

Men and equality



INSTITUTE
FOR THE EQUALITY
OF WOMEN
AND MEN





Men and equality

Conference proceedings

Men and change:

the role of men in equality between men and women (9-10 September 2005)

Working together on equality:

men as bearers of change? (7 March 2006)

Violence: a men's affair!

the role of men in preventing and ending violence (7 April 2006)



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Introduction^{1*}

Since the 1960s, society has progressively evolved towards more gender equality, but at the start of the 21st century, this evolution is not yet complete. Firstly, attention has been especially focussed on women: women's movements campaigning for equal rights for women and men; (positive) actions and legislation have been developed to put an end to the discrimination suffered by women; "women's studies" aimed at contributing to the emancipation of women from a scientific point of view, and so on. Men have often remained uninvolved in this process.

There have been some changes recently. The constructions of femininity and masculinity have been studied in gender studies, and "men's studies" have become a discipline in their own right that deals specifically with men. Movements devoting themselves to the rights and status in society of men have emerged on the ground. In politics, measures benefiting men have been developed, such as paternity leave, career breaks and the reduction of working hours. The attention has shifted from the emancipation of women towards the equality of women and men. In Belgium this has been reflected by the changing of the title of the competent minister and department.

This evolution is a logical consequence of the fact that changes occurring in society, and, more specifically, changes concerning the status of women in society, also influence men and masculinity. Men have had to, when they have not been forced to do so, adapt to the new configuration of the employment market, the family, decision-making, education and society in general.

But men are by no means passive actors of change; they have themselves supported these changes and have worked actively on them. Convinced that gender equality is beneficial to everyone, men have for centuries engaged in the fight for equal opportunities and rights. Let us cite as examples the Belgians Louis Frank, Henri La Fontaine, Willy Peers, Guy Cudell and Pierre Vermeylen.²

The fundamental importance of the involvement of men in the realisation of changes in status, attitudes, roles and (power) relations, and to achieving gender equality, is emphasised in the international context. In the Beijing Declaration, adopted during the Fourth World Conference on Women (4-15 September 1995), the international community undertook to encourage men to take part in all measures aimed at achieving equality. The role of men and boys in achieving equality had a central place at the 48th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (1-12 March 2004). The progress in the implementation of the conclusions on this subject will be assessed at the 51st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (26 February - 9 March 2007).³

The Council of Europe has, for some years, paid specific attention to the theme of men and gender equality. The starting point is that progress in gender equality requires a dialogue between men and women, as well as the sharing of responsibilities both from a private and public point of view. At the same time, emphasis is placed on the fact that important social problems, such as violence towards women, can only be resolved if men take responsibility for their own actions.⁴

In the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010, which was launched in March 2006 by the European Commission, the articulation of professional life and private life was presented as one of the six priori-

1 * The articles in this publication were previously published in Dutch and French in 2007.

2 The biographies of sixteen key male figures who played a role in the fight for gender equality in Belgium can be found in the *Dictionnaire des femmes belges*, published recently. Cf. Gubin, E. et al. (eds) (2006). *Dictionnaire des femmes belges XIXe et XXe siècles*, Brussels: Racine.

3 For more information, see: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/

4 For more information, see: www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/equality

ties for European measures in the area of gender equality. In this context, it is emphasised that men should be encouraged to take on family tasks, by among other means motivating them to take their paternity leave and to share leave entitlement with women.⁵

Three conferences concerning the role of men in equality and change

In 2005-2006, the Institute for the equality of women and men co-organised three conferences dealing with the involvement of men in gender equality.

On 9 and 10 September 2005, two study days entitled *Men and change: the role of men in equality between men and women* took place on 9 and 10 September 2005, focusing on masculine identity and the changes it has undergone, both in private relations and in public life, under the influence of egalitarian demands. These study days were part of local equal opportunities policy and were co-organised by the Administration of Local Authorities of the Ministry for the Brussels-Capital Region and the Alderman for Equal Opportunities of the City of Brussels.

On 7 March 2006, on the initiative of Mr Christian Dupont, Minister of Equal Opportunities, the Institute for the equality of women and men organised the *Working together on equality: men as bearers of change?* conference. Two central questions were tackled there: "How do social changes influence (the status of) men and how do men react to this?" and "How can men be involved in change in a positive way or how can they participate in the realisation of a more equal society?"

The first session was focused on the articulation of professional life and private life and on the question of how, by means of legislation, policy measures and actions, and specific initiatives within organisations, an alternative reconciliation can be encouraged for men. The second session examined why it is essential that men are involved in change and equality, how such a contribution can be stimulated and which steps have to be taken to achieve a new, equal society for women and men, in collaboration with women and men. The conference closed with a lecture by Michael Kimmel, an internationally renowned expert in the field of "men's studies".

In his conclusions on the conference, Minister Christian Dupont presented the Charter of "Men for the Equality of Women and Men". In this charter, men commit themselves to actively collaborating with women for the promotion of the equality of women and men, political and social parity, professional equality and a better articulation of all areas of life. You will find the full text of the charter at the end of this publication.

On 7 April 2006, also on the initiative of Minister Christian Dupont, a conference took place entitled *Violence: a men's affair! The role of men in preventing and ending violence*. The focus of this conference concerned the causes of violence, the importance of involving men in the prevention and handling of violence, and actions against violence developed by men themselves. In the afternoon, Michael Kaufman, founder of the White Ribbon Campaign, hosted an interactive workshop on the development of effective strategies to prevent and eradicate violence committed by men. It addressed two themes: the development of an appropriate framework for involving men in the promotion of gender equality and in the prevention of violence committed against women, and the development of concrete action plans and campaigns.

A publication concerning men and equality

The Institute for the equality of women and men has taken the initiative of collecting and publishing the presentations of the different speakers in order to make the expertise developed available to the general public. It is a unique publication for Belgium, in which the contributions of Belgian researchers and international experts are gathered together.

This publication has been put together according to four main areas. The first part contains contributions that deal with (the possibility and the need for) the commitment of men to gender equality. Michael Kimmel and Jeff Hearn set out the (possible) motives that drive men to get involved in gender equality. Sophie Pioro and Martine Corbière set out the results of a European study on men's resistance to change regarding gender equality.

Next, there is a focus on three specific areas. Concerning the *Identity, representation and stereotypes* theme, Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi and Fabrice Buschini examine the influence of male and female stereotypes on attitude to positive discrimination measures. Pascale Jamouille provides a view of the transformation of the figure of men and fathers in lower income neighbourhoods.

⁵ For more information, see: ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/index_fr.html

The *articulation of private life and professional life*, which is one of the priorities in the issue of gender equality, constitutes the central theme of six contributions. Hugo Swinnen argues for domestic care and tasks to become neutral from the point of view of gender, which would enable women to participate in paid work. In her contribution, Suzana Koelet searches for explanations enabling an understanding of the unequal division of domestic tasks that persists in families. Jessie Vandeweyer and Ignace Glorieux analyse the time use of men on a partial or full career break, while Laura Merla focuses on the “father at home” role. Françoise Goffinet, Laure Lantier and Veerle Pasmans argue for the introduction of concrete measures that, on the one hand, stimulate and facilitate the participation and maintenance in, and return of women to the employment market, and on the other hand, guarantee the participation in its own right of men in domestic and family responsibilities. Finally, Fabienne Bister explains the pursuit of a realistic balance between private life and professional life, from her own point of view as the head of a company.

As for Michael Kaufman, in his contribution he presents a number of theoretical considerations relating to *violence* committed by men. Nico van Oosten and Christian Anglada introduce the prevention of male violence and the handling of the perpetrators starting with their professional environment. Roland Mayerl presents some European projects concerning the fight against violence committed against women. One of these projects, the White Ribbon Campaign, is dealt with in greater detail by Daniël Bollen for the province of Limburg, and René Begon does the same for the provinces of Liège and Luxembourg.

In annex you will find a list of the participants in the three conferences, the introductory and closing addresses from Bruno De Lille, former Alderman for Equal Opportunities of the City of Brussels, Gratia Pungu, from the Administration of Local Authorities of the Ministry for the Brussels-Capital Region and Christian Dupont, Minister of Equal Opportunities, as well as the Charter of “Men for the Equality of Women and Men”.

We wish you pleasant reading.

Michel Pasteel
Director of the Institute for the equality of women and men

October 2009

The role of men in gender equality

Gender equality: not just for women

Michael S. Kimmel

On 8 March 2006, it was 95 years since the first official International Women's Day took place in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, through the impetus of the great German feminist Clara Zetkin, who wanted a single day to commemorate the 1857 strike of American garment workers, which led to the formation of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. On 19 March 1911 – the date has changed since then – more than a million women and men rallied to demand the right to work, to hold public office and to vote.

Think of all the changes that have already taken place in 95 years! In most, if not all European countries today, women have obtained the right to vote, to own property in their own name, to divorce, to work in every profession, to join the military, to retain sovereignty over their bodies, to challenge men's presumed "right" to sexual access once married, or on a date or in the workplace.

Indeed, the women's movement is one of the great success stories of the 20th century and perhaps of any century. It is the story of the complete and radical transformation of the lives of more than half the population. But what about the other half?

Today, the movement for women's equality remains stymied, stalled. Women continue to experience discrimination in the public sphere. They come up against glass ceilings in the workplace and are harassed and confronted by less-than-fully welcoming environments in public institutions. They still must fight to retain sovereignty over their bodies and to end their victimisation through rape, domestic violence, and trafficking in women.

I believe that the reason that the movement for women's equality remains only a partial victory has to do with men. In every arena – be it politics, the military, the workplace, access to professions and education – the single greatest obstacle to women's equality is the behaviours and attitudes of men.

I am convinced that changes among men are the next phase of the movement for women's equality – that changes among men are vital if women are to achieve full equality. Men must understand that gender equality is also in their interests – as men.

This great movement for equality has already begun to notice that men must be involved in the transformation. The Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing in 1995 says: "The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue."

Four years later, in a fact sheet entitled Men and Equality, the Swedish Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications put it this way: "Traditionally, gender equality issues have been the concern of women. Very few men have been involved in work to achieve equality. However, if equality is to become a reality in all areas of society, a genuine desire for change and active participation in the part of both women and men are called for."

But why should men participate in the movement for equal opportunities? Simply put, I believe that these changes among men will actually benefit men; that gender equality is not a loss for men, but a very positive evolution that will enable us to live the kind of life we say we aspire to.

In order to make this case, I will begin by pointing to several arenas in which women have caused radical changes during the course of the last fifty years and suggest some consequences I believe men are facing as a result.

First of all, women have put the issue of gender on the agenda. Women have demonstrated the centrality of gender in social life; in the past two decades, sex has joined race and class as the three primordial axes around which social life is organised; it has become one of the primary building blocks of identity.

This is, today, so obvious that it hardly needs mentioning. Parliaments have committees for equal opportunities and

the Scandinavian countries even appoint Ministers responsible for this portfolio. Every American university has a chair of study of the sociological, historical and literary roles of women. But we all too easily forget how recent this all is. The first chair of this type in the world was opened in 1972.

Second, women have transformed the workplace. Women are there to stay. They represent almost half of the labour force. I often illustrate this evolution to my students by asking the women who intend to have careers to raise their hands. They all raise their hands. Then I ask them to keep their hands raised if their mothers have worked outside the home for more than ten years without an interruption. Half of the hands are lowered. Finally, I ask them to still keep their hands raised if their grandmothers occupied a job for ten years. Virtually no hands left in the air. In three generations, my students can clearly see the difference in women's working lives.

Just 40 years ago, in 1960, only about 40% of European adult women of working age were in the employment market; only Austria and Sweden had a majority who were working. In 1994, only in Italy, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg and Spain were the majority of women concerned not working, and the European average had nearly doubled.

This leads us to the third area of change in women's lives: the reconciliation of professional life and family life. Once upon a time, not so long ago, women were forced to choose between their career and their family. However, at the start of the 1970s, women began to show increasing reluctance to make this choice. They wanted both. The question of whether a woman could have everything was at the heart of the debate during the past twenty years. Could a woman have a glamorous and rewarding career, and have a loving family?

The answer, of course, was "no". Women could not have everything because... men did. Men led enriching careers outside the home and the loving family to come home to afterwards. So if women want to have it all, that means that men are going to have to share housework and childcare. Women have begun to question the "double working day", with the housework that has traditionally been their responsibility and which awaited them at the end of their working day.

Finally, women have transformed the sexual landscape. As the dust is settling from the sexual revolution, what emerges in unmistakably finer detail is that it is women, not men, who are our era's real sexual pioneers. Women now feel empowered to claim their sexual desire. Women are permitting themselves to like sex, to want it and to seek it. Women feel entitled to experience pleasure. They have learned to say yes to their own desires, claiming, in the process, their sexual emancipation.

And men? What has been happening with men while women's lives were changing so utterly and radically? To be frank, not very much. Sure, some men have changed a little but most men have not undergone a comparable revolution. This is, in my opinion, the main reason that so many men are so confused about the meaning of masculinity these days.

In a sense, of course, our lives have changed radically. I think back to the world of my father's generation. In the middle of the 1970s, my father could go to an all-male university, do his military service in an all-male military and spend his entire career in a virtually all-male environment. That world has completely disappeared.

So our lives have changed. But what have men done to prepare for this completely different world? Very little. Our ideas about what it means to be a man have not changed. The ideology of masculinity has remained relatively intact for the past three generations. That is where men are today: our lives have completely changed but our definitions of what it means to be a man remain locked in a pattern set decades ago, when the world was very different.

What is that traditional ideology of masculinity? In the mid-1970s, an American psychologist offered what he called the four basic rules of masculinity:

1. "No sissy stuff" – Masculinity is based on the categorical rejection of everything that is feminine. Being a man is never being a sissy.
2. "Be a big wheel" – Masculinity is measured by the size of your salary. Wealth, power and status are all markers of masculinity. As an American bumper sticker put it "He who has the most toys when he dies, wins."
3. "Be a sturdy oak" – What makes a man a man, is that he is reliable in a crisis. And what makes him reliable in a crisis is that he resembles an inanimate object: a rock, a pillar or a tree.
4. "Give 'em hell" – Exude daring and aggression. Take risks; live life on the edge. Go for it.

The past decade has seen men bumping up against the limitations of that traditional definition, but without really knowing where to turn to look for other solutions. We chafe against the edges of traditional masculinity, but seem unable or unwilling to break out of the constraints that the four rules I mentioned impose on us. Thus the defensive-

ness, the anger and the confusion that we observe everywhere.

These limitations will become most visible in the four areas in which women have changed most: the placement of the gender issue on the agenda, the workplace, the reconciliation between professional life and family life, and sexuality. They suggest the issues that must be placed on the agenda for men and the blueprint for a new masculinity.

Let me pair up those four rules of manhood with the four arenas of change in women's lives and suggest some of the issues I believe that today's world is facing.

First of all, though we now know that gender is a central axis around which social life revolves, most men do not know they are gendered beings. Courses on gender are still mostly taken by women. The works devoted to the role of women that adorn all university recommended reading lists still have many more female readers than male readers.

I often tell an anecdote about a conversation I heard at a feminist seminar that I participated in about ten years ago. A white woman was explaining to a black woman how their common experience of the oppression of the patriarchal system bound them together as sisters. All women, she said, had the same experience as women. The black woman did not seem prepared to let herself be persuaded easily. "When you wake up in the morning and look in the mirror," she asked the white woman, "what do you see?" "I see a woman" responded the white woman hopefully. "That is the problem", responded the black woman. "I see a black woman. To me race is visible, because it is why I am not privileged in society. Because you are privileged by your race, it is invisible to you. It is a luxury, a privilege not to have to think about your race every second of your life."

I groaned, embarrassed. And when, as the only man in the room, all eyes turned to me, I confessed: "When I wake up in the morning and look in the mirror, I see a human being, a generic person. As a middle class white man, I have no class, no race and no gender. I am universally generalisable. I am Everyman."

Lately, I have come to think that it was on that day in 1980 that I became a middle class white man, that these categories actually became operative to me. The privilege of privilege is that the terms of privilege are rendered invisible. It is a luxury not having to think about race, class or gender. People who are marginalised because of the category to which they belong only understand the power of that category when it is deployed against them.

Let me give you another example illustrating how privilege is invisible to the eyes of those who benefit from it. Many of you have e-mail addresses and you send messages to people all over the world. You have probably already noticed that there is one big difference between American e-mail addresses and those of other countries: your addresses end with a "country code". For example, if you write to a South African person, you add "za" at the end of the address, "jp" for Japan, "uk" for the United Kingdom and "de" for Germany (Deutschland). But when you write to an acquaintance in the United States, the e-mail address ends in "edu" if they work in education, "org" for an organisation, "gov" for a federal government office and "com" or "net" for commercial Internet providers. But never "us". Why not? Why is it that the United States does not have a country code?

The reason is that when you are the dominant power in the world, everyone else needs to be named. When you are "in power", you need not draw attention to yourself as a specific entity, but, rather, you can claim to be generic, universal and generalisable. From the point of view of the United States, all other countries are "the others" and thus need to be named, marked and identified. Once again, privilege is invisible. In the world of the Internet, as Michael Jackson sang, "We are the world".

Becoming aware of ourselves as gendered, recognising the power of gender as a shaping influence on our lives, is made more difficult by the first rule of masculinity: "No sissy stuff". The incessant effort by boys and men to prove that they are "real men", and not effeminate, weak or gay, is a dominant theme, particularly among boys. As long as there is no adequate mechanism that enables men to experience a secure, confident and safe sense of themselves as men, we develop our own methods of "proof". One of the central themes I discovered in my book *Manhood in America* was the way that masculinity for Americans became a relentless test, a constant interminable demonstration.

My recent studies on the "gendered" nature of the resurgence of far-right neo-Nazi skinhead movements – which gather together boys and young men – has revealed that these movements are fuelled by this desire to prove their masculinity by denying it to "others" – Jews, women, gays, immigrants.

As a culture, we must make gender visible and give young men the means to develop a secure, confident, inner sense of themselves as men. Only then will we be able to breathe a sigh of relief.

The second area in which women's lives have changed is the workplace. Recall the second rule of masculinity: "Be a big wheel". Most men in fact derive their identity from their status as breadwinners. Often, though, the invisibility of masculinity makes it hard to see how gender equality will also benefit men. For example, when we speak of the "feminisation of poverty", we rarely see its other side, the "masculinisation of wealth". While in the United States, women's wages are expressed as a function of men's wages (we read for example that women earn 70 cents when men earn a dollar), what is concealed is what we might see if women's wages were the norm against which men's wages were measured. Men, on average, earn \$1.30 for every dollar women earn. Now suddenly privilege is visible!

Furthermore, the economic landscape has completely changed. And currently, the economy has not been kind to most men. The great global expansion of the 1990s affected the top 20% of workers. There are fewer and fewer "big wheels". European countries have traded for high levels of unemployment, which means that more and more men will feel as though they do not make the grade, will feel damaged, injured and powerless, and will once again have to constantly prove their masculinity.

But remember: women are today entering the workplace en masse. Just when men's breadwinner status is threatened, women appear on the scene as easy targets for men's anger. Recently I participated in a television talk show opposite three "angry white men" who felt they had been the victims of workplace discrimination. The show's title, no doubt to entice a large audience, was "A Black Woman Took My Job". In my comments to these men, I invited them to consider what the word "my" meant in the title, that they felt that the jobs were originally theirs, that they were entitled to them, and that when some "other" person – black, female – got the job, that person was really taking "their" job. But by what right is that their job? Only by that sense of entitlement, which they perceived as threatened by the movement towards workplace gender equality.

It is also this context in which we must consider the question of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment in the workplace is a distorted effort to put women back in their place, to remind them that they are not equal to men in the workplace, that they are, still, just women, even if they are in the workplace. Sexual harassment is a way of maintaining that sense of entitlement, of maintaining the illusion that the public sphere really belongs only to men. Sexual harassment is a way to remind women that they are not yet equals in the workplace, that they really do not belong there.

Every major corporate law firm and university is scrambling to implement sexual harassment policies, to make sure that harassment is recognised and punished. These policies usually consist of explaining what harassment is, and, for men, presenting ways of avoiding this pitfall, and, for women, behaviours to adopt if the need arises. But our challenge is not limited to putting people on their guard and providing advice after the fact. Our challenge is to prevent sexual harassment before it happens.

And that will require that we demonstrate to men what they will gain by supporting the fight against sexual harassment led by women. Not only because sexual harassment is enormously costly – as increased rates of absenteeism, a higher rates of staff turnover, and costs linked to the training of new workers and lower productivity are just some of the results. But also because if you hold a management position, your performance also depends on the strong performance of those that work for you. You should want everyone who works for you to feel comfortable and to be able to deploy all of their abilities and really perform. Therefore, it is in your interest as a man to make sure that all of your staff members – male and female – feel comfortable, confident and safe in the workplace. Sexual harassment affects women by limiting their productivity. But it also affects men because it affects the women we work with and therefore reduces our ability to work at our best.

We also have every interest as men in beginning to better reconcile work and family. A saying in the United States goes "No man on his deathbed ever wished he spent more time in the office".

Men should also better balance their professional life and family life. But remember the third rule of masculinity: "Be a sturdy oak". What has traditionally made men reliable in a crisis is also what makes us unavailable emotionally to others. We are increasingly finding that the very things that we thought made us real men impoverish our relationships with other men and with our children.

Fatherhood, friendship and partnership all require emotional resources that are, traditionally, in short supply among men. Resources such as patience, compassion, tenderness, attention to what is going on around us. "A man isn't someone you'd want around in a crisis," wrote the actor Alan Alda, "like raising children or growing old together."

In the United States, men become more active fathers by "helping out" or by "pitching in" and then by spending "quality time" with their children. But it is not "quality time" that will create the deep intimate relationships that we say we

aspire to, either with our partners or with our children. It is quantity time – which includes long hours of thankless, unnoticed drudge work. It is quantity time that creates the foundation of intimacy. Nurture is doing the unheralded tasks, like taking care of someone when they are sick, doing the washing, the ironing, washing the dishes. After all, if men are capable of being surgeons and chefs, we must be able to learn to sew and cook.

The workplace and the family are also joined in the public sphere. Several different kinds of policy reforms have been proposed to make the workplace more “family friendly”, to make the workplace more hospitable to our efforts to reconcile professional life and family life. These reforms generally revolve around three issues: on-site childcare in the workplace, flexible working hours and parental leave. But how do we usually think of these reforms based on the reconciliation of work and family? We see them as women’s issues. But these are not just women’s issues, they are parents’ issues, and to the extent that we, men, identify ourselves as parents, they are reforms that we must support. Because they will enable us to live the life that we say we want. We want to make the most of our children, we want to be able to arrange our workdays to reconcile work and family with our wives and we want to be there when our children come into the world.

On this score, we Americans have much to learn from Europeans, especially from the Scandinavians, who have proved to be so visionary in their efforts to involve men in family life. In Sweden, for example, men are actively encouraged by national policies to take parental leave to be part of their children’s first months. Before the institution of “Daddy Days”, less than 20% of Swedish men took parental leave. Today, the percentage of men who take advantage of this opportunity is over 90%. That is a government that respects “family values”.

Finally, let us examine the last rule of masculinity: “Give ‘em hell”. What this says to men is to take risks, live dangerously. The time has therefore come to talk about sex and violence.

Remember that the greatest change in sexuality over the past 40 years has concerned women. Just as women are saying “yes” to the own sexual desires, however, there is an increased awareness of the problem of rape all over the world, especially of acquaintance rape. In one recent American study, 45% of all of the female students questioned said that they had had some form of sexual contact against their will, and a full 25% had been pressed or forced to have sexual intercourse against their will. When one psychologist asked freshmen men over the past ten years if they would commit rape if they were certain they would get away with it, almost one-half said they would.

Ironically, when men speak of rape they do not speak with a voice of power, control, and domination. Listen, for a moment to a 23 year old man in San Francisco, who was asked under what circumstances he might commit rape. He has never committed rape. He is simply an average guy, considering the circumstances under which he would commit an act of violence against a woman. Here is his response:

“Let’s say I see a woman and she is very pretty, very elegant and very attractive, and that she’s giving off very feminine, sexy vibes. I think: “Wow, I would like to make love to her”, but I know she is not interested. It’s a tease. A lot of times women know that they are looking really good and they’ll use that and flaunt it and it makes me feel like she’s laughing at me and I feel degraded... If I were desperate enough to rape somebody, it would be from wanting that person, but also it would be a very spiteful thing, just being able to say “I have power over you and I can do anything I want with you” because really I feel that they have power over me just by their presence. Just the fact that they can come up to me and just melt me makes me feel like a dummy, makes me want revenge. They have power over me so I want power over them.”

Notice how this young man speaks not with the voice of someone in power, of someone in control over his life, but rather with the voice of someone who is powerless. For him, violence is a form of revenge, a form of retaliation, a compensation for the power that women have over him.

