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GENDER INEQUALITIES AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF
EMPLOYED WOMEN IN THE ALPS-ADRIATIC REGION

A comparison between Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia

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Gender inequalities and social conditions of employed women in the Alps-Adriatic region
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A COMPARISON BETWEEN CARINTHIA, FRIULI VENEZIA AND SLOVENIA

»The feminist task is neither to glorify nor to discount the differences between men and women, but to challenge the adverse consequences of whatever differences there may be.«

Quotation from Christine Littleton.
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INTRODUCTION

The roots of the woman question reach far back, but only in the last couple of centuries has it become a topic of discussion for an audience which has gotten wider and wider as time has passed and more people have become aware of the matter. Gender inequalities and the fact that women were (or rather have been) discriminated against, became an issue when in the name of the principle of equality and equal rights people (mainly women) started to challenge the long-standing and taken-for-granted idea of male superiority over the opposite sex, something that has long been considered as “a natural fact” or the result of “God’s will”.

In the seventeenth century, along with the spreading of the ideals of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution, people started to bring into question the given social order, the system of distribution of privileges and obligations and the wide existing social disparities. Among these, one of the most striking consisted of the different civil status accorded to men and women: for example, apparently the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen didn’t apply to all human beings but was meant only for men, because at that time women were considered to belong to another [inferior] category of people, and alongside children, invalids and mentally ill, were provided no individual rights. Since that time women have improved their situation very much, by getting organised in a movement to raise their voice in order to gain more rights.

Around the middle of the 19th century the so called feminists of the first wave demanded the right to manage their property when married, to receive an education like their brothers, to vote and to work. Almost a century later, starting in the late ’60s, the second wave feminism - also labelled the feminist liberation movement - spread across the western world: women went again to demonstrate in the streets, stating their right to control their bodies and asking for the end of the so called double standard of behaviour regarding sexual intercourses, for the legalization of abortion, for divorce and for more equality.

Nowadays we can say that we are faced with the third feminist wave which, among other requests, is demanding the actual implementation of policies fostering gender equality. Actually today there is a wide political agreement about the adoption of instruments such as positive action to reduce gender gaps, as well as the approach of gender mainstreaming, to prevent producing new inequalities and to help eliminate the ones already existing.

Equality of women and men is considered one of the major goals of the European Union - in fact, 2007 has been designated the ‘European Year of Equal Opportunities for All”. It was already stated in the European Community Treaty and later was reasserted in the Charter of
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Fundamental Rights of the European Union, that this organization is committed to the elimination of discrimination and to the promotion of equality between men and women; in 1996 the European Commission officially adopted the approach of gender mainstreaming, thus introducing a gender perspective into all policies, programmes and procedures of the European Union. Consequently it demanded its inferior levels of government – such as national States, regions, local administrations and public institutions in general – to take into consideration the gender dimension as a factor leading to social inequalities, and to work out measures in order to alter this trend. Since then much progress has been recorded in several fields, but in spite of women’s impressive educational achievements, their increasing presence in the labour market during their whole active lifetime, and the significant role they play nowadays in many spheres of the civil society, differences between men and women in terms of employment and career opportunities, pay and working conditions still remain considerable and is even underlined in some recent documents of the EU.

If we take into account the amount of time and energy that women and men invest in housework and tasks connected to family duties, we will see that it is mostly women who are deemed to be responsible for them. If a woman is both working for wage and in charge of the household, the scholars speak of a double burden or double shift, which is strictly connected to the issue of how to reconcile family and working duties, a situation which relates to men very seldomly because of the very strong legacy of the male breadwinner household model. Originally such a model was meant for the bourgeois family of the 19th century, but soon it became valid for all the social strata. It prescribed that the husband’s role was to work for wage while the woman had to be the care-taker at home; if an employment was compatible with these tasks and/ or if the financial situation of the family required it, only then could she work outside home.

Such a model of the “women by the fireside” has left a strong legacy in the sense that today even if women attain the same level of education of men – or even a better one – it has been statistically proved that on the average their salaries, as well as career opportunities are lower than men’s. There are many factors leading to such a discrimination and theories that try to account for it, but the main point is – and one just needs to cast one’s eyes over the standard working path of men and women – that while on the average private life doesn’t interfere with men’s (working) life course, pregnancies and family duties in general heavily affect women’s working lives, their achievements, careers, and opportunities offered them by companies. At the same time women usually have a hard time managing to reconcile their two “shifts” and to face the duties and responsibilities connected with them; moreover, on the average they can enjoy less leisure time than men.
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Biologically speaking only women can give birth to children and breastfeed them and this is why all over the world and throughout history societies have developed a division of tasks between the sexes that sees women performing some kinds of work near the house or the village, so that they can be close to their children, while men are usually more mobile and in charge of the defence of their community. The point is that it is not fair that since nature gave women the function of bearing children, still today they are discriminated against as a category, as a consequence of an “assignment” which doesn’t result from their own choice, most of all if we consider that not every woman becomes a mother. And also, if it is men and women together that guarantee the reproduction of our species and our society, why should women then be discriminated against for being mothers while the role of father doesn’t harm men’s (working) life path in any way?

I think that if our society wants to be competitive and prosperous in the future, it must on the one hand promote women’s employment and build upon their commitment, knowledge and potentials; on the other hand it must be able to reproduce itself [or otherwise be ready to accept increasing waves of immigrants]. These aims can be achieved only by finding ways to help women fulfil their natural task without forcing them to renounce the search for gratifications, self-realization, economic independence and whatever else they need, in a job. This implies that our governments must get committed in introducing and supporting measures that put women in the position to actually play their double role of workers and mothers, in fostering a more balanced and fair division of household duties and tasks between women and men, and in devising policies that strive to eliminate gender inequalities and discriminations. On their side companies should acknowledge the value of their female human resources and should understand that by introducing family friendly measures they would have more satisfied and less concerned employees, whose work performances would therefore improve, not to speak of the money they could save by reducing the turnover of a workforce more dedicated to the company. Finally, in the light of the concept of work-life balance, fathers should get more involved in their children’s education and spend more time with them, in order to help them to grow up and to enjoy their children’s childhood. The very welcome “side effect” of such a new code of behaviour for fathers would be that the responsibility of being a parent would not fall just on women any more, thereby diminishing the phenomenon of the discrimination against working women due to their family duties, while setting free women’s time and energies which could then be devoted to other things, for example making a career or just themselves. In fact the majority of women who have to reconcile family and work complain about their lack of free time and wish they had more of it.
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The aim of my work consists in analysing gender disparities and the social conditions of employed women of a very specific area, namely the core of the so called Adriatic-Alpine Euro-region, which is made up of Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia: I want to find out which region has proved to be more sensitive to the gender issue and has been more committed and successful in promoting a more equal society. I have chosen this area because it presents some peculiar characteristics that make it interesting (historical situation, bordering position, multi-language areas, etc.) but also out of personal reasons, i.e. I was born here (in Gorizia) and have been living here ever since, namely for 24 years in Italy, then for a year and a half in Austria and finally in the last year and a half in Slovenia.

Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia are neighbouring regions and to a foreign eye their landscapes must look similar, mainly because of the architectural legacy of a past when the three of them were all under the same administration and reigning family, i.e. part of the Habsburg Empire.

Till the end of the first World War [although only until 1866 for the area of Friuli, when it was annexed to the Reign of Italy] these regions were ruled by the same laws [concerning family and wedding for example] and were inhabited by a very Catholic population sharing the same family model, namely the traditional patriarchal male-breadwinner-housewife model according to which women’s role was defined by the three “K’s” [Küche, Kindern, Kirche] kitchen, children and church. This notwithstanding the fact that since more than half of the population (the lower class) was employed in the primary sector, women had actually to work hard at home as well as outside it, in order to help their family make ends meet. So given the fact that until 1918 Carinthia, (Friuli) Venezia Giulia and Slovenia belonged to the same state, that women’s situation here was very similar, after having being apart for less than a century now they are again under the umbrella of a common institution - the European Union - and since they are more or less all affected in the same way by world-wide phenomena such as the globalisation process [of capitals, work, models of reference, cultural trends, etc] and the process of individualization of society, I want to investigate whether woman’s social situation in these regions and their models of behaviour are still similar, or if they differ because of their dissimilar historical experiences and social developmental paths. I also want to find out how transeuropean rules [for example the principle of gender mainstreaming] have been applied and implemented in local contests belonging to different countries, and which strategies have been elaborated in order to tackle the problem of gender disparities and discriminations. I hope that through such a comparison I will be able to point out some “best practices” which might be applied in the future in other regions in order to promote equal opportunities and the development of a more equal society.
The first chapter of this work will deal with the main sociological theories about social inequalities, starting with the classical ones which adopted a hierarchical approach and focused mainly on people’s position within the economic field, and then moving to more recent standpoints, which adopted a horizontal approach in order to give accounts of the so-called new inequalities. These are connected with characteristics such as one’s gender, age, race, ethnicity, kind of dwelling, etc., so they cannot be directly connected to or explained by only taking into consideration one’s profession, but nonetheless they affect people’s life chances and achievements substantially.

In the second chapter I will outline if and how the main sociologists took into consideration the issue of gender inequalities, and what they wrote about woman’s nature and her role compared to man’s. Afterwards I will introduce the principal feminist approaches to the study of gender issues and their main points, and I will outline the theories that were developed in order to explain the phenomena of the gendered division of work and the existence of patriarchal relations in social structures, focusing most of all on the reasons why women are in a disadvantaged position in the labour market, and on the relationship between welfare policies and women’s situation.

In the third chapter I will describe women’s situation under the Habsburg monarchy and explain how the traditional male breadwinner-housewife model could assert itself and become the leading paradigm for the gendered division of work, notwithstanding the fact that women had always been working, at home as well as outside it, in the fields and factories. As we will see, the Catholic Church has played a key role in the affirmation of the traditional family model.

The fourth chapter will deal with the way woman’s condition has evolved over time in Europe and more precisely in Austria, Italy and Slovenia and the former Yugoslavia till our days. I will take into consideration the development of the female employment rates together with the different kinds of welfare states that have characterized these nations, coming to outline the types of gender relations that have been fostered. Moreover I will give an account of the impact that the two phenomena of the process of globalization and of individualization of society have had on women’s situation, focussing especially on Western countries.

In the fifth chapter I will focus my attention on the regional situation. First I will give an account of the way the European Union has been dealing with the issue of gender equality, and I will illustrate the principles and policies developed to tackle gender inequalities; on a second stage I will concentrate on the regional level and more precisely on the three regions which may represent the heart of the forthcoming Alps-Adriatic region: Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia. After having analysed the way women are present in the labour force there and the
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care services on which they can count - also contextualizing such data within their national
frame, i.e. of Austria and Italy - I will focus on the policies that have been developed by the
regional governments in order to support families, to promote gender equalities and to counter
gender discrimination, also describing the national and regional institutional bodies that deal
with the issue and their involvement in initiatives co-financed by the European Union such as
the program EQUAL. The goal of this part of the work is to detect some best practices which
have been elaborated in a certain region and have proved to be effective in helping parents to
carry out all their duties, and which may also be successfully adopted by other administrations.
My hypothesis is that in the end such policies won’t be much dissimilar owing to the common
membership to the European Union. Of course there are going to be “national/ regional ways” to
cope with the problems because the three regions present partially different workforce situations
and organization – I assume that these differences are connected to the dissimilar historical
experiences through which Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia went. Given the stress
laid by the socialist system (when Slovenia was part of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia) on
the principle of equality between the different republics (ethnicities) as well as between genders,
and considering that it demanded all of its citizens to work - so both men and women used to be
employed full time - I expect to find a comparatively better situation for women in Slovenia than
in the other two bordering regions, this both according to official statistical data concerning
employment as well as according to the results of the opinion polls carried out on the topics of
gender equalities and inequalities, and about men’s and women’s roles within family and
society. It must also be mentioned here that the weight of such a legacy could have already
been partially blunted by the dynamics that have been set off by the process of transition from a
socialist society to a so-called democratic capitalistic society – the process of re-catholization of
the population and the distance taken from everything that belonged to the old regime, to
mention a few.

In the sixth chapter I am going to present the results of a survey which I have carried out
in the three bordering regions, thus providing first hand data. In order to compare the social
conditions of working women of Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia I have developed a
questionnaire, translated it into German, Italian and Slovene, and used it to interview 30 women
who have family (children) and are employees of a financial company which has its
headquarters in Klagenfurt and branches in the whole Alps-Adriatic region, including Ljubljana
and Udine. The interviews took place in the three above mentioned cities during the months of
June and July 2006, thanks to the availability of the 30 women involved and with the precious
organizational help of the Human Resources departments of the Austrian, Italian and Slovene
branches of the group.
The questionnaire consisted of 32 questions, mostly open ones, through which I wanted to investigate women’s actual situation between family and work, their ideas about woman’s role in family and society (influenced more or less by their parents’ ideas on the same issue), their personal experience as far as unequal treatments owed to the fact that they’re women and their opinion about gender disparities. Moreover, I wanted to get to know their assessment about the commitment of their regional and/or national government as far as fostering equal opportunities and helping parents to reconcile working and family life and about the results that have actually been achieved in the field. One last point concerned the evaluation of the family- and/ or women-friendly attitudes of the company in each region/nation according to the interviewed women. As for my hypothesis, I again expected Slovene women to be the most emancipated, and the ones who enjoy more equal partnerships, where the division of work is not so engendered any more. Indeed it is so, and for a great deal the cultural legacy of socialism and its care institutions are to be held responsible for such a result, since they have gotten people used to taking for granted the fact that women work as men do, which may bring about a higher involvement of men into family life and household duties. It has to be said that also in Slovenia the labour force is still segregated by gender and young women seem to be discriminated against by employers upon hiring, owing to the fact that they may get pregnant and go on leave. Such a phenomenon, together with a still limited number of fathers who make use of the parental leave represent common features of the three analyzed areas and matters of concern of the institutions who deal with gender inequalities.

In the conclusion I will point out projects and best practices which have been developed in the analyzed areas and have been effective in promoting a more gender equal society in working towards the elimination, or at least the reduction of gender discrimination and inequalities. They may represent the starting point of a debate about the gender issues to take place within Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia, and therefore in the forthcoming Alps-Adriatic region, which may aid in the development of new answers and solutions. Moreover I will report possible family and women friendly measures to be introduced in companies in order to give an answer to the highlighted concerns and areas of dissatisfaction of working women.
CHAPTER 1

THEORIES OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY – FROM A VERTICAL TOWARDS A HORIZONTAL PERSPECTIVE

Starting with the definition given for the expression "social inequality" by some dictionaries, I will give an account of the theories that have been developed by the foremost sociologists in order to explain such a phenomenon, its origins, the different forms it can take and the way it shapes the social structure of a certain society. We will then see that the analysis of social inequality can be and indeed has been carried out according to different dimensions.

In *Wörterbuch der Soziologie* (2. ed., 2002) we can read that the narrow meaning of the term "social inequality" is the following: “a distinction between typical large groups of a given society”, so for example different social status are provided different privileges, different castes are provided different rights and duties and different social strata are provided different conditions of life. Besides, it adds that in the sociological theories of social inequality the attention is focused on a feature which is not homogeneously distributed in a given society, so that it is possible to distinguish different societal groups which share a similar situation, and which can also be hierarchically ordered according to the level of presence of that feature.

In *Soziologie Lexicon* (4.Edition, 2000), we read the following definition: “asymmetrical distribution of scarce and demanded goods among societal positions, which leads to privileged and unprivileged conditions of life for people”. As a consequence of this, different conditions of life are valued differently; if we speak of the structure of social inequality, then we make reference to the way in which in a given society scarce and demanded goods are distributed among its members; if we consider the vertical dimension of this structure, we come to speak about social stratification.

In my opinion the most comprehensive definition for the expression “social inequality” is given by Karin Gottschall in her book *Soziale Ungleichheit und Geschlecht – Kontinuitäten und Brüche, Sackgassen und Erkenntnispotentiale im deutschen soziologischen Diskurs*:

“Unter soziale Ungleichheit sollen hier die unterschiedlichen Zugangschancen zu allgemeine verfügbaren und erstrebenswerten sozialen Gütern und Positionen verstanden werden, die zugleich mit ungleichen Macht-, Anerkennungs- und Interaktionsmöglichkeiten einhergehen, und die Lebenschancen von Individuen
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und Gruppen relativ dauerhaft positiv oder negativ beeinflussen, das heißt, zu strukturierter sozialer Ungleichheit führen”.¹

The issue of equality and inequality between people has always been a very hotly debated one; as stated by Erhard R. Wiehn “one of the oldest and deepest experiences of humanity must have actually been the one about their inequality” ². Prophets, philosophers, theologians and intellectuals got engaged in trying to give account for the inequalities of their time - not so much contesting their existence but rather justifying it, indeed till the moment when the Christian religion introduced the concept that every man and woman is equal in front of God, as for centuries and millennia social inequalities between people had been taken for granted. Also the revolutionary message of the Christian religion had to be strictly limited to the spiritual sphere and didn’t mean at all to turn upside down the given social order of the time; it was just much later, with the French Revolution, that we could witness a rebellion against the strikingly different life conditions between a small minority of privileged and well off people and the poor majority of the population.

For sure the most well known sociologists who dealt with the topic of social inequalities are Karl Marx and Frierich Engels. In their analysis of the systems of production they focused mainly on the economic dimension and more precisely on the ownership and control over the means of production; according to them, as a consequence one’s position within the social structure depends on his position as far as means of production. Within the capitalist system of production they distinguished between two antagonistic groups of people: those who have the capital, thus owning and controlling the means of productions (and are only oriented towards making profit and exploiting the labour force) and those who have nothing but their own ability to work, and thus are at the order of the former. In Marx’s and Engel’s theory the first ones build up the capitalist class who constitute a minority and oppresses the second ones, called the proletariat; in their view such a contraposition was supposed to lead to a revolution, when the proletariat would have eventually rebelled against such an unfair situation and introduced a more fair system, the communist one, under which there would have been neither oppressors nor oppressed, everybody would have had the chance to work according to his/ her vocation

¹ »Under the term social inequality it has to be meant here different chances of having access to generally available and desirable social goods and positions, which at the same time are matched with uneven possibilities of interaction, of having power and getting acknowledgment, and which affect life chances of individuals or groups in a relatively durable positive or negative way, i.e. which lead to structural social inequality” (my own translation), from Karin Gottschall, Soziale Ungleichheit und Geschlecht – Kontinuitäten und Brüche,Sackgassen und Erkenntnisspotentiale im deutschen soziologischen Diskurs, Leske + Budrich, Opladen, Hemsbach, 2000, pag. 23.
² Erhard R. Wiehn, Ungleichheit unter Menschen als soziologisches Problem, Universitätsverlag, Konstanz, 1973, pag. 15, own translation from German.
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and everybody would have gotten what is necessary for living, thereby enabling an harmonious society

The analysis of social inequality by Max Weber, another well known sociologist, is more elaborated, because he took into consideration not only people’s position in the process of production but also their condition of life and life-style, which are usually directly related to the education and profession a person has. Weber coined the term “status group” [Stand] in order to make reference to the people who occupy a similar position within the social structure, which is connected to a certain set of opportunities and standard of living and a specific socially recognized prestige.

Weber’s analysis aims more at describing the given societal situation than at accounting for the way society and inequality evolve through time (typical of class analysis); as well he has paid attention to the economic dimension of people’s lives, using the concept of “class” to make reference to a group of people whose life chances are similar and depend on their position in the market, he distinguished between the ownerships’ class and the labour class, which position themselves in a hierarchical way. Next to the concept of class which is just connected to the material situation of a group (distributive dimension), Weber paid attention also to the way groups of people relate between themselves (relational dimension) and he employed the concept of “status group”: as it has already been mentioned above, one’s status is connected to one’s profession and education, so the people who are characterized by a similar positive or negative attribution of prestige, honour and esteem by other people, in connection with some common features (i.e. education, profession), belong to the same status group; according to the level of honour acknowledged by society to different groups it is then possible to classify them hierarchically. Finally, according to Weber, once (and if) the people belonging to the same status group become aware of their similar situation and common interests, and start to get politically organized to represent their interest, we speak of parties, and we can classify parties depending on the amount of power they have – i.e. how successful they are in imposing their will.

So employing the three classical dimensions for the measurement of social inequality after Weber’s work - which are income, [from income or estate], prestige and power – it would be possible to identify groups of people who share similar characteristics, and who can then be hierarchically ordered, from the most well off who can enjoy very favourable conditions of life, to the ones who fare worst.

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The concepts of class and status group developed by Marx and Weber represent the basics of the sociology of inequality, and many other sociologists have made reference to them and built their theories upon them. As a consequence we can speak of two schools of thought, the one which conceives society as made up of hierarchically organized classes, and the second which focuses on the concept of status and envisages the social structure as built up by different layers of social groups hierarchically organized according to their status.

One of the critics moved to Marx’s analysis is that his analysis was rather deterministic, indeed no revolution of the proletariat has ever occurred, but rather this class has come to terms with the capitalist class and instead of rebelling against it, has started to negotiate with it in order to improve the situation of the workers. Moreover it was limited to divide people just between workers and capitalists, for example the situation of the management doesn’t fall into any of the above categories, because the managers usually don’t own the means of production, although they actually control them, i.e. they make the decisions on how to use them on behalf of the owners. Anthony Giddens developed a classification system which takes into consideration people’s market capacity and not their situation as far as the means of production, and pays attention to data such as one’s wage contract, opportunity to climb the social ladder (mobility), access to education, position and tasks within an enterprise and the connected level of authority. In the end his class structure for the capitalist society is three-folded and consists of the upper, middle and lower class, also known as the ownership class, the educated class and the working class. As in Giddens’ view the membership to a class is mainly determined by one’s economic situation, or more exactly by one’s profession and properties.

A major criticism of the theories of social inequality which are based on the concept of class, is that since they focus mostly on one’s profession as the key feature for classifying people, they actually don’t take into consideration the whole population but just a minority of it, since only a minority of the population is economically active, i.e.- at the time when those theories were developed – (white) men between 15 and 60 years old. In order to overcome

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5 In the German edition of the book *Sociology* by Anthony Giddens (1999), we can read the following definition:


6 See for instance the critics moved by Reinhard Kreckel to the traditional theories of social inequality which focused on the vertical dimension, in *Soziologie der sozialen Ungleichheit*, by Bernhard Giesen, Hans Haferkamp (ed.), Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, Langerich, Germany, 1987, pp. 93-114.
such a limit, efforts were made to take into consideration not one’s profession but one’s occupational situation, coming to include into the analysis also the unemployed people; at the same time some sociologists like Goldthope and Parkin held that not so much was the individual the object of analysis but rather the household unit, the family, and that in order to classify families it had to be taken into consideration the profession (or the occupational situation) of its head, which is to say of the man. The explanation given to such a statement was that if women were employed anyway their income was lower than their husbands’, so it couldn’t have been considered a key factor for classifying the status of a family; on the other hand it was better to proceed like that for the sake of the concept of class, because otherwise it would have been impossible to build up a classification and no homogeneous group situation would have been detected.

Another strand of theories has also developed, next to the theories of social inequality based on the concept of class also another, drawing on the concept of status group elaborated by Weber. In this case non-economic features are also taken into consideration and come to identify a certain life style and a certain mentality typical of a group of people, who in this way distinguish themselves from other people; when life styles and standards of living of groups of people are compared and ordered from the most advantageous to the most disadvantageous life conditions, it is possible to draw up a social structure made up by a stratification of social strata or layers.

Thomas Geiger gave the following definition of social strata:

“Jede Schicht besteht aus vielen Personen (Familien), die irgendein erkennbares Merkmal gemein haben und als Träger dieses Merkmals einen gewissen Status in der Gesellschaft und im Verhältnis zu anderen Schichten einnehmen. Der Begriff des Status umfasst Lebensstandard, Chancen und Risiken, Glücksmöglichkeiten, aber auch Privilegien und Diskriminationen, Rang und öffentliches Ansehen. (…)”

7 Sylvia Walby (1986/10) writes that according to Goldthope (1980/67) “the family and household is the unit in analysis of stratification and that men largely determine the position of family in the structure of stratification”, and quotes him (1980/188) as it follows:

“it is difficult to envisage any factors which, over the period in question, would be likely to result in any sizeable number of women occupying markedly different class positions from those of the male “heads” of their families, or possessing attributes or engaging in activities which would in themselves materially influence the class position of the family unit.”

8 “Every layer consists of many people (families), which have a certain recognizable feature in common and as carrier of such a feature they get a certain status in the society and in the relation with other strata. The concept of status comprehend standard of living, chances and risks, possibilities to be happy, as well as privileges and discriminations, rank and public respect. Thus the process of stratification means the organization of society according to the typical status (social situation) of its members, without a closer qualification of this social situation or of the (above mentioned) feature, to which they are connected in the very historical case.” (my own translation). Quoted from Stefan Hradil, Sozialstruktur-analyse in einer
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Schichtung heist also Gliederung der Gesellschaft nach dem typischen Status (den Soziallagen), ihrer Mitglieder, ohne nähere Bestimmung dieser Soziallagen oder der Merkmale, an die sie im geschichtlichen Sonderfall geknüpft sind.”

As we can see this definition is very far from the materialism typical of the classist approach, even though when reporting about Theodor Geiger’s studies and researches about the German population, Stefan Hradil wrote that the colleague had mostly focused on the concept of mentality and more precisely on the way one’s position within the process of production comes to shape his mentality – so that from a threefold class-structure he came to distinguish five status groups.

In order to improve such a classification and to overcome the way it relies on the economic situation of a group, Stefan Hradil has widened the concept of the social situation of a group, in order to include into the analysis other features, such as:

- working conditions: type of contract, characteristics of the workplace (comfortable or not, safe or dangerous, level of pollution, etc), more or less interesting job, etc.;
- amount of free time and the way it is spent (available and affordable leisure activities);
- dwelling situation: type of dwelling, its location, available room, level of noise in the surroundings, on rent or one’s property, etc.;
- social security and soundness: social net on which to rely in case of need, financial situation, health situation, possible risk of job loss, becoming sick or poor to get sick, etc.

Hradil acknowledges that many of the above mentioned features are connected with one’s profession or wealth, in the sense that if a person has a good job or independently on the job is well off, s/he can afford a good house, interesting free time activities, go for a regular health check-in, take care of his/her situation when retired, protect him/herself against foreseeable risks, and provide his/her son with a good education so that they’ll have better chances to get a good job and so on. In this context it has to be mentioned that since the ‘70s – restricting our area of analysis to the Western countries - the State has become more and more involved in providing welfare services so that everybody can enjoy at least a certain basic standard of living and is [allegedly] provided with equal opportunity of education and self-development.

Anyhow, when trying to classify people according to their situation as far as the above mentioned features, it should be possible to identify some different sets of conditions of life and of interaction, deemed to be advantageous or disadvantageous with reference to the achievement of specific life goals, which are relevant for a group of people. Usually a certain resource has a key importance for the realization of one’s aim so that it is possible to distinguish


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between groups which have different life objectives and a different level of availability of the key
resources relevant for that objective. In this way it is possible to develop a theoretical typology
and not a classification, because there is no hierarchy or order (of better or worse) and also
because since life-chances distribute themselves on a continuum, it is hardly feasible to put
people precisely in this or that group, while simultaneously drawing a clear dividing line between
groups. In his book Hradil also mentions the existence of inborn features - such as one’s age,
cohort, sex, race, ethnicity, colour of skin and place of birth - which can bring about horizontal
inequalities (versus vertical ones): he then writes of “special (social) situations”\(^9\) which can be
taken into account next to the general social situations of the population when employing his
concept of set of life conditions – in any case, he hasn’t developed this line of thought. Instead,
while distinguishing between primary and secondary dimensions of different conditions of life
and their level of importance, Hradil came to develop a typology of the German population of the
‘80s, consisting of 14 groups\(^11\).
Besides, he introduced the concept of *milieu*, which consists of a group of people who share not
only similar objective life conditions but also similar perspectives and mind sets, so that in the
end they have a similar life style and rules of behaviours – in this sense he comes to say that
the social *milieus* connect individuals to their social environment, and regulate the way its
members interact among themselves as well as with people of other *milieus*.
Being aware of the complexity of reality and of the fact that the above mentioned sociological
concepts represent an abstraction, Hradil renounces building up a comprehensive model of
social structure, but rather suggests employing the concept of social situation in order to
analyse a specific population (in the statistical term) at a specific time, in a specific area, sorting
out people into groups according to their life styles but without giving them a hierarchical order.

A French colleague of Stefan Hradil, Pierre Bourdieu has developed a concept similar to
the one of *milieu*, i.e. the concept of the social *habitus*: in order to explain it, first it must be
introduced Bourdieu’s threefold categorization of capital and in connection with it, his definition
of class and social space. As he illustrates in *Die feinen Unterschiede*, there are three kinds of
capital: the economic, the social and the cultural. Of course, the first is strictly connected to
one’s job and wealth, whereas the second consists of the social relations and connections

\(^9\) See Stefan Hradil, ibid, pag. 76 and following.
\(^10\) See Stefan Hradil, ibid, pag. 153.
\(^11\) See Stefan Hradil, ibid, pag. 154 and following: according to the author the main dimensions are:
formal power, money, formal education, risks, social roles, discriminations; the secondary dimensions are
– besides the first ones – prestige, working conditions, free-time conditions, dwelling conditions, social
security, democratic institutions, social relations. He has identified the following groups: Macht-elite,
Reiche, Bildungselite, Manager, Eperten, Studenten, »Normalverdiener« mit geringeren Risiken,
»Normalverdiener« mit mittleren Risiken, »Normalverdiener« mit hohen Risiken, Rentner, Arbeitslose
(langfristig), Arme (keine Erwerbspersonen), Randgruppen.
available to a person and which can help him/her to achieve his/her goals; the last depends on one’s education; and all of the three capitals can be built up during one’s life and transformed over time, which means that by investing money it is possible to develop one’s cultural capital in order to get a good and well paid job later, or also that thanks to one’s social capital one may get a good job and make money, etc.

The social space is shaped by the way capital is distributed among the social actors, which is to say that people occupy a certain position in the social space and then relate with each other depending on the amount of capital available to them and the way it is structured\textsuperscript{12}; when people have a similar amount and structure of capital, they are supposed to develop a similar perception of reality and mentality, and consequently similar social practices and life-style – such a group is then named a social class. Bourdieu gave the following definition of class: “Classes are sets of agents who occupy similar positions and who, being placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditionings, have every likelihood of having similar dispositions and interests and therefore of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances”\textsuperscript{13} (here it must be noted how far such a definition of class is from the one of Marxist origin); Bourdieu studied social practices such as food and clothing tastes, leisure time activities, sport interests and so on, coming to distinguish three classes: the upper class, characterized by its sense of distinction, its power and the will to keep excluding other people from joining it; the middle class, whose distinctive feature is its cultural goodwill, in the sense that they strive to become members of the upper class and thus show an attitude of compliance towards everything which comes from the target class, without developing its own stance; finally the lower or working class, whose choices are lead by necessity.

If the objective situation of a class is connected with its available economic capital, i.e. with one’s place in the economic system, then the subjective features of a class have their roots in it but are also the results of social practices which may have another origin: within this context Bourdieu introduced the concept of social \textit{habitus}, defining it as the connection between the objective and subjective components of class and localizing its formation and maintenance in the process of socialization which takes place in the family and then in other social institutions.

\textsuperscript{12} In \textit{Sozialer Raum und Klassen – Lecon sur la lecon}, by Pierre Bourdieu we can read (pag. 19): “the social space and the differences which can be spontaneously distinguished in it, work on a symbolical level, as a room of life styles or as a set of Ständen, through groups of people which sort out among themselves because of dissimilar life styles… every social act is distinctive, being it performed consciously or not in order to create a distinction from others…” (my own translation from German).

Since it is possible to transform one kind of capital into another one, it is foreseen the chance to change one’s situation and position within the social space, moving upwards or downwards the social ladder according to changes, experiences, improvements and worsening which occur in life.

As far as I have read, I think that the sociologist who in the ’80s more openly distanced himself from the traditional theories based on the classical vertical dimensions for the analysis of social inequalities and stressed the need of giving accounts of new forms of social inequalities, based on inborn features, was Reinhard Kreckel. Despite acknowledging the centrality of one’s job in shaping a person’s social situation, he has refused the class approach for it included just a minority of the population in its analysis; similarly, he has highlighted the limits of the approach based on the concept of hierarchically organized social strata (problems of status inconsistency and the functionality of the existence of an order based on the level of prestige attributed to groups in order to maintain the current inequalities, i.e. the fact that a minority can enjoy many privileges while the majority of people has no access to them).

While holding that one’s employment still plays a central role, Kreckel has stressed the importance of labour relations, i.e. of the process of negotiation of interests between labour force and capital, which is to say, between trade unions and employers; since the nation-state sets the framework for such a process as well as controls the educational system, sets and collects taxes and redistributes resources and life chances (something which had not been foreseen by Marxists), it represents the third main actor in the arena of power relations – which he named “the abstract triangle of forces – die abstrakte Kräftedreieck von Kapital, Arbeit und Staat”\(^{14}\). According to him, this triangle of forces is responsible for shaping the way distributive and relational inequalities manifest themselves in the advanced society, which is to say in Western national states. He gives the following definition of social inequalities:

“Soziale Ungleichheit in weiteren Sinne liegt überall dort vor, wo die Möglichkeiten des Zuganges zu allgemein verfügbaren und erstrebenswerten sozialen Gütern und/ oder zu sozialen Positionen, die mit ungleichen Macht und/oder Interaktionsmöglichkeiten ausgestattet sind, dauerhafte Einschränkungen erfahren und dadurch die Lebenschancen der betroffenen Individuen, Gruppen oder Gesellschaften beeinträchtigt bzw. begünstigt werden.” \(^{15}\).

\(^{14}\) See Reinhard Kreckel, *Politiche Sociologie der sozialen Ungleichheit*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1992, pag. 154 and following.

\(^{15}\) “There exist social inequalities in a wide sense most of all where the possibilities of having access to generally available and desired social goods and/or to social positions which are provided with different level of power and possibilities of interaction, present long-term restrictions, and this way have a negative or positive effect on the life chances of individuals, groups or societies affected by it.” (my own translation), Reinhard Kreckel, idibem, pag. 17.
Kreckel underlines that there exists not only a distributive dimension of social inequalities, i.e. concerning the way desired social goods like wealth and knowledge are unevenly distributed among people, but also a relational dimension, and in this case the way groups of people relate between themselves has to be taken into account. Resting on what was written by Weber and Parkin about the way social strata and classes build up and close up, Kreckel has detected two mechanisms which regulate the relations between groups: on the one hand the tendency of organizations to organize hierarchically, on the other hand, intervention processes of selective association, of inclusion and of demarcation, and within this context inborn features such as one’s age, sex, race, colour of skin, ethnicity, etc., matter and thus can affect one’s situation and life chances. What Kreckel suggests to do to people who are discriminated against because of their inborn characteristics, is to become organized and mobilize themselves in order to represent their interests in the arena of power relations. In order to give account of the many forms of inequalities that we face, Kreckel has elaborated the metaphor of centre and periphery, between which there would develop power relation (cultural, economic, political, etc): in the centre we would find a concentration of social forces whereas in the periphery they would instead be split since there would be many peripheral centres.

Completely changing perspective and focusing not so much on the analysis of social inequality but rather on the way society organizes (and structures) itself in order to be able to carry out all of its needed activities, the concept of functional differentiation can now be introduced. This concept has been developed by the structural-functionalists - among whom one of the most well known is Talcott Parsons - drawing on the work of Pareto, Weber, Simmel and Durkheim. According to the functionalist approach, society is made up of a network of systems and subsystems, and each part is given a task that has to be performed so that the whole system can work properly. Families, for example, have two main tasks: responsibility for the socialization of their offspring and stabilization of the personalities of its adult members.

According to Talcott Parsons, there are four main needs to be met – adaptation, goal attainment, integration and maintenance – therefore it is necessary that social actors present dissimilar situations, because only in this way can they specialize in carrying out different activities – inequalities are thus conceived as positive functional to the existence and reproduction of the system.

According to the concepts of social stratification and social roles, the social system consists of many social strata, each social strata being made up of people who share a common set of values and have to fulfil a given role and having rules of conduct which provide rewards and

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16 For Weber see Reinhard Kreckel, idibem, pag. 65 and following; as far as Parkin, see Frank Parkin, Strategien sozialer Schliessung und Klassenbildung, in Reinhard Kreckel (ed.), Soziale Ungleichheiten,
punishments to the person who behave respectively according to or deviates from the expected standards of conduct. Since social strata are parts of a broader social system whose existence as a whole depends on the contributions of each and every part, each strata is ranked within the frame of the given set of shared values according to its utility, that is to say, to the functional contribution it can make for the successful working of the system.  

Finally, the approach of the symbolic interactionism has to be mentioned here also, which holds that rules are socially produced and continually confirmed or subject to change as social actors interact. One of the most important sociologists who focused his attention on the way human beings interact, is Erwing Goffman (although he claimed not to have been a symbolic interactionist): he has studied and analyzed the way people interpret a social context and act in everyday situations as well as in interactions taking place within an organized social setting, providing also some guidelines as far as the mechanisms which intervene in such situations – i.e. the assumptions made by people, the way they attribute meaning to symbols and actions of the other actors and how they respond to them. As it will be outlined in the next chapter, Goffman has paid attention also to the way sex as a category affects social interactions, in the sense that one’s sex can’t help but have an influence on the way the other social actors will conceive that very interaction and will therefore behave.

18 See Karin Gottschall, Soziale Ungleichheit und Geschlecht – Kontinuitäten und Brüche, Sackgassen und Erkenntnisspotentiale im deutschen soziologischen Diskurs, pag. 121 and following.
CHAPTER 2

THEORIES FOR SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND THE GENDER ISSUE

As we have seen only the last approaches have taken into consideration inborn features such as one’s age, cohort, sex, race, ethnicity, colour of skin and place of birth, as characteristics which can lead to different life conditions and chances, but this doesn’t mean that the other sociologists have failed to see these inequalities, simply that at the time when they were writing other dimensions of inequality were at the core of their concerns. The XIX century society was different than the one of today, the European nation states were almost ethnically homogeneous, people were less mobile and connected and inequalities were accepted as something normal and natural. For example, the fact that men and women were not provided with the same opportunities was just something taken for granted which didn’t need to be explained or justified; on the contrary, the gendered division of labour laid at the basis of the organization of society and of its order.

I will now give an account of the different sociological paradigms which have been elaborated in order to deal with the issue of gender inequality.

The supporters of the so-called paradigm of the differentiation moved from the observation that there are some fundamental biological characteristics which distinguish women from men: men are usually bigger and physically stronger than women, while only women can give birth to children and breastfeed them, which is why during the time of childbearing they should be protected, avoid to carrying out heavy activities and after having given birth they should stay near the children, thus near home. This is more or less the way all over the world, and throughout history societies have somehow developed a division of tasks between the sexes that sees women performing some kinds of work near the house or the village, while men are usually more mobile and in charge of the defence of their community, a task which gives them a lot of prestige and importance. This has somehow led to the development of a mind set or habit, according to which women belong to the private sphere, take care of their family and are in charge of household activities, while men represent their family in the public, are active within the public sphere and carry out more visible and socially rewarded activities. Since the work performed by women at home is to be repeated daily, its results don’t last long (food is consumed, clothing are worn up and get dirty again, house order and cleanings need to be renewed) and no formal education or training is needed to do it, it seems like women don’t do anything important. This assumption together with the old legislative provisions which gave the male head of the family the right and the authority to take all of the decisions, lead to the
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historical fact that women were subordinated to men and considered inferior to them. In a vicious circle families didn’t invest in the education of their daughters, but rather in their sons, a fact that brought about not only the idea that men were mentally more developed and intelligent than women, but also the outcome that most of the intellectuals were men. Therefore it can be understood why gender inequality hasn’t represented one of the main concerns of many sociologists, as well as why their theories about humankind actually were theories about mankind, having an androcentric bias\textsuperscript{19}.

Masculine bias can be spoken of when making reference to the work of Emile Durkheim and the way he wrote about men and women. He can be considered a paladin of the paradigm of the differentiation since he believed in the utility of the division of tasks among the members of society so that each could become specialized in something. It also follows that men and women must be given different tasks, according to their nature: Durkheim held that men would be more social beings than women, women would be closer to nature, emotional beings better equipped to carry out affective functions, to satisfy people’s basic needs and thus to get specialized in the private sphere, and in taking care of their family – and he wrote of \textsl{femina simple}\textsuperscript{20}. Conversely man’s situation would be more complex because men are deemed to be more developed and self-reflexive, therefore they’d have to become specialized in performing more intellectual activities in the public sphere, which as a consequence would make them more stressed out and more exposed to the danger of committing suicide. And here we are faced with the topic of the utility of the institution of marriage for the sake of society: according to Durkheim, being married helps men to recover from the stress of everyday life, protects them from falling into depression and allows them to satisfy their sexual needs in a legal framework; he admitted that marriage doesn’t have the same utility for women; on the contrary it could limit them (since then they have to become specialized in the private sphere and be subordinated to the authority of the husband), but such an unequal situation didn’t bring him to deepen the question, but rather to state that if women were to start to work a lot, it would turn out well for men, who could concentrate their energy just on carrying out intellectual work – for which he considered women not to be apt\textsuperscript{21}. In her book \textit{Ungleichheit und Geschlecht}, Karin Gottschall defines Durkheim’s gender theory as “clearly conservative if not latently hostile towards women”, whereas about another representative of the paradigm of the differentiation, George


\textsuperscript{20} See Barbara L. Marshall, Anne M. Witz,, ibid. pag. 23 and following.

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Simmel, she wrote that he “accentuated the so called women’s culture in a positive way, differentiating himself from Durkheim”\(^{22}\). Also for Simmel gender differences are rooted in nature\(^{23}\), women being more spontaneous and natural and centered on themselves, whereas men are more self reflexive and can conceive themselves as both subject and object, thus reaching a higher level of abstraction and a deeper understanding of the nature of the world. He wrote that men and women have “two deep rooted dissimilar qualities of being” so that “life process obviously has a different meaning for the woman than for the man”; he reported the assumption that women would suffer from a lack of logic and shared the view that men would be more intellectually gifted than women, but he somehow counterbalanced this difference by acknowledging women other qualities\(^{24}\). Simmel explained men’s feeling of superiority over women by deriving it from their superior physical strength and deeper understanding of the world, which would put them in a position of power, power that is then transformed into authority and (legal) rights. Anyhow, he was one of the few classical sociologists who admitted the masculine bias of the sociological sciences (at that time), in fact he wrote:

“... all of these categories are indeed male in their form and their claim for validity, as well as in the way historically they have been shaped. If we conceive those ideas as having an absolute value, as simply objective, then the equation objective equals male holds true in the historical life of our species... (woman) a being is judged according to criteria that have been created for an opposite (being). It derives that the autonomy of the female principle cannot be understood at all if we proceed this way... It is to be hoped for a call for fairness at an authority which is above both parties ...”\(^{25}\),

and also:

“One cannot sit on the chair of the judge and rank as lower and higher two beings, each of whom represents a perfect world in itself, and (since) only from their coexistence and antagonism the history of the human kind was originated.”\(^{26}\).

Because of the different nature of men and women, the former became specialized in performing some work for pay, while the latter focused on family and helped men work out their

\(^{22}\) See Karin Gottschall, ibidem, pag. 81.
\(^{25}\) George Simmel, ibidem, p. 220 and following (my own translation from German).
stress and reduce the tension and complexity of their fragmented life. It can be said that Simmel conceived such a gendered division of work as a social product, which has its root in nature but is subject to change as habits and manners change and in fact he foresaw the process of increasing individualization of women’s lives (thus getting closer to men’s situation) as a consequence of women’s movement. If before women used to be isolated from each other because they were confined in their homes, the women’s movement was successful in creating solidarity among them, built up on the basis of shared (similar) life conditions even though they were not working together, and this solidarity was going to break up with traditional gender roles, an outcome considered problematic by Simmel, who therefore couldn’t stand up for women’s cause, though nonetheless sympathized with them27.

I now come to the last representative of the paradigm of the differentiation. Talcott Parsons, as I have already said, has theorized the necessity to assign different tasks to different members and groups of society, so that each can become specialized in doing something for the benefit of the whole system. In the book Family, socialization and interaction process, written together with Robert Bales, he assigned the family unit – seen as a subsystem of the whole societal system - the task to take care of its members and more precisely to socialize and educate its offspring on the one hand, and to stabilize the personality of its adult members on the other hand. It must be underlined that Parsons and Bales took the American family of their time (the ’50s) as the unit of analysis for their researches, and since at that time only a minority of women was working for wage and mostly in sectors that are usually considered “feminine” (such as in the educational system, providing care to other people, or as secretaries in offices, etc.) they assigned men the primary responsibility of maintaining their family, while women would be in charge of family and household. The very source of the division of tasks is seen in women’s unique power of childbearing and childbirth, while men unable to do that, would have to become specialized in something else28: Men would be given the instrumental role within the family, become the main breadwinner, and take care of the connection between family and the outside world, whereas women were conceived as the emotional leader, responsible for providing care-work and household chores. Parsons was aware of the fact that the number of

28 At page 29 of the Italian edition of the book by Talcott Parson and Robert Freed Bales, Famiglia e socializzazione, we can read:
“Crediamo che la spiegazione fondamentale della allocuzione dei ruoli fra i sessi, biologicamente intesi, stia nel fatto che il dare alla luce i figli, e il prestare loro le prime cure, stabilisce in via presuntiva, un netto primato del rapporto della madre verso il bambino piccolo e ciò, a sua volta, fonda la presunzione che l’uomo, esente da queste funzioni biologiche, debba specializzarsi nella direzione alternativa, cioè quella strumentale.”.
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economically active women was increasing but he stated anyway that women’s wages couldn’t have competed with their husbands’ income, thus there would have been no competition inside the family unit as far as who has the instrumental role and represents the main breadwinner. With his own words:

“It seems quite safe in general to say that the adult feminine role has not ceased to be anchored primarily to the internal affairs of the family, as wife, mother and manager of the household, while the role of the adult male is primarily anchored in the occupational world, in his job and through it by his status-giving and income-earning functions to the family. Even if, as seems possible, it should come about that the average married woman had some kind of job, it seems most unlikely that this relative balance would be upset; that either the roles would be reversed, or their qualitative differentiation in these respects completely erased.”

While it still holds true that in general men earn more than women, women’s situation has changed a lot, to the point that while Parsons wrote that (at his time) “the housewife role is currently by far the predominant one for the married woman with small children”, nowadays the majority of women with small children – whether married or not – is economically active, whereas only a minority of women can afford to renounce work in order to stay at home. As a consequence it can be held that the functionalist approach and in general the paradigm of the differentiation were too deterministic in their connecting gender roles to biological features, thus their theories have failed to account for the societal change which occurred later.

Max Weber has never directly taken a stance as far as gender inequality and women situation, but he has written about the Protestant ethic and the institution of the (monogamous) marriage, seen as a basic social institution responsible for the reproduction of society, the primary socialization of its members and thus the transmission of values, culture and also of one’s status; moreover it is within the framework of the institution of marriage that people (men)

29 Quotation of the original version in English of the book by Parsons and Bales, from the book Women, men and society, by Claire M. Renzetti, Daniel J. Curran, St. Joseph’s University, Allyn and Bacon, Nedham Heights, MA, 1992, at page 130.
30 Talcott Parson and Robert Freed Bales, Famiglia e socializzazione, pag. 19 (my own translation from Italian).
31 In the book by Eva Cyba, Geschlecht und soziale Ungleichheit: Konstellationen der Frauenbenachteiligung, Leske + Budrich, Opladen, Hemsbach, 2000, at page 22 we can read: “Weber selbst unternahm keinen Versuch, Geschlecht als Kriterium der Chancenzuweisung zu behandeln...”; an even more explicit stance on the isue was taken by Ute Gerhard in her contribute to the book by Barbara L. Marshall and Anne M. Witz, (ed.), Engendering the social – Feminist encounters with sociological theory (pag. 122 and following), where she wrote that Max Weber stayed silent on the women question and didn’t take any stance in favor or against the women’s movement, probably because his wife Marianne Weber was engaged into it. Anyway according to Ute Gerhard the Protestant ethic was a male ethic, the feminine principle got no entrance in Weber’s theories, thus it can be said that he has neglected the gender question.
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are allowed to satisfy their sexual passions. In her book Karin Gottshall defined Weber’s theories as gendered blind, but she held that women’s situation could be somehow explained by employing the concept of status group, i.e. the level of prestige, respect and acknowledgement paid by society to a group of people, whereas the institution of marriage - conceived in the way Weber did - would represent a pretty patriarchal institution given that all of the authority is placed in men’s hands.\(^{32}\)

Karl Marx, or more exactly, Friedrich Engels, took into consideration women’s situation’s compared to men’s. In his book Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats, Friedrich Engels wrote that “the system of the family is completely dominated by the system of property … and with the pairing marriage begins the capture and purchase of women” thus destroying the communistic household system. Engels held that once upon a time women were paid high respect because their parenting, unlike men’s, was certain, which implied that they were the chief of the family (“communistic housekeeping means the supremacy of women in the house”). Later when men were successful in introducing monogamous marriage (for women) they managed to modify such an order to their advantage thus making their position more important, turning women into exchange value and starting to reckon descent in the male line. He wrote that “the overthrow of mother-right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude, she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the reproduction of children... it emerged the patriarchal family...”. Engels recognized the appearance of the first form of slavery, thus the first form of class antagonism within the family, a family based on the monogamous marriage and on the authority of the father: “In order to make certain of the wife’s fidelity and therefore of the paternity of the children, she is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband… it is the existence of slavery hand in hand with monogamy… The first class opposition that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male”. Since monogamous marriage lays at the basis of the industrial society, which according to Marx and Engels is characterized by the rivalry between the capitalist class and the proletariat, the solution envisaged is next and after the class revolution\(^{33}\), “the abolition of the monogamous marriage as the economic unity of society... for the liberation

\(^{32}\) See Karin Gottschall, Soziale Ungleichheit und Geschlecht – Kontinuitäten und Brüche, Sackgassen und Erkenntnisspotentiale im deutschen soziologischen Diskurs, page 61 and following.

\(^{33}\) To the marxists one’s situation was first of all connected to his/ her position within the system of production, thus first of all it had to be eliminated capitalism as a system of production.
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of the wife”. Indeed it is claimed that under the capitalist system women are not only exploited as part of the labour force, but also at home by their husbands, where they have to work another shift – this is the way the new communist society should relieve women of such harsh conditions of living. Historically the countries lead by a socialist system had tried to collectivize household chores up to a certain extent, by introducing canteens, kindergartens for working parents and other facilities which had the aim to relieve women from their double shifts, but since the socialist states were not so well off and given the expenditures needed to run these facilities, they couldn’t be successful in their endeavors. Engels at least had reckoned women’s unprivileged situation compared to men’s.

The scholars that embraced the Marxist approach had to stay faithful to the materialistic base of the theory and to the concept of class struggle, so if they wanted to take woman’s situation into consideration they had to face the problem of how to include into their analysis non working women, or more precisely unemployed women. As I have already said some (Parkin and Goldthorpe – see first chapter) solved the problem by stating that not the individual but rather the family had to be regarded as the basic unit of analysis, and that the family status (and class belonging) was to be drawn from its main breadwinner - who usually was the man. As a consequence women’s situation was derived from their husbands’ or their fathers’ one, a situation which was not yet satisfactory but at least the issue of where and how to consider women within class analysis had been addressed. In the United Kingdom some scholars (Britten and Health) also tried to take separately into account the husband’s and the wife’s employment situation, coming to the conclusion that women’s employment was not so irrelevant for the family situation, but rather it contributed a lot to its well being, the problem to be solved now consisted of the fact that in many cases it was not possible to assign the married people to the same class (concept of cross-class family). Goldthorpe’s stance was that such a proceeding was to be refused for it would have harmed the power of the class concept. On the other hand despite noticing that working women in the majority of cases couldn’t enjoy the same life chances and opportunities of development of their male colleagues, and that they also had in common their reproductive role, it was also not possible to theorize that being women constituted a class per se, in fact in general their conditions of life are affected by many other features – like their husbands’ profession, or the family they were born in, the education they


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received and so forth – thus making it impossible to develop a common class conscience, to share the same interests and to become mobilized to represent them.\(^{36}\)

The outcome of the so called debate between gender and class was that if a scholar’s priority is to keep adhering to the materialistic narrow approach, then one’s sex – together with all of one’s inborn features one’s age, nationality, race, place of birth, colour of skin, etc., – can’t help but be regarded on a secondary level. Some other scholars who refused the conventional narrow approach have tried to develop a multidimensional analysis, looking for a way to convey information about one’s situations – thus including one’s inborn features next to the employment condition – into an indicator of people’s societal situation, on the basis of which it should be possible to build up a social structure\(^{37}\). For example Anthony Giddens – as I have already mentioned in the first chapter – has defined class as based on one’s position within the labour market and not just in relation to the means of production, so that many elements can be taken into account as factors which affect one’s situation and his/her life chances: one’s work contract, opportunities of upward mobility, of climbing the ladder and making a career, level of authority within the company, access to education, and social connections outside the company which affect the level of respect and prestige acknowledged to that person.

Taking into consideration women’s situation within the labour market, Giddens observed that they would represent the “underclass of the clerk sector”\(^{38}\), since this is one of the more significant fields where they are employed, but unfortunately they are very often given just operative tasks and – maybe because of the their non continuous working path – very rarely manage to make it to the top. In one article written towards the end of the ’90s Giddens acknowledged the fact that women are discriminated against in the labour market because of the reproductive work that people expect them to carry out:

\(^{36}\) For a deepening of the topic see Petra Frerichs, Margareta Steinrücke [ed.], *Soziale Gleichheit und Geschlechterverhältnisse*, Leske und Budrich, Opladen, 1993, Schriftenreihe *Sozialstrukturanalyse*, edited by Stefan Hradil, volume 3, most of all the first chapter by Johann Handl about the way women’s situation was taken into consideration within the researches about social mobility on the one hand and social stratification on the other, as well as Eva Cyba on the interconnection between class analysis and gender, i.e. on the reasons why it is not possible to build up a class based on gender belonging.

\(^{37}\) See also Rosemary Crompton et al. (ed.), *Renewing class analysis*, Blackwell Publisher/ the Sociological Review, Oxford, 2000.

\(^{38}\) Quotation from Giddens 1979/224 as reported by Eva Cyba in her book *Geschlecht und soziale Ungleichheit: Konstellationen der Frauenbenachteiligung*, at page 39; here she also wrote: “Frauen sind nach Giddens eine Gruppe innerhalb der Arbeitschaft, die im Einkommensniveau und den Karrieremöglichkeiten systematisch diskriminiert wird und besonders routinisierte Tätigkeiten im Rahmen der unteren Ränge der Angestellten einnimmt”.
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“The expectation that women will raise children and perform domestic chores limits women’s opportunities, as gendered, unequal social relations are incorporated within the various practices carried on in paid work and in the home”\(^\text{39}\).

One of the most well known (general) sociologists who also devoted his attention to women’s situation is Pierre Bourdieu. In his book *Die feinen Unterschiede*, he listed gender as one of the variables which contributes to the building up of social classes; in fact we can read that

“... Alter, Geschlecht, soziale und ethnische Herkunft als unterschwellige Anforderungen wirken und vom Eintritt in der Beruf an die gesamte Karriere über mehr oder weniger öffnen die Kooptationsentscheidungen lenken...Eine soziale Klasse ist vielmehr definiert durch die Struktur der Beziehungen zwischen allen relevanten Merkmalen, die jeder derselben wie den Wirkungen, welche sie auf die Praxisformen ausübt, ihren spezifischen Wert verlieht.”\(^\text{40}\).

For Bourdieu, one’s sex matters, when it comes to the analysis of social structure. In fact he conceived it as an attribute which affects one’s chances to enter a job, and, over time, also people’s opportunities of career, and he marked the fact that “… the lowest positions are characterized by a considerable proportion of immigrants and women”\(^\text{41}\). One very important element of his analysis is represented by the fact that he was able to introduce the variable “time” into his theorization, and in fact he conceived one’s position within the social room as being dependent on his/her “dowry” of capital, the way it is structured (i.e. how much economic, social and cultural capital s/he has) and on the way it changes through time along with the changes that occur in one’s life. So by attaining a higher educational level for example, it is possible to get an career advancement and thus progress along the social ladder; by building up social networks women may improve their situation and so forth. Even more interesting within my analysis, is Pierre Bourdieu’s work *Die männliche Herrschaft*, in which he analyzed the original myth, the symbolical structures and the social practices of the society of the Kabyles, a population of Algeria with a very androcentric attitudes.

According to the original myth of these people, it was a woman who in a public place introduced a man to the pleasure of sex, but as soon as they started to date in a private place, the man


\(\text{40 “Age, sex, social and ethnical origin work as sub-threshold demands and guide more or less openly the decisions of cooptation at the access to a job and all along the whole career… A social class is rather defined through the structure of the relations among all of the relevant features which grant their specific value to each of the others and to the effects that the have on the practices.” Pierre Bourdieu, *Die feinen Unterschiede: Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1982, page 177 and 182 (my own translation).}\)

\(\text{41 Pierre Bourdieu, ibidem, page 185.}\)
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took control and assumed the leading role whereas the woman had just to react, an occurrence that is in tune with the basic norms of the Kabyle societal order, which attributes men an active role and women a passive one. Bourdieu described the dissimilar status of men and women in the Kabyle society as the difference that occurs between subject and object, an actor and an instrument; when writing about the way men compete for a woman there, Bourdieu reported that in those circumstances the woman plays no active role, and is merely an observer, an award for the winner, and in fact within this context she represents a symbolic value and when a man wins her, he increases his symbolic capital.

Bourdieu wrote that “…women are handled as symbolical instruments which through their circulation contribute to produce and reproduce symbolical capital”\(^{42}\). Women become instruments for building up social networks in that families get connected through marriages, thus their social status depends on their value as instruments of exchange according to men’s interests, evaluations and decisions. Moreover, women’s unique capacity for childbearing and childbirth is considered positive functional to the increase of men’s social capital and is judged secondary to men’s work of fertilization.

Bourdieu held that man’s supremacy – in the Kabyle tribe as well as in our society - is expressed through speech, lyric, and song, and as well says that in practices of interaction, we must deal with such expressions daily, and therefore end up not even paying attention to them and taking them for granted. His point of view instead was that since male supremacy is a human product, it should be questioned, and the same holds true for the gendered division of work. In his words:

“"The biological – anatomical difference between man and woman seems to be the uncontestable justification of the difference between the sexes which are socially constructed. The sexism is an essentialism like the ethical or the class-racism, it wants to ascribe some historically created social differences to a biological nature that would work as an essence from which would derive all of the inevitable acts of existence… this work turns upside down the relationship between cause and effect, it lets the socially naturalized construction appear as the natural justification of the arbitrary representation of nature which stays at the bottom of both the reality and the representation of the reality"\(^{43}\).

Coming to women’s actual situation, Bourdieu remarked that all of the activities which have to do with the biological and social reproduction get under evaluated in our society, house work not


\(^{43}\) Pierre Bourdieu, idibem, quotation from page 169 (my own translation).
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even being considered work\textsuperscript{44}, whereas more value is paid to activities that see women as objects, for example everything concerning beauty and representative tasks. All of the above couldn’t occur – underlined Bourdieu – without women’s consent, implicit or not, silent or not, because he held that there would be no dominator if there were no subordinated who recognized the power of the first\textsuperscript{45}, so his “way out” from women’s disadvantaged condition would foresee the necessity for them to ally together and hit the basic structures of the production and circulation of symbolical goods; according to him the core of the problem lies in the process of socialization, thus it is here that women should get engaged in order to change mind sets. As I have already mentioned in the first chapter, Bourdieu conceived the social \textit{habitus} as the connecting element between the objective and subjective components of class and localized its formation and maintenance in the process of socialization which takes place in the family and other social institutions. In an interview which he gave in 1994 Bourdieu stated that “… gender is a very fundamental dimension of the \textit{habitus}... the problem here is to find out how such a systematic difference [between the sexes] gets developed in the socialization.”\textsuperscript{46}

Now, if the socialization represents a highly gendered process, and since childhood boys and girls learn to distinguish between being a man and being a woman, between allegedly male and female behaviour, norms of conduct and activities, then women should try to change this very process if they want to break the chain of their subordinated state.

Also Erving Goffman, another very well known sociologist of the XX century, believed in the power of social practices and institutions in creating, representing and transmitting gender constructs. He became specialized in studying social settings - situations where people interact face to face - and came to the conclusion that people always have some pre-knowledge about the rules guiding interaction, one of these being represented by what he called the “sex

\textsuperscript{44} Bourdieu’s expressions are the following – from the same book, page 208:
»Wie sollte man übersehen, dass die mit der biologischen und sozialen Reproduktion des Familiengeschlechts verknüpften Tätigkeiten auch in unseren Gesellschaften sehr stark abgewertet sind, selbst wenn sie anscheinend anerkannt und manchmal sogar rituell zelebriert werden? .. der Eintritt der Frauen ins Berufsleben einen eklatanten Tatsachenbeweis dafür geliefert hat, dass die häusliche Tätigkeit gesellschaftlich nicht als eine wirkliche Arbeit anerkannt wird.«

\textsuperscript{45} With his own words, from the same book, page 228:
»Diese sanfte, unsichtbare, unmerkliche Diskriminierung ist nur mit der abgepressten und gleichfalls unbewusste Komplizenschaft der Frauen möglich. Die männliche Herrschaft tritt auf eine Unterwerfungsbereitschaft...«

»Was aber bei der Konstruktion des Raumes ... nicht gesagt wird, ist, dass es sich um einen Öffentlichen, das heisst männlichen Raum handelt... Man weiss dann nicht, wo man die Frauen
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arrangement” and, in fact he wrote that “gender in the modern industrial society works as the basis for a central code according to which social interactions and social structures are built up”

He meant that gender represents a code, gives an orientation about how to interact with other people because since we were born we were classified into woman or man (sex-classification), then according to this first classification we acquired a certain gendered socialization (from one’s sex awareness to one’s gender awareness) on the basis of which we’ve built up our gender identity and learnt a specific code of behavior (gender habitus), and very often it happens that we are in some public place and the way room is organized keeps us aware of our sex and gender - toilets for example are organized separately for men and women. Besides he has studied some rituals like courtship and all of the small courtesies that a (gentle)man is supposed to devote to a woman, meaning that in these very rituals the arrangement between the sexes displays itself in the most evident way. Thus through interactions and not only, people are kept aware of their sex, whereas social institutions contribute to set the gender order and to remind of the difference between the sexes – he called this phenomena “institutional reflexivity” and listed five examples for it: the gendered division of tasks, brotherhood as an agency of socialization, the gendered organization of room in toilets, the appropriate outfit and appearance for men and women and the way workplaces are distributed among them, and finally the system of identification. Goffman was of the mind that the physical differences between the two sexes are not such a big deal, nor do they affect so much the way we carry things out, but through the process of socialization and social interactions their meaning and relevance become enhanced and therefore rules of conduct which represent just social products, social conventions, become very powerful and important, coming to have a political impact since they affect people’s lives, the way people can express

plazieren soll, die im haus arbeiten. Nach allgemeiner Konventioon werden Frauen den sozialen Positionen zugeordnet, die ihre Ehänner einnehmen…«.