I think that perspective has been left out of our analyses of men’s violence, both at the interpersonal, micro level of individual acts of men’s violence against women – rape and battery, for example – and the aggregate, social and political analysis of violence expressed at the level of the nation state, the social movement, or the military institution. Violence may be more about getting the power to which you feel you are entitled than an expression of the power you already think you have.

I believe that we must see men’s violence as the result of a breakdown of patriarchy, of entitlement thwarted. Again and again, what the research on rape, on domestic violence reveals is that men adopt violent behaviour when they feel a loss of power to which they feel entitled. Thus a man hits his wife when she does not have the dinner ready on time, when she refuses to meet his sexual demands, i.e. when his power over her has broken down – not when the dinner is ready or when she is willing to have sex, which are, after all, expressions of his power and legitimacy.

This question of entitlement lies at the heart of current controversies over sex-trafficking all over the world. As we have tried to confront this new international problem, we have focused on “supply” – especially the international cartels that often kidnap and imprison young girls and women – and, of course, extended our compassion for the “product”, the women themselves. But few, if any, strategies have targeted the “demand” side of the equation, the men who are the consumers of these purloined and oppressed products. Why? Because we somehow understand that men feel entitled to consume women’s bodies, however they might be supplied.

Nearly 20 years ago, the anthropologist Peggy Reeves Sanday proposed a scale of propensity to commit rape upon which all societies could be plotted - from rape prone to rape free. (For the curious, by the way, the United States was ranked among the highly rape prone societies, far more than any country in Europe; Norway and Sweden were among the most rape free societies.) Sanday found that the best indicators of rape-proneness were: 1) whether a woman was entitled to retain the ownership of her property in her own name after marriage, an indicator of women’s autonomy; and 2) men’s involvement in child-rearing, an indicator of how much parenting and women’s work are valued.

So clearly here is an arena in which women’s autonomy is a good indicator of their safety – as is men’s participation in child-rearing. If men act at home the way we say we want to act, women will be safer.

Surely, these questions of violence and sexuality are an arena where we have to take strong measures to make clear our intolerance for acquaintance rape, adopt laws that protect women and attitudes of confidence in the advancement of women. It is also another arena in which men’s support of feminism will enable men to live the life they say they aspire to. If we make it clear that we, as men, will not tolerate a world in which women do not feel safe, and if we make it clear to our partners that we know that “no” means “no”, then – and only then – can women begin to articulate the “yes” that is also their right.

Conclusion

Rather than resisting the transformation of our lives that equal opportunities offers, I believe that we should embrace these changes, both because they offer us the possibilities of social and economic equality, and because they also offer the possibilities of richer, fuller and happier lives with our friends, with our lovers, with our partners and with our children. We, as men, have to support gender equality – both at work and at home. Not because it is right and just and fair – although it is those things. But because of what it will do for us, as men. At work, it means working to end sexual harassment, supporting family friendly workplace policies, working to end the scourge of acquaintance rape, violence and abuse that terrorise women in our societies. At home, it means sharing housework and childcare, as much because our partners demand it as because we want to spend that time with our children and because housework is a traditional way of nurturing and loving someone.

The feminist transformation of society is a revolution in progress. For nearly two centuries, we men have met insecurity by frantically shoring up our privilege or by running away. However, these strategies have never brought us the security and peace we have sought. Perhaps now, as men, we can stand with women and embrace the rest of this revolution – embrace this cause out of a sense of justice and fairness, for our children, our wives, our partners and ourselves.

Ninety-six years ago, 15,000 American women marched in New York to demand better pay, shorter working hours, the right to vote and an end to child labour. They summed up their demands with the famous slogan “Bread and roses” – they wanted both economic security and a better quality of life. Both money and beauty, they believed, were necessary for a sustainable life.

Three years later, a million women and men marched together in European cities to mark the first International Women’s Day.

Today, we men are also coming to realise that gender equality is in our interests as men; that we too will benefit from gender equality. That gender equality holds out a promise of better relationships with our wives, with our children and with other men. Ninety-six years ago, on the eve of the first International Women’s Day, an American writer wrote an essay entitled “Feminism for Men”. It began with these words: “Feminism will make it possible for the first time for men to be free.”

Remember that slogan from the first International Women’s Day: “Bread and Roses”. Only when we men share in the baking of the bread will we be able to smell the roses.

The role of men in gender equality

There are many different reasons why men can be interested in gender equality, and here are some of them

2
Jeff Hearn

1. Introduction

Men, or at least some men, seem slowly but surely to be becoming interested in gender equality. This is rather good news but – as my title suggests – there is no single reason for this interest and, in fact, not all of these reasons can be said to be cheering. Even though I have been asked to speak here theoretically about men and gender equality, in this subject theory cannot be dissociated from practice.

How are we to understand men's interest in gender?

First of all, I would like to point out that much of men's activities are not seen as related to gender – or even as political activity at all. They are not seen as "about gender"; they are not understood to be likely to make the relations or the divisions between genders more or less unequal.

Much of men's behaviours, in public and in private, in work, when they negotiate, persuade, network, lobby, pressurise, etc., are not seen as gendered. They are generally displayed, perceived and experienced as (if they were) "normal". They are not usually *gender-conscious* activities: they just happen!

And, in a sense, there is a rather strange "truth" in that. After all, most men do not go to work thinking: "I will discriminate against two women today, or one woman three times, or perhaps four women but in a much more subtle way, almost imperceptible to them, or in that case I am going to go for the big one and discriminate against a factory full of women!" No, rather the factory closes and it is the women who are then transferred or made redundant.

Men's practices producing and reproducing gender inequality are deeply embedded in social, economic and cultural relations so that men's dominant or complicit practices are often considered and judged to be the "norm", usual, or even official practice. This point was underscored by Patricia Yancey Martin in her studies on the decision-making process.⁶ Men's practices are normal, banal; those of women are noteworthy – or worse.

There are several ways of understanding these kinds of practices among men. One is through the prism of homosociality,⁷ in this case, men's preference for men and men's company rather than for women and women's company. Changing men's relations with each other is a particularly ambitious challenge: How is that heterosexual men are often so homosocial – preferring and valuing men and men's company over women and their company? Oddly, such (heterosexual) homosociality can sometimes go hand in hand with heterosexual sexism and homophobia.⁸ This aspect of men's relations with each other needs to be challenged.

Another very important focus of explanation developed over the recent years is cultural cloning, the tendency to reproduce more or less the same things, whether by gender, ethnicity, cultural organisation or tradition.⁹ This general phenomenon appears "evident" in many organisations and is most certainly very important in the area of gender (in)equality.

6 Martin, P.Y. (2001). 'Mobilising masculinities: Women's experiences of men at work', *Organisation* 8(4), pp. 587-618.

7 Lipman-Blumen, J. (1976). 'Toward a homosocial theory of sex roles: An explanation of the sex segregation of social institutions', in: M. Blaxall and B. Reagan (eds), *Women and the workplace*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Tallberg, T. (2003). *Networks, organisations and men: Concepts and interrelations*. Working Paper No. 495, Helsinki: Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration.

8 Kimmel, M.S. (1994). 'Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity', in: H. Brod and M. Kaufman (eds), *Theorizing masculinities*, Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage.

9 Essed, Ph. (2002). 'Cloning cultural homogeneity while talking diversity: Old wine in new bottles in Dutch organizations', *Transforming Anthropology* 11(1), pp. 2-12; Essed, Ph. (2004). 'Cloning amongst professors: Normativities and imagined homogeneities', *NORA* 12 (2), pp. 113-122; Essed, Ph. and T. Golberg (2002). 'Cloning cultures: The social injustices of sameness', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25(6), pp. 1066-1082.

Nevertheless, significant growth of men's more gender-related activities is noted at present, often related to gender equality. There are many reasons for this – even though men's attitude to gender equality is often, perhaps almost always, problematic, and particularly in relation to sexuality and violence.

For example in 1987, R.W. Connell began the book *Gender and Power* by identifying five "...reasons for change [that] have enough weight against this entrenched interest, [...] broadly to maintain the existing system [...] to detach heterosexual men from the defence of patriarchy [...]". They can be summarised as follows: a sense of justice, an attachment to special women, the swing of the pendulum, a modern spirit and humanism. In the same year, I concluded my book *The gender of oppression* by citing six "material reasons for men to change against patriarchy": the love and affection of other men, the power of children, improved health, anti-capitalism, the rejection of other men's violence, and peace without nuclear apocalypse.¹⁰ (See Annex 1)

However, being aware of gender issues does not necessarily mean being in favour of gender equality. Male supremacists are indeed gender-conscious, just as white supremacists are race- or ethnicity-conscious.

There are many reasons why men might be interested and are interested in gender equality. I will present to you three slightly different ways of studying this aspect: the continuum, the triangle and the wrong question.

2. Approach No. 1: the continuum – from A to B to C

First of all, it could be said that there is some kind of continuum from those men who are actively supportive of gender equality, onto to those who are in favour of this theme in theory but not doing anything in particular, to those who are "not bothered" and onto those who are actively hostile. Men's attitude to feminism varies along some kind of continuum from outright hostility to profeminism via muted hostility and vague interest, anti-feminist motivations suggesting that gender equality is unnecessary or undesirable and profeminist attempts to support gender equality and feminism (in a way comparable to the left-right continuum now supposed obsolete). Many men are open and hostile anti-feminists; many adopt a strategy of ignorance towards feminism, hoping that the interest will pass. Ignorance is a strategy that is well-established among men and probably the most widespread. Generally speaking, men are not interested in feminism. Between the two are these forms of men's strategies that see gender equality agendas as opportunities to benefit them without much concern for women. This fits the results of Norwegian and Swedish surveys dating back to the 1980s that revealed that about a third of men are "attached to tradition" and hostile to gender equality, a third are in favour of gender equality and in some way clearly active, and that a last third are in favour "in principle" but passive and unaffected.¹¹

But we are faced with a problem, because a simple continuum can mask other dimensions. For example, men may be pro- or anti-gender equality in terms of the *gains for women* but, on the other hand, be pro- or anti-gender equality in terms of the *gains for men*. Some men seem more interested in obtaining new gains for themselves than a general evolution of society towards gender equality.

3. Approach No. 2: the triangle – a three-way relationship

The second way of studying the relations between men and gender equality is a little more complex. In the United States, the growing number of political positions adopted by men's organisations has been analysed by Michael Messner according to their position at the three points of a triangle.¹² The points of the triangle are: first, the recognition of and opposition to men's institutionalised privileges, next, the recognition of the "costs of masculinity" and the fact that men "are going through a difficult period" and finally, the recognition of differences/inequalities among men. On this last matter, there are also men's gender-related activities that highlight the differences between men in terms of sexuality, race, religion, etc., being the most important. These three positions in some ways correspond to the stress on "responsibilities", "resistances", and "reaching out", which I have mentioned elsewhere.¹³

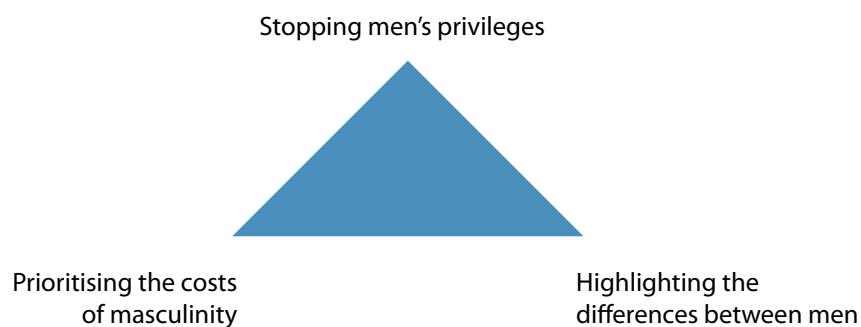
10 Hearn, J. (1987). *The gender of oppression*, Brighton: Wheatsheaf/New York: St. Martin's Press.

11 Jalmert, L. (1984). *Den svenske mannen* [The Swedish Male], Stockholm: Tiden; Holter, Ø.G. (1989). *Menn* [Men], Oslo: Aschehoug; Holter, Ø.G. and H. Aarseth (1993). *Menns Livssammenheng*, Oslo: Ad Notem Gyldendal.

12 Messner, M.A. (1997). *Politics of masculinities: Men in movements*, Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage.

13 Hearn, J. (2001). Paper 'Men and gender equality: Resistance, responsibilities, reaching out', European Conference on men and equality, Örebro, Sweden, March. www.cromenet.org.

Figure 1. The triangle¹⁴



This approach produces a less either-or analysis, which less resembles a continuum. It points to the complexity and the contradictions, paradoxes and ambiguities of the positions and motivations, especially when one considers the question of differences/inequalities and the many different kinds of differences, inequalities and “in-between” positions amongst men in different societies. It highlights the impossibility of reducing gender politics to a “left-right” dimension. It opens up some political spaces.

These different positions can be occupied by individual men, groups of men, even organisations or governments; they can have an impact on gender equality politics, work, family life, personal relationships, and even sexual relations.

4. Some examples

Before moving on to the third approach, I would like to provide some examples of men's attitudes to gender equality, which can be positioned at different points of the triangle that we have just described. Since the 1970s, several identifiable and shifting forms of explicitly gender-conscious politics among men concerning feminism have been observed, from anti-feminism to profeminism. In fact, it is important to add here that feminism has always been partly about men. Feminists have always had to consider their attitude towards men and the problem of men.

In the United Kingdom, the anti-sexist men's movement in the 1970s and early 1980s, influenced by feminist, gay, left, anarchist and green politics, were very active in organising national and regional conferences, meetings, groups and campaigns.

In 1980, these men drew up the following list of anti-sexist commitments:¹⁵

- Commitment to the (anti-sexist) group;
- Consciousness-raising done rigorously;
- Support for the Women's Liberation Movement;
- Support for Gay Liberation;
- having childcare;
- Learning from gay and feminist culture;
- Action on our own behalf;
- Propaganda and outreach programmes (linked to action);
- Link-ups with other Men Against Sexism groups;
- Renunciation of violence (physical, emotional and verbal).

These commitments retain all of their relevance today. These days, however, more global themes such as militarism and the environment, and the daily impact of computers and other communication and outreach technologies, would be added.

In the mid-1980s, the anti-sexist men's movement had lost its momentum in the United Kingdom and many men left these activities or tried to bring these issues into the more general issue and the work of teaching, youth work, social services, the media, healthcare, consultancy, writing, research, etc. This can be seen as both putting these ideas into effect and facilitating their incorporation and dilution. Next came a movement based on the mythopoeic approach and a return to nature! Then, recently, organisations for the protection of men's and fathers' rights

¹⁴ Adapted from: Messner, *Politics of masculinities*.

¹⁵ Commitments Collective (1980). 'Anti-sexist commitments for men – draught [sic.] 3', *Anti-Sexist Men's Newsletter* (9), p. 17.

made themselves heard more, sometimes in horrible ways, despite the fact that men and fathers have enjoyed privileges by virtue of their sex for a very long time.

Recently, there has been something of a revival of interest in profeminism, at least in a European and international context (see Annex 2). Among the examples of profeminist activities, let us take the European Profeminist Network,¹⁶ the profeminist *Ending Gender-based Violence: A Call for Global Action to Involve Men* project, supported by UNICEF and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA),¹⁷ and the European Critical Research on Men in Europe project, which is explicitly feminist/profeminist.¹⁸ There is even an International Network for the Radical Critique of Masculinities.

New interest in men's place in gender equality and their contribution is also noted from governments, the European Union and the United Nations, as well as their agencies. For example, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women has actively supported the role of boys and men in gender equality (The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality).¹⁹ This theme is moreover one of the priorities of the Finnish Presidency of the Union in 2006.

5. Approach No. 3: the wrong question – so what is gender equality anyway?

Coming back to the main theme, I have already shown how the continuum and the triangle provide two approaches for reflection on men who say that they want to be involved or are interested in gender equality. But it may however be the wrong question, given that differences are still noted is what is *actually meant* by gender equality. In other words, gender equality, like feminism, can be understood in different ways for different reasons. Here I am referring to three responses to the question of the meaning of gender equality: according to the points of view of reform (liberal), of resistance (conservative) and rebellion (deconstructive).

In the first case, gender equality could be considered to be the desire to realise the potential of women and men equally, albeit in the context of current gender and social structures. To quote Judith Lorber: "Gender reform feminists locate the source of gender inequality in women's and men's status in the social order, arguing that it is structural and not the outcome of personal attributes, individual choices or unequal personal relationships. An overall strategy for political action to reform the unequal gendered social structure is *gender balance*."²⁰

Judith Lorber continues: "Gender resistance feminists argue that the gender order cannot be made equal through gender balance because men's dominance is too strong."²¹ Gender equality *per se* is not a feasible aim since it will probably end up with women becoming like men. A more radical transformation is necessary, with women's voices and perspectives reshaping the gendered social order in a more fundamental way, including the abolition of patriarchy.

Gender rebellion feminists go further still, seeking to "take apart the gendered social order by multiplying genders or doing away with them entirely."²² Connections with other social divisions, differences and oppressions therefore become central, as do deconstructions of categories of sex, sexuality and gender, and the dualities often (re)produced through them.²³ Men, or rather "men", become an outdated social category.²⁴

By combining the "triangle" with this "wrong question", one obtains what could be called a three-dimensional picture of men's very diverse attitudes to gender equality.

6. By way of conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to point to five key themes: the context of inequality in society more generally, the recognition of men's contradictions, the typical case of violence, the state of play locally and globally, and the

16 www.europrofem.org/

17 www.sida.se/content/1/c6/02/47/27/SVI34602.pdf

18 www.cromenet.org

19 www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/men-boys2003/

20 Lorber, J. (ed.) (2005). *Gender inequality: Feminist theories and politics*, Los Angeles: Roxbury, p. 13 (italics in the original).

21 Idem, p. 14.

22 Idem, p. 12.

23 See also: Lorber, J. (1994). *Paradoxes of gender*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press; Lorber, J. (2000). 'Using gender to undo gender: A feminist degendering movement', *Feminist Theory* 1, pp. 101-108; Lorber, J. (2005). *Breaking the bowls: Degendering and feminist challenge*, New York: W.W. Norton.

24 See: Hearn, J. (1998). 'Theorizing men and men's theorizing', *Theory and Society* 27(6), pp. 781-816; Hearn, J. (2004). 'From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men', *Feminist Theory* 5(1), pp. 49-72.

lessons of feminism.

Gender inequality in unequal societies. First of all, there remains an ambiguity in many political discussions about men and gender equality: is the question 'how can men contribute to women's fight for gender equality' or 'what (additional) gain can men draw from gender equality'? Unfortunately, it is often the second.

Or, to put the question another way: can gender equality be realised in the context of patriarchy? If not, patriarchy has to be dismantled, out of which comes the need for men to be against patriarchy and profeminists without just looking to extract more gains from the "talk" about gender equality. Likewise, it seems impossible to make much progress on gender equality in a society that is so deeply marked by inequalities.

Table 1. Ratio of the income of richest 10% to the poorest 10% (UNDP)

Belgium	7.8
Finland	5.65
Sweden	6.2
United KINGDOM	13.6
United STATES	15.7

The societal context of inequality is extremely important in understanding and changing men's domination. For example, according to Western European standards, the United Kingdom is a very unequal society with a right-wing government. In the United Kingdom, the ratio between the income of the most affluent 10% and that of the most disadvantaged 10% is nearly two and a half times higher than (or 250% of) the same ratio in Finland, where I live most of the time (it is even higher, by nearly three times, in the United States). The so-called "Labour" party in the United Kingdom seems to be more to the right than the Finnish conservative party. In conclusion, the British system incorporates an enormous share of social inequalities which are accepted and which at the same time constitute gender inequalities and structural means of men's domination. Gender equality is impossible in the presence of deep economic inequalities. It is sometimes forgotten that being profeminist also involves opposing these types of inequalities.

Men and gender equality: watch out for the contradictions! Men can have diverse motivations for being interested in gender equality. That being the case, they must acknowledge their contradictions in their contribution to the long-term movement towards gender equality and the way in which it is presented in the interest of women. What contribution do men appear to represent?

Most immediately, positive action in relation to feminism often involves men recognising their dilemmas and ambivalences. Men may ask themselves, individually and collectively:

- How important is changing myself and other men?
- How much effort should I put into this?
- Do I want this to be a fundamental part of my life?
- In what ways do I like being a man, and in what ways do I not like being a man?
- In what respect are my feelings about change shared?

There are also more specific contradictions which men seeking to change their attitude to feminism often face:

- How do I learn from feminism? What feminism?
- How do I learn from feminism without taking over women's space?
- Do I need to depend more on men, on women, on both?
- How do I recognise being a man without emphasising that status?
- How do I recognise being a man whilst stopping being a Man?

Various tensions are also noted within the profeminism:

- between a more positive approach to men and men's potentialities, and a more deconstructive approach that aims to abolish men as a social category;
- between local activities and international links;
- between less and more libertarian tendencies;
- in the relations between profeminism, the different feminisms and feminists.

The “test case” of men’s violence. When men’s attitude to gender equality is discussed, it is always necessary to examine the way in which men’s violence is tackled. In fact, there is sometimes a tendency to focus only on issues such as paternity and the reconciliation of family and work instead of directly studying the themes of violence and sexuality. Yet, if one looks at the different national surveys relating to men’s violence confronting women,²⁵ it is clear, firstly, that men’s violence against women in their circle is much more frequent than is often thought and, secondly, that many men who are violent with women and children are also fathers. It is therefore inappropriate to promote paternity without also tackling men’s violence against women and children.

Some people have attempted to claim a symmetry between the genders regarding conjugal violence. These assertions are largely based on a count of the number of acts of violence.²⁶ But as Kimmel notes, they are based on misinterpretations of data or on narrowly defined studies.²⁷ Women can prove to be violent but they often act in a situation of self-defence – it is considered that this is the case in nearly three-quarters of known acts of violence between adults. In addition, taking into account men’s physical strength, women are likely to suffer more bodily injuries and psychological pressure.²⁸ In summary, the data demonstrates the existence of an asymmetry between the genders and men being responsible in 90% of all acts of violence (in public places, in the family environment and within the couple).

If we examine the social systems of Western Europe according to the extent to which they display an awareness of the enormous and serious problem of men’s violence and a willingness to confront it, the trans-national patterns that emerge in Europe are almost the opposite of Esping-Anderson-type standard classifications. Among the criteria that can be used for each country in this respect, let us take:

- the importance of research on men’s violence;
- the extent to which the predominance of men in acts of violence has been studied and/or publicly acknowledged;
- the existence of legal frameworks centred on men’s violence;
- the existence of social services initiatives aimed at dealing with the consequences of men’s violence;
- the extent to which social workers are trained to react to men’s violence.

When these criteria are used, according to our specific perspective, the United Kingdom and Germany stand out in perhaps quite a surprising way among Europe’s most advanced social systems whereas some Scandinavian countries achieve rather mediocre results or are only ranked in the middle. In other words, as far as this important dimension of men’s violence against women and children is concerned, a relatively “neo-liberal” European social system proves to be clearly superior to many Scandinavian-type social systems – that it to say a result that is the opposite of what could be expected according to the analysis of Esping-Andersen.²⁹

Surveying the local and global scene. How do these aspects function here – in Belgium? In the government? In other important institutions? Who are the key actors (among men)? What interests do they champion? How do all of these aspects function in your local personal context – in your workplace, in your life, within your couple and your family?

Men’s attitudes to gender equality do not only concern strategies and general policies but also the local, domestic and immediate changes occurring in the life of every man and on which men as individuals have some influence. They also concern the Big Questions of the day!

Many issues remain insufficiently studied – in particular concerning men on a global, trans-national scale. Studies are urgently required on men’s global domination in arenas such as militarism, international finance, multinationals, oil and energy policies, the sex trade, the international circulation of representations, and trans-governmental mechanisms. Tackling these global social problems requires changes spanning men’s immediate subjectivity to

25 Heiskanen, M. and M. Piispa (1998). *Faith, hope and battering: A survey of men’s violence against women*, Helsinki: Statistics Finland; Lundgren, E. et al. (2001). *Captured Queen: Men’s violence against women in “equal” Sweden – A prevalence study*, Stockholm: Fritzes Offentliga Publikationer; Müller, U. and M. Schrottle (2004). *Health, well-being and safety of women in Germany. A representative study of violence against women in Germany*, Berlin: Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; Walby, S. and J. Allen (2004). *Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British crime survey*. Home Office Research Study 276, London: Home Office.

26 Fiebert, M. (1997). ‘Annotated bibliography: References examining assaults by women on their spouses/partners’, in: B. Dank and R. Refinette (eds), *Sexual harassment and sexual consent*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

27 Kimmel, M.S. (2002). ‘“Gender symmetry” in domestic violence: A substantive and methodological research review’, *Violence Against Women*, Special issue: Women’s Use of Violence in Intimate Relationships, Part 1 8(11), p. 1332-1363.

28 Nazroo, J. (1995). ‘Uncovering gender differences in the use of marital violence: The effect of methodology’, *Sociology* 29(3), pp. 475-495.

29 Hearn, J. and K. Pringle, with members of the Critical Research on Men in Europe project (2006). *European perspectives on men and masculinities: National and transnational approaches*, Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

their relationships with women, children and other men. This also involves changing global, trans-national patri-archies – or trans-patriarchies – and their growing forms of power. Can one really begin to understand the local or global economy without making an effort to study men when men make up 90% or more of the management of major companies?

Two starting points must therefore be adopted in the study of men's involvement in gender equality: the local level and the global perspective.

Learning from feminism. Men can support feminists and feminism and draw lessons from it. They can promote (and of course also hinder) feminists' objectives and activities and participate in feminist forums but it is utterly inappropriate to expect feminists to solve men's problems or dilemmas for us/themselves. We must also act ourselves.

I believe and I have myself observed that taking feminism seriously as a man can change your life – in terms of time, priorities, activities, friends, allies, etc. Changing men's attitude to feminism requires personal changes and a changing oneself, one's relationships with women, children and other men, a transformation of the forms and objectives of politics, and the changing of analysis and theory.

A radical change is required among men; men must stop "being men". This requires a long-term commitment from men throughout their lives, not just a passing interest over a few months or a few years.

Annex 1

In 1987, R.W. Connell began his book, *Gender and Power* as follows:

“What reasons for change have enough weight against this entrenched interest, [...] broadly to maintain the existing system [...], to detach heterosexual men from the defense of patriarchy? There are, in my experience, five:

(1) Even the *beneficiaries of an oppressive system can come to see its oppressiveness, especially the way it poisons areas of life they share.* [What could be called the SENSE OF JUSTICE.]

(2) *Heterosexual men are often committed in important ways to women – their wives and lovers, mothers and sisters, daughters and nieces, co-workers – and may desire better lives for them.* Especially they may see the point of creating more civilised and peaceable sexual arrangements for their children, even at the cost of their own privileges. [FOR WOMEN THAT MEN KNOW...]

(3) *Heterosexual men are not all the same or united, and many do suffer some injury from the present system.* The oppression of gays, for instance, has a back-wash damaging effeminate or unassertive heterosexuals. [SWING OF THE PENDULUM EXPERIENCE]

(4) *Change in gender relations is happening anyway, and on a large scale.* A good many heterosexual men recognise that they cannot cling to the past and want some new directions. [Therefore TO BE MODERN...]

(5) *Heterosexual men are not excluded from the basic human capacity to share experiences, feelings and hopes.* This ability is often blunted but the capacity for caring and identification is not necessarily killed. The question is what circumstances might call it out. Being a father often does; some political movements, notable the environmental and peace movements, seem to; sexual politics may do so too.” [It is the optimistic meaning of HUMANISM AND THE ACTION OF HUMANISM] [My italics and insertions. JH]

In the same year, in the book *The Gender of Oppression*, I concluded:

“There are material reasons for men to change against patriarchy:

1. *the increased possibilities of love, emotional support and care for and from other men;* [simply, THE LOVE AND AFFECTION OF OTHER MEN]
2. *the privilege and emotional development that may come from increased contact and work with children;* [the “POWER” OF CHILDREN]
3. *the possibility of improved health, the reduction of certain illnesses, and the extension of life;* [IMPROVED HEALTH...]
4. *the creation of the conditions for the transformation of the capitalist mode of production (that is inherently gendered) to more liberating production relations;* [the ANTI-CAPITALIST FORCE]
5. *the avoidance of other men’s violence and of the fear of men, of killing, of being killed, and...* [AVOIDING OTHER MEN’S VIOLENCE]
6. *the reduction of the likelihood of nuclear annihilation, the grimmest legacy of patriarchy.”* [PEACE INSTEAD OF APOCALYPSE] [My italics and insertions. JH]

Annex 2. What is profeminism?³⁰

Profeminism describes men's solidarity and support for feminist struggles and issues. Just as there are various feminisms so there are various forms of profeminism. However, amongst all the different viewpoints, profeminists share a conviction to listen to and learn from feminism and women, and to rethink and deconstruct male gender as the dominant and hegemonic gender. This involves actively changing both ourselves and other men - personally, politically, at home, at work, in the media, campaigns, law, and so on. Examples of men's actions and power that need changing include men's violence, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, sexism and patriarchal dominance more generally. Profeminist organising can include campaigns, demonstrations, posters and flyers, writing letters, articles and pamphlets, producing T-shirts, postcards etc., as well as more personally oriented activities, including consciousness-raising groups.

Is being a profeminist the same as being in favour of equality? Profeminism wants to achieve gender equality, but it also wants to go further. We believe that gender inequality runs deeper than the surface of what many people perceive as equality, and is more structurally embedded in gender systems. We want to support feminism and women's groups in their struggles for an equal society, and we want to look at ourselves, and redefine and reduce our and other men's power position in society.

Are profeminist men anti-men? Profeminism is not against men. We believe profeminism can help men to live more fulfilling lives. However, we also believe that men shouldn't look for excuses when confronted with gender issues. Even if some men might suffer in some respects under male dominance, they also benefit from the fruits of hegemonic masculinity. Profeminism asks for a consciousness of one's own position as a man and towards the men around us. This can be very painful.

Is profeminism an organised movement? There is no such thing as an organised profeminist movement. Rather, profeminism is a plural movement or set of networks. Since this is a movement of men, we have to be especially careful not to re-establish hierarchies and totalitarianism.

What about other discriminated groups in society? Profeminism supports struggles against other discriminations and oppression. It is anti-racist, anti-heterosexist, and against discrimination and oppression of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenderists.

Is profeminism related to the men's movement? This is a difficult question to answer since the term 'men's movement' has been used in many different ways. Some men's movement groups are well-established groups that support feminism and the women's movement. Others, however, are regressive movements, such as anti-feminist, fathers' rights and men's rights groups.

³⁰ Adapted from: www.profeministmiehet.net/

Annex 3. Some useful links

European Profeminist Network
www.europrofem.org/

CROME Network: EU Critical Research on Men in Europe is a research and policy network that is explicitly feminist/profeminist.
www.cromenet.org

Renewed interest from governments, the EU and the UN in the role and contribution of men in gender equality. The Division for the Advancement of Women in the United States is active in promoting "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality".
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/men-boys2003/

www.achillesheel.freeuk.com/links.html

www.workingwithmen.org

www.whiteribbon.ca/

Academic links
www.xyonline.net/ [bibliography]

jmm.sagepub.com/ [journal Men and Masculinities]

The role of men in equality: studies on men and masculinity. A survey of three European countries

Sophie Pioro

1. Introduction

The “*Et les hommes?*”³¹ (What about men?) research project presented here is one of several questions: How do you talk to men about equality, about social gender relationships? What is their understanding of these themes? How can masculine resistances to change be understood? What can be done to enable the quicker, more effective promotion of policies for equality between men and women? How are social gender relationships exercised in the workplace or at home, or, perhaps more importantly, in the interaction between these two spheres which are so often presented as being independent?

We wanted to centre our analyses and actions on men who, apparently “resist”, or even refuse change, and conversely concern ourselves with men who claim or appear to have more egalitarian practices.

To this end we focused on three profiles of men:

1. Male (and female) political and administrative representatives, who have a link with equality policies, because we wanted to find people who are directly involved in the national implementation of the gender equality policy dictated by Europe and to look at whether taking charge of equality policies enabled them to better understand the subject, whether they changed their private behaviours and so on.
2. Trade unionists responsible for implementing agreements on equality, on the reconciliation of private life and professional life, and in particular how the reduction of working hours has been interpreted and negotiated in France in terms of professional and private equality.
3. Men who have decided to change their lifestyles in ways which give them more equality with women, for example men who have taken a career break in order to look after their children.

A total of 183 interviews were carried out (78 in France, 40 in Belgium and 65 in Greece). The most interesting results are presented in this text.

2. Men and change

We focused on men about whom, regardless of their statements, we could make hypotheses on one or more forms of change compared to traditional masculine models. The four selection criteria for our sample were: childcare; a break with parental routines; the sharing of housework; and, a distancing from the centrality of work as a foundation for identity.

Our study was not only limited to men in couples (regardless of whether the couple was a union with a woman or with a man), and we focused on men aged between 25 and 35, presupposing that they had already outgrown post-adolescence and that, in some way, they belonged to the generations that best assimilate gender equality

31 The “*Et les hommes?*” project took place from December 2002 to February 2004, in France, Belgium and Greece, on the initiative of Daniel Welzer-Lang (Université Toulouse Le Mirail and Association Les Traboules), François Delor (Observatoire du Sida et des Sexualités, Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis, Brussels and Association Ex æquo) and Sophie Pioro (at the time, responsible for policy on male/female equality in the Office of the Minister of Employment, Belgium). The Greek partner was Kethi (roughly equivalent to the Ministry for Women’s Rights in France). The team was joined by Yannick Le Quentrec (sociologist), who co-managed the section on trade unionists and Martine Corbière (sociologist), who co-managed the section on male politicians and senior administrative representatives.

issues. The interview grid consisted of questions that touched on both representations and practices, on both interactions with close relations and intimate perceptions of sexuality and masculine identity. It should be noted that in order to help put this into context, and in line with our partners' networks of expertise, the interviews in Belgium were centred on gay men.

3. Professional employment

We know that for men it is the centrality of work, professional work, that creates purpose, a title, social appreciation, honour, enhanced masculinity. The company, office, university or market environment functions as a masculine playground. Men have to accept this battle to perfect their masculine image, to make the grade as a man and achieve the status of Great Men, who not only dominate women (and obtain material and symbolic privileges from it) but also other men.

The first observation here is the substantial decrease for some in France and Belgium of the central value of paid employment and a distancing from its centrality (in practice and/or debate).

Work is criticised in various ways: because of hierarchy in the workplace, deplorable relationship factors, in particular due to a difficulty in accepting (or tolerating) and managing conflicts (many men talk about "an obstacle course of avoidance"), and finally because of the "pressure" exerted by work. Many men say that work pressure is increasing. In this environment, one must be successful, always available and so on, and they do not tolerate this.

Does this mean that the challenging of part of the domestic hierarchy is resulting in men being unsuited to the masculine hierarchies at work in the working environment? This assertion would in that case be in keeping with the work of Christophe Dejours for whom the conformity of attitudes between domestic and professional environments guarantees good psychological functioning.³²

4. Valued work

Nevertheless not all of the men encountered are as critical with regard to paid employment. Some, on the contrary, still talk about work as enhancing, a realisation of potential, a psychological support, helpful to their equilibrium and social recognition.

Many of these men equate "good", enhancing, potential-realising work, with the freedom or not to have free time, "time for oneself"³³ and/or time with their spouse or children (in France and in Belgium).

We also noted the particularity of an over-investment in work in the case of single men. Are these the effects of renegotiation, of women's refusal to see their spouse absent from the home? Unlike in a traditional couple where the man can attain a fine rising career thanks to his companion's care of the home, men under this renegotiation talk about the links between celibacy and professional over-investment.

In short, despite a critical distancing on the centrality of work, this remains a key element of masculine identity; and the absence of work (unemployment, redundancy, etc.) means tensions and sometimes even depression. But paid employment remains in the lead in symbolic terms. One observation may seem surprising and in any case provokes reflection. Even for these men who are said to be progressive and who express numerous criticisms about work, this work still continues to create a hierarchy at home: for a significant part of the men encountered in this study, investment in paid employment (the position it confers, the time it demands) allows the hierarchical representations of the distribution of housework. And, except in the case of alternating custody, there are few men who reorganised their paid employment according to home life.

32 Dejours C. (2000). 'Le masculin entre sexualité et société', in: D. Welzer-Lang (eds), *Nouvelles approches des hommes et du masculin*, Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, pp. 263-289.

33 De Terssac, G., J. Thoemmes and A. Flautre (2004). 'Régulation politique et régulation d'usage dans le temps de travail', *Travail Humain* 67(2), pp. 135-154.

5. Housework

Housework, or the taking care of production activities (food, housework, leisure activities) and reproduction activities (in relation to children if necessary), requires interactions between those who cohabit, regardless of the form of cohabitation: marriage, couple, collective habitation, etc. Housework seemed to be one of the privileged areas in which to study how gender relations are transforming, supporting or resisting the move towards gender equality.

A first form came to light regarding domestic renegotiation: celibacy. This is also a form of masculine response to egalitarian interpellations and to the demands of companions that men invest more in housework. François (30 years old, single with 2 children) summarises quite well the statements heard: "You do exactly the same work as in a couple, except that you don't get thrown in the doghouse. You see, there is nobody telling you 'You have to do it! Why haven't you done it yet?' – That just doesn't happen any more. I do it and that's it. I mean, you know, there is no overseeing eye!"

In couples, the progress of equality is traditionally measured by the level of men's domestic investment. Some French men moreover present reversed gender positions: the man takes care of nearly all of the work to be done. But – here one sees the scientific interest in not limiting gender studies only to heterosexual men – contrary to essentialist representations of the sexes and gender, we see here that the differentiated internalisation of standards of cleanliness and tidiness is also present in gay couples.

In some couples, one person is more "shambolic" and the other therefore tidies up. Supposing this to be the case, we observe that in these gay couples, the division very often obeys the social hierarchies created outside the home. The man who cleans the most (who is symbolically placed in a position of domestic domination) is the youngest man and/or the one with the least educational, financial or symbolic capital etc., even though this dominant model is subject to many exceptions, in particular according to the free time left by investment in professional employment.

Confronted with the difficulties of doing it together, an alternative and empirical solution seems to have been adopted in several couples: each person does their share of housework. And of course, men that live alone also take care of the home, in their own way.

Since it would be dangerous to lapse into generalisations about all men, we don't wish to draw hasty conclusions, but the fact remains, that in our "chosen" sample of men in change, 55% of the men who live in a couple, in France (54.5%) or in Belgium (55%), do at least as much, but very often more, housework than their female or male companion.

6. Mental burden, mental unburdening, routinisation, and outsourcing of housework

We know from the work of Monique Haicault that the issue of housework cannot be limited to just doing it.³⁴ The "mental burden" of doing it, the anticipation and the feeling of having to plan and organise, must also be factored in.

As for the men who live in a couple, there are many who say that the mental burden remains the responsibility of their female or male companion. A sub-group in this category is characterised by a "mental unburdening": those who want to be told, to be informed that they have to help, etc.

Also occasionally, apart from in the case of those men who live alone, the mental burden is taken on by the man who was interviewed. Moreover, we saw divisions of this mental burden in Greece, which, while perfectly following the public=man/private=woman division, did not match the forms seen in France and in Belgium.

6.1. The routinisation of housework

Not having to think about it beforehand, not stressing about it, taking it as it comes... A new way of considering untidiness came up in the interviews: routinisation.

One can no doubt still cite discrepancies between statements and practices, and present the usual invisibilisation

34 Haicault, M. (1984). 'La gestion ordinaire de la vie en deux', *Sociologie du travail* (3), pp. 268-277.

of the housework carried out ad infinitum by women. Ethnography would be useful here in order to go deeper into this notion and what it really conceals. But the recurrence of the statements is puzzling. What if we were coming across a new form of the implementation of housework? It is this hypothesis that we will adopt here.

Apart from the debates on parenthood and the mental burden subsequent to the presence of children, which we will examine later, what is causing the move from “mental burden” to routine? What obstacles exist to distinguish men’s routine housework of the mental burden of their companions’ work?

Without doubt a large part of women’s housework is also routinised, attested to by those who iron and so on while watching television, those who say they make something to eat with what they find in the fridge, etc.

The mental burden and routinisation of housework can go together within the same family model. Combined with the asymmetrical double standard at work in cleanliness and tidiness (women are preventative as regards housework, where these men are curative), masculine routinisation become a gendered position of least-cost, advanced in men’s egalitarian strategies in relation to women’s mental burden.

6.2. Outsourcing housework

Another way of looking at housework is its outsourcing. A substantial number of these men (and their female or male companions in the case of those who live in a couple) outsource housework through use of a cleaning lady (and more rarely a man), or the use of cleaning services. While the origin of or the decision for outsourcing are diverse, the results are identical: no longer putting up with domestic constraints oneself.

Different cases came to light: outsourcing chosen by the companion, outsourcing chosen by both members of the couple, outsourcing by parental family members,³⁵ and outsourcing chosen by a father who lives alone with his children. Other cases are more unusual: as in a gay couple, in which the companion pays a cleaning lady to do his share. And there are many men who explicitly refer to the use of machines (automatic vacuum cleaners, washing machines, etc.) to carry out housework.

Outsourcing simplifies the lives of these men and their female or male companions. In terms of social gender relationships, the outsourcing observed in France, Belgium and to a different degree in Greece (where the family support provided by women is still very present) quite profoundly change the conditions for the exercise of masculine domination. Outsourcing enables, facilitates and supports the professional employment of companions and domestic investment by men, and it is therefore a facilitator of equality between the genders for the couples or the single people concerned.

Its deeper meaning remains to be considered, including in terms of social relationships. Is the massive outsourcing of housework by the use of women with more precarious statuses (domestic employees of immigrant origins, etc.) equality?

While there are frequent accounts of the reduction of the asymmetrical double standard, in which each person fits in with the standards of the other and gives way, other men say that the renegotiation is neither linear, nor problem-free. Several interviews also tackle the obstacles to “giving way”: the female companion who cleans before the cleaning lady visits, the fearful mother who is afraid that the man will take poor care of the children, etc.

7. Fatherhood

Many of the men have experienced fatherhood. Three cases presented themselves: men in couples with children, those who bring up their offspring alone, and those in Greece whose children are brought up by their mother. We note right away that among these, apart from a few trade-unionist men still embittered by the legal conditions of a separation, we did not come across “angry men” who were angry with a particular woman or with particular women, or divorced fathers bent on revenge. There is every indication that, whether married or not, amicable separation is the rule among these men under renegotiation and among their partners.

An initial observation: faced with the current difficulties related to the couple, the reconciliation between public life and private life, and the exercising of parenthood, some men assert their lack of desire to have children or, for gay men in particular, their inability to have them or the complexity that this represents.

³⁵ Parents, grandparents, etc.

Others speak of “happy fatherhoods”. Either the man looks after his child/children in a consequential way (we even had the case of kangaroo fathers), or men describe “harmonious” sharing: very near to one another, alternating custody within geographic proximity, closely arranged periods of time: one week in two is often mentioned. But apart from these cases which are cited the most in order to illustrate the sharing of authority and tasks, other types of difficulties have come to light in the statements.

The difficulties of fatherhood: reassuring men

Even outside the debates on homosexual parenthood that are ongoing in some countries, the free exercise of fatherhood and “egalitarian” responsibility for children still come up against numerous obstacles. Many refer to gendered stereotypes, stereotypes of men and of their female companions, and stereotypes of public authorities and without doubt of the State.

The legacy of patriarchy with which went hand in hand the power of husbands/fathers, fathers absent from the domestic scene and the exclusivity of mothers in the bringing up of children, has left a mark in the form of some men’s lack of confidence in their ability to look after children.

Pressures of stereotypes on mothers, non-belief in men’s abilities to look after children, discovery of the joys (and the constraints) of fatherhood following a separation? The fact remains that a way found by some men, in general in this case in agreement with the mother, to properly come to terms with being a father is distancing himself from the former conjugal or parental couple by making the alternation less frequent: some men talk about a long-term time distribution (one year in two) for having responsibility for the children, which provides the time to re-establish the bond with the children, others place a distance between the homes.

These measures attempt to counter the difficulties of dividing the mental burden of parenthood between men and women. Several men in this way explain the obstacles to “sharing the tasks” related to the education of the children, their spouse’s or former spouse’s difficulties in letting go of the public functions and tasks related to childhood: contact with teachers, the authorities, etc. This can moreover become an obstacle to new parenthood. To this attests a man who speaks about his attempt to obtain parental leave and who found himself objecting to the current non-egalitarian logic of the authorities in France according to which only one parent is considered for parental leave. Others explain how, aside from the conflicts on the right to custody (widely covered by the media), the legal system is resistant to hearing about men taking responsibility for children.

Furthermore, the absence of conflicts regarding custody does not mean that separations are not difficult, that they do not produce feelings of anguish and that it is not difficult for the man and the woman to get along. In short, the legal system, its laws, the practices of legal or social assistance professionals and stereotypes regarding maternity or paternity, often combine to oppose the voluntary taking of responsibility for children by men.

A lot has been written about fathers. Often, under the pretext of paternity, the writings are turned against women: some men and certain groups have generalised a dispute with one woman into a dispute with all women. However, and notwithstanding these often virilist forms, the issue of the “sharing” of children still remains unresolved.

8. By way of conclusion

Unlike the theories of calamity that see a generalised effect of masculine crises in boys’ educational disengagement, in the rate of suicides committed by men and in men’s domestic violence, the study of men under renegotiation shows – if one accepts that it is supposed to be first and foremost qualitative – that the pursuit of gender equality does not lead to complete disorder for men or even a generalised discussion of crisis.

Men, at least some men, are changing, and in a way that favours equality, although in the case of many of them, their practices are more egalitarian than their stereotyped statements, which still reproduce naturalist or essentialist visions of the sexes and of gender.

The changes in men are obvious in the studied corpus of men under renegotiation: criticising parental models, distancing themselves from professional employment (although this still constitutes the mainspring of most male itineraries), taking responsibility for all or part of the housework even if it means routinising it or outsourcing it through the use of domestic staff, looking after children full-time or part-time, incorporating in France and in Belgium the demands of women during the course of the conjugal career, in particular in a second couple (following a period of post-conjugal celibacy in which men, whether they are heterosexual or gay, adjust their daily practices

in line with criticism from their partners), and, for some living their homosexual desires including in a couple, etc.

Men are changing, but not always in the way that women want, and even less in a way that we sociologists could “predict”. While certain changes have to be analysed as new resistances to change or to equality, as reconstructions (or new clothing, as François de Singly rightly puts it³⁶) of male domination, the body of male lifestyles cannot be reduced to this.

Furthermore, the men that we encountered lack models that permit them to be identified and discussed. They can no doubt sing the praises of their personal “DIY efforts”, but how can one not associate these deficiencies with the suffering that they have experienced at one time or another in their itinerary, in their practico-practical pursuit (meaning aside from discussion) of models that are an alternative to the mandatory virility. We are obliged to note the shortage of studies on men and the gulf in the field of gender (which goes beyond just feminist studies) between studies on women and those on men. And this observation of deficiency can be extended, say men, to all of the reflections, writings and works that could support men in their changes towards equality. There are no or few identifying models, no or few places in which to talk about the break-down of virility, the doubts that give rise to feminist or gay questioning, and the anguish caused by the evolution of societies that is reducing men’s privileges and forcing men to redefine themselves.

If we do not wish to leave the exclusivity of making provision for men just to reactionary and anti-egalitarian groups of divorced fathers who transform a dispute with one woman into a war with all women, particularly those fighting for equality, the question of social support for men in an egalitarian issue is crucial.

We still need to know who to support and how

Our study highlights different cultural models (at least this is how we characterise it provisionally for want of a better way) of masculinity and virility. Between the universalist options of the French and Belgians and the differentialist models that came up in Greece, between the almost entirely urbanised territories of Northern and Central Europe and the still largely rural areas of the South, in the middle of confrontations with the historically different virile Orders (related to the Army, religion, war, economic struggles, the forms of libido dominandi, etc.) become apparent not a multitude, but a selection of models of virility whose limits and links to equality between men and women we still do not know how to define. It seems that only gay men have taken advantage of the transversalisation created by the Internet and recent struggles to coordinate discussion and demands, if not practices.

In short, the studies must continue.

³⁶ de Singly, F. (1993). ‘Les habits neufs de la domination masculine’, *Esprit* (11), pp. 54-64.

Masculine resistance to change: the case of male politicians and administrative representatives

Martine Corbière

1. Presentation of the research

This article proposes to review the results of research funded by the European Commission that aimed to shed light on masculine resistance to change regarding equality between men and women. The study took place in 2003–2004 in 3 countries: France, Belgium and Greece. However, only the Belgian and French data will be presented here.

Getting the measure of masculine resistance to change led us to focus our research on *male politicians and administrators directly involved, due to their position, in the national implementation of gender equality policies*. We wanted to find men engaged in the different levels of the development and updating of directives that were selected beforehand. We also interviewed individuals with an elective mandate: territorial elected officials and elected officials from trade unions. We also met with senior civil servants and senior administrative representatives.

Our aim was to identify the difficulties in practice of implementing international and national directives to build gender equality in a specific territory.