47 Quotation from Erving Goffman, Das Arrangement der Geschlechter, German translation of the original text The arrangement between the sexes, published in 1977 in the review Theory and society 4, pp. 301-381. The German version of The arrangement between the sexes constitutes the core of the book Interaktion und Geschlecht, edited by and with the introduction of Hubert A. Knoblauch and an epilogue by Helga Kotthoff, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1994 – the quotation is from page 105 (my own translation).

48 Goffman gave the following definition of the concept of institutional reflexivity: “… features of the social organization which lead to the consolidation of our gender-role-stereotypes and to the dominating arrangement between the sexes” – quotation from Erving Goffman, Interaktion und Geschlecht, page 139.

49 Through daily family life and interaction siblings become aware of the fact that often different treatments are reserved for boys and girls, that they are given different tasks, are supposed to respect distinct rules of conduct and have to face dissimilar expectations.

50 The system of identification consists in a set of indications from which we are able to understand if we are dealing a man or a woman: for example from the tone of voice of the person, his/her look and clothing, the handwriting, the personal pronouns s/he uses to make reference to his/herself and so forth.
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themselves and their personality. Simply stated, if women are not supposed to be aggressive and competitive, if some places and some jobs allegedly don’t suit them, or if they should not go around alone at night or not dress too provocatively, then their field of action is limited. Moreover, since some tasks are deemed to be womanly and others just for men, moving from some small biological differences we come to a gendered division of tasks and afterwards to a specific gender ranking:

“Es zeigt sich jedoch, dass diese recht vorübergehende, biologisch bedingte Eingeschränkheit der Frau kulturell ausgebaut wird. Die Erfüllung einer ganzen Reihe häuslicher Verpflichtungen wird als dem Mann unangemessen angesehen; und eine ganze Reihe von Aufgaben ausserhalb des Haushalts wird als unangemessen für die Frau definiert. […] Auf diese Weise werden die soziale Rolle von Männern und Frauen deutlich ausdifferenziert. Ganz nebenbei erhalten Frauen dabei den niedrigen Rang und weniger Macht, wird ihr Zugang zum öffentlichen Raum eingeschränkt […] insgesamt wird das Leben der Frauen im weitaus grösserem Mass als das der Männer von Haushaltspflichten bestimmt.”

Given the fact that women in general get lower wages than men, have less opportunities to make a career and get good jobs, and in some countries have restricted access to loans, Goffman held that they should be considered one of the groups of people who are discriminated against in our modern society, but they would represent a special group because sometimes they are also discriminated favourably – for example when they are not obliged to serve in the army or expected to carry out very harsh dirty and tiresome tasks, and they are treated with good manners. Goffman foresaw for the future a change in the arrangement between the sexes, as the gendered division of work has started to be less and less taken for granted and its

51 With his own words – from Erving Goffman, ibidem:
»Mein Argument war, dass die körperlichen Unterschiede zwischen den Geschlechtern als solche keine grosse Bedeutung für die menschlichen Fähigkeiten haben, die wir zur Bewältigung der meisten Aufgaben benötigen...(page 139). Zusammengefasst untermauert die frühliche Erziehung das, was durch die selektive Wahl nach Alters- und Grossenunterschieden verstärkt wird, nämlich soziale Situationen, in denen sich Frauen und Männer ihre angeblich unterschiedliche »Natur« gegenseitig wirkungsvoll vorerzieren können. (page 143)«.

52 Erving Goffman, ibidem, page 116 and 128. Translation:
»However it appears that this really temporary state of women of being limited in their activities, which is biologically determined, is culturally developed. The carrying out of a series of household chores is conceived as not appropriate for a man, whereas a whole series of tasks outside home is defined as not appropriate for a woman. … In this way social roles of men and women get really diversified. Besides women get the lowest rank and less power and their access to the public sphere is limited… all in all women’s life is characterize by household duties much more than men’s life.«.
fairness and basis have been put into question since “a part of our citizens doesn’t conceive any more woman’s traditional position as a natural expression of her natural abilities.53.

Having noticed the fact that women (at least in the Western civilization) were getting more and more involved in the public sphere (in the sense that for various reasons an increasing number of them was becoming economically active or, more precisely, had kept working after having gotten married or given birth), and having acknowledged the fact that the workforce was characterized by a gendered segregation both vertical and horizontal, with women more represented in the lower levels of hierarchy as well as concentrated in some special occupational fields with low status, low pay and limited opportunities of career, and that despite working for wage women’s workload at home in general hadn’t decreased, some female scholars in the ’60s started to make researches on the phenomenon of gender inequality, as well as to blame the existing theories of social inequality for having failed – with some rare exceptions as I have outlined above - to give account of the dissimilar life conditions and chances of women and men. It was the time of the feminists of the so called second wave: after having gained the right to vote (that time in the majority of the Western countries), to get an education, to work for wage - which had been the demands of the first-wave feminists – along with other groups who had started to demonstrate for a more democratic society, for the end of the war in Vietnam and for more equality between people of different races and ethnicities, women began to address existing gender inequalities and to challenge social structures which rested on a traditional gender system. For example they claimed their right to control and dispose of their bodies, both as far as sex was concerned and regarding the possibility of having an abortion; they denounced the existence of double standards with regard to sexual behaviors and fought for the right of getting legal abortion; in very Catholic countries women fought for the right to get divorced and – shortly after - they started to question the existing traditional gender order and to rebel to the systematic subordination of woman as a group by men54. The scholars who devoted their attention to the gender issue can be sorted into different groups according to their ideological standpoint, but they all shared the same interest in giving account of women’s situation and in finding out the basic mechanisms of male domination and unequal gender relations in order to change the system and introduce more equality into it55.

The first approach is the one of liberal feminism, which can also be considered the softest approach since it didn’t analyze systematically nor aim at radically changing the structural factors which have led to gender inequality and discrimination. Instead it held that women and men are equal since they all are human beings, thus if women would be given the same opportunities as men, they could reach a similar position in society and be as successful as men in competing for socially desired goods. Therefore liberal feminists called for legislative changes and individual efforts to build up a more equal society; they also welcomed positive actions in order to counterbalance past inequalities and discrimination and to help women catch up with men.

The second approach is the one of Marxist feminists: at the basis of their analysis there are the capitalist relations of production which are responsible for putting women in a condition of oppression since they end up in the lowest paid, less interesting dead-end jobs, or otherwise in a supportive position to a man who is their boss and in the end takes all of the merits. It follows that the situation of working women is comparatively worse than their male colleagues’, and that women would represent the proletariat class also at home, where they have to perform repetitive household chores without getting any social recognition for their work. In fact for keeping the system working capitalism needs fresh labour force, in two senses: first it needs new people to join the labour market, and second it needs the workers to recover from a hard day of work, they are supposed to rest and relax at home to again be then fit the next day (to be exploited once more). The point is that though performing reproductive work which is socially needed, women aren’t rewarded for it, it is just taken for granted, it occurs within four walls so it is almost invisible and not even regarded as real work because it doesn’t have exchange value - supposedly its trade-off would consist in the love and recognition of the family members. Told with the words of Iris Marion Young:

“Women’s oppression doesn’t imply just an unequal situation as far as status, power, well-being, which is the result of being excluded from privileged activities by men. Men’s freedom, prestige, power and self-realization are made possible only because women work for them. Gender exploitation presents two aspects: on the one hand the delivery of the fruits of women’s material labour to men, on the other hand the transfer of women’s care and sexual energies to their (men’s) advantage.”

Apart from theorizing the necessity of overcoming the capitalistic system of production, the supporters of this approach discussed the need for introducing a salary for housework and
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pursued the idea of measuring the value of household chores in order to include them in the calculation of the GNP, so that women’s reproductive work could find social acknowledgment.

The third approach is the one of the social feminists: they included in their analysis the concept of patriarchy, which can be defined as “a system of interrelated social structures through which men exploit women”\(^{57}\). According to them at the roots of women’s oppression is the gendered division of work which gives men a position of privilege, better chances of getting well-paid jobs and making a career, while women find it harder to pursue a career because of the additional workload that they take on at home. The proposed solution is to change social institutions starting from the process of socialization and education of the newborn, meaning that women should stop raising their children to make a distinction between girls and boys and showing them a family model based on the traditional gendered division of tasks, otherwise they can be held co-responsible for the transmission of a mindset which conceives gender differences as normal and thus contribute to the perpetuation of patriarchal gender relations.

The fourth approach is the one of the radical feminists, which is actually very close to the positions of the last one, with the difference that it theorizes the necessity to radically change all of the cultural, economic, political and social structures which perpetuate the supremacy of men at the expense of women – some scholars of this approach actually came to suggest that women should start a strike of their uterus, since biological differences between men and women and most of all women’s capacity of childbearing seems to constitute the very origin of gender inequalities. Other scholars criticized the fact that all of the other approaches were based on a compulsory heterosexism, i.e. their analysis was formed by the assumption that the nuclear family represents the norm, thus not considering the other forms of family and most of all neglecting other forms of sexuality.

The fifth approach is the one of the post-modernists which criticizes all of the above theories stating that there cannot exist a unique concept of sex, of class, or race and so forth like they postulate, instead holding that since every concept represents the result of speech-practices, every speech is rooted in a specific spatial-temporal context and every concept is connected to some pre-knowledge about the words that define it, it follows that all of the concepts are relative to their context, so there cannot exist absolute truths, just cultural products, and similarly there cannot exist just one history, but as many histories as women’s

\(^{56}\) Iris Marion Young, Die fünf Formen der Unterdrückung, in Herta Nagl-Docekal, Herlinde Pauer-Studer (ed.), Politische Theorie - Differenz und Lebensqualität, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1996, quotation from page 115 (my own translation from German).

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voices and stories. For its part, this approach has also been subjected to a lot of critics, in fact other feminists got afraid of the idea that if every concept is relative, if every history has the same importance, exactly when women had finally began to raise their voice, utter their ideas, complain about the existing gender relations and call for their emancipation, this postmodernist stance would have made their voices irrelevant, deprived them of all of their authority and made it even harder for them to find any acknowledgment for their alternative points of view.

Finally there are the feminists who developed a psychoanalytic analysis of women’s situation of their subordination to men. Of course they started their analysis making reference to Freud's theories and taking distance from his very chauvinistic and phallocentric point of view which postulated the primacy of man’s sexual organ over women’s, so that girls not having it would develop the feeling that they lack something, and therefore that they are inferior to guys. The scholars of the psychoanalytic approach countered the theories of penis envy and of the complex of Oedipus (and to Jung’s theory of the complex of Electra) and posed a new theory based on the re-evaluation of woman’s sexuality and of her unique capacity of childbearing, a feature which for the significance that it has for the survival and reproduction of our species, would give her a very important role.

Going deeper into the work of some of the feminist scholars, one of the most influential has been Sylvia Walby, who has focused her attention on the concept of patriarchy and on gender relations and distinguished six key sets of patriarchal relations, i.e. six social structures which are related to each other so that all together they build up the system of patriarchy. In a work first published in 1986 she concentrated her analysis on the fields of housework and employment: she held that the average household was characterized by a patriarchal mode of production, because if the husband was the main breadwinner and the wife just a housewife, or if she was employed then it was for a lower wage than the man, then at home the wife is expected to work to the benefit of the whole family, producing labour power in the form or children (the workers of tomorrow) and/ or regenerating her husband’s labour power. In exchange she would get just a part of the man’s salary even though she had worked as long as her husband or even longer (when employed). It follows that within the household the woman represents the working class whereas the man represents the exploiting class.

58 For a more developed debate on the issue see Regina Becker-Schmidt, Gudrun Axeli-Knapp, Feministische Theorie zur Einführung, Hamburg, 2000, and also Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, Drucila Cornell, Der Streit um Differenz – Feminismus und Postmoderne in der Gegenwart, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1993.

59 See for example the (for her time revolutionary) work of Luce Irigaray, Das Geschlecht, das nicht eins ist, Merve Verlag, Berlin, 1979 (the original version is Ce sexe qui n’en est pas un, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1977); and also Antoinette Fouque, I sessi sono due. Nascita della femminologia, translated from French by Nadia Setti, Milano, Nuova Pratiche Editrice, 1999.
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Within the field of paid work, some social practices make sure that the majority of women end up in a disadvantaged situation compared to men: according to Walby women are excluded from some professions (until not so long ago for example they couldn’t enter the army in many European countries), discriminated in hiring practices, sacked before men in cases of redundancies, and excluded from training. There would be many reasons behind such a situation – for example many women are employed with part-time contracts, or interrupt their working paths because of pregnancies or other family reasons – but they can only partially give account for gender segregation both on the vertical and horizontal level.

The other social structures dominated by men to the disadvantage of women are cultural institutions, sexuality, male violence and the state. The state through its social policies can support patriarchal relations in the private sphere, in fact through transfers, taxation systems and laws it can push women to become part of the labour force or conversely encourage them to stay at home and take care of their family and house, thus keeping them dependent on their partner’s income and on public money. In another book written in 1997 Walby acknowledges the fact that women’s participation in the workforce has increased (as well as the number of women living alone – with or without children –) nevertheless the level of gender segregation hasn’t decreased much. In this book she distinguishes between private and public form of gender regimes that are based on patriarchal relations, but her most important point consists in remarking on the fact that people of different age, class, ethnicity and place of residence are affected by different forms of gender regimes. Moreover she observes that in the last 20 years there has been a change in the form of gender regimes, from private to public kind of patriarchal relations, which means that in the private sphere the situation has improved: although women still take charge of most of the household work, they’ve become more autonomous from their partners, they have learnt to earn their living thus at home their power of negotiation has increased and they are not as subordinate to men any more. Still a crucial difference has to be pinpointed between younger and older women: while older women have been living under the framework of a private gender regime, thus being subordinated by their husbands and depending financially on them, younger women tend to postpone the moment when they will get married and have children in order to get an education and therefore a good job, so that they can stand on their feet; moreover they take it for granted that they will be economically active – even with children - until the moment they retire. Nonetheless, despite their achievements in the field of education, women still fare comparatively worse than men in the market economy – thus Walby speaks of a public gender regime; it has

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60 The topic will be developed in the following chapters.
also to be underlined that she welcomes the initiatives of the European Union aiming at reducing gender inequalities and at promoting women’s employment, conceived as a fundamental precondition to the process of social inclusion, as well as a step to be made in order to have an economic system that is able to utilize its human capital efficiently.

Another scholar who has focused her attention on the concept of patriarchy is Ursula Beer. In her famous book *Geschlecht, Struktur, Geschichte*, she carries out a historical analysis of the way men and women used to divide tasks within the family, starting by describing the organization and distribution of work in agrarian families, passing through the families of weavers and spinners, to come to the industrial family, and connecting each time the analysis of the gender relations of that time with the laws and provisions in force. She found that gender has been and still is a key principle for the organization of society, that women have always been in charge of taking care of the needs of their family members, of carrying out household chores and activities near the home (like taking care of the animals in the stable, cultivating vegetable and working in the fields), this on top of other kind of work that they were performing for pay, like spinning and weaving work, or factory shift or maid work in other families. The roots for such a situation – she holds – are to be found in the gender specific socialization: since they are very young girls learn that they are supposed to serve other people, that they are reserved a different treatment from their brothers and are ranked after them; then when they enter the labour force women are usually hired in low positions thus ending up bringing home less money then their husbands. Beer gives a name to this set of women’s condition at home and outside it, calling it secondary patriarchy: if the first form of patriarchy is that which had developed during the XIX century, when the bourgeois model of family - based on a housewife not working for wage and a male breadwinner who represents the chief of the house and therefore has the power and the authority to make all decisions – spread and became the model of reference also for working families, then the second form of patriarchy is connected with the fact that women now work for wage, even though “positions with power and dominance are exclusively in men’s hands”\(^\text{62}\). In the capitalistic system working women – with rare exceptions - are always at the order of some man and also at home it is men who set the rules because if they don’t represent the only breadwinner of the house any more, they usually earn more than their wives, so one way or the other their say has more weight and they have more authority.

Other scholars who concentrated on women’s disadvantaged position in the labour market and have elaborated interesting explanations for that situation, are Ilona Ostner and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim.

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Ilona Ostner has developed the concept of *Weibliche Arbeitsvermögen*, which could be translated as women’s set of abilities and attitudes to work. Her work moves from the basic distinction between productive and reproductive work: the first can also be called professional work, as one needs some kind of training or education to learn to do it, requiring an orientation towards results and an instrumental attitude towards the tasks to be performed, which are usually exactly set and must be performed according to specific rules; professional work is rewarded with a salary, usually occurs within a hierarchically organized environment and has sharp schedules. For what concerns reproductive work, it is exactly the opposite of productive work: it takes place at home, it is strictly connected with satisfying people’s needs - and the affected people are one’s closest in the world, her beloved; it requires no specific knowledge (just some practice), implies no hierarchy, has no time schedule - which can also mean that one never comes to an end; reproductive work requires the person who performs it to have skills like empathy, perseverance, sensitivity to human needs, intuition, patience, as well as flexibility and the ability to think about many things at the same time, and also to carry out more tasks at once. Because of its features, reproductive work is considered by Ostner similar to agricultural work, which also has to be performed according to natural time, doesn’t give much room for planning, implies a lot of hard work and the possibility to see the results of one’s work not immediately but in the medium to long term, and moreover is hard to delegate or outsource.

The four main theses of Ostner’s work are the following:

1. “In der Hausarbeit werden überhaupt erst die Grundlagen für das Funktionieren beruflicher, das heisst primär an Wertvergrösserung, nicht an Bedarf orientierter Produktionsprozesse geschaffen”;

2. “Für die meisten Frauen dürfte die Auseinandersetzung mit Hausarbeit, ihrem Arbeitsgegenstand und ihren Arbeitsweisen, Fähigkeiten und Werthaltungen, Eigenschaften und Perspektiven bestimmen”;


Ostner’s stance is that women with their reproductive work create the precondition for the functioning of the capitalist world, through performing such basic work they develop specific skills, attitudes and viewpoints, which on their side can't help but affect women's professional conduct. According to her – she wrote at the end of the ‘70s – women would develop a tendency to prefer housework to professional work, and if they had to look for a job, they would opt for activities that present similarities to domestic work: so for example we find women working as teachers, nurses, caregivers, maids, helpful secretaries, friendly shop assistants – jobs which by the way are among the least qualified and lowest paid, and because companies don’t reward women for their emotional skills, they are considered a sort of useful externality, to be exploited without giving anything in exchange. Of course nowadays it can be disagreed with Ostner’s point of view that women would prefer to be a housewife then to work for pay - today it looks like women would rather be happy to delegate household chores to other people and in fact as soon as they can afford it, they hire a maid. At any rate Ostner also acknowledges that already at the time when she was writing women were beginning to look at professional work no longer just as a duty to carried out only when it was financially necessary, but rather under a positive light, to think of it as a possibility of realizing themselves in a different way, to get recognition for their work, to widen their social life.

In a paper published in 1983 Ostner emphasizes the fact that the diffusion of the capitalistic mode of production didn’t bring about a weakening of patriarchal relations, on the contrary through the clear separation of productive and reproductive work women’s situation has become even more obviously dependant on their husbands’ money. Moreover since they

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63 From Ilona Ostner, *Beruf und Hausarbeit: Die Arbeit der Frau in unserer Gesellschaft*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1979, 2nd edition:
1. “In the reproductive work are actually created the preconditions for the functioning of the professional productive processes, which are not oriented primarily to (satisfy) needs but to the increase of value” (page 11);
2. “For the majority of women the fact that they deal with housework, the object of their work and their working methods does determine their values, characteristics and perspectives” (page 12);
3. “Women’s identification with a specific form or work and way of working – with housework, cannot be without consequences for women’s Arbeitsvermögen and so for their professional conduct” (page 187).
4. “Thus in general women prefer direct domestic reproductive work. Homework becomes the primary orientation of the female Arbeitsvermögen, therefore job seldom (becomes) a fundamental element in a woman’s way of life. Also female job-choice can be interpreted as a selection on the basis of female object of success: professional job situations look easier to be worked out, managed and borne, the similar they are to typical contexts of the private reproductive work” (page 198).
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are still and always in charge of housework, women are still seen as mothers and wives also when they are employed, they are not conceived just as women, individuals.; on top of this and again owing to their family burdens, women are not as available for paid work as men are – for example women are less ready to work overtime or to move to another location. Of course all of the above has consequences: women are not given the same opportunities as men to further qualified for a job, to make a career, or to get a higher wage, thus we seldom find women in managerial positions and it is more likely to find them in low qualified jobs, the ones that are the easiest to get but also to lose; we often hear about the idea that women represent a reserve army, people to be drawn into the labour force in times of expansion, and to be pushed out in time of cutbacks.

The other sociologist who wrote about the female Arbeitsvermögen is Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim. In a book published in 1976\textsuperscript{65} she also distinguishes between professional work performed in the so called public sphere and private work performed in the domestic sphere – and differently from Ilona Ostner, she characterizes housework as repetitive, monotonous, taken for granted, necessary but unrewarded. Like Ostner, Beck-Gernsheim underlines the fact that productive and reproductive work follow two different and diverging logics, which women are then compelled to reconcile; the fact that women are held responsible for housework – because of a division of work which has been developed through time, writes Beck-Gernsheim – is not without consequences, indeed women do develop some special attitudes and abilities and a mind set which unluckily make them disadvantaged in the competition for jobs on the labour market. This set of disposition – being attentive to human need, empathic, patient, altruistic, oriented to job content more than to the reward, etc – is not considered professional, but nonetheless they are exploited in the so called female jobs, i.e. in the field of education, healthcare, social work, etc., which unfortunately are usually characterized by low wages and very limited possibilities of making a career.

Beck-Gernsheim underlines that the so called female features are not inborn features but are developed over time in a vicious circle through a specific gendered socialization and education\textsuperscript{66}, which she conceives as being both the cause and the consequence of the gendered division of work. A gender specific socialization brings about gendered skills which


\textsuperscript{65} Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim, Der geschlechtsspezifische Arbeitsmarkt: zur Ideologie und Realität von Frauenberufe, Aspekte Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1976; my quotations are from the 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, published in 1981 by Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main.

\textsuperscript{66} Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim agreed with Simone De Beauvoir’s very famous stance “We are not born like women, we are made that”

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are then going to lead to gendered life projects and paths, and unless women break the chain and start to raise up their children in a gender neutral way, the process will only continue. The author emphasizes most of all the different working paths of men and women: she holds that men, being freed from family burden, are able to plan their working life, set their goals and pursue them without having to face particular hindrances, whereas women are not able to do the same, cannot plan as much because they were taught to be oriented first towards the family, second towards the job, thus it is very likely that their working path will be marked by interruptions and periods of part-time work in order to better take care of their family during particular periods. The problem, she holds, is also that the labour market is organized on the basis of a one-and-a-half-person-job, which means that everybody who wants to be successful and make career should not be burdened by reproductive work and instead should have somebody to take charge of it for them: this usually mirrors men’s situation but of course doesn’t hold true for women, for if they are held responsible for reproductive work, they cannot be offered the “one-and-a-half-person-jobs”, or as she writes “die zeitliche Summierung von Beruf und Hausarbeit erlaube kein volles Engagement im Beruf, beschränke die Wahrnehmung der dort angebotenen Chancen”.

According to Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim being socialized in order to develop what she calls a weibliches Lebenszusammenhang (female life-nexus) for girls turns into a self-fulfilling prophecy: if they are trained to be submissive, not to assert themselves, to be female, then they will lack the motivation, the guts or the self esteem to try to look for an interesting job, or to compete with men for it, and they would then be resigned to accepting a low status job.

The author also deals with the issue that women would like to take their traditional role as soon as they could afford if, i.e. to withdraw from the labour market in order to be housewives and take care of their family and house: she holds that the question is not that simple, that the kind of job must be considered, her attachment to it, her class and the kind of education she got in order to see whether her idea of family model is based on a strong gendered division of work or

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68 Quotation from Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim, Männerrolle, Frauenrolle – aber was steht dahinter?, in Roland Eckert (ed.), Geschlechtsrollen und Arbeitsteilung: Mann und Frau in soziologischer Sicht, Beck, Munich, 1979, pp. 165-201: “the adding up of time (to be devoted to) for job and housework would not allow to get really engaged in one's job and would limit the possibility to seize of the chances offered there.” (my own translation).
is rather more oriented towards an egalitarian partnership. Beck-Gernsheim acknowledges that if a woman has an uninteresting, low paid dead end job, it is understandable that if she can afford it, she would rather not work for pay but just for her family; moreover she observes that although the gendered division of tasks still holds on, younger women take it less for granted, they develop a different mind set and reckon that they will have a life-long working path. The solution envisaged by the sociologist is that besides a more equal division of housework between the sexes, reproductive work should finally be regarded as real work and becomeget socially acknowledged and that social institutions (labour market, socialization, etc) should be changed according to it in order to favour it – most of all in the light of 1) the increasing demand of care-giving work (and lack for it) owed to the fact that life expectancy has increased a lot together with the need of elderly people to be helped in carrying out their activities; 2) the impressive fall of birthrate - in fact having a child has got riskier and riskier for women given the connected break in their working life, the raising numbers of divorces and simply how much it actually costs to raise up a child.

Another very influential contribution to the study of gender relations was given by Regina Becker-Schmidt and Gudrun-Axeli Knapp. The two German sociologist of Marxist matrix focused their attention on the double socialization to which women are subjected and to the consequences it brings with it. As it was already explained above, the fields of productive and reproductive work follow two different logics and require dissimilar sets of skills and attitudes, so that if women have to be active in both spheres then their socialization must occur in a way that will allow girls to develop both sets of attitudes, so that they will become good mothers as well as good workers. This of course represents a tough process because of the difficulties implied in reconciling the two logics, and it must be taken into account that since the introduction of the capitalistic mode of production the private and the public spheres have been separated and also hierarchized – reproductive work is considered inferior to work which produces profit. Because of the traditional gendered division of work, the responsibility to carry out reproductive work is primarily assigned to women, so they end up developing the so called female Arbeitsvermögen, which then puts them in a disadvantaged position on the labour market. As a consequence the authors hold that

“Der zentrale Widerspruch, der die doppelte Vergesellschaftung von Frauen kennzeichnet, besteht demnach darin, dass sich ihre Integration in die Gesellschaft

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69 For a deepening of the issue see Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim, Der geschlechtsspezifische Arbeitsmarkt: zur Ideologie und Realität von Frauenberufe, Aspekte Verlag, page 131 and following.
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... nicht nur durch Klassenzugehörigkeit, sondern auch durch Segregation und Deklassierung qua Geschlecht vollzieht.”

Regina Becker-Schmidt and Gudrun-Axeli Knapp have carried out an analysis of the structures of relation between the sexes in different fields, starting with the private sphere to move to the public one, taking into consideration the way gender relations reproduce themselves in daily interactions, speeches and social institutions like the process of socialization and sexuality; they emphasize the fact that reproductive work is necessary and fundamental for society but is given very little social acknowledgement, and also that working women are usually not only considered as workers but as workers-with-uterus. The fact that working women are not regarded as individual but seen in connection with their family role brings about negative consequences for women, indeed they are perceived as possible factors of costs (if they get pregnant they need to be replaced etc), thus they get less training (it could be a loss of invested money) and employers also expect women not to become overly committed to their job since their main concern would be the family; of course employers don’t think that a parenthood could harm a man’s performance, on the contrary they think that it will make them even more engaged and possibly ready to invest more time in the job since they are now responsible for a larger family (they have turned into “The breadwinner” since it is likely their wives have at least temporarily drawn back from the labour market). So in the end because of their double socialization and of the traditional gendered division of work, it can be said that women receive less possibilities for development, of attaining a certain social status and limited chances of receiving social recognition.

In a paper published in 1994 Regina Becker-Schmidt acknowledges that “economical and technological transformation, changes in women’s behavior as far as education and job, as well as erosions in the way private life has been traditionally shaped, have made the structure of the relations between sexes more dynamic, but haven’t actually de-hierarchized their social organization.”

In general the labour market still presents a high level of gender segregation,

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71 Quotation from Karin Gottschall, Soziale Ungleichheit und Geschlecht – Kontinuitäten und Brüche, Sackgassen und Erkenntnisspotentiale im deutschen soziologischen Diskurs, page 178:
“The central contradiction which characterizes women’s double socialization consists in the fact that their integration into society occurs not only through class belonging but also through segregation and devaluation via gender”.


74 Regina Becker-Schmidt, Geschlechterverhältnis, Technologieentwicklung und androzentrische Ideologieproduktion, in Niels Beckenbach, Werner van Treeck (ed.), Umbrüche gesellschaftlicher Arbeit,
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both vertical and horizontal, and women still hold the primary responsibility as far as reproductive work is concerned, thus nourishing the reproduction of patriarchal gender relations in the different fields of society.

A very interesting and quite comprehensive analysis of the causes of women’s disadvantaged position in the labour market has been carried out by Francine Blau, who reports that there are many theories that try to give an account of women’s situation between family and work. The first to be mentioned is the one of the neoclassic model, according to which people are rational beings, thus they decide to become specialized in performing special activities to then pull together their contribution to the advantage of all. So within the family if women are more gifted or prepared to provide reproductive work they should concentrate their energies on that while husbands will work for wage and maintain their family financially – anyway in case of a break up the consequences of such a division of work would be very dangerous for women, because while men could afford to hire somebody to provide them with household services, women would find themselves without financial resources and would have to start to look for a way to earn a living without having previous job experiences.

Another explanation for women’s decision whether to work or not comes from an economic approach and is described by the curve of the labour supply decision: it holds that every person (woman) decides whether it pays off to work for pay or not according to the evaluation of the money s/he could earn compared to the value assigned to staying home and taking care of one’s own family. This means that depending on one’s education, skills and experience, it is possible to estimate how much s/he could earn, and this value has to be compared to the value assigned to the time spent at home, the result being a curve of indifference: the higher the income one can get, the more likely it is that s/he will join the labour force; also one’s partner’s income affect his/her propensity to work for pay or at home.

Other factors that exercise an influence over a women’s choice whether to be employed or not are the taxation system, the welfare state and the availability of childcare facilities: the system of taxation can assist or penalize a two-income family, indeed a high level of taxation on the earnings of the second worker of a household is going to discourage that person to work for pay; a welfare state which provides generous transfer policies to numerous families or to families with just one breadwinner can encourage people to decide to adhere to the traditional family model, where the mother is a housewife (plus maybe works in the informal sector) and the father is the breadwinner. Finally the availability of childcare facilities preferably located near home, with suitable opening times and of good quality affects a lot of women’s decision whether

Verlag Otto Schwartz & Co., Göttingen, 1994, special volume nr.9 of the review Die soziale Welt, pp 527, 538, quotation from page 527.

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to work outside home or to stay at home and personally look after her children. Most of all the
cost of childcare facilities has to be compared with the woman's income – for the woman it has
to pay off to work, otherwise she will prefer to personally take care of her offspring.

Finally woman's own life path, her education, her attitudes and interests as far as the
fields where she wants to realize herself, her desire to find acknowledgement as well as her
need to be financially independent – most of all in these times of increasing rates of divorce etc.
– all of these factors affect her propensity to work for wage or to stay at home. Moreover, while
in the past the income of one person was enough to satisfy his family members' needs,
nowadays it has become more expensive to keep those standards of living - as Francine Blau
writes “it takes two paychecks to keep up with the two-earner families of today”75.

Coming now to take into consideration gender differences in occupation and earnings, it
has already been said that the labour market is characterized by a high level of gender
segregation – Francine Blau has also measured it through the index of segregation, coming to
the conclusion that the phenomenon has been slowly decreasing since women have started to
enter traditional male jobs as well as to be promoted to managerial positions, but in general it
still holds true that women are concentrated in administrative positions and in the service sector,
that on the average they earn less than men (gender wage gap), and that the “ceiling glass” is
still there. The conclusion drawn by the author is that “while pinpointing discrimination is difficult,
there is ample evidence that despite recent progress, it has not gone away”76, a fact from which
it derives that human resources are not used efficiently, most of all women's human capital is
underutilized, which is good for neither the economy nor for women themselves, because they
can end up being unsatisfied with their situation and feeling frustrated.

Some supply side explanations for women’s and men’s dissimilar situation in the labour
market focus on people’s own preferences and investment in human capital. First of all it has to
be said that men and women enter the labour market with dissimilar qualifications in the first
place, and in fact girls and boys tend to choose their education in different fields; even if their
choices are slowly becoming less and less affected by their sex and the gendered socialization
they get, it still holds true that in general boys opt for more technical professions and girls for
professions which imply contact with people or are anyhow labeled as female professions.
Besides according to the theory of human capital, women would not invest as much as their
male peers in the development of their human capital because they expect their professional
path to be characterized by interruptions connected with pregnancies, which may have a

75 See Francine Blau, The economics of women, men and work, Pearson Education Inc., New Jersey,
76 See Francine Blau, The economics of women, men and work, Pearson Education Inc., New Jersey,
negative impact on their salary, thus limiting or even voiding their educational investments – in my opinion such a stance doesn’t hold true for young people, through in fact nowadays not only the gender ratio of the people who become inscribed at some university is balanced, but on the average women are also more successful then men in completing their education; maybe the above mentioned perspective is valid for vocational training at the workplace, for life long learning and for specializations to be attained after the degree.

Another theory which tries to give account for the phenomenon of gender inequalities in the economic sector is the one of the compensating differentials, according to which while men pay more attention to the entity of the salary when choosing a job, women take into consideration other features other then the pay, such as the level of personal involvement in the field of the job, their interest in carrying it out, the social contact it involves and so forth. Unfortunately the jobs women prefer are not among the best paid but rather the opposite. In fact according to the theory of the double labour market - which has been developed in the United States – there is a primary and a secondary labour market: in the first there are people who became specialized in doing something and work under favorable long term contracts with normal social contributions, paid insurance and sick leave, as well as good career possibilities; this labour market is characterized by a high level of horizontal segregation based on the attained qualifications, and because of their fields of specialization women end up in the exactly comparatively worse-paid occupations or in positions of support to men and with limited opportunities of making a career. In the secondary labour market we find precarious, uninteresting, low paid and low status jobs, and here women are not actually discriminated against but rather structurally disadvantaged because of their family duties (for example they prefer to work day shift, thus limiting their choices)\(^\text{77}\).

Coming now to the demand side theories, which deal with employers’ hiring decisions: the first is called the model of statistical discrimination and holds that unfortunately for women, it seems that employers expect them to be less productive and reliable than men because they are perceived as being more attached and committed to family than to the job - because they are less willing to work overtime or to go on business trips than men, etc. – moreover, if they are of an age when they could be willing to start a family and have children, they are perceived as prospective future causes of cost – if they get pregnant they are going to stay at home, which means that it will be necessary to hire and train somebody else at their place and successively to retrain the mothers when they will return to the job. As a consequence it can happen that

\(^{77}\) See for example Reinhard Kreckel, *Politische Soziologie der sozialen Ungleichheit*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1992, page 241 and following.
employers are going to prefer to hire a man over a woman\textsuperscript{78} – we speak of a discriminating behaviour against a woman, when though having the same qualifications as a man, the latter is preferred just because of his sex, or she is hired under a different, less favorable contract (lower pay) than the man. The same kind of reasoning happens to be made by employers as far as the decision on whom to invest for on-the-job-training or when promoting somebody to a position with higher responsibilities; it has also to be mentioned that employees i.e. women’s colleagues can affect the above mentioned decisions of an employers, when they express their preference to work with male colleagues - most of all it has been reported that men dislike receiving orders from a female superior.

The second demand-side theory is based on the overcrowding hypothesis: if a lot of women would like to find a job in a specific field, then the supply of labour force is going to be high thus the point of balance between supply and demand of labour force is going to correspond to a lower level of salary, and this is way the sectors characterized by a high level of female employment would present low wages.

The third demand-side theory has been labeled the monopsonistic model and it assumes that employers would set the wages in order to get the labour force they need, so if women because of their non-linear working path find it hard to get a job, they are going to be satisfied with a lower wage than men if they do they get hired.

Finally it has to be mentioned that historically trade union haven’t taken care of women’s specific problems, for example, they haven’t fought to find special agreement with the employers in order to help women reconciling professional and family duties – this because trade unions have been rather male-dominated institutions and because they have preferred to invest their energies in promoting the interest of the so called average worker, which is to say a man working 40 hours a week with a long-term contract, who doesn't have special needs connected with being a father, since being a father and a worker don't present any problem of reconciliation\textsuperscript{79} – this can be applied exactly to the concept of the “one-and-a-half-person-jobs” developed by Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim.

The solutions envisaged by Francine Blau to reduce and eliminate gender inequalities in the labour market include some efforts which should be made by all of the involved actors: the


employers should become more sensitive to the issue of gender equality, most of all in the process of hiring people, when giving opportunities of development and growth, and when awarding a promotion, which should always be linked to the achievement of some agreed-upon aims, moreover more attention should be paid to the issues of reconcilability and to the balance of family and company commitment, for both women and men. In fact men should be encouraged or at least not discouraged to become more involved in reproductive work, and in order to promote this change, the whole society and mind set has to change. On their side women have to keep investing in their human capital, to learn to represent their interests more vigorously within trade unions for example, and to become committed in promoting a more family friendly society, a society that takes care of the issue of reconcilability and tries to help people cope with it. On their side men must become more involved within the private sphere as well as more committed to building up a fair society, based on gender equality and equal opportunities for all, which also implies that they should renounce the privileges they often get because of their sex. Finally the State is supposed to pass an adequate legislation of the topic of gender equality, to guarantee its respect as well as to guarantee everybody a basic standard of living; moreover it has to fight against discrimination (of every type), promote the development of a family friendly society and support positive measures when they are needed to counterbalance previous situations of disadvantage.

Other scholars have also written on the topic of the state’s role in connection with the issue of gender equality and inequality have written also other scholars. Reinhard Kreckel for example has included it as one of the three main actors within his theoretical model of the corporatist triangle, where social forces concentrate themselves and lead to the shaping of power relations and to the “ungleichheitsbegründende Kräftefeld”, the field of forces which brings about inequalities: in fact employers, trade unions and the state through their interaction and the process of negotiation of interest, actually come to set working conditions and thus to distribute life chances. According to Kreckel, within this triangle of forces the role of the state is very important because it has to provide the framework for the process of bargaining as well as set and then supply the basic standard of living to be guaranteed to all of the people who live in the state – and he adds that the state is a national-state, in the sense that one’s nationality does matter, most of all on the labour market and when it comes to social services. In his book *Politische Soziologie der sozialen Ungleichheit*, Reinhard Kreckel carries out the analysis of the

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social structure of the German society before the reunification, or more precisely of the ex Federal Republic of Germany, and he shows how one’s nationality can be one of the causes of people’s marginal status - indeed being an immigrant, old, ill or a woman are all considered factors which can lead discrimination or limited access to life chances. The sociologist has developed the metaphor of center and periphery in order to take account of people’s different position within the field of social forces and the power of negotiation connected with it: the more peripheral one’s position, the less bargaining power of the person, the more limited (worse) will be her/ his life chances and the harder it will be to represent her/ his interests effectively. In fact according to Kreckel the corporative system is not able to properly take into account the interests of marginal groups, thus coming to discriminate against people on the basis of some inborn features they have – for example immigrant people though having an academic education as well as professional experience can end up being exploited because they would accept jobs far below their capacities and preparation, or with a worse pay than for a local citizen, and unfortunately such jobs are very often in the informal sector, thus delineating a discriminative situation.

In his analysis Kreckel has also devoted attention to gender relations: he detects the origin of gender inequality and of women’s disadvantaged situation in the gendered process of socialization and in patriarchal relations, and draws on Regina Becker-Schmidt’s concept of double socialization, holding that because of the fact that women have to invest time and energy in order to become good wives and mothers as well as good workers, they end up being discriminated against in the labour market. In contrast to Regina Becker-Schmidt, Kreckel states that not only women but also men are subjected to a process of double socialization in the sense that they have to learn to become good fathers and good workers, the difference between men and women consisting in the fact that men – in comparison to women - have been successful in subordinating their family role to their professional role in a way that makes them easy to be reconciled, and that allows men to invest in their career without having to face any social disapproval. In fact just the opposite is true, if conventionally the husband’s role is to maintain his family and to be the main breadwinner, then the more he invests in his job, the better he will be in providing for his family; on the contrary if women invest in their career it is very likely that they’ll run into societal disapproval, that they are going to be labeled as cold mothers who are not taking care of their family in an appropriate way. According to Kreckel the roots of different gender roles lay in a conventional (i.e. socially produced) gender division of tasks that has established itself through time and in accordance with it reproductive work falls

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81 See Rosemary Crompton, The gendered restructuring of the middle classes: employment and caring, in Rosemary Crompton et al. (ed.), Renewing class analysis, Blackwell Publisher/ the Sociological
under women’s responsibility – it doesn’t matter whether she is employed or not. As a consequence women are charged with a double workload and cannot be as available as men for their work, nor have they the same energies and motivation to invest in a career as a man. Also because of the stereotypes they have to face which work against their efforts to assert themselves in the job - i.e. they are always regarded on the basis of their familiar role in the sense that they are not expected to be as productive and committed to their work as a man, and it is very hard to fight against such a resistant stereotype and to prove with facts that it doesn’t hold true. As it can be read in many reports\textsuperscript{82}, women have to be better than men and devote much more energies and efforts than a man in order to get a similar position, a situation which is not consistent with the claim that we are living in a society based on the principles of meritocracy and equal opportunities. This is why Kreckel holds that “we have to deal with spectacular inequalities between men and women within the job-hierarchy”\textsuperscript{83} and that women are discriminated against in our society: if it were true that there is gender equality and that the more talented and deserving people can make it to the top, then women shouldn’t be as underrepresented in high-rank positions as they actually are. Kreckel draws also on the concept of the dual labour market, and by analyzing the German situation comes to the conclusion that in general women fare worse than men: in the primary labour market there would be no direct competition between men and women because it presents a high level of segregation along the sex axis owed in good part to dissimilar qualifications, and the occupations characterized by a high concentration of women unfortunately are also the ones with lower wages; in the secondary labour market we find a high percentage of women who are not really discriminated against because they are women, but rather they are not successful in getting a sound and well-paid job (very often because of family duties), so they end up accepting something precarious. The solution proposed by Kreckel is that women should become aware of the very important work that they provide to our society (reproductive work) as well as of their comparatively disadvantaged position, and therefore should unite themselves, get organized and raise their voices in order to represent their interests. Women should fight to make reproductive work more visible and its value socially acknowledged, they should strengthen their position within the corporative system, trade unions and the state, and they should exercise pressure on the state so that it will promote the development of a more family friendly society and persuade companies to invest in a more gender-equal way in their human capital in order to use it.

\textsuperscript{82} See for example Andrea Leitner, Frauenberufe – Männerberuf, Zur Persistenz geschlechtshierarchischer Arbeitsmarktsegregation, IHS Vienna, March 2001.

\textsuperscript{83} Reinhard Kreckel, Politische Soziologie der sozialen Ungleichheit, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1992, page 237.
Gender inequalities and social conditions of employed women in the Alps-Adriatic region effectively, and to become more sensible to the issue of the reconciliation between familiar and professional duties for all of their employees including men.

Another sociologist who has given an important contribution to the study of gender relations is Jane Lewis, who has developed an analysis about how a state, through its policies, can affect the way gender relations are shaped. Her analysis draws on Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s categorization of the possible forms of the welfare state of capitalistic countries, and of their direct impact on the structure of employment. He has detached three forms of welfare state:\(^{84}\):

- the liberal welfare state, which is based on the concept of the auto-regulative power of the market and is characterized by a very low involvement of the state in it - in fact the state is only supposed to set the legislative framework, make sure that the rules are respected and intervene as infrequently as possible. As a consequence social policies are kept at a minimum, social insurance plans are modest, as well as universal transfers, which are low and means-tested; according to Esping-Andersen the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada for example are characterized by this situation;

- the corporatist welfare state, which he holds has a strong Christian matrix and provides generous social policies, which have a negligible redistributive impact (thus preserving the given status differences), it doesn’t invest in childcare facilities and through its fiscal policies it supports the traditional family model based on the male breadwinner and non-working wife; it has been historically developed for example in Austria and Germany;

- the social-democratic welfare state, which is founded on the principle of universal services and the promotion of equal opportunities; it guarantees every (regular) citizen good living conditions, invests in care-facilities for young and elderly people and provides high parental leave allowances, thus actually giving women the chance to choose whether to work for pay or be housewives. The Scandinavian states have followed this approach and have encouraged women to be economically active: a lot of workplaces were created in the public sector - where working schedules are usually family friendly - and more precisely in fields where women tend to prefer to be employed (i.e. in so called feminine fields). Besides these very services supplied by the state were the ones women needed in order to be relieved from some reproductive work and thus have the possibility to look for employment.

Jane Lewis moves a step further than Gøsta Esping-Andersen and investigates the interactions between social policies, women’s participation in the labour force and gender relations\(^{85}\). According to her both the liberal and the social democratic forms of welfare state promote


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women’s employment, but in a different way: in the first case women find most employment within private companies, which may or not take into consideration their family duties and be sensitive to the issue of the reconcilability between family and work; as it has already been mentioned before, the Scandinavian states have encouraged women’s employment by providing them the services they need, and by hiring a lot of them into such places. Moreover working schedules in the public sector are family friendly, and the provisions for maternal, paternal and parental leave are very favourable. As a consequence, we find a high level of female employment rate throughout their life paths, a situation which contributes in making women rather autonomous and places them at the same level as men, given their financial independence.

In the states characterized by corporatist welfare policies, social insurance benefits are always connected with employment (and not so much with citizenship like in the universalistic model) and what matters primarily is the main breadwinner’s employment, in the sense that when an adult – the man - is working in a family, his family members are also entitled to get social services (except for the pension, at least as long as the main breadwinner is alive); in these states wages used to be set in such a way, that the breadwinner would have been able to maintain his family (so called family wage; nowadays the situation has changed) whereas women were not expected to work for pay and thus it was not invested in services which would have helped women to reconcile family duties and employment – just the contrary, it was expected the family to be the first provider of social services. The way social policies were shaped in these states has to be connected with the level of influence exercised by the Church on the political system - which was quite high - and since the Church has been historically in favour of a traditional division of work, social policies in these states have fostered the traditional male breadwinner model – this way women had time devotable to charity activities and to reproductive work, to be performed not only within their own family but also in their family of origin as well as to the advantage of their parents-in-law.

Finally I want to report about the concept of “double presence” that has been elaborated by the Italian sociologist Franca Bimbi: in her opinion it is not sufficient to say that women have to be socialized according to two logics, and have to learn to reconcile productive and reproductive work, in the sense that it’s not just a question of time-matching, double work load or juggling duties. Given the fact that at home women usually have to organize a lot of activities and to plan everything in advance in a way that harmonizes the necessities of everybody, and

since they develop special attitudes like being attentive to people’s needs, being able to carry out multiple tasks at once, be available etc, according to Franca Bimbi it is not possible then that when women go to work they simply “turn off” the part of their brain that pays attention to family duties. Instead continue also during their working schedule they think about them, and vice versa, it is likely that women will also keep mulling over work-related problems when they are not in the office – the reason of this occurrence lies in their very ability to consider multiple things at the same time. In order to give account of this phenomenon Franca Bimbi has elaborated the concept of the “double presence”: she defines it as women’s ability to take care of productive and reproductive work contemporaneously, as if they were at the same time present in both spheres – or more exactly, at least with their thoughts women actually do this. Moreover, Franca Bimbi was of the opinion that when women’s employment is seen as of secondary importance to family needs, the relation between women and the family is “gifted” so to say – she speaks of a “gifted relationship”, meaning that it is not fair to assume that for the family’s wellbeing women’s reproductive work matters more then their productive work, because in this way it is again postulated that women’s main commitment should be towards the private sphere, thus somehow ranking household work above professional work – and of course it this would hold true only for women and not for men, therefore delineating another gender inequality. The solution envisaged by Franca Bimbi consists on the one hand in the necessity to give the proper value and societal acknowledgment to the reproductive work performed by women, and on the other hand to help women reconcile their duties by changing the opening times of many offices and services which women need to visit or use, so that they will no longer coincide any more with women’s working schedules.

In this chapter first I have reported on the way the so called classical sociologists have dealt with the topic of gender inequalities, then on the approaches that have been developed in order to cope with the issue, and finally on the theories and concepts which have been elaborated in order to explain their existence.

In the next chapter I will describe women’ situation under the Habsburg monarchy and explain how the traditional male breadwinner-housewife model could assert itself and become the leading paradigm for the gendered division of work, notwithstanding the fact that women had always been working, at home as well as outside it, in the fields and factories. As we will see, the Catholic Church has played a key role in the affirmation of the traditional family model.

87 See Franca Bimbi, Gender “gift relationship” and welfare state cultures in Italy, in Jane Lewis, Women and social policy in Europe – Work, family and the state, pp. 138-169.
CHAPTER 3

THE GENDERED DIVISION OF WORK FROM THE TIMES OF THE HABSBURG EMPIRE UNTIL THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In the last chapter the concept of the gendered division of tasks was mentioned many times, and I will now go deeper into it, giving account of how it was born and then describing the evolution of the gender relations through time in connection with the stance of the Church as far as the division of work between men and women.

According to anthropological studies, every society has developed some kind of division of work between the two sexes taking into consideration the fact that only women can menstruate, get pregnant, bear children and give birth, whereas in general men are stronger and bigger than women and can run faster, so almost everywhere women have been charged with tasks to be performed in an area around the house, whereas men could be more mobile and had to protect their families.

Of course the biological differences mentioned above have affected the way tasks were assigned to one sex or the other, but when a specific value is connected with an activity and the person who carries it out is given a certain level of prestige, this no longer has anything to do with nature, but becomes a social fact; in a society dominated by men, activities carried out by them end up being ranked very high while women's activities are considered less important and are connected with a lower level of prestige\(^88\). Moreover it doesn't hold true that the division of work is naturally given because people have to be taught how to carry out activities, women for example are not born as care givers, but must be socialized to become such, and also because in different societies we find women performing different tasks, sometimes even so called male activities - which in this case lose their prestige (because performed by women).

THE GENDERED DIVISION OF WORK IN THE PEASANT PRE-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

In the middle ages the custom was that only people who could fight and defend their city, could be considered a subject of right - which is to say, only men were given the very prestigious and important task of defending their own family and work for maintaining it as well.

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as to represent it in the public, while women had to take care of the house and be defended. In general however until the beginning of the process of the industrialization most of the people used to live in the countryside, where the division of tasks occurred according to the principle of the “common house”: everybody had to do what was necessary for the sake of everybody else, had to produce for the needs of the family as well as for the market - if possible - in order to earn some money to be used to buy what couldn’t be produced autonomously, so it could happen that women had to carry out so called male work in the field or that men would help at home when necessary. The same principle also held true for crafts-men families and for those who lived in the cities and had a shop (traders). Anyway one must not think that the peasant family was based on the equality of its members, but just the opposite: the man was the head of the house and the one who held authority, represented his family in public affairs and dealt with money, for example when selling agricultural products at the market; the women was his helper but she was subordinate to him, she had to obey him – in fact it was a custom that women and children couldn’t eat with men at the same table. The woman was in charge of everything concerning the house, she had to take care of her family, cook, clean, produce food to feed the family, produce clothing and repair them, cultivate the garden, take care of the animals, feed and clean them, help in the field and if necessary also till, which was considered an important and tough male activity, but if it was performed by a woman, she was not given the prestige that would have been paid to a man. It was a very patriarchal system and was transmitted from one generation to the other through the process of socialization and education, and women had to teach their daughters to carry out female activities and to be obedient and respectful towards their fathers.

A slightly special situation characterized the families of spinners and weavers: at the beginning of the industrial revolution when the first manufacturing plants were built, many families used to produce textiles at home, spinning and weaving, called “job on order” and

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91 The family of those time was the extended family, not the nuclear family of today; on the principle of the “common house” see Ilse Dickinger, Das patriarchalische System als Ursache der Diskriminierung von Frauen im Berufsleben, Linz, Johannes-Kepler-Universität Linz, 1995, pag. 40 and also Ursula Beer, Geschlecht, Struktur, Geschichte – Soziale Konstituierung des Geschlechterverhältnisses, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1990.

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people were paid per piece. They usually carried out this job next to the field and farm work in order to round up their earnings and in many cases it represented an additional workload for the woman – but not only she, also children used to help when there really was a lot of work because since it was a work of precision, having small fingers constituted an advantage, besides it could happen - and it was not considered so special – that the husband would have carried out some housework chores so that the wife (and the children) could have kept working in order to meet the deadline for the contract\textsuperscript{93}. In fact in this field the competition for getting an order was really fierce, so the market was actually led by the rule of offer and demand and when families needed to get some work in order to make money, they were ready to accept work for a very low price, to the advantage of the companies and to the disadvantage of all of the spinners and weavers\textsuperscript{94}. Anyway, even if out of necessity, men in these families carried out some household chores, the gendered division of tasks was usually respected and the above mentioned occurrences didn't put it into question, moreover the money earned by the woman through her work was considered just an additional income, and the man was conceived as the main breadwinner, the wife as the one in charge of family and house\textsuperscript{95}.

THE GENDERED DIVISION OF WORK IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

When women started to work for wage outside the house, people – men as well as women – kept considering their earnings as a family income additional to the man’s, the reason for it being double: on the one hand women were still charged with household work, therefore it didn’t matter whether they were employed or not, because their main role was to be the caretaker; on the other hand from the very beginning of the industrial revolution and since women had entered factories, their wages were much inferior to men’s. Birgit Bolognese-Leuchtmüller in her book Frauen-Arbeitswelten, Zur historischen Genese gegenwärtiger Probleme, explains that the reason for the wage gap can be found in the convergence of many factors, the first consisting of the high gendered segregation of the labour force, both horizontally and vertically. Men were to be found in the mining and metallurgic industry and in the mechanical sector, whereas women were employed mainly in the textile sector, in the production of clothing, in the cleaning sector and in the food industry; there were also men in these last sectors but usually


\textsuperscript{95} See Barbara Duden, Karin Hausen, *Gesellschaftliche Arbeit – Geschlechtsspezifische Arbeitsteilung*, pag. 24.
working as supervisors. Women's work was deemed to be less difficult than men's, to be repetitive and easy to be carried out in the sense that education or qualification weren't necessary to do it, and as a consequence women were paid less. It holds true that women were less willing to undergo a period of apprenticeship than men, because during this period people were paid very little, and it was considered an investment for one's future, but girls believed that it would have been worth it for them, so that in a self fulfilling prophecy they preferred to start to work for wage immediately in order to buy their dowry and get married\textsuperscript{96}, so they usually chose to find a place as a maid at the service of some family (maybe in the city) or to get non-qualified work where they wouldn't have been offered any chance to improve their situation or become specialized because it was assumed that they would have gotten married or pregnant and quit working at least temporarily, in a vicious circle. Women were considered as a reserve army, to be hired as cheap labour force in times of increased demand and as long as there lasted the need for them (thus they were among the first to be fired in case of crisis); they were deemed to be first and foremost in charge of the family work, so they had work and also a person who could maintain them – the man needed to work in order to sustain his family, so for him a job and a so called family income had to be guaranteed\textsuperscript{97}. Moreover it was also assumed that a woman would have needed less money to meet her necessities (when living alone) than a man – for example she didn't need to spend on cigarettes, alcohol etc.\textsuperscript{98} Even when women were

\textsuperscript{96} See Anton Rauscher [ed.], \textit{Die Frau in Gesellschaft und Kirche}, Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 1986, pag. 47 and following.

\textsuperscript{97} In the book by Johanna Werckmeister, \textit{Land Frauen Alltag – Hundertjahre Lebens- und Arbeitsbedingungen der Frauen im ländlichen Raum}, at page 112 we can read what follows:

»Frauenarbeit wurde geringer eingeschätzt als Männerarbeit. Dabei handelt es sich um die Nutzung eines speziellen Merkmals der weiblichen Arbeitskraft, das damit zusammenhängt, die Arbeit der Frauen grundsätzlich nur als Zuarbeit zu dem (»Familie«-) Einkommen der Ehemänner oder Väter aufzufassen. […] Aufgrund des niedrigen Lohnniveaus, das immer auch eine Folge der qua Geschlechterideologie verankerten Vorstellungen von der sogenannten »abgeleiteten« Versorgung der Frau ist, werden die Arbeiterinnen geradezu »naturwüchsig« auf die ökonomische Absicherung durch Ehe und Familie verwiesen. Die Argumentation schliesst sich zum Kreis, wenn die Minderbezahlung von Frauenarbeit damit legitimiert wird, Frauen seien schliesslich durch die Ehe versorgt.«.

\textsuperscript{98} In the book edited by Birgit Bolognese-Leuchtmüller, Michael Mitterauer, \textit{Frauen-Arbeitswelten, Zur historischen Genese gegenwärtiger Probleme}, at page 179 we can read:

»Noch ungewollt zynischer mutet allerdings die selbstverständliche Annahme einer bei der Frauen von vornherein stärker ausgeprägten Verzichtbereitschaft in bezug auf Genussmittel wie Alkohol oder Tabak an, da »Frauen, wie es dies ja schon sprichwörtlich ist, … ihre Bedürfnisse übermässig … einzuschränken gewöhnt sind.« (The quotation in the text is from a text by Wilbrandt of the year 1906).

And also:

»Neben den unterschiedliche angenommenen physiologischen Bedürfnissen kommt bei der Definition des zumutbaren Minimaleinkommens vor allem die Theorie eines Gestaltungsprinzips nach Familien- bzw. Individuallohn zum Tragen, wonach die Untergrenze der Bezahlung sich bei Männern »automatisch« eher in Höhe des Existenzminimums einer Familie, bei Frauen dagegen eher bei jenem einer Einzelperson einpende, da davon ausgegangen wurde, dass eine
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drawn into the labour force and required to perform every kind of job, even the hardest ones,
including in the mining industry, when men had to go to join the army and fight during the first
world war, these jobs were still conceived as male jobs and when the war was over women had
to leave, to withdraw in order to give men back their jobs. Working women in the XIX century had a very tiring life, and were often charged with a double, triple or even quadruple workload when they were living in the countryside; besides the shift in the factory and taking care of their house and family, they also had to help in the fields and take care of animals. Moreover during the XIX century the standards as far cleaning and children’s education had improved, and consequently women were expected to improve their performances despite the fact that they were employed. For the women who worked in administrative positions, who had got some kind of education - most of all in the cities - the situation was lighter since at least their work wasn’t so physically exhausting, even though everybody had to work very long shifts and women - on top of that - had to start with the housework afterwards.

At the basis of the traditional gendered division of work there was on the one hand the ideology of the Christian religion, according to which women had to be subordinate to men – and in the XIX century families were very religious thus almost blindly following what was considered God’s rules; on the other hand state legislation had been inspired by the Christian standpoint, and there it was also prescribed women’s subordination to men.


Both the Catholic and the Protestant Churches [as well as the Jewish and Muslim religion] have been promoting a strongly patriarchal point of view as far as the division of work between the sexes, holding that the woman has to be relegated to the domestic sphere and to perform her “natural” duties of a prolific, careful mother and faithful, respectful wife, while the so-called public sphere belongs to man’s “natural” arena since he is the one in charge of running business and of toiling to provide his family with all it needs. This division of the household tasks follows the example set by Maria, the personification of the ideal woman, portrayed as the only one to have been conceived without the original sin, as a young woman ready to obey the call of her Lord and to serve him, and as a virginal mother.

unverheiratete Frau nur für sich allein zu sorgen hätte und eine verheiratete lediglich einen Zusatzverdienst einbringen würde.«.

See Erna Appelt, »Denn das Gesetz unserer Zeit heisst Ökonomie...« Weibliche Angestellte im Prozess sozioökonomischer Modernisierung, in Birgit Bolognese-Leuchtmüller, Michael Mitterauer (ed.),
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Until the 20th century the Church has fiercely opposed woman’s employment and her involvement in public life, because it feared that these activities would have had a detrimental effect on her womanliness and devotion to her “natural” tasks, perhaps the most important of these consisting in educating her children according to the rules of the Church. If at the beginning of the Middle Ages women were actually allowed into some professions\textsuperscript{100}, the worsening of the general economic situation had led to the need to find a scapegoat as well as to eliminate some competition for men, who had to fulfil their role of breadwinner: women who didn’t fit the prescribed canons of behaviour (for example if they were single or too outspoken, or if they knew how to use plants to cure people and so forth) were suspected of being witches and possessed by evil spirits, thus they had to be burnt at the stake. Of course this was supposed to have a detrimental effect on other women, to put them back in “their place”.

A socially accepted alternative to getting married consisted in devoting one’s life to God and prayer: in convents nuns were given the possibility of study and work, to develop and express their personality because there they were seen as “a-sexual” beings, thus not dangerous any more; nevertheless a female ecclesiastic couldn’t (and can’t) get the same consideration and power as a male one because women were (and still are) excluded from the most important church services and functions in the Catholic Church - where priestly service is still open only to men - while in the Protestant Church women can be appointed as priests but nonetheless the main authorities are always men.

The two most important female biblical figures are Eva, the first woman and mother of human being, and the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Since the Church has been using them through time as models of behaviour [negative and positive respectively], it’s worth it to look at the way they are actually portrayed in the holy texts.

In the book of Genesis we read that Eva was created by God, similar to him\textsuperscript{101} through the man [1, 27], from one of Adam’s rib while he was sleeping [2, 22], so that he did not have to be alone any more but could have enjoyed the company of a “…helper suitable for him”[2, 18]; together the man and the woman were put in the Garden of Eden and God gave them the task to be fruitful and increase in number as well as prohibiting them to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But they disobeyed God because Eva ended up paying attention to the tempting words of the snake and had some of the prohibited fruit. She offered it to Adam.