Our study also led us to look at the position of the interviewees in their domestic environment even though they exercise high-ranking positions in the professional sphere in order to measure the interdependence of these two spheres. Our analysis seeks, following this detour into private life, to measure the possible capability of these men to seize and/or create the possibility of a demasculinisation of the professional sphere even though they exercise high-ranking positions in it because this today appears to be the bastion to weaken in order to achieve real equality.

The results presented here come from the analysis of 49 interviews carried out in France and Belgium. In order to gather data that was at once defined and contextualised, we chose to look at four sectors in France with an equality remit. The fields of employment, education, continuing vocational training and also that of urban planning policy – all featuring in framework documents concerning gender equality – were the focus of our attention. These spheres of actions formulated and driven by policies and carried out by administrative representatives, therefore offered us the opportunity to meet with men positioned in the different levels of the development and updating of directives that were selected beforehand. 36 interviews (34 men + 2 women) had to be carried out in order to fit this methodological option. We also interviewed individuals with an elective mandate: a mayor, vice-chairmen of town committees, regional councillors, general councillors and also university presidents and chairmen of employers' associations. We also met with senior civil servants and senior administrative representatives: a regional prefect, a county prefect, a town sub-prefect and also a county director of a department devolved from the state, directors of structures focusing on issues relating to training and employment. Finally, we also interviewed policy officers with the title of "resource person for equality" in sectors of activity engaged in concrete directives such as for example the feminisation of traditionally masculine employment sectors.

Given the specificity of Belgian structures, another strategy for the composition of our corpus was selected. It again involved the carrying out of interviews with actors with an interest in equal opportunities, but a career-oriented approach, with respect to the national context, could not be envisaged. That being the case we interviewed senior representatives from the Brussels region, male politicians and administrative representatives, policy officers at the Institute for the equality of women and men and finally people working within the institutions that manage employment policies in Belgium. A total of 11 men and 2 women were interviewed in this context.

2. Awareness of gendered distribution in the professional and political spheres

During the course of these meetings, we wanted to record statements that translate the representations constructed by these men on the positioning of women in the economic and professional spheres. In order to stimu-

late remarks from them, we also asked these men to describe to us the position of women in their structure (political or administrative).

2.1. On the subject of horizontal segregation³⁷

The administrative representatives encountered refer to the very significant feminisation of their structures. This is considered to be very clear by all of our study subjects. However, starting from this statement of fact, which is easily identified by all, the interpretations diverge. For some, this level of feminisation is simply proof that the government is *"entirely favourable to women"*. Nevertheless, some made the time to go into the history of the institution of which they in the end said nothing save to suggest that it indeed weighs on the gendered characteristics of administrative jobs. Through this recourse to institutional heritage, they are naturalising the situation observed. Some of the study subjects' remarks, far from being terse and superficial, are based on diverse themes (childcare or other unsatisfied collective needs, a job that enables the reconciliation of family life and private life) in order to talk about a situation that they present to us as an evolving social construct but which still has to assume a gendered heritage.

Nevertheless, there is fairly limited awareness of horizontal segregation: none of the study subjects describe this fixation of women in government as being part of the system although some of them made time to note it in a wider structural framework.

These study subjects who hold a management post necessarily have the task of staff management. They mention the difficulty, resulting from this very high level of feminisation, in the organisation of work. Being open to the public on certain days of the week is occasionally problematic. Requests for leave due to the sickness of a child are still mainly made by women. The same applies for requests for part-time working and parental leave.

They all call for a greater desegregation of jobs. The end of quotas to safeguard men's jobs in the government is put forward to emphasise the significance of this issue. For some, the call for more men in the institution's contingents goes beyond the simple passing over of the organisational difficulties created by female jobs. They speak at length, if need be, about specific groups such as unemployed young people aged 16-25 who could benefit from a more mixed reception. Apart from these specific cases, many maintain that mixed teams are in fact teams that complement the nature and quality of the service provided. Men and women's attention would not be focused on the same dimensions of the work.

We recall the following points from the exchanges on the position of women in the institution: while these men believe that the overly large presence of women leads to serious dysfunction, a number of them extol feminine qualities, thereby betraying their essentialist visions.

After having considered their employees, the study subjects spontaneously spoke to us about their structures' "customers". The directors of employment services and advisors from the field of continuing vocational training are genuinely engaged with these issues of inequality between men and women. For them it is a genuine employment issue, prompting them to consideration and very often actions. We observe a genuinely integrated concern. Analyses concerning users are much more thorough and referenced than those that they developed previously on their female colleagues. In view of this shift in the discussion, it seems that, for the men of our corpus, it is easier to develop a vision of the inequality of treatment when one talks about people who are the concern of social welfare. It did not appear possible for women as a group to constitute an inferior category in the structure; it is when one touches on an approved group in difficulty that it is more possible to encounter remarks that elaborate on unequal, asymmetric relations.

To end this analysis of the awareness of horizontal segregation, let us make a detour through the depictions of the male politicians interviewed of their party and the various premises of national governance. They observe without difficulty that the latter have fewer female members than male ones. Little information is provided to explain the low presence of women in political groups. The explanations for this are still quick and behaviourist in nature, namely they mention an "attitude of retreat on the part of women". There was nothing on possible processes to exclude very masculine organisations and there were some, but not very many, reflections on the difficult reconciliation of private life and professional life.

³⁷ Gendered segregation that crosses the various professional spheres. This divide leads for example to a massive presence of women in the sphere of education or also in public administrations.

2.2. The issue of vertical segregation³⁸

The developments that illustrate the issue of vertical segregation, looked into with the administrative representatives, corroborate the evident absence of a clear vision of the hierarchical relations between the two genders. Many of the study subjects believe that the women within government cannot experience unequal treatment. The law is clear and the same for all and they can also not imagine finding within their structures substance to support the hypothesis that tends to highlight differentiated treatment for men and women. According the study subjects, women are present at all levels of the hierarchy. Only a precise post by post breakdown that we carried out with them, supported by an organisation chart, enables them to measure vertical segregation. Some men see in this configuration a simple fact of chance, not being able to imagine that it is the mark of a redundant social construction.

We note however that a certain number of interviewees in the four French career paths spontaneously observed that women are more rarely present in executive and management posts. They immediately specified that they had contributed since their arrival to a rebalancing of the situation. Each time that they were given the opportunity, they said they had preferentially appointed women to high-ranking posts. The information that they summon in order to explain this statement of fact is in no way an argument aimed at recognising their contribution to the fight against unequal treatment. Some of them spoke to us of a “demographic state of affairs” that is imposed on them and that leads them to promote women.

Occasionally the arrival of women at the summit of the hierarchy simply results from an institutional will that must display an exemplary attitude in view of the missions that are entrusted to it. Our study subjects describe themselves as conscientious operators of a policy that is not defined by them and for which they receive very clear directives with monitoring of pre-established objectives. This exemplarity consists of allowing women to hold important posts, or also allowing people of immigrant origins to enter the authorities, but also of welcoming into its staff as a priority people who present a deficit of employability. The issue of the poor positioning of women in the employment market then comes within a very broad issue of social justice that is moving forward and needs to be developed. This vision of things is accompanied by the difficulty of engaging detail on the specific issue of women’s position in the professional sphere, which they prefer to envisage as a particular form of the fight against the inequalities about which they possess more references to guide their reflections and construct their arguments.

The study in Belgium in general revealed men who would make specific remarks about vertical segregation. Figures were announced, explanations intensified and clarified this institutional awareness to give us a glimpse of a fairly accurate vision of the differentiated position of men and women in the workplace. These men bear the mark of the policies carried out in Belgian administrative structures and have, it seems, constructed reflection based on experiences they have witnessed and in which they were occasionally even the actors.

The Belgian corpus was made up of men who had all had, at a given time in their career, the specific task of dealing with the issue of gender inequality and not simply an orientation watered down by many others, provides a less “common sense” vision than that found in the French panel. We can attempt to provide two explanations for this: first of all the Belgian study population includes a certain number of men who, although they belong to a dominant social group, have occasionally, due to other political or sexual backgrounds, themselves experienced the inferior position in the structure. That being the case we are tempted to say that those who have in one way or another been forced to confront inferiorisation (minority party) or perhaps discrimination (homosexual) are more inclined to recognise and analyse situations of unequal treatment. The other element, which may explain the different tone between Belgian men and French men, concerns the study by career path chosen in the approach to the subject in France. Getting the measure of the equality policies in four sectors clearly identified as theoretically concerned by the latter and conducting the study in a specific territory (a region in France) led us to encounter all of the actors involved in all levels of the hierarchy in this given context. Consequently, the profiles of posts were more confused than in Belgium and the institutions provided were in the case of some simply permeated by a disembodied directive and less systematically stimulated for concrete results. Also their employees and managers did not have the same foundation of experience as their Belgian neighbours.

3. The implementation of equality policies

During the course of the interviews with these men and women, our questions sought to gather information referring to actual practices. The questions on this area of study were deliberately asked in a direct way. What were they implementing? What methods were they using? What partnerships existed? At this stage of the exchange the re-

³⁸ Segregation at work within the hierarchy: from its base to its summit.

searchers practised the annotated agenda technique to find out the dates of the latest meetings and the agendas of these meetings. We went as far as examining their knowledge of the framework documents regarding equality. We wanted to hear them talk about their achievements. Those who could not recount practical experience could nevertheless allow us to discover their missions, their key areas of work and their work issues, in order in the end to help us understand why they had skipped over directives that were nevertheless in theory also aimed at them.

3.1. Equality policies: a subsidiary issue

Every institution, on the basis of its exclusive or shared areas of power, gives priority to specific objectives, while cross-cutting policies are neglected and indeed completely abandoned. For some, it is a matter of placing an emphasis on land using planning and on local development, for others it is necessary to look internationally when certain public services make a priority of leaving behind “the bad posture of administrative management”.

In the end, there seemed to be priorities to which one dedicates oneself completely, followed by everything that constitutes crisis management (movements for industrial action, social movements, heatwaves, civil protection, food safety) and then finally the “must-do’s” concerning living together better and more justice, which are patently obvious but are hardly ever mobilising.

The interviewees in this way recounted all of their investments on specific points, which at the time of the study represented a force for the enormous accumulation of energies and reflections. They told us that enormous challenges are added to dossiers some of which are political and the rest of which are technical. Expectations in terms of results and timing lead them to focus much of their resources to honour a directive. Pressure is described as very important, and they spoke to us of urgency and the imperious nature of demand.

Every interviewee mentioned action programmes, framed by dossiers with complex administrative engineering, that mobilise them strongly, enhanced for some by a task of coordination and arbitration.

Finally, in a more residual way but expressed several times, we have noted the weight brought to bear on activity by the mandate of an elected representative that is nearing its end. The catalogue of urgent matters becomes clearer, the personal marks that some men wish to leave behind at their departure make the actions to be carried out a priority or more marginal.

3.2. Action variable, analysis variable, element of context

We recall that in these sectors, which are all marked out by framework documents regarding equality between men and women, we observe a very variable level of implementation. There is a first group of actors for whom equality policies constitute an action variable, a second group for which they are an analysis variable and a last group for which they are an element of context.

The very great majority of actors engaged in *missions relating to employment or continuing vocational training* mobilise resources around what is commonly called equality policies. *Equality policies constitute here an action variable* and two institutional groups are illustrated in this first term of our typology.

On the one hand we have bodies such as the ANPE, AFPA or ORBEM (Brussels-Capital Region), which conduct actions in the fight against discrimination. Women, in the same way as other users recognised as being in difficulty, benefit from particular attention in the form of specific arrangements. In this way therefore women but also foreigners or people of immigrant origins, people with disabilities, people recently released from prison and so on, are singled out by integration targets that are subject to assessment. The staff of the structures that we encountered critically scrutinise their work in terms of equal opportunities which must give women better social positioning. Women present a deficit of training and employment, which must be countered in the name of this ideal of social justice. According to the men studied who work in this type of structure, the difficulty lies in the demand for complicated results to be achieved but above all repeated. In fact, the study subjects revealed that their work in networks with the economic world is realisable for a time, but interest in it fades if their service does not play a spurring role. Furthermore internal resistance has an impact.

On the other hand, in France we have employers’ associations (such as the building federation, the public works federation) which can display a mobilisation concerning the employment of women with very different concerns than those of the preceding institutional group. Women are the subject of specific actions because they are clearly perceived as a balancing workforce in sectors with a workforce shortage. It is then not at all a question of a gender issue and not even an issue of equality between men and women. It is at the very most about making professions

that were traditionally masculine from now on accessible to women. Generally speaking, the situation of women is only very rarely mentioned, because while there is an interest in them, it is because they constitute a potential that today is difficult to ignore. It is not a matter of rebalancing an unequal state of affairs, in short working out of philanthropy, but the selling points of action reveal a pragmatism tied to the direct benefits of such a process. And in the end, the professional associations note a dividend from modernity that works in favour of a corporation's brand image.

We note that for this group of interviewees, those who find in the integration of women an opportunity to achieve an internally defined objective, there is very clearly a lack of knowledge about European guidelines. In fact, the Community legal framework is never mentioned. When we asked the study subjects if their actions were guided by European documents, they all said that they never referred to them, while a minority knew of their existence but were not able to state their principles. Their programmes are organised on the basis of agreements established in a local partnership framework. European Social Fund financing is a budget line that never came up in the statements of the study subjects as a resource that serves a major European policy area.

For the men encountered, the implementation difficulties lie in the resistance of partners to join in with the actions that they pilot. The "us and them" pattern that we were able to identify on several occasions in the dynamic of the statements, focuses the resistance which is analysed more as over-cautiousness, and in any case never as inertia, on the actors of their area of action. The representatives of the employers' federations refer to, without condemning them, the heads of companies who demonstrate a lack of conviction and therefore commitment to their objectives. The attitudes to the non-participants are understanding, translating in our view a language that a short time ago they shared, representations from which the initiators of action plans in all likelihood only distanced themselves a while ago.

Let us now change career path. In *the field of education*, the issue of equality is more of *an analysis variable*. The interviewees regularly produce gendered statistics, make observations and perhaps display an intention for future action, but have themselves yet to undertake anything, apart from a university president who created a policy officer post. The statements made are occasionally totally naive, "what is the problem?" we were asked, or very fatalistic: the divide between boys and girls takes effect upstream and therefore as an actor of higher education they can do nothing.

Ultimately, we also encountered political and administrative actors for whom equality between men and women is an element of their professional landscape, *a variable of the general context* but which in the end hardly ever tests them.

For example, the men that we encountered in the *urban policy career path* are largely experienced in discussing racism and have more difficulty talking about sexism. When they talked to us about segregation it was primarily to bring up the theme of immigration, which appears to mask all of the other forms of segregation. In their view, the difficulties that still exist with regard to equality between men and women are especially visible among populations of immigrants or of immigrant origins. We note a very low use of scientific messages, while on the other hand these men appear to be very open to media messages: many spoke to us about the issue of conjugal violence in the same terms as those used by the media in recent months.

4. Centrality of employment and domestic contributions

If we have concluded that there is a low level of critical scrutiny concerning equality between men and women on the part of the actors engaged in fighting against inequality between the sexes, it is then hardly surprising to observe some conservatism in conjugal living arrangements.

4.1. Women, the balancing variable of family equilibrium

For the purposes of our analysis, we will review the professional situation of our interviewees' spouses in order to note, despite the diversity of the situations, some recurrent forms. While in France and in Belgium women's labour force participation rate exceeds 80%, a high proportion of the wives of the men we encountered are women who stay at home: 14/41. The husbands' career demands no doubt constitute a strong determining factor in this state of affairs, although this retreat into the family sphere was occasionally presented to us as the choice of the women much more than of the couple. The reality is without any doubt more complex because the men's successive geographic mobility requires that the women redouble their efforts to enter a professional activity by assimilating a state of affairs that is out of their control. The vast majority of these women have suspended their professional activity on the arrival of the first or second child.

Among the women who work, many of them carry out a part-time activity. Only 17/41 occupy (or occupied before their retirement) a full-time post. We note that among the latter, some choose posts with atypical working hours in order to better meet the demands of family life by ensuring a presence in the home at important times (departure from school in the afternoon, etc.), or worked part-time when their children were younger.

All of the men encountered (with the exception of one case of alternating custody following a separation and another of two years of parental leave taken by one father) specified that it is their wives who put a lot of work into the activities of the nursing and raising of their children. They described this situation as being harmful to women's careers. Nevertheless, some mentioned with the same reasoning dynamic the need for a child to benefit from parents who are available, namely who can escape having too many professional demands. Although the statements are at times genderless (parents, people), they shift as far as naming the mother as the guardian of good upbringing

4.2. What do they do when they "lend a hand"?

The vast majority of the men that we encountered contribute little in the home. They say they know how to do everything or nearly everything but the vast majority do not do very much. The mental burden remains in all of the cases with the woman.

The reason being of course that these male politicians and administrative representatives are characterised by the centrality of work. Much time is spent at work. For some it is in fact time on holiday that enables them to dip back into everyday domestic life.

There never appears a loss of fondness for this investment in work, there is no suggestion of possible work-related suffering. There is little culpability in this over-investment in professional life, even though it is occasionally found among the youngest men of the corpus concerning the little time spent with children.

The study subjects have in some cases specific and infrequent interventions (reading the gas meter), and a minority get involved more regularly (every evening) in concrete tasks, while the majority busy themselves in limited periods of time (on the weekend, on holiday).

These men undeniably take advantage by only bearing a residual share of the constraints of the home. In other words, their disengagement from these everyday occurrences that are taken on by women (wife, other female relative, domestic employee) enables them to successfully invest (we recall that their professional positioning stands them at high levels of the hierarchy) in the working environment. However, that said, far from being constructed in a binary way, the terms of the negotiation occasionally take a shape that allows us to understand how much men and women are jointly active in the dynamic and continuous construction of the gender prison. In fact, the wives, far from occupying a position that is simply assigned by their spouse, participate in the eviction of men from domestic life. Some men who are taking on responsibility, say they are thwarted by a hostility from their wife at seeing them engaging in tasks for which she has the skills.

5. Conclusion

To conclude our analysis we wish to emphasise that, in France and Belgium, we observed that the implementation of equality policies was a subsidiary issue opposite areas of work designated as being a priority. Our research leads us to assert that there is very often an absence of structural policy for equality. In fact people with the title of "equality policy officer" allow institutions that have created this post profile to parade a branch of work on the issue of women. Very often, the various services completely neglect to integrate the issue of equality into their actions because they are assured of the presence of people who are responsible for it; so this excuses them from conducting a policy to that effect. We have also observed sham intentions, incapable of giving impetus to a cross-cutting policy in all of the services. We suggest the term of the outsourcing of equality policy when we observe this type of institutional configuration.

Furthermore, when the study subjects express the intention to move the public sphere forward, this in no way initiates a more radical transformation of the relations between men and women in their private sphere. The men encountered stand in a discursive way in favour of equality. It is likely that these men are creating an adaptive process that is able to protect a hard core of privileges (associated with a monopoly: that of men and above all Great Men), while expressing ideas of equality, but without letting themselves be forced into a genuine transformation.

Finally we emphasise that reconsidering the position of women, indeed joining in solidarity with their concerns, at no time led these men to contemplate the issue of masculinity, its privileges and its suffering.

“With us, but not among us”: a paradox of positive discrimination

Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi and Fabrice Buschini

1. Introduction

The aim of positive discrimination is to give certain categories of the population access to fields (politics for example) or decision-making roles (executive posts for example) from which they are generally excluded, using voluntarist and preferential policies.³⁹ The populations concerned are generally women, or certain ethnic or linguistic minorities, although the measures can also concern other social categories whose numerical representation in the field under consideration is largely poor.⁴⁰ This under-representation is result, in all likelihood, of discrimination, as can be discerned among people with a disability, members of minority groups on account of their religion, sex or age, etc. Such discrimination is difficult to dispute in the case of women, whose rarity in decision-making posts contrasts fiercely with the fact that they constitute one half of the human genus.

The first positive measures appeared in the 1960s in the United States, with the aim of ensuring better equality of opportunities for the black community in employment and education. In the past few years, they have also been spreading on this side of the Atlantic. In France, a journalist with *Le Monde* declared that positive discrimination “progresses slowly and sheepishly, keeping a low profile and not always giving its name” (15 November 2003). This is in all likelihood due, at least in part, to the fact that the French political system is based on republican values which make it wary of the granting of any right or favour to categories of people, for fear of assisting the emergence of communitarist sentiments or of strengthening them. This system cannot accept the idea of preferential treatment granted to a minority – of an ethnic, religious, or other nature – but at the very most a “nudge in the right direction”. It has nevertheless created positive discrimination policies, as attested to by the “priority education zones” (ZEP), created in 1981 to provide more resources to the educational institutions located in disadvantaged districts with a high density of immigrant populations. The opening from 2001 at the Institut d'études politiques (Institute of Political Studies) of a specific entry route, without competitive examinations, for the most worthy pupils from these ZEPs, the imposition on companies for at least 6% of their employees to be people with a physical disability, or also, since 2000, the institution of the parity of the two sexes on electoral lists are other examples of this. Nicolas Sarkozy's stance of questioning the existence of the ZEPs, even though he wanted to appoint a “Muslim prefect”, has suddenly placed positive discrimination back on the agenda. The subject of positive discrimination has since become a controversial issue with occasionally virulent tonalities both in the political world and in public opinion. These arguments already show through in the choice of terms, which too often carry in them a judgement on the concept. While “positive measures” and “positive discrimination” are widely used in the French-speaking world, one also comes across “reverse discrimination”, “inverse discrimination”, “anti-discriminatory action”, “action to correct inequalities”, “preferential treatment”, “positive mobilisation”, or also “equal employment opportunities”.⁴¹ This variety of names, to which can be added a string of metaphors such as that of a “social elevator”, points to the diversity of stances of different people on the presumed origin of the inequalities between social categories, their more or less unjust nature, their inescapability or their mutability, as well as on the methods judged appropriate to remedy it. The idea of equal opportunities, for example, only advocates greater respect for the principle of equal opportunities for all. It contrasts with that of reverse discrimination, which brings a more aggressive tone to action and which, according to Eric Fassin's formula, offers “the mirror image of the discrimination that it claims to tackle”.⁴²

39 Cf. Calvès, G. (2004). *La discrimination positive*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

40 Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. et al. (2007). 'Noir ou pauvre? Représentations de l'inégalité sociale et des moyens pour la corriger chez les étudiants brésiliens' (submitted for publication).

41 Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. (2002). *Les représentations des groupes dominants et dominés: Collections et agrégats*, Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble.

42 Fassin, E. (2003). 'Penser la discrimination positive', in: D. Borrillo (ed.), *Lutter contre les discriminations*, Paris: La Découverte, p. 56.

2. The variety of measures

A second source of debate concerns the great variety of positive measures envisaged in practice. For public opinion, the prototype measure – often the only one known – is that of minimum quotas for access to a profession, a sphere of activity or a high hierarchical level. It is therefore the idea of the numerical parity of groups. This type of measure is very unusual: quotas have been prohibited in the United States since a Supreme Court decision in 1978 and, following a decision from the European Commission, in Europe, they are subject to conditions that greatly limit their impact. The reality has much more substance: Konrad and Linnehan,⁴³ for example, manage to catalogue as many as 119 types of measures put in place in American companies. Among them, are listed measures focused on the objectives to be achieved and that directly challenge employment procedures, such as for example the preference for a minority candidate who is sufficiently qualified for the post. But there are also listed there a lot of measures intended to offer a more equitable environment to minorities, such as incentives to submit applications, or also mentoring and training programmes specifically reserved for the minorities concerned.