\textsuperscript{101} Or similar to her, if we’d like to imagine that God is not necessarily similar to a man, but to a woman.

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who accepted it. As a consequence they were expelled by God from the Garden of Eden and Eva was condemned to suffer during her pregnancy and give birth to children with pain, while Adam will have had to painfully toil over the ground in order to produce his daily food [3, 16-19]. Also very noteworthy is the relationship established by God between the man and the woman, based on the following sentence: “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

Since Eva is characterized as the one who couldn’t resist temptation and who dragged man into sin, it follows that she is a bad example and in fact she has been sometimes blamed for being the cause of all of the pain of mankind; on the contrary, as it has been mentioned above, Mary personifies the best model of conduct for a woman ever. In Luke [1, 26-55] we find a good description of the behaviour of the Virgin Mary when she was sent the Angel Gabriel to tell her that she was God’s favourite, having been chosen as the one who was going to give birth to his Son. First she felt “greatly troubled by his words” and wondered how she could have gotten pregnant since she was still a virgin; after having listened to the words of the angel she welcomed her fate by answering: “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said”, and also, “he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me”. Indeed when later on Mary went to visit her cousin Elisabeth, she was already greeted as a “blessed” woman because she had believed in God’s promises.

We can find many other female characters in the Bible but only Eva and the Virgin Mary represent the two archetypes for women’s behaviour and have become central figures in the Church doctrine and ideology: the Virgin Mary as an idealistic example of proper conduct for a woman – her cult was also encouraged by Pope Pius IX who with the encyclical letter Ubi Primum introduced the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, stating that she was the only woman that was conceived without sin and asking bishops to encourage people to be devoted to her. On the contrary the figure of Eva has always represented a negative model of a dangerous woman, a sinner and a tempter, who dragged the human race into a state of sin and condemned it to gain its food through the sweat of its brow; in the centuries of the Reformation and the Counterreformation, when “uneasy” and outspoken women were

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102 “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.” Genesis, 3, 6.

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persecuted as alleged witches, the image of Eva and her “deviant” characteristics were often quoted to back up sentences of condemnation.\(^{104}\)

The Old Testament – a collection of books which represent the holy texts of the Jewish population – presents a set of rules of conduct which ought to be followed by people, and which convey a patriarchal vision of the relationships between men and women; similarly to other holy texts for other religions, the books of the Old Testament tried to regulate people’s lives for their own sake, and of course the recommended behaviours can’t help but be strictly connected with the time and context when they were written, therefore some of its rules have lost their validity over time. For example, in the Book of Deuteronomy it’s written that a man and a woman having been found committing adultery are to be taken to the gate of the town and stoned to death, but later on Jesus taught people not to punish a woman caught committing such a sin that way \([\text{John, 7, 53 – 8,11}]\). Other rules were still in force at the beginning of the 20th century\(^{105}\), for example the provision that women were to be considered “unclean” for seven or 14 days after having given birth to respectively a son or a daughter, and had to wait 33 or 66 days respectively before they were allowed to leave the house to undergo a religious ceremony - the ritual of “churching”\(^{106}\) - where they had to be “purified” from their bleeding \([\text{the Book of Leviticus, 12, 1-8}]\). Even if at first sight this habit may seem rough, because it portrayed the woman as dirty and limited her freedom of movement, actually it was meant for her sake, because it “forced” her to stay home and have some rest after having given birth to a child instead of going straight back to her [hard] daily work. The point consists in understanding the reason why the Church decided to keep on requiring believers to respect certain rules of behaviour while it abandoned others, and why society has rejected some of these precepts while continuing to promote a strict adherence to others. For example in the Bible it is clearly stated that committing adultery represents a sin for both men and women \([\text{Proverbs, 6, 20 – 7, 27; Matthew 5, 27-30; Corinthians 6, 12-20}]\) but at the end of the 19th century – beginning of the 20th a double standard of behaviour was commonly accepted, i.e. the men were allowed to have sexual intercourse before getting married, while for the same act a woman would have been bitterly condemned\(^{107}\). The answer to the question posed above might be the following: a rule

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\(^{104}\) See Ilse Dickinger, *Das patriarchalische System als Ursache der Diskrimination von Frauen im Berufsleben*, page 213 and following.


\(^{107}\) “A whole class of people... did so ... through open insistence that this laws of morality didn’t apply to them... In defiance of the teaching of the catechism, which strictly insists that Christians must follow the sixth commandment, there developed first a silent, then gradually and open consensus that for a man a free-love life was neither sinful nor dishonourable – in fact, the very opposite.” Bertha von Suttner 1889, in Susan Groag Bell and Karen Offen (ed.), *Women, the Family and Freedom: The Debate In Documents*,
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kept its validity as long as it didn’t question the provision that woman had to be subordinate to man, thus upholding the patriarchal organisation of society according to which authority was held by husbands within families and by Church and State in public life; as soon as a precept didn’t fit this principle of authority, it was refused or no longer considered.

Ilse Dickinger holds that the version of the New Testament which we can read today has been depurated from most of the parts where an egalitarian relationship between men and women was conveyed, instead women were portrayed according to the moral standards of behaviour of the time: obeying the Lord like the Virgin Mary [see above], obliging like Martha, shy like Mary from Bethany, a sinner like Mary Magdalena. Other examples include the fact that since it was not acceptable that one of the apostles was a woman, her name [Junia] would have been turned into a male name [Junias], or that even if it’s written that the Holy Spirit came down over sons and daughters [Acts, II, 5, 17-18] and that all the believers are one in the body of Jesus [Corinthians, I, 12, 27], this still hasn’t lead to any emancipation of the woman within the Christian religion, but rather to the reassertion of her subordinate position, though not even to her de-valorisation. The reason for such an outcome has to be looked for in the fact that spiritual rules – most of all at the dawn of the history of Christian religion – were to be conceived as completely separate from the secular order of the time, for it was “only” in front of [the Christian] God that women and men were to be considered equal. On the other hand at the beginning Christian people constituted just a small community and were already persecuted because of their belief so it was better not to put into question the patriarchal order of the society they lived in. This is why the Christian religion at the beginning of the 20th century started to move to a patriarchal order, excluding women from church services; later on when


108 See Ilse Dickinger, Das patriarchalische System als Ursache der Diskriminierung von Frauen im Berufsleben, Linz, Johannes-Kepler-Universität Linz, 1995, page 205 and following; she reports also that already in 400 b. C. the Jewish priests had re-written the Old Testament according to the patriarchal order of that time, thus taking distance from the ancient myths which upheld a matriarchal stance. [“Mythen wurden von Priestern umformuliert, das Alte Testament im Sinne der patriarchalen Ordnung von jüdischen Priestern noch 400 v. Chr. umgeschrieben”, quotation from page. 199].

109 See Ilse Dickinger, ibidem, page 201 and following; and also Lily Braun, Die Frauefrage: ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und ihre wirtschaftliche Seite, Berlin, Bonn, Dietz, 1979, page. 28 and following.


111 The Roman society was based on the concept of the patria potestas, which meant that the man of the house had the power of life and death over his familia, the term indicating his wife, children and slaves; for a deepening of the topic see also Ilse Dickinger, Das patriarchalische System als Ursache der
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Christianity had established itself as a religion, its theologians began to selectively use what Jesus and the Apostles had said to support their stance on topics\textsuperscript{112}: again, even if in the Acts it’s written that the Holy Spirit did come down over sons and daughters, the theologians preferred to quote Peter when in Corinthians 14, 34 he wrote that “…women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission… if they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home…”. As far as women’s models of conduct, Eva is described as a “suitable helper”, who is going to become “one flesh” with Adam, the only man she is allowed to desire and the one who will rule over her, and together they are asked to “…be fruitful and increase in number”\textsuperscript{113}; Mary, Jesus’ mother is called “virgin”, “blessed”, “the Lord’s servant”. In Corinthians it is also written, that “each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband… the wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband.”\textsuperscript{114} [7, 2-4]; in Ephesians wives are instructed “[you have to] submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church…. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” [5, 22-33], while in Titus we read that young women should be trained “…to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands”. [2, 4-5].

If we look at the texts produced by the [Catholic] Church until the Popes’ encyclicals of the 20th century, we find that the behaviour recommended to women is rooted in these very passages, which later, mostly at the end of the 18th century, were quoted as authoritative sources to support the argumentation that wives had to submit to their husbands. That’s also the case of the encyclical Arcanum written in 1880 by Pope Leo XIII, where he stated that “the husband is the chief of the family and the head of the wife” and goes on, “the woman, because she is flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, must be subject to her husband and obey him”, afterwards explicitly quoting Ephesians 5, 23-24. It’s worth underlining that in this encyclical the Pope also clearly indicated the aims of a [Christian] marriage “[By the command of Christ, it not only looks to the propagation of the human race, but to the bringing forth of children for the Church…] and pointed out the Catholic Church’s engagement in the preservation of the “holy chasteness of the

\textsuperscript{112} See Lily Braun, Die Frauentfrage: ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und ihre wirtschaftliche Seite, page 28.
\textsuperscript{113} Very interesting is also the explanation that Hanspeter Heinz gives about the way God punished Adam and Eva, namely differently according to the different spheres of action which have been assigned to them – see Hanspeter Heinz, Auf der Suche nach der Sendung der Frau in unserer Zeit, in Anton Rauscher [ed.], Die Frau in Gesellschaft und Kirche, Berlin, Duncker und Humbiot, 1986, pag. 286.
\textsuperscript{114} The text goes on saying that “In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife”. 

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marriage-bed”, pinpointing that she would be the “best guardian and defender of the human race” and the Christian religion “the true mother of all good, cherishing and sublime virtues”.
Also in the encyclical *Arcanum* Pope Leo XIII made very clear the position of the Church regarding divorce, a stance which was going to have a very strong influence on the development of the debate on the issue in Europe and most of all in the countries where the Catholic religion was the most widespread. The sacrament being in marriage inseparable from the contract, its nature is that of a holy indissoluble union115, and quoting Jesus’ words, “what God has joined together, let man not separate.” [Matthew, 19, 6]. Therefore if one rejects the teachings of the Christian religion, distinguishes between sacrament and contract in marriage and introduces the possibility of cancelling the second, the society suffers negative consequences to such an extent that it would be “hardly possible to describe the magnitude of evils that flow from divorce.”, sinking marriage “of necessity into the slavery of man’s vicious nature and vile passions” [encyclical Arcanum].

Also Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* - besides taking position in favour of the right of property conceived as the foundation of the family, thus openly counterchallenging the Socialist doctrine - reminded people of the very purpose of marriage by quoting Genesis: he reasserted the traditional division of the roles in the household according to which the man is the head of the family, “…it is a most sacred law of nature that a father must provide food and all necessaries for those whom he has begotten […] the children belong to the father […] a woman is by nature fitted for homework, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty, and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family.”.

The stance of the Protestant Church regarding women’s place in the family and within society is based on Martin Luther’s standpoint, which is quite near to the one of the Catholic Church. According to him woman’s role consists mainly in being a mother and a wife who cares for the psychological and physical wellbeing of her man and who pays him respect and obedience, and she is physically weaker than a man and also less intelligent (and would talk a lot but without knowledge about things, just foolishly because she wouldn’t be able to understand worldly things) - it follows that as far as the division of tasks goes, his point of view was quite traditional and indeed he wrote:

“Im weltlichen politischen Regiment und Händel taugen die Frauen nichts, dazu sind die Männer geschaffen und bestimmt von Gott, nicht die Weiber…. Die Ehefrau verfügt demnach über folgende Taugenden: Geduld, Friedfertigkeit, Unschuld; sie sollte furchtsam, schamhaft und vor allem häuslich sein, nicht zu sehr auf ihr

115 In Genesis 2, 22-24 it is written “… a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh”.
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Äusseres achten und sich nicht mit Schmuck überladen... Schminken war unerwünscht. Sie sollte leise und vor allem nicht zu viel reden, beim Essen war ihr Schweigen geboten. Die Ehefrau soll sich ganz Mann und Haus hingeben... die Ehefrau [ist] für die eheliche Untreue ihres Mannes verantwortlich – eine “unwirsche” Frau fordere den Mann geradezu zur ausserhäuslichen Befriedigung der männlichen Bedürfnisse heraus”.

Again, women are confined to the private sphere and considered inferior to men, are supposed to be modest, helpful, devoted and obliging, including as far as sex is concerned, because men would have needs that have to be satisfied – there is no reference to women’s needs and rights.

FAMILY LAW UNDER THE HABSBURG EMPIRE

As we have seen religious standpoints as far as men’s and women’s roles and code of conducts were honoured, were very much gendered, and since in the past people were deeply religious, such a stance affected many of their lives. It was also mirrored in the legislation. I will now focus attention on the area of my interest, the Alps-Adriatic region. As I have already mentioned, in the XIX century and up to the First World War this area was under the Habsburg Empire (except for the part of the Italian region called Friuli, which was annexed to the Reign of Italy in 1866). Here in 1811 the *Allgemeine Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch* was passed, a code of laws which would be valid for more than a century; the preparatory work for its drafting had started already in 1753 and it was carried out by a commission made up exclusively of men belonging to the upper class. As a consequence the law couldn’t but bring the mark of the ideology of that class despite the fact that it represented just a thin minority of the population of the empire. According to this law the man is obliged to maintain his family, and in exchange the wife has to take care of her family needs and of the house; the man can’t force her to work for pay but can require her to help him carry out his activities, anyhow she wouldn’t become entitled to any remuneration since she is maintained by her husband; on the other side the man is forbidden to prohibit his wife to work for pay, but only under the condition that she will not neglect her family 117.

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116 Quotation from Lily Braun, *Die Fraufrage: ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und ihre wirtschaftliche Seite*, page 229 and following:

   „Women are not suited for worldly political government and trading, men are meant for that and not women, God has established it... A housewife has the following virtues: patience, docility, innocence, she should be timorous, prudish and most of all devote herself to the household, she should not pay too much attention to the way she appears and should not overload herself with make up... make-up is not desiderable. She should talk in a low voice and not too much, while eating it is required her to be silent. The housewife should devote herself completely to her man and he house... the housewife (is deemed to be) responsible for her man’s unfaithfulness – a gruff woman pushest the man to find a way to satisfy his needs outside the marriage.”.

and house, which represent her main duty. The woman is deemed not to be able to administer the family’s goods, which is a man’s task, and her interests, like children’s, are represented by the man, who is the head of the house and carries all of the authority, thus making all of the decisions—for example where to live, which furniture to have, on which budget to live, what time to eat and so forth; in case of a quarrels, man’s will would prevail over the wife’s. According to the law partners have reciprocal rights and duties, should be faithful to each other and help each other; of course it is the father who gives his surname to the offspring, while when a child is born outside of marriage s/he took the surname of the mother whereas the natural father had the duty to maintain it according to his possibilities (i.e. legitimate children had precedence).

Till 1811 having intercourse outside marriage was punishable, though afterwards it was only discriminated between legitimate and illegitimate children; sexual intercourse was considered a duty within marriage, and if the wife didn’t fulfil her duty, the husband had the right to ask for divorce. The issue of separation and divorce was a hotly debated one because of the influence exercised by the Church, which insisted on its role in celebrating marriages and on its holiness: first of all it has to be underlined that in the Habsburg empire it was not so easy to get married because it was necessary to get the permission of the local authorities, which was subordinated to giving evidence of one’s ability to sustain himself; Christians, for example, were only allowed to marry people of the same confession and as a consequence many people simply cohabited and there was subsequently a high rate of illegitimate children as well as of unmarried people (more than 50% of the marriageable people were not married). When celebrated, marriage was considered a contract by the state – therefore feasible of being terminated – whereas the Church conceived it as a sacrament, blessed by God, and thus unbreakable; the Church accepted the so called division of bed and meal, a situation when husband and wife would keep on living together but put an end to their reciprocal rights and duties, so that the man was not supposed no longer to maintain his wife, though they should still have been faithful to each other and couldn’t have re-married. The state also provided the possibility to separate so that people would have been free to get married again, but this possibility was reserved only for people who could prove that they weren’t Catholic when they got married.

According to the law women through the whole XIX century were not allowed to join political associations, and only in 1896 were they admitted to go to university, but as far as the

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ownership of some property and taxation, their rights were respected, they had the same duties as men and likewise had to pay taxes - and actually women, like men, having a certain amount of assets, had the right to vote at the local level\(^\text{120}\) (which anyway was eliminated in 1867 only to be reintroduced in 1918 together with the right of vote for every major person – i.e. men as well as women - at the national political elections). At any rate the law provided that as soon as she entered marriage, she would lose all her rights since, from then on, the husband was entitled to represent her and her interests.

A very remarkable analysis of the nature of the marriage contract as a special kind of contract between the sexes in the XIX century has been carried out by Carol Pateman: the author pinpoints the particular nature of the marriage contract in comparison to other contracts: when two parts stipulate a contract, this should regulate reciprocal rights and duties and it should go to the advantage of both sides, otherwise it wouldn’t make sense for a person to sign it, but the marriage contract doesn’t seem to have the above mentioned features. If women cannot make decisions for themselves and are not considered subjects of right like men, then apparently they would not be entitled to enter such an agreement just our of will, nor should they be interested in it, since the marriage contract - the way it was regulated in the XIX century holds Pateman – didn’t put some limits to both man and woman in order to make it possible for them to live together, but actually it limited just the woman while giving the man the right to take advantage of her work (both reproductive and productive). In this way such a contract would regulate a relationship between husband and wife which would be very similar to the one existing between master and slave\(^\text{121}\). Of course the marriage contract introduced a patriarchal relation between the partners and provided that the husband had to maintain and protect his family, and in exchange for this the wife had to be subordinate to him, his will and his authority. Some feminists actually got involved in the issue and tried to fight against such an unfair and discriminating situation, but since for most of the people of that time it was simply taken for granted and accepted, whether fair or not, and since it was anchored into the legislation and with only men actually producing the laws, it was impossible to start changing the patriarchal order from its heart, so instead feminists concentrated their efforts – and were more successful – on two other topics: education and work.

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Before reporting about the evolution of the legislative provisions of the Habsburg empire as far as women’s education and work condition, it is worth it to introduce the topic of the family models that were widespread at that time. I have already described the way work was actually organized in peasant and workers families, so now it is time to talk about the noble and bourgeois families: the people who were well off enough to afford to let the woman stay at home, while the man would take care of family affairs and through them maintain his wife and children. Also in these families the gendered division of work was respected, but actually bourgeois wives had only to take care of themselves, of the image of their family and of their husbands (the wives had to carry out representative tasks, appear at their husband’s side in public occasions, entertain people with their pleasant company and so forth) and in a very limited way of their children and house, since they usually had maids and nursemaids who actually carried out housework. At the beginning of the XIX century people were still persuaded that a girl of the upper class wouldn’t have needed to get an education only to become a good wife and mother, because that was her destiny\textsuperscript{122}; only after having fought a lot and on behalf of “honored” women who maybe wouldn’t have been able to find a suitable husband, did the idea that girls needed an education in order to be able to find an appropriate job and earn a living become acceptable. “Honorable jobs” were those close to the so called feminine natural vocations and attitudes, so for example as a teacher, educator, nurse - jobs that were regarded as the expression of woman’s inclination to help people and provide care work; eventually it also became suitable for them to work white collar jobs (secretary and clerk), the basic precept being that according to the XIX century stereotype of women, they were supposed to perform work for love, whereas wearing public work was considered not inappropriate, harmful and degrading and anyway, women’s realm was the house – “der Herd”.

According to the bourgeois ideal female type of the time, a woman had to be tidy, economical, patient, honest and careful, to devote herself to her family, to invest time in educating her children properly, to keep the house clean and neat and to prepare a welcoming nest for her husband when he would have come back tired from work\textsuperscript{123}. As it has been already explained, this was also the model propagated by the Church, so even if it was originally conceived for the bourgeois woman – who didn’t need to work and had to take care of her and her family’s image and reputation, it also ended up representing the ideal family model for the working class.

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people, who were very religious. Unfortunately for them, they couldn’t afford to live just off the husband’s income, therefore women had to go to work, and were no longer able to match the provisions set by the model. Most of all for women it was very hard to keep the pace with the steadily improving and increasingly demanding standards of hygiene and education, thus they started to develop a feeling of inferiority. In 1869 because the upper class didn’t believe in the low class educational skills the obligation was introduced for children to start school when they were six years old, for five years, with boys and girls in separated classes, to prevent children from being exploited in factories.

Coming back to the issue of women’s employment, in the XIX century in the Habsburg Empire the majority of women used to work, notwithstanding the male breadwinner family model propagated by society – Oskar Lehner in his book Familie, Recht, Politik reports that a census in 1890 showed that 61% of women were working and if we cast a look at the data of the censuses carried out from 1890 to 1910 we see that in the whole Empire the absolute number of working women actually outnumbered the number of working men, even though approximately half of the women were registered under the voice “helping family members”. A large percentage of the people (one third) were active in the agricultural sector, even though the number of those working in the industrial sector and the service sector was registering a high rate of increase; women were mostly to be found in the agricultural sector but also in the textile industry, in the food-processing branch and also in the service sector, working in taverns, bars and guesthouses, as well as in commerce.

Käthe Leichter writes in her book Frauenarbeit und Arbeiterinnenschutz in Österreich, that in 1910 43,3% of the working women helped in some family firm, around 60% were working in the agricultural sector, 28,8% were autonomous and 25,9% worked in factories; she also reports that in the same year on the average 46,6% of women were working, but the percentage for Slovene women was 56,4% while for German speaking women it was 43,8%. Most of the

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124 According to the census of 1851 94,82% of the population of the Habsburg empire was Catholic, 1,74% Orthodox and 1,29% Protestant, while in 1910 90,82% declared to be Catholic, 2,33% Orthodox and 2,06% Protestant. Data from Birgit Bolognese-Leuchtmüller, Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Berufsstruktur, Gesundheits- und Fürsorgewesen in Österreich 1750-1918, Teil 1 des Bandes by Alfred Hoffmann, Herbert Matis, Wirtschafts- und Sozialstatistik Österreich-Ungarns, Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, Vienna, 1978, page

125 Before it was up to parents whether they were sent to school or not, and since by law boys didn’t have to pay any fee, whereas girls had to pay a fee, of course only very few girls had the chance to get an education; in 1927 the mandatory period of school attendance was elevated to 8 years all together, divided in elementary and high school – see Ilse Dickinger, Das patriarchalische System als Ursache der Diskriminierung von Frauen im Berufsleben, page 99 and following.

126 Data taken from Birgit Bolognese--Leuchtmüller, Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Berufsstruktur, Gesundheits- und Fürsorgewesen in Österreich 1750-1918, different tables.

127 See Käthe Leichter, Frauenarbeit und Arbeiterinnenschutz in Österreich, Verlag „Arbeit und Wirtschaft”, Vienna, 1927
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Slovene women were busy with field and farm work or as maids, the percentage being so high because the area was characterized by a high male emigration rate, therefore women who had stayed alone at home had to take care of everything by themselves. In Carinthia most of the people – men and women – were employed in the primary sector and worked on a daily basis for the owner of very big farm-firms, whereas the secondary sector was not so developed. Leither writes that “in Carinthia and Craniola agricultural work actually rested on women’s shoulders.” As far as the region which is nowadays called Friuli Venezia Giulia, according to the Habsburg census of 1880 the so called costal area, in the county of Gorizia and Gradisca many people – men and women – were active in the agricultural sector but differently than in Carinthia, here mainly as land-owners, whereas in the county of Trieste the industrial sector and also commerce were more developed owing to the presence of the harbour. Moreover here lived most of the noble people of the region so that women’s employment rates were much lower than in other areas (at around 25%) because many of them could adhere to the prescribed bourgeois family model and afford not to work, a situation that in the whole area of my interest was coupled with the lowest rate of employment in the primary sector, a rather high rate of women employed in the industrial sector, as well as the highest rate of women working as maids – higher than the sum of the correspondent rates of all of the other areas put together. Coming to the district of the Friuli (or also called the province of Udine), here only 40% of

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128 See Peter Vodopivec, Wie die Frauen in slowenischen Raum im 19 Jahrhundert am öffentlichen Leben teilnahmen, in Margret Friedrich, Peter Urbanitsch (ed.), Von Bürgern und ihren Frauen – Bürgertum in der Habsburger Monarchie, Böhlau Verlag, Vienna, 1996, page 156.
129 For the information about both Slovenia and Carinthia see the introductory chapter of Birgit Bolognese-Leuchtmüller, Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Berufsstruktur, Gesundheits- und Fürsorgewesen in Österreich 1750-1918.
131 Statistische Zentral Commission, Ergebnisse der nach dem Stande von 31/12/1880 IN Trieste sammt Gebiet, Görz-Gradisca und Istrien ausgeführten Zählung der Bevölkerung und der häuslichen Nutzhiere, K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, Vienna, 1882 – data from different tables but mostly from page 20 and following. According to the census carried out in 1921 by the Reign of Italy, who had took over the costal area as well as part of Slovenia, which were before under the Habsburg monarchy, 25% of women in the province of Trieste were working (probably since Trieste was the only true city, here used to live the upper class, people that didn’t need to work – and in fact Trieste had more maids than all of the other areas together), compared to 46% in the area of Gorizia and Gradisca, against an impressive 52% in the Slovenian speaking area, whereas the rest of them were busy with housework or were students or in pension (or they were working but not officially). As far as the fields of activity, in the area of Gorizia Gradisca, almost haft of the women was working in the primary sector whereas in what can be called Slovenia the correspondent percentage was almost 80% (around 60% for men); in the province of Trieste around 35% of the active women were working in the industrial sector, another 35% circa as maids – here a very small percentage of people were active in the primary sector since the leading one was the industrial one, followed by commerce. Data from Istat, Censimento della populazione del regno d'Italia al 01/12/1921, Roma, 1927, mainly from the table at page 182/3..
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women were working according to the census carried out in 1871 (in the Reign of Italy). Out of them, 81% were active in the primary sector, the rest in the industrial sector and as maids.\textsuperscript{132}

Life and working condition in the XIX century were really tough. If a peasant family could auto-produce most of the things it needed for its survival, and by selling the over stock it had produced it could buy the rest. In some aspects the situation for families living in the city was even harder. Here the children only represented factors of cost and could no longer provide help (by law they had to go to school and had few chances to help at home) and the auto-production was much more limited than when living in the countryside, thus people needed more money to buy their goods. As a consequence women had to look for employment as maids, in factories or in an office if they had some education. The fact that women were entering the labour force without any qualification, out of financial need, and that they were used to the fact that their work was valued little in terms of both money and of people’s acknowledgement (in short, they were used to be exploited and took the situation for granted, as something normal) brought about the consequence that they were ready to accept work for a very little wage. This was first of all not fair to the women themselves, secondly it represented a source of competition and worries for men, who were used to getting higher salaries and became afraid of the possibility of losing their jobs to the “advantage” of women or that women’s flow into the labour market would have caused a lowering in the level of wages.\textsuperscript{133} Next to it there was also the fear – of society and more precisely of the upper class and the Church rather than of the working class itself – that working women would end up neglecting their families, that they wouldn't have had enough time and energy to educate their children, to take care of their husbands, to do the household chores, and that all of the above together would have worn them out to the detriment of their reproductive capacity. This is why society slowly began to take care of women’s working conditions, to analyze their workload and to put a limit to their exploitation. The outcome of this process was that in 1885 a law was passed which made night- and dangerous work prohibited for women and children – in this way some doors were closed to women so that male workers would have less competition, but on the other hand the fact had been taken into consideration that if women had worked over night then during the day family work and child-care wouldn’t have let them get the rest needed, which would have turned out to be too harmful to their wellbeing and their reproductive capacity; carrying out dangerous work could have had the same effect, avoidance of which was desired. Also the limit of a maximum weekly schedule of 44 hours for women was introduced for the same reasons as mentioned above, as well as in

\textsuperscript{132} Data from Ministero di agricoltura, industria e commercio, Ufficio centrale di statistica, \textit{Censimento 31 dicembre 1871}, Roma, 1871, tables at page 150 and following.

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In order to give women the possibility to carry out the housework that had been neglected over the week – so called big work like washing clothing or long cleaning and cooking tasks – so that they could have enjoyed at least one day off (like men did). Moreover in 1888 when the facultative health insurance was introduced for workers (but not for maids or farmers), women were given four weeks off after childbirth, during which they were paid between 60 and 75% of their salary: this provision – above all - was welcomed by the Socialist female organization as a very big step ahead, most of all when for example in the countryside women had to go back to their field work as soon as two-three days after having given birth134. As it was written by Käthe Leichter, “the task of the association of the female workers was to make it feasible for working women to reconcile their reproductive function with their employment without very heavy damages and to make them physically and psychically fit for action”135; she also writes that while people were inspired by the Catholic ideology – the one expressed by the three “K’s”, Kindern, Kirche, Küche – they were also in favour of passing a legislation limiting women’s work so that they could have devoted themselves to the care of their “nest” (when not directly for an increase of men’s wages so that they could have been able to maintain their families and women wouldn’t have needed to go to work any more)136, socialist women mainly claimed that women should have their right to work recognized in order to help out their families, and asserted the principle that the same pay had to be given to people performing the same job (their claim was “Gleicher Lohn für gleiche Arbeit”; Käthe Leichter reports an average gender wage gap of between 25% and 50% in 1910), thus fighting against discriminative behaviours on the basis of one’s sex and against the exploitation of women. They also held that taking into account women’s interests and helping them to get organized and to fight for a better pay was in the interests of male workers, because this way they would have eliminated women’s competition as a cheaper labour force as well as prevented the level of the average wage from going down; this next to the fact that female and male workers had common interests to fight for, owed to the fact that they shared a similar class condition.

The awareness of their different (class) situations compared to the one of bourgeois women was one of the reasons why socialist and upper-middle class women didn’t unite their voices to make their claims louder; another reason consisted of the fact that well-off women were more interested in justifying women’s need for education in order to learn to carry out a “honorable job” in case they couldn’t have gotten married, than in establishing women’s right to

134 See Käthe Leichter, Frauenarbeit und Arbeiterinnenschutz in Österreich, page 73 and following.
135 Quotation from Käthe Leichter, ibidem, page 86 (my own translation from German).
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work. Compared to Austrian women, Slovene and Italian women were not as present in the public sphere and engaged in representing their rights, the reasons for this being numerous: first of all as it has already been mentioned, most of them were farmers, very few belonged to the upper class and all of them were very religious, thus they didn’t take part in public affairs and political life (also because by law women were not allowed to join political organizations). They were confined to the private sphere, they had to work to make ends meet in their family, and to be good mothers and wives according to the ideal promoted by the Catholic Church and to the traditional gendered division of work, that’s to say that - quoting Peter Vodopivec - „the man is the head, the woman the heart, in him dwells the reason, in her the feeling… the man devotes himself to the external world... she - like the saying goes - supports the three angles of the house.”. Women’s role at home was very important not only for the wellbeing of the family but also, and more importantly, because they represented the main agent of their children’s socialization and education. As I have already said, women were usually very religious and devoted, thus the Church expected them to raise their offspring according to its norms so that they would become religious, whereas nationalist movements were interested in gaining women to their cause because besides representing half of the populations, through them they could also have won prospective supporters in their children – and this was also the stance of the Slovene nationalistic movement: even though women in general would not support it in public, at home they were responsible for teaching their children the language.

This idea that women were so called “sisters-in-arms” and “activists of the back lines” represents a stable feature of many ideologies, in fact the socialist movement, the Nazi party in Germany and the Fascist party in Italy, all paid attention to women under this point of view and planned their inclusion within their lines because of their domestic role; even if nationalist parties fostered a very conservative division of work and promoted the traditional family model based on the male breadwinner and head of the house, in case of need - when men were engaged in the battlefield - they didn’t hesitate to require women to substitute for men at home

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137 Most of all when also maids started to get organized in order to get some rights like health insurance and paid maternity leave, the existing cleavage between women of different classes showed its deepness – indeed very few borgeois women supported their maids’ claim, because the maids’ interests were conflicting with their own ones – see Lily Braun, Die Fraufrage: ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und ihre wirtschaftliche Seite, Berlin 448 and following.

138 See for example Peter Vodopivec, Wie die Frauen in slowenischen Raum im 19 Jarhundert am öffentlichen Leben teilnahmen, in Margret Friedrich, Peter Urbanitsch (ed.), Von Bürgern und ihren Frauen – Bürgertum in der Habsburger Monarchie, pp. 141-165.

139 Quotation from Peter Vodopivec, ibidem, page 148, which constitutes itself a quotation from the newspaper Novice, edition number 66 of the 17th August 1853, at page 263-264. (my translation from German).

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in everything, asking them to carry out all of the so called male work, in the fields as well as in the factories\textsuperscript{141}. This occurred during the Second but also during the First World War: Käthe Leichter reports that women were called “Soldaten des Hinterlandes” (soldiers of the hinterland) and that they were drawn into the war industry, working day and night to produce in order to meet the needs of the army, something that in the past used to be forbidden\textsuperscript{142}. The two world wars gave women the chance to step in big numbers into the public sphere, to learn to carry out different tasks, to get to know each other, to take responsibility for their families, to stand on their feet and to become autonomous, and these new experiences couldn’t be erased all at once men can back home. Actually, many women withdrew without complaining and went back to “their place”, some instead had lost their men, therefore were forced to keep on earning a living; others simply didn’t want to step back.

The fact that at the end of the war life conditions were tough, that people were poor, and therefore couldn’t spend money on unnecessary things and that the economy needed to be reconverted from being oriented towards war-production to normality, brought about a decline in the employment rate, a drop in the number of families who could afford to pay a maid and therefore a huge amount of unemployed persons who needed to find a job. Under these circumstances governments reacted by pushing for the reintegration of men into the labour force, and the Austrian government, for example, passed a legislation which provided that women could work in the public administration only if they were unmarried or widow; in general there was a widespread feeling of hostility towards double-income families, consistent with the one male breadwinner ideology and the traditional division of work it was believed that women’s place was at home and that men had the duty and the right to work\textsuperscript{143}.

At the end of the war it was easier to fire women because they had been employed last, though they represented a cheaper labour force than men and they were eager to work. As a consequence, women’s employment rates decreased at first, but soon afterwards began to rise again and, as Edith Rigler reports, between the two world wars in Austria the female employment rate rose by 6,7% while the male one fell by 3,7%, women finding employment


\textsuperscript{142} See Käthe Leichter, Frauenarbeit und Arbeiterinnenschutz in Österreich, page 11 and following.

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mostly in the public sector, in administrative places and in the trade\(^{144}\). The conservative regime that later would have taken over the power in Europe were oriented towards a traditional vision of gender relations, thus their legislation and propaganda worked to push women to withdraw from employment and to get back to their role of “angel of the home” (*Engel der heimischen Herd*).

Summarizing this chapter, we have seen that the prevalent family model in the Habsburg Empire was the male breadwinner one, which provided that the man had to earn a living in order to maintain his family, while the wife had to be at home and to take care of it and her husband and children; although this ideal type was originally meant for bourgeois families, since it was backed up by the Church it also became very popular among the farmer and worker classes, even though they couldn’t match its norms. Neither the fact that in peasant families, spinner and weavers families was the gendered division of work seldom respected, nor the increasing number of employed women could put into question the validity of its principle since it rested on a long term tradition as well as on the current legislation, besides women’s earnings were much lower than men’s and were always considered an additional income to their husbands’, because men were conceived as the breadwinners, women as just helpers. As a consequence we can say that at the time of the Habsburg Empire, and until the end of the Second World War the institution of family, the state and the labour market were characterized by patriarchal relations and that women’s condition compared to men’s was much more disadvantaged.

In the next chapter I will analyze the way woman’s condition has evolved over time in Europe and more precisely in Austria, Italy and Slovenia and the former Yugoslavia until our days, taking into consideration the development of the female employment rate together with the different kinds of welfare states that have characterized these nations, coming to outline the types of gender regimes that have been fostered. Moreover I will give account of the impact that the two phenomena of the process of globalization and of individualization of society have on women’s situation, focusing especially on Western countries.

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CHAPTER 4

WELFARE STATES AND GENDER RELATIONS – THE CASE OF AUSTRIA, ITALY AND SLOVENIA FROM THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

In the previous chapter we saw that in the Habsburg Empire, during the whole XIX century, gender relations within the family and in society in general were characterized by a strong patriarchalism, people oriented themselves towards the ideal type of the male breadwinner in families where women were employed, one of the reasons being that as soon as they had entered the marriage contract, according to law they had actually transferred to their husband the power and the authority to represent their interests, to speak for them and to administer their goods. A key role in the production and reproduction of a social order based on gender inequality and the submission of women to man has been played by the Catholic Church, which, through its priests and encyclicals, has endorsed the traditional androcentric and hierarchical division of work and glorified the family as “woman’s kingdom”\textsuperscript{145}. Nonetheless in the XIX century many women were working, even though a high level of horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour force contributed to keep their wages so low that in the end their earnings were considered just an additional family income, secondary to the man’s income.

According to the censuses that had been carried out in the Habsburg Empire – and in the Reign of Italy as far as the region of Friuli is concerned – in the period between 1871 and 1918 the areas of Carinthia, Craniola (which corresponds to contemporary Slovenia) and Friuli Venezia Giulia were characterized by the prevalence of the primary sector (more than 50% of the active population worked in this sector), followed by the industrial sector and then by transportation and commerce. As it has already been mentioned, the area which is currently Slovenia recorded the highest level of female employment, followed by Carinthia and Friuli, where women had to help in the fields or to work in inns, bars and taverns; in the area around Trieste there used to live aristocratic and bourgeois families, whose women could afford not to work and instead to hire housemaids; here there were also more women working in factories and in commerce thanks to the presence of the harbour, the only one of the whole Habsburg Empire. This was the situation at the outbreak of the First World War; at its end in 1918 the Habsburg Empire no longer existed. At its place there were the Federal Republic of Austria and the Republic of Hungary; Carinthia belonged to Austria, the area inhabited by Slovene speaking
people was partitioned between the Reign of Croats, Serbs and Slovene, the Reign of Italy and the Republic of Austria – a situation which was going to lead to many problems both in Austria and Italy, problems connected with the fact that when nationalistic parties took over the governments in the two states, Slovene people began to be discriminated against. The area of today’s Friuli Venezia Giulia was assigned to the Reign of Italy, which later under the Fascist regime pursued a policy of widening towards the East, coming to occupy and annex to itself a wide area of Slovenia. The year 1918 marked the beginning of a dissimilar historical, social and economic development for the regions of Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia, even though some features – like the strong feeling of devotion to the Catholic religion by the majority of the people, a peripheral position within their states and in respect to the decisional centres, as well as some internalized attitudes, customs and traditions - represented some common resistant-to-change features. Now since one of the objectives of this work is to discover similarities and differences between the regions of the Alps-Adriatic area concerning women’s condition less then a century after the moment when the regions of Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia started to undergo a different developmental path, then in order to understand their current situation there arises the necessity to give account of the ways in which the three regions have experienced dissimilar developments.

The real differences began to take shape at the end of the Second World War owing to the fact that all three of them between the two World War had been characterized by nationalistic regimes which had promoted a similar, traditional model of gendered division of work as well as a conservative image of the ideal woman and the ideal family.

Before going into the way Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia have differentiated themselves – and thus how women’s condition within them has become dissimilar – it is worth mentioning that during the Second World War all of the people of these areas had to face privations, invasions and foreign occupation; men were drawn into their national Army while women had to deal with serious troubles at home and to replace their men in everything, again being expected to step into public life and take responsibility for administering family matters, for earning a living and providing their household with everything it needed. It was a time of poverty and hardship, but also the time when the basis for changes were set; many people embraced the cause of Resistance and started to become organized in order to fight against Nazis and Fascists, some just because these people were considered cruel invaders, others in the name of another ideology - namely of Communism - which they wanted to establish as the leading organizational principle of society at the end of the war, when it would

145 See Maca Jogan, Maca Jogan, The stubbornness of sexism in the second part of the 20th century in Slovenia, in Niko Toš, Karl H. Müller (ed.), Political faces of Slovenia – Political orientations and values at...
Gender inequalities and social conditions of employed women in the Alps-Adriatic region have been the time of reconstruction. Women also played a very important role in the movement of Resistance, often supporting partisans by providing them with shelter and food, very often as relays among different groups, carrying arms, munitions and food as well as news, and sometimes even fighting, such as in the Balkan area.

WOMEN’S SITUATION IN YUGOSLAVIA AND IN SLOVENIA

Between the two World Wars Slovene people were part of the Kingdom of Croats, Serbs and Slovene, a multi-national monarchy characterized by an inhomogeneous level of development and different codes of law: in Slovenia the laws inherited from the Austro-Hungarian Empire were kept in force, the level of illiteracy was much lower than in the rest of the Kingdom thanks to the inheritance of the past, and the economy was more prosperous than in the Croat and Serb parts. one thing was certainly shared though, that being the discrimination against women: nor were they excluded from political rights, when working were paid much less than men, were not entitled to ask for divorce and abortion was prohibited. The Social Democratic Party of Yugoslavia, (also called Communist Party) founded in 1919, established from the very beginning a women’s section and “… championed equal rights for women, as it was aware of the importance of their activity and commitment … for their own emancipation and for the success of the revolutionary struggle as a whole.” Working women demanded equal rights to work as men, equal wages and better working conditions; even if the party was banned in 1921, it didn’t lose its power of appeal and when Josip Broz Tito became its leader in 1937, he included in the party program women’s claims such as the right to vote, adequate protection for working mothers, equal pay for equal work and so forth, thus attracting many women. When the war broke out in 1941 in Yugoslavia, the Communist party called for resistance against the invaders and was among the first to organize the National Liberation Front; all the political groups – both the ones involved in the resistance as well as those who cooperated with the invaders – tried to gain women’s support to their cause, but the partisans were the only ones

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146 Even though in the Austrian Hungarian Empire Slovene women “…lived under conditions of specific sociopolitical and national discrimination” – this is way in 1917-1918 they campaigned in favour of a Yugoslav state – the new state didn’t meet their expectations, “… on the contrary, Slovene women in Austria had a better social and legal position… there was the danger that Serbian Civil Code would have been extended to other parts of the state”, which would have represented a big step back. Quotations from Vlasta Jalušič, Women in interwar Slovenia, in Sabina P. Ramet, Gender politics in the Western Balkans: women and society in Yugoslavia and in the Yugoslav successor states, Pennsylvania State University, USA, 1999, page 53 and 58.

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who were successful in organizing a self-sustaining women’s organization. Since the Communist party had paid attention to women’s issues before the war and that during the war had inserted women’s liberation and claims within the objectives of the liberation movement, it was able to recruit many of them within its lines (the official data is two million women), moreover it gave them the right to vote and be voted for at the party conference and in local assemblies, and it assigned them important administrative tasks and functions to be carried out for the sake of the fight. The reasoning behind this was that women constituted half of the population, thus gaining their support during the war would have meant becoming the leading party at its end - which indeed happened.

In 1942, the Anti-fascist front of women was created and in 1943 its Slovene session; Communist women were sent to villages to build up local units and recruit other women to the cause in order to constitute a network to back up partisans; each unit had its council and functions were assigned to people not by appointment but democratically, through secret elections. Not many women became engaged in the actual fight though many of them died while “on duty” (the official number is around 620,000), and they had to provide support to partisans by caring for them, by relaying messages and goods, by sensitizing people to their cause and mobilizing them, by preparing sabotage acts against the enemy, and were assigned to nursing staff, propaganda units etc.

Many young women were also attracted to the cause by the alternative life style connected with it; the catchphrase for them was that the fight should have borne fruits for women, that there would have been gender equality in the new state. The Communist party also intended to promote equality between nations and nationalities and to build up a multi-ethnic federal state where each nationality would have become a republic, a solution that was very much welcomed by Slovenes. Unfortunately, being both the partisan organization as well as the Antifascist Woman Front organized on a local basis, its members came mainly from the dominant ethnic group, so while it was possible to promote ties between women and partisans and to gain support for the Communist party, the system couldn’t promote ethnic integration; in Slovenia the partisans were the only organized resistance force, thus women readily volunteered and joined it.

At the end of the war the Communist party became the leading party, with the marshal Tito its leader, thus he had to realize what had been promised before: with a referendum the monarchy was abolished and Yugoslavia became a federal republic; in 1946 it was issued the constitution where were enshrined the principles of gender equality and of equality between the

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148 See Barbara Jancar-Webster, Women in the Yugoslav national liberation movement, in Sabina P. Ramet, Gender politics in the Western Balkans: women and society in Yugoslavia and in the Yugoslav
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different nations. The state took the name of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and was made
up by six republics (and two autonomous provinces), each with its own constitution; the principle
of the separation of Church and State, was introduced there was freedom of religion but it was
regarded as a personal issue, whereas Church properties were confiscated and nationalized,
moreover a limit was set up to the admitted entity of one’s private property – for examples each
farmer household could have up to 210 hectares of arable land. Women’s situation improved
thanks to the 24th article of the constitution which provided that men and women were to get the
same pay for carrying out the same work and that women were entitled to a period of paid leave
after child-birth; besides that, both partners had the possibility to ask for divorce and children
born within or outside marriage had the same rights.

In 1950 the principle of self-management in the sphere of material production was
introduced, and later on also for social services (in 1974 it became “advanced self-
management”), which meant that in each city a council of the association of working people was
set up, where public affairs were discussed and each person had a say; means of production,
money and labour were pulled together and it had to be decided how to employ them within the
framework provided by the central authorities; also women’s issues became a matter of public
discussion – of course the solutions for each issue had to be found respecting the federal
constitution, the constitution of each republic as well as its legislation. Local communities made
decisions as far as health facilities, childcare, education, culture, environmental protection and
so forth; because of the decisive contribution given by women during the war, they were entitled
by the constitution to work and to enter the labour associations on the same feet as men,
besides the socialist government wanted to provide “…a new base for marital and family
relations”149, and it tried to transfer part of care work from women to social institutions - for
example it invested in childcare facilities and canteens.

In her book Gender politics in the Western Balkans: women and society in Yugoslavia and in the
Yugoslav successor states, Sabina P. Ramet writes that “the Communist [party] did more than
any other political party holding office in the 20th century, to highlight the importance of gender
equality. But the communist failed ultimately, in Yugoslavia as elsewhere, to take up the tasks of
using the educational system to reshape people’s thinking about gender diversity.”150. Indeed
even if the principle of gender equality was a constitutional principle, Yugoslav women were
under-represented within political bodies, the labour market was segregated and traditional

149 Quotation from Vida Tomšič, Woman in the development of Socialist self-managing Yugoslavia, page
66. quoted from the official program of the Communist party.
150 Sabina P. Ramet, Gender politics in the Western Balkans: women and society in Yugoslavia and in the
Yugoslav successor states, page 95.
patriarchal relations survived, most of all in the countryside – Ramet reports that the same Tito had pinpointed that “the under-representation of women in political life was contrary to the principle of gender equality”, but still in 1977 for example only 23.3% of part members were women\textsuperscript{151}. Vida Tomšič in her book \textit{Woman in the development of Socialist self-managing Yugoslavia}, acknowledges that it had been proved to be very hard to overcome conservative-bourgeois family mindsets, that thanks to the investments in public care facilities working women could be relieved from some of the care work that they used to provide, but that men were not asked directly to become more engaged in the private sphere and to increase their share of household work, thus patriarchal marriage relations could survive; moreover she states that “legal equality doesn’t eliminate the roots of discrimination” and that “the remnants of the patriarchal mentality live not only in the male section of society.”\textsuperscript{152}. She highlights that people living in cities and villages or belonging to different age cohorts had different mentalities, that the need for a change in the division of roles was still evident, and that family relations should have become more egalitarian, whereas instead, women were “still regarded as primarily responsible for child-care and the upbringing of children.”\textsuperscript{153} Actually she writes that the Communist party officially promoted an equal sharing of work among the family members and was in favour of women’s active participation in all social activities, not as women but as individuals, this is why in 1953 the association of the Antifascist Front of Women was closed – women’s problems had to represent societal problems thus they had to be dealt with within the comprehensive Socialist alliance of working people.

Two bodies were created in order to take care of women’s problems: the Committee for the socio-economic position of women and the Council for family planning; they had to carry out research, report the results to the whole organization and give advice on what to do. Childcare facilities (Kindergarten, \textit{crèches} and day-care centers), homes for the elderly, health care centers and marriage counseling centers were built in order to release (working) women from some duties that had historically been on their shoulders\textsuperscript{154}; these social welfare institutions were financed by state budgeting as well as by people through the self-managing system. At the beginning of the ’60 s child allowances were introduced in order to care for children’s wellbeing independently on their legal status; in 1969 a federal law was passed which made abortion legal and contraceptives available for free and later on in 1974 it was put into the constitution that...
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every person had the right to freely decide about his (her) reproductive capacity, besides it was set out that the duration of the maternity leave was to be 6 months with an allowance of 100% of one’s average salary; in 1976 parental leave was made available also for fathers and in 1986 – on advice of the Committee for the socio-economic position of women – it was prolonged up to one year.

The point of all of the above was that in order to realize gender equality there had to be created the social conditions that would have enabled everybody (women) to exercise his/her right to work and to take part in the self-managing system; the measures introduced in Yugoslavia were successful in increasing the rate of female employment, in fact as far as Slovenia (which had always had better records than the other republics) while in 1952 women constituted 33.3% of the labour force, in 1970 the percentage had increased to 41,2%, in 1980 it was 44,2% and in 1990 it had reached 46,9%, which is to say that women constituted almost half of the workforce, and almost all of them were employed full-time. Unfortunately the phenomenon of the gendered segregation of occupations, together with the different educational paths undertaken by men and women in general are to be held responsible, if not in total then at least in part for the persistence of a gender wage gap, decreasing but still present (again for Slovenia its rate was of 25% in 1951 and in 1998 still of 11,3%). If in the ’50s the system of the planned economy demanded the engagement of all of the available work force - thus in order to meet the needs of reconstruction, of the process of industrialization and of modernization of the whole country the absolute numbers of employment rate were increasing for both sexes - when in the ’60s a drop in the economic performances was registered, the idea that “women’s labour does not pay” and that women have to take care of their families gained weight again and as Vida Tomšič reports, it was women who were first pushed out of the labour market. Indeed on the one hand, even if the principle of the separation between state and Church had been established, the Catholic legacy as far as the gendered division of work would have remained very strong thus contributing to keeping alive traditional models and values; on the other hand it can be said that the socialist system had promoted the ideal type of the “revolutionary


156 According to Eva Bahovec, Nina Vodopivec, Tanja Salec, when in 1951 women were gaining on the average 25% less than men, 13% of the difference can be attributed to the fact that women held lower level of qualification but the remaining 12% was owed to gender inequalities - from the chapter by the three authors, *Slovenia*, in Gabriele Griffin (ed.), *Women’s employment, women’s studies and equal opportunities 1945 – 2001, Reports from nine European Countries*, University of Hull, UK, 2002, pp.292 – 232.

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proletarian mother”, a citizen who became engaged in the labour force, believed strongly in the socialist ideology but had also to be a good and unselfish mother who was ready to get engaged in the public sphere when there had arisen the need – during the war for example. The sociologists Eva Bahovec, Nina Vodopivec and Tanja Salecl in their contribution about Slovenia in the book edited by Gabriele Griffin, Women’s employment, women’s studies and equal opportunities 1945 – 2001, Reports from nine European Countries, highlight twice (on pages 293 and 324) that gender relations have been changing very slowly because of the pre-communist social and cultural traditions, but also because the ruling party “treated women as a reserve: in critical moments they were supposed to enter the arena of public life…”, on the other hand “…unqualified female workers were then supposed to begin to return to family life.” Moreover the socialist system had never actually gotten engaged in the promotion of a fairer division of work at home, though to a certain extent it had tried to transfer some family-private work to the public sphere in order to put women in the condition to be in the labour force like men, but it had never encouraged men to carry out household chores – even though by acknowledging them the right to have the paternal and parental leave, it did support men’s involvement in family care work. All in all – as a consequence – it can be said that in Yugoslavia and thus also in the Republic of Slovenia “the position of women in the family is [was] based on contradictions. Equal rights protected by legislation, egalitarian ideology and institutional support coincide with traditional patriarchal patterns of behaviour”\textsuperscript{158}, “the traditional woman’s role had never been questioned, the mother-governess-housewife had to be helped to cope with her double role\textsuperscript{159} of mother and worker - so that in the end women have accepted their double burden (job and family work) as something “natural”.

WOMEN’S SITUATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND WORK IN SLOVENIA SINCE ITS INDEPENDENCE.

In 2002 the Slovene population amounted to 1.964.036 people, out of which 51,2% were women; the employment rate\textsuperscript{160} measured 64,3%, the female rate was 59,8% and the male one 68,7%. For what concerns the unemployment rate, in 2001 it was 5,9% and broken down by


\textsuperscript{160} In Slovenia it is calculated for the population aged between 15 and 64 year old.

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sex, the value for men was 5.6%, for women 6.3%; in 2002 it was registered a youth unemployment rate of 15% (calculated on people between 15 and 24 year old).

In order to understand such statistics we have to take into consideration their evolution, in fact after having gained independence in 1991 Slovene had to face some very challenging transformation, which of course affected the labour market. In the report *Gender, Work and Employment in Ten Accession Countries of Central Eastern Europe to the EU* by Pollert and Fodor (2004) we can read that in the country the ratio of the female labour force to the total labour force had had an increasing trend until the beginning of the ‘90s, while afterwards a shift occurred and it began to decrease. This can be explained considering the evolution of the level of unemployment: since the middle of the ‘90s women began to become over-represented among the unemployed (in 1995 they made up 43% of the unemployed; in 2001 already 48.9%), while the number of unemployed men decreased from 49 thousand in 1993, to 39 thousand in 1995, to 29 thousand in 2001. This occurred because when the country embarked on the transition process from a socialist economic system into a capitalistic one, the first sectors that were affected by closing-downs were the traditionally male-dominated ones, thus more men than women lost their jobs; after some years people also began to be dismissed in the service sector – where, as we will see, women represented the majority of the employees.

The fact that in the last few years the male unemployment rate has decreased to a greater extent than the female one can also be interpreted as evidence that Slovene employers would rather hire a man than a woman, a discriminating behaviour within the recruitment process that would clearly go against the anti-discrimination clauses of the Employment Relationships Act (ERA) of 2003. Unfortunately such an interpretation has been confirmed by a study carried out in 1996 in 16 small, 20 middle and 14 big companies: 70% of the interviewed employers declared that hiring a young woman who could potentially make use of maternity and parental leave represented for the firm a higher burden/risk than the employment of a man.

For what concerns gender segregation from the perspective of the distribution of male and female employment across sectors, in 2002 the employment rate in agriculture amounted to 9.6% both for men and women; an average of 47% of men and 28.5% of women were working in the industry (the total employment rate for this sector was 38.5%), while 61.3% of women and 42.8% of men had a job in the service sector. If we compare this data with that of 1993 we can

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see that while the first sector registered a decrease of less than one percentage point in the number of employed people, women employment rates in the secondary and tertiary sector changed by -5,2% and +5,8% respectively. So we can say that in 2002 the service sector was rather feminized, with almost 2/3 of all women working there, while the majority of men still had a job in the industrial sector.

According to the 2004 Labour force survey by STAT on the average women worked 39,8 hours a week and men 42,1, which means that there was almost no gender gap concerning the working schedule. These figures are confirmed by the fact that 92,6% of women had a full-time job (95% of men do), while the incidence of female part-time workers on the whole amounted to 44,9%, which, compared to European data, is very low. We can give account for such a situation by recalling the fact that under the socialist system there were almost only full-time jobs, and women made up almost half of the active labour force because suitable childcare services were provided. Anyhow it is likely that the share of part-time workers in the number of employed people will increase in the future, because in the 2004 National Action Plan for employment (NAP) it was established that that kind of contract should be encouraged in order to improve the flexibility of the Slovene labour market.

In order to give a comprehensive picture about women’s position in the workforce in Slovenia it must be added that only 14,1% of them are employed with fixed-term contracts, that they make up 25% of the self-employed persons, and that the average gender wage gap measures 10,8%.

As a conclusion for this part of the analysis it is possible to say that thanks to the legacy of the former socialist system, where the planned economy demanded the engagement of the entirely available workforce, women in Slovenia far e quite well in the labour market since they show high participation rate among the employed and also similar working patterns in comparison to men. The negative aspects consist of a certain level of segregation in the labour force and in the fact that unemployment has recently affected women more than men, two data that can be taken as evidence for the worsening of women’s position also in light of the attitudes shown by employers towards young women within the recruitment process. Moreover it has to be reported that while

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164 For further details see also the report by the European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Working conditions and gender in an enlarged Europe, Luxembourg, 2005.
165 See www.stat.si/letopis
166 In the article Working time developments – 2004, Mark Carley reports that in Slovenia a uniform 40-hour week is applied, with none of the three sectors differing from the national average by more than two hours. Mark Carley, Working time developments – 2004, EIRO; April 2005.
During the socialist system the principle of gender equality was rooted in the constitution, since 1945 and it has been taken for granted that the process of modernisation and transition towards a market economy occurred along with the spreading of androcentric attitudes.

On one hand partially in connection with the problematic phenomenon of an increasing male unemployment, on the other hand through the advertisement of an alleged “Western Woman” who had not been forced by the socialist state to enter the workforce instead of performing her “natural” role of mother at home, in the ‘90s the Catholic Church and right-winged parties began to call for a re-domestication of women. As we see from the longitudinal analysis of the results of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) for Slovenia, carried out by the sociologist Maca Jogan, at first people were tempted by the ideas of the androcentric propaganda to which they were exposed, but very soon they realized that it was not feasible for a family for the woman not to work, mostly because the economic crisis at the beginning of the transaction was mainly affecting men’s jobs. As a consequence Slovene people showed a clear rejection of the male-breadwinner ideology, and for example in 2003, 88.3% of male respondents and 91.5% of female ones agreed or strongly agreed that both the man and the woman should contribute to the family income. Nonetheless when it comes to childrearing or to the division of household tasks, androcentric attitudes and behaviours come to the surface and prove that the traditional patriarchal orientation has survived the socialist gender egalitarian orientation. In fact from the answers given to both the ISSP questionnaire and to national opinion surveys from 1992 to 2003, as well as from researches about the way men and women employ their time, it is clear that at least for what concerns the private sphere the Slovene society is still somewhat sexist. The research about time-use recorded that the amount of time men and women dedicate weekly to carrying out household work was 6.3 and 23.3 hours respectively in 1994 and then of 7.93 and 21.79 hours in 2003, which is a ratio of 1 to 3, indicating women’s performance is three times that of men’s. If we recall the fact that...
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average, Slovenian women work (for pay) as much as men do, it turns out that they must feel overburdened.

If we take a look at the data about the parental leave takers broken down by sex, in 2004 only 1.59% of all the users were fathers (which represents 1.8% of all fathers), while as far as the paternal leave, in 2004 72% of fathers stayed home for 15 days whereas only 9% of them stayed home longer, numbers that speak for themselves. But let's have a closer look at the regulation of childbearing and childrearing leaves.

In Slovenia there are four kinds of leave: maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave, all of which are financed by the public social security system; we will discuss here the first three¹⁷³. The maternity leave lasts 105 days and usually only mothers are entitled to it (a father can replace the mother only under special circumstances; it starts 28 days before giving birth and the benefit amounts to 100% of the mother’s salary; if she works part-time she also gets the same social insurance payments of a full time employee. At the end of the leave there exists the right to re-enter one’s usual position, and until the child’s 3rd birthday the parent who cares for and nurses him has the right to make use of the parental leave in its part time form; if at the end of the maternal leave a breastfeeding mother goes back to her full time job, she is entitled to at least one hour of paid break for breastfeeding.

Paternity leave was first introduced in 2003 (even if already in 1976 parental leave was made available to fathers); under the current regulation it is a non-transferable right of the father and consists of 90 days. The first 15 days must be taken within the mother’s maternal leave and men are paid 100% of their average salary; the other 75 days may be used until the child turns 8 years old and the father gets paid only the social security contributions according to the minimal wage.

For what concerns the parental leave, when the maternal leave is over one of the parents is entitled to 260 days of paid leave with full compensation of one’s salary for the purpose of nursing and caring for the child; in case of twins the parent is entitled to an additional 90 days for each child after the first. The parental leave can be used in a block or on a part-time basis - in the latter case it lasts till the child turns three years old, an option that in 2004 was chosen by 10% of the entitled parents. The benefit – called “parental compensation” - amounts to 100% of one’s average salary for the full-time option while for the part-time form the parent is paid

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according to how many hours s/he actually works, through social insurance is paid as if the s/he was working full time. Special provisions exist in case of birth of (severely mentally) disabled children as well as for adoption.

If the parent doesn’t use the whole parental leave it is possible to get up to five months of parental compensation in order to pay for childcare services, for rent or other house expenses; as already pointed out above, it is mostly women who end up taking the parental leave; it is also worth mentioning that in everyday language people employ the expression “maternal leave” to refer not only to the real maternal leave but also to the parental one, thus actually thinking that the maternal leave as such lasts for one whole year and that (just) the mother is entitled to it.

In case the parents are not entitled to paternal compensation after the birth of a child (for example because they don’t work/ were not insured for parenthood), they can apply for a special financial assistance called “parental allowance” which amounts to circa € 125 monthly, to be granted for 12 month; it may also be paid to a third person when s/he is the one who actually minds the child (for example a grandparent).

For each new-born child the family is granted a “one-time assistance” which either consists of a package or of money, exactly € 208. Besides, each parent in charge of the maintenance of a child receives financial help from the state in the form of a Child allowance: depending on the per-capita family income the family is granted a certain sum of money for each child until they turn 18 years old, which progressively increases by 10% for each additional child. If a pre-school child doesn’t go to kindergarten, the allowance for him will be 20% higher; if a youth is studying s/he can also receive the child allowance till s/he gets 26 years old. On top of these provisions there is also a large-family allowance, which is paid once a year to families with three or more children and amounts to € 292.

Employees also have the right to up to seven days of paid leave each year, for personal circumstances, and also to one day of leave when they get married or when it occurs that a very close relative dies.

The fact that a family is granted a child allowance increase of 20% if the child doesn’t attend the Kindergarten may represent an incentive for people not to use day care, but rather to find another solution in order to get the money, an hypothesis that seems to be feasible because the kindergarten attendance rate in the 2002/03 school year amounted to 42,5% for children aged from one to three years old, and to 71,2% for the children between four and six years old. As Violeta Neubauer has reported in her speech at the conference “Women and men in an enlarged Europe” which took place in 2004, thanks to the Pre-School Institutions Act which forced municipalities to provide children a chance to receive childcare services, the number of children who could go to a kindergarten has increased, so that nowadays only for a few of them
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may it be problematic to find a place in a kindergarten. The price for the tuition fee varies according to the family income and to the number of children who use the service, though it has to be within a given price range (in 2000 on average parents paid for 32% of the actual price of the service); families who are entitled to a welfare supplement are exempted from any payment. In 2001 Slovenia devoted 25,6% of its GDP to social security, while 9,2% was the amount of GDP allocated for payments connected to maternal, paternal and paternity leave and to childcare services.

It also has to be reported that in the 2003 ISSP survey the majority of people (45,7%) claimed that a women should work on a part-time basis when there are pre-school children in the family, which is to say that although in Slovenia part-time employment still only constitutes a marginal share of all of the contracts, people think that it may represent a good measure in order to reconcile family and work (for women). It must also be underlined that while in 1993 52,3% of the interviewed answered that when a woman has a pre-school child she should stay at home and not work, in 2003 that percentage had dropped to 28,8%, which means that the majority of people nowadays have embraced the dual breadwinner ideology.

WOMEN’S SITUATION IN AUSTRIA.

In 1918, at the end of the First World War, the newly-established Republic of Austria had already given women the right to vote; as it has already been illustrated, Austria was a truly Catholic country, but this couldn’t help the spreading of secularized behaviours like divorce and cohabitation, a consequence of which was a high rate of children born out of the wedlock; as far as women’s employment, as it was highlighted by Käthe Leichter, Austria was already characterized before the First World War as well as after it by a high level of female engagement in the workforce (higher in comparison with the rates of other states), even though the labour market presented itself as very much segregated by gender and the gender wage gap was significant.

During the Second World War, women at home had to provide for everything owing to the fact that men had been recruited into the Army and sent to the battle fields, - they were called to work in the factories instead of men in order to produce what was necessary for the war, and of course they had to work in the fields – as much as possible – in order to produce food to feed their families. The fact was they had to face the hardship of the circumstances and somehow earn a living to maintain themselves and their children. At the end of the conflict the situation was bad< the country had suffered a high loss of human lives (mostly of men of working age) and there were many widows as well as separated women (because the war had changed their husbands so much that living together had become unbearable) that women couldn’t just
withdraw into the private sphere, but had to keep working. Birgit Bolognese-Leuchtenmüller reports that in 1951 women represented 39% of the workforce, which was above the international average, but below the percentage it had before the war as well as below the rate of the rest of the '50s and '60s – she explains this data by pinpointing that at the end of the war there had been a baby-boom, therefore women with toddlers were out of the labour force. The historian also reports the data about the female employment rate in different occupations, and again we see that the phenomenon of the gendered segregation of the workforce hadn’t disappeared and that, the experience women had gained during the war and the fundamental contribution they had given notwithstanding, they were still paid less than men. Moreover the educational paths for girls and boys were still dissimilar, characterized by a remarkable level of segregation as well, but the situation was slowing going to improve in the sense that women soon started to progressively catch up with men regarding educational attainment and qualifications.

Through time women’s engagement in the labour force in Austria has followed an increasing trend, and along with economic development, has occurred a shift of working people from the primary sector to the industrial sector and then to the service sector –something which hasn’t changed radically though, is the gendered segregation of the labour force. According to the report about gender inequalities issued by the Austrian Ministry for social security and generations in 2002, in 1951 the female employment rate was 49%, which grew to 53% in 1961, then went back to 49% in 1971, to increase again and steadily to 54% in 1981, 58% in 1991, 61% in 1991, and finally 62% in 2000. While in 1951 more than one third of women were self-employed, or rather were helping in (mainly) agricultural family enterprises, in 2000 that number had fallen to 5%, while the number of the employees had doubled; it must be stressed that through time people have been devoting a longer period of their life to their education, and also that over time the legislation has changed as far as the requirements for retiring, thus these elements can give account for a part of the changes that have occurred as far as female (and male) employment rate, most of all at the beginning and towards the end of people’s working lives. One thing that has not improved so much in Austria is the level of segregation of the labour force: according to a report by the Institute for advanced studies of Vienna (IHS), the index of segregation in Austria has recorded one of the highest values in the world because

175 Birgit Bolognese-Leuchtenmüller reports that in June 1948 on the average a woman working in Vienna was getting only 66% of a man’s wage, despite the fact that her working week usually consisted of 44 hours, his of 46, i.e. there was just a couple of hours of difference.
176 See Bundesministerium für Soziale Sicherheit und Generationen, Geschlechtsspezifische Disparitäten, Vienna, 2002, page 33 and following.
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taking into consideration data from the period between 1994 and 1998 67.4% of women were employed in typical female jobs (i.e. jobs where women represent the majority of the workforce) while only 8% of them were in typical male jobs, moreover more than 50% of women were concentrated in just four occupations out of a classification of 27 of them, all four pertaining to the third sector - white collars and shop assistants, professions connected with taking care of other people and in providing assistance to clients\textsuperscript{177}. If it holds true that the service sector is the only one where an increase in the employment rate was registered (+0.9% at the national level from 2002 to 2003), then unfortunately it is also true that here we find the so-called Mc-jobs, which are the ones with the lowest salaries and the worst possibilities for making a career. According to the OECD in 2002 in Austria the gender wage gap ranged between 20% and 30% (to women’s disadvantage of course), the reasons for such a difference to be looked for in different educational achievements and qualifications between men and women, shorter working schedules and lower level of seniority for women, dissimilar career progressions as well as much longer periods of leave\textsuperscript{178} - a part of such a percentage however, would not be explainable through the above mentioned factors, which means that it should be attributed to a discriminative behaviour against women\textsuperscript{179}.

If we take into account just the data on official employment we see that in the ‘50s women’s working paths used to follow an increasing trend until they got married or had children – usually between 20 and 25 years old – called the two-phase-model; over time behaviours have changed, and the curve of female employment with them, so that in the ‘70s it assumed the shape of an M with its peak down in correspondence with the moment when women would temporarily withdraw from the labour force in order to take care of their children, and later to return to work, - also called the three-phase model. In recent times the curve of female employment over a life-time has taken the shape of an inverse U, thus getting closer to the curve of male employment\textsuperscript{180}: man usually records a high level of employment over his whole


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working life, if the curve of female employment was similar to the male one, it would mean that women’s employment rates have increased in general, and that it doesn’t present long periods of time off the labour market due to family reasons. In fact this is true, but if we cast a look at the kind of contracts under which women usually work, we see that many of them have just part-time jobs, which doesn’t hold true for men. In the ministerial report about gender inequalities it is possible to follow the way part-time contracts have spread in Austria, so we can see that from the year 1975 to the year 2000 the percentage of men working part-time has increased from 1 to 3%, whereas for women it has gone from 14% to 29% and in absolute terms it has tripled.

Coming to current times, the 2001 Austrian census registered an average employment rate of 69.3%, with the female one being 59.8% and the male one reaching 75.9%; as far as unemployment, according to the information gathered by the AMS (Arbeitsmarktservice) it had been increasing until 1998 - when the average reached 7.1% and broken down by sex, was 7.5% for women and 6.9% for men -. later on it recorded a decreasing trend and actually women’s situation was improving faster than men-s (indeed in the year 2000 the female unemployment rate was 5.9% and the male one, 5.8%), but unfortunately in the first years of the third millennium it started to increase again, reaching the rate of 6.9% in 2002 and 7% in 2003, even though now the problem affects men to a higher extent than women. At any rate it has to be underlined that Austria had a peculiar system for calculating the unemployment rate until 1995, when it joined the European Union: the method already employed in the other member states has been used starting with this year and according to it Austrian figures are lower - for example in the year 2000 the unemployment rate amounted to 4.4% for women and 3.2% for men – much lower than those recorded in the other countries.

Finally it is worth looking at mothers’ employment rate: in 2001 according to the study Babies and bosses by the OECD, 41% of women were working full-time, 20.3% with a part-time contract and 3.4% were on leave – for mothers of children up to 16 years old these rates were 30.4%, 32.2% and 9.4% respectively, thus showing how having children obviously reduces the

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181 This occurs because the provisions regarding maternal and parental leave have improved over time, coming to cover a longer period of time during which women are still counted among the active population, this is why the peak down has disappeared. I am going to illustrate these provisions in the next pages. For the model describing employment patterns, see Friederike Maier, Employment and equal opportunities – Development of the labour market in the European Union, in Federal Chancellery, Federal Ministry for Women’s Affairs and Consumer Protection, Eva Cyba, Margit Knipp, Employment 2002: the future of women – Labour market, equal opportunities, information and communication technologies, European Commission, Federal Ministry for Women’s Affairs and Consumer Protection, University for Design, Linz, Documentation of the EU Conference 3-4 September 1998, Linz, pp. 12-38.

182 See Bundesministerium für Soziale Sicherheit und Generationen, Geschlechtsspezifische Disparitäten, Vienna, 2002, page 50 and following.

183 In Austria it is calculated considered the number of men aged between 15 and 64 years old and of women between 15 and 60 year old, since they can already retire when they turn 60 year old.

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possibility or willingness to work full-time and increases the rate of the part-time female workers. Even more interesting is the correspondent data for mothers of children up to 3 years old; in fact only 14.7% of them work full-time, 17.2% work part-time and 40% are on leave - and since during the leave they are still included in the active population, it results that in general 71.9% of mothers with children under 3 years old are in the workforce, while actually only 31.9% of them do work. Finally, regarding the mothers of children between 3 and 6 years old, in 2001 28.2% were working full-time and 37.4% part-time, therefore confirming that having pre-school children makes it more likely for women to be employed part-time and also that when children start to attend kindergarten, mothers go back to work; of course the higher the number of children, the more likely it is that their mother will be working part-time or temporarily withdraw from the labour force. Other elements that affect a mother’s decision on whether to be employed or not are her husband’s income, her level of education, her kind of job and attachment to it (because of the job itself or because of the wage); the quality, availability and price of childcare facilities; of course there is an inverse relation between the level of education of the woman, her income, the extent to which she likes her job and the availability of affordable and trustworthy childcare centres, and the likeliness that she will quit in order to take care of her family (at least) while her children are very young, whereas her husband’s income has a direct relation with this likeliness. Moreover, external factors also matter, for example the range of jobs that are available to the woman, the economic situation as well as the taxation system185 and socio-political factors in general, the most important of all being social expectations about how a mother is supposed to behave186. In another report by the Institute for Advanced Studies, from 2001, we can read that “since women because of a traditional role attribution are held responsible for many spheres of reproductive work (housework, child-minding, child-raising etc.) and since there is no sufficient alternative to turn this non-paid work into paid work, there exist clear, on-going tendencies for women on the Austrian labour market to be discriminated”187. Also, because of the current provisions as far as parental leave and the existing family policies – which I am going to discuss later on – many scholars agree with the assumption that the Austrian society fosters the

185 For example in Austria in 2001 there was a taxation system which penalized the second earners of a household, in fact if a woman had earned 67% of APW (the wage of an average production worker), had she been not married, her income would have been taxed at a rate of 22%, while if she was married and the second earner of a household, her income would have been taxed at a rate of 25%, thus penalizing her – see Florence Jaumotte, Female labour force participation: past trends and main determinants in OECD countries, OECD working paper no. 376, Paris, December 2003.
186 For a deepening see Manfred G. Schmidt, Erwerbsbeteiligung von Frauen und Männern in Industrieländervergleich, Leske + Budrich, Opladen, Hemsbach, 1993.
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traditional male breadwinner model at least for families with pre-school children\textsuperscript{188}, a position which is also backed up by the results of opinion polls that have been recently carried out in the country.

According to the ISSP survey of 1994, almost half of the interviewed agreed with the statement that “a man’s job is to earn money, a woman’s job is to look after home and family” (48.1% agreed or strongly agreed, while 36.3% disagreed), while a striking 73.3% was of the opinion that a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works (only 17.8% disagreed with the statement); the results for the same questions eight years later (ISSP survey 2002) show a modification of people’s ideas and attitudes towards a less conservative position, but the weight of the tradition is still evident, in fact 29.5% of people still agreed with the first statement (and 45.9% disagreed) and 64% agreed with the second statement (20.5% disagreed), values which are among the highest in Europe\textsuperscript{189}.

The results of the Eurobarometer opinion survey carried out in 1996 also confirm Austrians’ orientation towards the male breadwinner model and the acceptance of a gendered division of work, in fact only 68% of men and 78% of women were of the opinion that having a job is as important for a woman as for a man (for example in Sweden the percentages were 98% and 90% respectively; in Italy, 97% and 87%), while 29% of women and 42% of men agreed with the statement that when job are scarce men should get priority over women (in Sweden only 7% of women and 8% of men agreed, in the Netherlands 25% and 27% respectively)\textsuperscript{190}.

We come now to the current provisions for maternal, paternal and parental leave as well as regarding child allowances. For what concerns maternal leave, in Austria employed pregnant mothers are entitled to a maternity benefit which amounts to their average wage for a period of 16 weeks, usually 8 weeks before and 8 after the confinement. During such a leave their social insurance contributions are regularly paid, they are protected against dismissal\textsuperscript{191} as well have the right to get back to their usual job afterwards. Also, formally unemployed women enjoy maternity leave and receive an allowance of the same entity of the unemployment benefit, while working women with really low income are granted a payment of almost € 7 daily; fathers are


\textsuperscript{189} For the whole data of the ISSP survey of 2002 see Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, Family and changing gender roles III, Study number ZA3880, ISSP 2002.

\textsuperscript{190} Eurobarometer 44.3, Equal opportunities for women and men in Europe?, Luxembourg, European Community, 1998.

\textsuperscript{191} The protection from dismissal lasts longer than the actual maternity leave, i.e. it covers also the four months following its end.
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not entitled to paternity leave but some collective agreements provide them one or two days off around the child’s birth.

After having carried out a pilot test in Carinthia in 2001, in 2002 it was introduced the Kindergeld in the whole federation: it is a monthly child benefit check of € 436 to be paid to each family whose income doesn’t exceed a certain threshold, until the child turns three year old; this payment is not connected to woman’s employment, housewives and students are also entitled to it and it was introduced with the specific goal “to create a child-friendly atmosphere and to prove that the education and care of children represent important services for society and for the social and economical future development.”

Under the current provisions, at the end of the compulsory maternity leave both parents are entitled to alternatively take up a period of parental leave; it is possible to switch twice between the father and the mother (but each period of leave must last for at least three months) and they are also allowed to get one month off contemporarily – in this case the leave will then end when the child is 23 months old. It is also possible to arrange with the employer to have part-time leave, which will then last up to the child’s 4th birthday unless the parents opt for this formula simultaneously. For the first two years after the birth the law prohibits the firing of the parent who makes use of the parental leave, and at the end of the period s/he has to be given back his/her usual job. The financial benefit consists, for every person regardless of his/her usual wage, of € 14,53 a day and can last up to 30 months or even 36 months when the father also assumes childcare duties; for single parents and twin-births there are special regulations, i.e. the monthly allowance increases (in case of twins, the family receives additional € 218 monthly for each child after the first). Moreover the law provides that the beneficiary is allowed to earn an extra income of up to € 14,600 a year without benefit loss, this allegedly with the aim of promoting labour market participation of mothers of small children and in order to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family obligations. The problem is that the illustrated provision has a “sore point” consisting of the difference between the duration of the ban from dismissal during the parental leave (up to the child’s 2nd birthday) and the period of time during which Kindergeld is paid, namely for 30 or 36 months. Mothers - most of all when they have a low-paying job - often end up losing their protection from dismissal to take the chance to stay at home longer and to personally mind their child, but this way they may be fired, while it must be also

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193 In this case the leave is shortened of as many months as both parents are working part time simultaneously; it is also possible to have a full time leave for a certain period and later on turn it into a part-time leave for the rest of the time (one month full time is counted as two months part-time), as well as to decide to post-pone three months of leave and use it in the future, within the first seven years of child’s life.
underlined that the social security contributions are paid only for the actual period of the statutory parental leave, which is to say for two years. A study from the WIFO\textsuperscript{194} (Österreichisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung) found that between 2000 and 2002 a drop was registered in the number of mothers who had gone back to work within 24 months after birth (i.e. at the end of the parental leave according to the old provisions), and precisely from 54\% to 35\%. In the first version of the already mentioned WIFO study we can read the following statement: “the provision of the child-care benefit should have improved the parents’ freedom of choice regarding how to solve the issue of childcare and regarding their own presence in the workforce. The here reported findings show that in the frame of the current regulation such provision has led to a prolongation of women’s withdrawal from working life, without bringing about a more active participation of fathers to the institute of parental leave in order to take care of their children.”\textsuperscript{195}. As a matter of fact despite a recorded increase in the number of fathers taking up the parental leave (it amounted to 1.067 male users in 1997, 1.157 in 1999 and 1.420 in 2000)\textsuperscript{196}, under the current regulation male workers are hindered rather than encouraged to go on leave because of the high income-losses connected with it. In fact men usually earn more than women (31,9\% more on the average in 2000\textsuperscript{197}), and the child benefit being totally disconnected from one’s actual income, the more one earns, the bigger the sum which s/he has to renounce. This is also why mothers with better paid jobs tend to go back to work earlier compared with the rest of working women; as well, many of them don’t manage to re-enter their job after they chose to stay home for 33 months\textsuperscript{198}. As it has been written by an expert of the OECD, “the possibility of taking relatively long parental leave, especially when it is combined with financial benefits, is particularly attractive to less skilled women or women in precarious job situations, i.e. precisely those women who subsequently find it most difficult to return to work.”\textsuperscript{199}.

\textsuperscript{195} Similar results for what concerns the impact of paternity leave provisions over women’s employment were found in the study by Rafael Lalive, Josef Zweimüller, Does paternal leave affect fertility and return to work? Evidence from a “true natural experiment”, Bonn, May 2005.
\textsuperscript{197} See Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, Die Stellung der Frauen im österreichischen Erwerbsleben, Vienna 2002, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{198} Georg Adam, Calls for reform of childcare benefit scheme, EIRO, Vienna April 2004.
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One of the more important reasons why so few fathers get engaged in childcare activities stems from the fact that despite the ongoing and growing trend of female participation in the labour force, the Austrian society has proved to still be rather traditional when it comes to the division of household duties (as it has been already illustrated with the data about the ISSP survey and the Eurobarometer), thus women feel in charge of the education of their children as well as responsible for taking care of them\textsuperscript{200}. Such attitudes are eventually fostered by the Austrian family welfare policy, which is very comprehensive and supportive to natality: indeed even if it formally gives parents the possibility to share the duties connected with having a child, it is actually, as it was pointed out in a study by OECD, “because of its generosity in terms of payment rates, coverage of the population and duration of leave entitlements and Childcare benefits, … [it] involves giving significantly more support to those families which choose to have a parent caring full time for a very young child … there is a consensus in Austria about the importance of supporting mothers to care for very young children on a full time basis.”\textsuperscript{201}. It is also true that so far the law doesn’t oblige employers to allow parents to switch to a reversible part-time job\textsuperscript{202}, and since on average only 13% of children aged 0-3 are in formal day-care, this results in pressuring the mother to make use of the full-time parental leave. The study of OECD reports also that the employment rate for mothers of very young children overestimates the real proportion of working mothers, because 55% of them are on a leave and tend to actually re-enter the workforce when the children have reached the Kindergarten age; it is also very likely that as soon as the children start to attend school their mothers will work again on a full-time basis.

In order to give a comprehensive overview about social welfare provisions in Austria it has to be reported that parents are also entitled to statutory leave to care for sick children and relatives up to 10 and 5 working days a year respectively, and to take up to three months off for family emergencies without remuneration but under protection from dismissal. Moreover parents are also eligible to family benefit consisting of a monthly allowance for their first child of € 95 until s/he turns 3 year old, € 112,70 when s/he is between 3 and 10 year old, and of € 130,90 until s/he turns 19 year old, and later on becomes € 152,70 when s/he is still studying or on a vocational training, up to her/his 26\textsuperscript{th} birthday and provided that her/his own income doesn’t

\textsuperscript{200} See also the results of the Mikrozensus 2002 regarding the average amount of time that men and women actually dedicate to perform household chores, childcare and care-work in general, in Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz, \textit{Haushaltführung, Kinderbetreuung, Pflege, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus September 2002}, Vienna 2003.


\textsuperscript{202} In 1997 only 3% of the leave takers used this option. See Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Jugend und Familie, \textit{Österreichische Familienbericht 1999, Band II: Familien- und Arbeitswelt}, Vienna, 1999, p.157.
exceed a specific ceiling. These sums are increased monthly € 12,80 and of € 25,50 respectively when there is a second and third child, and in the latter case if the family income is below a certain threshold there is also a further monthly bonus of € 36,40.

On top of the above mentioned provisions there is a service offered in the whole country through the AMS (labour market service) which consists in helping out parents when they have children that have to be taken care of while they attend an educational training, or when they start to work with such a working schedule that they are forced to look for a childcare provider; the amount of the handout depends on the applicant’s income and on the expected entity of the expenditure; on the average it lasts for six months.

Besides, next to the national provision that establishes that till a child gets seven years old, one of his/her parents - when s/he has been working at least for three years in a company with at least 20 employees - has the right to get a part-time working schedule, in 2004 the federal government started to give incentives to companies with less than 20 employers which decide to set up (at least) an additional part-time work-place, thus having to reorganize the personnel, the workplace and the work-plan. More precisely when this new workplace is established for a parent of a child up to seven years old and the duration of part-time amounts at least to six months, the government pays for 30% of the incurred expenses, up to maximum € 2000, as well as an addition sum of € 500 for each new part-time workplace.

For what concerns self-employed people or more precisely women, the national Chamber of Economy provides them the chance to get a reliable replacement during their maternity leave, free of charge, besides always free of charge up to a certain threshold of income and by paying a certain percentage of the value of the service, for entrepreneurs – male and female – it is possible to be replaced also in case of sickness, accident, period of health therapy or under other occurrences that prevent them from working for at least two weeks. Besides, at the beginning of 2007 the session “Women in the Economy” of the national Chamber of Economy launched a collection of firms in order to introduce a tax deduction up to a yearly € 783 for both female and male entrepreneurs who make use of childcare facilities and/ or domestic cleaning services, and the deduction should correspond to the 10% of the expenditures.

Coming now to focus on the features of the childcare system, in Austria the attendance rate of Kindergarten meets or is close to meeting the desired level set by the European Union (90%) but the same is not true for the percentage of children between 0 and three year old that are taken care of in childcare facilities. According to the OECD study Babies and Bosses, in 2001 in Austria 86% of children aged between three and six year old were enrolled in

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203 See the legal provision that has established this possibility under www.awsg.at/aws/media/931.pdf
204 See the internet site www.wkk.or.at/fiw/betriebshilfe.htm
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kindergarten, while only 13% of those between 0 and three year old were inscribed in childcare centres; even if public bodies contribute to the payment of the attendance fee for childcare centres, they are still expensive for many families. According to the report, despite an estimated shortfall of some 90,000 childcare places, the public spending allocated to childcare services amounted only to 0.43% of the GDP, whereas the corresponding percentage devoted to financing the childcare benefit scheme amounted to 2.26%, which is to say that the first was six times lower than the second. If such an assessment is correct we can infer that the government somehow leaves up to families the solution about how to take care of young children or, more exactly, it contributes to solving the problem through the provisions of the parental leave and the child allowance - which as it has been explained, contribute to fostering a traditional gendered division of work.

WOMEN’S SITUATION IN ITALY

In Italy women were only given the right to vote at the end of the Second World War, and the very first time they were called to express their say was on the 2nd June 1946 at the referendum for deciding whether Italy should have stayed a monarchy or become a republic, and then once more in the same year in order to elect the members of the constitutional assembly. In 1948 the Republic of Italy adopted the new constitution, which among other things established that all the citizens are equal in front of the law, without any discrimination based on sex or other inborn features (article 3), that the Republic is based on work and it recognizes the right to work for all of its citizens and it should provide the necessary conditions in order to guarantee this right, whereas the citizens have the duty to choose and carry out an activity or function according to their possibilities in order to contribute to the development of the whole society (article 4). Moreover (today) it is clearly stated that the female worker should get the same right and remuneration of a male colleague when carrying out the same work, that working conditions should anyhow allow her to fulfil her fundamental family function, and also that mother and child must be guaranteed a special and adequate protection (article 37). Finally in the constitution it is written that the republic protects maternity (articles 30 and 31) and that it recognizes the rights of the family, considered as a natural society based on the contract of marriage, where the partners are equal. This last point wasn’t included in the constitution of 1948 – of course it has been modified many times since then – but it was added after 1975, when the

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205 See http://www.betreuungspraemie.at/vote.asp
206 See Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz, Haushaltsführung, Kinderbetreuung, Pflege, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus September 2002, p. 82 ff.; such data include also the missing places in Kindergarten and day-care centres for primary school-age pupils.

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fascist family laws were changed and husbands and wives were given the same rights within the family; similarly the provision about equal pay for equal work performed by men and women was introduced after such a principle had imposed itself to the attention in the whole world – then in 1977 the law was passed on the equality of treatment of male and female workers, which introduced also for fathers the possibility to take paternity leave when the mother didn’t have the possibility to do so, thus trying to promote more equal gender arrangements between the spouses. Unfortunately such a provision had a very limited use\textsuperscript{208} and thus couldn’t greatly affect the traditional and rigid gendered division of work in Italian households, the majority of which has usually consisted of a nuclear family where the father works for pay and the mother is a housewife, or even if employed, she must still carry out all the household chores\textsuperscript{209} – just as has been fostered by the Catholic Church.

In Italy the Catholic Church has always played a key role in shaping people’s habits as well as the national legislation and policies, as the scholar Bonnie Smith writes, “the Italian situation for women was one of the most repressive in Europe. Not only women worked extensively... but virtually no modern legislation existed on their behalf... the Catholic Church had long had enormous spiritual and ideological power over the terms of women’s existence in Italy. Long after other countries had moved toward secular policies, Italy relied on Church doctrine to set its own laws. Divorce and birth control were banned for religious reasons, and the power of the father in the family rested on ecclesiastical interpretations of the Bible."\textsuperscript{210} It has already been presented the position of the Catholic Church during Leo XIII’s pontificate\textsuperscript{211} - that women were better suited to stay home and take care of children and educate them so that they would become good Christians - essentially the Church has never stopped upholding this view, because it represents the logical consequence of its patriarchal stance and because according to it the aim of marriage is to have children and raise them according to the Christian precepts. Still in 1945, at the end of the Second World War, the stance of Pope Pius XII was

\textsuperscript{208} See Donatella Barazzetti, Carmen Leccardi, Mariagrazia Leone, Sveva Maraggia, Italy, in Gabriele Griffin (ed.), Women’s employment, women’s studies and equal opportunities 1945 – 2001, Reports from nine European Countries, University of Hull, UK, 2002, pp 179.
\textsuperscript{209} See Chiara Saraceno, Changes in Italian families, from the ’60s to the present, in Daniela Del Boca, Margherita Repetto-Alaia, (ed.), Women’s Work, the Family& Social Policies – Focus on Italy in a European Perspective, Peter Lang, New York, 2003, pp 7-37; in 1998 still 62% of the Italian families consisted of a married couple with children – see http://www.irpps.cnr.it/.
\textsuperscript{210} Quotation from Bonnie G. Smith, Changing lives, Women in European History Since 1700, Lexington, Massachusetts, Toronto, University of Toronto, 1989, pag. 532.
\textsuperscript{211} “work which is suitable for a strong man cannot reasonably be required from a woman ... a woman is by nature fitted for homework...” Pope Leo XIII, Arcanum, Rome, 10 February 1880.
that “for the same work output a woman is entitled to the same wage as a man” \(^{212}\), but he also criticized the fact that women were forced to go to work by the necessities of life, representing this as a “depreciation of her true dignity”, a lack of “respect for her dignity and her mission” and stating that “unnatural equality with the husband is to the detriment of the woman herself”; in a famous speech he urged people to “restore as fast as possible the honour of the woman’s and mother’s place in the home” because “it is clear that if man is by temperament more drawn to deal with external things and public affairs, woman has … more perspicacity and a finer touch in knowing and solving delicate problems of domestic and family life. […] … there must be a certain inequality and due accommodation, which is demanded by the good of the family and the right order and unity and stability of home”. From these words it is clear that in 1945 the Catholic Church was supporting a traditional division of work, based on the male breadwinner model and where women’s work outside home should have gotten the proper recognition but it should still have been avoided when possible, i.e. it was accepted in case of necessity but the real woman’s realm was considered the private sphere. It had also been “allowed” for women who could “dispose of more time” to get involved in activities such as “study and expound the place and the role of woman in society, […] explain and diffuse the teachings of the Church”, even if – it is underlined – “this direct participation… does not at all change the normal activity of woman.”. At any rate in my opinion the most interesting part of Pope Pius XII’s speech comes when he explicitly gets involved into political matters and asserts that “it is part of the office of the public authority to adapt the civil rights of the wife to modern needs and requirements, keeping in view what the natural disposition and temperament of the female sex, good morality, and the welfare of the family demands, and provides always that the essential order of the domestic society remains intact, founded as it is on something higher than human authority and wisdom, namely on the authority and wisdom of God, and so not changeable by public laws or at the pleasure of private individuals.”: from these words the intrusion of the Catholic Church into issues that should be just matters of the state is evident, unfortunately in Italy the political class has always been sensitive to the official point of view of the Church (and a good part of it is still very much sensitive to it – even if very few people attend religious services\(^{213}\)) thus things have been changing slowly, at least as far as the improvement of women’s condition. Only in

\(^{212}\) Quotation from Pope Pius XII, *Questa grande vostra adunata*, speech held in Vatican city on the 21\(^{st}\) October 1945, reprinted in *Vital Speeches*, Rome, 1 November 1945, doc. nr. 118 in the 2\(^{nd}\) vol. by Susan Groag Bell, Karen Offen (ed.), *Women, the Family and Freedom: The Debate In Documents*; all of the quotations that follow are from the same source.

\(^{213}\) For a deepening see the results of a survey carried out between the 22\(^{nd}\) December 2005 and the 5\(^{th}\) January 2006 by Eurispes under [http://www.eurispes.it/](http://www.eurispes.it/): according to it 87,8% of the Italian population has got the Catholic baptism but only 36,8% calls him/herself a churchgoer, besides the vast majority of the interview – both believers and not – are in favour of divorce, cohabitation and under some conditions, also of abortion.
1970 the referendum was passed concerning the introduction of the possibility to divorce, whereas contraceptives any became legalized in 1972; as it has already been mentioned in 1975 the reform about the part of the civic code regarding family laws was passed, and in 1978 abortion became legal and family advisory bureaus were created. Unfortunately such improvements came along with an actual worsening of women’s situation in the labour market: if between the Second World War and 1965 the Italian labour market was one of the most flexible, characterized by very low unemployment rates and by a female employment rate of 23,5% in 1952, which then increased to 30,3% in 1958, to 32,5% in 1963, by 1965 it had decreased to 29,8%. In the ’60s trade unions had got stronger and in 1970 they accomplished the approval of the Statuto dei lavoratori, a collection of laws about the way the labour market had to be regulated, which set a lot of restrictions regarding hiring and dismissing people thus making the Italian labour market one of the most rigid in Europe. Actually it also holds true that thanks to these laws Italy came to have the most comprehensive social security system in Europe, since an institute called CIG (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni – redundancy payment funds) had been set up and financed by the State, which guaranteed that in case of crisis, when companies would have needed to reduce their workforce, workers wouldn’t have gotten fired but instead they were at home getting 80% of their average salary, waiting to be called back to work. The problem was that trade unions wanted to represent the interests of the whole working force, which is to say, of the so called average (male) worker with a full time contract, thus they opposed the introduction of part-time working contracts since they were considered insufficient for earning a living and the fear was that they would have ended up dividing the workforce and diminishing its power of negotiation. As a consequence the Italian labour market became highly regulated, employers preferred to ask their employees to work overtime instead of hiring somebody else or to have people working part-time (the social contribution to be paid for employees didn’t depend on the working schedule) and for women it became very hard to reconcile work and family duties; moreover, since in general men probably wouldn’t have made use of the parental leave, they were preferred to women in the recruiting process. All these things together have led Italy to have one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe – most of all among women and young people – as well as one of the lowest level of development of part-time contracts, even though thanks to some legislative changes which have been passed since the ’90s, some flexibility has been introduced in the labour market, making slow changes to the situation; moreover it has been reported that in Italy there is also the largest black economy in the industrial work, whose entity according to some calculations, would amount to 20%-30% of the national GDP.

See Daniela Del Boca, Labour policies, economic flexibility and women’s work – The Italian
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In general scholars share the view that Italian women fare worse on the labour market in comparison to other European colleagues because there is a scarcity of part-time jobs – which would allow women to reconcile an employment with their traditional fundamental role of caretakers within the family -, because again in comparison with other countries, in Italy the share of jobs available in the service sector is lower (and it is in this sector that women are hired more easily), because the opening times of childcare institutions and schools are not compatible with a full time occupation, as well as because there is a lack of available and affordable childcare facilities for very young children. In fact the state has not been investing much in services connected with children, but rather it has devoted more money to those for elderly people (both pensions and social services in general) because demand on this side is very high as a consequence of the decline of birth rates coupled with the aging of the population and much longer life-expectancy than in the past.215 Because in the past women used not to be in the (official) workforce and many of them are still not working, and because of the traditional very strong family and kin ties and intergenerational obligations which stem from the Catholic socialization and mentality216, in Italy it is still expected that the family (women) will take care of its members, both the very young and the oldest, thus acting as the first provider of social services with the state intervening in a complementary way - this kind of welfare state has been labelled “the South European family care model”, in it “the family is entitled to limited support of social services as well as low direct support”217 while “the rigidity and limitations of the supply of publicly provided childcare are somewhat compensated for by a substantial family support system.”218. Luckily there is also a good side to this situation, namely that thanks to old legislative provisions which have allowed many employees of the public sector to retire with relatively few years of paid social contributions and thus being relatively young, nowadays there are many grandparents available and in shape to help women with childminding; according to some surveys in 45,7% of the households where the mother works, grandparents look after their

215 See for example Daniela Del Boca, Labour market partecipation and fertilità of Italian women, in Daniela Del Boca, Margherita Repetto-Alaia, (ed.), Women’s Work, the Family& Social Policies – Focus on Italy in a European Perspective, pp. 34-47, particularly significative is her point of view that “One of the major reasons for low participation rate is the mismatch between the types of jobs sought by married women with children and the types of job offered”, quotation from page 36. See also Daniela Del Boca, Low fertility and labour force participation of Italian women: evidence and interpretation, OECD Labour market and social policy, occasional paper no. 61, Paris, October 2002.
216 See Manfred G. Schmidt, Erwerbsbeteiligung von Frauen und Männern in Industrieländervergleich, page 53.
217 Quotation from Daniela Del Boca, Labour market partecipation and fertilità of Italian women, in Daniela Del Boca, Margherita Repetto-Alaia, (ed.), Women’s Work, the Family& Social Policies – Focus on Italy in a European Perspective, pp. 42
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grandchildren, a percentage that decreases to a still significant 16.9% when the mother doesn’t work\(^\text{219}\).

Coming now to analyse the way Italian women are present in the labour market, nowadays the female employment rate\(^\text{220}\) is 45.2% compared to 69.7% of the male population, the unemployment rates are of 6.4%, for men and 10.5%, for women, while among young women it reaches a worrying 30.9% (all the data is from the 2003 ISTAT Labour Force Survey). It follows that in Italy women fare worse than men in the labour market; luckily different from the male rates, female employment rates have been increasing in the last 10 years, and most of all for women between 30 and 49 years old, while the female unemployment rate, although having recorded an increasing trend towards the end of the XX century, has recently started to decrease, even though its values for both men and women are higher in Italy than in most of the other countries of the European Union. Moreover these percentages hide very big differences between the North and the South of the country, as well as between women with different level of education. In fact according to the data published in a report by the CNR in 2003 the female activity rate in the South was 12 points lower than the Italian average, the gap being wider for the younger and less educated women, who are among those who have more difficulties finding employment; in addition the percentage of unemployed women in the South was more than double the Italian rate, both in general and for younger women (the general data was of 25.5% in the South compared to a national value of 11.7%, while for women between 15 and 29 years old it was of 38.6% and 19.6% respectively)\(^\text{221}\).

In analysing the way in which women are present in the labour market, it can be said that the level of segregation is quite high, according to the 2003 Labour force survey by ISTAT 76% of women were working in the service sector, representing 46% of the labour force within it; 20% of women had a job in the secondary sector, constituting 24% of the labour force there, and only 4% of them were working in the agricultural sector where they made up 32% of the labour force. As it is reported in the 2004 ISFOL dossier on the workforce\(^\text{222}\), in 2003 women made up 29.3% of the self-employed people and 76.9% of those who had a part-time employment; 17.3% of working women in Italy had a part-time contract (13% in the South), the primary and the third sectors recording the higher rates, while the corresponding value for men

\(^{218}\) Quotation from Daniela Del Boca, Low fertility and labour force participation of Italian women: evidence and interpretation, page 8.

\(^{219}\) Data from Daniela Del Boca, idibem, pag. 9.

\(^{220}\) In Italy it is calculated for the population aged between 15 and 64 year old.

\(^{221}\) Data from CNR-IRPPS (Istituto di ricerche sulla popolazione e le politiche sociali), Dermotrends, no.1/2004, page 4.

\(^{222}\) Guadalupe Riccio (a cura di), Dossier regionali sul mercato del lavoro – Il lavoro femminile, ISFOL, Roma, 2004, pp.79-86.
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was 3.2%. The data about the part-time employment is low compared to the European numbers –33.2% for women and 5.6% for men -; and they can be interpreted in two different ways according to the meaning that we want to attribute to such a work-contract: if we consider that it is more desirable to work full time, a part-time job doesn’t represent a good option, which may be accepted just in order to avoid unemployment, a situation that often occurs for women in South Italy where there is a lack of job opportunities\(^{223}\), and the higher one’s educational level, the higher the level of dissatisfaction connected with such an option\(^{224}\). On the other hand there are people who voluntarily opt for a part-time contract because of the flexibility that it provides in dealing with one’s time - for women it can represent a good solution in order to manage to reconcile their family and working times.

According to the 2003 Labour force survey by ISTAT only 12.2% of women and 8.2% of men had a temporary contract, mainly in the agricultural sector, the corresponding rates being 17.1% and 11.7% in the South, which confirms the fact that in the South the situation is worse, as temporary contracts are connected with more precarious conditions of life. Only 5.3% of the women and 3.6% of men working with this kind of contract declared that they had chosen it, while respectively 42% and 40.8% of them asserted that they had to accept it because they couldn’t find a permanent job; if we consider that the incidence of these forms of contracts have been growing over time in the whole country - from a percentage of 6.2% in 1993 to 9.9% in 2001 – the picture that we get is not so rosy, most of all for women living in Southern Italy since here the unemployment rates are much higher than in the rest of the country, and it is more difficult to get a job - both a full time and a part-time one - and it is more likely to find just a temporary position.

Coming towards a conclusion, the positive trend of both the female employment and unemployment rates in Italy must be underlined – the first increasing, the second decreasing – even though the growth in the amount of people who work under both a temporary or a part-time contract casts some shadows on the picture because as it has been explained these kinds of contract are often connected with more insecure life conditions and only in a minority of cases represent the outcome of one’s free choice. A recent report by the CNEL lays emphasis on the progressive reduction of the gender gaps in the labour force, calling attention to the steps ahead


\(^{224}\) If one doesn’t choose to be employed part time but rather is forced to accept such a contract, the risk that it turns into a trap, - i.e. to persist in such a job – is considerable, in fact many studies have proved that firms tend to invest less on part-time workers in term of training, and offer them less career-chances. See for example Tindara Addabbo, “*Atypical* work in Italy in gender perspective – the case of parasubordinates and part-timers”, in Daniela Del Boca, Margherita Repetto-Alaia, (ed.), *Women’s Work, the Family & Social Policies – Focus on Italy in a European Perspective*, Peter Lang, New York, 2003, pp. 84-102.
made by women in managerial position (their share grew from 26.7% in 1993 to 32.1% in 2000) as well as stressing the fact that the behaviours of the younger women as far as the labour market, have become similar to those of their male coetaneous, most of all when they have the same level of education\textsuperscript{225}. Another positive point consists in the fact that the gender wage gap in Italy is relatively narrow: if it holds true that on an annual basis men on average earn between 20-25% more than women, for young people the gap only amounts to 5-10% and shows a decreasing trend, moreover a part of it has to be explained taking into consideration the fact that men in general have longer working schedule then women, as well as (usually) a job of a higher rank, the hourly difference of pay for similar work being thus much lower than the annual earning divergence\textsuperscript{226}.

As a consequence - and notwithstanding the fact that the Italian taxation system tends to penalize the second earner of a household, thus discouraging women's employment\textsuperscript{227} - it can also be said that the male breadwinner-female housewife family model in Italy has actually been losing ground, because more and more women have become engaged in some form of employment, being thus replaced by the model of the dual breadwinner couple, whereas women's lives are increasingly characterized by the model of the double presence, within which one's main interests and investment of time and energy can fall into the private, familiar sphere or the professional one\textsuperscript{228}. Unfortunately for women, such a change hasn't gotten along a modification in the way household work is divided between men and women: it is widely acknowledged\textsuperscript{229} and also documented in details in researches about men's and women's time use\textsuperscript{230}, that the division of duties within the Italian family is still a very traditional one despite women's employment, and also when the relationship is based on an egalitarian partnership, it has been proved that when a child is born the couple moves to more traditional behaviours since it is usually the mother who gets more engaged in care-work and therefore has to reduce

\textsuperscript{225} See the publication by CNEL, \textit{Il lavoro delle donne fra tutela legislativa e previsioni contrattuali}, Roma, febbraio 2002, page 6 and following.
\textsuperscript{228} See for example the results of a survey that has been carried out in the ‘90s in the Veneto region interviewing women belonging to different age cohorts – Sisa Biadene (ed.), \textit{Modelli territoriali e differenze di genere – Una ricerca nell’area veneta}, Feltrinelli ed., Milano, ottobre 1994. For a deepening about the patterns of change in Italian family, see Rossella Palomba, \textit{Main current patterns in the family}, in IRPPS, \textit{Dermotrends}, No. 02/2003, Roma, 2003, page 6.
\textsuperscript{229} See for example CNEL, \textit{Maternità e partecipazione delle donne al mercato del lavoro tra vincoli e strategie di conciliazione}, p.40 and also Anna Tempia, Ricomporre i tempi – Tra orari di lavoro, convenzioni sociali ed esigenze individuali: la difficile costruzione dell’identità, Collana IRES, Ediesse Srl., Roma, 1994..
at least temporarily, her working engagement in order to meet the needs of the situation, while no change in working-hour patterns are recorded for fathers and most of all no increasing engagement in household duties – on the contrary, these become more “woman’s duty” since she is the one who spends more time at home. This is why at the national congress “Politics for women in the new Italian regions” that took place in Trieste in 1997 the President of the Regional Commission for Equal Opportunity between Men and Women of the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia claimed that “women require policies of reconciliation between life and working times and a fairer division of care work between the two sexes”, while the Italian Minister for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women of that legislation stated that “…the reform of social welfare can't take place disregarding the fact that it can't be shaped and built up around the figure of the male breadwinner any more…”

It would be fair that housework and childcare were shared in a more balanced way among men and women in Italian families, owing to the fact that the second have increased their engagement outside home the and also because they contribute financially the to family’s wellbeing too, but unfortunately there is still a cleavage between people’s ideas and their actual behaviours. In fact women devote many more hours to domestic work (most of all over the weekend) and childcare than men, who instead on the average, and also when they have children, can enjoy more leisure time, and on weekends spend more time with their children, usually by playing with them and not so much minding them or carrying out routine tasks.

There is also room for a change towards more egalitarian gender relations in Italy because in the surveys that have been carried out in the last decade the respondents proved to have taken distance at least in theory from the traditional patriarchal division of work. According to the ISSP survey of 1994, at that time 49,5% of the interviewed disagreed with the statement that “a man’s job is to earn money, a woman’s job is to look after home and family”, even though 68,1% still believed that if the mother of a very young child works, it is likely that the child will suffer.

In 1997 the IRP carried out a survey interviewing 1500 people face-to-face about their ideas and attitudes concerning the family, having children and immigration. According to its results, in some aspects the Italian population is still rather traditional, for example for 57% of the people between 30 and 44 years old and for 67% of those above 44 years old, the ideal family is still the nuclear one, made up by husband, wife and children, and 80% of the interviewed were of the opinion that marriage is the best way to fulfil a relationship. One of the

231 Quotations from Commissione Pari Opportunità, Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, Le politiche per le donne nelle nuove regioni italiane, Atti del convegno, Trieste 24-25 ottobre 1997, p. 150.
232 See also CNEL, Il lavoro delle donne fra tutela legislativa e previsioni contrattuali, page 8.
233 For a deepening see Adele Menniti, Rossella Palomba, Family responsibilities and gender attitudes in Italy, in IRP, Dermotrends, nr. 01/2001, page 3.
most important things in one’s life would be to be able to devote enough time and attentions to one’s children (78% held that it is very important) and to educate them properly (82%), whereas only 20% said that for them it is very important achieve a more egalitarian division of tasks within the family (another 47% answered that it is quite important) and only 22% mentioned their career as their life goal (other 45% said that it is quite important for them to make a career). When asked directly about the gendered division of work, 51% of the interviewed said that men should get involved in housework like women, whereas 18% were of the same opinion but under the condition that the woman has a job, and another 26% only when it is necessary. 46% of the respondents held that the best way for a woman to reconcile family and work would be to have part-time employment, while 68% said that the best option for a man would be to have a full-time job and a family; 68% of the people shared the idea that for a woman her children should have priority over her job, but 75% held that it is important for a woman to have a job and be financially independent; only 35% of the interviewed believed that if the husband earns enough his wife should not work, whereas 58% disagreed with such a stance. Two other interesting points are that 81% of the people were not of the opinion that for a man career comes before family and children, but also 95% asserted that for a man it is important to have a good job.234

In the year 2000 the same institute as before (IRP) carried out another 2000 interviews in Italy about the issue of the division of work at home, the results of which are quite interesting. Beside the fact that 69% of the people who at the time of the interview were not employed and were looking for a job declared that they would have liked to find part-time employment, 28% of the interviewed strongly agreed with the statement that housework is as important as paid work and another 52% agreed with it, thus letting us infer that the social acknowledgment of the value of care (unpaid) work has augmented. Also interesting is the juxtaposition of the levels of agreement for two assertions that at first sound quite contradictory: by bringing together the percentages given to the two modalities “strongly agree” and “agree” the result is that 74% of the interviewed people believe that no one can take care of a child as well as his/her mother, whereas 83% of them are of the idea that both the father and the mother are equally suitable to take care of children. I would say that it is possible to interpret such results in the sense that, consistent with the increased societal recognition paid to reproductive work, society nowadays is in favour of a deeper involvement of fathers in their children’s education and growth, although the majority still believe that women are better equipped for these tasks; my assumption finds a confirmation in the level of people’s agreement with another assertion, namely 97% of the

interviewed were of the opinion that fathers should have an active role in his children’s education, while 56% of them stated that in general men should carry out half of the housework. From these results we can say also that Italian society has moved towards a more egalitarian position as far as gender relations, which implies not only the endorsement of a more equal division of reproductive work but also a more progressive stance regarding women’s employment, indeed it looks like the support towards working mothers has increased in the sense that it is now not only considered normal for a woman to work (instead of being “just” a housewife), but 74% of the interviewed agreed with the statement that even if both of the parents work full-time, family and employment are compatible, whereas 52% of them were of the opinion that a woman should not sacrifice her career for a child.

Coming now to the issue of maternal, paternal and parental leave, despite the fact that “Italy is among the Western Countries the one that neglects the most the subject family”, the current legislation concerning parental leave [law 53/2000 and legislative decree 151/2001] is conceived as being quite progressive because it has been designed in order to promote a fairer distribution of family responsibilities between mothers and fathers, and it contains provisions and measures of protection for workers who make use of them which have been given a very positive judgement.

In Italy there are different kinds of leave. There exists, first of all, a compulsory 5 month maternal leave (compulsory for employees, recommended to self-employed and quasi-subordinate workers for their and their foetus’ sake) which starts one or two months before the presumed date of confinement; during this period women receive an allowance equal to 80% of their previous average salary. Under some specific circumstances fathers can be entitled to paternity leave for the entire duration of the maternity leave or for the part that the mother hasn’t used, and they too are paid 80% or their average salary. The law provides that until the child turns one year old in general it is prohibited to fire workers who make use of maternity or paternity leave and also, to make sure that no coercion may be exerted by employers, and that during that period a worker’s resignation has to be validated by the labour inspection service; at the end of the leave workers are entitled to go back to their usual job and be assigned the same tasks as before. For specific categories of mothers the law sets some supplementary benefits: a

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235 By comparing EU member states public expenditure we can see that 2/3 of the money devoted to public welfare in Italy is used to pay out pensions, compared to an European average of 50%, while at the same time the country registers one of the lowest percentage of GDP investments into family policies (in 2000 it amounted to 3.8% of GDP). Quotation from CNEL, *Maternità e partecipazione delle donne al mercato del lavoro tra vincoli e strategie di conciliazione*, p. 191; data on public expenditure from European Commission, *European social statistics – Social Protection, Expenditure and receipts. Data 1991 – 2000*, Office for Official Publication of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2003, p.65 ff.

state maternity benefit of up to € 1.671,76 (depending on one’s actual occupational situation) and an allowance paid by INPS through the local municipalities to unemployed mothers whose family income is under a specific threshold, which amounts to € 271,56 per month for five months (which is a total of € 1.357,80) for each “new” child.

Aside from the maternal/ paternal leave, each of the parents is entitled to a supplementary period of up to six months of parental leave when employed, during which people are granted an allowance amounting to 30% of their average salary; it can be used continuously or piecemeal and also simultaneously, and if the father claims it for at least three months, the mother can stay home for one more month or vice versa; in the case of a single parent her/ his leave can last up to 10 months. Also during this kind of leave it is prohibited to dismiss workers and afterwards they have the right to return to their job.

When the mother doesn’t make use of the paternal leave and goes back to her work while she is still breast-feeding, she is entitled to two hours of remunerated rest per day until the child turns one year old (to one hour if she is working less than six hours a day); if she doesn’t exercise such a right the father – in a subordinate employment - may do it.

On top of these provisions there are others which concern the case of sick children: until they are 3 year old each of the parent (not simultaneously) may abstain from work to take care of them as long as they are ill but without being paid during the leave; when children are aged between three and eight years each parent can stay home 5 days a year per child, if the illness lasts longer the parent has to use some of his/ her holidays. Similar conditions exist for adoptive and fostering parents while special provisions are set for parents of twins and of handicapped and severely handicapped children.

The law also sets that through collective bargaining even more favourable clauses on parental leave may be agreed upon within collective contracts – for example the one for public-sector workers establishes that they are paid 100% of their average salary when they stay home to take care of ill children aged under three years, up to 30 days a year. Company-level bargaining involves negotiation on measures which would help parents to reconcile work with childcare, such as flexible working schedules, tele-work, home-work and the possibility to convert full-time jobs into reversible part-time ones, an option which is nowadays quite used in the large-scale retail-sector but still very little in the secondary sector.

People who make use of the parental leave for their own children or when adopting are always protected from dismissal and their social contributions are paid. As far as the actual fruition of these possibilities, of the working mothers interviewed by ISTAT in 2002 who were employed, 76% reported that they had spent some time on parental leave (81% in the North, 66% in the South) while 7% said that their husband/ partner made use of it and 4% of the
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fathers were planning to do the same. According to a research carried out in 2004 on almost 250,000 employees of the public sector by the National Observatory on family matters about the fruition of parental leaves in Italy, that year 4% of them had taken parental leave, 76.8% of these being women, while as far as men, only 2% of the male employees made use of it, against a percentage of 5.8% for women. 61.7% of the users opted for just one month of parental leave, the percentage of men who decided this way being 92.1% - of course such a choice is connected with the fact that in the public sector during the first month of leave one gets his/her normal average salary - indeed only 4.9% of men spent two months at home while the correspondent value for women is higher, namely 16.4% (and also for longer periods women registered higher rates than men), but also the majority of women reported to have chose the one-month option (54%)\textsuperscript{237}.

In the year 2002 the Ministry of Welfare introduced an \textit{una-tantum} check of € 1,000 for each child after the first; moreover there exist monthly allowances for families whose income is under a specific threshold, which for a unit of 4 persons (without handicapped people) can amount to a maximum of € 250,48\textsuperscript{238}. In addition, since 1998 municipalities may grant monthly allowances to family units with at least three minor children and whose income doesn’t exceed a certain ceiling, which amount to € 118,38.

The system of allowances described above may represent a good support for families with children but more crucial for women’s presence in the workforce are the features of the existing childcare system. While in Italy the percentage of children aged between three and five year old that attend Kindergarten is above 90%, the country doesn’t fare so well regarding childcare facilities attendance for children under three year old (Eurostat reports in 1999 percentages respectively of 91% and 6%). In order to try to improve such a situation the national government passed the law 289/2002 which allocated a certain amount of resources to the development of childcare services on workplaces, so that the closeness between children and parents would help the latter to reconcile family and working times. The law set out some requirements (educational as well as concerning the environment) which have to be met by such nests, and established which contributions are to be given to firms who will provide such services and to parents who will make use of them: for both the principle of tax deductions was chosen, in particular parents can deduce from their taxable income up to € 2,000 yearly for each child hosted in such structures.


\textsuperscript{238} More information under \url{www.inps.it}
A CLOSER COMPARISON BETWEEN AUSTRIA, ITALY AND SLOVENIA

After having presented women’s situation nowadays in Austria, Italy and Slovenia, and having given an overview about the way it has developed through time in these regions from the period of the Habsburg Empire until our days, the moment has come to provide a clearer comparison between the three states.

According to the data by Eurostat 2005\(^\text{239}\), in the second quarter of 2005 the female employment rate was 61.7% in Austria and Slovenia, and 45.4% in Italy and 56.3% in the European Union, whereas the female unemployment rates amounted to 5.6% in Austria, 6.7% in Slovenia and 9.7% in Italy, 9.6% being the average European rate. It follows that as far as women’s situation in the labour market, Italy presents the worst values among the three countries and also a situation which is worse than in the majority of the member states of the European Union, an assertion that finds a further confirmation when we cast a look over the values for long term unemployment for women: again in 2004 Italy showed a percentage of 5.5% against a European average of 4.7% and the much better numbers of Slovenia and Austria which recorded 3.4% and 1.4% respectively. As a consequence it can be said that not only less Italian women than their Austrian and Slovene colleagues can count on a job (thus a salary), but also that it is comparatively harder for Italians to find a job.

Coming now to the kinds of contracts under which women work, consistent with what has been said above in 2005 Slovenia recorded the lowest rate of female part-timers employed (11%) and Austria the highest (38.7%), Italy placing itself in an intermediate position (25.7%), the average European rate being closer that of Austria than to the other two (32.6%); although in Austria the flexibility of the working schedule has allowed more women to enter the labour market and to work for wage while still being able to carry out their share of reproductive work at home, it must also be said that shorter working times are connected with lower wages and fewer social contributions, as well as with less possibilities of getting further training and making a career, moreover it is hardly possible to make ends meet for a person who works part time and can count only on herself, not to say when she also has to maintain one or more children. Therefore even if so far women in Austria seem to fare the best, maybe this holds not so true, indeed it is in Slovenia where women show high level of participation in the work force and mainly with a full time working schedule, which means that it is likely that there they can earn a living\(^\text{240}\). The data about gender wage gap fit this hypothesis well, in fact while in 2004 in


\(^{240}\) In the issue no. 4/2005 of the Eurostat series of *Statistic in focus* about *Gender gaps in the reconciliation between work and family life*, it is reported that while Austria is among the countries where the part-time contracts for mothers are the most widespread, on the opposite Slovenia is among the ones...
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Slovenia the hourly gender wage gap amounted to 9%, in Austria it was 18% and in 2002 in Italy of 7%\textsuperscript{241} - this very positive data for Italy is to be explained recalling the fact that in this country trade unions used to oppose the introduction of flexible forms of employment, being focused instead on the objective of getting a good retribution for all of the workers - men and women - thus aiming at achieving the goal of equal pay for equal work. Finally an indicator which casts some light on the level of vertical segregation of the labour market is the share of female managers out of the total managers, and again Slovenia fares the best with a good 32.8%, followed – maybe surprisingly – by Italy with a percentage of 31.9% and the last is Austria with 27%, the European average being 32.1%. Maybe one would have expected Italy to record the worst performance again, but instead, even though few women work for pay in this country, many of those who don’t are probably involved in some form of informal work, since Italy has one of the most developed black market in the world as it has already been mentioned – those who do work are also comparatively better educated and qualified\textsuperscript{242}.

Coming to take into consideration the employment conditions of mothers, according to data gathered by EUROSTAT\textsuperscript{243} for 2003, in all the three analyzed countries their level of participation in the labour market decreases when the number of children increases, but whereas in Slovenia the difference is minimal (the level of employment of mothers of three children is just about 5% lower than for mothers of one child), in Austria it is the widest, of almost 20%, whereas in Italy it is around 15%, data which is still very significant given the general low rate of female employment. Considering children’s age, in Italy it seems not to play any influence on mothers’ level of employment (according to the already quoted publication, the employment rate of women between 20 and 49 years old amounts to near 50% when the youngest child is between 0 and 2 years old, or between 3 and 5 years old or between 6 and 11 years old), in Slovenia it does but it is very limited - i.e. there is a difference of circa 1-2% between the employment rates of mothers of children who are in the above mentioned age-ranges – and still on the average near the value of 80%, whereas in Austria the data show that while it decreases from the first to the second stage, later it increases again (from 74% to 66% to 76%). This may sound contradictory but it isn’t. It has already been said that in Austria people making use of the parental leave are counted in the workforce and since the parental leave lasts for two years with the protection from dismissal, then we understand why the rate of employed

\textsuperscript{241} No data available for 2004.


\textsuperscript{243} EUROSTAT, \textit{Gender gaps in the reconciliation between work and family life}, pag. 2 and following.
women whose youngest child is between 3 and 5 years old is lower than the one for mothers of children up to the age of two; not surprisingly, later when their youngest child attends primary school, Austrian mothers' level of employment increases again.

Another piece of data available is the level of part-time work of women aged 20-49 by the number of children under 12 years old: while in Slovenia it stays at around 3% for both mothers and non-mothers, in Italy and Austria it goes from 20% for women without children to respectively 28% and 43% for mothers with one child, to 35% and 50% for mothers of two children, confirming once more the fact that in these two countries parenthood affects women's life conditions, and more precisely it diminishes their level of involvement in the labour market and increases their engagement in the private sphere, which is to say that they trade off paid work with reproductive non-paid work.

In all three countries the higher the woman's educational level, the more likely it is that she will keep working after having children, even though it must be pinpointed that differences persist in the level of female employment also for the most educated women. In fact, while in Slovenia the employment rates for women holding a university degree goes from 95% for those without children to 90% for those with up to three children, in Austria the gap is of 12 points, the higher rate being 94%, and in Italy of 15 points, the higher rate being 88%; for women who didn’t complete high school in Slovenia the employment rate is 71-72% notwithstanding the number of children (none or some), whereas in Austria it goes from 74% for mothers without children to 41% for mothers with 3 or more children, the correspondent percentages in Italy being 45% and 17% respectively. In 2003 whereas in Slovenia 77% of nuclear families were made up of both the man and the woman working full time, the correspondent rate in Austria was 47% and in Italy 38%, in Italy the family-type of the male breadwinner – housewife representing the more frequent one with a rate of 45% (against 22% in Austria and 13% in Slovenia), while in Austria more than one fourth of families consisted of the man working full time and the woman part time (in Slovenia this form characterized only 2% of families, in Italy 13%). All of these data can’t but confirm the existence of a gendered division of work in Austria and Italy, which is more outstanding in the latter. Maybe the reasons for such a situation can be looked for in the attitudes of the three societies towards mothers and families, and can be connected with the existence of a more or less remarkable influence of the Catholic religion and/or the past (socialist) system. As a matter of fact it has been said that

"Italy like Austria... are at the bottom of the ranking as far as the dismantling of gender inequalities in the workforce. The reason for this stems out of the strong political and cultural position of Catholicism, which is carried out and represented also by parties and
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out of a specific path of modernization, which has privileged the male population against
the female one.”

As it has already been mentioned in Slovenia, 42,5% of the children up to the age of
three are taken care of in childcare facilities, whereas in Austria and Italy the same holds true
only for 13% and 6% of children of such an age respectively – of course the availability of a
place in such an institution consistently affects a mother’s decision whether to work or not.
Other factors which strongly influence mothers’ employment are the duration of the parental
leave and the amount of wage-compensation for the time off one’s job in order to take care of
the child. As I have already explained Austria has the most comprehensive provisions for
parental leave, but it can also be said that they are so comprehensive that they may end up
encouraging a woman to stay home even after the period of the protection from dismissal has
expired, indeed most of all for women who show the lowest levels of attachment to their job –
either because they have a part-time job (so if they were to go back to work their earnings would
be limited anyway), or because the work is monotonous and unrewarding, or because they
realize that they can easily find a similar occupation later, or simply because they put their
family ahead of their job - it is more desirable to keep withdrawing the state monthly check of
the Kindergeld for other six months at least, then to go back to their workplace.
I think that all, in all Slovenia is the country which has the best provisions as far as paternal
leave since all of the parents who makes use of it have the right to decide whether to take it in
the full-time or in the part-time option (and not only the parents who are so lucky to work in a
company with at least 20 employees like in Austria), in the first case staying at home until the
child turns one year old and being paid the equivalent of one’s average salary, in the second
case working with a reduced schedule until the third birthday of the child and being paid
according to the effectively worked hours, whereas the social contributions are paid as if s/he
were working full time – with this provision in my opinion the Slovene society has proved to give
social acknowledgement to the care work provided by parents (some social contributions are
paid just because of the work performed in connection with the status a parent). On the opposite
I think that Italy fares the worst under the point of view of parental leave provisions, indeed even
though here the protection from dismissal is the strongest, the compensation for the time “off” is
the lowest both for the maternity leave as well as for the parental leave, whose duration is also
very limited. In my opinion this makes Italy a society which is not family friendly, and in fact with
its fertility rate of 1,33 children per woman Italy is among the least fertile countries in Europe. My
assertion also finds an argumentation in the data about the percentage of the GDP that is

244 Quotation from Manfred G. Schmidt, Erwerbsbeteiligung von Frauen und Männern in
Industrieländervergleich, Leske + Budrich, Opladen, Hemsbach, 1993, page 86 (my own translation from
Gender inequalities and social conditions of employed women in the Alps-Adriatic region devoted to expenditures connected with families and children: in Italy in 2003 it amounted to 4.1%, against a European average of 8%, 8.6% for Slovenia and 10.8% for Austria, which on the opposite prove that they care for families and invest in their wellbeing.