Our recent work has made it possible to validate a typology for positive measures focused on the objectives to be achieved.⁴⁴ This typology organises them along a continuum according to the respective weight that they give to the beneficiaries' personal qualities (skills and qualifications, in short that which is a matter of "personology") and to their inclusion in a social category (their membership of a minority group). At one end of the continuum, the measures set aside any reference to membership of a group – it is occasionally said that they are *blind* to the corresponding category. They then ensure a stricter application of commonly accepted competence criteria. At the other end, the measures focus on the expected result and in particular, for the most aggressive among them, on the numerical parity of the groups concerned without taking into account the skills of the people chosen, or through a screening of skills only within the minority. In this way, a measure specifying that, *when several people apply for a job, preference must be given to a woman over a man if they have equivalent qualifications*, gives priority to the personology of the candidates, and tempers it using category criteria. A measure stipulating that, *when people's skills meet the minimum requirement for the post, preference must be given to a woman over a man regardless of their respective skill levels* subjects personological criteria to category criteria. The idea that underpins this continuum is that the more one moves towards a category definition of people to the detriment of their idiosyncratic characteristics, the more the tendency to make use of stereotypes manifests itself, namely of qualities that are rigid, depersonalised and usually judged to be rather negative, and assumed to be common to all members of the group in question.⁴⁵

3. Some classic results

Social science studies have widely borne out some simple facts.⁴⁶ Unsurprisingly, a positive measure is judged more favourably by people belonging to the group destined to benefit from it than by others. On the one hand, there are considerations of personal and collective interest. On the other hand, the fact of belonging to a discriminated group creates a feeling that the social structure is rigid and unjust, which is combined with the feeling of being powerless to as an individual get over the barriers erected by the majority in power. From that point on the social hierarchy appears difficult to change, other than through conflict, or, if appropriate, through voluntarist policies such as, in fact, positive discrimination. Another well-established result is that a positive measure is rejected all the more when it moves away from the personal pole and towards the group pole, that is, when it becomes more aggressive. Finally, positive measures receive a better reception when they are supported by a justification. This can follow two principles: promoting the diversity of the groups in a field or providing compensation to the members of the minority group for the discrimination suffered in the past.⁴⁷ Occasionally, a justification combines these two principles, as attests the definition of "positive action" dating back to 1988 which appears in the European Commission's *Positive action manual*: "Positive action aims to complement the legislation on equal treatment and includes all measures contributing to the elimination of inequality in practice. [...] A programme of positive action is a planned process that an employer chooses to undertake in order to implement a more balanced representation of women and men in the workplace and thereby makes possible *a more efficient use of the qualities and talents of the workforce*."

43 Konrad, A. M. and F. Linnehan (1995). 'Formalized HRM structures: Coordinating equal employment opportunity or concealing organizational practices?', *Academy of Management Journal* 38, pp. 787-820.

44 Lorenzi-Cioldi, *Les représentations des groupes dominants et dominés*; Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. and F. Buschini (2005). 'Vaut-il mieux être une femme qualifiée ou être qualifiée de femme? Effets paradoxaux de la catégorisation dans la discrimination positive', in: M. Sanchez-Mazas and L. Licata (eds), *L'autre. Regards psychosociaux*, Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, pp. 279-308.

45 Cf. Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. (1994). *Les androgynes*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

46 Cf. Harrison, D.A. et al. (2006). 'Understanding attitudes toward affirmative action programs in employment: Summary and meta-analysis of 35 years of research', *Journal of Applied Psychology* 91(5), pp. 1013-1036.

47 Thomas, R.R. (1990). 'From affirmative action to affirming diversity', *Harvard Business Review* 90, pp. 107-117.

Our own studies have clarified certain phenomena at work in the establishment of positive measures. Studies conducted in companies have shown that a professional ascent that is more rapid than that of the other members of one's group can lead a person to doubt the ability to take on their new role. This doubt intensifies if the mobility is due to a positive measure, and all the more so when this measure is aggressive. Self-handicapping conduct then has a tendency to emerge in the person who has benefited from the positive measure. It can, for example, take the form of procrastination, insufficient preparation, psychosomatic complaints, or the taking of drugs.⁴⁸ The mechanism for this self-destructive conduct could be the following: feeling favoured by their employment or their promotion, but under circumstances that make them uncertain regarding the real causes for their success, the person self-handicaps themselves in order to be ready to attribute the failures that they fear in the future to causes that are unrelated to their skills. It is unquestionably a detrimental impact of positive measures, which has been the subject of studies in disciplines as diverse as psychiatry⁴⁹ and sociology.⁵⁰

Finally, our research has reported a better acceptance of positive discrimination measures among university students than among company workers. The student environment appears to be marked by egalitarian ideologies that are more consonant with the establishment of policies to correct social inequality.⁵¹ Regarding workers (in our research, executives of both sexes already in place), they experience a conflict of interest with the potential beneficiaries of these policies, which is in all likelihood at the root of their greater distrust of these policies. There is therefore an "objective", structural component of the attitudes towards positive discrimination.

4. A different image of the woman executive

Our studies on the representations of positive discrimination have furthermore highlighted the importance of certain identity dynamics concerning the "dominant" and "dominated" groups. In particular, a woman who rises to an executive post in the absence of a positive discrimination policy is judged to be at once competent and masculine (she is described, for example, as *authoritarian, energetic, independent, powerful, masculine*). A woman whose professional ascent has benefited from a positive measure remains competent, but is no longer judged using masculine stereotypes. She is certainly described as *profiteering, opportunistic, ruthlessly ambitious*, and fortunate, but she is, in return, credited with much more positive characteristics that come under the feminine stereotype, such as being *affectionate, calm, open, charming and feminine*.⁵² In other words, it is as if a woman occupying an executive post in the absence of positive measures has to legitimise her professional ambitions by renouncing her sex. This is in keeping with the classic studies on gender stereotypes and leadership.⁵³ The new fact here is that the proof of her competence, linked to the accentuation of her femininity, characterises her when she manages to occupy the post through a positive measure. In this way, the descriptions of a woman who rises to a higher professional status through a positive measure are tinged with feminine stereotypes. There seem to be several reasons for this.

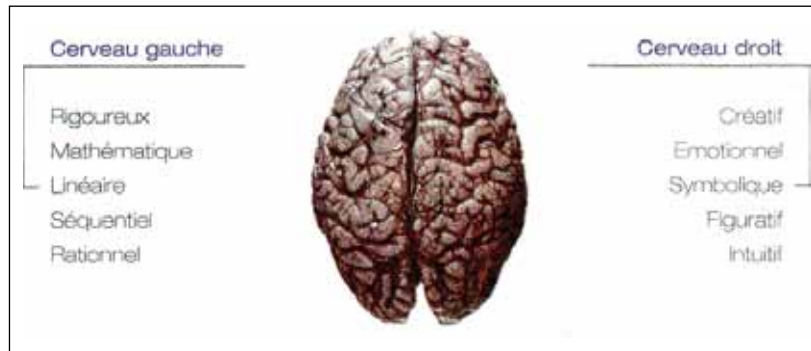
Figure 1. Advertising image representing androcentric thinking (Banque Cantonale Vaudoise)⁵⁴



- 48 Lorenzi-Cioldi, *Les représentations des groupes dominants et dominés*.
- 49 André, C. and F. Lelord (1999). *L'estime de soi: s'aimer pour mieux vivre avec les autres*, Paris: Odile Jacob.
- 50 Ehrenberg, A. (1998). *La fatigue d'être soi*, Paris: O. Jacob.
- 51 Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. (1991). 'Pluralité d'ancrages des représentations professionnelles chez des éducateurs en formation et des praticiens', *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale* 4, pp. 357-379.
- 52 Cf. Lorenzi-Cioldi, *Les représentations des groupes dominants et dominés*.
- 53 Schein, V.E. (1973). 'The relationship between sex-role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics', *Journal of Applied Psychology* 57, pp. 95-100.
- 54 Image text: Bringing together skills to optimise performance, BCV. ASSET MANAGEMENT, Asset management close at hand.

First of all, this tendency accompanies a recent evolution of mentalities and more generally of the climate of opinion. In its struggle against *androcentrism*, which held masculinity as the measure of everything (for an illustration, cf. Figure 1), the current of *psychological androgyny* first of all stressed the similarities between men and women as groups.⁵⁵ During the 1980s and 1990s, social science research, like public opinion, valued individual uniqueness and differentiation between people, regardless of their sex, the colour of their skin, their religion, etc.

Figure 2. Advertising image representing essentialist thinking (Eurogroup Consulting)⁵⁶



Since then, we have witnessed a return in strength of the theme of *difference*: there are specificities linked to the sex of individuals (cf. Figure 2). The insistence on the differences between men and women accompanies positive discrimination policies, which place an emphasis on the group that the beneficiaries belong to. This insistence is rooted in essentialist thinking, which judges people according to their membership of a group rather than according to their

own, unique qualities that are different from those of other people. Essentialism attributes an unchanging nature to a person, which they share with all of the other members of their group. Most often, this nature is identified by means of a small number of personality characteristics, psychological qualities, tendencies, opinions and attitudes judged to be permanent and unchanging, and deployed in all circumstances.

Concerning women, this tendency uses the path of the *eternal feminine*, a notion that summarises a collection of skills supposed to be natural (rather than socially acquired) and present in every one of them. These skills share similarities with subtle prejudice, particularly with the emergent forms of benevolent sexism,⁵⁷ and with the opinion according to which women are endowed with a more pleasant temperament than men.⁵⁸

They point to the singularity of the relationships that women maintain with others, in particular with the authority and power in hierarchical relationships: their capacity to listen and to be attentive to the needs of others, their utmost sensitivity in personal relationships and their pursuit of consensus rather than confrontation, their intuition and their sense of observation, their frankness and their capacity to adapt and to challenge themselves, their tendency to value others more than themselves, their creativity and, more important, their tendency to cultivate flexible, democratic and participative leadership styles.⁵⁹ It is therefore a question of qualities with expressive and relational tonalities that contrast openly with those attributed to men, which are more individualist and instrumental, and until then reputed to be useful, unfortunately, necessary, for the pursuit of a professional career, such as confidence and self-assurance, the ability to make decisions quickly, and the spirit of competition.

In this new climate of opinion, which tends to scrutinise collective differences and to confer positive value on each group, a climate that is occasionally supported by certain feminist currents going back to the studies of Carol Gilligan,⁶⁰ measures that support the female career no longer appear so misplaced. New ways of thinking about them are envisaged, making them more acceptable to the members of the majority category (men) but also to women who are already in decision-making posts.

55 Cf. Lorenzi-Cioldi, *Les androgynes*; Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. (1995). 'Androgynies au masculin et au féminin', in: M. Berthod-Wurmser et al. (eds), *La place des femmes. Les enjeux de l'identité et de l'égalité au regard des sciences sociales*, Paris: La Découverte, pp. 143-151; Lorenzi-Cioldi, F. (1996). 'Psychological androgyny: A concept in search of lesser substance. Towards the understanding of the transformation of a social representation', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 26, pp. 137-155.

56 Image text: Left brain: Rigorous / Mathematical / Linear / Sequential / Rational; Right brain: Creative / Emotional / Symbolic / Figurative / Intuitive.

57 Glick, P. and S.T. Fiske (1996). 'The ambivalent sexism inventory: Differentiating hostile and benevolent sexism', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70, pp. 491-512.

58 Eagly, A.H. and A. Mladinic (1993). 'Are people prejudiced against women?', *European Review of Social Psychology* 5, pp. 1-35.

59 Lorenzi-Cioldi, *Les représentations des groupes dominants et dominés*.

60 Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

5. When the ceiling collapses, the walls go up

The eternal feminine therefore confers a separate identity on women. Furthermore, the feeling of feminine specificity and diversity anchors women to positions that are their own. Men and women would therefore no longer be in competition for the same tasks. They would on the contrary complement each other with a view to the execution of these tasks. Nevertheless, the eternal feminine weakens the feeling of a negative interdependence between the sexes. It removes any threatening, competitive nature from women, and makes them appear as complementary to men.

This reasoning matches a paradoxical result that is emerging in our ongoing research: positive measures whose only stated criteria for promoting women to executive posts is the sex of the candidate (namely, very aggressive measures, verging on quotas) are often better accepted by opinion than measures that also take into account their qualifications.⁶¹ Surprisingly, these aggressive measures, which totally exclude men, are occasionally rejected less than softer, less restricting, measures which do not close the door on the majority group and do not therefore elude the competition between the sexes.

Our current research is deciphering the processes that underlie this dynamic that combines the essentialisation of women and the greater acceptance of positive measures in their favour. It is a matter of identifying and organising into a hierarchy the factors that influence the reception that is reserved for these measures. The main hypothesis is expressed as a chain of causation. The establishment of a positive measure renders the beneficiaries' group membership inescapably crucial. It strengthens their essentialisation, in this case in the eternal feminine. This provides, depending on its intensity, the feeling of the specificity of the group members, which, in turn, tempers the threat that this group holds over the influential majority. This weakening of the threat then leads to a greater acceptance of the positive measure.

Every positive measure causes at least two types of threats: structural and symbolic.⁶² The first, which are more "objective", concern the division of a resource, such as powerful posts, responsibilities, advantages, privileges, etc. In this case, they mainly affect men and in a more general way people (men and women) who occupy decision-making positions and roles and who see their chances of obtaining a new job, a promotion or a salary rise as being threatened. Symbolic threats come within the scope of belief systems, in particular meritocracy. They concern in particular the identity dynamics and the self-esteem of the actors. But they affect the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of positive measures differently. For the beneficiaries, the often mentioned harmful effects of a positive measure concern the ambiguity of the reasons for professional success. Are these reasons a product of individual qualities and merits (competence, effort, etc.), or of the fact of belonging to a protected group? For the influential majority, symbolic threats take the form of a criticism of the monopoly of the dominant positions, of a sphere of activity that is losing its social value due to the increasing number of women entering it, etc.

In a first study, 160 men and 159 women working in different private sector companies were informed that, in view of the observed scarcity of women in the executive posts, the management of a company (ostensibly imaginary) had decided to put in place a positive measure facilitating women's access to these posts. The participants then judged a series of statements representing the threats potentially caused by the introduction of this measure (the validity of this range is supported by studies that we conducted beforehand). Table 1 presents these statements and the averages obtained by the participants of both sexes.

61 Cf. Lorenzi-Cioldi and Buschini, 'Vaut-il mieux être une femme qualifiée ou être qualifiée de femme?'

62 For another typology of the threats, see also: Stephan, W.G. and C.W. Stephan (2000). 'An integrated threat theory of prejudice', in: S. Oskamp (ed.), *Reducing prejudice and discrimination*, Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 23-45.

Table 1. Structural and symbolic threats caused by the introduction of a positive measure

	Sex		
	woman	men	average
Reduction of opportunities for men to rise to senior executive posts M	3,6	4,0	3,8
Realisation that men monopolise executive posts M	5,4	4,6	5,0
Reduction of the power of men who occupy an executive post	3,1	3,2	3,2
Emergence of doubts among men concerning their own abilities	3,3	3,2	3,3
Realisation that men who occupy an executive post do not always have the necessary skills M	4,9	4,6	4,7
Feminisation of certain professional fields M	4,3	4,2	4,2
Need for men's greater participation in housework M	5,6	4,7	5,2
Loss of self-confidence of the spouse who see his partner acquire a better status than him	3,3	2,9	3,1
Increase of women's financial autonomy M	6,0	5,6	5,8
Women's realisation that it is possible for them to rise to executive posts M	5,9	5,4	5,7
Spreading of a poor opinion of women	3,2	3,2	3,2
Spouse's jealousy regarding his partner's career M	4,0	3,3	3,6
Realisation that women have family burdens that are harmful to their career M	4,4	4,4	4,4
Transformation of the natural order of things	2,8	3,1	2,9
Attack on the femininity of women who rise to an executive post	2,6	3,1	2,9
Appearance of doubt among women because they will not know if they have been made an executive because they are women or because they are competent W	4,1	4,5	4,3
Devaluation of women who fail in their attempt to rise to an executive position W	3,7	3,6	3,6
Fear of "not being up to it" among women who rise to an executive post W	3,6	3,6	3,6
Feeling of being "under pressure" among the women employed W	4,5	4,3	4,4

1 = not at all threatening, 7 = very threatening

[M]: Threat to men, [W]: Threat to women, for the statements judged to be the most threatening.

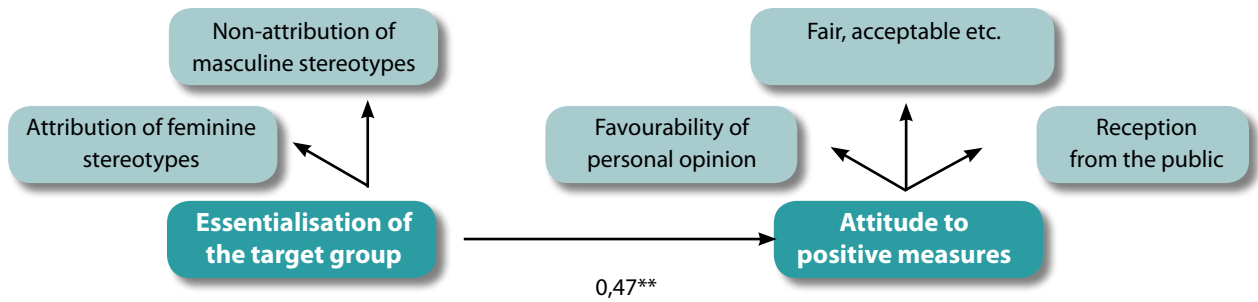
This table shows that the majority of the items (68%) obtain an average that is higher than the middle of the scale (3.5) from both sexes, which indicates the potentially threatening nature of the introduction of a positive measure (and this being an imaginary company, with the absence of any direct involvement of the participants in the establishment of the measure). But each threat applies differently to the two sexes (cf. Table 1, the symbols "M" and "W"). Among the male threats, the overall average of which reaches 4.33, emerges the potential competition represented by the access of women to executive posts, the fear of a monopoly on these posts, and the increased participation in the management of family tasks. Among the female threats, the average of which only reaches 3.65, emerge doubts on the ability to take on a role that was not acquired in accordance with meritocratic criteria, but also the fear of a devaluation of women who do not manage to rise to a senior status despite the introduction of a positive measure.

These initial results illustrate a phenomenon that is classically established in the literature, namely the reservation of individuals, whether they are men or women, towards the introduction of voluntarist policies that do not fit with the criterion of individual merit.⁶³ Our hypothesis, however, predicts that the essentialisation of the group benefiting from the positive measure leads to the weakening of the threats posed by this group, and that this favours a better reception of the positive measure. A second study tested this mechanism. The participants, 190 male workers and 190 female workers, having assessed, with the aid of stereotypical masculine and feminine traits, a hypothetical woman who had just obtained an executive post by benefiting from a positive measure, judged (as before) the threats caused by this measure. They then expressed an opinion on the fairness, acceptability and effectiveness of the positive measure, as well as on their favourability to this measure and the reception that public opinion was going to reserve for it. We will pause for a moment on the question prompting the stereotype of the newly employed woman. This question measures the essentialisation of the woman in her group, by prompting a description of her with the aid of characteristics usually judged to be typical of women (for example, "is sensitive to the needs of her team", "follows her intuition", "helps the members of her team to grow", "is emotional", "listens to the members of her team"), and typical of men ("focused on the goals to be achieved", "individualistic", "behaves like a leader", "directive", "sure of herself", etc.). A high attribution of female stereotypes, combined with a low attribution of male stereotypes, is an indication of the essentialism of the woman beneficiary in the eternal feminine.

An appropriate statistical handling of these responses (causal analysis) has made it possible to reveal the mechanism, which starting from the essentialisation of the woman beneficiary, results in a rather favourable reception of the positive measure. Figure 3 shows the first stage of this analysis. It connects the essentialisation to the favourability of the positive measure.

63 Crosby, F.J., B.M. Ferdman and B.R. Wingate (2001). 'Addressing and redressing discrimination: Affirmative action in social psychological perspective', in: R. Brown and S.L. Gaertner (eds), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Intergroup processes*, Malden: Blackwell, pp. 495-513.

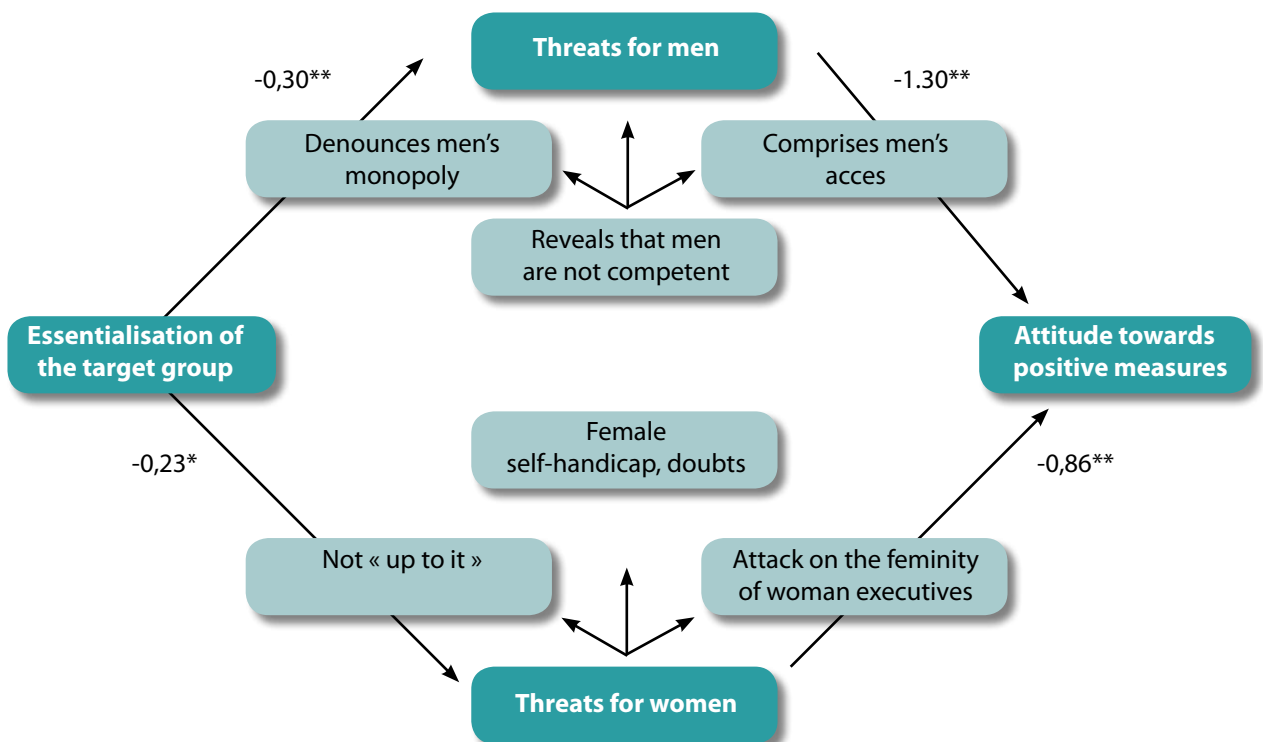
Figure 3. Role of the essentialisation of the woman beneficiary in the favourability of the positive measure. Causal analysis (the rectangles shows examples of statements)



One sees the appearance of a positive effect of the essentialisation of the woman on favourability towards the positive measure. The participants (men and women) who describe the newly employed woman as being very feminine and not very masculine are more favourable to the positive measure than the other participants.

What is the mechanism that controls this link? The second part of the statistical analysis answers this question. In accordance with our hypothesis, the essentialisation of the woman leads her to being thought of in specific spheres of activity, roles and tasks that are different from those exercised by the influential majority, essentially men. Therefore it should temper the feeling of threat constituted by the more supported rise of women to key posts in the company. This is precisely what the results show (cf. Figure 4).

Figure 4. Role of threat as a mediator. Causal analysis (the rectangles show examples of statements)



Looking at Figure 4, one first of all notes that, as one might expect, the essentialisation of the woman beneficiary significantly reduces the different structural and symbolic threats to men, but also to women themselves. In this way, the opinion according to which the woman executive fits a supposed "feminine nature" leads the participants to consider that this woman does not harm men's careers, nor their prerogatives as executives reputed to be competent. It is also interesting to note that, with regard to threats for women, essentialisation eases the uncertainties usually associated with the fact of benefiting from a positive measure, such as the fear of not being up to the post, self-handicapping, or the "masculinisation" of the personality. Finally, unsurprisingly, Figure 4 reveals the beneficial contribution of this reduction of threats to the judgement of favourability towards the positive measure.

In short, when women are identified through the filter of a separate identity which, by removing any threatening or competitive nature, makes them appear complementary to men, reactions of rejection are tempered even among the members of the influential majority. This new identity enables women to break the glass ceiling. The feeling of the diversity of gender and the feminine specificity that provides essentialism nevertheless anchors women to positions that are their own, in this erecting new walls, which while they remain visible are no less difficult to get through. This non-conflictual and relatively consensual conception of the two sexes further eases men's consciences. It in fact enables them to elude the criticism that they have so far unduly monopolised high-status positions in a discriminatory way.

6. Conclusion

The dynamic of essentialism generates some positive consequences and other more negative ones. Regarding the positive ones, we note that, in contrast to the traditional professional environment in which a career is governed by an abstract idea of "competence", the environment where a positive measure supports women's professional rise does not in any way require that they endorse the stereotypical traits of the influential majority. In this way, women are no longer summoned to present themselves and behave "like a man", by adopting for example an autocratic and directive leadership style, in order to justify their rise to a senior professional status. In short, they are no longer forced to keep their femininity in check.