Finally if we take into consideration the level of involvement of men into reproductive work, on one side we find out that in general in all of the three countries very few fathers make use of the entitlement to the paternal leave, the percentages going from 1.33% (of entitled fathers) in Austria to 1.8% in Slovenia, to 2% in Italy – even though it has to be said that the data for Italy stems from a survey carried out mainly interviewing public employees so it may be not representative of the whole population. Anyway it is undeniable that child-care turns out to be a female tasks. Now if we also analyze the way men and women divide housework, in Italy on the average women spend 5.33 hours doing household chores, men just 1.5, while in Slovenia the correspondent figures are 4.5 and 2.66 therefore we can infer that in both countries women carry the main responsibility as far as housework – thus the division of work is still gendered – but in Slovenia women seem to get much more help from men or at least men are used to perform in some household chores. As far as Austria, as it has already been said a good share of the population is of the mind that “a man’s job is to earn money, a woman’s job is to look after home and family”, moreover in the Grüner Frauenbericht 2003 it was reported that on the average women used to spend four hours dealing with housework everyday against just a single hour spent by men.

GENDER RELATIONS IN AUSTRIA, ITALY AND SLOVENIA  
From what has been written above it seems quite clear that all three analyzed countries are characterized by a gendered division of work both in the private and in the public sphere, its extent varying from the comparatively more balanced situation of Slovenia to the worst figures recorded in Italy; recalling the concept of patriarchal relations developed by Sylvia Walby, it can be asserted that in Austria, Italy and Slovenia households are characterized by a patriarchal mode of production, the Austrian state representing the one which through its provisions on

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245 Among the three analyzed countries Italy is the only one which doesn’t pay a monthly allowance for children till they reach the major age, even though a certain amount of money can be deducted from one’s taxable income when there are dependant children – for a deepening about the Italian welfare system see Pierpaolo Donati, Quale welfare amico della famiglie?, paper prepared for a conference about the Italian welfare, which took place in Bologna on the 20th April 2004.

246 Data from Christel Aliaga, How is the time of women and men distributed in Europe?, no 4/2006 of the series of Statistic in focus - Population and social conditions, Luxembourg, 2006 – unfortunately Austria was not covered in the survey.


248 See chapter 2.
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children allowances and parental leave, as well as its taxation system seems to support patriarchal relations in the private sphere the most. As far as the field of employment, the current levels of both horizontal and vertical segregation of the workforce allow us to draw the conclusion that in general women are disadvantaged within the workforce compared to men, even though it is clear that the higher a woman’s education, the better her chances will be to get a good job and to show higher levels of job-attachment in comparison with women with lower level of education, despite having had children. Since young women record comparatively better educational achievements than their male peers, given the fact that they take for granted the idea to work all life long and that many of them postpone the moment they will build up a family (because of their studying or because they first want to realize themselves professionally), it can be expected that in the future gender relations will be characterized by a higher level of equality both in the private and in the public domain. Anyway the current state of the art supports Sylvia Walby’s allegation that there has been a change in the form of gender regime and a shift from a rather private kind of gender regime which has shaped the lives of the oldest women, to more public forms of patriarchal relations and thus of gender regimes for younger women, since they have been able to gain more equality with their partners within the household while in the public sphere they still have to face some form of discrimination and fare comparatively worse than men. As a consequence even though the situation has been slowly changing and improving, even though a steadily increasing number of women are employed and that more and more of them have been able to make it to a managerial position, Ursula Beer’s concept of secondary patriarchy is still valid.

Conversely Ilona Ostner’s concept of female Arbeitsvermögen has been a bit overtaken in the sense that, notwithstanding the fact that women are still performing most of the reproductive work – on the average they devote more time than men for both household chores and child minding – they still have been able to enter nearly all professions, to get used to the logic of the professional field so that for a growing number of them their family duties haven’t limited the possibility of realizing themselves outside the family and to have a career, and not only in so called female jobs. Of course it has to be acknowledged that the level of segregation in the workforce is still significant, which implies that the above mentioned concept of female Arbeitsvermögen as well as Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim’s concept of female Lebenszusammenhang, can still be applied least to a certain group of women.

Moreover “the higher in the job hierarchy, the more likely to have working conditions favourable towards alleviating the contradictions between family and working life” – quotation from Lis Højgaard, Workplace culture, family, supportive policies and gender differences, in Eileen Drew, Ruth Emerek, Evelyn Mahon, Women, Work and the Family in Europe, Routledge, London, 1998, pp. 140-156.
Coming now to investigate the relationship between gender regimes and welfare state in Austria, Italy and Slovenia, in order to understand which kind of gender relations a government fosters - thus also which kind of family model is encouraged - one has to take into consideration factors such as social and fiscal policies, the current legislation for parental leaves and the level of investments in childcare services and in care services more in general.

In her paper *Work-home balance in Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden: Is it possible to identify models?*, Barbara Haas identifies two main strands of models for analyzing households and gender relations: the so called “structuralist” and the so called “culturalist” approach. The first one focuses mainly on female and male employment behaviour and on how much the welfare system backs up traditional gender roles. On the basis of these elements and moving from a pretty traditional situation to one characterized by rather egalitarian gender relations it is possible to speak about a strong-, modified- or weak breadwinner model. On the other hand the culturalist approach looks at the social values and norms on which, in a given society, the gender arrangement identifies who is the person who primarily takes care of the offspring of a family and who is its money maker. Given the fact that both approaches would be lacking in some aspects, Barbara Haas tries to develop herself a classification which aims at synthesizing the former two, taking into consideration mainly the employment participation and patterns of women and men with childcare responsibilities on the one hand, and the way unpaid work and care is distributed between women and men on the other. In this way we get five possible household models.

- the traditional breadwinner model, which historically has been the most widespread one, where the male partner works full-time while the woman usually quits working upon marriage or childbirth in order to take care of her family;

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250 Barbara Haas, *Work-home balance in Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden: Is it possible to identify models?*, Vienna, Institute for Advanced Studies, December 2003, Sociological Series nr. 59.

251 In this contest one connects the concept of welfare system for example to the laws that rule parental leaving, available public childcare facilities and so on.


- the “head – complement” one, where the man has to provide the family with financial resources and thus has the authority to take the most important decisions, while the woman is in charge of the home and of raising the children and is seen as a support for the man, emotionally and materially, and usually can take decisions only regarding day-to-day matters connected to the running of the household;

- the “junior partner/ senior partner” model, where the so called traditional marriage contract as described above has been modified and the woman also works for wage but still her job is considered secondary to the man’s one; she has more negotiation power when it comes to take [financial] decisions since she has her own resources;

- the “equal partners” model, where both partners work, their jobs are valued equally and domestic responsibilities are shared equally, and the same happens for the financial power.
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- the **modified breadwinner model**, where the male partner has a full-time employment and the woman is working part-time or with a flexible schedule and manages to combine work and family-related responsibilities—resulting that child-caring and household tasks still being considered duties to be fulfilled in one way or the other by the female partner, even though she is also employed;

- the **egalitarian employment model**, where both partners work full-time and childcare facilities are mainly provided by the state but as far as the division of household work, it is still usually performed mostly by the woman;

- the **universal carer model**, where both partners work full-time and fairly share unpaid work; children can be taken care of by their parents—who would arrange their working schedule taking into consideration such a duty—or by public institutions;

- the **role reversal model**, which has been realized very seldom, where the woman is the main breadwinner while the man performs most of the unpaid work.

On the basis of this classification the sociologist has tried to identify which model could be applied to Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden, and as far as Austria she holds that it presents features which would allow classification within the countries characterized by the traditional breadwinner model or alternatively by the modified breadwinner model, depending on the point of view. Indeed as we have seen in Austria reproductive work still primarily represents a woman’s responsibility, as she is the one who devotes a lot of her time to household chores and as it was pinpointed by more than one scholar, the existing provisions regarding parental leave and Kindergeld haven’t been successful in encouraging men to become more engaged in sharing parental duties, they have actually ended up strengthening the traditional gendered division of work most often when people’s level of education is low and the woman’s job is not so involving. Moreover while Austria records a high female employment rate (61.7%), if we analyze under which kind of contract they are employed, we see that while men work mainly full-time a very high percentage of women work on a part-time basis (38.7%) and that many

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253 In the book by Erna Appelt (ed.) *Frauen in den ARGE-Alp-Ländern*, we can read that
“Werden finanzielle transfers unabhängig von Erwerbsstatus der Mutter geleistet, so stellen diese u.a. für gering qualifizierte Frauen, die nur niedrige Einkommen erzielen können, einen Anreiz dar, sich aus dem Erwerbsleben ganz oder überwiegend zurückzuziehen. Für Erwerbstätige Männer ist mit dem (partiellen) Rückzug der (Ehe)Partnerin oft einen Anreiz verbunden, die finanziellen Einbußen durch Überstunden zu kompensieren. Das hat zu Folge, dass die geschlechtsspezifische Arbeitsteilung neuerlich verfestigt wird.”

254 See also Claire Wallace, *Work and Flexibility in eight European Countries: A cross-national Comparison*, Institute for Advanced Studies, December 2003, Sociological Series nr. 60.
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of them withdraw from the labour force to take care of their children until they start to go to the Kindergarten - indeed it has been documented that the older the children the higher the female employment rate\textsuperscript{255}. Besides, more than half of the nuclear families in Austria are made up either by the man working full time and the wife working part time, or just by the male adult working and the housewife. As a consequence it can be said that in Austria “many policies and institutional arrangements still hinge on the male breadwinner- housewife model, which has largely been transformed into a breadwinner model with supplementary income from a working wife\textsuperscript{256}, which is to say, that Austria can be classified among the countries characterized by the traditional breadwinner model or alternatively by the modified breadwinner model, anyhow in both cases gender relations there would be still rather patriarchal.

As far as Italy it has to be pinpointed that the country has been historically relying on family as a provider of social services, in fact it has invested a very limited amount of its GDP in the development of childcare services, moreover as it was underlined above, the parental leave provisions are not so comprehensive and the level of female employment is very limited. All of these data are certainly connected together, and they allow us to state that “the Italian situation is a mix of rapid modernization and traditional family relationship\textsuperscript{257}, many Italian families correspond to the male breadwinner – housewife model, where gender relations have of course a patriarchal form and many women do depend on their husband for living\textsuperscript{258}. For the future, giving the increasing female employment rate and the steady rising educational level that women achieve, it is feasible that the number of families where both partners work for pay will grow and overcome the figure of families where only the man is employed; it has to be hoped that the Italian government will devote more resources to the development of care services for

\textsuperscript{255} For example Barbara Haas reports that only 21% of Austrian mothers with children between 0 and 2 years are employed, while the percentage increases when the children are in the Kindergarten age, and reaches 62% when the children go to school. Looking at data from the perspective of children, in the report about the results of the Ministry for social security, generations and customer protection Mikrozensus 2002 called \textit{Haushaltsführung, Kinderbetreuung, Pflege}, it is stated that only 9.8% of all children under the age of 3 years old are looked after in some kind of childcare facilities, while 73.3% of those between 3 and 5 years old go to the Kindergarten.


\textsuperscript{258} Jane Lewis wrote in 1993 that “In Italy both the patriarchal family law and the lack of any coherent pattern of social security or social services have rendered the family and women extremely important in the provision of welfare; this in turn has served to suppress women’s employment.” Quotation from Jane Lewis, \textit{Women and social policy in Europe – Work, family and the state}, Edward Elgar Publishing Co., Aldershot, 1993, page 17.
both children and elderly people, so that women will be relieved from some reproductive work and will be able to dedicate more time to paid work.

For what concerns Slovenia, as we have seen the level of women’s involvement in the workforce is quite high and their working schedule are very similar to men’s ones, even though unfortunately the labour market is still quite segregated and the so called “glass ceiling” for women hasn’t disappeared; in Slovenia 77% of the families are made up by the two adults working full time and here it was recorded one of the highest level of childcare attendance as far as children up to the age of three years old, so that the female employment rate seems to be affected in a very limited way by the presence of children, their number and age. Unfortunately even here reproductive work is still performed mainly by women - both as far as childminding and household chores - so that it is possible to classify Slovenia within the countries characterized by the egalitarian employment model and by gender relations which presents some traits typical of a patriarchal framework, but in a much softer way than in Austria and Italy.

THE EFFECT OF THE PROCESSES OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN AND GENDER REGIMES IN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The last topic that I am going to cover in this chapter is the one about the effects of the processes of globalization and individualization on women and on the way gender relations are shaped in the developed countries – thus in Austria, Italy and Slovenia.

The phenomenon of globalization is a very complex one, so far academics haven’t agreed upon a common definition but they agree that it is currently taking place and it is bringing about changes. In my opinion a good definition has been provided by Held & McGrew and is the following:

“[globalization is] a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions ... generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power.”

The first wave of scholars who dealt with such an issue focused mainly on the economic dimension of globalization, underlining the negative consequences it was producing in national states: in this sense globalization was connected with the emergence of trans-national corporations, which thanks to the available digital technologies were able to trade huge quantities of goods, services, information as well as capitals across borders. The fact that such flows were occurring as if boundaries between nation states didn’t exist, together with the entity

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and value of these businesses, was perceived as a loss of power and authority of nation states - which in fact had no means to exercise a control over those movements – and a gain of influence of such companies. Thus we come to the political dimension of the process(es) of globalization, namely to the fact that along with nation states we witness the entrance of other actors on the international arena, such as the afore mentioned transnational corporations, international organizations and NGOs, the latter expressing the point of view of the (global) civil society.

As it was pointed out by Scholte\textsuperscript{261}, the growth of supra-territorial relations among people and institutions – a key feature of globalization - can be interpreted as an evidence that there has occurred a change in the nature of social space, i.e. that social connections nowadays can be developed also detached from a territorial logic, mainly thanks to the diffusion of communication technologies. These in fact let people get instantly connected regardless of their geographical distance, thus allowing them also to feel close, sometimes (when they share believes, interests or problems) even members of a social community. This consideration leads us to the third dimension of globalization, the cultural one, which affects people's perception of their identity. In a world which is getting more and more interconnected, when people can get to know almost in real time what is going on on the other side of the globe, and the same piece of news is simultaneously broadcasted in the five continents, we increasingly experience a compression of time and space, as well as the feeling of belonging to a unique community, that we all live in the same place. As Robertson put it\textsuperscript{262}, globalization implies a raising awareness about the fact that the world constitutes a whole, and that in order to deal effectively with local happenings and problems one must take into consideration their embeddedness into the wider context (hence the famous slogan “think globally, act locally). As far as the cultural dimension, the question is also whether the exposition to a homogenising mass-media culture will lead to the elimination of diversity and the creation of a common shared identity, an hypothesis firmly rejected by Robertson, according to whom rules can be shared but not an identity, since the latter is connected with one’s experience and culture and “cultural pluralism is a constitutive feature of the contemporary global circumstance”\textsuperscript{263}.

\textsuperscript{263} For example when he writes about women’s response to the analysis and interpretation of globalization, he reports that different groups of women have developed different approaches, according to their diverging personal experiences (feminist movement and WED - women and development), the point consisting basically in the fact that the perspective of Western white women couldn't be representative for nor applied to the condition of women in the developing countries. Quotation from Roland Robertson, ibidem, page 61.
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After this short sketching out of the main features of globalization, I am now going to focus on the way such a phenomenon affects women’s life, thus it must be analyzed the way in which trans-national corporations came to reshape the labour market on an international level, and the impact they had on national welfare states.

In *Was ist Globalisierung?*, Ulrich Beck defines globalization as „a process, as a result of which nation-states and their sovereignty are undermined and criss-crossed by trans-national actors, their power-chances, orientations,, identities and networks”, and claims that this will lead to a world society without a world state, nor a world government, to a disorganized global capitalism. According to him one of the main consequences of such a development would be the cut down of local labour forces and the transfer of labour intensive production processes to low-wage countries, an occurrence which would bring about a shock in the European countries because of the connected loss of income, growth of unemployment and in general, the worsening of life conditions. As a matter of fact Beck underlines that while the economic development of the country goes beyond the nation-state’s control, its [negative] consequences fall all within the web of the national social state; the problem is that not only we witness a decrease in states’ authority and power because of the rise of super-territorial players, but also that trans-border capital stirs up an increasing competition among national states in order to attract investments - which means to create job-opportunities - . the point being that such a competition takes place on one side through the provision of the best possible conditions to settle down a business (educated workforce, infrastructures, etc) but on the other side through the reduction of fiscal pressure and taxation. This can’t but imply that state budget will get shrunk, which will end up in a cut in welfare state policies, a result welcome and desired by the supporters of neo-liberalism, the ideology which believes in the self-regulating mechanisms of the free market and would like the state to draw back and release companies from rules and constraints which make them not competitive.

If we take a look at the consequences for women of the cut in welfare provisions in the Western countries on one side, and of the transfer of production to low-wage countries on the other, we will see that they are strongly affected by such changes.

In the developing countries women represent “the preferred workers in the global factories”, most of all when they are young, poor, not educated and not unionized and come

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from the countryside\textsuperscript{266}, women are considered to be “physically better suited [than men] to perform tedious repetitive tasks” - that nevertheless require a lot of concentration and precision - “as well as more docile”\textsuperscript{267}, in fact they are regarded by the companies as passive victims who need to work in order to maintain their family and thus won’t dare to get organized to ask neither for an improvement of their working condition, nor for a salary which will be at least on the line of subsistence. On the contrary, actually because of the very harsh working conditions and thanks to their increasing awareness of their rights and of their value – since they often represent the only source of income for their families – these women got progressively more unionized, also with the help of international NGOs which deal with women’s rights and problems. Under such circumstances we see that having globalization brought about a feminization of labour, it also constituted an opportunity for rural women to get more self-conscious and autonomous and – as it has been pinpointed by Brigitte Young – through the integration in the global economy, they could lessen their dependence on men as well as start to weaken the local patriarchal structures of male domination.

Coming now to women in Western countries, the withering away of social policies and welfare state institutions proved to be particularly disadvantageous for women most of all. As it has been stressed by Marchand and Runyan, women represent both the major recipients as well as providers of social services, thus when states cut back their provisions such services must be re-privatized, which is to say, they must be anyhow performed and this will occur within the private sphere, in the family. Of course then this load of (reproductive) work is going to fall on women’s shoulders again, like it used to be before national states introduced welfare state institutions. The point is that in the meantime women’s position has radically changed, in fact in the Western countries women’s employment has increased steadily over time and it has become obvious that not only men but women too work to contribute to make ends meet\textsuperscript{268}. Such a stance has become even more obvious nowadays, under the current threat of transnational companies to close down factories in the developed countries to transfer them into the low-wage countries, in order to cut expenses and maximize their profits. Under such a threat the power of trade unions gets reduced and people are willing to accept more flexible working arrangements. Moreover, if women represent – as they do - the majority of the people employed


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by the state and the state is going to cut the services it provides, this too is going to negatively affect women’s situation, in the sense that less job opportunities will be available to them.

An interesting analysis of the kind of gender regime associated with a specific historic regime of accumulation was carried out by Brigitte Young: she defines gender as the social construction of being male or female, which is always inserted into a network of hierarchically regulated social relations; a gender regime would then be a macro-political concept and would consist of the totality of given institutionalized practices and forms of gendered systems of domination, which represent also a social ordering principle of societies; it must be stressed that within her theory these practices have got institutionalized exactly as a result of a specific historic regime of capital accumulation.

Young reports that the Fordist phase of capitalism (1950-1973) has been labelled “the golden age of capitalism” because of the particular compromise that that time had been reached between capital and labour, but – she points out – this (only) holds true if the point of view is the one of a white, male industrial worker living in a Western country. In fact such a compromise rested on a gender order which conceived women as housewives, dependent on their husband and whose status had been achieved through their husband’s one; if they were to be integrated into the labour market, it was just as so called “second earners”, they were often hired in the public sector or in the third sector, where it was more feasible to manage to reconcile family and employment, and – last but not least – since the Fordist society was a society of mass production as well as mass consumption it was accepted that women worked because thanks to their additional income families could afford to buy more goods. As a consequence we see that women got tied threefold to the welfare state: as social workers, as clients and as consumers of public services. During the ‘70s, years of economic rationalization, more and more women were hired in the secondary sector as well, mostly as un-skilled workers assigned to low-paid jobs, thus their status within the family didn’t change much: they were still considered second earners and despite working for wage, they were still in charge of the reproductive labour at home. It follows that the labour market was in general getting increasingly segregated according to the axis of gender while the gender-specific separation and division of work between the public and the private spheres was still valid.

Nowadays – holds Young – the increasing internationalization of capitalism along with the restructuring processes set up by the global economy have undermined the Fordist gender

270 The same remark was done also by Jane Lewis - see her paper Rethinking Social Policy: Gender and Welfare Regimes, Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, 1999, IWM Working Paper No. 6/1999.
271 For more details see Young Brigitte, Genderregime und Staat in der globalen Netzwerk-Ökonomie.
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order. On one side women have improved their level of education (today on the average they even fare better than men as far as the achieved results) and thus they are interested in having a job where they can use their acquired knowledge and fulfil themselves\textsuperscript{272}, on the other side the status of housewife has a good deal of its meaning and importance because of the introduction of several technical devices which have (over)simplified it. As a consequence the share of women within the workforce has markedly increased thus weakening the male breadwinner model as well as the Fordist gender order.

Within such a frame we must then now take into consideration what occurred because of the globalization process. As it has been said before, the increasing internationalization of capitalism led to two main outcomes in the Western countries:
- on the one hand it put pressure on national states to cut taxations and social policies expenditure, which then resulted into either the re-privatization of the provision of such services, mainly at the expenses of women’s time and energy, or into the creation of a market to supply them. This second option represents of course a solution only for the well-off families that can afford to pay for it; here it is also important to stress that usually it is mainly low educated or immigrant women who perform such services, many of them in the informal sector, which means that they work without a contract, nor insurance etc.;
- on the other hand under the threat of the closing down of firms because of their lack of competitiveness connected with supposedly overregulated industrial relations (this from the employers’ point of view), the myth of a life-long full-time job has perished and people are increasingly ready to accept flexible forms or work, being it under the part time formula, or of job sharing, as freelance, seasonal worker or worker on call, everything in order to have a job thus a source of income. It is mainly young people and women who welcome such forms of contracts, because they allow them to manage their time and juggle between an employment and studying or taking care of the family, therefore this flexibilization may represent a good opportunity for them, but for most of the people it isn’t the case.

When writing about the process of de-standardization of labour, Ulrich Beck speaks of a transformation from a “system of standardized full employment to a system of flexible and pluralized underemployment”\textsuperscript{273}, which according to him represents a negative change, because

\textsuperscript{272} As it has been pinpointed by Birgit Rommelspacher in her paper \textit{Neue Polarisierung und neue Konvergenzen: Das Geschlechterverhältnis im Zeitalter der Globalisierung} (in Schmidt Gert, Trinczek Rainer, Globalisierung – Ökonomische und soziale Herausforderungen am Ende des 20.Jahrhunderts, Soziale Welt, Sonderband 13, NOMOS Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden Baden, 1999, pp. 243-258) less and less our society can afford to renounce to women’s professionalism, which is the result of the investments they made for their education.

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the income provided by such jobs is not sufficient to allow a person to live “a life of his/ her own”, and also because with the increasing individualization of working contracts, times and places, less and less elements connect people together and give them a sense of belonging to a community, as well as it gets harder and harder for trade unions to represent the workers’ interests (whose interests? It is a competition of everybody against everybody).

The growing instability of one’s working life, regardless of his/ her sex, the impossibility to rely on just the man’s income to support a family, the raising integration of women into the workforce, all of these phenomena are characteristic of the process of so called “feminization of the labour force” as well as of the process of “individualization of society”. In the global economy men like women are reduced to individuals who have to be the master of their life and to take their own decisions in order to maximize their “gains”; (theoretically) women have finally got rid of the ascribed “feudally” gendered division of labour and have reached equality with men on the labour market in the sense that now they too can have a market-dependant biography. But how does it affect the family (if there is one)? As I have already mentioned, we are currently witnessing the polarization of society – i.e. a rise of social inequality – between a white professional middle class, well educated and integrated into the formal economy, and the bulk of people which consists of the labouring poor who are active both in the formal and in the informal sector but almost exclusively in low-wage jobs, whose level of education is low and have a hard time to make ends meet. The first kind of people can afford to pay somebody who will carry out their household chores, while the second group must juggle between their paid job(s) and housework.

If we focus our analysis on women, some succeeded in entering a professional career, thus they can rely on having somebody else who takes care of their private sphere, anyway this is not the case of the majority of women, who instead must find a way to reconcile productive and reproductive work; in an individualized society how this will happen represents just a personal problem, of no interest for the market. In this sense we can speak of a process of shaping of inequalities between women themselves, whose outcome is a hierarchy labelled of “mistress-maid”: we will then find (white) educated women-in-career at the top, who are dependant on other women (of colour), low-educated or immigrant who perform their reproductive work. Such a social division is also mirrored in the dwelling system, as a matter of fact – as Saskia Sassen

\[274\] For a more comprehensive explanation about the process of individualization of one’s biography as well as the problems that arise within the family because of such a process, see Ulrich Beck, ibidem, part 2.

\[275\] See Brigitte Young, *Genderregime und Staat in der globalen Netzwerk-Ökonomie*, page 192 and following.

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(1998) has pointed out\textsuperscript{276} - in one part of the big cities we will find the districts for the well-off people, while the “serving people” live in other districts.

As a conclusion of this analysis we can say that in the Western countries the process of globalization has brought about a sharpening of the tendencies that are connected with a gendered division of labour – i.e. a re-patriarchalisation of society -, because as we have seen, since welfare state has begun to shrink and social services to get re-privatized, it has occurred that the majority of these services must be again carried out by women, both in their own home as well as in the houses of those people who can afford to pay somebody else to perform their reproductive labour in order to dedicate all of their energies to a market-oriented life/ career\textsuperscript{277}.


\textsuperscript{277} For some empirical data regarding the situation in Austria in 1999, see Eva Kreisky (ed.), \textit{Globalisierungsmythen: Feministische Perspektiven}, ÖZP 2001/2, page 131 and following.
CHAPTER 5

THE GENDER ISSUE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IN THE ALPS-ADRIATIC REGION – A PORTRAIT FROM SECONDARY SOURCES

In this chapter, I will give an account of the way the issue of gender equality has been dealt with, first within the European Union, and second in a regional context (namely in the three regions which may represent the heart of the forthcoming Alps-Adriatic region: Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia), with the aim to detect some of the best practices which have been elaborated in a certain region and have proved to be effective in helping parents to carry out all their duties, and which may be successfully adopted also by other administrations; as far as Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia, I will also report on the social condition of working women there, contextualizing such data within their national framework and providing information on the local childcare services (demand and supply) and welfare policies in support of families.

THE ISSUE OF GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union has a long-standing commitment to the promotion of gender equality. In fact, the Treaty of Rome - which established the European Community and was signed in Rome in the year 1957 – started that equality represents one of its founding’s principle, that the organization must aim to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between men and women in all its activities (articles 2 and 3), and that it must combat discrimination based on a number of grounds including sex; the social provisions of the Treaty provided that men and women must have the same opportunities on the labour market. It was also recognized the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value (articles 137 and 141)\(^{278}\). Over time several directives have been developed in order to implement the principle of equal treatment in employment, such as, for example, Directive 75/117/EC on the principle of equal pay and Directive 76/207/EEC on access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions, which later on was amended by the Directive 2002/73/EC on sexual harassment conceived as a form of discrimination based on sex; more recently the European Union became involved in the field of parental leave (Directive 96/34/EC) and has encourage better protection of pregnant and breastfeeding working women (Directive 92/85/EEC).

In 1995 the European Union participated in drafting the Beijing Platform of Action at the Fourth Women’s Conference promoted by the United Nations, whose main outcome consisted in the content of the 19\(^{th}\) article of its Final Declaration: it officially introduced the new approach
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of the gender mainstreaming and declared that, every planned activity, every national and
international act, every policy and program of development undertaken before this declaration
was adopted should have been evaluated according to its predictable effects and consequences
on men and women, respectively, while positive actions were accepted as a tool to contribute to
reduce gender inequalities and gaps\textsuperscript{279}. In 1996 the European Commission decided to adopt
the approach of the gender mainstreaming\textsuperscript{280} thus introducing a gender perspective into all policies,
programmes and procedures of the Community starting from the moment when they are
elaborated; the official definition, given in 1997 by the United Nations Economic and Social
Council (ECOSOC) of the above mentioned approach, is the following:

"Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications
for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or
programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns
and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design,
implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all
political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally,
and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve
gender equality."

\textsuperscript{279} See \url{http://www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/legislation/ectreaty_en.html}.
\textsuperscript{279} For a deepening see Agenzia ANSA, Giunta Regionale del Veneto, \textit{Quarta Conferenza Mondiale sulla
\textsuperscript{280} European Commission, Communication: \textit{Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all
Community policies and activities} COM(96)67final.
\textsuperscript{281} Quotation from \url{www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/gender/newsite2002/about/defin.htm}; on the official
site of the European Union we can read the following definition:

"Gender mainstreaming is the integration of the gender perspective into every stage of policy
process – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view of promoting equality
between women and men. It means assessing how policies impact on the life and position of
both women and men – and taking responsibility to re-address them if necessary."

Regina Frey in her book \textit{Gender in mainstreaming} gave the following explanation:

"Gender Mainstreaming besteht in der (Re-)Organisation, Verbesserung, Entwicklung und
Evaluierung von Entscheidungsprozessen, sodas von den AkteurInnen, die üblicherweise in
Entscheidungsprozesse eingebunden sind, eine Perspektive der Gleichberechtigung der
Geschlechter in allen Vergehensweisen auf allen Ebenen und in allen Phasen eingenommen
wird."

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{278} See \url{http://www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/legislation/ectreaty_en.html}.
\textsuperscript{279} European Commission, Communication: \textit{Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all
Community policies and activities} COM(96)67final.
\textsuperscript{280} Quotation from \url{www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/gender/newsite2002/about/defin.htm}.
\end{footnotesize}
Gender inequalities and social conditions of employed women in the Alps-Adriatic region prolonged till the end of 2006, with a budget of EUR 50 million euros (later extended to 61.5 million euros), and an Action programme designed for the annual work programmes to implement it; the framework strategy sought “to combat inequalities between the sexes in economic, political, civil and social life, and to change roles and remove stereotypes in these areas.” It was conceived as a comprehensive approach embracing all Community policies, based on the development of horizontal activities and on the coordination of gender-related activities in the various policy areas of the organization.

In 2001 at the European Council of Lisbon set out the objective to transform the European Union into the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based society in the world by 2010. In order to achieve such a goal one of the steps taken consisted of adopting in each and every country policies aimed at increasing women’s active presence in the workforce, and taking into the due consideration their role of caregivers; the female employment rate was to be boosted to such an extent that in the target year on a European level it should exceed 60%. Two years later, at the Barcelona European Council it was agreed that the provision of childcare services was to be improved as well, so that by 2010 at least 90% of the children between the age of three and the mandatory school age, and at least 33% of the children under three years old, will be taken care of in public or private childcare facilities. These provisions have been promptly incorporated into the policies of the European Union. In fact, in the text about the Employment Guidelines for 2002 we can read that their aim was “… to design, implement and promote family-friendly policies, including affordable, accessible and high-quality care services for children and other dependants, as well as parental and other leave schemes”, whereas in the text about the European Employment Strategy 2003 it is written that “members should remove disincentives against female labour force participation, and strive, taking into account the demand for childcare facilities and in line with the national patterns of childcare provision, to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age, and at least 33% of the children of under 3 years of age.”

Among the instruments set by the European Union since 2001 in order to achieve a more equal society is the program EQUAL, an initiative financed by the European Social Funds and based on the active cooperation between member states, which aims at combating discrimination and social exclusion on the labour market; the program is described as a laboratory for “new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work


and those looking for a job.” and is articulated by four pillars: employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities. Moreover every year the Commission must report to the European Council about the progress recorded in the realization of a more gender equal society, as well as the problems still at large. In the report on equality between men and women in 2006 we can read that “gender equality policy is a key for sustainable growth, quality jobs and a greater social cohesion,” a statement consistent with the standpoint in favor of employing people (women) in order to improve the social cohesion of society (if they work, earn money and spend it on the market they, and probably their family, won’t be dependent on social assistance). The goals set at the European Council of Lisbon are part of a wider strategy of the European Union which is based on the idea that in order for the market to be prosperous in the long term, it needs to count on educated and well trained people. In order to develop such human resources it is necessary to create the social conditions that allow people to have a family and to be economically active. From this reasoning stem, concepts like life-long learning on the one hand, and of work-life balance on the other, former being strictly connected with the tenet of reconcilability between family and work. Drawing more women on the labour market means allowing them to earn a living and (hopefully) to realize themselves in one more sphere, while for society, it means to taking advantage of women’s skills and potential, a source of human capital that otherwise could be wasted.

If the European Union aims at becoming the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based society it must not only fully employ the available human capital, but also create such a framework that encourages people to start families and to have children. Children represent the future workers, scientists, as well as clients and consumers, taxpayers and so forth – in order for a society to have a long-term development, it must be able to reproduce itself. This is why reproductive work – also called care-work – should get a higher social acknowledgment and the people who provide it should at least not be penalized; if possible they should be able to keep giving their contribution, for example by adopting family friendly policies, schedules and other kinds of arrangements. As it is written in the afore mention report, “a good work-life balance helps to reduce gender gaps and to improve the quality of the work environment while addressing the challenge of demographic change.”

Both quotations are from the text by Eurostat, Development of a methodology for the collection of harmonized statistics on childcare, European Communities, Luxembourg, 2004, the first from its preamble at page 10, the second from its preface.

For more detail see www.ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/about/index_en.cfm.


See for example Juliet Webster, Reconciling adaptability and equal opportunities in European workplaces, Report for DG Employment, European Commission, April 2001.

Gender inequalities and social conditions of employed women in the Alps-Adriatic region continues- there is still “evidence of the different time use patterns between men and women and of the role of carer predominantly assumed by women and the greater difficulties they face in trying to reconcile work and private life”\textsuperscript{288}. For example, it is reported that a childbirth has a different impact on the working life of men and women between 20 and 49 years, i.e. on the average the female employment rate records a drop of -14,3\% whereas the male rate increases of 5,6\%; because of family duties, stereotypes, gender-biased remuneration and evaluation systems, it is much more difficult for women than for men to make career. It must be acknowledged that much progress has been recorded in several fields that are under the jurisdiction of the European Union\textsuperscript{289}, but in spite of women’s increasing presence on the labour market and the active role they play nowadays in many spheres of the civil society, differences between men and women in terms of employment opportunities, pay and working conditions still persist. In practice, men and women still don’t enjoy equal opportunities, and the fact that women are under-represented in political bodies and that they are often victims of violence show that there are still structural gender inequalities, where institutions must now intervene.

In order to tackle these issues the European Commission has developed a proposal for the Parliament and the Council - which has been approved - for establishing a Community programme for employment and social solidarity, named PROGRESS, which will run from the beginning of the year 2007 till the end of 2013. It will have a budget of 628.8 million EUR and will aim at supporting the implementation of the European Employment Strategy, at improving the level of social protection and inclusion, and the quality of working conditions; it wants to combat discrimination and promote diversity as a richness, and also – last but not least – it supports the effective implementation of the principle of gender equality and promotes gender mainstreaming in EU policies\textsuperscript{290}. Moreover the year 2007 has been designed as the “European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, as part of a concerted effort to promote equality and non-discrimination in the EU”\textsuperscript{291}: the European Commission has indicated six priority areas where to intervene: helping men and women attain economic independence through their integration in the labour market both as employers or entrepreneurs and the elimination of gender wage gap; enhancing the reconciliation between work, private and family life through investments in

\textsuperscript{288} Quotation from European Commission, ibidem, page 9.
\textsuperscript{291} See the press release IP/05/647, of the 1\textsuperscript{st} June 2005 by the Department of Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission; see also http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/647&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en.
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childcare services, the promotion of flexible working arrangements and the encouragement of fathers to take up family responsibilities; promotion and equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes; eradicating gender-biased violence and trafficking; eliminating gender stereotypes in society; promoting gender equality outside of Europe. Although quite long, it is worth quoting here the stance of the European Commission about the state of the matter regarding the gender issues:

“Inequalities remain and may widen, as increased global economical competition requires more flexible and mobile labour force. This can impact more on women, who are often obliged to choose between having children or a career due to the lack of flexible working arrangements and care services, the persistence of gender stereotypes and an unequal share of family responsibilities with men. Progress made by women, including in key areas for the Lisbon strategy such as education and research, are not fully reflected in woman’s position on the labour market. This is a waste of human capital that the European Union cannot afford. At the same time, low birth rates and a shrinking workforce threaten the European Union’s political and economical role.”

During the European Year of Equal Opportunities awareness raising activities should take place across the whole European Union, organized by the national and local bodies who deal with the issues of gender equality and equal opportunities. Before accounting for the bodies who are in charge of this work in Austria, Italy and Slovenia, as well as in Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia, and before describing their activities and initiatives, I will first report on the living conditions of working women in the last two regions, the local provision of care-services on which they rely, and the welfare policies developed by the regional governments in support of their families.

FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

According to the 2005 issue of La Regione in Cifre, the region counted 1.202.715 inhabitants at the end of 2003, of whom 51,6% were women; in 2004 the employment rate was 62,5%, the female rate was 52,6% and the male was 72,4%. Considered alone such data may seem low, but in comparison with the national rates (respectively 57,4%, 45,2% and 69,7%) we can see that the regional data are above the average, besides the unemployment rates registered in Friuli Venezia Giulia were less than the half of the national ones, namely

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294 In Italy it is calculated for the population aged between 15 and 64 year old.
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2.6% for men, 5.8% for women and 3.9% on the average, compared with the Italian rates of 6.4% for men, of 10.5% for women and an average unemployment rate of 8%. The unemployment rate for young women is higher (between 15 and 24 year old) – 16.9% according to the 2003 ISTAT Labour Force Survey - which is nonetheless much better than the national rate of 30.9% and can be accounted for by the high average level of education recorded in the region. As we can see, Friuli Venezia Giulia fares very well on a national level, and it should also to be emphasized that in the last years all the rates have been improving.

Coming now to the analysis of women’s presence on the labour market, as it is reported in the 2004 ISFOL dossier on the workforce, in 2003 Friuli Venezia Giulia women made up 31.8% of self-employed people, and 82.2% of those who had part-time employment (the national rates were 29.3% and 76.9%); while from 2000 to 2003 the former percentage registered a decrease, the opposite is true for the latter. In fact, in 2000 women represented 80.3% of the part-time workforce. According to the 2003 Labour force survey by ISTAT the incidence of part-time female employment in Friuli Venezia Giulia was low (17.5%; in Italy it is 21.1%), while only 8.8% of women had a temporary contract and the majority - 73.8% - were employed with a regular long-term contract; for the sake of completeness, it should be reported that in the region women made up 43.5% of the people with a long-term contract and 55.1% of those who had a temporary employment, which is to say that also in this region more men than women can enjoy a “regular” full-time and long-term working contract. Again it is worth underscoring the fact that the working women of Friuli Venezia Giulia in general fare better than the average Italian woman. In fact, it seems that in Friuli Venezia Giulia it is comparatively easier to get a job and there are better chances that it will be one with a good kind of contract.

Going onwards with the analysis, if we look at the women’s employment rate according to their education we notice that again and for all of the different educational levels, women in Friuli Venezia Giulia fare far better than their national counterparts, with (positive) differences that range between 0.2% for the level “no title/ primary education”, to 8.9% for the level “high-school diploma”. Concerning the sectors in which women work, in 2003 they represented 31.25% of the those employed in the agricultural sector, 25.15% of the workforce in the secondary sector (but only 3.49% of the people who dealt with construction), and 50.62% of the those active in the service sector.

If we take into consideration the fact that there are more men than women who have a permanent employment, that less men have a temporary job and that very few of them work on


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a part-time basis, and that the male unemployment rate is lower both in general and for young people (11.9% for those between 15 and 24 years old), we can come to the conclusion that all in all in Friuli Venezia Giulia women fare better than women in many other parts of Italy in terms of their situation within the workforce, nevertheless also here gender inequalities are present and women are still disadvantaged compared to men. It follows that there is still work to be done in order to attract more women to the labour force and to promote a culture of equal opportunities within companies as well as public institutions; surely mothers represent one of the most important target groups for many initiatives because many of them may be drawn into the labour force so that their potentials, skills and knowledge may be tapped, and also because of the role they have in the process of socialization and education of the children who will become the future citizens of a hopefully more equal society. Regarding the specific policies that should be adopted for mothers, many studies point out that one of their hardest problems consists in finding a way to reconcile family and work, a problem which still too often turns into a dilemma: research on time-use and sociologists in general maintain that the division of duties within the Italian family is still rather traditional despite the increasing presence of women in the workforce\(^{297}\), and even though “before the arrival of the first child, couples tend to share the housework fairly equally, something about a baby encourages the resurgence of traditional gender roles\(^{298}\), so that it is usually the mother who has to make a compromise, probably by reducing her working engagement in order to take care of her offspring, while no change in working-hours patterns are recorded for fathers.

Coming to the special provisions that the Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia has established in order to support maternity and to foster an increase in the birth rate, in 1993 a law was passed giving married couples (whose income was under a specific threshold) a maternity allowance which today would amount to € 1.500 ca, compatible with other kind of allowances. Moreover for every second born child these families are given an una-tantum check of more or less € 3.000 (€ 5.000 in case they had twins) and also for each third and following child an una-tantum check of more or less € 4.500. On top of this until 2003 the law provided also that the Region had to pay a monthly check for each child after the second one, until the 3rd birthday of each child; the same provisions were valid also in case of the adoption of a child younger than 10 years old. In 2003 the law was reformulated and since then the Region has been paying an una-tantum check whose amount has to be fixed every year to each child of each family whose


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income is below a certain level: for the year 2005 the sum of the check was of € 1.550 for the first child, € 3100 for each following child and € 4.650 for each twin child; moreover according to one’s family income the Region is paying a monthly check of up to € 210 for each third and following child, till s/he turns three year old.

The system of allowances described here may represent a good support for low-income families with children but more crucial to women’s presence in the workforce are the features of the existing childcare system. For what concerns the situation in Friuli Venezia Giulia, in 2003 according to the data published on the internet site for the region, 94% of the children between 3 and 5 years old attended a nursery school, while 10,5% of those aged between 0 and two years old were enrolled at a private or public nests. The regional data are already better than the national ones, but also regarding this point there is much room for improvement. Precisely in order to try to give an answer to the considerable demand for places in nests, the regional council has recently passed a new law on childcare facilities, the 20/2005, which has fixed the general requirements to be met by private and public providers of childcare facilities. It also states that the Region will supply some kind of financial aid in order to help families pay for the attendance fee.

Next to the support given by the Region to woman and families through maternity grants, family allowances and the improvement of the childcare system, in 2003 a special program was launched called “FUTURA – Services for equal opportunities”, co-financed by the European Union through the ESF (the last deadline for applications was in December 2006). Such a program targeted mainly women in charge of children up to 15 years old, disabled persons or elderly people above 75 years old, and it aimed at helping them balance their family and working times by providing a network of welfare-services; women and men that worked or were going to attend vocational training courses were entitled under specific circumstances to a monthly voucher of up to € 350 for maximum of 6 months to be used in order to pay for childcare services or baby-minders, care-services and assistance in looking after disabled or elderly people, and in preparing their meals.

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298 Quotation from Ann Crittenden, *The price of motherhood – Why the most important job in the world is still the less valued*, Fitzhenny and Whiteside Ltd, Ontario, 2001, page 25.

299 See [www.regione.fvg.it/minori](http://www.regione.fvg.it/minori)

300 The circumstances are the following: when a woman gets a full-time employment after having been unemployed; when she starts to work again full-time after having made use of maternity leave or breast-feeding leave; when she switches from a part-time employment to a full-time one; when she launches her own entrepreneurial activity; when she gets involved in a project of tele-work or of re-modulation of working schedules; when she enters the workforce after having spent a period of detention or when followed by an anti-violence centre. For what concerns men, in order to get access to such a service they must be the only adult person of the family and work full time or be on a training program.
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From March 2003 to September 2005 over 3200 women applied to such a program, while the Region paid out vouchers for an amount of € 7,9 ml; at the end of 2006 the support for the project by the European Union through its ESF terminated and the project was temporary suspended, but, given the very positive response that it received and its usefulness, the regional government declared its willingness to find the resources to re-finance it. Specifically in order to get a feedback on the project and in order to detect possible strategies and operative tools to be introduced by the regional government with the aim of improving women’s employability, as well as to give a concrete answer to the demand for services that help women reconcile their working and caring duties, on behalf of the Region and of the Regional equality advisor, the IRES (Regional Institute for Economical and Social Researches) carried out a survey among women in the year 2005: according to its results in Friuli Venezia Giulia a traditional gender contract persists, where the bulk of the reproductive work falls on her shoulder regardless of whether she works or not – an output which is in line with the national statistic about men’s and women’s time use; there is room for improvements since such a model is slowly changing among young couples, especially when the couple’s level of education is high and the woman is employed.

Another regional data set which is in line with the national one is the way women rely on their family network in order to get some help in their juggling of family and work. In fact, in Friuli Venezia Giulia working women count most of all on grandparents’ help mainly in connection with childminding and child-transportation. Another measure that according to the interviewees, would be welcomed is the possibility of switching to a part-time schedule. Unfortunately for women, it must be emphasized that on the one hand grandparents in a near future may not be available any more as care-providers. In fact, through time the legal provisions for getting retired have changed and got longer (and maybe they will become people who need to be taken care of); on the other hand, companies – at least in Friuli Venezia Giulia – have still a Fordist vision of labour, where that what counts is to be present on the job, the longer the better, and, according to this logic, if a person wants to work part time it means that his/her level of commitment to the job is low. Indeed, some women reported that owing to their family choices and their request to have a reduced working schedule they were segregated, given other tasks with less responsibilities and were cut off from some processes, with an obvious negative effect on their professional career.

This is why it was suggested that the regional government should invest money in public childcare facilities and more in general in services of care in order to improve their offer, to reduce their price and to adjust the criteria for drawing the children’s

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302 For a deepening see IRES, ibidem, at page 197 as well as the in-depth interview.
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placement in order not to penalize women who work with atypical forms of contract (74% of the interviewees recommended it, and 33,5% explicitly pointed out that the supply of places in crèches doesn’t meet its demand). Besides, it was proposed to draw up a register with the names of the people who offer childcare services upon a certified education in the field maybe coupled with fiscal deductions for the families who hire them. Moreover a similar system could be organized for private cleaning services and general help with household chores: this way on the one hand some informal work could be found while on the other hand, since the above mentioned services are usually provided by women, new job places would be created, which would help other women to reconcile their duties connected to family and job, thus generating a positive vicious circle. It was also pinpointed the desirability of the organization of an awareness campaign about the social value of care work and more equal gender relations was emphasized. The best option would be to develop a special program for schools in order to shape new gender roles; moreover the regional government should promote the introduction of reversible part-time contracts for people with significant loads of care-work, as well as the provision of flexible working schedules, the development of family friendly policies (an option warmly welcomed by 58,1% of those interviewed), and the provision of financial incentives to the companies that adopt them.

Some interviewed asserted that women should be given the opportunity to work part-time for 6 hours a day (and some also added that they should be paid as if they were working full time, or at least be paid the social contributions of a full time worker as a recognition of the value of the care work that they provide), not only until the child turns one year old, but until s/he goes to the kindergarten. In fact, many women declared that because of the rigidities of the existing working schedule, when it was not possible to rely on the help of the family network, they were forced to quit their job in order to face the responsibilities connected with reproductive work – 36,3% of those who were unemployed at the moment of the interview but had worked before said that they were unemployed because they had had a child. The fact that flexible working schedules are quite rare constitutes a further problematic element, which has to be added to opening times of schools and childcare facilities that are often rigid as well, thus making things even harder for working parents (women), not to mention of the times when they are closed, like during the summer or for Christmas, when most of the parents of course still have to work. It must be acknowledged that many municipalities try to meet such a need by offering summer camps, nonetheless the number of applicants almost always exceeds the number of available places, they don’t cover the whole period off from school and they may well represent a high item of expenditure for an average family.
Another interesting data set consists in the reasons behind a gendered division of labour. Besides the persistence of a traditional family model, economic reasons influence it as well: even in so called “egalitarian partnerships” the couple opted for the woman’s temporary withdrawal from the labour force (for example by taking the facultative parental leave, during which in Italy one usually gets just 30% of her/his average salary, except for civil servants, who in the first month get their full wage) in order to meet the demand of reproductive work. In regards to what taking parental leave or days off when the child gets ill, notwithstanding the legislation, it was reported that fathers almost never took it because of a working culture that doesn’t welcome but rather discourages it303.

Another data set which emerged from the survey is the lack of information about the facultative parental leave as well as about the project Futura (79,8% said that they didn’t know about it), an aspect on which must be addressed in case the regional government manages to refinance the programme. Anyway almost all of the women who took advantage of it were very satisfied with it: 42% of the women who could benefit for it opted for the voucher connected with a child care facility, 31,2% chose to be helped carrying out household chores – thus getting relieved from a heavy task and being able to devote more time and energy to their families, an aspect that was praised - and 13% of them asked for a baby-sitter. Surely all the women welcomed the chance to be helped in paying for the services they needed, but it must be emphasized that many could avoid quitting only because they had temporarily solved the problem of who minds the children; since the support offered by Futura is limited in its duration, once the beneficiaries had run out of vouchers the problem would have been still there. Therefore, they might have had to quit their job at that time. As a consequence, many women proposed to extend the time-coverage of the service304, also by redistributing the same amount of money over a longer period of time, till the children started to go to the kindergarten; many asserted also that some criteria which regulate the access to it and the placement could be modified, such as the provision that the woman must work full time - in fact there are women who work so to say part time but it actually means 6 hours a day, on top of which there is the time spent on transportation and perhaps also the time spent bringing the children to somebody who minds them, and the women end up being actually very busy.

303 See IRES, ibidem, page 198 and following.
304 It must be reminded that Futura doesn’t provide a check to the women, but a voucher to be spent picking up one of the possible services provided, and some women said that it was so to say hard for them to get every month services for an amount equal to the value of the voucher that had been granted them, this is why they suggested to keep giving the same total amount of money to each women, but to provide her the possibility to decide for how long to make use of it, i.e. to cover with it the whole cost of a chosen service or just a part of it but for a longer period of time, to be allowed to decide how to spend it in a more flexible way.
A final proposal suggested that the Futura be open to more men in order to give a significant indication about a division of tasks which would be less gendered and more equal and balanced, so that in the long run the problem of reconcilability between family and work will no longer represent just a “women’s problem”.

The regional government is very aware of the positive impact that the project Futura had; in connection with the design of reform of the welfare in relation to the labour market – i.e. services that help to keep or attract people on the labour market, through training and education, through services that make labour offer and demand meet, by giving fiscal incentives to the companies which employ disabled persons or persons at risk of being unemployed because of their age or sex; etc – it has declared that it intends to give continuity to the projects that support women’s employment, both at the light of the target set by the European Union and because it is believed that a woman who works gives a fundamental contribution to the welfare of her family, so that she won’t need social assistance and in the very end she will also contribute to the economy by spending money on the local market.

Next, to the project Futura, the regional government of Friuli Venezia Giulia wants to keep running also the project Imprenderò – Programma di cultura e formazione imprenditoriale. As the name says, the project aims at encouraging the entrepreneurship culture both in the school and in general, giving concrete support to everyone who plans to establish his or her own business by providing services of tutorship, personalized preparation and counselling on how to develop a business plan and to start-up a company, as well as specific training courses; moreover it helps companies overcome an intergenerational handing-over and modernize their working procedures by introducing elements of innovation. The project was launched in the year 2005 with the contribution of the European Social Funds, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and with many local organizations – trade unions, associations of category, school, centres of research and Chambers of Commerce – and in the first two years it has implied an investment of € 490.000 to the benefit of 9.500 people who have taken advantage of the free of charge services that were offered, 2/3 of whom were women. Indeed within the project – which has been financed so far till the end of 2008 - there are two sections specially devoted to women: women who are currently in the educational system or attending a training course, and women who plan on launching their own company.

The fact that the regional government of Friuli Venezia Giulia is sensitive of the gender issue and the problem of reconcilability between family and work – which usually concerns women much more than men, as we have seen – is proved also by the recent legislation that it has passed, like the regional law 24/2004 which provided a legal framework for the people who provide care work within a familiar setting; the aforementioned regional law 20/2005 about the
childcare system and the regional law 18/2005 on employment, protection and quality of work. This last law includes special measures in support of companies who hire women (and socially disadvantaged people) with a long-term contract, as well as special norms about women’s access, stay and reintegration in the labour force, norms against the discrimination of working women and support for the reconciliation between family and work. Within the regional government one of the member of the ruling Committee – who is a woman and is responsible also for the financial sector and plan (budget) - is responsible for the Regional department for equal opportunities (Assessorato per le pari opportunità), within which a dedicated Regional service for equal opportunities has been established (Servizio regionale per le pari opportunità). In September 2006 the Service was provided with 1,1 ml euros for the realization of its work-plan in order to develop activities which promote the equality between the sexes in collaboration with the local authorities, associations of women, the third sector and the Regional Commission for equal opportunities. Besides, the regional government has allocated some more 0,6 ml euros to organizations and associations who work in order to alleviate and mitigate the situation of female distress and to promote solutions in favour of the conciliation between times for productive and reproductive work; in the year 2006 35 local bodies submitted such projects and altogether they were given 0,4 ml euros as a contribution in order to realize them.

Consistently with the approach of gender mainstreaming fostered by the European Union and the promotion (among firms) of the value of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility, the Regional department for equal opportunities has decided also to launch the initiative of the gender budgeting, to be introduced both at the regional and at the local level in order to assess the impact of the decision about expenditures on both women and men, and it also plans to launch a certification of social commitment to be awarded to the companies which adopt family friendly measures and policies which promote gender equality.

Another fact that gives evidence of the sensitivity of the regional government of Friuli Venezia Giulia towards the gender issue is the promotion of the project “Ess.Er.Ci Rewritten Social Contract”: organized within the framework of the European project EQUAL and co-financed by the European Social Funds, it has received the funding from the Ministry for labour and social policy and of the Region, and it finds its starting point in the recognition of the fact that women in Italy and in Friuli Venezia Giulia still do not enjoy equal opportunities and the same living conditions like men in many fields, forcing them to carry a much heavier burden as far as family and house-related work is concerned, which as a consequence makes it harder for women to stand on an equal footing with men in the labour force and in decision making processes - many women simply don’t have the same availability of time and energy that are necessary for making a career or to be politically active.
The project "Ess.Er.Ci Rewritten Social Contract" has a budget of € 930,000, it was launched in 2006 and will last till the end of 2008 and it is organized on three levels: first through some thematic seminars which took place in 2006 in the whole region, it aimed to sensitize people on women's peculiar life conditions and problems as well as on gender images and stereotypes, then on the basis of the achieved awareness the partners involved in the project were invited to sign a new social contract between men and women, based on the acknowledgement of the fact that gender differences constitute elements of richness for the democratic system as well as for companies. On the 29th January 2007 the social actors signed the contract thus becoming formally committed to the promotion of a new culture, where gender differences are ascribed a positive value and gender equality begins to become a reality. On the basis of this "re-written social contract" six workshops on different topics will take place over the course of the year 2007, all which are articulated on a phase of analysis on the state of matters in a specific field from a gendered perspective, and on an experimental phase whose aim it is to achieve more gender equality. During this second experimental phase as well as after it, educational activities are planned, coupled with the dissemination of information about the results of the workshops and the preparation of a hand-book of good practices.

Another organism which takes care of gender issues in Friuli Venezia Giulia and is also involved in the project "Ess.Er.Ci", is the afore mentioned Regional Commission for equal opportunities. Set up among the first of such bodies in Italy with the regional law 23/1990, it is an advisory body of the regional board and the regional committee; it is made up of the women who have been elected to the regional commission, the 19 women appointed by representative female associations and movements of the region, and the Regional Advisor on equal opportunity and treatment between women and men in the labour force. The Commission is organized into sub-committees which work on specific topics and devote a lot of time to maintaining contact with the many local associations of women and local bodies responsible for equal opportunities, so that it receives feedback on its work, and can cooperate, in efforts to achieve better results. Its tasks are many: it promotes research and surveys about women's condition in the region with special attention devoted to working women; it organizes awareness raising campaigns, congresses, workshops and occasions of debate on issues that affect women's condition; it has to provide a mandatory opinion about the programmes developed by the regional board and committee which may affect women's situation, and it can

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305 See for example the report drawn at the conclusion of a project of research which was based on the organization of workshops on the issue of equal opportunity and which explored the need for education and training courses expressed by women or different cohorts (project R.I.T.M.O.) – Grazia De Angelis, Laboratori locali sulle pari opportunità: linee d'indirizzo e buone pratiche per un orientamento che dia valore alle differenze di genere, final report, Trieste, 11 March – 10 May 2004.
develop its own legislative proposals on topics that are connected with the issue of equal opportunity. Besides, a very important assignment consists in developing positive actions which aim at promoting women’s access to the labour market, education, qualification and re-qualification. In order to do so the Commission is in charge of the evaluation of the projects for positive actions submitted by local bodies to the regional government, whose costs could be in part covered by the second. Moreover the Commission has got involved in a very important project, namely in the programme Interreg III ITA – SLO 2000-2006, which was co-financed by the European Union and was focused on the issue of equal opportunities in the two areas. The project has implied a work of networking with its Slovenian counterparts, a census of the existing organizations and associations which work with and to the advantage of women was realized, and 14 thematic meetings with participants and experts from both the regions: here it was possible to learn about each other, the state of women’s conditions from a comparative perspective, and to compare experiences, problems and ideal practices elaborated in order to promote a culture that valorizes gender differences.

Another organism which deals with gender issues in Friuli Venezia Giulia is the Regional equality advisor: officially set up with the regional law 18/2005, the person who enters this office is appointed by the Ministry of labour together with the Ministry of Equal Opportunities, on the proposal of the Regional committee, for a period of four years renewable once, and s/he must be an expert on gender issues, female work, and labor in general. The equality advisor is given the task of promoting and controlling the realization of the principles of equality, equal opportunity and non-discrimination between men and women in the workforce; s/he is a public functionary, therefore if s/he gets to know about cases where the law has been broken, s/he has to inform the legal authorities about it, working in cooperation with the regional and provincial labour department. Moreover s/he has to promote projects of positive actions, letting circulate the information about their results and about possible practices that have been developed; besides the equality advisor has to promote educational activities and labour policies that are based on the principle of equal opportunity and contribute to its actual realization. It has already been said that the equality advisor is a member of the Regional commission for equal opportunities, thus her work and the work of the Commission is coordinated. Besides in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Mrs Grazia Vendrame – who is the current equality advisor - works in close touch with the Regional department for equal opportunities, so that she was among the initiators of the projects Futura, Imprenderò and Ess.Er.Ci. She has closely followed the development of the programme Interreg III ITA – SLO 2000-2006, and has promoted the realization of the research Oltre Futura. In an interview that I carried out on the 20th January 2006 Mrs Grazia Vendrame declared that there is the project to realize an official register of women with a

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certified formation as educators, who will offer their work as professional “Tagesmutter”, based on the example of the Trentino-Alto Adige region, and could align themselves with certified cooperatives and provide care work to families who need it. The objective of this project would be on the one hand to meet the demand of working women for care work – as it indicated by the research on Oltre Futura - in order to make it more feasible for them to reconcile family and working duties; on the other hand this way offers new chances for formal employment to be created for women, since they usually are the care-providers.

In order to conclude the section on Friuli Venezia Giulia and Italy, I will now provide some further information on the organisms which deal with gender issues on a national level.

First of all it must be said that in the year 1983 the National committee for the realization for the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunities among workers was set up, while in 1984 the National commission for equal opportunities between men and women was established; the first body is ruled by the national law 125/91 and is made up of representatives of trade unions, associations of category and female organizations, as well as by the national equality advisor, an organism which was established by the same law (whose norms have been later integrated by legislative decree 196/2000), which has also officially introduced the possibility of developing positive actions for the attainment of equality in working conditions between men and women in the labour force.

The National committee for the realization of the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunities among workers is responsible for controlling the application of the existing normative about equal opportunities in the field of labour. It promotes the presence of women in public bodies dealing with labour issues and professional education, supplies information and promotes positive actions and projects which aim at fostering female employment, strives to realize factual equality between men and women by overcoming hindrances to the attainment of equal opportunities.306

As far as the national equality advisor is concerned, the tasks of this organism are similar to those of the regional correspondent body, except that it deals with national bodies and coordinates the regional and provincial equality advisors307.

In 1992 the National committee for female entrepreneurship was established, and in 1991 the National commission for equality was as well, which in 2003 became the National commission for equal opportunity between man and woman: it consists of 25 members appointed by the Minister of equal opportunity, representing trade unions, associations of category and female associations. It also includes female experts and three regional representatives of equal

306 See www.lavoro.gov.it/Lavoro/md/AreeTematiche/occupazione/domandaOfferta/pariopportunit%C3%A0.htm.
opportunities. Twice a year one representative for each regional commissions and for the two autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano are invited to participate; more or less its tasks are similar to those of the regional commissions, with the difference that of course its field of analysis and action is the whole country and that it elaborates proposals for legislation which aim at removing forms of discrimination against women and at improving the realization and implementation of the principle of equal opportunities in every field of life\textsuperscript{308}.