Regarding the negative consequences, while the finally accepted (or, more precisely, rejected to a lesser extent) positive measures favour the women's vertical mobility, namely their rise to posts at a higher level of the hierarchy, they tend to increase their horizontal segregation, namely their confinement to specific fields, tasks and functions – that are sometimes less valued than those entrusted to men. The inclusion of a woman in a "feminine species" is accompanied by shared beliefs about the tasks, roles, functions and fields of activity for which they are destined, or perhaps naturally predisposed, in the same way as all other women. Confirming this fear, we note a growing number of women executives in companies, but who are to be found in certain fields, such as advertising or human resources services, which men more willingly give up. The greater acceptance of positive measures brought about by the essentialisation of women with their group therefore has a price. While the eternal feminine enrolls women in a pleasant nature, it at the same time locks them into a restricting collective identity.

1. Introduction

In order to better understand the transformation of the figure of men and fathers in lower income neighbourhoods, I carried out a long field study on “les pères d’hier, d’aujourd’hui et de demain” (the fathers of yesterday, today and tomorrow) among families living in the Amazones, a small estate of social housing.⁶⁴ It is located on the outskirts of the town of Onf,⁶⁵ a Belgian town in the former cross-border mining basin (Hainaut/Nord in France) where there is a particularly high level of unemployment (26.63% of the active population). Through a slow process of immersion and thanks to varied sources (observations, informal conversations, biographical interviews, analysis of private archives, etc.), I sought to reconstruct the day-to-day realities and journeys of the fathers and stepfathers who live there. Ethnologists are experts on communities. Their methods of observing participants and stories of life enable them to get close to their interlocutors’ perspective on the world. They reveal the constructions of identity and place them in the social environment. They bring out the knowledge that is the product of the experience and history of the mentalities of groups and individuals.

Passing on knowledge to young people about fatherhood and examining the role of men, fathers or stepfathers had meaning for my interlocutors. Their own conceptions of masculinity and fatherhood have often evolved according to the ever-changing nature of family ties, which characterises contemporary families (separations, reconstructions, single, single parenthood and so on). They are continuously reshaped by the transformation of living conditions in lower income neighbourhoods: the insecurity of employment and underground employment, the feminisation and the stigmatisation of social housing, the “solitude payments” provided for by social legislation, conjugal tensions and the deterioration of the image of men in housing estates, etc. My interlocutors feel in transition between the old rural and industrial models of fatherhood, and contemporary closer and more “relationship-based” fatherhood. Many experience periods of considerable transformation but also periods of depression and withdrawal. Their stories show that the identity of men, fathers or stepfathers is never fixed. It changes, from one child to another, from one stage of existence to another and from one family situation to another.

2. Constructions of identity

I explored the construction of masculinity and of fatherhood together with the attitude towards the risk in adolescence, in the “youth crowd”, and then in the lives of families.

2.1. Gender tensions in street culture

The criteria for access to social housing feminise the social habitat, where increasingly more single mothers live. With no companion or vocational integration, some over-invest in their children. The young people that occupy the public spaces of “difficult” neighbourhoods and leave the education system without a diploma or qualifications, experience specific tensions. Adolescents who grow up around the foot of the tower blocks remain fixed in their neighbourhood and do not leave their family. In adolescence, some boys do not manage to get to know fathers who did not look after them, especially if they are strongly discredited by their mother. If they do not find formative masculine models in their circle, the “school of the street” becomes a buffer zone, where they can construct for themselves a proud masculine consciousness. The peer group enrolls the youngest boys in the culture of the street and the social life of its dealings. The group protects them and is a passage for them. They over-invest in their “street family” even though they know that one day they will have to leave it, to enter adulthood. Risk taking and virilist behaviours are distinguished conduct that is useful for building up reputation capital and moving up the hierarchy of the estate.

64 Jamouille, P. (2005). *Des hommes sur le fil. La construction des identités masculines dans les milieux précaires*, Paris: La Découverte. Supervised by the LAAP (Laboratoire d’Anthropologie Prospective de l’Université de Louvain-La-Neuve), this research was carried out in the context of the CSM of the Charleroi CPAS and supported by the European Commission’s Interreg programme, the French Community of Belgium, the Walloon Region and the Charleroi CPAS.

65 In order to protect the private life of my interlocutors, the place names and proper names have been changed.

This school of the street places young people at risk. The toughness of social relationships, behaviours of domination/submission and paths of criminality can alter their mental health and marginalise them. When social ties are based on violence, trust is impossible, young people live under tension, and the climate of neighbourhoods deteriorates. Life on the estate also produces significant gender tensions. Some young people seize more and more power in the home, over their mother and their sisters, over their territories, and from the girls of their estate. The virilist positions are often an expression of the competitive spirit of young men identifying with caricatures of men and who occasionally wish to exercise the authority of an absent father. This position echoes with the group leader figures of street culture. The honour of the estate and of their family requires, in their view, the "serious" behaviour from the girls. In the most impoverished estates and those that are the most neglected by the public services, sexual violence is commonplace. Girls that have lost their reputation are given a rough ride. Some girls "act like boys", protecting each other in "girl gangs". Most girls can avoid trouble, pretending to submit themselves to boys' domination while reacting disdainfully, in secret. The first gender relations are consequently constructed of rancour, animosity and concealment. In the culture of the street, some girls are subjected to violence that marks their psychological and relationship-based lives. Some display risky, reactive and post-traumatic conduct, which destroys them. Having become women, they continue to battle the male sex. They experience difficulty in trusting men, in giving them a position as a father and in bringing peace to their couple. They do not necessarily believe in an egalitarian model of men and women. Being cautious, they first of all rely on their own protection. Some combine reservedness, distrust of men and appropriation of children.

Most of the boys mentioned have a powerful desire for social integration. For them, the peer group and its dealings are just a stage in their lives and an alternative is plausible. They dream of "making some cash", of opening "a little business", when they come of age, and find a woman just for themselves, outside the neighbourhood. In small-scale dealing, they accumulate skills that they hope to redeploy in the legal economy. Some achieve this in stages. To construct their lives as men, they must withdraw from the group and invest in other social networks: the girlfriend, the family, training or work, the sports club, etc. But when they want to "sort themselves out", they do not all have the same resources or the same support.

2.2. Insecurity of the father figure

Fatherhood is made insecure by the deterioration of living conditions. In these social housing estates, adult men are less and less numerous. Couples are becoming scarce or are "unofficial". In order to maintain the level of benefits, fathers or stepfathers fictively reside elsewhere. Some live in illegality in their own home, as a tenant, economically or legally (undeclared employment, underground economy, false residence, etc.). How can one continue to be a father in these contexts? Women in the estates have added, to their traditional burdens, the management of social benefits and "little jobs" ("cleaning jobs", etc.). Their social qualities and domestic knowledge are more easily suited to the service economy, whereas heavy work is less valued. Women who have experienced violence in the family or on the street retain a certain reserve in the investment in a couple, preferring that the man resides elsewhere, which is also more convenient for them with regard to finances. Some children make life hard for their father or stepfather whose position is weak. When there is a low ability to manage conflicts of authority, domestic violence is exacerbated. Some women tend to exercise a substantial hold over the lives of the "passing men" that they take in.

Three strong paternal figures emerge from the study or rather three phases through which the fathers confronted with risk conduct at times pass.

Confronted with the risky conduct of the oldest boys, the first type of father figure wanted to "come down hard" on them (supervise and punish), in a severe and authoritarian attitude, reproducing the roles attributed to fathers in the old world of workers. Under the pressure of their children's crises, they experimented with forms of negotiation and dialogue, spending more time with them, expanding their affective and relational intelligence. They learned to "take care" of them, anchoring their authority in a closer relationship.

A second type of father figure is deeply depressed. These men cannot find their place in their family, or in the professional environment. They have a very bad image of themselves. As fathers, they feel discredited, set aside, while their children "vote with their mother". They withdraw into themselves, isolate themselves in psychotropic substances and television, are sometimes reduced to the status of children by their wives, and distance themselves from their children. A few react using violence. Broken and totally vulnerable, they are now only given a feeling of security by the figure of their own mother, with whom they take refuge when they are "thrown out". Their children exhibit attention-seeking conduct, but they are not able to respond to them. They are lost, feel like poor models of fathers and are overwhelmed by guilt.

A third type of father figure has withdrawn himself from most of the duties of parenthood. Some have not established a bond of attachment with their children. In general, these fathers were themselves placed or lived alone with their mother. They have not been able to do things differently from their own father. Another, much more numerous, category has not been able to exercise co-parenthood following a conjugal break-up. Their ex-wives, who receive increased benefits, have kept the social housing and the children. These fathers have found themselves in a rented room. Having had "old school" upbringings, they did not conceive of their fatherhood without the mediation of the mother. They did not feel capable of taking care of the children's everyday lives. In working-class family traditions, exchanges are quiet, educational duties are exercised in real-life situations. When they do not share in the life of the child, some fathers do not see how to bring them up either. They blame their ex-wives for "turning the children against them". Contemporary co-parenting requires the ability to negotiate, communicate and to adapt to change. When they have little know-how in these different areas, some fathers have a tendency to feel completely powerless and to lose their grip, and so co-parenting conflicts end in being severed from their children.

In the context of separations, some mothers use the participation of fathers in the underground economy to dictate their own terms (break-off of personal relationship with the child, exorbitant alimony paid "cash in hand", etc.), threatening to report them if they do not agree to it. Historically, in the working-class world, women manage the relations with the institutions and they have experience in this area that fathers lack. Some use the law to their advantage. Some fathers give in and leave. They withdraw themselves but also feel that they have been withdrawn, feeling that there is an alliance between their ex-wives, the magistrates and the social workers. As fathers, they lose confidence in themselves and in the professionals.

In social housing, many mothers bring up their children alone or share very few of the parenting duties with their new companion. This concentration of all of the duties (biological, educational, affective, educative, legal, social, authority, etc.) on just one parent comprises a high level of risk for the children's socialisation. The burden is heavy for the "solo" parent and it is difficult to take everything on all of the time. In general, men or women who bring up their children alone have difficulty in exercising the parental duties that were traditionally the prerogative of the other sex. Some women give up taking on authority duties. Some fathers are lost when faced with the relationship-based and affective dimension of upbringing. Extreme risk taking and use of psychotropic substances are often forms of calling out to the father or a regulating third-party figure. Risk taking by children places the parents in crisis and triggers processes of change. Many seek help from their circle, widening their social kinship. They resume dialogue, sound out the affects and replace the divisions between the generations. The young people then manage to "control themselves", find meaning in legal integration and act independently of their own family.

3. Conclusion

The increase of defiance, individualism, the instability of social relationships and tensions in different spheres of social life (employment, residential environment, the peer group, the family), and in organic interactions, place men and fathers in particular at risk. In order to assume their fatherhood, manage their family relationships and help their children to moderate their risk taking, they must function in a sensitive way and develop negotiated relationships with their (ex-)wives and their children (or their new companion and stepchildren), for which life has not prepared them. Some have resources and identity securities that enable them to evolve. Others feel "of no use to the world", penned in in social housing, hooked up to a benefits drip, and delegitimised by their wife and their children. They experience overlapping psychological, familial and social suffering. Their problems are interwoven, processes of loss of control "mesh" with their paths and those of their children. This production of risky conduct jeopardises individuals and the groups they belong to. Setbacks, shortcomings, social violence, identity and conjugal tensions, and extreme risk taking by their children set men and fathers off. Their conduct, their identity and their parenthood is not fixed. While they can destabilise them, their crises can also be creative. Some interlocutors have found support in various social networks. The sociabilities that are reconstructed locally can maintain protection around people, set in motion risk management processes, evolutions of identity and transformations of fatherhood.

Fathers at work, men in the home: searching for levers for the degendering of tasks within the household and the family⁶⁶

Hugo Swinnen

1. The nature of the problem

In the last few decades, women have held more paid jobs whereas men have not proportionally increased their participation in household and family tasks. In many European countries, men have the biggest share of paid work while women have to perform the majority of the tasks relating to the household and the bringing up of children. In most European countries, women devote twice as much time as men to children. What is more, women carry out more household and family tasks than men even when they perform a full-time paid job. This observation crops up in all European countries. Today, the division of tasks between the sexes constitutes a problem insofar as it hinders individuals' freedom of choice. Women in particular are familiar with the limits of the possible and see their freedom of choice paralysed. If women are to be paid more for their work, men will have to be encouraged to take care of children and the household more.

2. Why is this a problem?

For different reasons, European governments and all of the European Union want women to participate more in the labour market. At a macro level, the following reasons explicitly or implicitly play a role in this:

- the strengthening of (EU) countries' competitive power;
- the limitation of claims on income support;
- to increase (financial) support for taxes and social security;
- the appropriate management of wage claims.

There are also reasons at the micro level to put the issue of the division of household and family tasks between men and women on the agenda. The objective of European countries and the European Union of increasing women's participation in the labour market is only realisable and fair if it is coupled with an increase in the proportion of family and household tasks performed by men. In the absence of a change in men's behaviour, women will either not participate more in the labour market or they will have to take on a markedly heavier workload in order to realise this higher level of participation.

Moreover, women also have less freedom of choice in household tasks. In fact, someone has to take care of the less pleasant tasks: if men do not assume their responsibilities, these tasks will have to be performed by women. In the end, it is only right and fair that men make a comparable contribution to family and household tasks.

3. What measures should be undertaken?

The current division of tasks between men and women is influenced by three types of conditions playing a part at the macro, meso and micro levels, respectively. These conditions influence both the degree of intervention (quantity) and the nature of the tasks (quality) that men perform in the household and the family.

The macro conditions relate to time (flexible working hours and leave schemes), money (tax systems) and structures (childcare structures). To guarantee a more fair division of all work and family tasks, it appears necessary to have good regulations as regards childcare, parental leave, lifecycle arrangements, the right to work part-time, etc. These regulations are of particular importance in taking the first steps on the road to a fairer distribution: men will be able to take on a greater number of household tasks and women will be able to work more outside the home.

⁶⁶ This document is to a very great extent inspired by a draft study entitled "Working Fathers, Caring Men" carried out by the Verwey-Jonker Institute in the context of the European Commission's EQUAL programme. Duyvendak, J.W. and M. Stavenuiter (eds) (2004). *Working fathers, caring men*, The Hague/Utrecht: Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs/Verwey-Jonker Institute.

4. But more has to be done...

In fact, even if macro conditions exist that are favourable to the performance of household and family tasks by men, it then appears that men show very clear preferences for certain household tasks. In this way, shopping and cooking are highly valued and the other household tasks (cleaning or laundry) are abandoned and perhaps ignored. Men also prefer to look after children above household tasks. There is, for men at least, a clear hierarchy in the performance of tasks. Research has shown that the differences in the taking on of household and family tasks between men and women are of a cultural nature. In other words, this difference is open to change. It is important therefore not only to influence the quantity of time that men and women invest in the household and the bringing up of children, but also the division of the types of task. It is possible to intervene at the meso level through a qualitative approach to the conditions for the sharing of work and family duties between men and women. At the micro level, it is a matter of degendering tasks, of disassociating tasks and gender.

5. The micro level: degendering tasks

It is therefore important to have better knowledge of the mechanisms that underlie the unfair division of household tasks. Tasks in fact have a connotation based on gender. How can they be thought of without this type of consideration, which is an approach free of any gender-related consideration? This was done in the study by the Verwey-Jonker Institute through three tasks, in this case shopping, laundry and visiting a consultation clinic. The description of these tasks shows that it is possible to free certain household tasks (such as shopping) from their female connotation, thereby removing the obstacle to the performance of these tasks by men. A stimulating fact lies, for example, in the fact that a task is part of a "chain" of tasks. Men who cook find it normal to do the shopping and men who dress their children in the morning will be concerned about the availability of clean clothes. The study also shows that the visibility of the task and a greater tolerance for possible mistakes are deciding factors for the performance of household tasks by men. We observe that in the Netherlands the feminine connotation of visiting the consultation clinic has almost disappeared whereas it is still very present for laundry, which is still essentially incumbent on women.

Among the important interlocked mechanisms that are favourable (or unfavourable) to degendering are:

- The "chain" approach: if one task from a chain becomes less linked to a gender, the other tasks from the chain follow more easily.
- Visibility: men more easily take up visible, public tasks, such as shopping and visiting the consultation clinic. If more men take on these tasks, other men will be more stimulated to do so. Furthermore, the performance of these tasks may influence the performance of invisible tasks that are an integral part of a chain.
- Tolerance: another important element lies in the way that certain tasks are carried out. Men and women in fact have different approaches: if men perform tasks that traditionally belong to the territory of women, tolerance for difference and possible mistakes will play a decisive role.
- Control and execution: tasks can be transferred gradually. This handover may first take place with regard to execution, with women keeping control. Then, men may take control of certain tasks. Shopping is again an excellent example of this. Older men clearly have a greater tendency to use a shopping list drawn up by their wives while younger men are more independent. Tasks may also be transferred step by step as in the case of laundry for example.
- Home alone: men take up household and family tasks more easily when they are alone (with the children). This point refers to the meso conditions, namely the appropriateness of the paid work in relation to the household and family tasks.

6. Influence of circumstances: exceptional practices

In our study, we also intended to investigate to what extent circumstances influence conceptions relating to the division of tasks and actual behaviour. To this end, we observed a certain number of households that must be considered "exceptional practices". The "standard practice" is a cell made up of a man, a woman and one or more children, with the man working outside the home according to regular working hours (in the main from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), and the woman being responsible (to a very large extent) for the household and family tasks. By "exceptional practices", we mean that the man does not have regular working hours or that he has an unusual work pattern, or that he is part of a particular type of household. Thirty households participated in the study, consisting of households with homosexual fathers, men doing shift work and men doing telework. In each case we examined their conceptions of male and female tasks, and the actual division of tasks.

The main conclusion of the study on exceptional practices is that there is a strong correlation between, on the one hand, men's conceptions and preferences concerning the division of tasks between the two sexes and, on the other hand, the possibilities of men to work and to take care of their family. In households already advocating a more balanced division of tasks, it seems that men's skills, their preferences and their family tradition has little or no importance. The men's ideas and conceptions appear to be flexible when they are obliged to perform certain tasks due to changing circumstances. In this case, (supposedly) lacking skills suddenly appear to play a secondary, indeed negligible role. The fact of being "alone" at home with the children appears to encourage men to perform domestic tasks. A Norwegian study on paternal leave had earlier already drawn a similar conclusion.

7. Innovation in some European Union countries

In most European countries, it appears that a fairer division of work and domestic tasks between men and women is a pressing issue. In our study, we also examined some foreign examples, in this case a Northern European country (Sweden), a central European country (France) and a Mediterranean country (Spain). For each country (macro conditions), we looked for meaningful examples of men being encouraged to take on childcare and household tasks. In this context, we took particular interest in innovative initiatives at the local level.

Sweden has a long tradition of the intervention of public authorities in the role of fathers. In this context, local authorities have developed various initiatives that have a direct influence on the tasks of bringing up and caring for children that men perform within the household. Furthermore, it appears that these initiatives are limited to childcare. In Sweden too, the issue of the current division of household tasks between men and women appears to be a more difficult subject to examine.

In this respect, it is surprising to note that precisely the opposite is true in Spain. At both the local level and in the public authorities' national campaigns, the Spanish authorities stimulate men to perform more "domestic" tasks (both household tasks and childcare). Spain's "lead" is perhaps related to the fact that this country is in the process of making up for falling behind in Europe.

Finally, in France, it appears to be difficult to put the subject of men and family tasks on the national policy agenda. This reluctance is above all related to the fear of the interference of the public authorities in the private sphere. Nevertheless, a climate that is favourable to the consideration of this issue is also, slowly but surely, appearing in France, because it has reached the limits of realisable improvements regarding macro and meso conditions. France can pride itself on a strong tradition on these levels. However, people increasingly ask themselves whether the well-being of children suffers as a result of an absence from the family environment of more than ten hours per day. The local policy makers are realising more and more that an absence of interference in "private affairs" systematically leads to a markedly heavier workload for women than for men, which is a situation that, in the end, is very unfavourable to the possible participation in working and public life.

8. Recommendations

It very certainly remains necessary to promote the existing and planned measures at different levels and to closely monitor their effects on a fairer distribution of domestic tasks. I would like to mention some measures that can, on the basis of our study, be considered crucial to encourage men along this road.

At the macro level, there are individual (paid) leave schemes for men (*home alone*). However, a generic measure such as the right to work part-time (as in the Netherlands) may also effectively contribute to a fairer division of work and family and household tasks.

At the micro level, I once again stress the importance of a "chain" approach and the encouragement of tolerance. However, the mobilisation of professionals also opens up excellent opportunities. This can be done in two ways: first of all, by ensuring that more men are steered towards certain professional groups (healthcare, baby clinics, childcare, home care, household services) and next, by explicitly focusing attention on the role of men in household and family tasks. Young parents very much appreciate the systematic demand from professionals for the active presence of fathers.

The act of discussing with men their role of father is an important intermediate step towards a fair division of tasks between men and women. The European Union has already understood this. Today, a certain number of (local) projects financed with European public money are aiming to ensure the promotion of fathers' involvement.

A number of cities ("New Faces" project under the Eurocities banner) are organising workshops where they are encouraged to get more involved in childcare and where they can exchange points of view on how to cope with difficulties. At the same time, these workshops make it possible to inform the authorities about the presence of bottlenecks to be removed at the meso or macro level.

However important caring for and bringing up children is, men must not however limit their efforts to this area. They must also participate more in all household tasks. By showing men that the fact of being a father in its own right takes on great importance for their personal development and that of the other members of the family, there is a risk that they will continue to leave the performance of the less fun household tasks to the care of women: "this is not why I took parental leave!" In the long term, public authorities should reflect on masculinity and femininity with regard to the division of tasks. Diversity and the freedom of choice are key concepts in this context.

The question is therefore no longer if men must take on certain tasks, but actually to define a desirable division of tasks between the partners within households. Each partner could perform part of all of the tasks: it is a fair starting point for discussions around the kitchen table.

Tenacious differences: explanations for the unequal and persistent division of household tasks in Flemish families⁶⁷

Suzana Koelet

1. Introduction

Approximately 5 years ago – in 2001 – the public debate on the New Man was at its height. It was quite difficult to determine precisely what was implied by this new icon and this was even part of the discussion that was enthusiastically held in the media and in the public arena. The important thing was above all the fact that he be “New”. But is he “New”? “Every month men are a little more like washing powder”, wrote *Knack* magazine (26 September 2001). “Even though the formula has remained painfully unaltered for centuries, people are constantly and without any shame putting a sticker on it exclaiming “New!!””. In this regard, the “New Man” fitted perfectly into the new and great certainty that, according to Elchardus, had lodged itself in the public debate and in the heads of many citizens during recent decades: “Everything is in motion, nothing stays the same anymore, everything is changing.”⁶⁸

We, as researchers from the TOR group, have also taken part in the debate. In an Open Letter to the former Minister for Equal Opportunities, Mieke Vogels (De Standaard, 2 May 2001), we let it be known that: “We believe that it is beneficial for a society that people receive money and time to study social life in more detail which is only done in a very basic way by trend watchers. We are convinced that critically challenging the myths created by the media is one of the crucial tasks of scientific research.” We set ourselves the goal of thoroughly analysing the household tasks of Flemish women and men living with a male/female partner, by means of time budget research. We limited ourselves in this respect to only a single field for which radical changes had been announced. We in fact wanted to carry on with the results of the time budget study which caused excitement in April 2001 because they showed that the traditional models of roles in Flanders were still alive and well.⁶⁹ We set off in search of an answer to the question “why is the division of household tasks by gender still so often the norm in Flemish families, and what factors influence this division of tasks?” In this article, we provide a brief overview of the conclusions that we drew from the study, based on the time budget analyses.

2. Practical considerations...

We cannot deny that in the day-to-day organisation of household tasks, practical considerations such as who is available and what exactly has to be done play an important role. Nevertheless, the argument that says that women perform more household tasks because they have more time for it than men does not stand up. Men and women in fact divide up their time differently; they have different priorities. When women do not perform paid work, they use 40% of the time that they normally devote to a job to perform household tasks and for men it is barely 18%. For this reason, women are often faced with making a choice between their job, the household and the children, and they experience a greater exchange between these three aspects of life. They reduce their household tasks more often than men as they devote more time to their job or if there are young children in the family. And, conversely, they also more often take a step back from the employment market if there are children around or to be able to meet the requirements of the household. As the number of children aged over 5 in the family increases, women get through more and more household tasks. Men, on the other hand, generally make an extra effort for the first child, but subsequently do less and less household tasks as the number of children increases. Finally, when women do not have a job, they will less easily drop the housework when they are faced with health concerns.

67 This article appeared previously in: *Uitgelezen* 12(2), 2006, pp. 2-6.

68 Elchardus, M. and I. Glorieux (2002). *De symbolische samenleving: een exploratie van de nieuwe sociale en culturele ruimtes*, Tielt: Lannoo, p. 7.