Finally in 1996 the Equal Opportunity Ministry (without portfolio) was established and in 1997 the Department for equal opportunity as well, with the purpose of supporting and constituting the administrative structure of the Equal Opportunity Ministry. This organism is charged with the task of gender mainstreaming for the decisions and activities of the other ministries so that they do not disadvantage women. It represents the Italian government in all the international bodies that deal with gender opportunity, including in the European Union; finally but most important of all it programs, advises and coordinate all the initiatives (also the legislative ones) in the fields of the promotion for equal opportunities and the prevention and removal of every form of discrimination.

In order to set order to the current legal norms on the subject of equal opportunity between man and woman, the government has passed the legislative decree 198/2006, which is called the “Code of equal opportunities between man and woman”. It collects all the legislation about the bodies which deal with the topic, all the legislation about equal opportunity, positive actions for the conciliation of family and work, as well as the legislation against discriminatory behaviours in many different fields.

CARINTHIA

The 2001 census registered in Carinthia registered 559,404 inhabitants, of whom 51,7\% were women; the employment rate\textsuperscript{309} measured 62,9\%, the female one 53,7\% and the male one 72,3\% of it. If we compare regional data with the Austrian ones, we can see that all three rates are ranked below the national level (in 2002 respectively 69,3\%, 63,1\% and 75,7\%).

Focusing our attention on the statistics about unemployment, according to the information gathered by the Carinthian AMS\textsuperscript{310} (Arbeitsmarktservice) in 2005 the general unemployment rate measured 8,7\%, and broken down by sex it amounted to 9,5\% for men and 7,8\% for women; in 2003 the youth unemployment rate (of people between 19 and 24 year old)

\textsuperscript{307} See http://www.consiglieranazionaleparita.it/default.aspx
\textsuperscript{308} See also www.pariopportunita.gov.it/DefaultDesktop.aspx?NewStatus=4&doc=769
\textsuperscript{309} In Austria it is calculated considered the number of men aged between 15 and 64 years old and of women between 15 and 60 year old, since they can already retire when they turn 60 year old.
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was 11.3%. Casting a look over the data of the past years we see that such rates have increased, in fact in 2002 the general unemployment rates were 6.9% in Austria and 8.2% in Carinthia, while in 2003 they were 7.0% and 8.1% respectively. We can conclude that the entire country seems to suffer a growing unemployment with Carinthia faring even comparatively worse, thus the people here must be even more concerned about the issue. Anyway we have to recall the fact that if the unemployment rate is measured by the same method of the other EU member states, then the figures are much lower and the situation does not look as bad.

For what concerns the way women are present among the workforce, in 2002 they made up 30.7% of the self-employed people and 45.1% of the employees; the latter percentage had grown up to 45.8% in 2003, an increase that may be explained recalling the fact that the male unemployment rate was increasing thus changing the employment ratio between men and women towards a more favourable situation for women. If we look at the gender segregation taking into consideration the distribution of male and female employment across sectors, we see that in 2003 women represented 31.84% of the workers in the first sector, 30.96% of those in the secondary one and 56.98% of the employees of the third sector. Given the fact that in that year people in the services made up 66.7% of all the employees we can infer that the majority of women had a job in this sector, which has a higher incidence of part-time contracts but also the only one where from 2002 to 2003 it was registered an increase of the employment rate (+1% at the regional level, +0.9% at the national one). According to the data of the Mikrozensus 2002 the sectors with the highest concentration of women were the textile industry, teaching and education, social and health services, and the retail system; in the report issued in June 2005 by the Institute of Advanced Studies of Carinthia (HIS Kärnten) it is stated that the very sectors where working women are predominant are also the ones with the lowest salaries.

Considering now women’s typologies of contracts and their duration, the results of the Mikrozensus 2002 show us that only 5.5% of women had a temporary contract, 3.7% were doing an apprenticeship, while by far the majority (almost 91%) had a permanent contract. As it is reported in the Kärntner Genderstudie carried out by scholars at the University of Klagenfurt on behalf of the Department for women and equal treatment of the Carinthian government, 82.54% of men declared to work for pay for an average of 36 to 40 hours a week, while only

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311 In the report Frauengesundheitszentrum Kärnten GmbH, Erstfassung Datenbericht für die Entwicklung des Kärntner Frauengesundheitsprogramms, Villach, Salzburg, 2004, it is stated that „on a federal level Carinthia records the lowest employment rate, for men as well as women“, p. 9.
312 Data from STAT, the Mikrozensus 2002.
313 According to the IHS 2/2005 Report, in the sectors where the salaries are the lowest women represent 69.2% of the employees, against an average female workforce of 44.4%; Carinthia has the worst data of whole Austria.
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59.76% of women claimed the same, whereas around 14% of women stated that their weekly schedule consisted of between 16 and 20 hours. It is evident that part-time contracts are accepted or pursued more often by women than by men, thus if we take into account the fact that women are likely to be found in sectors where the salaries are low and that their working schedule are shorter than men’s, we can easily understand the reason why the gender wage gap in Carinthia is high.\(^{314}\)

One of the factors which greatly contribute to the gender wage gap and most of all to the gender pension gap\(^{315}\) is paternal leave or rather, the way female workers make use of it. In some municipalities of Carinthia in 2001 a pilot test was carried out which led to the introduction of the so-called “Carinthian Kindergeld” first in this region, later in 2002 in the entire federation. The Kindergeld is a child allowance consisting of a monthly check of € 436 to be paid to the parent who cares for the youngest child until s/he turns three years old; such a child benefit was introduced in order “to create a child-friendly atmosphere and to prove that the education and care of children represent important services for society and for the social and economical future development of Carinthia.”\(^{316}\) Unfortunately as we have seen such a cash payment has ended up reducing the actual female employment rate, a phenomenon which holds true also for Carinthia, in fact the Institute for Advanced Studies has found out that in this region the percentage of employed women aged between 20 and 40 has decreased from the 54.6% in 2001 to the 52.5% in 2003\(^{317}\).

As far as the figures about fathers taking the parental leave in Carinthia, despite a recorded increase in their number, it still represents a marginal phenomenon: while in 2003 5,464 parents made use of the parental leave, only 37 of them were men which is to say only 0.68% (the national data was 1.33%\(^{318}\)), the reason why they were so few is to be attributed at least partially to the current regulations which - as it has already been pinpointed – rather hinder than encourage male workers to go on leave because of the high income-losses connected with it.

In order to give a comprehensive overview of social welfare provisions in Carinthia, on top of the aforementioned federal provisions, the region grants socially disadvantaged families an additional allowance of up to € 436 (depending on the family’s income) for each child since


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the end of the period during which on the parent of the given family is entitled to get the *Kingergeld* till the child turns 10 years old – on the internet site of the regional government it is underscored that “Carinthia is a pioneer and a region that sets the example, since Carinthia is the only federal region that pays such an allowance until the 10th birthday of the child and – depending on the income-threshold – up to the amount of € 436 per child”\(^{319}\). Moreover since the 1st January 2006, when the newborn has the Austrian citizenship (or one of the parents has it) the family gets a check of € 800 for a firstborn, of € 900 for a second-born, and € 1000 for a third born.

Coming now to focus on the features of the childcare system, for what concerns the attendance rate of day nursery centres the exact regional data is not available but just to give an idea about the situation, in the year 2003 in the region only 894 children were registered in such facilities while between 2001 and 2002 almost 9 thousand births had occurred! It has to be said that in 2001 the registered children were only 148 and that from that year to 2003 the number of available nursery centres was also increased from 10 to 45, which means that an effort was made in order to develop the supply of childcare services as an answer to an increasing demand for places expressed by parents. In fact according to the data from the Mikrozensus 2002 in Carinthia there was a childcare-facility gap of between 7.000 and 10.000 unity; even if the public bodies in Austria contribute to the payment of the attendance fee for childcare centres, for many families they will still be too expensive\(^{320}\).

In the program developed for the legislative period 2004–2009 by the parties who won the last regional elections it is stated that children’s well-being is among the priorities of the government and that it wants to provide all the kids with the same opportunities for their growth\(^{321}\). Among the measures that ought to be implemented there are a new comprehensive regulation of the standards for nursery centres, Kindergartens and post-school care centres; an increase in the pedagogical staff and in the number of available places in the post-school institutions; the creation of an educational pull of mobile people in order to provide childcare services also during holidays; the provision of an extra educator paid by the regional administration for each


\(^{320}\) See Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz, *Haushaltführung, Kindertreuung, Pflege, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus September 2002*, p. 82 ff.; such data include also the missing places in Kindergarten and day-care centres for primary school-age pupils.

Kindergarten with groups of children of mixed age, so that it will be possible to take care of more of them, particularly in the countryside. It must be acknowledged that in the last years the situation has substantially improved at least as far as services for children between 3 and 5-6 years old are concerned: according to the data published by the regional government in the year 2005 26 ml euros were invested in the construction of childcare facilities, so that in the school year 2005/06 a surplus of 1955 places in kindergarten was recorded, in other words there were 16.790 registered children attending a kindergarten while the number of available places was of 18.745. Moreover the regional government pays for the fee of the children who attend the last year of kindergarten up to a monthly amount of € 75, and it has also launched the pilot-project of the "Mobile Tagesmütter": it gives families the possibility to ask for the services of a child-minder who works for the cooperative Kärntner Hilfswerk, who can come to the children's home and look after a maximum of three siblings who are 10 years old or younger. When baby-sitter-on-call works at an hour when childcare facilities are usually closed, the family is charged just € 5 for an hour and the regional government pays for the difference in price up to € 22, which is the actual hourly fee.

As far as other family friendly policies that were adopted in Carinthia order to allow parents (mothers) to reconcile work and family, as in the rest of the country there are the programmes “Work and Family Audit" and the competition “Women and family friendly company", both of which aim at raising awareness about the desirability and benefits connected with helping parents carry out both their working and family duties.

The national program "Work and Family Audit" was introduced in 1998 and consists in carrying out a check-in of the firm that wants to participate in order to identify the areas where to intervene with the family friendly measures that are more suitable according to the need of the given company; usually the consultants suggest introducing some changes in the working schedule, training policies, workplace practices and support services. Through a process of assessment, feedback and follow-up which in the end should result in the award of a certificate. Starting with the management and trickling down to the actual employees involved, the commitment of the company to a family-friendly place of work should grow, which will eventually lead to an increase in the workers’ motivation and loyalty to the firm, a reduction in their level of stress and turnover and ultimately to the achievement of a more productive environment. By the end of 2002 already 56 companies had been involved in such a program, whose costs are partially covered by the government.

In 2002 a law was passed which made possible for Kindergarten to accept children below three years old.

For a detailed description of the program and the competition see www.familienallianz.at/
The second initiative consists in a competition to find the firm which has provided the best working conditions for its female staff members and parents in general, by taking into proper account their needs connected with their family duties. The competition is carried out in each Austrian region and for different categories of firms according to the size of their workforce; the benefits are in terms of valuable media coverage and publicity for the companies involved.

Coming now to describe the organisms that deal with gender issues in Carinthia, since 1992 within the regional government, the Department for women and equal treatment has been established. Its main task since 2001 consists of applying and implementing the principle of gender mainstreaming in order to foster a progressively more gender equal society, where women and men are treated in the same way and where equal opportunity for the two sexes is a reality. The head of the department, Delegate for women and equal treatment was officially given the task in 2004 to lead the newly established Antidiscrimination office. With the regional constitutional law of 2001 it was set out that the department is independent and autonomous in carrying out its activities, a situation which is unique in the panorama of the Austrian federal states – as Mrs Helga Grafschafter stated in an interview that took place on the 9th November 2005 – and which gives the department solid legal basis and a strong voice when representing women’s interests in Carinthia because its existence is not dependent on the political will of the current leading party or coalition.

The main fields of work for the Department for Women and equal treatment are three: activities of gender mainstreaming, equal treatment and support for women. As far as the first, in order to implement such a strategy a team called GEMEX was created – Gender Mainstreaming Arbeitsgruppe – which is made up of functionaries from the various departments of the regional administration: these people have been appointed within their offices in order to take part in a specific training program where they became familiar with the current legislation on gender issues, the concepts of gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, gender sensitive management of human resources and so forth. Also functionaries from the district administrations attended the training - the goal of the initiative was to create a team of persons who are familiar with gender issues and the strategy of gender mainstreaming, who are interested in implementing it, and thus can act as multipliers and contribute to the transfer and dissemination of information as well as to the development of a gender sensitive approach. One and the very first of the outputs of this initiative was the realization of the handbook “Frauen und

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324 For more information see [www.frauen.ktn.gv.at/](http://www.frauen.ktn.gv.at/)

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Männer unterwegs - Leitfaden zur Umsetzung von Gender Mainstreaming” by the municipality of Hermagor - Pressegger See.

In close connection with the activity of gender mainstreaming, within the Department a Gender controlling section was established, which is responsible for collecting information and data on alleged situations of discrimination on the basis of sex inside the public administration in order to take the proper counter-measures; moreover, it is involved in a project of data collection and analysis of personnel policies and budget-drawing within the regional as well as the local public administration in order to successively develop measures which will be more gender sensitive and equal (i.e. gender budgeting).

Coming to the field of work which deals with the principle of equal treatment between men and women, the Department for Women and equal treatment is competent for the application of this principle in the workplace, so that people that have been treated unfairly on the basis of their sex in the workplace can address their grievance to this office and they will find law experts to advise them and help bring their case to trial. Moreover the Department is supposed to gather remarks, wishes and pieces of advice on how to improve the situation for the female civil servants of the region.

Finally the Department is in charge of representing Carinthian women’s interests: through activities which aim at raising people’s awareness of gender inequalities and particularly about women’s situations and difficulties, through public relations work, by taking part in meetings with trade unions, associations of category and collaborating with several committees, and by developing legislative proposals to be submitted to the regional council, the Department wants to overcome barriers and hindrances which lie on the way towards the achievement of a more gender equal society, where men and women are really given the same chances as far as access to the labour force, career-opportunities and remuneration. Through several counselling centres located in various towns of the region as well as at its “headquarters”, the Department provides information and answers to women’s questions and concerns, publicises the availability of contributions especially devoted to women who find themselves in special situations – for example those who want to undertake a professional training or get an education, start-up their own company, as well as those who have an income that places them below the poverty line, or were victims of violence. In 2005, all the above mentioned information was gathered for the first time in a comprehensive publication named “Juno – you know!”.

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which was financed by the above mentioned Department and also by the European Social Funds through the initiative Equalize, and by the Ministry for economical affairs.

It must be emphasized that the initiatives of the Department for women and equal treatment are always patronized also by the regional government through the political representative who is in charge of social affairs (services and problems concerning families, women, children, young, elderly and disabled people, etc.). Indeed, on the Internet site for the Carinthian government under the voice Policies in support to women and for equality we can read that the principle of gender mainstreaming must be introduced and adopted in every field, and this, coupled with the removal of situations of gender inequality, will bring about the development of gender equality. Unfortunately, it has been widely proved that women still often find themselves in a disadvantaged situation and this is why it is necessary to create awareness about their situation and then to actively promote their interests and to support them; of special concern to the regional administration is the provision of childcare facilities, which ought to be more available (open) most of all in the afternoon in order to help parents reconcile professional and family duties. Besides, another core point consists in working in cooperation with educational institutions and centres for girls in order to encourage them to be very attentive about what they will choose to study at the university or which job skills they would like to learn. The regional government and the Department for women and equal treatment have been promoting many projects in this field, from the mentoring programs and the mentoring competition “Lilith”, to the organization of the fair Jugendmesse, from taking part at the federal campaign “Mut! – Mädchen und Technik”, which brought educators, parents and girls involved in training sessions, and provided the girls with practical experiences in order to assess their competences, understand their wishes and vocations and pursue so-called “male jobs”.

The regional government and the Department for women and equal treatment got also involved in the projects of female empowerment: according to this approach women should be taught to be more confident, active and self-supportive, to learn to become assertive and committed in the economic and political field, for example as entrepreneurs and political leaders. One of such projects is Equalize: it was financed with funds of the EU-EQUAL initiative to an amount of 1.5 ml euros and lasted two and a half years (and was concluded in 2005); it saw the participation of more than one hundred Carinthian women and included fours modules: going back to the labour force after a period of parental leave (module “FemBack”), building up

327 The handbook was so useful that the Department run out of copies very soon; in 2006 another version of the guide was published, this time even more comprehensive since it had almost three times more pages; the issue of the version 2006 of the book was financed by the Department for Women and equal treatment and the regional government, as well as by the Regional office for social affairs and disable people.
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women’s self-confidence through a course of Female Career Coaching, improving one’s qualification (module “Start-up”), and getting to know the approach of gender mainstreaming in order to introduce a gendered perspective into all the bodies, the decisions they make and the initiatives they organize, so that society is more aware of the existing gender differences without conceiving them as something negative (module “Balance”).

Beside the above mentioned activities and initiatives the regional government and the Department for women and equal treatment have also promoted the realization of studies about the women’s situation in Carinthia – for example, in 2004 it was published the “Kärntner Genderstudie”, the organization of many conferences and meetings where such a state of the art was discussed and debated, where opinions were exchanged and possible solutions and indications on how to work forward were developed.

Some results of the above mentioned study which may be interesting in this framework are that 68.4% of the women who work full time stated that they feel overburdened by work because of their employment, while for women working part time the figure goes down to 42.2%, thus proving that having a reduced working schedule makes it easier to reconcile professional and familial duties (also because women justify their choice to work part-time or to quit their job by stating that it was taken because of family duties). Moreover, the fact that Carinthian women declared that they feel comparatively less overburdened because of family–related work than Austrian women in general, was explained by recalling the fact that the female employment rate in the region is below the average national level, from which it was inferred that “it is possible that because of a stronger traditional orientation of women in Carinthia, the domestic workload is accepted as typically connected with their role”. Also when women work most of the household chores fall on their shoulders; as it was asserted by the interviewed men and women, such a traditional and unequal division of work is perceived as something “in the norm” even though women tend to complain and to express feelings of dissatisfaction. In many families the grandparents and most of all the grandmother play a very significant role as childminder and transporter. Indeed when grandparents’ help is not available it gets much harder for parents – i.e. for women – to juggle their job and childcare facilities, and also in Carinthia the opening time

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328 For a deepening see www.frauen.ktn.gv.at/ and also www.ktn.gv.at/
331 Quotation from Referat für Frauen und Gleichbehandlung (ed.), ibidem, page 40 (my own translation from German).
332 See Referat für Frauen und Gleichbehandlung (ed.), ibidem, page 87 and following.
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of the latter constitutes a matter of debate and dissatisfaction. Besides, perhaps surprisingly given the many forms of financial help that both the federal and the regional government have developed, the interviewed people still criticized the state for not doing enough in order to support families in the form of financial help and the creation of more part-time jobs for parents (mothers).

In another survey that was carried out in Carinthia in 1995 by interviewing 696 women, it was found out that “the environment in Carinthia is assessed as rather women-friendly....[even though] women experience the closer environment as more women-friendly than the whole Carinthian society”\(^{333}\); moreover 77% of the interviewed declared that the management of the house and the carrying out of housework lies on their shoulders, whereas 32% said that they don’t get any help from their partners at home, a situation that concerns also \(\frac{1}{4}\) of working women. It is therefore not surprising that the level of satisfaction expressed by women about the given division of tasks is low (on a scale from 1 – lowest – to 5 – highest – the average score was 1,85). Women would like the reproductive work performed by them to find more acknowledgment in the society, even though it is reported that “for the majority of women it is still natural to renounce, at least for a certain period of time, the realization of their own wishes to the advantage of children... To quit their job because of the birth of a child is not considered a sacrifice for many women”\(^{334}\), they say that the whole day-schedule is set by the child’s needs, something which is perceived as normal but which also leads to the fact that not only women’s everyday life ends up being very different from that of men, but that in the long run their life-courses also differentiate them from each other. The men’s follows a rather linear development, while that of women is instead characterized by interruptions of their working path and career, changes and so forth. Many Carinthian women said that even though children represent the priority, they are not satisfied with the situation, but unfortunately they have the feeling that they cannot help it.

More than a decade ago, women expressed their wishes that there were more childcare facilities and that they were more affordable, less expensive, that the offer of part-time jobs would be wider, that the work of being a mother and a housewife would find more social recognition, and that women would find more support when they decide to start to work again after a time off the labour force because of family reasons. Indeed 58% of the interviewed asserted that it is hard to find a (proper) job after a break. According to scholar Anna Moser, this survey indicates that the traditional gendered division of work and the lack of an equal sharing

\(^{333}\) Quotation from the report by the Institut für empirische Sozialforschung, *Frausein in Kärnten*, Vienna, September 1995, page 35 (my own translation from German).

\(^{334}\) Quotation from Institut für empirische Sozialforschung (ed.), ibidem, page 56, 58 (my own translation from German).
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of household tasks between the sexes can be held responsible for the fact that Carinthian women feel overburdened, and that their position within the labour force is one of disadvantage compared to men’s one – i.e. that they end up looking for part-time positions, where they will hardly be able to earn a living (if they happen to have to count on just themselves and their income) and to realize themselves. Luckily it also holds true that women of the younger cohorts don’t take patriarchal relations for granted and expect to be or state that they are in a supportive partnership. Moreover, as we have seen, the political instances of Carinthia have started to give an answer to some of the needs expressed by women by investing in childcare facilities and helping out families – even though it must be emphasized that it was invested mainly in kindergarten and not in nests. Also, by providing an allowance to parents who temporarily withdraw from the labour force in order to take care of their children the regional government still supports the traditional gendered division of labour, since it is almost always women who take the parental leave (because they usually earn less than their husbands or partners) thus they also carry out household-related work, and this way they contribute to upkeep patriarchal relations.

At the end of 2003, the scholar Franz Nöstlinger comes to a similar conclusion, namely that the Carinthian society should encourage men to become more engaged in providing reproductive work, both in the sense that they should be more committed to carrying out housework and to taking care of their children, and that they should make use of the paternal leave; moreover the society should start to give more acknowledgment to care work and reward it more in order to bring to an end to discrimination against women on the labour market because of their family role; finally in order to meet the needs expressed by families there should be more childcare services, with longer and more flexible opening times, and companies should offer more flexible working arrangements.

SLOVENIA

As it was said in the previous chapter, thanks to the legacy of the Socialist system in Slovenia the principle of gender equality has been long established and even though we still run into gender disparities there, it has to be said that Slovene women have always been encouraged to actively take part in public life. This is why already in the ’80s when Slovenia was still part of Yugoslavia, women got organized in powerful civic movements which militated


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against the opposition: they decided not to support the Communist party because in their opinion it hadn’t still realized actual gender equality, and they started to openly address issues where the state had failed to intervene, like violence against women, the problem of the gender wage gap, the fact that in political life women were a minority and thus were marginalized. In 1984 the women’s section of the sociological society carried out a study on gender equality, whose result was to propose the prolongation of the parental leave up to the first birthday of the child, with full compensation of income (before it lasted six months), such a proposal turned into a law in 1986. In 1985 Lilit was founded, an association which included many organizations of women, ecological groups, gays and lesbians groups as well as people committed for peace; one of the first activities of this association was to fight the proposal of the introduction of a compulsory military service for women, and later against the building of nuclear power plants in Slovenia. In the same years in all of Yugoslavia the topic of birth-rate was gaining more and more attention because of the striking difference between the low birth-rates of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia on the one hand and the high ones of Kosovo and especially of the Albanese population in Kosovo on the other hand. Within this framework one should be reminded that abortion was available free of charge in the whole Yugoslavia since it was a constitutional right, but in connection with the above mentioned worrisome demographic changes it was possible for the Catholic Church and parties to launch a successful campaign against abortion. When the Christian Democrats entered the ruling coalition after the first multi-party election held in 1990 – and women then made up only 11% of the members of the new Parliament – “the emancipation of women ceased to be an automatic part of the system’s legitimation”; the government launched a program of changes with the aim of bringing the country to democracy based on a market economy, distancing it from the old system and the right to abortion, which was considered part of the negative legacy of Socialism. There was the possibility of erasing such a constitutional right with a decision supported by 2/3 of the Parliament in which case it would not have been included in the new constitution: in order to avoid such a threat Slovene women joined together despite their different points of view, and started a common action which was able to gain the support of the population and led to public manifestations of protest in favour of the right of abortion in front of the Parliament in 1991. They were successful. The feminist groups were able to obtain the establishment of the Parliamentary commission for women’s politics in 1990 (which later became the Commission for equal

337 In the ’80s only 25% of the members of the Parliament were women, a situation that was not consistent with the principle of gender equality that by constitution was supposed to be realized in every field of life.
opportunity policy), which was given the task of discussing legal acts, carrying out research and drawing proposals for acts on equal opportunity matters; later on, the government committed itself to the realization of the rights of women as guaranteed by the constitution, legislation and international treaties, so in 1993 the Office for women’s politics was set up, which had actually started already in 1992. The goal of this office was to work for the integration of the principle of gender equality into government policies and for the elimination of inequality in all areas of life; in order to accomplish this, it was given the tasks of carrying out analyses about the causes for the phenomenon of discrimination, to elaborating proposals aiming at improving the legislation in terms of gender equality and to gathering and providing information on rights concerning women.

Metaphorically, if thanks to women’s mobilization a battle was so to say won, the war was still not over: in the light of the increasing unemployment rates owed to the process of transition to the capitalistic system, which in the first half of the ’90s concerned men more than women, patriarchal ideas about the division of work gained new favour and were put forward by many parties: as an example in 1994 for the first time, and later on once more, the Slovenian Christian Democrats presented a proposal for the prolongation of the parental leave up to the third birthday of the child. Luckily, it was rejected because it would have put women in a very disadvantaged position in the employers’ eyes; in fact, upon the submission of such a proposal, the Office for women’s politics carried out a survey and found that if such a provision had been passed, the employers would not have been willing to hire women because of the costs connected with having them on leave for such a long time and also because of the loss of skills that such a long time without working would have implied. More precisely 63% of the interviewed stated that they would have definitely opted for a worker who would not have had to take such a leave, while 74% declared that in their opinion such a provision would have cut women’s chances of being hired. Even though such a provision was not introduced, it holds true that women have been increasingly affected by the problem of being unemployed: in the second half of the ’90s firms in which many women were employed started to be faced with the measures connected with the transition to the market economy (like, for example, the textile industry), and in the years 1996/97 it was recorded that 2/3 of the job seekers were women, so that special programmes for their inclusion in the labour market had to be developed. Nowadays, it is provided that

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women must make up at least 50% of the beneficiaries of every programme for qualification, vocational training, and every programme which aims at creating employment. Luckily - despite the data about unemployment - women’s participation in full-time paid employment in Slovenia is still high, also thanks to the high educational level attained by people on the average, so that the majority of women manage to be financially independent. An issue that still requires attention and engagement in order to address it, is that family activities fall still mainly on women’s shoulders, as time surveys and the statistics on parental use clearly show.

For what concerns the services offered by the welfare state in Slovenia, in a report from 2003 the scholars Nevenka Černigoj Sadar and Petra Vladimirov wrote that “although there has been a reduction in welfare programmes, the social policy measures that ease work-family balancing have not been reduced and some of them has been improved”, which is a good point, but they also added that “the situation is accompanied with high level of insecurity due to the flexibilization of the labour market and employment relationships”; in another paper Nevenka Černigoj Sadar and Aleksandra Kanjou Mrčela wrote that “increasing demands from employers, the high level of social and economic insecurity and the attempt of the Catholic Church to influence everyday life have demanded and still demand a lot of women’s energy to prevent any step backwards.”. Since Slovenia has gained independence and joined the European Union, some steps forward towards a more gender equal situation have been made.

After the introduction of the approach of gender mainstreaming in the European Union, in light of the fact that Slovenia at that time was applying to become a member country, in 1997 it launched the project “Enhancing women’s participation in decision- and policy-making process in Slovenia” which lasted three years and consisted in an educational training offered to a group of functionaries appointed by three ministries; it aimed at introducing knowledge of and sensitivity for the gender mainstreaming approach into the public administration and also to mobilize women in order to build upon their potentials, knowledge and experience.

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339 Data taken from the report by Nevenka Černigoj Sadar and Aleksandra Kanjou Mrčela, Actors and recent policy changes influencing the life of women in Slovenia in the nineties, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, 2005, page 7.
340 According to the scholars Maca Jogan and Nevenka Černigoj Sadar, the influence exercised by the Catholic Church on people’s and especially women’s behavior still play a very important role in determining such a situation – see for example Maca Jogan, Mulieris Dignitatem, Catholic Church and Gender Hierarchy, paper presented at the European Conference “Women in a Changing Europe”, Aalborg [D], 18-22 August 1991, and also Maca Jogan, The decomposition of sexism in the second part of the 20th century in Slovenia, in Edith Saurer (ed.), Women’s movements. Networks and debates in post-communist countries in the 19th and 20th centuries, special issue of the review L’Homme, Böhlau Verlag, Köln/Weimar/Vienna, 2006, pp.197-211; see also Nevenka Černigoj Sadar, Labour market integration of women an d care work, University of Ljubljana,
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institution which guarantees that such an approach is applied is the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities: in February 2001 it took on the tasks of the Office for Women's Policy and since 2002 its work is regulated by the Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. According to this act the above mentioned office is responsible for many tasks: it coordinates and formulates policies as and draws proposals and regulations aimed at achieving equal opportunity and at countering discrimination; it has to monitor the position of women and the realization of their rights; it examines regulations, acts and measures developed by the ministries in regards to the way they will affect women's and men's lives; it is in charge of the coordination of the activities aimed at implementing gender mainstreaming; it is responsible for the drawing up of the national programme for equal opportunities for women and men and also for monitoring its implementation; it has to draw up analysis, reports and other materials concerning equal opportunities; it promotes the realization of equal opportunities by supplying information and organizing awareness raising campaigns; it deals with initiatives put forward by NGOs active in the area of equal opportunities; finally it represents the government in international and regional organizations involved in the realization of equal opportunities for women and men. Moreover it offers a free and anonymous telephone number to people who think that their rights have been violated or restricted because of their sex, as well as a service of advocacy for equal opportunities for those who feel they have been treated unequally. For what concerns the activity of monitoring, every four years the Office must draw a report about the state of women's and men's rights in the country, to be submitted to the CEDAW; as far as regulations, acts and measures, the Office has not always been involved in their development, nor it has been constantly kept updated about the activities of the ministries, which makes is hard to carry out its tasks properly. The personnel of the Office tries to follow the legislative process by checking the drafts that are published on the websites of the ministries; its capacity of intervention depends not only on the level of cooperation with each ministry, but also on the level of knowledge about the specific topic dealt with in the given provision. Anyway according to the Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men each of the ministries of the government of Slovenia had to appoint an official who is in charge of the implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming and is assigned to cooperate with the

343 For more detailed information about the tasks and work of the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities see [www.uem.gov.si](http://www.uem.gov.si).
344 In the report by Vlasta Jalušič and Milica Antic, *Women – Politics – Equal opportunity. Prospect for gender equality in Central and Eastern Europe*, we can read that “in Slovenia the Office for Women’s Politics often has to struggle to obtain relevant information and documents from ministries”; the report was published by the Mirovni Institute of Ljubljana in 2000, quotation from page 10.
Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities. In December 2005, there were 18 such coordinators, according to the public relations officer of the Office, the efficacy of the work of these coordinators and their cooperation with the Office depends on many factors: on the personal interests of the individuals, on their position within the ministry and the power connected with it, on their level of involvement and knowledge about each and every provision developed in the ministry, provisions which are supposed to take into consideration the principle of gender mainstreaming\(^\text{345}\). According to the PR spokeswoman the level of cooperation between the Office and the ministerial coordinators would be good. Within the Office one person is in charge of the coordination of the coordinators from the ministries, while another one deals with the equal opportunity managers of local authorities; regular meeting are held with the coordinators, this way, for example, the 2005-2013 National Action Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men has been developed, as well as the subsequent National Plan for 2006-2008. As far as the cooperation with NGOs dealing with women and equal opportunity issues is concerned, they as well have been involved with the Office in the preparation of the NAP, mainly through workshops focussed on different topics; besides they are invited every year to apply for funds in order to get their programmes co-financed by the government.

The Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities has established a very satisfactory collaboration with the Ministry of labour, family and social affairs, and more precisely with its Department for family affairs, which is responsible for the formulation of family policy relating to marital relations, relationships between parents and children, adoptions, foster care and guardianship in accordance with the Marriage and family relations act, and whose work also covers regulation of matters related to parental protection and family benefits, along with the provision set out by the Parental protection and family benefits act. One of the most important measures introduced by the Department is a programme according to which the ministry refunds employers the expenses that have arisen from the need to hire somebody who could replace a mother who took the parental leave, this in order to counter-act the discrimination that women may face in the hiring process, when employers may look at them as a possible source of costs in connection with their (forthcoming) family role\(^\text{346}\). Also the department is involved in projects which aim at preventing violence against women and help those who find themselves in such a situation; it collaborates with NGOs that organize activities for children in the afternoon in

\(^{345}\) Information provided by Mrs Sonja Robnik, PR officer of the Governmental Office for equal opportunity, during an interview which took place on the 7\(^\text{th}\) December 2005.

\(^{346}\) Information received during the interview with Mrs Lea Javornik Novak, the coordinator for equal opportunity of the Ministry of labour, family and social affairs; the interview took place on the 9\(^\text{th}\) February 2006.
order to help working parents; it has promoted courses about interpersonal communication in response to the striking divorce rates that have been recorded in the country; it is engaged in promoting the value of parenthood and it collaborates with NGOs which help young parents with limited income.

Another department which actively collaborates with the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities is the Department for labour market and employment, which is also part of the Ministry of labour, family and social affairs. In 2004 when it drew up the Single programming document for the National Development Strategy for until the end of 2006, it put the principle of equal opportunities between men and women among its horizontal priorities, so that each and every programme aims at promoting equal opportunity and women must represent at least 50% of the beneficiaries in every course of qualification, vocational training as well as every programme which aims at creating employment. Additionally they have to make up at least 30% of the assisted self-employed. Equal opportunities have to be promoted especially through the gender mainstreaming approach; given the fact that this represents a horizontal priority, the ministry decided not to develop special programmes targeted just at women – as it is also stated in the Active Employment Policy; in 2005, the Small business development Centre in cooperation with the Public employment service ran a program aimed at female entrepreneurs, with the goal of providing them with support services.

The Ministry of labour, family and social affairs is also responsible for the program EQUAL: in Slovenia the programme, financed with the European Social Funds, was launched in 2004, its goal consisted of promoting equal opportunities and family friendly practices. One of the projects financed by the ESF within the framework of the program EQUAL is called “Young mothers/ family friendly employment”; the project aims at decreasing hidden discrimination against young women – potential mothers owed to their possible maternity on the labour market; it included carrying out researches on the state of the matter, raising awareness activities about the current legislation and the rights of the target group, addressing the issue with the actors who have a say in it - trade unions, employers and decision-making groups -, the establishment of a certification system for the companies that introduce family friendly measures, as well as the development of proposals which could improve the situation.

The certification system which is going to be introduced is based on the German and Austrian experience of the Work and Family Audit and implies the realization of a check-up of the situation within the company as far as working conditions, benefits, career and training opportunities, employees’ level of satisfaction and problems, reconcilability between family and work. The company will be assisted by professional advisors who after having analyzed the given situation will develop a set of measures to be implemented within three years in order to
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reach some specific goals; at the moment a company signs its engagement in the realization of the programme, it is awarded a first basic certificate of family-friendliness, while at the conclusion of the three years, if it has passed the audit, it will be granted the real certificate of family friendly enterprise. The aim of the whole process should go beyond the improvement of the image of the company and the possibility of saving money thanks to a reduced turnover of its labour force; the point should be to modify the corporate culture to the advantage of the workers so that they can more easily reconcile family and professional duties, and as a consequence they will be happier, more productive and more committed to their job, which of course goes to the advantage of the company.

Thanks to the project “Young mothers/ family friendly employment” in Slovenia, the first in-depth national research on the attitudes towards fathers and mothers in the workplace and about the parents’ and potential parents’ experiences regarding working and looking for a job was carried out. The need to introduce family friendly measures in Slovenia would be backed up not only by the research carried out in the framework of the above mentioned project but also by the results of other social surveys: in research ordered by the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities in 2005, it turned out that 17% of the interviewed had had difficulties when they were looking for a job because of their status as parents, 31% declared that they often have to work more than eight hours a day, which is hardly reconcilable with having a family, and 12% stated that their relationship with their superiors had gotten worse because of their duties connected with being parents. The possibility of having a reduced working schedule doesn’t seem to be so desirable for parents, as the low percentage of takers of such a form of leave shows (in 2004 around 10% of the parental-leave takers opted for this solution), even if in the 2003 ISSP survey many people (45,7%) claimed that a women should work on a part-time basis when in the family there are pre-school children; also according to the PR officer of the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities in Slovenia people do not to consider part-time employment as a real option in order to reconcile family and working duties, the reason for this should be identified by the fact that during the socialist system women were used to working full time, and in doing so they were supported by a good network of public childcare services. According to the results of the above mentioned survey of 2005, 53,8% of the children between one and three years old were taken care of in crèches. Moreover, the majority (67%) of parents assessed the operating hours of the existing childcare facilities to be sufficient, while only a minority (17%) were not satisfied with it. It should also added that 47% of the interviewed would welcome operating hours past 16.

Data from the research report by Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela, Nevenka Černigoj Sadar, Stasi med delom in družino, Vlada RS, Urad za enake možnosti, Ljubljana, 2005.
In the light of the acknowledgement that satisfied workers are more productive, employers should really consider introducing family friendly measures (with or without getting involved in the Audit): according to the results of the survey carried out within the project “Young mothers/ family friendly employment” among young people, 62% declared that they find it hard to reconcile professional and family life, they also said that they would like to have the understanding of their superiors and a working climate that takes into consideration people’s needs, as well as more flexible working schedules; they expect the state to support them in building up a family and they count on their social network for concrete help, whereas they don’t expect to find support where they work, as though becoming a parent were just a personal matter that shouldn’t affect one’s work beyond what the current legislation provides (leave etc.). 18% of the interviewed said that they would like to work with a reduced schedule (if we break down the data by sex, the percentage is 10,8% for men and 21,6% for women), but they wouldn’t ask for it not only out of purely financial reasons, but because this contract is not welcomed at all (it would be just for different-able people, was the comment of some employers). Some – mostly women - reported negative attitudes towards pregnant women and that they had experienced improper treatment upon re-entering their job after the parental leave, i.e. they weren’t advanced or were even retrograded, or were given a problematic schedule; beside this 13% of the interviewed reported to have had concluded their parental leave ahead of time, the mothers because of their superiors’ attitude and the fathers out of financial reasons, but also because of the pressure of the environment around them. The conclusion of the research is that “Slovene companies should develop a culture of responsibility from the side of the employers towards the employees”, while on their side young employees should develop “higher expectations towards employers”. More precisely, the employers should introduce working praxis based on non discriminatory employment, flexible schedules, an organisational culture that cares for and understands the employees and the needs of young children’s parents, long term and non discriminatory career plans, and most of all, a work culture that does not identify parental obligations solely with women, since this actually brings about discriminative behaviours against them and eventually their marginalization within the labour market. 

Also the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities has identified this as one of the currently most problematic issues in the field of gender issues; this is why at the end of 2005, it launched the campaign “Očka, aktiviraj se!”, “Daddy, be active!”: at the first stage, it consisted of an

348 Data and quotations from the research reports by Aleksandra Kanjou Mrčela, Nevenka Čermigoj Sadar, Mladim materam/ družinam prijazno zaposlovanje – Študije primerov – podjetja/ organizacije v Sloveniji; Telefonska anketa o usklajevanju dela in starševsrva/ zasebnega življenja mladih v Sloveniji, FDV, Ljubljana, April 2006.
advertisement campaign targeted at fathers with the aim of making them aware of their entitlement to 90 days of paternal leave, as well as to counter traditional stereotypes about the division of work between the sexes. In the second stage, radio-advertisements were produced, as well as a movie which was broadcasted on the national television at the beginning of 2007: it showed the relationship between fathers and children on one side, and fathers and their working environment on the other, the expectations about their role expressed by their children, partners, employers and society, their legal rights and the difficulties and the dilemma they were faced with, in order to make not only fathers but the whole society aware of the situation and make everybody consider it.

A CLOSER COMPARISON BETWEEN CARINTHIA, FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA AND SLOVENIA

As we have seen, Friuli Venezia Giulia fares comparatively better than Italy for almost every considered indicator, while the opposite is true for Carinthia; if we compare the data of the three bordering regions it is difficult to claim that women’s situation is really the best in one of them.

In general Slovenia is the country that fares better concerning the goals set by the Lisbon European Council in 2000, in fact its female employment rate is the highest among the three, it matches the level set by the European Union and it diminishes just a little for mothers of preschool children; moreover the country recorded the lowest rate of part-time workers thus it looks like here women manage to earn a living by themselves. On top of this in Slovenia the gender wage gap is low even though this couldn’t prevent the development of gender segregation, in fact here like in the other two regions the level of horizontal segregation in quite high; it holds true that the feminization of a sector usually implies a wider gender wage gap, which is true for Austria and Carinthia but not for Slovenia probably thanks to the legacy of the socialist system, while for Italy and Friuli Venezia Giulia it has to be recalled the commitment of trade unions to the goal of equal pay for similar work at the expenses of the flexibilization of the working contract.

Carinthia is the region with the highest gender wage gap among the three and also the one where the incidence of (female) part time employment is the highest, two things that are connected and that get reflected in the statistics about gender segregation, with the issue of gender pension gap being very actual and hot. In Slovenia we find the highest percentage of women working in managerial positions, but not even here do they make up half of the managers, therefore also gender vertical segregation is an issue that regards all of the three areas.
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For what concerns unemployment, it is a problem that affects Slovenia more than the other two regions, while as far as this point Carinthia is the region that fares the best and maybe surprisingly here the problem concerns men more than women.\(^{349}\) Also if we take into consideration the duration of women’s working contract we figure out that Carinthia is doing well because it is the place where only 5.46% of women have a temporary contract while 90.85% of them have a permanent job, while in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia the correspondant rates are respectively 8.80% and 14.10% for the incidence of women with a temporary contract, while 73.80% and 85.34% of them have a permanent contract. Therefore if it holds true that in Austria and Carinthia many women work on a part-time basis, thus in case they should count just on their income probably they wouldn’t manage to make ends meet, on the other hand it also holds true that even though they can count on just a little income, at least they can count on it in the long run.

Coming now to the provisions for maternity, paternity and parental leave, their typology varies across the countries for what concerns duration, benefits and entitled persons. Starting with the maternity leave, in all the countries there is a period of compulsory maternity during which the reimbursement is in the first place connected to the mother’s salary; if the mother is not employed she is granted a sum that usually represents a certain percentage of the minimum average salary and that should guarantee a minimum standard of living. Italy allows the father to make use of the maternity leave under some circumstances (thus somehow it becomes a transferable right) and it is also the country that grants the longest leave (5 months or otherwise 150 days more or less, against the 105 days of Slovenia and the 16 weeks or 112 days of Austria) and the best protection against dismissal, because when the leave is over the parent has the right to re-enter her/his usual job and till the first birthday of the child s/he cannot be dismissed. On the other hand it also holds true that in Italy the entitled parent receives a reimbursement which amounts just to 80% of her/his average salary, while in Austria and Slovenia the compensation is full.

When the maternal leave is over in Italy if the employed mother re-enters the workforce and is still breastfeeding, until the child turns one year old she gets a reduction of her working schedule of one or two (remunerated) hours, respectively when she is employed on a full or part time basis; if she is entitled to such a rest and doesn’t make use of it, the father can make use of it if he is an employee. These are the only circumstances under which in Italy a parent is entitled to work “part-time”\(^ {350}\), whereas in Austria the parent who officially takes care of the

\(^{349}\) Data taken by the HIS Kärntner Konjunkturreport 2/2004, Klagenfurt, June, pages 5 and 6.

\(^{350}\) Here I have employed the double quotes because if the weekly working schedule of a person amounts to 40 hours and s/he is then allowed to have a reduction of 2 hours a day, s/he would be still working 30 hours a week, which can still be considered a full time job under the current definition of full and part-time.
newborn can decide how many hours and when to work if s/he is employed in a company with 20 or more employees, while if working in a small enterprise s/he can agree with the employer upon a part-time parental leave up to the child’s 4\textsuperscript{th} birthday – even if this actually occurs seldom. In Slovenia there exists a universal right to work part-time (being paid the social insurance contributions of a full-time worker) for the parent taking care of the new-born up to the child’s 3\textsuperscript{rd} birthday, but as we have seen also here people don’t make a wide use of this provision. In my opinion in Italy there exists such a limited possibility to switch the full-time work into a part-time one because of the historical resistance and reluctance of trade unions to the introduction of non-traditional working contract; anyway also in Austria in small companies there is a strong resistance from the employers’ side to grant parents the reversible part time because of the adaptation costs that its introduction implies\cite{351}, whereas also in Slovenia people have reported about negative attitudes from side of the employers towards long parental leave and part-time schedules.

In conclusion also because in Italy during the facultative parental leave one usually gets only a reimbursement of 30\% of his/her average salary, I would say that in this country we find the less supportive provisions for parental leave, whereas Slovenia has the best ones taking into consideration the possibility to use the long part-time leave formula and the provisions of the non-transferable paternal leave, a right that is not given to Austrian and Italian fathers. So far Slovenian fathers are entitled to only 15 days of leave with full compensation of income, there were proposals to prologue it up to a month but so far they haven’t passed, anyway the current provisions already represent a good starting point in order to promote a more egalitarian division of the duties that arise from rearing a child.

If we cast a look at the percentages of fathers who took the parental leave, unfortunately we see that in all the three countries as well as in the bordering regions their rates are very low, and in addition to this it has to be underlined that in Slovenia not even all the fathers take the 15 days of paternal leave with full compensation of income, not to talk of the rest of the paternal leave which is not paid. This state of the art confirms the persistence of traditional patriarchal relations as far as the division of work: it is not enough that women represent almost half of the workforce and that almost all of them work full time – like it is the case in Slovenia – they are still the primary care givers, the ones that take the parental leave and that perform the majority of the reproductive work at home, as time-budget surveys show. For women it must be worth it taking a long time off their job in order to personally take care and educate their children, but it is also unquestionable that the longer a person is not working, the more likely it is that a process work in Italy and Austria; I have found a Slovene definition of part time work that comprehends every work with a schedule of less than 36 hours.

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of de-skilling occurs, besides in all the three areas mothers reported on having experienced negative attitudes towards their parental role and the duties arising from it, and the phenomenon of gender discrimination against women most of all upon hiring still represents a sad truth although it is forbidden by law.

As far as the measures which help people achieve a good work-life balance, the provision of affordable, available, trustful childcare facilities with opening times compatible with parents' working schedule represent a key feature, while other important points are first whether flexible working agreements are available (at least for parents), and secondly whether companies have introduced family friendly measures.

For what concerns the level of supply of childcare services in the three analyzed areas, all three of them fare well in regard to the attendance rates of childcare facilities for children between three and five-six years old, already meeting or being close to meeting the standard set by the Barcelona European Council for this age-range (90%), but when it comes to the attendance rates of day nursery centres for children between zero and three years old only Slovenia with its 42.5% already matches the standard set by the Barcelona European Council (33%) while Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia (or more in general Austria and Italy) have still to work hard in this sector. Indeed according to several surveys in these regions it is hard to get a place in a public nursery centre, it can be found more easily in a private one but then the fee is really high and not every family can afford it, and for those who are not so well off but decide to pay for it, it often means to allocate a good part of the mother’s salary to this item of expenditure so that she can keep working also while her child is so young.

As we have seen in all the three areas parents (women) said that they wish childcare facilities were more affordable and that there were more available places, besides they would warmly welcome more flexible and longer opening times of such institutions since a common problem is represented by the time gap between the end of their working schedule and the time when they would be supposed to pick their children up – if grandparents are not available to substitute them and mind their grandchildren for a while, it is really problematic. This is why next to the desire expressed by some parents to get a reduced working schedule (or better a reversible part-time for the period when children are in the pre-school age), the introduction of more flexibility in the management of one’s weekly (or daily, or monthly) working time would represent a very welcomed family friendly measure that companies could set up. Unfortunately a lot of enterprises still have a fordistic vision: they prize people’s availability to work overtime, their physical presence on the workplace, while instead people’s ability to reach the agreed goals should be awarded. Unfortunately such an organizational culture ends up putting parents in a

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351 See Georg Adam, Right to paternal par-time proposed, EIRO, Vienna October 2003.
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disadvantaged position: fathers don’t dare to take the parental (or paternal) leave because of the negative attitudes and judgement of the environment towards “non-necessary” absence from the workplace; on the other hand mothers usually take it – because it is considered normal, it is “their role” – which brings about several consequences: they usually don’t get the same opportunities as far as job-advancement and career as men do because their working path is characterized by breaks and times off, and of course neither can they put up long working hours and overtime, nor they can show the same availability and commitment to the company as it may do a person who doesn’t have family obligation. Moreover women as a category and most of all young women (possible future mothers) may end up being discriminated against on the labour market when looking for an employment because the employers assume that they may get pregnant and go on leave, therefore they would represent a cost for the company – thus they prefer to hire a man. Here the problem consists in the persistence of gender stereotypes and of gender relations based on a traditional division of work. Now such a situation is not fair towards women, it is not fair that on top of an eight-hour shift they have to carry out all the reproductive work alone\textsuperscript{352}, and it is not fair that because of their biological function – which they may decide to exercise or not – they are discriminated against on the labour market, not to count the fact that if they accept a job under their level of qualification or don’t work at all, this represents a loss of human capital, something that the European Union cannot afford if it wants to really become the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based society.

Of course women may well decide to invest in their career and not to have children - since it looks like it is the maternity which is connected with a worsening of one’s status on the labour market - but this prospect should be worrisome for the European Union, because its main and most important capital is its (well educated) human capital. It follows that women should be put in the condition that neither they are forced to renounce to something because of a maternity, nor they have to face negative consequences because of it; governments should do everything that is in their power to support not only women but parents in general to reconcile their family and professional duties, and they should provide incentives to companies that introduce family friendly measures and show a sensitivity towards the issue. Moreover governments should promote a more gender equal division of work, a new gender contract which takes the distance from the old traditional patriarchal relations and is based on a more active participation and engagement of men and fathers into reproductive work.

\textsuperscript{352} If they can afford to hire somebody who does the household chores for them anyway it is going to be a women of a low social status or immigrated, who cannot find a regular employment and ends up accepting to work in the informal sector in order to earn something. So also this solution is not very good, and anyway doesn’t bring about a change of gender relations towards more equality between the sexes.
At the light of this reasoning projects like “Ess.Er.Ci.” promoted in Friuli Venezia Giulia and the campaign “Očka, aktiviraj se!” of the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities of Slovenia represent good solutions, in these two areas the institutions that deal with gender issue and work for the achievement of more gender equality are moving in the right direction. Of course also the initiatives undertaken by the Carinthian authorities are praiseworthy, because everything that is done in order to improve women’s situation must be welcomed, but in this case in Carinthia they are not actually moving in the direction of promoting a change of culture, a higher level of involvement of men and fathers into family matters. In my opinion in Carinthia institutions are developing many programmes that aim at empowering women, at giving them tools – being it financial support or trainings to get new knowledge and develop new skills, also in so called not-female sectors – which can help them to be able to stand on their feet and for sure they are going to have positive effects on women’s situation, but they can only indirectly affect the existing gender contract. I believe that a more self confident woman can demand her partner to be more present and supportive at home, but only if she thinks that children’s care and housework is not just her own responsibility and as far as I know in Carinthia there exists no project that explicitly backs up such a standpoint. It has to be acknowledged that in Austria fathers do have the possibility to take the paternal leave, but as we have seen this occurs seldom; on the other hand it has been proved that the Austrian system of the *Kindergeld* ends up upholding a traditional patriarchal division of work. So in Carinthia it should be worked for the promotion of a new more gender equal social contract.

On the other hand in my opinion Carinthia is at the forefront for what concerns the implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming, in fact here it has been established a unit that deals with this task in a comprehensive way, and it has been set up a team of people (GEMEX) consisting of functionaries belonging to the several departments of the regional administration, who are in charge of the implementation of the above mentioned principle. Also in Slovenia the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities is in charge of the same task, but it was reported that the structure has limited human resources to devote to this goal and that sometimes it was not getting all the needed information from the other institutions on time. As far as Friuli Venezia Giulia I would say that here the approach of gender mainstreaming has not yet gained the status of a leading principle of the regional administration, this because there isn’t a body to whom it was assigned the task of implementing this principle, here more bodies actually work partially carrying out this task and probably the Regional Commission for equal opportunities represents the setting where the members of all the regional institutions which deal with gender issues meet, thus here they can coordinate their actions and monitor what is going on in the public bodies and how their decisions and initiatives may impact on men’s and
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women’s lives, but this activity hasn’t yet been institutionalized as “work of gender mainstreaming”. Anyway things are moving and improving for sure since recently it has been established the Regional service for equal opportunities within the Regional department for equal opportunities, and maybe this Service could be soon given the task to implement the principle of gender mainstreaming.

As far as family friendly enterprises, Italy – and thus Friuli Venezia Giulia – is the only one of the three analyzed countries that hasn’t yet introduced a system of certification of the family friendliness of enterprises - only in the autonomous province of Bolzano something has been made, probably thanks to the strong connections with Austria with whom language ties make communication and exchange of information and best practices easier. In this field Austria and thus Carinthia represent again the vanguard since they introduced the “Work and Family Audit” already back in 1998 and here also the competition “Women and family friendly company” has been recording a high level of participation. Thanks to initiatives like these the topic of family friendly measures has gained a good coverage as well as a good promotion, while in Italy and thus in Friuli Venezia Giulia they represent still the exception, they have been introduced only by some big companies as part of their programme of corporate social responsibility. Anyway as we have seen one of the suggestions that came from the research “Oltre Futura” was exactly to introduce a system of certification of family friendly companies. In Slovenia the “Work and Family Audit” has been recently introduced as part of the project “Young mothers/ family friendly employment” and in May 2007 the very first company will get the first (basic) certificate.

A praiseworthy initiative that was realized by the region Friuli Venezia Giulia and must be mentioned here is the programme “FUTURA – Servizi di pari opportunità”: as it has already been explained in details, the programme has proved to be very successful in helping women to reconcile their family and working duties and to set free some of their time and energies for other things; in my opinion the system of vouchers devised within this programme represents a very useful tool (much better than the allowance – for example the Austrian system of the Kindergeld), because on the one hand it is connected with women’s engagement in the labour market, on the other hand it can contribute to create new employment in so called female-sectors such as childcare services, assistance for elderly persons and help with carrying out housework chores. In connection with this programme – which should have a follow-up in Friuli Venezia Giulia – there is the idea of creating a register of professional child-minders who could provide flexible childcare services on demand on the example of the “Tagesmutter” of the autonomous province of Bolzano and similarly to the service of the “Mobile Tagesmutter” which is offered by the Carinthian regional administration: this too represents a good practice because
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through it the public authority is trying to give an answer to a need expressed by the population (need for flexible childcare services to reconcile work and family duties) and contemporarily it allows to create new chances of employment which would go to the advantage of women.

A final remark has to be made as far as people's knowledge of their rights and of the services that can give them a concrete support: the survey “Oltre Futura” has highlighted a lack of information about the programme FUTURA, as well as confused information about the provisions for parental and care leave, therefore at least in Friuli Venezia Giulia new ways and channels to disseminate information about such topics ought to be devised. In my opinion the Department for women and equal treatment of Carinthia is doing a great job in this field, since it has been organizing a lot of awareness raising activities – last but not least the handbook “Juno – you know!” that was issued already three times - and the number of women who turned to it for information, help, etc. Most of all thanks to the campaign “Očka, aktiviraj se!” I would say that also the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities of Slovenia is doing a good job.
CHAPTER 6

THE GENDER ISSUE IN THE ALPS-ADRIATIC REGION: A PORTRAIT FROM PRIMARY SOURCES

In this chapter I am going to present the results of a survey which I have carried out in the three bordering regions on the issues discussed in this work: the goal of the survey was to gather first hand information about the social conditions of working women of Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia. In fact after having compared the three areas as far as legal provisions, the situation of the female labour force, available childcare facilities, the results of opinion pulls and surveys about gender roles and the work of the institutions that deal with gender issues, and after having drawn some conclusions from this material, I wanted also to hear the opinion of the very women who live in the Alps-Adriatic region in order to verify whether my provisional results would have been backed up by their declarations or not.

In order to carry out my survey I decided to select one company that is present in the three areas of my interest and to ask its management for collaboration: my hypothesis was that if I had asked the same questions to women who live in the three areas and work for the same group, I would have been able to compare their situation in the most direct and best possible way.

My choice has fallen without hesitation on an Austrian financial company, and it has been a very lucky one. I have decided myself for this company because not only is it present in the whole Alps-Adriatic region but its goal is to become »the leading commercial bank in the Alps-Adriatic region« and “to contribute to the prosperity of the Alps-Adriatic region and of the people living together in it“353, thus underlining its roots and its commitment to this area.

In order to carry out my survey I developed a questionnaire made up mostly by open questions, translated it into German, Italian and Slovene and sent it together with my project of research to the central Human Resources department of the company. Subsequently with the approval and help of the latter I could get in touch with the Human Resources departments of the Austrian, Italian and Slovene branches of the group, and with their very precious organizational cooperation I could interview 30 female employees. As far as the sample, my requests were that there were 10 women for each region and that they had children, of course I was also interested in their civil status and family situation as well as in their professional position but these data were going to be collected during the interviews and were not critical for building up the sample. In fact since alone I couldn’t have interviewed more than 30 persons, at any rate my survey
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wouldn’t have had any claim of being a representative study. A comparative study of one firm in three countries in one segment of the labor market is of course limited and the situation of working women in other companies and segments may well be different so that my conclusions cannot be generalized, anyway I think that it is possible to draw useful inferences from this case study - indeed the aim of a qualitative analysis is not to gather statistically sound data but points of discussion on relevant issues.

The choice of the women to get involved in the project was thus left to the three above mentioned Human Resources departments; they have selected for me women that cover the whole spectrum of possibilities – married and cohabiting as well as lone mothers; mothers of teenagers, of children and toddlers, women working full time as well as part time, assigned to the front office and to the back office, simple white collars as well as managers of the low and middle levels.

The interviews took place during the months of June and July 2006 in Klagenfurt, Ljubljana and Udine; they lasted from a minimum of 40 minutes up to a maximum of 75 minutes and consisted of 32 questions - mostly open ones - through which I wanted to investigate the following topics: women’s actual situation between family and work; their ideas about woman’s role in family and society influenced or not by their parents’ ideas on the same issue; their personal experience as far as unequal treatments owed to the fact that they’re women and their opinion about gender disparities. Moreover I wanted to get to know their assessment about the commitment of their regional and/or national government as far as fostering equal opportunities and helping parents to reconcile working and family life and their knowledge about the results that have been actually achieved in the field. One last point concerned the evaluation of the women and family friendly attitude of the very financial company in each region/nation, as an employer, according to the interviewed.

As far as my hypotheses, I expected Slovene women to be the most emancipated and the ones who live in more equal partnerships, where the division of work is not so gendered any more, while as far as the company attitudes towards parents and women and their connected family duties, I expected the Austrian company to be the most sensitive in this field owing to the fact that it is the oldest of the three “sisters” and also because when living in Austria I have experienced that society as very family friendly, thus I expected a leading company such as the one I have chosen to play a leading role also regarding these matters. As we are going to see, my hypotheses were correct.

Quotation from the company internet site.

See the attachment at the end of the work for the summaries and partial transcriptions of the interviews.
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Before starting to report about the results of my survey I want to provide some more data about the financial group and its national companies. With its strategic business sectors - banking and leasing - the corporation is present in eleven countries of the Alps-Adriatic region; its philosophy is based on "the preservation of independence and regional identity" so that the customers and business partners understand that they are dealing with a "a dynamic and internationally minded bank which at the same time is at home in each of the individual regions". According to the yearly reports of 2005, the group serves over 1 million customers throughout the Alps-Adriatic region and has over 5,500 employees at over 350 locations.

The history of the group goes very much back in the days, and exactly to the year 1896 when a first cooperative credit institute was founded in Klagenfurt; in 1920 it officially became a bank. In 1986 a first representative office was opened in Udine while in 1990 the an independent leasing branch was founded in Klagenfurt, which just a year later started cross-boarder activities in Slovenia. At first in both Italy and Slovenia the company was present just as a provider of leasing products but later on it developed also bank services; in the '90s the group started a process of expansion in an increasing number of Countries of Southern Eastern Europe and finally at the beginning of 2007 it changed its name in the one it has now.

THE FINANCIAL GROUP IN AUSTRIA

In Austria there are two subsidiaries of the holding company, more precisely one provides banking services and the other leasing services. The first counts 660 employees at 23 locations in Carinthia, Vienna, Salzburg, Linz and Munich and represents one of the leading independent financial institutions of the country; it must be underlined here that one of the members of its Board of Management is a woman; the second employs 39 people and is a full-range provider of tailored lease financing models for a wide range of products.

Since the holding employs so many people, parents of young children can decide to work part-time and also under which formula (horizontal or vertical part-time, for how many hours etc.); besides parents often get the possibility to have a flexible working time which implies that they have to be in the office during the so called “core hours” and that in each office it must be guaranteed the presence of at least a person during the whole working day, but it is left up to the people of the very office how to arrange their working schedule taking into consideration this rule and also their family duties (children transportation to and from crèches, kindergarten, schools, etc.). Only people working at the front office may have a more rigid working schedule.
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In Austria the company offers all of its employees language courses all year long (most of all in English), for a group or one to one depending on the agreement reached between the employees and their superior during the yearly appraisal interview. The structured annual speech is an instrument for the management of human resources that has become more and more popular: within this frame it is possible to check how the employee is doing, whether s/he has met the goals set for the previous year, to verify if s/he has special needs or wishes and whether these match the plans that the company has for her/him, to decide which kind of training s/he needs in order to do that as well as to set new goals for the next year. Since all the job advertisements for new positions are first made public inside the company, if a person would like to change sector – in order to learn new things, to challenge her/himself etc. – s/he has the possibility to apply to do so and if the change is possible, s/he will be followed by a mentor for the first times; moreover fresh employees are assigned a mentor for six months in order to progressively learn how to work.