69 Glorieux, I., S. Koelet and M. Moens (2001). ‘Vlamingen in tienduizend en tachtig minuten: een Tijdsbudget-onderzoek’, in: J. Lemaître and H. Van Geel (eds), *Vlaanderen gepeild! De Vlaamse overheid en burgeronderzoek 2001*, Brussels: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, pp. 157-184.

In other words, women specialise in household tasks more than men. It is not a question of pure efficiency, where the person who has the most qualifications and can therefore earn more money, works the longest and therefore does fewer household tasks. In three out of ten families, the man has more qualifications than the woman, but in three quarters of families, it is he that works the most hours per day. It is also sometimes thought that women do have less of a career and work less hours because of children, but that already appears to be the case before they become mothers: 62% of women who have a higher level of education than their partner and who do not have children still work for less time than him. Barely a quarter of women who have more qualifications than their partner also devote more hours to their work than he does. And when they have children, the percentage of women who still work more than their partner goes down to 14%. The fact of having children can therefore have an influence on a career, but the fact that women work for less time is in general decided before they become mothers. Even if they have good qualifications, the most demanding posts slip through their fingers.

3. ...given shape in defined power structures...

In our current society, women's specialisation in household tasks generally places them in a less favourable position and provides them with fewer opportunities than a specialisation in the employment market. In a society where ever more relationships threaten to fail, this makes women vulnerable to poverty and economic insecurity. Specialisation based on gender is for this reason a reflection of the different positions of power of women and men in our society. In negotiations concerning housework, men appear to be able to land in a privileged position, which is inextricably linked to the general organisation of society according to gender. The picture painted by this study of the participation in the employment market of men and women who live in couples shows an employment market that penalises women and favours men, and which not only reflects but reinforces the greater power of men. Being confronted with a lack of prospects in typically "female" jobs should explain why women generally consider themselves more available for household tasks.

Because men generally have greater opportunities in a society organised on the basis of gender, it is above all a woman's position of strength in the family that is important in the time that men and women devote to housework. A higher and more favourable status at work enables women to reduce the time they devote to household tasks. This will also allow them to again have more career opportunities, which illustrates the self-reinforcing and circular dynamic of the strength processes. The men whose partners have their own income perform a few more hours of housework per week than men with partners without income, regardless of the availability of these partners.

4. ...justified by conventional social norms...

In stable systems of gender inequality, people are often not aware of such power mechanisms, because these are justified as being *authority*.⁷⁰ This very clearly emerges from the observation that men and women do not consider their own contribution to household tasks to be unfair.⁷¹ Many women feel that it is to be expected and is even desirable, just as many women take pleasure in a gender-based division of tasks giving them the feeling of being supported and protected.⁷² The social norm for a long time laid down that women had to seek their personal development in the act of taking care of others, whereas men had to let others benefit from their independent accomplishments.⁷³ Such social norms, which stem from dichotomous gender differences, act as an ideological *construct* that justifies and reinforces the inequality between men and women.⁷⁴

Our analyses show that in 1999, many men and women still let themselves be led by this social norm, acquired via upbringing and socialisation, when they are faced with the problems of the division of household tasks in the family. The norm determines what behaviour is appropriate for men and for women, and it acts as a kind of meta-directive in which the behaviour can continue to evolve. It is only within the limits of this social norm that the most pragmatic directives come into effect. While the restricting nature of the social norm is very pronounced, men and women must only let their household tasks be based in small part on arguments such as availability and

70 Chafetz, J.S. (1988). 'The gender division of labor and the reproduction of female disadvantage. Toward an integrated theory', *Journal of Family Issues* 9, p. 112.

71 See among others: Arts, W. and P. Hermkens (1994). 'De eerlijke verdeling van huishoudelijke taken: percepties en oordelen', *Mens en Maatschappij* 69, pp. 147-168; Widmalm, F. (1998). *Marriage, housework and fairness* 39, Uppsala: Uppsala University, Department of economics; Baxter, J. (2000). 'The joys and justice of housework', *Sociology* 34, pp. 609-651.

72 Bell, C. and H. Newby (1976). 'Husbands and wives: The dynamics of the differential dialectic', in: D.L. Barker and S. Allen (eds), *Power and exploitation in work and marriage*, London: Longman.

73 Gerson, K. (2002). 'Moral dilemmas, moral strategies, and the transformation of gender. Lessons from two generations of work and family change', *Gender & Society* 16, p. 8.

74 Epstein, C.F. (1988). *Deceptive distinctions: Sex, gender and social order*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

the demand of household tasks.

This for example appears to be the case among women aged 55 and over, who do not (any longer) perform paid work or who are at the end of their careers. They can easily find themselves in the role of carer that is allocated to them and find their self-esteem in it, and they will let themselves be led less by practical arrangements in the time that they devote to housework. Among women aged under 55, on the contrary, the restricting nature of the social norm is less pronounced and practical considerations play an important role. Many of these women, at a working age from the point of view of employment, feel that the prospects that the social norm tries to entice them with are unsatisfying. These women increasingly feel the need to fulfil themselves both in the family and in the employment market. This also results from their mediocre score on the scale of the conceptions of individual roles, which indicates to what extent they identify with the social norm. They also have aspirations outside the household and they themselves therefore try to find the right balance between their commitments outside and their traditional commitments as carers, often regardless of the conventional dictates about roles. It is in such a situation that practical arguments for the performance of household tasks will play an important role in the time devoted to household tasks. Due to the lack of a generally accepted course of action, they rely much more on their own conceptions of roles to define the balance that they will keep between work and care and to define how much time they will devote to housework.

Unlike these women, men of the same age still hesitate to leave the protective shield of the conventional social norm. It is in fact they who reap the fruits of the gender-based division of employment. Their personal progressive conceptions of roles nevertheless indicate that they do indeed want to take on the housework. However, the analyses show that that cannot overshadow their primary activity, their paid work and their identity. Paid work still comes first for these men. Their personal conceptions of roles only determine to what extent they will devote the time left to them after job to household tasks. Once they reach the age of 55 and over, these men can no longer easily hide behind their demanding job and the mould of the gender-based role model begins to bother them. Just as among women, the time that they devote to housework will depend much more on instrumental factors than the demand of household tasks and their availability.

5. ...in a symbolic society permeated by gender.

Seen together, these factors do not appear to be conclusive in explaining why the division of household tasks according to gender still stands. While today it has become less easy to impose on men and women a role that is suited to their gender via external pressure and that an individual increasingly has the impression that they must and can discover their own role, the tenacious differences in the household tasks of women and men indicate that this freedom of choice is in some sense illusive. This is due to the fact that the performance of household tasks still indicates a division between men and women, which they can use to present themselves to others as clearly as possible. The fact that the women and men who perform household tasks at the same time “do gender”,⁷⁵ can only indirectly come out of the Flemish time budget data, but clearly manifests itself in the six interviews that we carried out in the context of this study.

The female/male distinction is very important in our relationships with others and in the construction of our identity. Despite the fact that women and men are more similar than different, our entire society is permeated by and organised around this dichotomy. This means that the difference between men and women in our daily actions must in each case be questioned, reconfirmed and pointed out, in order to be able to retain its aura of fairness and evidence. The possibility of accomplishing this via household tasks is implicitly recognised by many people and also strongly supported institutionally. It is then easy for men and women to make the most of the symbolism of this activity when they present themselves to other people, even if they do not always agree with the validity of this connotation. Through the execution or not of household tasks, they can prove to themselves and others that they are a competent member of a defined gender category and that they have the predisposition and the willingness to adopt the gender-based behaviours that suit them. Women who have assimilated into their own image the idea that household tasks are women's work, can show that they are women and good companions by perfectly performing household tasks or by at least retaining final responsibility and by criticising the work of their partner. Men can emphasise their masculinity by avoiding household tasks, by dawdling when they are being carried out or by performing typically male tasks. It is precisely through these acts that the symbolic connotation of these tasks as women's work remains intact.⁷⁶

75 West, C. and D.H. Zimmerman (1987). 'Doing gender', *Gender & Society* 1, pp. 125-151.

76 See also: Van Every, J. (1997). 'Understanding gendered inequality: Reconceptualizing housework', *Women's Studies International Forum* 20, p. 417.

Because household work is not, according to this interpretation, pure work, but also a way of being able to express oneself to others, the performance of household tasks can bring about some satisfaction. One can also express one's concern and attachment to others, although this is not equally the case for men and for women. This positive connotation of household work may also explain why women remain attached to these tasks, which are often said to limit their opportunities. Since household tasks are such an essential component of the social construction of femininity, women may even feel that the perspective of neutralising gender in household tasks is problematic, that it is a threat made against their identity. According to the "doing gender" approach, women in fact become enormously psychologically involved in the household tasks that fall to them as women and that also applies for women who work and who explicitly reject the idea that household tasks are their responsibility alone.⁷⁷

The idea of "doing gender" goes well with Elchardus' analysis that says that we are evolving towards a *symbolic society*, in which the production and dissemination of symbols develop into a central control mechanism.⁷⁸ This gives us the illusion of making our own choices. By the term *symbolic society*, he especially wants to draw attention to the more emotional elements of this choice process, compared with the cognitive choices dictated by reason. The division of household tasks is not simply a question of behaviour, but also a question of the meanings that are associated with this behaviour in the family.⁷⁹

6. A tenacious future?

Since men and women ceaselessly "do gender", they perpetuate, reproduce and justify the existing division of household tasks, which is based on gender categories. Such a division of the status quo may see to it that women in the end see only a few alternatives to the current division of household tasks. As an individual, it is very difficult to move away from this model.⁸⁰ Owing to this continual reconfirmation, the existing division of tasks acquires a natural and evident nature, meaning that very often people no longer consider this subject. A gender-based division of household work consequently constitutes, as Fenstermaker Berk aptly puts it, "*an easy refuge for all of those among us who are cowardly or who very simply have had enough of opposing it*".⁸¹ But does the process of "doing gender" then exclude forever social change in the sphere of the division of household tasks?

If it is only a question of large-scale and dramatic change, we must reply in the affirmative. Sullivan has nevertheless highlighted another form of change, which is no less significant, namely a slow change, that is perhaps imperceptible from year to year, but in the end sufficiently tenacious to lead to a slow dissolution of the current structures.⁸² In this case, there is room for change. In order to give gender differences a natural and fair appearance, continual interactive validation is necessary. This ensures that there are immediately many opportunities for resistance available, which can be thwarted every day in social relations. It is above all when cracks appear in the aura of evidence that surrounds an act that this internal validation becomes a delicate point:

*"The rebellion of the body and the feeling of hardness nevertheless drive a radical change of tactic, the tireless repetition to oneself of the principles guiding the action to convince oneself and trigger the acts, if not to find the automatisms. The internal struggle is often close-fought, all the more unsettled and delicate to lead because the presentation of the motives for action may at any moment produce the opposite effect to that which is sought by submitting these motives to critical analysis: do I really have to do it, for what reasons?"*⁸³

When the division of household tasks is defined on the basis of gender categories, therefore at various times by social actors, this may little by little bury the justification of the existing institutional rules.⁸⁴ Social movements can play a specific role here.⁸⁵ They can provide the necessary ideology and impetus for individual explorations of alternatives for the division of household tasks according to gender. By confronting people with possible alterna-

77 Ferree, M.M. (1991). 'The gender division of labor in two-earner marriages', *Journal of Family Issues* 12.

78 Elchardus and Glorieux, *De symbolische samenleving*, p. 25.

79 Potuchek, J.-L. (1992). 'Employed wives' orientations to breadwinning: A gender theory analysis', *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 54, p. 549.

80 Berk, S. (1985). *The gender factory. The apportionment of work in American households*, New York/London: Plenum Press, p. 208; Van der Vinne, H. and M. Brink (1997). 'Dilemma or compromise: The division of housework and child care among dual earners', in: G.A.B. Frinking and T. Willemsen (eds). *Dilemmas of modern family life*, Amsterdam: Thesis, p. 104; Kaufmann, J.-C. (1998). *Dirty linen: Couples and their laundry*, London: Middlesex University Press, p. 50; Holvoet, N. (2004). 'Breaking the waves: over ongelijkheid man/vrouw, gender en collectieve actie', *Antenne* 22, pp. 40-47.

81 Fenstermaker, S. (2002). 'Work and gender (from the gender factory)', in: S. Fenstermaker and C. West (eds), *Doing gender, doing difference*, New York/London: Routledge, p. 115.

82 Sullivan, O. (1997). 'The division of housework among "remarried couples"', *Journal of Family Issues* 18, pp. 205-224.

83 Kaufmann, J.-C. (1992). *La trame conjugale. Analyse du couple par son linge*, Paris: Nathan, p. 18.

84 Collins, P.H. et al. (2002). 'Symposium on West and Fenstermaker's "Doing difference"', in: S. Fenstermaker and C. West (eds), *Doing gender, doing difference*, New York/London: Routledge, p. 99

85 *Idem*, p. 100; Holvoet, 'Breaking the waves'.

tives, they can force them to make choices. This also forces them to look at the current way of acting and this requires a capacity for introspection, which may lead onto gender consciousness.⁸⁶ The gender consciousness must not be confused with conceptions concerning stereotypes and gender roles. It is a kind of continuum with, on the one hand, men and women who look beyond conventional gender structures or do not challenge them and, on the other hand, men and women who are in general totally conscious of gender issues and also of the rights associated with gender positions. By working on this gender consciousness, change takes place slowly and gradually, whereas in the long term it may bring about an enormous transformation. Or, as Kaufmann says:

"Some of the major challenges of our time, such as equality between men and women, are closely dependent on the simplest of acts."⁸⁷

86 Sullivan, 'The division of housework among "remarried" couples'; Holvoet, 'Breaking the waves'.

87 Kaufmann, *La trame conjugale*, p. 193.

Work or career break: a world of difference? Changes in the time use of male workers on a career break

Jessie Vandeweyer and Ignace Glorieux

1. Introduction

Legislation on career breaks was introduced by the Belgian government in 1985. It allows employees to interrupt their career altogether or in part for a certain period of time. The employee is paid a state allowance covering, in part, the loss of earnings. Initially, this measure was aimed at achieving a redistribution of labour. As time went by, it increasingly became an instrument aimed at facilitating the combination of work, family and leisure time. In the second half of the 1990, three additional forms of career break were introduced: parental leave, career breaks for palliative care and medical care-based career breaks. At the beginning of 2002, the system was given a radical overhaul, and became known as “time credit” in the private sector.

In 2004, 9% of female employees (that is 89,000 women) and 2.9% of male employees (that is 35,500 men) used career leave or time credit, in part or in full. Although the total share of men has grown in recent years, it is still a small group that takes advantage of this opportunity. If we look at male employees under the age of 50, only 1.1% took career leave (as opposed to 7.3% of their female counterparts).⁸⁸ In this article we will focus on the “relatively exceptional” group of male career-breakers. Why do men opt to take a career break or time credit? Does this measure make it possible to satisfy the need to balance work life, family life and leisure? How do men spend their time when they temporarily work less or not at all?

Can we consider the men that opt for a career break or time credit to be in the vanguard of change? The absence of work or part-time working constitutes an atypical cultural model for men.⁸⁹ In 2004, the percentage of working men in Belgium was still considerably higher (68%) than that of working women (53%). What is more, 42% of women perform a part-time job while this type of work is still relatively non-existent among men (7%).⁹⁰ Men in the prime of life who work less or who do not perform any professional work are in fact quickly stigmatised. This can be explained, according to some authors, by the lack of socially acceptable alternatives for men in our society.⁹¹ Vanderweyden observes that the arrival of male employees on a career break in a world of women where no clearly defined role is available can also be an advantage. They can in fact play their own roles there and incite admiration.⁹² The situation is considerably different among women. In our society, the lack of a job or a part-time job is markedly better tolerated for women than for men. Women who do not work can assert their role of “housewife”.⁹³ As long as the earnings gap between men and women continues and jobs for women are considered less prestigious and rewarding, for some women the role of motherhood will remain an important source of self-fulfilment, satisfaction and autonomy. This means they remain reluctant to swap their “authority” as a housewife for a more equal distribution of household tasks.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, this is not however accompanied by a reduction of women’s total workload. In fact, in 2004, the average Flemish woman was occupied with household tasks for 24 hours a week, with 3 hours and 39 minutes spent on childcare. The equiva-

88 Geurts, K. and A. Van Woensel (2005). *Genderzakboekje. Zij en hij op de arbeidsmarkt*, Leuven: Steunpunt Werkgelegenheid, Arbeid en Vorming, pp. 110-111.

89 Vanderweyden, K. (2002). *Is er leven zonder werk? Over minder werken en sociale integratie op de drempel van de eenentwintigste eeuw*, Leuven/Leiden: Acco, p. 303.

90 Source: SPF Economie, Direction générale statistique et information économique. *Enquête sur les forces de travail 2004*. (statbel.fgov.be/figures/d31_fr.asp#1, consulted on 3 mars 2006)

91 Derks, A. et al. (1997). ‘De paradox van de individualisering van werkloosheid’, *Tijdschrift voor Sociologie* 18(3), pp. 327-350; Glorieux, I. (1995). *Arbeid als zingeving: een onderzoek naar de betekenis van arbeid in het leven van mannen en vrouwen*, Brussels: VUBPress; Elchardus, M and I. Glorieux (1995). *Niet aan de arbeid voorbij: de werkloosheidservaring als reflectie over arbeid, solidariteit en sociale cohesie*, Brussels: VUBPress.

92 Vanderweyden, *Is er leven zonder werk?*, p. 314.

93 De Witte, H. (1994). ‘(‘t Is geen) leven zonder werk. Een overzicht van recente literatuur over de psychische gevolgen van werkloosheid’, *Welzijnsgids - Noden, Werken* (12), pp. 1-23.

94 Sayer, L.C. (2005). ‘Gender, time and inequality’, *Social Forces* 84(1), pp. 285-303; Koelet, S.(2005). *Standvastige verschillen. Een analyse van theoretische benaderingen over de verdeling van het huishoudelijk werk tussen vrouwen en mannen op basis van tijdsbudgetonderzoek*, Brussels: Research group TOR, Sociology department, Free University Brussels (unpublished doctoral thesis).

lent figures for men were 14 hours and 1 hour and 26 minutes per week respectively.⁹⁵ Women still carry out the majority of family tasks.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, there has been a change in recent years. A longitudinal study in the United States, the United Kingdom and in Germany shows that men take on markedly more household tasks following their partner's entrance into the labour market. However, it is a "slow motion adaptation". Women immediately reduce the amount of household work they do following their entrance into the labour market. On the other hand, the increase among men only takes place some years later.⁹⁷ The massive arrival of women on the labour market in the 1970s transformed the combination of work, family and leisure time into a real balancing act in which men can also make their mark. The extent to which career break legislation and time credit measures have succeeded in encouraging a different combination of work and family life among men will be discussed in this article.

2. Presentation of the study on male career-breakers

In 2004, the University of Antwerp and the Free University of Brussels carried out a major survey among male Flemish career-breakers aged between 20 and 49 in order to gain a picture of their lifestyle and time use.⁹⁸ Both those respondents taking advantage of the general career break and time credit schemes, as well as those taking thematic leave, formed the subjects of this study. Hereafter, we will use the hyperonym "career-breakers" to refer to all of these groups. Only male employees who, at the time of sampling, had at least five months to go on their career breaks were selected, in view of the fact that the time between taking the sample from the Social Security Data Bank and when the respondents were visited by the interviewer could be a few weeks to several months. For that reason, shorter breaks were not considered for inclusion in this study.

We intentionally chose to only interview career-breakers aged up to 49. Since 2002, there has been a special ruling in place for the over-50s, with more flexible conditions and larger contributions. The so-called "landing-strip jobs", whereby over-50s reduce the number of hours they work and are not subject to a time limitation, are used by the majority of workers to make the transition between work and retirement. In 2004, 18.2% of women and 10% of men in the working population aged over 50 opted for a part-time career break.⁹⁹

In total, we interviewed 607 male and 629 female career-breakers¹⁰⁰ and we supplemented the survey with a control group of 278 people in employment. Around half of the career-breakers also kept a diary for a period of seven days in which they noted down their activities, the times, the people present, the people they spoke to, the reason for their actions and, if they were travelling, the mode of transport chosen. This document focuses on the full-time and part-time male career-breakers who kept a diary for a week. In order to reveal the changes in how male career-breakers spent their time, they were compared with full-time working men in the same age group from the Flemish TOR'04 time use survey.

The methodology used in the careers survey was identical to that used for the Flemish TOR'04 time use survey.¹⁰¹ The two surveys were implemented during the same period, from 15 April to 30 October 2004, with a break of six weeks during the summer holidays. Diaries and questionnaires were used as measurement instruments. The diaries used in both studies were identical. The questionnaires contained one section unique to the situation of career-breakers and a section in common with the TOR'04 time use survey. This division allows a comparison of the demographic characteristics, attitudes and behaviours of the career-breakers with those of the average Flemish population.

The population of career-breakers from which we took a sample was divided up as follows: 73.9% female part-time career-breakers, 13.2% male part-time career-breakers, 10.6% female full-time career-breakers and 2.3% male full-time career-breakers. In total, 15.5% of the population was male and 84.5% was female; 12.9% interrupted their careers on a full-time basis (so temporarily doesn't work anymore), against a part-time percentage of 87.1%. Each subgroup of career-breakers is representative of the Flemish population of career-breakers, namely career-breakers aged between 20 and 49 with a career-break of at least five months. They were weighted according to their age

95 Glorieux, I., J. Minnen and J. Vandeweyer (2005). *De tijd staat niet stil. Veranderingen in de tijdsbesteding van Vlamingen tussen 1999 en 2004*, Brussels: Research group TOR, Sociology department, Free University Brussels.

96 Koelet, *Standvastige verschillen*.

97 Gershuny, J., M. Bittman et al. (2005). 'Exit, voice, and suffering: Do couples adapt to changing employment patterns?', *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67, pp. 656-665; Sayer, 'Gender, time and inequality'.

98 Project National Fund for Scientific Research 'Loopbaanonderbrekers onder de loep. Een onderzoek naar de leefsituatie en tijdsbesteding van gebruikers van het tijdskrediet in Vlaanderen' (convention G.0515.04).

99 Geurts and Van Woensel, *Genderzakboekje*, p. 111.

100 Male career-breakers: 194 full-time and 413 part-time; Female career-breakers: 294 full-time and 335 part-time (figures not weighted).

101 Cf. Glorieux, I., J. Minnen et J. Vandeweyer (2005). *Technisch verslag bij de tijdsbudgetenquête TOR'04*, Brussels: Research group TOR, Sociology department, Free University Brussels.

and leave rate.¹⁰² The male full-time career-breakers from the TOR'04 time use survey were weighted according to sex, age and educational level.

In this document, we have identified four groups of men according to their working situation: full-time workers (n=433), full-time career-breakers with work-related activities during their career breaks (n=53), part-time career-breakers (n=188) and full-time career-breakers with no work-related activities (n=55) (cf. paragraph 4). The career break or time credit system makes it possible to interrupt a career without prejudice to the reason for the interruption. Performing alternative professional work is one of a number of possibilities. In this case, the government allowance is voided. Furthermore, it is also possible to take thematic leave linked to certain conditions (fact of being a parent, palliative care and medical care).

3. Sociodemographic profile of the survey groups

In order to get a better picture of the groups of 20-49 year old men, we examined their education levels and their family situations. The average age of the men in this study was 37. The part-time career-breakers were considerably older (40 years old on average).

3.1. Education level

In comparison with the overall Flemish population, career-breakers are, on average, more highly educated.¹⁰³ However, it is more sensible to compare their educational level with that of the Flemish male working population (they are more highly educated than Flemish men without employment), because they are also in a position to take leave.

Table 1. Men by educational level and by employment status (percentages)

	Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working	Working men aged 25 to 49 (EFT 2004) ¹⁰⁴
N =	433	53	188	55	
Lower	27,5%	15,1%	23,9%	14,8%	25,0%
Medium	42,4%	47,2%	38,3%	44,4%	40,8%
Higher, non-academic	19,4%	30,2%	29,3%	27,8%	22,3%
Higher, academic	10,6%	7,5%	8,5%	13,0%	12,0%

Our sample of full-time working men is a fairly good reflection of the total male working population in the Flemish Region. The proportion of lower-educated people is lowest for full-time male career-breakers (regardless of whether they worked or not). However, there are no significant differences with respect to educational level between the four groups. In other words, male career-breakers come from all layers of the population who might potentially take such leave.

3.2. Family situation

The men in our survey do not share the same family situation. Part-time male career-breakers often live with a partner and children, and have more and younger children than both full-time workers and full-time career-breakers (whether working or not). Three quarters of part-time career-breakers live with their partner and their child(ren); 12.2% only have a partner. Among full-time career-breakers without any working activities, we find many more men who still live with their parents (18.5%) or who cohabit with a partner but are without children (29.6%). Furthermore, 40.7% of full-time male career-breakers not working during this time live with a partner and children. Cohabitation with children is therefore the dominant family situation both for working men and male career-breakers. In terms of family situation, full-time male career-breakers who work do not differ from men working full-time in the same age group. Furthermore, the two working groups do not differ with respect to any background characteristic.