In the Yearly Report for 2005 it is written that the company “… sees in good educated employees who work together a decisive competitive factor in an environment that is becoming highly competitive”\(^\text{355}\). Consistently with this statement in order to give its employees the possibility to develop themselves in 2005 the company has devoted € 700.000 to the organization of training-sessions, some of which were tailored just to managers – in fact in that year the group founded the its “Management Academy”, which is the cadre training unit for managers and future managers of the group and works in cooperation with the Malik Managementszentrum Sankt Gallen. Moreover the company offers special programmes to graduates and trainees, courses on bank-issues that have to be successfully attended by all of the new employees, as well as special courses on specific matters connected with one’s job (for example new regulations and laws passed by the European Union or the national parliament and so forth).

In the report we can also read that the sickness-leave rate of the employees is well below the average and that the company cares for its employees’ health, this is why it has been investing in preventive measures in the health-sector – for example in 2005 it run the pilot project “(Company name) Fit Programm”, which gave the interested co-workers the possibility to draw a fitness programme tailored to their needs with the supervision of professional trainers.

Last but most important point, in the year 2005 the company applied at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumerprotection to start the project “Audit Familie und Beruf”: the project began with the creation of a team of people belonging to different departments, who under the

\(^{355}\text{Company name, Geschäftsbericht 2005, Klagenfurt, Mai 2006, quotation from page 17 (my own translation from German).}\)
supervision of ministerial functionaries had first of all to carry out an analysis of the state of the
art of the company; on a second stage it was decided which measures to introduce in order to
reach which goals within which deadlines and under the responsibility of whom (everything was
written down in a catalogue). The whole process of implementation of these measures is
supposed to last more or less for three years, it implies also drawing up some interim reports
and in the end – if everything goes smoothly according to the plans – it brings to the award of a
certificate officially stating that the company is a family friendly.

The information that had to be provided at the beginning concerned – besides some basic data
about the company and its history – the organization chart, current contracts of employment,
working schedules, available forms of work (office-based, home-working, mobile..), the structure
of the labour force broken down by sex, forms of contract and family situation, development of
the staff-number in the last couple of years, the employees’ turnover and the percentage of
parents that go back to work after the parental leave, and information about the yearly
structured speeches between employees and direct superiors, data from internal surveys,
awarded prizes, reasons for the application to the project, information about the works council.

Within this frame it must be mentioned that within the premises of the headquarters of the
company there is a crèche where the employees can bring their children up to the age of 3
years old – actually the company doesn’t cover the costs of the fee but it offers its employees
the possibility to have their children next to their workplace so that they can save time
connected with transportation, are already on the spot for emergences and have the chance to
go and quickly visit their babies during the day if they’d like to.

As far as the measures that ought to be introduced, here I will list some of them:
- flexible working schedules are to be further developed in order to make it easier for parents
to get back to work after a parental leave;
- regular speeches about the issue of how to reconcile work and family needs are to be held
more often;
- the option of “desk-sharing” should be introduced, specifically thought for parents on leave
to give them the chance to keep in tight contact with their job during this period and to avoid
that they lose their skills, moreover the company can save on costs connected to replacing
people and can also prevent waste of human resources because of de-qualification;
- the development of a clear and constant flow of communication between superior and
employees about the topic of reconcilement between family and work should be
encouraged, so that the latter should feel more comprehended and supported by the
company and so that it will be possible to reduce their turnover and absence rates;
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- it should be invested into the improvement of the communication directed to the employees on leave, so that they will feel be kept updated about the changes that are occurring and will therefore feel more connected to the company;
- an intranet platform with information about measures aiming at reconciling family and work should be developed;
- a column to be devoted to the topic of work-life balance in the works council magazine should be established;
- awareness raising activities directed to the managers about family friendly measures (seminars, trainings etc.) are to be organized;
- information about the above mentioned topic is to be provided during the Welcome Day;
- measures targeted at parents on leave are to be further developed, with the aim of connecting and integrating them more strongly to the company during this period (participation in projects, training sessions, appointment of a dedicated mentor in each department, organization of the “Karenz-day”, etc.);
- one a year it should be carried out a check-up of the current services provided to families, in order to further develop and improve them.

Further ideas concern the possibility to adapt the facility where there is the crèche according to the current legislation, so that in the future it will be also possible to look after children between three and six years old; on the intranet pages there could be also information about child-minding services or even a Tagesmutter could be partially paid for by the company in case an employee’s child gets sick, so that the parent doesn’t need to take a child-sickness leave.

It has to be pinpointed that in the company, as soon as a parent communicates that s/he will go on leave – although not even once it has occurred that a male-employee has taken the parental leave – s/he receives a folder with the current legal provisions on the matter, the steps to be taken with regard to the health insurance coverage and also at the fiscal office, her/his rights as a parent, the different options about the different forms of leave (full- and part-time) and the measures developed by the company in order to keep her/him in touch with the work-environment, including the possibility to arrange a gradual return to the workplace, or to prolong the leave if necessary.

THE FINANCIAL COMPANY IN ITALY

Also in Italy there are two subsidiaries of the holding: the banking company has branches in the North of the country, serves 41.000 customers with a staff of 389 people, to whom some more 116 independent finance agents must be added, while the leasing network counts of 170 employees.
In Italy the national contract for bank clerks provides that during the mandatory maternity (or paternity) leave one is paid her (his) whole salary, beside this there is no other special regulation for parents, thus it is left up to each company how to settle the thing. At the company of our interest it is possible to agree on a reduction of the working schedule, every employee can ask for it and upon receiving such a request the Human Resources department together with the superior of the very employee has to check whether it would be feasible and compatible with the needs of the office. The official policy is to grant it preferentially to parents of young children or people who have demanding care duties (if they have to assist close sick relatives, or disable people etc.): the company provides this possibility just for a limited period of time – i.e. for an year – renewable, and not for always because owing to organizational reasons it is possible to have just a limited number of employees working part-time, thus it was chosen to give all parents the possibility to take advantage of this change for a limited period of time, instead than granting it just to some people for an indefinite period of time. It is possible to decide which kind of part-time formula to get but usually people prefer to work in the morning till the lunch break. In fact the typical working schedule of a bank clerk goes from 8.15 until 16.45 with a lunch break that must be between 13.30 and 14.30, it can be skipped of course but there is no flexibility as far as the begin of the afternoon-shift and in general there is no flexible working time at all, the schedule has to be respected - but this doesn’t represent a peculiarity of the analyzed company, it is a common feature of the Italian banking system. So far not even one father has taken the parental leave or has asked for a reduction of his working schedule at the “our bank”, and since the company exists it has happened only a couple of times that a father has taken a child-sickness leave.\footnote{In the year 2006 the company had 11 women on maternity leave: after the compulsory period of leave 10 employees took also six months of facultative leave while one woman decided to take only four months of this kind of leave (so far). When also this period of leave had expired, all the women have taken advantage of the possibility to have two hours of paid leave to breastfeed. Besides in the year 2006 there were nine women (mothers) working with a part-time contract.}

In order to facilitate their (female) employees in the work of reconciling family and professional duties, the company has devoted an area of its new seat to setting up a crèche which is going to host 25 children between 13 and 36 months old, of these 16 places are reserved to employees’ children while the others are available for the families of the municipality where the company has its seat. The childcare facility will start its activity in September 2007, it will be opened from 8 to 18 with flexible opening and closing times and the parents will have the possibility to visit their babies during the lunch break.

As far as the promotion-policies, there are some common lines but there isn’t a clear company policy: it doesn’t hold true that part-time workers can’t get any chance of advancement, the
company actually prizes one’s attainments and commitment to his/her job – of course these are connected with the working schedule but it is more a question of dedication. Anyway for sure one’s availability in terms of time spent on the workplace (overtime) constitutes a critical variable, thus under this point of view part-timers may be disadvantaged. Since some years also in Italy the praxis of holding a yearly appraisal interview between each employee and her/his superior has been introduced and in the Corporate Responsibility Report we can read that currently 70% of the staff is doing that. Similarly to what happens in Austria, also in Italy within this speech people assess their yearly achievements, set the goals to be reached next year and discuss about training needs and opportunities, moreover the employee is also asked to give a judgment about the company, its points of strength and weakness. This way also the company gets a feedback about its activity, consistently with the statement that «... we take great care of our employees, aware that they are the main key to our success and the interface between the company and the final customer».\(^{357}\) Also in the 2005 issue of the Corporate Responsibility Report\(^{358}\) (the first one for the company) it is acknowledged that human resources represent one of the most important added value of the company, this is why it declared its commitment to the “well-being, satisfaction and personal growth of our collaborators, whom we consider to be the main reason for our success»\(^{359}\). The so called “Homo (company name)” is supposed to be prepared, motivated, with a strong sense of responsibility and attachment to the company philosophy as well as to her/his territory, which s/he can understand and serve in the best way.

As far as the composition of its staff, currently 36% of the employees of the bank are women and examining data about newly-hired people we see that the female component has been increasing so that in 2005 women made up 43,7% of the new comers. Some other characteristics of the “Homo (company name)” are his relatively young age and a high level of education, in fact 80% of the employees are below 40 years old and 42,2% of them has a university degree, thus proving that the company results attractive for young, educated and skilled persons; besides given the fact that in the same year the turnover rate amounted to just 6% it can be said that the company is able to motivate its staff. One of the most important ways in order to do so is investing in human capital training programmes: their range is very wide and goes from the English language courses offered free of charge to the whole staff – organized for groups or individuals according to the needs of one’s work position – to the seminars for the newly-hired people (focused on the banking system, its legislation, the structure and the philosophy of the group and of the company, etc); from training sessions devoted to specific subjects for those who carry out a certain job, to lessons on communications’ methods and

\(^{357}\) Quotations from the internet site.
\(^{358}\) See Company name., Bilancio sociale, Udine, June 2006.
skills, teamwork, time-management, problem solving, emotive intelligence, etc. Moreover the managers have been offered also language courses abroad and have been involved in the Management training programme organized by the “Management Academy”, a long lasting programme attended by managers coming from all the branches of the group, which aims at creating a common managerial culture. Finally besides specific courses organized for the financial agents, the company gives students the possibility to move the first steps in the world of work by doing a period of traineeship and some of the students who took advantage of this chance in Italy came also from Austria.

The commitment of the company to have a competent and motivated labour force is clear given the entity of its investments into training programmes: in 2005 it devoted more than 267,000 euros to this item of expenditure. Moreover the company gives people the chance to change department if they wish: since it has been constantly expanding and since open positions are firstly made know internally, there is room for change – of course first of all the company has to guarantee some services and make sure it has the right person in the right place, thus compatibly with these preconditions the personnel can also vary tasks in order to learn to do something else.

In the spirit of team building, the bank supports the »(company name) club Italia«, a club opened to all its employees - currently 89% of them are members - that organizes trips, recreational activities, sport competitions, Christmas parties for the employees’ children and so forth, and is partially financed by the company. In its view such activities contribute to strengthen the ties between the people, which has a positive influence on the work environment. According to the results of a survey (which were published within the Corporate Responsibility Report) the employees have declared to be satisfied with the working climate within the company, with their relationships with co-workers and clients and with their level of autonomy and responsibility in carrying out their work, but they have reported that some measures ought to be introduced in order to improve the system of benefits and incentives, the decision-making process, the educational offer and the organizational efficiency. Although the majority of the interviewed said that they are satisfied with their work (45% are very satisfied, 41% are rather satisfied), the current levels of satisfaction are lower than in the past (45% asserted to be less satisfied than three years ago while 35% reported to be more satisfied than in the past). In order to give an answer to this partially bad outcome, the bank has decided to launch a house organ to be published just on the intranet in order to improve the communication flow and get the employees more involved in the company philosophy as well as in its achievements and initiatives.

359 Quotations from the internet site.
THE FINANCIAL COMPANY IN SLOVENIA

In Slovenia in the year 1999 it was established bank-subsidiary of the holding, which represents the fastest growing bank in the country and counts on a staff of 273 persons; the leasing subsidiary has a longer history, with its share of 40% of the market it constitutes the leader in all its leasing activities and it employs 142 people.

In Slovenia it is possible to have a flexible working schedule, the part-time form of contract is almost not-existent and the policy of the company here is to grant it according to the situation of the very person who applies for it, after having taken into consideration on the one hand the needs of the bank and on the other hand the persons’ commitment and dedication to her/his work. The wages are set on the basis of the individual contracts signed upon hiring, for each position there is a minimum wage then according to one’s experience and abilities it can be negotiated on its very entity, at any rate the company doesn’t discriminate between men and women. On top of the basic wage there is a variable component of remuneration, which is made up by individual- and group-benefits connected with the achievement of agreed targets. Career advancements depend on one’s superior assessment; according to the manager of the Human Resources department, talented and committed people are provided the chance to be promoted by changing department or moving up the ladder of the organizational structure, indeed some of the managers are very young. As it has already been mentioned, the company has been growing very much and very fast, with an average of some 40 newly-hired employees every year, so that there are constantly open positions which could be filled by people who are already working in the company but would like to change department. The setting where to express wishes for a change is the yearly appraisal interview: like in Austria and Italy also in Slovenia every head of department - from the board of management downwards - is supposed to hold a speech with each subordinate in order to talk about the state of the art and achieved results, career opportunities, needs to attend trainings and so forth, moreover the goals to be reached within next year are set here.

Compared with other Slovenian banks, because of its good performances the analyzed company represents a quite unique case, indeed in a period when others are rather cutting off their staff it has been expanding, therefore it results particularly attractive as an employer and can count on highly motivated and good educated human resources,\(^{360}\), moreover it offers its employees the possibility to participate at sport activities free of charge and to buy tickets for cultural and sport events at a reduced price.

\(^{360}\) The 55% of the employees has a higher education – data from Company name., Annual report 2005, Ljubljana, June 2006, see page 28 and following.
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As far as seminars and training courses, the superiors decide about the needs of their staff and communicate these decisions within the yearly interview; there is no difference in the rate of men and women attending the training courses, and it has to be mentioned that also Slovene managers are involved in the Management training programme of the Management Academy.

Since the Slovenian subsidiaries of the holding have been very busy expanding themselves, the time hasn’t yet been ripe to think about establishing a crèche: at any rate here there aren’t yet as many employees as in Italy and Austria, and the existing childcare facilities can already meet a good share of the demand for care. As far as other initiatives devoted to employees’ children, up to their seventh birthday they are invited to take part at the annual Christmas party where they receive a present bought by their own parents with the money provided by the company in form of a voucher.

One last point regards the share of male employees who go on leave when they become fathers: nowadays most of them take the paternal leave for the two weeks when they are paid their entire salary but almost no father has ever taken the child’s sickness leave - also here it is mostly mothers who make use of it; besides so far no father has ever taken the parental leave.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ABOUT WOMEN BETWEEN FAMILY AND WORK IN THE ALPS-ADRIATIC REGION

Women’s lives in Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia present similarities and differences as it was expected. The very first remark regards daily life, since Slovene women tend to wake up very soon - already between 5.30 and 6 o’clock – and start to work at around 7.30, followed by their Austrian colleagues and finally by the Italians. This of course is connected with the opening times of childcare facilities, schools, offices and shops and in general with the different timetable around which the society is organized – in Italy on the average people tend to begin and to finish to work later and also meals are consumed later. As it has already been said, in Austria and Slovenia people usually have the possibility to work according to a flexible schedule so that it is easier for them to manage to bring children to kindergarten or to school and then to go to the office, and they are very happy and satisfied with this situation:

„...Gott sei dank!... immer pünktlich zu kommen, würde nicht gehen“;
„Also es ist bei uns toll und es könntest mir nicht anders vorstellen, weil es ist eigentlich schon sehr gut“.

On the opposite Italian women have complained about the rigidity of their schedule as well as about their need to ask for a permission whenever they may have family duties that have to be taken care of during one’s usual working day:
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“...è ovvio che dovrebbero venirti incontro con l’orario di lavoro... qui non c’è flessibilità, è ovvio che un datore di lavoro con 500 dipendenti deve garantire un servizio, se la gente comincia a venire ad orari diversi, ... ma allora i bambini vengono sballottati, non sempre hanno voglia di alzarsi subito, o di fare colazione, ma gliela devi far fare,... almeno al mattino sarebbe utile avere un orario flessibile...

"Anche se il contratto di lavoro del settore bancario prevede per i quadri direttivi la possibilità di auto-gestire il proprio orario di lavoro, poi esso non è applicato, non solo, non è nemmeno accettato! e non ci sono degli organi di controllo che ne garantiscono l’applicazione, nemmeno per le aree privilegiate [i quadri direttivi, ndr] quindi alla fine è una possibilità che di fatto non esiste";

"La mancanza di orari flessibili in Italia costituisce un grave handicap";

"Se ho bisogno di uscire prima o di entrare dopo devo chiedere permessi o ferie; “mi pesa l’orario rigido, che quandoporto la bambina all’asilo non posso mai fermarsi un attimo a parlare con la maestra, devo subito scappare al lavoro...”.

As far as the kind of contracts under which the interviewed women were employed, in Slovenia none of them worked part-time, not even a woman who had just come back from her leave and whose baby was just one year old while only a woman reported to have worked for some months according to a reduced schedule in the period after the parental leave and because her child was heavily sick:

“Vem, da skoraj nobena si ne upa v službi reči, da bi manj čas delala, pa tudi finančno to ne znese, ne?“;

"O skrajšanem delovnem času nismo se pogovarjal... mislim, da tu nobenga je izkoristila dopusta s skrajšanim delovnim časom".

In Italy only two out of the 10 interviewed women had this contract and just temporarily, one of them would like to keep working this way until her children will have grown up but she reported to be given this possibility (just) by year and complained that although she had been working in the company for a very long time, she had never been promoted or given higher responsibilities:

“...ma comunque vedo che responsabilità non mi vengono assolutamente concesse, probabilmente in virtù del fatto che uno è qui disponibile solo mezza giornata quindi ritengono che determinate cose non possano essere affidate ad una persona della quale ha la disponibilità di mezza giornata, ecco.”

On the opposite they told her that it wasn’t planned to give her higher responsibilities any time soon:

“L’unica mia certezza è che non avuto, non ho e non avrò, queste sono le ultime direttive, le maternità hanno sicuramente inciso e finché continuo a chiedere il part-time non avrò sicuramente".

In her opinion this lack of chances of self-development should be connected with the part-time schedule, and she felt kind of discriminated because of it:

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“Speravo che le promozioni fossero connesse al raggiungimento di obiettivi invece per quello che ho potuto vedere fino ad adesso non so come sono state date, a chi, come, perché… ultimamente mi sembra che c’è questa politica, c’è stata una proposta che a me sicuramente non è stata fatta, della serie questi sono i tuoi obiettivi, se in un anno li raggiungi o comunque dimostri che vali, avrai… probabilmente a qualcuno è stato anche detto se rinunci al part-time avrai tot e probabilmente avranno rinunciato. A me è stato detto che un avanzamento o un aumento di stipendio è a sé, non c’entra niente col part-time ma secondo me non è facilmente dimostrabile, il contrario…”.

In Austria four out of the 10 interviewed women were working part time, on the average for 30 hours a week, while other four had had a part time contract in the past and another one had been out of the labour market for a very long period, during which she had devoted herself to her children and to further educate herself. In general the interviewed expressed very positive comments about the current provisions for parents of young children:

„Ich würde schon sagen, dass es mit den derzeitigen Karenzregelungen auch einen guten Schritt gesetzt wurde, dass es ins Gesamt eine dreijährige Karenzzeit ermöglicht wird, wenn auch der Vater für ein halbes Jahr in Karenz geht, das sind schon gute Anfänge, und auch mit dieser Zuverdienstgrenze, dass man trotzdem noch die Möglichkeit hat, einen Fuß im Beruf zu haben, dass man nicht völlig draußen ist, das sind gute Möglichkeiten, glaube ich. Sicherlich konnten Dingen noch besser sein, aber ich glaube, man kann zufrieden sein.“;
„…einer guter Schritt in die richtige Richtung“;
„Also bei uns ist es sehr gut geregelt“;
„Die laufende Karenzregelungen sind in Ordnung, … von der finanziellen Seite ist es in Ordnung, und das muss doch nicht jeder, es kann jeder ausnutzen, muss aber nicht.“

At any rate these provisions would bring about also negative effects: since it is usually women who take the parental leave and also the possibility to work part time, they (may) end up being discriminated against on the labour market, most of all upon hiring and when they are in the years when they may be willing to have children:

„Wir merken es einfach im Recruiting aus, dass gewisse Bereichsleiter wenn sie Personal anfordern, von vornherein sagen, wir wollen jungen Burschen, damit wir nicht mit solchen Probleme später konfrontiert sind, und ich glaube, dass es die jungen Frauen bei uns schon ein bisschen schadet, ja…“;
„…in der Zeit, wenn das Kind geboren ist, zwei Jahre wird man nicht arbeiten, ich glaube, das das zum Teil die Grunde sind, warum Frauen weniger Karriere als Männer machen, glaub ich zu mindest“;
„…durch diese Karenzgeld sagen viele, dass die Frau zu Hause gelockt ist, zu Hause zu bleiben, und dann am Ende fällt es ihr der Wiedereintritt schwer…“.

Only one Austrian woman referred that her partner had used the parental leave, while neither in Italy nor in Slovenia were there other cases, instead some women reported to have shared the
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child’s sickness leave with their husbands or partners but at any rate also these cases represent just a minority. Coming back to the only man who took the leave, the woman said that by doing so he had so to tell broken a law but that he had dared because he was already planning of quitting in order to become self employed, and that in that period his company didn’t have enough work for him thus it was convenient also for them to have him temporarily not on the payroll:

„Er hat eine nicht geschriebene Regelung gebrochen, aber das war gar nicht so unwillkommen, dass er in Karenz geht, denn die Firma hatte damals wenig Arbeit, es gab für ihn zu wenig Arbeit vorhanden, als aber er wieder Aufträge bekommen hat, hat er auch während der Karenz auf Werkvertragsbasis gearbeitet“.

Of the 10 Italian women just 3 took the facultative parental leave after the period of maternity, while the others could enjoy a reduced working schedule until the baby’s first birthday because they were breastfeeding; in general Italian were not satisfied with the current provisions as far as the paternal leave, some complained about the poor entity of its allowance:

“certo che ricevere solo il 30% del salario medio è una compensazione un po’ scarsetta!”

Others complained about the rigidity of the leave:

“…sono assolutamente insufficienti e in adeguate perché non sono per niente elastiche, non è una questione di denaro, quello andrebbe anche bene, sarebbe invece importante avere la possibilità nei primi anni di vita del bambino di avere un orario più flessibile, la possibilità di potersi gestire un po’ da soli l’orario, o che il datore di lavoro conceda un part-time facoltativo, su richiesta del lavoratore.”.

Finally some said that somehow they may also understand the employers’ point of view, therefore these provisions would be fair and fine:

“Adesso c’è l’allattamento fino all’anno e poi oltre l’anno si può stare a casa senza essere pagati, comunque la compensazione pari a 30% del salario medio mi sembra una cosa giusta, penso che l’azienda e lo stato non possano fare di più”.

In Slovenia the totality of the interviewed declared to have taken the parental leave in the full-time form and that they had spent one year at home, except for one who had given birth abroad and then moved back to Slovenia to work already just three months after the delivery and while she was working her unemployed husband was the primary care-taker of the child; in Slovenia the women who stayed home longer than one year did it out of health-reasons. Moreover it is worth mentioning that only four reported that their husbands or partners used the part of the paternal leave with the 100% reimbursement of one’s salary and nothing more: quite interesting was the comment of a woman who held that after those first two weeks one doesn’t need any more the father’s help, that he’d better go to work and earn while the mother is at home:

“Pozna se ne, pri naš se čist vsak izpad dohodka pozna, zato da če ni res nujno… tisti prvi 14 dni je prav, da je doma, da ti pomaga, pa tako, pol pa pojdi v službo, pa ‘služiš, sem jast doma ne? ☺“.
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Another one referred that if she had another child now, she would prefer to work part time at least for two years:

“Možnost polivičnega delovnega časa nisem koristila, ker sicer ne bi dobila takšne zaposlitve, če bi se morala sedaj še enkrat odločiti, bi vsaj za dve leti, zaradi otrok sprejela zaposlitev s polivičnim delovnim časom.”

At any rate in general none of the interviewed was interested in the part-time formula of the paternal leave and one even said that the company probably wouldn’t like to give such a chance:

“…se mi zdi, da od strani čefov ni interesa… mislim, da tu nobenga je izkoristila dopusta s skrajšanim delovnim časom”.

As far as their opinion about the current provisions, many Slovene women praised the fact that also fathers are now entitled to their non-transferable paternal leave:

“Mislim, da je dovolj dolgo, se mi zdi v redu, tudi da so dali možnim možnosti, da izkoristejo dopust…”

even though as we have seen not all of them use it – and some wished the leave would last longer because they would have enjoyed spending more time with their babies, but actually only the one who had just gone back to work after one year off said that it was hard for her to leave her child in the morning to go to work, she also added that before being herself a mother she had judged foolish the proposal to prolong the leave but that she had changed her mind. Other women said that if the leave lasted longer, it would be more difficult to go back to work

“…ni zdravo”;

“…dve leti odsota je pri naši predolgen zeit…”

and that anyway one would get tired of being home:

“…če pa ti rodiš normalnega zdravega otroka, je po tem otrok po enem letu že tok samostojn, da končno postaneš moja osebna mnenja le gospodinjska pomočnika”.

Except for some exceptions, almost all the interviewed could count on the grandparents’ (and most of all on the grandmothers’) help, not so much for housework but rather for child minding and transports to or from the kindergarten, therefore it can be said that relying on one’s family network for concrete help represents a common feature. Conversely the use of childcare facilities for babies up to three years old seems to be very different: while only two Italians said that they children attended a crèche, in Austria it was five of them and in Slovenia almost all – as we are going to see very soon, these data are strictly connected with the availability of grandparents to look after their grandchildren and most of all to the grandmothers’ employment or status of housewife. At any rate going back to the topic of childcare facilities, many women in all the three regions complained about their price, the long waiting list, how difficult it had been to get a place and finally about the opening time that would be too short:
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“Težko je dobiti prostor, cena pa je odvisna od občine… je kar drago, lahko bi bilo cenejši…”;
“…la donna manda il bambino all’asilo nido per tenerlo il posto di lavoro, in pratica gira l’assegno dello stipendio all’asilo…sebbene a fronte di orari migliori; la scuola materna invece ha costi più ragionevoli”;
“…die Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen in Österreich nicht so gut sind, sie sind zeitlich nicht flexibel, und wenn man in dem Handel erwerbstätig ist, ist es absolut nicht genug; bei Krabbenstuben ist die Nummer der verfügbaren Plätze sehr begrenzt, damit man einen bekommt, muss man sich ein Jahr vorher schon melden, und dann muss man zwischen 200 und 300 Euro pro Monat bezahlen, was sehr teuer ist!”.

At any rate once more, Italian women stood out as the most unsatisfied and pinpointed the fact that in their country opening times would be rigid and would not meet at all working women’s needs, they could just suit the schedule of a part-time worker but as we have seen there are very few of them:

“Manca una taratura sugli orari, non sono fatti tenendo in considerazione le esigenze dei genitori.”;
“E’ evidente che le famiglie hanno esigenza di avere una struttura dove portare i bambini… una mamma anche volendo non riesce nemmeno ad arrivare a casa per fargli il pranzo, alle 12.45”;
“…i bambini ci vanno volentieri, certo ci sono aspetti che si potrebbero migliorare, come gli orari di apertura, che non sempre sono compatibili con gli orari di lavoro delle donne, non coprono una normale giornata lavorativa, allora o si adegua questa struttura o si adegua il mondo del lavoro, da qui l’esigenza di avere flessibilità per la donna”.

Also Slovene and Carinthian women claimed that their government should invest more in childcare institutions in order to create more places and introduce more flexible and longer opening times, while the opinion about the price of private childcare facilities was unanimous in the whole Alps-Adriatic area: it would be too high, so high that a woman should almost work just in order to pay the fee:

“…quelli privati hanno costi spropositati, anche pari a ¾ di uno stipendio… una manda il bambino al nido giusto per potersi tenere il lavoro…”.

Another thing that women of the three areas have in common is being very busy: in general they wouldn’t have time for themselves and wished they had more free time:

“…es war wirklich eine stressige Zeit, muss ich sagen, ich hatte keine Zeit für mich…..”;
„Wenn ich aber ein bisschen mehr Freizeit hätte, wäre es gut, aber es ist trotzdem gut“;
“…a casa sono che ti aspettano con gli artigli fuori… e tu devi sempre ascoltartele e stare zitta… che stress!”;
“Bisogna avere il tempo, per sentirsi sovraccarichi, è già un lusso!”;
“Non ci si può sedere, bisogna sempre fare qualcosa, organizzare”.

Nonetheless almost all of them expressed high level of satisfaction with their life and most of all with their family, job and income. Another common feature is the fact that almost all of the
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interviewed called themselves religious persons (only two women in Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia and four women in Slovenia stated that they aren’t religious), but not churchgoers (just one woman in Italy and one in Slovenia regularly go to Church), thus giving room for the supposition that in general women have taken distance from the Church’s traditional stance about woman’s role in family and society. Indeed many of the interviewed women asserted that as far as this point every woman should be put in the condition to do what she wants to do, to be a mother and contemporary work, or to devote herself either just to her family or just to her career. On the average Slovene women stated that every couple should reach its own agreement as far as who does what, but that at any rate it is normal for a woman to be employed, that men and women are equal and should equally share household duties, from the children’s education to the household chores:

“…ker ne vem, zakaj bi ženske podpirale vse štiri vogale, ne samo tri…”;
“Enakovredne možnosti bi moralo biti povsod…”;
“Ista vloga kot moški v družini in v službi… med materami in samskami ne bi smelo delati razlik…”;
“Če oba delata, si morata deliti vse doma, ce možno tudi otroki bi morali pomagati…”;
“vse ženske delajo, to je normalno… da moški opravijo gospodinjskega dela je tudi normalno…”.

A good half of Carinthian and Friulan women were of the same opinion:

“Per me una donna deve ricoprire tutti i ruoli, è in grado di farlo se vuole, se si organizza, può essere una manager e una brava madre di famiglia, dipende dalle coppie, da come vogliono impostare la loro vita.”;
“Ogni donna dovrebbe essere libera di fare le sue scelte senza doverle pagare più di quello che paga un uomo, per conciliare il più possibile le esigenze della famiglia e del lavoro…”;
“Non penso che ci sia un ruolo preciso che la donna debba ricoprire, cioè nel senso, ognuno ha le sue capacità, come donne e come uomini… il ruolo della donna nella società è legato alle sue capacità e caratteristiche, cioè se uno merita deve andare avanti, qualunque attività che faccia, indistintamente. Non dico che la donna debba avere un ruolo particolare perché non penso che esista un ruolo legato alla donna… non si può generalizzare…”.

but while they all agreed on the statement that a woman without children can be as available and committed to her job as a man is, some acknowledged that nonetheless housework would be on her shoulders because men don’t have as good organizational skills as women, men would be rather limited because of the education they got and the habits that they have developed:

“…moški so mal narodni”;
“Ci vuole molto molto tempo per cambiare strutturalmente credenze e abitudini circa i compiti di uomini e donne; l’obiettivo sarebbe che tutti facciano un po’ di tutto, in modo che uomini e donne possano scambiarsi i ruoli; in realtà poi ci sono resistenze strutturali al cambiamento, per esempio
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l'uomo non è abituato a fare certe cose, ci mette molto di più a farle... c'è un retaggio culturale e familiare che influenza sulla capacità e la volontà dell'uomo di fare certe attività e viceversa."

"...secondo me sono molto limitati in questo ambito, però è colpa nostra, di noi mamme, perché vuol dire che la sua mamma ha mandato a lavorare suo marito, lei è stata a casa e gli ha sempre preparato tutto, dai calzetti, ai pantaloni, al fazzoletto da mettere dentro ai pantaloni, tutto... quindi faccio una colpa al 70% a questi uomini, poveretti, e un 30% a noi perché potevamo spiegarcì un po' meglio ☺";

"Della casa c'è poco da fare, si deve occupare la donna senz'altro. Per tanto brava che sia stata a coinvolgere mio marito, è brutto da dire ma sono limitati, in certe cose, non so se è perché non si impegnano, non gli interessa... se non gli dici non vedono, ecco, una donna vede le cose da sola, non ha bisogno di suggerimenti, fa, non lo so, sarà nell'istinto materno, sai cosa devi fare... certe cose mi sembrano così banali, invece vanno suggerite, non le vedono. Ma questo io penso anche sul lavoro, che siano limitati, sarò razzista magari io dall'altra parte, ma finalmente qualcuno..."

Thus with or without children a woman would be the leading person of a family: when she becomes a mother, she is going to be the one who devotes more time to children while in the first months after the birth she would be actually irreplaceable:

"Die Mutter ist die Mutter!";

"im Rahmen der Familie, wird immer die Frau die Rolle haben, die Kinder zu bekommen und in den ersten Zeiten zu mindesten zwei Jahre auch zu betreuen, das geht einfach gar nicht anders... und ich denke, ein Mann kann in der Beziehung unterstützen aber er kann es sicherlich nicht alleine in den ersten Paar Monaten übernehmen, das geht einfach gar nicht...";

"Secondo me la donna è il motore principale della famiglia, lavoro, vita sociale...".

All this brings about the consequence that working mothers cannot be as flexible and available (for overtimes) as men may be, family duties would limit women and their possibilities of making career:

"...pač dokler si samski, brez otrok, se laži uveljavljaš, to definitivno, ker si več časa v službi na razpolago, čeprav potem, ko imaš otroka, si pa bolj kot bolj organiziran... prednost imaš otroka, ker si enostavno prisilen, dokler nimaš otroka si lahko rečit, ti lahko pustiš kakšno luckno... ☺";

"A’ junger Mensch tut sich leichter, weil er flexibler ist, wenn jemand Mutter ist, ist es schon schwieriger, und ein Mann, auch wenn er mithilft, die Arbeitsaufteilung, die meiste Arbeit bleibt der Mutter...";

"...una volta che hai famiglia poi c'è meno disponibilità da parte delle donne, si può dire ad un uomo di fermarsi di più per una riunione, per ricevere un cliente ma per la donna con famiglia è più difficile, o lo sa in anticipo e si organizza, o non si può far".

Some women seemed to have resigned to this situation:

"...probabilmente noi donne siamo programmate per sopportare, partoriamo noi quindi abbiamo un limite di sopportazione più alto";
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"È anche vero che la vita di una donna è più difficile.. gli uomini non hanno tutte le altre incombenze che sono tipiche di una donna, cioè anche in una giornata tipica che si va al mare, cioè chi è che si alza prima? Chi è che prepara i bambini? Chi è che prepara tutto? È una donna, eh! Anche in una famiglia dove i compiti sono divisi, fondamentalmente chi fa quasi tre quarti è sempre la donna… Il massimo sarebbe gestirsi all'interno della propria famiglia dividendosi i compiti, dove è possibile, dove c'è disponibilità…"

"Noi donne sul lavoro siamo svantaggiate, anche se ci impegniamo… però hai sempre fatto un bambino, se devi andare dal pediatra se tu che chie di il permesso, torniamo sempre al discorso di prima, che è per logica che sei tu che devi sacrificare te, la carriera e via dicendo, non l'uomo… il mammò non esiste ancora ☺."

Others claimed that the mentality should change, reproductive work should get a higher social recognition:

"Wenn man eine Hausfrau ist, wird man oft als minderwertig behandelt, man ist vielleicht dumm, weil man Hausfrau ist, das merkt man schon, aber dafür hat sie sich entschieden, das heißt überhaupt nichts aber das gibt's, auch in meinen Bekanntenkreis Aha, du bist NUR Hausfrau, Maria! Warum denn? und so weiter… aber man akzeptiert eigentlich diese Entscheidung nicht richtig…".

Moreover the governments should devise more measures aiming at helping women to reconcile work and family duties and that women should play a more active role also in the (public) society:

"Wenn eine Frau arbeiten will aber auch für die Familie da sein, dann sollten es Möglichkeiten gegeben, das durchzusetzen bzw. zu vereinbaren…";

"Io penso che dovrebbero intervenir più che per favorire l'uguaglianza, mettere le donne nella condizione di poter fare le stesse cose, è ovvio che dovrebbero venirti in contro con l'orario di lavoro…";

"V enakopravnosti, vse podsod mora biti, in v družini in v službi, se mora pridelat po svojega, priburit… bolj ženske se morajo priboriti, da te upoštevajo in tako…".

In Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia there were also women who expressed quite traditional views, i.e. they held that women should stay at home when children are young or at least work part time, because it wouldn't be feasible to take care of them properly when working full time:

"Ora io lavoro part-time ed è normale che mi dedichi alla famiglia di più di lui… se la donna non vuole avere una famiglia allora può essere pari ad un uomo a tutti gli effetti, altrimenti è difficile conciliare carriera e famiglia…";

"La donna che ha famiglia deve da sola rendersi conto che non è una donna in carriera, perché secondo me rischia di non far bene né questo né quello";

"Die Arbeit ist da, um etwas zu verdienen, sicher sollte sie dann auch Spaß machen, aber bei den Kindern dabei sein, schauen wirklich, wie sie sich entwickeln, und ich denke, dass es mit zwei Stunden am Abend… wird wenig genan… wenn eine Frau Karriere machen will, ist es für sie in
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Ordnung, nur meine ich, dass eine Vollzeitarbeit und Kinder sehr schwer zu vereinbaren sind, darüber bin ich sehr skeptisch".

If we compare what the interviewed said about the role that women should play in family and society with the way they have arranged to divide household duties with their husbands and partners, we see that in Friuli Venezia Giulia women tend to take care of everything, from the house to the children, in fact only three of them reported to rely on a maid for helps at home, while when the husband helps it is meant that he contributes to growing up the children and maybe drives them somewhere, but as far as housework he would represent "the last resort":

"...lui è proprio l’ultima spiaggia";
"...appena sposati li facevamo assieme, ora no, ora lui mi tiene le bambine così io posso fare i lavori in pace";
"...tutta la gestione dei bambini risulta a carico mio, e così pure la casa, i trasporti, le attività sportive, la partecipazione agli incontri con gli educatori, alle feste dei bambini, tutto. Lui aiuta la mattina....".

Anyway this situation doesn’t prevent women to have the feeling that they stand on equal footing with their husband or partner.

In Carinthia the fact that most of the interviewed had a part time contract of course affected the way household duties were divided, so that six out of ten reported to be in charge of all the household chores and of the organization of children:

"...es war klar, dass er die Karriere verfolgt und ich kümmere mich um das Haus und betreue das Kind";
"...er hilft nicht zu Hause, es ist alles auf mir";
"...zu Hause macht er nichts gerne außer Bügeln, so muss ich den Rest machen; die Erziehung der Tochter ist eine gemeinsame Verantwortlichkeit, aber für die Kinderbetreuung bin ich in erster Linie zuständig".

Of the ones who were helped, two called themselves satisfied with the situation:

"...und Gott sei dank habe ich einen Mann, der sehr viel hilft.".

Another one declared to feel responsible in the first line for the above mentioned activities, while the last one used to do everything but since she had changed to a full time contract and her children had grown up, everybody had got used to carrying out his or her share or work at home, this way diminishing her workload.

Once more Slovenian women seem to enjoy the best situation since only three out of 10 said that they were responsible for everything but they could count on the help of somebody else (their mother or a maid) for household chores, one was single, while the other six referred that they and their partner shared everything:

"Ko kar se da, si deliva pač ni določeno, kaj kdo dela, ... če je treba, mož pomaga, za vse poskribo. ";
"...mi imamo moderno... on pride, dela, skuha, slika...".
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Consistently with the above described situation, Italian women declared to feel overburdened and to find it hard to reconcile family and work:

“Tutt’ora mi sento sovraccarica di lavoro, sono costantemente impegnata lungo tutta la giornata, sono stanca perché mi è difficile trovare un momento per me stessa”;

“Non è facile conciliare lavoro e famiglia, mi sento in difetto nei confronti dei bambini perché non sono con loro, e in debito nei confronti di chi mi aiuta...”;

“A volte mi sento oberata di lavoro, in alcuni momenti mi sembra di non riuscire a fare niente bene... la casa è grande, il lavoro è impegnativo, mia figlia ha le sue esigenze, sono tante cose, tutte di responsabilità e se uno vuole farle tutte bene per trarne soddisfazione gli sembra di non farcela. Allora ci si deve fermare, riorganizzare, meditare, poi si riesce ad uscirne.”.

Moreover they complained about the fact that whenever they got help with the children in order to devote themselves to other activities, they had to give account of what they did and if they got late, they had to listen to other people’s complains and justify themselves. Also Carinthian women had felt overburdened at times but they didn’t report so many problems of reconciliation; Slovene women said that they had felt overloaded most of all because they often had to work overtime but in general they managed to do everything.

It is very interesting to compare the social condition of the interviewed and their opinion about the role of woman with their parents’ views and the way they had arranged things at home: in Friuli Venezia Giulia only two out of 10 grandmothers were employed, two more worked as dressmakers at home while the rest were housewives. All of them were alone responsible for children’s education and the household and according to their daughters just a couple had an equal relationship with their husband, moreover while only one grandfather used to help at home if necessary, all the others didn’t, on the opposite they had a patriarchal mentality and thought that home and children constituted women’s duties while they were the breadwinners thus the masters of the family:

“I...a donna è sempre stata quella che fa tutto”;

“...quella della donna sottomessa al marito, mio padre è sempre stato il capo assoluto, e la gestione della casa era compito di mia madre anche se lavorava”.

Nonetheless all the women reported that both their parents had been supportive to them and that some mothers had explicitly advised them to get an education and a good job in order to be independent:

“Mia mamma mi ha sempre detto che dovevo lavorare, che mi avrebbe aiutata con i figli, ma dovevo lavorare”.

In Carinthia only two grandmothers used to be housewives while all the others had an employment; only one of them could count on the help of a maid for household chores, while
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three grandfathers did help at home even though in general it was normal for women to be responsible for the family wellbeing and the house:

„Die Teilung der Aufgaben zwischen meinen Eltern war eine traditionelle: die Mutter war zuständig für Kochen, Putzen, Wäschen, für den Garten und dann im Stall müsste sie auch die Tiere füttern, und sie und die Kinder haben auch im Wald geholfen, wenn es nötig war. Der Vater hat mehr in dem Freie gearbeitet, Holzarbeit im Wald gemacht, die Ernte usw. ...sehr patriarchalisch“.

Also in this case all the interviewed had been supported by their parents and were made aware of the importance of getting a job and independency through it; more than half of their fathers stuck to patriarchal relationships:

„Einmal hat er zu mir gesagt, dass es ein Naturgesetz ist, dass die Männer so zu sagen bestimmen und dass die Männer einfach eine Stufe höher stehen...“;

„Seiner Meinung nach gehörte die Frau dem Herd, sie hatte zu kochen und zu putzen und das zu machen, was der Mann wünschte, so wurde es auch gelebt“.

The other half believed in gender equality and didn’t think that woman’s role was to be at home:


„...beide hatten eine moderne Einstellung, sie waren gleichberechtigt, sie hatten nicht das Bild von der Frau am Herd“.

Some women explicitly pinpointed that they didn’t agree with their fathers’ patriarchal point of view and that they didn’t want things to be the same way in their own family:

„...dadurch, dass es so aufgeteilt war, ist das Bewusstsein in mir gewachsen, dass ich es so nicht haben will “.

Only one Slovene grandmother was at first not employed because her husband worked in the army and the family had to move a lot, but when the interviewed got 12 years old her mother had enough of being at home and found an employment, therefore it is possible to say that all the mothers of the interviewed used to work for pay. This data confirms the portrait that I have drawn in the previous chapters about the Slovene society during the period of the Socialist system, when both men and women were fully engaged in the labour force – as I have reported in order to allow this to happen the government of that time had invested a lot in childcare facilities, indeed the majority of women reported that they had started to go to the kindergarten when they were just one year old, while as we have seen in both Friuli Venezia Giulia and Carinthia still nowadays just a handful of women send their children to these facility, instead they rely on the help of their family network.

The data gathered in my interviews of course cannot be representative for the whole society since the sample is too small, but they fit the frame that I have drawn about how the Austrian,
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Italian and Slovene society used to be and are nowadays: in the past both the latter were characterized by the male breadwinner – housewife model, according to its traditional form in Italy and to its modified form in Carinthia since here many women used to work, but this didn’t prevent people from adhering to a patriarchal standpoint, from which the next generation started to take distance slowly but firmly, so that nowadays in both Friuli Venezia Giulia and Carinthia many families are living according to the egalitarian employment model. As far as Slovenia, it can be said that already in the past this society was characterized by the egalitarian employment model and that now it is moving towards the universal carer model.

In general all the women of the three bordering areas believe in equal relationships, even though many of them haven’t been able to realize it in practice since they are still the ones who are primarily responsible for children and home, with different levels of involvement of their partners and husbands in sharing household duties. As I have already said, this level of men’s involvement into reproductive work and the number of actually equal partnerships are higher in Slovenia – and the same holds true also for the past, in fact four women reported that their fathers used to help at home and that their parents were mutually supportive and stood on equal footing:

“…o vlogi ženske v družini in družbi je bilo pa tak zelo pozitiven zgled, zelo enakopravnega… res enakopravnost se je moja starša v tem pogled učit…”;
“…zelo razporejeno, oba sta bila enakopravna… morda mama je bila bolj dominantna…”.

The other grandfathers had a patriarchal mentality thus even though their wives were employed, they held them responsible for the management of the house and for children’s education:

“Takratno mišljenje je vsekakor bilo, da je vloga ženske poleg službe samo še gospodinjstvo, izhod s prijateljicami, kultura, kino, opera, predstave…”;
“On je bil mnenja, da je on v službi dovolj delal, potem ko je prišel domov je sedel pred televizijo in čakal, da bo kosilo skuhano…”;
“…pri naš je mogla žena vse narediti…”

Also this data is consistent with what I have written in the previous chapters, i.e. that although the Socialist system had enshrined gender equality in the constitution, it hadn’t been able to change traditional views about woman’s role in the family. The consequences have been on the one hand a high female employment rate and good developed childcare facilities, on the other hand the failure in achieving actual gender equality because of the family duties that weighted on women’s shoulders. As a result also today even though people take women’s employment for granted, the labour force is still segregated by gender and young women seem to be discriminated against by employers upon hiring, owing to the fact that they may get pregnant and go on leave while it is expected that young men won’t.
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Quite interesting are the answers given by women to a closed question that I had in my questionnaire and that regarded woman’s role between family and work in general - i.e. not the very woman’s role, even though many women have answered on the basis of their own experience. While in general Austrian, Italian and Slovene agreed on the statement that having a job represents the key factor to woman’s independence and that in order to build up a warm relationship with a child it doesn’t matter so much how much time a mother spends with her baby (with some limits of course), but rather its quality, the first differences emerged in connection with the statement that “a job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children”: the majority of Slovene and Carinthian disagreed with it, holding that while a woman may realize herself through children, the house is not so important, while half of the Italian - taking the sentence as it is i.e. not differentiating between children and home - expressed agreement. Moreover the majority of the latter was of the opinion that when a woman works full time both her children and family life in general will suffer because she can’t but be neglecting them. On the opposite almost all of the Slovene and Carinthian women disagreed with the statement that “a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/ her mother works”, and also more than the majority of both groups didn’t think that “all in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full time job”. These data confirm the traditional orientation of Austrian and Slovene women towards female employment - it is normal for them to work, it is something taken for granted; also the answers of the women from Friuli Venezia Giulia confirm the Italian’s traditional attitude towards female employment – more and more it is conceived as something normal because it takes two paychecks to have a good standard of living, but it is still seen as a hindrance as far as the accomplishment of woman’s role within the family, therefore backing up the view that at least when children are young, women should be at home taking care of them while their husband – evidently – work. As a consequence it can be held that the model of the male breadwinner – housewife seems to be still appealing during the period when children are young, then the fact that it cannot be realized in practice is connected with the need to keep one’s job, most of all such a good paid job as the one of bank clerk.

Coming to the topic of discriminative or not fair behaviours towards women, fortunately just few women reported to have been treated unfairly because of their sex, in particular an Italian declared that in the past she was precluded career chances because she had uttered her wish for maternity, which she found very unfair, hurtful and discrediting towards her capacities, knowledge and skills:

“mi sono state precluse determinate possibilità di carriera in quanto donna e perché ho dichiarato di voler avere figli in futuro, questo mi precludeva di avere certi ruoli... mi sono arrabbiata moltissimo.... sicuramente l’ho ritenuto offensivo e screditante delle mie qualità.”.
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To others it had happened to have a superior who would have preferred to have male coworkers around:

„Mein ex-Chef hat einmal gesagt, er würde, wenn er entscheiden könnte, lieber einen Mann als Assistent haben als eine Frau, weil eine Frau einfach auf Grund ihrer Tätigkeit als Mutter oft ausfällt, krank ist, vielleicht auch launischer ist auf Grund ihrer hormonellen Situation... also, da war ich eigentlich sehr erstaunt.“

Another one referred about a boss who would pay more attention to a male colleague’s ideas just because they had come from a man, whereas her own ideas may have been better but since they were expressed by a women they didn’t get so much consideration:

„Na delovnem mestu... se tu dogaja... moškega kolega, pri enaki stvari ali mogoče pri slabšji stvari, če je slabšimi idejami ali predlogi, ga bolj upoštevajo kot mene, če glih kaj kratko opremljevega konkretnega predlagam ali karkoli, pridi k čelu, bolj upošteva njega... če rasmisljš zakaj, vidiš, samo zato ker je pač moški... to, ki se vidi, da je zelo moško vodstvo... gre politika v to smir.”

Some Slovene woman reported to have had the feeling that during job interviews the interviewer was wondering whether she would have gotten pregnant any time soon or anyway that women are asked about their family plans:

„...z razgovorom... so mi dali vidit, da glede nato, ko pač imajo ženske ponavadi otroke in nekako pričakujejo, da bom imela še kakšenga, in pač eno leto in pol je za njih predolgo, da me pač bodo pustili na nekaj vsakem položaju...“

„Če te vprašajo, a bi vi še imeli otroke, kdaj boste imeli otroke, a ne?, pa kok so stari, to takoj pride v glavi, računajo, kok boš šla na bolniški, kolik na porodniški, kok boš verjetno doma... kakorkoli, a ne?”

„...to ni dovoljeno ampak na razgovoru uprašajo vse... in moškim ne, verjetno ne, to ni fair...“

Another one said that upon taking over his father’s company she had to prove to her partners that she would have been able to keep it running, and that she needed to invest a lot of energy into it because of the prejudices of those people:

„p...rej je oče vozil, zdej jo jaz vozim, eh, ženska 😊 in je blo treba priboriti se, da bo naprej laufalo, da te upoštevajo kot direktorja...“

It must also be mentioned the isolated case of a Slovene woman who said that she had sometimes felt privileged because of her sex, that people were nicer to her, but – again – her case is unique:

„Nisem imela nikoli občutka, da niso z mano ravnali nepravilno, ker sem ženska, precej imam občutek, da imam prednost, ker sem ženska, no, tako... 😊 zdi se mi, da ne vem, v službi, doma, recimo ko smo študirali, da če si ženska ne vem, da ti je v kaksnih trenutkih laži, kot kar če bi bila moški... v službi, če nekaj narobe nardiš, pač ker imamo glavno moške šefe, ... ti lepši povejo... pač če greš v trgovino, ti dajo vse prednost recimo ... 😊 ... je boljše če si ženska kot moški, jaz mislim, no.”
Indeed even though only few women had experienced unfair treatments on their skin, in general they agreed on the view that women are disadvantaged on the labour market:

„Sie werden sicherlich nicht behandelt wie Männer, glaube ich auch. ... vielleicht ist es, weil wir sie sind, die die Kinder bekommen, jeder Karriere da einfach einen Knick bekommt, das ist ganz normal, viele Firmen der Karriere der Frau nicht zu sehr vertrauen, weil sie nie wissen, wann sie vielleicht da einmal nicht sein wird, wenn sie ein Kind hat, ist man einfach unflexibler und ... ja, also gleich behandelt, wirklich behandelt wie ein Mann glaub ich werden die Frauen nicht bei uns…“;
„Geschlechtspezifische Ungleichheiten gibt es in gewissen Sparten schon noch, Männer werden noch bevorzugt, denn Frauen gehen in Karenz“;
„...am Arbeitsplatz manchmal hab ich das Gefühl, dass man schon zu spüren bekommt, dass man a Frau ist, das merkt man schon teilweise…“;
“Delodajalec na štartu išče moškega, to se dogaja, se se že srecala... čepraj pišejo m/ž... “;
“...sigurno, da niso ženske pravično obravnavane zato, ker so ženske, zaradi otrokih... če je mlada, bo sla na porodinski dopust, če je bolj stara, na bolinški dopust... vsi to pričakujejo, in seveda tudi delodajalci... “;
“Za mlade punce, to moram reči, da je verjetno res, da niso obravnavane enako kot moške“. Moreover they think that things have been improving over the last couple of decades but that the glass ceiling is always there, that a woman must be much better than a man in order to get the same kind of acknowledgments and rewards, that men are privileged when it comes to advancements because they can be more available and flexible and don’t take as many leave permits as women do:

“Per il datore di lavoro dare un part-time è un problema, rappresenti un costo, essere donna ti penalizza, per tanto che tu possa essere brava, a parità di un maschio, si preferisce l’uomo, rispetto a lui tu hai molti più pensieri, non c’è solo il lavoro ma anche i figli, la casa…anche se ci metti lo stesso impegno, rischi comunque di venirne fuori peggio…“;
“Il soffitto di cristallo esiste; a parità di bravura fra un uomo e una donna l’uomo fa carriera prima o la donna deve essere più brava, deve fare 5 volte tanto!”;
“L’uomo dà disponibilità, le donne comunque non ne danno, poi è vero, perché poi fondamentalmente quelle che hanno figli sono quelle che tendono ad andar via prima…“;
„Und die Frauen haben immer Nachteilen... als sie Kinder auf die Welt kriegen, dann sind sie von der Arbeit einige Jahre weg, dann kommen sie nicht zu mit... das ist nicht leicht, noch immer nicht, es hat sich schon sehr viel verbessert aber wir sind noch immer nicht gleichberechtigt mit den Männern“;
„...die Männer vielleicht ein bisschen fauler sind, sie haben es leichter, vielleicht wenn nicht eine solche Leistung bringen, haben sie einen sicheren Platz.“;
„...das habe ich immer schon damals als Kind mitgekriegt, dass eine Frau muss fast stärker sein als ein Mann, so dass sie sich behaupten kann... man soll sich nicht herunterdrücken lassen"
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Some women are of the opinion that “equality doesn’t exist, nor will it ever exist”, that equal opportunities exist just on the paper whereas women have always been penalized because of their biological function:

„Gleichberechtigung wird es nie geben, ganz sicher nicht!“;

„...noch jetzt in Zeiten der Emanzipation trotzdem in der Arbeitswelt sind Frauen noch nicht gleichberechtigt, aber es ist ich glaube fast überall so - sprich von den Tätigkeit ihrer Aufgaben, von der finanziellen Entlohnung... dass man Frauen einfach gewisse Dinge nicht zutraut, und dass Frauen auf Grund ihrer ich glaube Funktion als Mutter und Hausfrau auch gewisse Jobs gar nicht annehmen können, auch wenn sie es wollten, weil man muss sich dann entscheiden, entweder Familie oder Karriere. Und da tut sich ein Mann glaub ich leichter.“.

“...mladih punc glih ne marajo, ker ne marajo porodniških, in sicer nisi zaradi tega že prevzeman ampak ti dajo pojasni videti, in to zame ni fair”

“Se ti senti discriminata in quanto donna, volendo si, dalla mattina alla sera!”;

“Da sempre la donna è penalizzata rispetto all’uomo... la parità che abbiamo raggiunto è solo verbale, non di più, per esempio se ci sono due uffici [...] uno gestito da me e uno da un uomo, se non ci conosceno, se arriva una persona che deve fare un pratica, un progetto, stai sicura che va dal maschio... quindi è una parità limitata...”

“Le pari opportunità tra uomo e donna... non ci sono e non ci saranno mai, no donne abbiamo voluto essere al pari degli uomini ma non lo saremo mai, lavoreremo sempre il doppio secondo me, e saremo sempre considerate la metà.”.

The differences of treatment would be under everybody’s eyes, at any rate some also think that if a woman has the right qualities and skills, she can manage to assert herself – even though the price may be that she has to neglect a bit her family:

“Credo sia una cosa abbastanza alla luce del sole... perché è la donna che fa i figli e per questo viene a mio parere discriminata nel mondo del lavoro. Ci sono donne che hanno figli e riescono a far carriera, ma è problematico, devono lottare di più per ottenere e poi per mantenere la posizione...”,

“...ho dovuto sempre lottare per arrivare a certi livelli, ho lavorato come un uomo... però non trovo assolutamente giusto che una donna debba essere come un uomo per poter fare strada, e dimenticarsi della famiglia, chiaramente non tutte le donne sono disposte a farlo e d’altronde non mi sembra neanche giusto chiederglielo”;

“lo ci ho messo molto del mio - tempo, energie...volendo, una donna può fare carriera.”.

Carinthian women found the phenomenon of the gender wage gap unfair and they were the only ones who mentioned this point, thus confirming the fact that the issue is a hot one in Austria; when they compared their situation with that of women from other nationalities – i.e. from Turkey or maybe Muslim countries – they stated that all in all women in Austria are treated good, even though they couldn't but agree that men are treated better, indeed most of all upon hiring women would be discriminated against:

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„Wir merken es einfach im Recruiting aus, dass gewisse Bereichsleiter wenn sie Personal anfordern, von vornherein sagen, wir wollen jungen Burschen, damit wir nicht mit solchen Probleme später konfrontiert sind, und ich glaube, dass es die jungen Frauen bei uns schon ein bisschen schadet, ja....

Also Slovene women seemed to be very much aware of this problem and also of the existence of the glass ceiling, nonetheless half of them was of the opinion that in general women are treated fairly. This data could be interpreted in two ways: either these women haven’t been personally discriminated against and they don’t pay attention to what’s going on around them therefore they miss unfair behaviours towards women, or in Slovenia women are actually treated better than in other countries and almost enjoy equality with men. I have written “almost” because in my opinion it is not possible to say that there is actual gender equality, not even in Slovenia, because of the several remarks about young women being disadvantaged when they apply for a job and also because of the phenomenon of the gender segregation of the labour force.

It must be acknowledged that on the average women don’t know much about the government’s initiatives in order to realize a more gender equal society, a good half of the interviewed in all the three areas explicitly admitted neither to follow nor to pay attention to what’s going on, some justified themselves by recalling the fact that they are too busy with other more concrete things. When asked about the areas where the government (regional and/or national) should get more engaged, Carinthian women said that it should work in order to achieve more equality as far as wages and against the phenomenon of violence against women, moreover it should devise a way to reduce the discrimination against women upon hiring and in connection with the fact that they take the parental leave, the point being that if fathers took it, women wouldn’t be discriminated against:

„Was die Regierung für gleiche Bezahlung bei gleichem Job macht, finde ich ganz ganz wichtig, ich glaube, es läuft eine Studie noch immer.... Und was ich noch finde, es darf keine Frau nur deshalb, weil sie womöglich Kinder kriegen könnte und in Karenz gehen könnte, bei einer Jobentscheidung benachteiligt werden, weil würden Männer in Karenz gehen, würde sich die Frage nicht stellen“.

Also Slovene women shared this opinion. The only proposal put forward by an Italian women was to invest in the education, because the approach top-down (legislation, government’s initiatives) wouldn’t be enough if people are not educated to respect each others, this is why children should be taught to treat persons of the two sexes in the same way:

„La cosa più importante, secondo me.. è che bisogna educare i figli verso il rispetto di entrambi i sessi, l’uguaglianza nei trattamenti deve venire dal basso, cominciare dalla gente altrimenti per esempio si fa la legge sulla parità dei trattamenti e poi si trova il modo di aggirarla, quindi bisogna
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incominciare ad educare i figli a non fare differenze, bisogna inculcargli i valori giusti, e li si vede l’importanza del ruolo della donna…”.

Another question regarded the initiatives that the government should undertake in order to develop a more family friendly society: first of all it has to be said that really all the 10 women from Friuli Venezia Giulia were unanimous in judging the Italian society as not family friendly at all, that the institutions have a lot of work to do in order to meet family needs, that the times around which the society is organized don’t take into proper consideration the schedule of a working woman, therefore if she can’t rely on the help of some grandparents it would almost be impossible to reconcile having children and an employment:

“…nemmeno per idea la società italiana non pone per niente la famiglia al centro delle sue attenzioni”; “…una famiglia è messa in croce, se non hai dei nonni che ti danno una mano… al lavoro ti danno la disponibilità che ti danno, perché ognuno vede i suoi interessi…manca tutto da questo punto di vista qua, secondo me… e dopo si chiedono perché non si fanno i figli, o perché la gente è nevastenica…!”;

“…non tanto, impegno zero finora… c’è molta strada da fare, si potrebbe organizzare di più per la cura dei bambini al di fuori della famiglia… sebbene i politici dicano che la famiglia sia importante secondo me in Friuli poi questo non si traduce in fatti”;

“…direi proprio di no! Secondo me il mondo gira su altre priorità, la famiglia è agli ultimi posti”.

As a consequence they suggested that the government should invest in measures that help women to reconcile family and job, such as in childcare services and part-time schedules: as far as the first, there should be more places in crèches, the opening time should be prolonged and become more flexible, and the fees should be lowered; as far as the second, women suggested that maybe mothers should be given the possibility to a reduced working schedule by law in the first years after the childbirth, or at least they could be allowed to have a more flexible schedule; another proposal would be to grant financial incentives to the companies that introduce the measure of a reversible part time for parents361:

“Lo strumento della flessibilità dovrebbe essere assolutamente studiato più ampiamente…”.

Differently from their Italian colleagues, eight out of 10 Austrian women judged their society as family friendly, mainly because of the legislation about the parental leave and the right for parents of young children to work part time, and also because of the entity of the family allowances (monthly contributions for each child until s/he reaches the major age or until her/his 26th birthday if s/he studies):

“…die österreichische Gesellschaft ist grundsätzlich familienfreundlich”.

This didn’t prevent them from highlighting areas where according to their point of view the government should still invest, and – this time similarly to Italy – they regard childcare facilities:

361 Actually there is already the law XXXX on positive actions which foresee such a possibility.

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"…die österreichische Gesellschaft ist ziemlich familienfreundlich, die Familienbeihilfe sind nicht wenig, aber es fehlen Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen, Horten sowie Nachmittagsbetreuungseinrichtungen";

"…die Lage ist noch nicht optimal und ideal, aber mindestens bemüht man sich."

The majority of Slovène women was of the opinion that the government doesn’t support enough families, thus the Slovène society wouldn’t be family friendly:

“Nasplošno ni, ker so naredili samo obljube… nič niso naredili za otroke in študente…”.

They would expect the government to invest more in childcare facilities and to help out young people who want to build up a family and thus need to find a dwelling, moreover some women were very critical towards the allowance for numeros families, whose amount they judged ridiculous:

“Jaz mislim, da bi mogel še več poskrbeti za vrtec, da bi bilo več prostora, da ne bi imeli več težav z tem… zdi se mi, da to ne tako pomembna tema…“.

“družba naredi premalo za socialo”; “Mislim, da za družbo nimamo nič kaj dosegati, oziroma nič, se moramo sami najditi, sploh za mlade družine je zelo slabo urejeno, ni nobene finančne podpore… potem mladi rajši ostanejo doma pri starših in se ne odločijo za otroki…“.

If to the reader it might sound strange to hear that Slovène did complain about their childcare facilities even though they record the highest level of crèches attendance, it must be recalled the fact that here people got used to a good network of childcare centers already in the years of the self managing socialist system, this is why although in a comparative perspective they are getting the best services in this field in the whole Alps-Adriatic area, it also holds true that their expectations are higher because of the past experience, therefore they end up showing a similar (low) level of satisfaction with the current state of the art.

Very interestingly some Slovène women stated that maybe it were time for women to get more engaged in the public sphere, in politics, so that they cold contribute to make things change and improve in the direction of a more family friendly and a more gender equal society. Since the other interviewed didn’t express such an opinion I interpret this data as a sign that Slovène women are more assertive and emancipated than their Austrian and Italian colleagues, in fact the first ones would not just expect others to do something but would be more ready to work for themselves and to dare to play the role of protagonists in the public arena. In my opinion the fact that in Slovenia since decades female employment has been taken for granted and the fact that in the past women were encouraged to participate in public life, can be held responsible for the present situation and the better conditions that Slovène women can enjoy in comparison with their colleagues in Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia.

The last point of this comparison regards the attitudes and the commitment of the analyzed financial group to the promotion of a family friendly environment and of gender
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equality. Before going into details as far as the answers given by the interviewed on this topic, I want to pinpoint the fact that the national companies which are part of the holding are given some targets to be achieved every year regarding business results but are left free to manage themselves according to the culture and the rules of their nation, consistently with the keywords of the corporate mission statement: “local market knowledge at a very personal and emotional level … Respecting differences, growing together…”362. Because of different legislations, different banking cultures and a different level of development to be measured in terms of years of existence, the three subsidiaries of Austria, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia couldn’t but present similarities as well as elements of differentiation, like it has already been explained at the beginning of this chapter. As a consequence also women’s opinion and level of general satisfaction with the company were dissimilar.

A shared feature is the very limited number of women among the managers of the highest levels coupled with the lack of special measures (positive actions) aiming at supporting women in order to have a more gender balanced presence of people in all the several hierarchical levels. Actually some Slovene women declared that they don’t feel the need to be supported:

“…nimamo občutka, da bi mogle biti spodbujene…”

According to them the presence of men and women would be balanced everywhere except for the highest levels and for sure it would be more balanced than in other banks according to the experience of some:

“…se mi zdi na splošno, da če gledam na banko po strukturju vodilnih žensk, je to slabo … na teh bom rekla middle management, low management, do uprave pa ne…”;

“Smoo kar enakopravni v primeri z drugimi banki, imamo več moške kot drugi banki…”;

“Mislim, da je kar dobro razporejeno, če samo pogledamo kolik na vodilnih mestih so ženske, je kar dobro tuki, v naši banki, se mi zdi…”;

As far as the policy for advancements, Slovene women reported that at the moment it was quite rare to be promoted since this would be usually connected with the reorganization of an office, whereas the entity of one’s salary would depend very much on the contract signed upon being hired, later on its re-negotiation could take place within the annual appraisal interview to be held with one’s superior; just one woman complained that in the past when the company was smaller, even though men and women had the same level of education the first used to get more money than the second for carrying out the same job, nowadays she couldn’t tell whether it would still hold true or not since the number of employees has increased so much that it is not possible to make such comparisons any more:

362 Quotation from the internet site.
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“…pri naš v banki, sta ženska in moški opravljala popolnoma isto delo, en druzga sta nadomeščala, in sicer je moški dobil velik višjo plača kot ženska… ženske so bile velik manj vredne kot moški v tej banki…”

According to another woman these aren’t such differences, while a third women said that the company is about to introduce the ranking wage scale so that in any case every difference in wages that is not justified by one’s tasks and skills - if it exists - is going disappear:

“Jaz ne poznam, da bi rekla, da je en, zato ker je moški, da zasluži več ko kar ženska, ne vem… če enako delata, ne vem…. jaz nikoli nisem moškega… da bi dala moškemu več plače kot ženski, slučajno ne, jaz nikoli na spol ne gledam, plača je samo po izkušnjo.”

Many Slovene women said that at in the analyzed company people of both sexes are given the same opportunities of carrier and that the company prizes one’s capacities, achieved results, commitment and availability:

“Če si dober, lahk napredujš, boš mogoče dobil več plače…”

Moreover it is possible to change department if wished and to attend language courses; women would welcome the establishment of a childcare facility within the premises of the bank or in the surroundings and they referred that except for the check for the Christmas present and the subsequent Christmas party, the company doesn’t do anything special for children – but it was ready to help out heavily sick children by paying for their cures. The interviewed declared to be very satisfied with the possibility to have a flexible working schedule, even though it looks like not all of the employees can have it, it would depend on one’s job; moreover some complained about the fact that they have to work overtime because of the huge workload of their office, but they wouldn’t get paid for it. Getting a reduced working schedule would be another problematic issue since according to a woman no mother had taken the leave in the part time form because the bosses would not be “keen on” giving this kind of contract. Finally they would not like to hire young women because of the possibility that they may get pregnant and go on leave, but such an opinion doesn’t match with the statement made but a woman who belongs to the management, who said that the company has been hiring many young women:

“…da bi to naredila, da bi mlade ženske vseeno zaposlovale, čeprav je verjetno, da bodo noseče, nima vlada kaj narediti, to bo vedno tako, ne? Pa mi veliko mladih žensk zaposlimo, v glavnem so same mlade, pa pač, če bo noseča, po pa noseča, hvala bogu ne?☺”

All in all I would say that the women’s level of satisfaction with the company in Slovenia is high, that although gender equality doesn’t represent one of the company’s explicit concerns, it actually guarantees equal opportunities and thanks to the provision of the flexible schedule it shows a certain level of family friendliness. For sure there is room for improvement: as it has already been mentioned, the financial group in Slovenia has been expanding a lot thus the number of employees has been increasing steadily which requires a big organizational effort,
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but once there will be time, human resources and political will for that, the company may plan to build up a crèche for its employees’ children like the Austrian and Italian “older sisters” have already done. Maybe the fact that some people have to put on a lot of hours of overtime is owed to the company process of growth and the problem will be solved soon by hiring another person; if it isn’t so a solution ought to be found because such a stance goes against the principle of work-life balance, besides a person that works overtime for a prolonged period might suffer a decrease in productivity. Finally and again consistently with the approach of work-life balance the company should start to re-think about its policy as far as the part time working schedule and show a more positive attitude towards it: parents (not just mothers!) of toddlers objectively have a different family situation than parents of teenagers, giving the first ones the possibility to temporarily reduce their schedule can improve their productivity, their level of satisfaction and attachment to the company and also their availability to work overtime if necessary once their children will have grown up a bit. Moreover if the company decides to apply to start the process of certification of its family friendliness, this could give impulse to a very positive vicious circle: by introducing family friendly measures it could obtain better performances from its staff and reduce the rate of turnover and the number of sickness leave, people would be more satisfied with their job and maybe even more proud to belong the company, thus turning themselves in (unpaid) PR people and making positive advertisement, besides the company would increase its level of attraction as employer in the eyes of talented human resources

As it has already been said, the Austrian brance of the group is currently working in order to complete the “Audit Familie und Beruf” and get the certification of family friendly company, in this way it represents the forerunner of the holding in this field. The interviewed women had just word of praise for what the company does for parents:

„Im Haus jeder Verständnis ist da!“,
„In unserer Bank bemühen sie sich wirklich, dass jeder Mitarbeiterin wenn sie zurück kommt, unabhängig davon, wie lange sie weg war, wieder eine adäquate job findet wenn nicht sogar in den Bereich zurück kommt. Also bei uns ist es sehr gut geregelt“

In fact beside applying the law (for example as far as the right to work part time for parents) the company has showed very positive attitudes and a good level of sensitivity towards parents’ duties: it has opened a crèche, it gives the possibility to have a flexible working schedule, it

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provides people on parental leave with all the information they may need about their rights and the deadlines, and it is engaged in helping those who go back to work after the leave. Moreover it has been investing a lot in its human resources by organizing a lot of training activities and it gives the possibility to change department when desired. As far as gender equality, also here the issue is not on top of the list of company concerns but according to the interviewed the situation would be quite balanced as far as the number of male and female employees on the different hierarchical levels except for the highest ones, but it has to be underlined that one of the three members of the Board of Management of the bank is a woman.

„...die Anwesenheit von Männern und Frauen sehr ausgeglichen ist“;
„In den Leistungspositionen gibt es [Frauen] aber wenige, wenn man jemanden sucht, und den aus der internen Abteilung herausnimmt, doch vielleicht noch eher so ist es oft ein Mann, nicht eine Frau, ist einfach so, wenn man externe Persönlichkeiten sucht, ist die Auswahl bei den Männer größer als bei den Frauen, also sind die Chancen für Frauen geringer... Von Recording her, weil wir gerade in der Position ja sitzen, das ich eine Frau speziell fördere, dass ich sag, ich muss unbedingt eine Frau da sitzen haben, das sagt man nicht, sie sagen, ich muss da einen Mann sitzen haben; wenn wir für uns suchen, dann schaut man wirklich, wer bewirbt sich, wir schauen die Qualifikationen, was man gemacht hat.“;
„Ich glaube, das ist generell, es ist aber sicher auch zum Teil hier schon, wenn man sich zum Beispiel die Führungspyramide bei uns anschaut, also haben wir von 20 Führungskräften was sind? nur drei Frauen oder so, und das muss ja irgendwie seinen Grund haben, von diesen drei oder vier Frauen hat nur eine nur ein Kind, ja?“.

Women reported that within the bank there is no gender wage gap and that people are promoted according to their capacities, achieved results and commitment and not because of their sex:

„Ich glaube nicht, dass wenn man eine Position zu besetzen hat, sich nur für den Mann oder die Frau nur aus geschlechtsspezifischen Gründen entscheidet, sondern der bessere mögliche gewinnen.“;
„Es gibt Karrierechancen, man kann sich intern verändern, man kann sich weiterbilden, man kann auch in Ausland gehen, absolut ohne Unterschied ob Man oder Frau. Es gibt Mitarbeitergespräche mit Zielvereinbarungen, ja...Männer und Frauen werden absolut gleichbehandelt“.

As a conclusion I would say that the women’s level of satisfaction with the company in Austria is very high, that it is a family friendly company and its commitment in this field is a long lasting one because of the process of certification that it has started, and that although also here achieving gender equality doesn’t represent one of the company’s explicit goals, equal opportunities are actually guaranteed. The only remark that I can make regards the process of
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selection of the human resources to be hired: this is a very sensitive area and the management should make sure that here it is actually always looked at the persons’ skills, knowledge and experience and that men will never be preferred to women just because of their sex and because it is not likely that they will take a leave for family reasons – in fact the idea that mothers are not fully available and devoted to their work has to be eradicated.

In Italy the opinions about the company as employer were not so unanimous: the majority of women complained about the rigid working schedule, but as we have seen this represents a common feature of the whole Italian banking system and the analyzed bank is not an exception; although the national contract doesn’t set specific rules as far as when to give the possibility to work part time, “our company” provides this option to the people who ask for it and after having analyzed the reasons behind it, thus showing a certain level of family friendliness. The fact that it is going to host a crèche in its seat represents a good further step forward, but I have also to say that in general women were not (yet) good informed about it, therefore the project to issue a house organ for the employees is very appropriate since it gives an answer to what otherwise would be a lack of information.

The fact that the Italian subsidiary has started to issue a Corporate Responsibility Report represents a very important point: as it is written in its introduction, this way the company commits itself to care about the relations with all of its stakeholders in the long run, and its human resources together with clients are the most important ones. The investments in training activities, the financial support given to the employees’ club and the attention paid to the best possible organization of the working environment in the premises of new seat are all measures that testify the company interest in having a motivated and satisfied staff, but there is still work to be done at least according to the interviewed women. In fact half of them asserted that even though advancements would depend on one’s engagement, availability and capacities, the company is a bit chauvinist

“…un’azienda dove ci sono poche donne al comando, e più che altro è un’azienda maschile…”;
“Pari opportunità ni, siamo un’azienda che punta più sul maschio che sulla donna…”.

Actually the company has been hiring men as well as women but the feeling is that men are favoured in some positions and that women need to work much harder than their male colleagues to get the same results:

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“Essere donna ti penalizza, per tanto che tu possa essere brava, a parità di un maschio, si preferisce l'uomo, rispetto a lui tu hai molti più pensieri, non c'è solo il lavoro ma anche i figli, la casa...anche se ci metti lo stesso impegno, rischi comunque di venire fuori peggio...”.

Since working mothers would be less devoted to the company than men, they may end up being disadvantaged, and one woman who had a position of middle management stated that out of organizational reasons, even she had ended up somehow penalizing women with a reduced working schedule because when she had to decide whom to assign new responsibilities she didn't take into consideration the part timers as an option:

“Di fondo le donne qui devono fare il doppio degli uomini per avere gli stessi risultati, ma penso che sia innata questa differenza e qui è tangibile eh, ... è sempre stata... si vede anche dall'organigramma. Per esempio all'inizio che non era una banca, era una società di leasing c'erano 16 ragazze e 4 uomini, poi man mano che è aumentato il numero delle persone sono arrivati solo uomini... veramente le donne sono poche... sono ad uso segreteria, e ci sono alcune in certi ruoli ... e basta. Però ci sono anche un due – tre capo area...”;

“Se la donna ha famiglia e lavora con un part-time non è pensabile che la mettano a dirigere un’area... la cosa non si concilia. Ho l’impressione che l’azienda ci tenga a sottolineare che ha cuore il problema ma non so se questo sia un fatto di facciata o no, ma almeno c’è interesse”;

“Che qui dentro si senta questa differenza [di trattamento] è vero, io penso che lo sentano tutti come donne questo, però proprio che a parità sia andato avanti lui .. [no]. Beh, ma c’è questa preferenza, perché l’uomo dà disponibilità, le donne comunque non ne danno, poi è vero, perché poi fondamentalmente quelle che hanno figli sono quelle che tendono ad andar via prima...”;

“At any rate there are also those who think that the people’s capacities and results are prized regardless of the sex:

“Se raggiungi degli obiettivi più che altro puoi avere dei premi, certo che più dai.. al momento in cui devono decidere chi promuovere, se sei fra quelli che hai dato hai delle possibilità, altrimenti no, raccogli quello che semini, c’è poco da fare”;

“Penso che il rapporto uomini donne qui sia abbastanza equilibrato, anche fra i nuovi assunti, certo ci sono dei ruoli in cui l’uomo è più favorito come figura, o in cui è più ricercato, ma non è che si voglia discriminare”;

“Sicuramente qui le promozioni sono legate al raggiungimento di obiettivi, concordati o meno, uno deve meritarsela, dimostrare che vale, le capacità vengono riconosciute, non importa se sei un uomo o una donna”.

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“...comunque assumono molte donne, in passato c’è stato un periodo in cui hanno assunto tanti uomini.... Mi risulta che in altre banche assumono più uomini.”.

I would say that the Italian subsidiary should do something in order to change the negative opinion of some of its employees, first of all because it has gotten engaged in the cultivation of good relationships with its staff and secondly because - as I have already mentioned - employees represent the very first PR people of a company\textsuperscript{366}. Of course taking into consideration the data published in its Corporate Responsibility Report the company can already be satisfied with its power of attraction of young talented human resources, but looking at things in the long run it always makes sense to further improve the corporate image, moreover a satisfied person is a productive person.

If in Italy there isn’t yet the possibility to obtain a certification of family friendly enterprise, nor are there competitions where the most women friendly companies are awarded, I would suggest to draw up a questionnaire in order to investigate parents’ need and the aspects of their job that may be improved in connection with these needs; maybe the survey could also be used to analyze the level of satisfaction with the services of the crèche once it will be running. If the company cannot change some critic elements like for example the rigid working schedule, it is advisable to prepare mainly close questions so that people are compelled to choose between given options, this way it will be avoided that they will say they wish it were possible to change the very elements that cannot be modified\textsuperscript{367}; besides by giving them the possibility to express their personal suggestions in some questions it will be possible to gather good ideas for future changes. At any rate before carrying out the research the company should have already thought of some measures that are likely to be implemented in the medium term and which will help parent to reconcile work and family duties. In this way with a limited investment of resources the company is going to show that it cares about its employees (by asking for their opinion and needs ad by introducing at least one measure that is going to further improve the situation) not only in connection with their job but in a more comprehensive way, consistently with the concept of work-life balance; after having proved this, it is very important to keep the communication flow inside the company alive, from the bottom upwards as well as from the top downwards.

Such a survey could be carried out also in Slovenia (if the company doesn’t apply for getting the certificate of family friendly enterprise), with the same kind of modalities and goals, while in

\textsuperscript{366} On the benefits connected with the introduction of an approach aiming at realizing gender equality in a company see Syvonne Nordström (ed.), *Quality work in gender equality- A handbook for the workplace*, Edita Västra Aros, Västerås Sweden 2005.

\textsuperscript{367} But maybe it would be possible also to introduce some kind of flexible working schedule, every handbook on family friendly policy and measures included suggestions in this direction – see for example Federal Ministry for Environment, Youth and Family Affairs, *Balancing family and work – Proceedings of the conference of experts*, Vienna Hofburg, 14-15 September 1998.

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Austria the measures that are being introduced and implemented in connection with the Audit are already a step further, the are more organic and comprehensive. Some of them could be introduced also in the other two younger subsidiaries (if they haven’t already been introduced and I didn’t know about it), like for example:

- the preparation of a folder with all the information about the current legal provisions about maternal, paternal and parental leave, the steps to be taken, the parent’s rights, the different options about the form of the leave and the measures developed by the company in order to keep the employee in touch with the work-environment;
- the development of an intranet platform with information about the measures that help parents to reconcile family and work, with special attention to be paid to the projects promoted by the regional and national bodies in the field;
- the improvement of the communication flow with parents on leave as well as of the measures targeted at them and aiming at developing a strong integration and connection to the company during this period (participation in projects, training sessions, the appointment of a mentor in each department for them, etc.);
- (eventually where it is feasible) the introduction of the option of desk sharing.

Other measures could be for example that school breaks may be taken into consideration when planning the holidays of the staff of an office in order to give priority to parents in the choice of the period; it could be provided some financial help for paying the fee of a crèche for the employees who applied to get their baby inscribed at the company childcare centre but didn’t get a place; some financial help could be provided also for hiring a child-minder instead of taking a child-sickness leave. Moreover each subsidiary could grant a certain amount of money to each employee who becomes a parent as a contribution to face the expenses connected with having a baby, something that exists so far only in Austria as far as I got to know.\footnote{For a very comprehensive list of possible family friendly measures coupled with an analysis of the produced effects see Stefan Becker (ed.), 
\textit{Familienorientierte Personalpolitik – Checkheft für kleine und mittlere Unternehmen}, Deutsche Industrie-und Handelskammertag, Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, berufundfamilie gGmbH, KiWi GmbH, Osnabrück, May, 2006.}

CONCLUSION

I think that the results of my survey are quite interesting: first of all they fit the framework that I have been drawing during this work and they match with the results of other surveys that have carried out in Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia as well as in Austria, Italia and Slovenia, and which I have reported here – I am referring for example to the common problem of expensive childcare services with too short and not flexible opening times, or to the fact that everywhere women rely on the help of their family network, i.e. of grandparents, a situation that
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should make the public authorities think, in fact given the current demographic trends coupled with the new rules about the years of social contributions that are necessary to retire and get a pension, it should be clear that it must be invested in care-services, for both children and elderly people.

Another field where public authorities should intervene regards the gendered segregation of the labour force: not only should they support women entering so called male professional fields and vice versa, they should also devise a way to pay a higher social recognition to the reproductive work provided by women. By saying this I am not just thinking for example of measures such as paying social contributions in connection with periods out of the labour force in order to care for relatives, being it children (maternity, paternal and parental leave) or grandparents or disable persons, for sure these measures are to be welcomed but I am thinking rather of awareness raising campaigns, activities and projects aiming at changing the way of thinking and old stereotypes, such as that being a housewife would be a zero-status activity and would be given little consideration because it doesn’t pay off, or that providing care-work is a typically female task because women are talented for it so they should also carry out that (low status and low rewarded activity, when it is paid at all!).

In my opinion if public authorities have gotten committed to the promotion of a more gender equal society – and they did, since gender equality is one of the basic principle of the European Union -, they should work in the long run for a change of mentality: reproductive work should become more important and men should feel responsible for providing some of it and should get more engaged in growing up their children and also in carrying out household chores, starting with using their possibility to take the parental leave. The results of my survey have confirmed that it is almost only women who go on leave, a situation this is strictly connected with the fact that women may end up being discriminated against when looking for a job or in regard with career chances because it is expected that they won’t be as available and thus – according to a fordistic vision – as devoted to a company as men can be. The vicious circle can be broken only by promoting a more gender equal division of work and most of all of the reproductive work, and if the last one will be better rewarded – not only financially but in terms of importance, of social recognition – it is likely that also men will be more active in the field. From the data gathered so far it is obvious that the work to be done is huge: with the exception of half of the Slovene interviewed women and few Carinthian ones, all the others do carry alone the main responsibility for the organization of children and their care (waking them up, preparing them, driving them around, helping them to do the homework, going to free time activities, etc.) and also as far as household chores (and when they are helped by another person, either is it a grandmother or a maid, thus still always a woman).
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In general as we have seen, people believe in equality, they have taken distance from the traditional view that sees the woman at home, in the kitchen, taking care of her family and house, nowadays women work for pay, it is a fact (almost) taken for granted – if not for other reasons, because it has gotten almost impossible to make ends meet with just one paycheck. The interviewed think that nowadays every woman should be put in the condition to choose which role to play, whether to devote herself more to the family or the career, or to both of them, every couple should find its own agreement on the way responsibilities are to be divided and in women’s opinion duties ought to be shared – how much, again, is to be negotiated and arranged in each couple for itself. As far as singles, they hold that no difference should be made between men and women, and for women without children it should actually be possible to receive the same career chances as men do, since they can be as available, committed and devoted to their job as men can be. Few women have actually pinpointed that no difference at all should be made between singles, cohabiting or married women without children and mothers, because if we do, we would already be assigning mothers the main responsibility for reproductive work thus accepting that on the average their possibilities to develop themselves professionally and in general to realize themselves outside the private sphere are to be limited because of family duties. Taking into consideration the fact that in my sample - with just one exception – it was only mothers who took the parental leave, it is possible to say that all the interviewed have actually held themselves responsible in the first line for their children and subsequently also for their organization. If on top of this we add the fact that in many cases they were also wholly responsible for household duties, we can conclude that as a famous saying goes - between saying and doing there is the sea – the majority of women has not been able to live according to their ideal of gender equality, that even though they work thus can have the feeling to stand on equal footing with their husbands or partners, gender relations in their private lives are not yet actually egalitarian, but on the opposite they still present some patriarchal elements. In my opinion this situation is to be connected also with the fact that all the interviewed reported to feel overburdened and that they wish they had more free time – once more, I think that the root of the problem lays in the unequal division of work: if men contributed more to reproductive work, women would feel less busy and overloaded with work. Despite this state of the art, luckily women asserted to be satisfied with their life.

As far as gender relations in the labour market, from the survey we have seen that the only critical points may be two: the hiring process and the glass ceiling. As far as the first – again – it should be a question of equity and meritocracy, and if the society could change in the way above described, namely if it became normal also for fathers to take the parental and child-sickness leave, women would not be discriminated against upon hiring anymore, and later on
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fathers and mothers could record similar levels of availability to work overtime, thus they could really become the same chances of being promoted – even if it has to be underlined that according to the results of my survey in general the analyzed company would really prize people’s talent, results and engagement regardless of their sex. Interesting and original is the proposal of a woman in connection with overtime work: according to her the work should be organized in such a way that it were not necessary to work longer any more, maybe if it were possible to measure people’s workloads, those who manage to finish their tasks on time should be somehow rewarded because it means that they have been able to organize themselves properly.

Finally two last points: first, when the public authorities launch a new project or service, it is of fundamental importance that they develop a plan of communication and devise the best channels that will allow them to reach their target audience – of the 30 women that I have interviewed very few had heard something about the projects run by the regional and/or national government, but none of them has actually ever mentioned the bodies that deal with the issue of gender equality in their region! This is why it is essential for these institutions to find the best way to convey their messages to the people who can take advantage of the provided services and initiatives.

Secondly, it will be possible to change things and realize a more gender equal society where productive and reproductive work are both equally shared, only if women will become more engaged in working in order to achieve this: they can play a more active role in the public sphere, in politics, and propose policies that are going to improve the current state of the art, but they have room for action also within their private sphere. Indeed it is fundamental to educate children not to treat differently people of the two sexes, to respect differences, besides it should be avoided to convey gender stereotypes towards children, for example about what boys and girls are supposed to do, how they are supposed to behave etc. Moreover it is very important how children are socialized: parents are the first agents of socialization, their behaviours and the activities they carry out are going to represent a model of conduct for their children, and it will be a gendered model of conduct. This is why it would be important for them to see that also fathers work at home and take care of them, so that they will develop the idea that every person takes care of other people and that everybody has to contribute to do household work, this way for them in the future (hopefully) it will be normal and taken for granted to be in a gender egalitarian relationship, where reproductive work is shared.
CONCLUSION

The goal of my work consisted in analysing gender disparities and the social conditions of employed women of a very specific area - the core of the so called Adriatic-Alpine Euro-region, which is made up of Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia - in order to find out which region has proved to be more sensitive to the gender issue and has been more committed and successful in promoting a more equal society.

My hypothesis was that I would have found similarities and differences: since until the end of the First World War Carinthia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia had been ruled by the Habsburg Monarchy, I expected this common past to have left some traces and more precisely I imagined I could have discovered that the ideology of the male breadwinner-housewife had left some kind of legacy because of the very strong appeal that it used to have, when it was backed up by patriarchal family-laws and it was actively promoted as the proper model of conduct by the Catholic Church. Moreover I expected that since nowadays Austria, Italy and Slovenia belong to the European Union, this shared feature couldn’t but have played a role. For example if a basic principle of the Union like the one of gender equality, or the stress laid on the promotion of female employment and family friendly measures used not to represent key traits of the legal order and of the tradition of the three countries, they should have been introduced later on because of the membership in this institution.

As far as the differences, I assumed that also the dissimilar political and social paths of development that had characterized the three countries and therefore also the three border areas from 1918 until the ‘90s would have left a mark. In particular I expected that the social conditions of Slovene women nowadays should have still benefited from the emphasis put by the self managing socialist system on the principle of equality between sexes, the mobilization and employment of the whole population (women included) and the organization of a network of care services for children and elderly people, in order to relieve working women from some of their household activities. As a consequence I expected Slovene women to enjoy the best life conditions among the women of the three areas, to record the highest level of employment rate, to be able to rely on more supportive childcare facilities and to enjoy more equality with men in the private as well as in the public sphere.

Another goal of my work was to devise some “best practices”, i.e. some initiatives and projects launched by one of the administrations of the Alps-Adriatic area, which have proved to be effective in promoting equal opportunities and the development of a more gender equal society, and that might be applied in the other regions in order to achieve the same results.
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For what regards the findings of my work, all of my hypotheses were confirmed.

First of all the legacy of the male breadwinner-housewife model is still very strong: as a family model it is not backed up by the current legislation any more, and only a tiny minority lives according to it, but it hasn’t lost all of its appeal. Today it is very hard to manage to make ends meet when in a family there is only one breadwinner, women have to work and they also want to work in order to be independent, self-supportive as well as in order to realize themselves also outside the private sphere. Moreover in connection with the goals set out at the European Council of Lisbon in 2001 and of Barcelona in 2003, national governments are compelled to promote female employment rates and to support working women in their effort to reconcile family and job, by improving the existing childcare services.

In the educational field women have caught up with men and maybe on the average their achievements are even better, but despite this they still fare worse than men on the labour market, which is still characterized by both horizontal and vertical gender segregation and by the existence of gender wage gaps. This holds true for Austria, Italy and Slovenia – and consequently also for Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia – even if to different extents: without going again into details, I want to point out that according to my findings in general women may still be discriminated against on the labour market and the reason is to be found in their parental role. When I have asserted above that the male breadwinner-housewife model has still some appeal, I was thinking of the fact that when a child comes to the world, it is almost always the mother who takes the parental leave, a father who does it represents still the exception. Moreover according to time-budget surveys as well as to the interviews that I have carried out, women devote much more energy and time than men to household chores and to activities with children, while other researches found out that even if a couple might be characterized by egalitarian gender relations until the moment of childbirth, this event usually brings about a more traditional division of work – because when the mother stays at home, she starts to provide more reproductive work.

According to secondary as well as primary sources, Slovene women are the ones who enjoy more equality with men both in the private and in the public sphere and in general the prevalent family model is the egalitarian employment model - but also here there are still some gender gaps, the most striking ones being on the one hand the difference of time devoted to reproductive work by men and women, and on the other hand the data broken down by sex about who takes the parental leave.

Slovenia has already met the goals set by the European Union as far as the rate of female employment and the level of attendance of childcare services, it records low level of gender wage gap and in comparison with other countries also a good share of women in managerial
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positions, moreover there are good provisions as far as the parental leave and fathers are entitled to a period of non transferable paternal leave which ought to promote their engagement in taking care of their children. Thanks to the self managing socialist system that had characterized the economic, political and social organization of the country when it used to belong to the Republic of Yugoslavia, historically the country has always recorded a high incidence of women in the labour force (today they make up almost half of it), so that people take female employment for granted - and it has to be pinpointed that women like men usually work full time, thus even if they live alone, they can manage to stand on their feet. Moreover already in the ‘60s the country built up a good network of childcare facilities - they were necessary since women were employed, and in fact almost all the women whom I interviewed in Slovenia reported that their mothers used to work and that they had started to go to the kindergarten when they were one year old, but half of them reported also that their mothers were in charge or everything at home and that their fathers adhered to a patriarchal standpoint, that it was normal like that. Conversely the other half of fathers used to help at home.

As far as their own families, as I have already said also in Slovenia, even if women usually work full time, they are also the ones who devote more time to reproductive work, moreover none of their husbands or partners has taken the parental leave. Besides according to the results of national surveys, a significant share of people is of the opinion that when in a family there are pre-school children women should work part time or stay at home, a data that coupled with the ones mentioned before reveals that traditional patriarchal orientations have survived the promotion of egalitarian gender orientations during the socialist system. The negative side effects connected with this situation are that women may end up being discriminated when looking for a job and also in terms of career opportunities devoted to them. In the company of my case study this doesn’t seem to be the case but outside the situation may be different: indeed in 2005 it was launched a project financed with the European Social Funds within the initiative EQUAL called Young mothers/ family friendly employment which specifically dealt with this issue. The project implied carrying out researches, the promotion of awareness raising campaigns in order to inform young people about their rights and to sensitize trade unions about the problem of discrimination against women because of their family duties, and also the establishment of a system of certification of the family friendliness of enterprises, coupled with awareness raising campaign targeted at the latter and aiming at showing the benefits connected with the introduction of family friendly measures and with the award of such a certification.

If the unequal division of family duties lays at the roots of the problem of discrimination against women on the labour market, the promotion of a fairer division of tasks between men and women as far as reproductive work represents the best possible answer: consistently with this
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reasoning in 2005 in Slovenia the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities launched the campaign “Očka, aktiviraj se!”, which aimed at fostering a more active engagement of fathers within the family, as well as to inform them about their rights. Similar activities ought to be realized also in Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia, most of all since here women are not doing as well as in Slovenia.

As we have seen in Austria there are very comprehensive provisions as far as the paternal leave and the possibility given to parents of young children to work part time, but since again it is mostly women who make use of them, again they run the risk to be disadvantaged on the labour market, a concern that was expressed also by the women whom I interviewed within my project. Beside the critics moved to the system of the Kindergeld - which would encourage women to stay at home and temporarily draw out of the labour force most of all if they have a low status, low wage and not very interesting job - the fact that mothers often work part time ends up affecting the division of household duties in a patriarchal way. In fact the majority of the women in my sample reported to be the primary responsible for children and household chores, even if they held they are in an egalitarian relationship.

According to primary and secondary sources, In Austria and in Carinthia the female employment rate has been historically high and so it is also nowadays, but the same holds true for the share of women who work with a reduced schedule and who therefore might not be able to earn a living if they had to count just on their income. This situation is coupled with a level of childcare attendance rate for children up to the age of three which is well below the target level set by the European Union. The reasons for this can be looked for on the one hand in the availability of grandparents who are able and willing to take care of their grandchildren, on the other hand in the existing parental leave provisions which give parents the chance to stay at home with their children for up to two and a half years, and later to work part time up to the child’s seventh birthday. As a consequence many Austrian families live according to the male breadwinner-housewife model or rather to a modified version of it: both the adults work but the man represents still the main breadwinner because the woman usually works for less hours thus her income is lower, it represents a supplementary income – and she ends up providing more reproductive work because she can devote more time to that. If the majority of people – men and women – are satisfied with this arrangement, many women are not satisfied with the existing gender wage gap but find it unfair, an opinion expressed also by the women of my sample. Another element of dissatisfaction is connected with the existence of a glass ceiling for women, moreover woman are aware of the fact that employers may prefer to hire a young man to a woman because they expect the second to be not as available and devoted to the company as the first can be, owing to her biological function and the duties arising from that, not to talk of...
the costs connected with the need to replace a parent who goes on leave. At any rate the women working for the analyzed company in Carinthia asserted that there men and women are treated fairly since they are given the same chances and one’s commitment and achieved results are prized regardless of the sex, moreover the company would be very family friendly - and its engagement in the project of the “Audit Familie und Beruf” gives evidence for that.

According to the gathered data, in general the Austrian and Carinthian society are conceived as family friendly societies even though people still complain about the existing childcare system and they think that the government should invest in it in order to provide more places, to lower their attendance fees and to extend their opening schedule. The government of Carinthia has tried to give an answer to this need by launching the project of the “Mobile Tagesmutter”, an interesting initiative which could be introduced also in Slovenia and Friuli Venezia Giulia – actually here people are already thinking about that. Praiseworthy are also the activities promoted by the Women and Equal Opportunity Department of the regional government of Carinthia since they aim at encouraging girls to enter so called male professional fields and at empowering women through courses and training sessions and by providing with them many useful information. Moreover within the department an office devoted to the activity of gender mainstreaming has been established, so that policies and initiatives of the public authorities won’t affect men’s and women’s lives in a different way, but will be inspired to the principle of the promotion of gender equality. The only remark that can be made to the Carinthian bodies dealing with gender issues, regards the lack of projects and initiatives aiming at changing the division of work within families, i.e. at encouraging men to play a more active role as far as childcare and household chores.

In Italy and Friuli Venezia Giulia the unfair gendered division of work is also an issue, but luckily public authorities are aware of the situation and have launched the project “Ess.Er.Ci. Rewritten Social Contract” in order to tackle the problem.

As I have already said, Italy fares the worst among the analyzed countries as far as women’s life condition, in fact partly because of the strong influence of the Catholic Church in shaping people’s habits, the national legislation and policies according to traditional patriarchal relations, partly because of the very strong family and kin ties, it is still expected that the family (women) will take care of its members and act as the first provider of social services according to the so called “South European family care model”. As a consequence public childcare facilities have had a limited development and their opening times are not compatible with the mother’s full time employment, and the same holds true for the school system, whose schedules have been tailored on the model of the male breadwinner – housewife. Luckily women of the youngest cohorts show levels of interest and attachment to their job similar to those of their male
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colleagues, but on the average Italy records one of the lowest female employment rates of the European Union and is still far from reaching the level set by the European Union, and also as far as childcare attendance rate it is necessary to catch up. Such a need is highlighted also by the results of many surveys, included mine: Italian women do complain about the existing childcare system, its insufficient supply, its rigid schedules and its expenses fees. Italian women are also unsatisfied with their working schedule – one of the outcome of my interviews was indeed that women wished it were possible to have a flexible schedule, moreover in general they are unsatisfied with the current parental leave provisions and have proposed to introduce the entitlement to a (reversible) part time contract for the parent who takes care of children. Unfortunately such a wish bumps against a culture that has always looked with hostility at this kind of contract, and also against a legislation that makes it inconvenient for employers because of the relatively high taxation connected with it.

If it holds true that gender pay gaps in Italy are limited, on the contrary the level of segregation of the labour force (horizontal and vertical) is still quite high, at any rate at least the female employment rate has been recording an increasing trend so that although according to the official data still many families seem to adhere to the male breadwinner – housewife model (most of all in the South were unemployment represents a very hot issue), it can be said that also in Italy this model has been losing ground and has been progressively replaced by the model of the dual breadwinner couple. Unluckily for Italian women, their lives are increasingly characterized by the model of the double presence while very limited changes have occurred in the way household work is divided: in Italy more than in the other two countries gender relations in the private sphere are still pretty traditional and present patriarchal elements. The data about time use by men and women as well as the results of my survey give evidence for this fact, indeed all the interviewed women called themselves responsible for managing house and children, while men’s help – if any – is usually limited. Besides none of the women’s husbands has taken the facultative parental leave, thus confirming once again their limited involvement in the provision of reproductive work. In order to change this state of the art – as I have mentioned above – in Friuli Venezia Giulia the project “Ess.Er.Ci. Rewritten Social Contract” was launched, which included thematic seminars on different aspects of women’s life conditions, awareness raising campaigns about gender differences and a series of workshops. Other two very important programmes launched by the regional administration of Friuli Venezia Giulia are “Imprenderò” and “FUTURA – Servizi di pari opportunità”: the first aimed at supporting projects of self-entrepreneurship and had a session specifically dedicated to women;

369 Official data cannot take account of the informal sector, but as it has already been said, Italy has one of the most developed grey economy of the world.

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the second supplied specific groups of working women with significant care-workload with a set of vouchers to be used to pay for care services such as for the fee of a crèche, a child-minder, a maid etc.; the objective of the programme was to help women to reconcile their family and working (or educational) duties by relieving them from some workload or by contributing to cover the fee for a nest.

As a conclusion I want to say that the administrations of all the three analyzed areas got committed to the promotion of gender equality and are aware of the problems of reconcilement that women face every day, as well as of the fields were they may still suffer discriminative behaviours in connection with their current of prospect family duties. As I have already said, if the European Union wants to become the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based society it cannot afford to renounce to women’s skills and potentials, moreover it needs to encourage young couples to build up a family and have children, this is why on the one hand it has to be invested in family friendly measures, on the other hand reproductive work should be paid a higher social acknowledgment.

The year 2007 is the “European Year of Equal Opportunities for All”, in all its member states many awareness raising activities are organized in order to eradicate (among others) gender stereotypes and in order to promote gender equality, a fairer division of work and a new gender contract which takes distance from the old traditional patriarchal relations and sees the active participation and engagement of men and fathers into reproductive work. I hope that these activities will reach their target audiences and will be successful in getting across their message, so that at the end of this year, when it will be time for giving account of what has been done, the results will be satisfactory and it will be possible to assert that we have moved some steps further towards the realization of a more equal society.

\footnote{Only one husband asked for a temporary reduction of his working schedule.}
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ATTACHMENTS
THE QUESTIONNAIRES
INCHIESTA SULLA CONDIZIONE DELLA DONNA FRA FAMIGLIA E LAVORO
NELLA REGIONE ALPINO-ADRIATICA

Il campione é composto da madri di famiglia che lavorano presso l’azienda analizzata

VITA PROFESSIONALE E FAMILIARE

1. Per favore descriva la sua giornata tipo, dal momento in cui si sveglia a quello in cui va a dormire la sera (si prega di elencare le principali attività svolte – lavori di casa, tempo trascorso con i figli, cura della propria persona – possibilmente con i rispettivi orari)

2. Per favore descriva (se possibile facendo riferimento alla propria formazione/ educazione)
   i. il suo lavoro [compiti, responsabilità, orario, etc.];
   ii. come é giunta a questo posto di lavoro;
   iii. la sua carriera lavorativa.

3. Chi vive nel suo nucleo familiare? (marito/ compagno, figli, genitori, etc.)

4. Per favore descriva la professione di suo marito/ partner [compiti, responsabilità, orario, etc.]

5. Per favore descriva il modo in cui Lei e suo marito/ partner vi siete divisi le responsabilità e i lavori di casa, incluso la cura dei bambini (chi svolge attività come pulizie, lavare, stirare, cucinare, trasporto dei bambini, incontri con i loro educatori, riparazioni a casa e fuori, etc.).

6. Per favore descriva il modo in cui Lei e suo marito/ compagno vi siete organizzati per prendervi cura dei figli quando erano piccoli, fino a quando hanno iniziato ad andare a scuola. Si prega di indicare l’anno di nascita di ciascun figlio e l’eventuale uso di qualche forma di congedo e la sua durata [di maternità, paternità, parentale, congedo per malattia del bambino, astensione facoltativa]; avete forse avuto la possibilità di ottenere un part-time reversibile?

7. Chi é stato coinvolto nell’accudimento e nell’educazione dei figli [genitori, suoceri, babysitter, asili nido pubblici o privati, scuola materna] e in quale misura?

8. Vi siete mai sentite sovraccariche di lavoro, o che vi veniva richiesto di svolgere troppe attività? Per favore spiegate quando é successo, perché e come vi siete sentite. (Avete trovato/ trovate difficile riconciliare famiglia e lavoro?)

9. Per favore descriva la famiglia dei suoi genitori e la loro professione, chi svolgeva i lavori di casa, chi si prendeva cura di Lei e dei suoi fratelli/ sorelle (se presenti), con particolare attenzione al periodo della sua infanzia [riconciliabilità fra cura dei bambini e lavoro].

10. Per quello che ne sa, che opinione avevano/ hanno i suoi genitori circa il ruolo che la donna deve ricoprire all’interno della famiglia e nella società? I suoi genitori l’hanno sostenuta negli studi?
11. Se genitori e suoceri sono ancora in vita, quanto spesso li vede? Per favore specifichi se è più Lei che fa loro visita o l’ inverso, e se è lei che li deve accudire o se sono loro che in qualche modo la aiutano ad esempio passando tempo con i suoi figli o svolgendo dei lavori per lei.

12. Come si immagina la sua vita fra 10 anni?

LA PROPRIA VITA E LA QUESTIONE DELL’UGUAGLIANZA DI GENERE

13. È soddisfatta della propria vita [familiare, lavorativa, reddito, (uso del) tempo libero disponibile] o desidererebbe che alcune cose fossero differenti?

14. Ha mai avuto la sensazione che nel suo Paese in qualche modo le donne non siano trattate correttamente in quanto sono donne? In quali circostanze?

15. Ha mai avuto l’impressione di non essere stata trattata correttamente in quanto donna? Se si, per favore descriva le circostanze in cui ciò è avvenuto, la scorrettezza subita, come si è sentita e come ha reagito.

16. Ha mai avuto a che fare con immagini stereotipate della donna?

17. Fino a poco tempo fa la nostra società era incardinata sul principio di una divisione di genere del lavoro, sia all’interno che all’esterno della famiglia; secondo lei quale ruolo dovrebbe ricoprire oggi giorno la donna nella famiglia e nella società? [se possibile faccia una distinzione far donna single, sposata o convivente senza figli, madre].

18. È d’accordo o non è d’accordo con le seguenti affermazioni circa le donne/ madri [le possibili risposte sono: sono (pienamente) d’accordo/ non so/ non sono d’accordo (per niente)]:
   1. Una madre che lavora può stabilire con i suoi figli un rapporto affettuoso e profondo allo stesso modo di una madre che non lavora.
   2. È probabile che un bambino in età pre-scolare soffra se la sua mamma lavora.
   3. In generale, la vita di una famiglia soffre se la madre lavora a tempo pieno.
   4. Avere un lavoro va bene, ma la cosa più importante per una donna sono la casa e i bambini.
   5. Avere un lavoro è il modo migliore per una donna per essere indipendente.

OPINIONE E IMPEGNO DEL GOVERNO E DELL’AZIENDA IN TEMA DI UGUAGLIANZA DI GENERE E DI MISURE A FAVORE DELLA FAMIGLIA

19. Come valuta le disposizioni vigenti per i congedi parentali (durata, copertura finanziaria)?

20. Come giudica le istituzioni che accudiscono i bambini in età prescolare? Si prega di motivare la risposta.

21. Secondo Lei la società italiana pone la famiglia al centro delle sue attenzioni? Si prega di motivare la risposta. [Ritiene che finora il governo italiano si sia impegnato ad aiutare i genitori a riconciliare vita familiare e professionale?]
Gender inequalities and social conditions of employed women in the Alps-Adriatic region

22. Cosa sa e come valuta quello che il governo (nazionale e regionale) ha fatto per eliminare le disparità di genere e promuovere pari opportunità fra uomo e donna?

23. Pensa che ci siano delle aree specifiche in cui il governo dovrebbe intervenire maggiormente in favore dell’uguaglianza di genere? Quali?

24. Il suo datore di lavoro le mette a disposizione dei servizi per l’infanzia, o dà ai genitori la possibilità di avere orari di lavoro più flessibili visti i loro impegni familiari, o in qualche altro modo viene incontro alle loro esigenze? [ci sono forse borse di studio per i figli dei dipendenti, o vengono organizzati o in parte finanziati soggiorni estivi per i bambini, etc.?]. Per favore descriva la situazione.

25. Per quello che ne sa, qual è la politica dell’azienda in tema di promozioni e avanzamenti di carriera? [per esempio le promozioni sono connesse al raggiungimento di obiettivi precedentemente concordati; ci sono programmi di mentoring, etc.].

26. Secondo Lei l’azienda in cui lavora ha a cuore il tema delle pari opportunità? Sa per caso dell’esistenza di misure positive per promuovere una più bilanciata presenza di uomini e donne ai diversi livelli gerarchici dell’azienda?

DATI PERSONALI

27. Anno di nascita:   |__|__|__|__|

28. Stato civile:
   1. single
   2. sposata
   3. vedova
   4. separata/ divorziata
   5. convivente

29. Titolo di studio:
   1. scuola media
   2. scuola professionale
   3. maturità
   4. corso professionale post-maturità
   5. laurea
   6. altro: ……………………..


31. Si ritiene una persona religiosa? Quanto spesso partecipa alle funzioni religiose?

32. Come si immagina l’Unione Europea in 10 anni? Quali sono i suoi desideri e le sue aspettative al riguardo?

Grazie mille per aver partecipato alla ricerca!

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UMFRAGE ZU FRAUEN IN BERUF UND ARBEITSWELT IM ALPEN-ADRIA RAUM

Auswahl: Weibliche Angestellte des Unternehmens mit Kindern

BERUFLICHES UND FAMILIÄRES LEBEN

1. Bitte beschreiben Sie Ihren typischen Tag, vom Aufstehen bis Sie wieder ins Bett gehen (bitte nennen Sie, wenn möglich mit Zeitangabe, Ihre wichtigsten Aktivitäten, z.B. Kinderbetreuung, Hausarbeiten, Pflege der eigenen Person).

2. Bitte beschreiben Sie - wenn möglich mit Hinweise auf Ihre Ausbildung -
   a) Ihren Beruf [Aufgaben, Verantwortlichkeiten, Zeitplan etc.];
   b) Wie Sie zu diesem Beruf gekommen sind;
   c) Ihre berufliche Karriere.

3. Wer wohnt in Ihrem Haushalt? (Ehemann/Partner, Kinder, Eltern, etc.)

4. Bitte beschreiben Sie den Beruf Ihres Ehemannes/Partners, wenn vorhanden [Aufgaben, Verantwortlichkeiten, Zeitplan, etc]

5. Bitte beschreiben Sie, welche Vereinbarungen Sie und Ihr Ehemann/Partner bezüglich der Teilung von Haushaltsaufgaben und Verantwortlichkeiten, inklusive Kinderbetreuung, getroffen haben (Putzen, Kochen, Bügeln, Kindertransport, Erziehung, Reparaturen zu Hause, etc).

6. Bitte beschreiben Sie, wie Sie und Ihr Ehemann/Partner sich bezüglich der Kinderbetreuung organisiert haben, bevor die Kinder in die Grundschule gegangen sind. Bitte geben Sie für jedes Kind an, wann es geboren wurde und, ob und welche Form Karenz in Anspruch genommen worden ist und wie lange [für die Mutter, Vater, Eltern, bzw. Eltern von kranken Kindern], und ob Sie die Gelegenheit gehabt haben, zu einer reversiblen Teilzeit zu wechseln.

7. Wer hat bei Kindererziehung bzw. Kinderbetreuung mitgeholpen? [Eltern, Schwiegereltern, Babysitter, Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen, Horten, etc]. In welchem Masse?

8. Ist es Ihnen vielleicht passiert, dass Sie sich überfordert oder überlastet gefühlt haben? Bitte beschreiben Sie, wann und unter welchen Umständen es der Fall gewesen ist. (Fällt es Ihnen schwer Familie und Beruf zu vereinbaren?)

9. Bitte beschreiben Sie die Familie Ihrer Eltern. Welchen Beruf die Eltern hatten, und wie sie sich die Arbeit zu Hause (Haushalt, Kinder) geteilt haben, vor allem als Sie noch klein waren [Vereinbarkeit von Kinderbetreuung und Arbeit]

10. Wenn Sie sich erinnern können, was war die Meinung Ihrer Eltern bezüglich der Rolle der Frau in der Familie und in der Gesellschaft? Haben sie Sie bei Ihrem Studium bzw. Ausbildung unterstützt?

11. Wenn Eltern und Schwiegereltern noch leben, wie oft sehen Sie sie oder besuchen Sie sie und umgekehrt? Bitte geben Sie an, ob es mehr darum geht, dass Sie für sie sorgen oder

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... ob sie für Sie hilfreich sind [z.B. sie passen auf Ihre Kinder auf oder helfen Ihnen bei Hausarbeiten].

12. Wie stellen Sie sich vor, dass Ihr Leben in 10 Jahre Zeit sein wird?

EIGENES LEBEN UND FRAGEN DER GESCHLECHTERGLEICHHEIT

13. Sind Sie mit Ihrem Leben zufrieden? [Familienleben, Beruf, Einkommen, Verfügbarkeit von Freizeit]? Oder wünschen Sie manchmal, dass manche Dinge anders wären?

14. Haben Sie vielleicht manchmal den Eindruck, dass Frauen in Ihrem Land irgendwie nicht wirklich gerecht behandelt werden oder wurden, weil Sie Frauen sind? Unter welchen Umständen ist/war das der Fall?

15. Haben Sie vielleicht manchmal den Eindruck, dass Sie nicht wirklich gerecht behandelt werden, weil Sie eine Frau sind? Wenn ja, bitte beschreiben Sie unter welchen Umständen, wie Sie sich dabei fühlen und darauf reagiert. Schildern Sie ein konkretes Ereignis?

16. Ist es Ihnen irgendwann passiert, dass Sie auf Stereotypen über Frauen gestoßen sind? Was für Stereotype?

17. Bis vor nicht so langer Zeit war unsere Gesellschaft nach dem Prinzip einer geschlechterspezifischen Arbeitsteilung organisiert, sowohl in der Familie als auch außerhalb; nach Ihrer Meinung, welche Rolle sollte heutzutage eine Frau in der Familie und in der Gesellschaft übernehmen? [wenn möglich, bitte unterscheiden Sie zwischen dem Status von lediger Frau, kinderloser Frau und Mutter].

18. Sind Sie einverstanden oder nicht mit den folgenden Stellungnahmen über Frauen/ Müttern (mögliche Antworten: stimme (völlig) zu, weder/ noch, stimme (gar) nicht zu):
   a) Eine erwerbstätige Mutter kann mit ihrem Kind eine solche warme und feste Beziehung entwickeln wie eine erwerbslose Mutter.
   7. Im allgemein, wenn die Frau Vollzeit erwerbstätig ist, wird es dem familiären Wohl schaden.
   8. Einen Job zu haben ist in Ordnung, aber eigentlich streben Frauen nach einem Haus und Kinder.
   9. Einen Job zu haben stellt die beste Weise für eine Frau dar, unabhängig zu sein/ werden.

EINSTELLUNG UND VERPFLICHTUNG DER REGIERUNG UND DER FIRMA GEGENÜBER GLEICHBERECHTIGUNGS- UND FAMILIENFREUNDLICHEN MASSNAHMEN

19. Was ist Ihre Meinung über die laufenden Karenzregelungen?

20. Wie würden Sie die derzeitigen Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen und deren Kapazität einschätzen? Wie so?

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22. Was wissen Sie über Regierungsinitiativen gegen geschlechtsspezifische Ungleichheiten und mehr Chancengleichheit? Wie würden Sie diese Tätigkeiten bewerten?

23. Ihrer Meinung nach, gibt es noch irgendwelche Bereiche, wo die Regierung sich mehr einsetzen sollte, um Gleichberechtigung zu erreichen? Welche?

24. Stellt Ihr Arbeitgeber Ihnen Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen zur Verfügung, oder haben Eltern Anspruch auf einen flexiblen Arbeitszeitplan, oder werden ihre Lage und die sich ergebenden Bedürfnisse unter spezifische Berücksichtigung genommen? [z.B. gibt es Stipendien für Schüler bzw. Studierende, oder werden Sommerferien für Kinder veranstaltet bzw. finanziert, etc]. Bitte beschreiben Sie die gegebene Lage.

25. So weit Sie wissen, welche ist die Konzernpolitik bezüglich Förderungschancen und Karrierechancen? [d.h. Lohn oder Beförderung mit der Erreichung von bestimmten Zielen verbunden; Mentoringsprogramme, etc].


PERSONLICHE DATEN

27. Geburtsdatum? [___|___|___]

28. Familienstand:
   1. ledig
   2. verheiratet
   3. verwitwet
   4. geschieden/ getrennt
   6. mit Partner zusammenlebend

29. Welche Ausbildung haben Sie abgeschlossen?
   7. Hauptschule
   2. Gymnasium
   3. Berufliche Schule
   4. Lehramt
   5. Lehre
   6. Universität/ Fachhochschule
   7. Sonstiges: .........................

30. Wo leben Sie? (Stadt, am Stadtrand, Dorf).

31. Verstehen Sie sich als eine religiöse Person? Wie oft gehen Sie zur Kirche bzw. besuchen Sie die Messe?

32. Wie stellen Sie sich die Zukunft der EU - sagen wir – in 10 Jahre dar? Welche sind Ihre Wünsche und / oder Erwartungen darüber?

Vielen Dank fürs Mitmachen!

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Vzorec sestavljajo ženske – matere, ki so zaposlene pri raziskovalnem podjetju

POKLICNO IN DRUŽINSKO ŽIVLJENJE

3. Prosim opišite svoj tipičen dan, od časa, ko vstanete, do večera, ko greste spat (prosim navedite najpomembnejše dejavnosti, in po možnosti navedite čas, ki ga običajno namenjate otroku/omi, gospodinjskim opravilom in zase).

2. Prosim opišite (po možnosti glede na vašo izobrazbo):
   i. svoje delovno mesto [naloge, odgovornosti, delovni urnik, itd.];
   ii. kako ste prišli do tega delovnega mesta;
   iii. svojo poklicno kariero.

33. Kdo živi v vašem gospodinjstvu - družini? (mož/ partner, otroci, starši, itd.)

34. Prosim opišite poklic - zaposlitev vašega moža/partnerja [naloge, odgovornosti, delovni urnik, itd.].

35. Prosim opišite, kako si vi in vaš mož/partner delite gospodinjske in družinske naloge in odgovornosti, vključno z nego otrok/a (kdo večinoma čisti, kuha, lika, prevaža otrok/e; opravlja manjša popravila v stanovanju/hiši, itd.).

36. Prosim opišite, kako sta si z možem/partnerjem organizirala nego in varstvo otrok/e pred vstopom v šolo. Prosim, navedite rojstno leto (vsakega) otrok/a in kakšno obliko dopusta ste izkoristili ter za koliko časa (porodniški, očetovski dopust, dopust za nego, bolniški dopust); ali ste imeli priložnost delati skrajšani (delni) delovni čas.

37. Vam je pri varstvu in vzgoji otrok kdo pomagal (starši, tata, tašča, varuška, vrtec, dnevno varstvo, itd.) in v kakšnem obsegu?

38. Ali je vam morda zgodilo, da ste se počutili preobremenjeni, ali da so drugi od vas preveč pričakovali? Prosim opišite, kdaj in v kakšnih okoliščinah se je to (z)godilo (ali težko usklajujete družinske in poklicne obveznosti?).

39. Prosim opišite družino vaših staršev, ko ste bili majhnii: kakšne poklice so imeli, in predvsem, kako so bila razdeljena gospodinjska (domača) opravila in odgovornosti ter nega in varstvo otrok/a [usklajevanje dela in negovanja].

40. Morda poznate, kakšno mnenje so imeli vaši starši o vlogi žene/ženske v družini in v družbi? Ali so vas podpirali v vašem izobraževanju oziroma študiju?

41. Če so vaši starši in tata in tašča še živi, kako pogosto jih videvate ali obiskujete? Prosim pojasnite, ali jih pogosteje obiskujete vi, ali narobe, in ali vi skrbite za njih ali pa pomagajo oni vam [na primer pri varstvu otrok ali pri kakšnem gospodinjskem delu].

42. Kako si predstavljate svoje življenje čez deset let?

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STALIŠČA O SVOJEM ŽIVLJENJU IN O ENAKOPRAVNOSTI SPOLOV

43. A ste zadovoljni s svojim življenjem [družina, zaposlitev, dohodek, izraba prostega časa]? Ali si želite, da bi bile nekatere stvari drugačne?

44. A ste kaj dobili občutek (ste zaznali), da ženske nekako niso pravično obravnavane zato, ker so ženske? V kakšnih okoliščinah?

45. A ste zaradi tega, ker ste ženska, imeli kdaj občutek, da z vami niso ravnali pravično? Če da, prosim opišite, v kakšnih okoliščinah se je to zgodilo, kaj je bilo po vašem mnenju narobe, kako ste se počutili in kako ste reagirali?

46. A ste kdaj natereli na stereotipne podobe žensk?

47. Do nedavnega je bila družba organizirana po načelu delitve dela med spoloma, tako v družini kot v širši družbi; kakšno vlogo naj bi po vašem mnenju imela ženska sedaj v družini in v družbi? [po možnosti razlikujete med ženskami, ki so brez otrokov - samse ali partnerice in tistimi, ki imajo otroke, so materi].

48. Kako se strinjate z naslednjimi stališči ženskah/materah (možni odgovori so: popolnoma se strinjam; - strinjam se; - ne morem se odločiti, ne vem; - ne strinjam se; - v celoti se ne strinjam):
   10. Zaposlena mati lahko ustvari ravno tako varen in topel odnos s svojim/i otrokom/ki kot mati, ki ni zaposlena.
   11. Predšolski otrok bo zelo verjetno trpel, če je mati zaposlena
   12. Če gledamo v celoti, družinsko življenje trpi, kadar je žena polno zaposlena
   13. Je v redu, če je ženska zaposlena, toda tisto, kar si ženske najbolj želijo, so dom in otroci.

MNENJE O ZADRŽANJU IN PRIVRŽENOSTI (SLOVENSKE) VLADE IN PODJETJA GLEDE SPODBUJANJA ENAKOPRAVNOSTI SPOLOV IN DRUŽINAM PRIJAZNE DRUŽBE

49. Kaj mislite o sedanji zakonski ureditvi porodniškega in starševskega (materinega in očetovskega) dopustu, in o dopustu za nego otroka? (trajanje in nadomestilo dohodka).

50. Kako ocenjujete dostopne zmogljivosti vrtcev? Zakaj?

51. Mislite, da je slovenska družba nasploh prijazna do družine? Prosim pojasnite, zakaj menite tako. [mislite, da je sedanja vlada privržena temu, da bi pomagala staršem pri usklajevanju družine in zaposlitve?].

52. Kaj poznate in kako ocenjujete to, kar sedanja vlada dejansko dela, da bi odpravila neenakopravnost med spoloma, in da bi uveljavila enake možnosti moških in žensk?

53. Ali so po vašem mnenju kakšna posebna področja dejavnosti, na katerih bi vlada morala več storiti za doseganje enakosti/enakopravnosti med spoloma? Katera področja so to?

54. A vam vaš delodajalec nudi kakšno obliko pomoči za otroke ali vam kot roditeljem omogoča bolj prožen (fleksibilen) delovni čas, ali staršem kako drugače pomaga? [na primer nudi
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otrokom uslužbencev štipendije, ali organizira za njih poletne tečaje in tabore za otroke, itd.]
Prosim, opišite stanje.

55. Ali poznate, kakšna je politika vašega podjetja glede možnosti napredovanja in kariere? [i.e. plača in napredovanje sta povezani z dosego nekih dogovorjenih ciljev; ali so na razpolago mentorski načrti izobraževanja, itd.]?

56. A menite, da je vaše podjetje privrženo pospeševanju enakopravnosti spolov? A ste kaj slišali o kakšnem pozitivnem ukrepu, ki naj bi spodbujal bolj uravnoteženo navzočnost moških in žensk na različnih hierarhičnih nivojih znotraj podjetja?

OSEBNI PODATKI

57. Kdaj ste rojeni? |__|__|__|__|

58. Zakonski stan:
1. samska
2. poročena
7. vdova:
8. razvezana
9. partnerka (partnerska skupnost)

59. Najvišja šolska izobrazba:
8. srednja šola
2. višja šola
3. diploma na univerzi
4. specializacija, magisterij
5. drugo: .........................

60. Kje živite? (v mestu, v okolici, na vasi).

61. A ste verni (religiozni)? Kako pogosto hodite k maši?

62. Kako si predstavljate Evropsko Unijo čez deset let?

Najlepša hvala za sodelovanje v anketiranju!
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