¹⁰² Cf. Desmet, B., I. Glorieux et J. Vandeweyer (2006). *Technisch verslag bij het onderzoek 'Loopbaanonderbrekers onder de loep. Een onderzoek naar de leefsituatie en tijdsbesteding van gebruikers van het tijdskrediet in Vlaanderen*, Brussels: Research group TOR, Sociology department, Free University Brussels.

¹⁰³ Denis, in: Vanderweyden, *Is er leven zonder werk?*, p. 98.

¹⁰⁴ Source: FPS Economy, SMEs, self-employed and Energy, Directorate-General Statistics and Economic information. *Enquête sur les forces de travail 2004*. (http://statbel.fgov.be/figures/d31_fr.asp#1, consulted on 3 march 2006)

Table 2. Men by family situation and by employment status (percentages)*

	Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
N =	433	53	188	55
Living with parents	12,5%	5,7%	1,6%	18,5%
Living alone	9,5%	5,7%	7,9%	9,3%
Single parent family	2,8%	1,9%	2,6%	1,9%
With partner without children	18,8%	28,3%	12,2%	29,6%
With partner and children	56,5%	58,5%	75,7%	40,7%

* p<0,05

The people on a full-time career break who do not work, most often have no children. While less than a third of all of the men have a child aged under 7, 42.3% of part-time male career-breakers fall into this category.

Table 3. Men by age of children and by employment status (percentages)*

	Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
N =	433	53	188	55
No children	40,6%	38,5%	21,7%	58,2%
Youngest child aged less than 7	26,1%	21,2%	42,3%	27,3%
Youngest child aged 7 or older	33,3%	40,4%	36,0%	14,5%

* p<0,05

Part-time male career-breakers are clearly unique in relation to the other groups. On average they are slightly older, are more often likely to live with a partner and children, and have younger children than the other men. One-fifth of part-time male career-breakers have taken the break because of parental leave. Only 2% of the full-time career breaks are because of parental leave.¹⁰⁵

4. Why choose a career break?

The reasons for taking a career break vary depending on whether part-time or full-time leave is taken. For full-time career-breakers, 37% of men (whether working or not during the period of leave) made the decision on account of another work-related activity (as opposed to only 2% for the part-timers). This group of men also recorded the highest number of working hours following analysis of the diaries. In view of the fact that the aim of this document is to find out how men's use of time changes when they work less or not at all, the decision was made to divide full-time career-breakers into two groups: those who performed another professional activity and those who recorded no working time during their career-break period. Therefore, we will discuss below the situation of full-time male workers and three groups of male career-breakers (full-time career-breakers with professional activity, part-time career-breakers and full-time career-breakers without any professional activity). Comparison of the three different groups of career-breakers enables us to observe that the reasons for taking the leave also differ significantly (Table 4).

¹⁰⁵ This low figure is partly explained by the fact that only career-breakers with at least five months' leave were included in the sample. In other words, fathers taking three months' full-time parental leave were not included.

Table 4. Reasons for career interruption (percentages)¹⁰⁶

	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
N =	53	188	55
More time for children*	25	50	27
More time for domestic work*	6	22	14
Other paid employment*	65	2	13
Dissatisfied with job*	17	9	25
Less work pressure*	8	18	5
Study / training*	7	7	29
Health reasons	11	13	9
Stress	4	8	13
More leisure time*	4	32	7
More time for myself*	4	23	7
Care for sick/elderly person	0	4	9
Social commitments	0	3	2
Building/renovation	6	10	13
Travel*	2	1	7

* p<0,05

According to the diary entries, the majority of full-time career-breakers (65%) with work-related activities chose to take career leave because of another professional activity. “More time for children” was specified by one quarter of these men, 17% are dissatisfied with their job and 11% interrupted their career for health reasons. The reasons for taking part-time career leave differ. The reconciliation of work and family plays a clear-cut role here. Half of part-time career-breakers wanted more time to devote to children and one-fifth mentioned having “more time for domestic work” as one of the reasons for career leave. Furthermore, 32% took the plunge in order to have more leisure time and 23% more time for themselves.¹⁰⁷ These last reasons indicate a desire to “unwind”. Full-time male career-breakers without a work-related activity also formed a separate group, among whom almost one-third specified studies or training as a reason for career leave.¹⁰⁸ However, they also place importance in spending more time with their children (27%) and domestic tasks (14%). Male career-breakers with children gave these last reasons and chose a career break to take up more family responsibilities. One-quarter of the non-working full-time male career-breakers were also dissatisfied with their jobs

5. Changes in men’s time use during career leave

In order to analyse changes in the time use of full-time or part-time career-breakers, we have divided time use into five major categories: total workload, personal care, education, social participation, leisure time and travel.

5.1. The total workload was not in proportion to the number of hours worked

Full-time male career-breakers singled themselves out noticeably from the others in their reasons for taking career leave. Trying out a different job, devoting more time to children and returning to studies or training were all mentioned by them. The reason for taking career leave however also determines to a large extent the type and number of activities during the period of leave. A first noteworthy finding is the fact that the number of hours worked by full-time male career-breakers is very high. They work 20 hours and 41 minutes per week, as opposed to 27 hours and 27 minutes for part-time career-breakers and 38 hours and 35 minutes for full-time workers (Table 5). However, this finding must be viewed in the context of the 54% of full-time male career-breakers who carry out work-related activity during the period of leave. Consequently, a large number of men choose to take full-time career leave in order to try out another job. As already explained in paragraph 4, it is for this reason that we decided to divide the group of full-time career-breakers into: full-time career-breakers with work-related activities (that is, having carried out paid work during diary recording week) and full-time career-breakers without a job. This approach makes it possible to identify the major changes in time use resulting from working less or not at all.

Full-time career-breakers with work-related activities barely differ from full-time workers. In fact, their background characteristics and their time use is very similar.

¹⁰⁶ Several reasons for taking a career break may be given. The sum of the percentages is therefore higher than 100.

¹⁰⁷ Significantly more men without family commitments choose part-time career leave in order to have more leisure time; “more time for myself” is chosen as often by fathers as by non-fathers. “More time for children” and “more time for domestic work” is stated more by fathers.

¹⁰⁸ 93% of non-working men who choose full-time career leave to undertake study or training have no children.

Table 5. Time spent on paid work, on domestic work and on childcare (total week)

		Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
	N=	433	53	188	55
PAID WORK*		39:35	42:10	27:27	0:14
	In the workplace, at home...*	38:53	41:50	26:33	0:00
	Time spent at work without working*	0:37	0:19	0:52	0:01
	Time related to unemployment and looking for a job	0:03	0:00	0:00	0:13
DOMESTIC WORK*		11:05	10:43	18:21	25:34
	Housework*	6:01	5:54	9:04	12:38
	Odd jobs*	3:05	2:30	6:31	9:34
	hopping*	1:35	1:51	2:13	2:31
	Visiting and using services*	0:23	0:26	0:32	0:49
CHILDREN*		2:19	2:24	4:47	4:57
	Childcare*	1:00	0:34	2:24	3:10
	Education*	1:19	1:49	2:22	1:46
Total workload*		53:01	55:18	50:36	30:46

* p<0,05

If career leave is not taken to carry out other work-related activities, it goes together, for men, with a surprising reduction in total workload. The total workload consists of time devoted to paid work, domestic work and childcare. Working full-time career-breakers have the heaviest workload. They in fact work for 55 hours and 18 minutes, which is longer than men working full-time (around 53 hours per week). For part-time male career-breakers, the workload decreases by 2 hours and 25 minutes per week. Finally, non-working full-time male career-breakers bring up the rear with a total workload that is 22 hours and 15 minutes less than that of full-time workers. In terms of total workload, full-time male career-breakers who perform work-related activities do not significantly differ from full-time workers with respect to paid work, domestic work and childcare.

Part-time career leave does not really lead to a considerable reduction in total workload. The lower number of hours worked compared to full-time workers, that is 12 hours and 8 minutes less, is in fact partially compensated for by an increase in domestic work, of 7 hours and 16 minutes, and childcare, 2 hours and 28 minutes. A large proportion of the part-time male career-breakers furthermore also choose to reduce their time at work in order to devote more time to their families: 42% mention "more time for the children" as the main reason for taking part-time career leave, while 16% mention "more leisure time" as a priority and 9% mention "health problems". Sixty percent of part-time male career-breakers devoted time to their children during the diary record-keeping week, as opposed to 42% of full-time workers, 42% of full-time male career-breakers with work-related activities and 35% of the full-time male career-breakers with no work-related activities. To a significant extent, men with part-time career leave are therefore more likely to live with a partner and children than other men.¹⁰⁹

Full-time male career-breakers without work-related activities actually showed a marked reduction in their total workload. Their workload is 20 to 25 hours less than that of men who are in part-time or full-time employment. In comparison with full-time male workers, they devote 14 hours and 29 minutes more to domestic tasks and 2 hours and 38 minutes more to children. Non-working full-time male career-breakers also carry out more domestic tasks than part-time career-breakers (+ 7 hours and 13 minutes). However, the time devoted to children does not rise as a proportion of the time freed up by not working.

Part-time or full-time career leave can however actually speed up the performance of a greater number of family tasks. There is nonetheless a very strong correlation between the total workload and the family situation. The aforementioned results do not take account of the fact that 76% part-time male career-breakers cohabit with a partner and children, whereas for working men this percentage falls to just 56 to 58%, and for full-time male career-breakers without work-related activities it is 41%. We can get a better picture of the changes in the combination of work and family burdens if we look exclusively at fathers (Table 6). Among fathers, the overall workload differs significantly. For male career-breakers with a family, a clear-cut redistribution of workload can be identified.

¹⁰⁹ If we take into account the different family situations, we discover that full-time male career-breakers with work-related activities devote 2 hours and 38 minutes to childcare, full-time workers 2 hours and 31 minutes, part-time male career-breakers 4 hours and 3 minutes and full-time career-breakers without work 5 hours and 56 minutes. The difference in time devoted to children between full-time male career-breakers and part-time male career-breakers is therefore greater.

Less paid work or no paid work at all is accompanied by a growing increase in household work and childcare.

Table 6. Total workload of men with a partner and children

	Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
N=	244	31	143	22
PAID WORK*	39:10	45:04	27:36	00:00
DOMESTIC WORK*	11:58	9:36	18:34	32:11
CHILDREN*	3:50	3:47	6:14	11:50
TOTAL WORKLOAD*	54:58	58:28	52:24	44:02

* p<0,05

An exception to this are the full-time male career-breakers who, in reality, do not interrupt their professional careers but start a new work-related activity. They perform significantly more hours of paid work than full-time workers, but roughly the same amount of domestic and family tasks. It is shown that they only take on 40% of all of the care and upbringing of children. In view of the small number of fathers in the group of full-time male career-breakers, these results should however be taken with all of the usual reserves and be regarded as indicative.

Recent Australian research has shown that the thematic content of parenthood is completely different for men and women.¹¹⁰ In fact, motherhood implies – much more than fatherhood – carrying out different activities at once, more physical childcare, spending more time with children and experiencing more time restrictions in general, and not forgetting the responsibilities relating to the children. These differences persist in families where women work full-time. Table 6 shows that men who take on a career break can already change this situation and take on part of the family-related workload. In fact, almost 90% of fathers taking career breaks have a working partner. In the questionnaire, fathers with part-time career leave report taking on approximately 44% of all of tasks related to the children. For non-working fathers with full-time career leave, this even rises to 66%.

5.2. Personal care: a constant?

Personal care accounts for the lion's share of weekly time use. Working men do not differ very much in this. The less men work, the more time they devote to personal care (Table 7). A reduction or a full break in professional activity leads to a significant increase in the time devoted to eating and drinking. In addition, non-working full-time male career-breakers devote more time to professional forms of personal care (hairdresser, medical care at home or externally, etc.). However, this difference cannot be explained by poorer health among non-working full-time male career-breakers. Getting dressed and washing, regardless of the work situation, occupy approximately four and a half hours per week.

Table 7. Time spent on personal care (total week)

	Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
N=	433	53	188	55
PERSONAL CARE, EATING AND DRINKING*	13:46	14:00	14:57	16:32
Eating and drinking*	8:44	9:11	9:45	11:12
Dressing, washing	4:42	4:24	4:42	4:16
Receiving professional care*	0:19	0:24	0:30	1:02
SLEEPING AND RESTING	58:07	57:43	57:35	60:43
Sleeping and resting	56:39	56:24	56:12	59:09
Relaxing and doing nothing	1:02	1:00	0:58	1:10
Making love	0:25	0:18	0:23	0:23
Total duration of personal care*	71:54	71:44	72:32	77:15

* p<0,05

¹¹⁰ Craig, L. (2006). 'Does father care mean fathers share? A comparison of how mothers and fathers in intact families spend time with children', *Gender & Society* 20(2), pp. 259-281.

Combining work and family-based tasks takes its toll: part-time male career-breakers sleep and rest the least. Full-time male career-breakers without professional obligations can sleep more than part-time career-breakers and working men.

5.3. Taking a career break to study

Paragraph 4 shows that almost one-third of full-time male career-breakers without work-related activities mention studies or training as a reason for taking leave. Full-time male career-breakers with and without work-related activities spend significantly more time with their noses in books than their counterparts who work full-time (3 hours 23 minutes and 7 hours 27 minutes, respectively). For part-time and full-time workers, this fluctuates around one hour per week (Table 8).

Table 8. Time spent on education and training (total week)

		Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
	N=	433	53	188	55
EDUCATION AND TRAINING*		0:49	3:23	1:06	7:27
	College*	0:08	2:32	0:33	6:08
	Other training, courses	0:41	0:51	0:32	1:18

* p<0,05

This value is consistent with the questionnaire, which revealed that 31% of men taking a full-time career break (whether working or not) are enrolled in an educational or training programme that occupies more than 30 hours per year. This percentage drops to 13% among part-time career-breakers. The nature of the training and the reason for pursuing (further) training also differ depending on whether the career leave is full-time or part-time. In the case of full-time career leave, those concerned prefer daytime course of study in a college of higher education or a university in order to improve their prospects in the labour market. On the other hand, part-time male career-breakers generally participate in a course or workshop rather than a full-time programme of study. This study may be taken in higher education, in formal adult education, within a cultural association or in art education. More than half of people take this course of study out of interest in the subject or as a hobby.

The data again reveals that men with full-time career leave clearly differentiate themselves from part-time career-breakers. Whereas the latter mainly use the freed up time to facilitate a more balanced combination of work, family and leisure time, almost one-third of full-time male career-breakers choose to interrupt their jobs with a view to enhancing their career, in particular by later being more competitive in the labour market.

5.4. Less work, more leisure time?

It is often assumed that work (paid work and family tasks) and leisure time are interconnected vessels. A reduction in the number of compulsory activities should, if that were the case, go hand in hand with an increase in the number of leisure activities. However, in view of the time use statistics, it appears that this is not always the case. When we add the time devoted to social participation and leisure time, it does appear that full-time male career-breakers who perform another work-based activity have less time for this type of activity (namely 28 hours and 40 minutes). Working men devote four more hours to social and leisure activities, in this case 32 hours and 49 minutes. The difference for part-time male career-breakers is slight and not significant (17 minutes). The reduction of the total workload by 2 hours and 25 minutes for part-time career-breakers is therefore not automatically converted into leisure activities. It are the full-time male career-breakers without work-related activities, in particular, who have a considerable amount of leisure time, with 41 hours and 39 minutes per week, or almost 6 hours per day that are not devoted to family tasks, sleeping and other personal care.

It is likewise interesting to examine social participation and leisure time separately.

Table 9. Time spent on social participation (total week)

	Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
N=	433	53	188	55
SOCIAL PARTICIPATION*	8:36	8:21	9:08	14:30
Associative life*	1:28	1:44	1:25	3:19
Social contacts*	7:06	6:36	7:39	9:50
Care and assistance to family members*	0:01	0:00	0:03	1:20

* p<0,05

Full-time workers and full-time career-breakers who work have an almost identical profile when it comes to social participation (Table 9). Taking part-time career leave is no guarantee of greater social participation, since workers in this situation do not devote significantly more time to social activities than full-time workers or full-time career-breakers with a job. Only among full-time career-breakers without a job is a significant increase in the time devoted to social participation observed. They devote the most time to associative life, social contacts and care and assistance to family members.

Table 10. Time spent on leisure (total week)

	Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
N=	433	53	188	55
LEISURE*	24:13	20:19	23:58	27:09
Hobbies and games	1:28	0:44	1:12	2:08
Sport	1:11	1:01	1:14	1:58
Recreation*	2:03	1:17	2:57	2:23
Outdoors	3:20	3:35	2:41	3:03
Culture and entertainment	1:14	1:33	1:04	1:23
TV and video	11:38	9:34	11:02	11:39
Listening to music	0:15	0:12	0:22	0:28
Reading*	1:17	1:03	1:57	1:14
New media	1:42	1:17	1:24	2:49

* p<0,05

As far as leisure time is concerned (Table 10), full-time career-breakers with a job differentiate themselves noticeably from full-time workers and other men. With 20 hours and 19 minutes, they have the least leisure time of all. The other groups do not differ significantly from each other in terms of total amount of leisure time. All of the actors devote most of their leisure time to watching television. The four groups only differ significantly from each other when it comes to the time devoted to reading and recreation. Recreational activities (walking, cycling and swimming) and reading are the preferred activities of part-time career-breakers.

5.5. Combining work and family leads to longer travel times

The absence of work or temporary part-time work, brings about an increase in the amount of travel (about one hour per week) compared with that of full-time workers (Table 11). The nature of the travel undertaken reflects the types and number of other activities. Full-time career-breakers without work-related activities, of course, devote the least time to journeys between home and work, but more time to domestic activities and children. However, they spend the most time on journeys to and from school or training centres and on other travel.

Table 11. Time spent on travel (total week)

	Full-time work	Full-time career break, working	Part-time career break	Full-time career break, not working
N=	433	53	188	55
TRAVEL	8:04	7:32	9:06	8:54
To and from work*	3:52	2:22	3:56	0:29
To and from school, university, courses*	0:06	0:35	0:12	0:50
Leisure-related travel	1:30	1:32	1:28	1:48
Domestic work-related travel*	0:30	0:24	0:45	1:11
Children-related travel*	0:26	0:54	1:01	1:34
Travel to and from famil	0:36	0:29	0:40	0:53
Other travel*	1:02	1:15	1:01	2:06

* p<0,05

Men who interrupt their career on a full-time basis to carry out other work-related activities devote less time to travel between home and work than full-time workers. Only 62% of working full-time career-breakers travelled between home and workplace during the week of recording activities in the diaries, as opposed to 85% of full-time workers. This difference indicates that full-time career breaks are above all taken to engage in self-employed activities outside the home. When working full-time career-breakers were asked where and how they intended to work after the end of their career break, 64% responded that they wanted to embark on self-employed activity. Only 6% of non-working full-time career-breakers wanted to work on a self-employed basis after the career break. None of the part-time career-breakers chose this option.

6. Allocation of freed up working time

Another way of looking at changes in career-breakers' time use is to examine how the time freed up by working less or not working is divided between other activities compared to full-time workers (Table 12).

Table 12. Allocation of working time freed up by working less or not at all compared with full-time workers (percentages)

Activities	Part-time career break (12 hrs 8 mins less paid work)	Full-time career break, not working (39 hrs 21 mins less paid work)
Domestic tasks	60	37
Childcare	20	7
Travel	9	2
Personal care	5	14
Education and training	2	17
Social and leisure activities	2	22
Other activities	1	1
Total	100%	100%

Part-time career-breakers work 12 hours and 8 minutes less than full-time workers. About 80% of the time they gain by working on a part-time basis is allocated to family tasks (household tasks and children). Nearly one-tenth of this time is devoted to travel. Part-time male career-breakers present a strong image as "stay-at-home fathers". They use career leave and time credit schemes effectively to achieve a better balance between paid work and family life. This demonstrates that when men are presented with an opportunity to work less and are supported in taking up a legitimate alternative role by means of career leave and time credit schemes, they can effectively (temporarily) take on more family tasks.

In Norway, it appears that taking paternity leave of one month is common practice for men. However, it only actually became so after the authorities had introduced a legal framework for paid paternity leave. This framework gave Norwegian men the added stimulus, justification and legitimisation for staying at home.¹¹¹ Several other studies show that the policy of the public authorities can in fact influence the willingness or not to take paternity leave and stress the importance of an institutional framework created by the labour market and the State as a

111 Brandth, B. and E. Kvande (2001). 'Flexible work and flexible fathers', *Work, Employment and Society* 15(2), pp. 251-267.

catalyst for changes in men's employment behaviour.¹¹²

Among full-time career-breakers without work-related activities, 44% of the time freed up is allocated to family tasks (Table 12). In other words, they devote a smaller share of freed up time to family tasks than part-time career-breakers. On the other hand, around one-fifth of the freed up time is allocated to social activities and leisure, and one-fifth to study. If we consider only the full-time career-breakers without work-related activities and with children, they would appear to devote around three-quarters of time freed up to family tasks, just like part-time career-breakers. However, their numbers are too low in our statistics to be able to obtain any certainties in this respect.

7. Summary and conclusion

Career break and time credit schemes enable the reduction or stopping of professional work for a certain period. A worker on a career break freely chooses how to manage this period. The abovementioned analyses reveal that taking career leave does not necessarily go hand in hand with an increase in leisure. On the contrary, 54% of full-time male career-breakers have a job. Wanting to try out another job is the reason most frequently mentioned by men for choosing a career break. Full-time male career-breakers performing a job and full-time workers present almost the same background characteristics. Their time use is furthermore almost the same. They differ on the other hand in the time spent undertaking education and training (3 hours and 23 minutes as opposed to 49 minutes), as a result of which there is a reduction of available leisure time (20 hours and 18 minutes as opposed to 24 hours and 15 minutes). They have the highest total workload and the greatest time pressure of all of the men. Part-time career leave also does not necessarily imply an increase in hobbies and leisure time. In fact, part-time male career-breakers use the freed up time (12 hours and 8 minutes) to work less than full-time workers and devote more time to household work (+ 7 hours and 16 minutes) and to caring for and bringing up children (+ 2 hours and 28 minutes). Part-time career-breakers devote eighty percent of the time gained through part-time working to family tasks (domestic tasks and childcare). They also, to a lesser extent, devote more time to travel – mainly for household tasks and children (+ 1 hour and 2 minutes), personal care (+ 39 minutes), education and training (+ 17 minutes) and social participation and leisure time (+ 17 minutes). Three-quarters of part-time career-breakers cohabit with a partner and children. The combination of part-time working and family tasks explains why their total workload is not less than that of full-time workers and leads to equivalent time pressure.

Part-time male career-breakers use the career break and time credit schemes to adjust work and family life. This demonstrates that when men are presented with an opportunity to work less and are supported in taking up a legitimate alternative role by means of career leave and time credit schemes, they can effectively (temporarily) take on more family tasks.

What do men do when they no longer have to work? Compared to their working counterparts, they have an extra 39 hours and 21 minutes to allocate to different activities. The largest share of the time freed up is devoted to household tasks (+ 14 hours and 29 minutes), to a range of social activities and leisure time (+ 8 hours and 50 minutes), and to education and training (+ 6 hours and 38 minutes). Furthermore, they also devote more time than full-time workers to personal care (+ 5 hours and 22 minutes), childcare (+ 2 hours and 38 minutes) and travel (+ 50 minutes). Male career-breakers without work-related activity use on average only 43% of the working time freed up for family tasks, as opposed to 80% in the case of part-time career-breakers. One-fifth of the freed up time is devoted to social activities and hobbies, and one-fifth to study. This group of men therefore has the most leisure time and the lowest workload and time pressure. Only 41% have their own family and 18% live with their parents. However, they do not differ significantly from full-time workers in this respect. Twenty-nine percent of them chose career leave in order to undertake study or training, whereas this percentage drops to only 7% among part-time and full-time career-breakers.

For men, full-time career leave remains, first and foremost, a means of trying out new professional activities (approximately half of full-time male career breakers choose this approach). The other half of full-time male career-breakers do not perform any work-related activities during the leave period and around 40% of it is made up of men who take advantage of the career leave to begin studies (this group contains hardly any fathers) and 60% is men who mainly take on family tasks.

It is equally legitimate to take a career break in order to undertake study, take on family tasks or try out a different professional activity. When we look at the career break and time credit schemes from the perspective of the realisation of a better balance of work and family tasks, it appears that these measures bear the most fruit for part-time male career-breakers.

112 Deven, F. and P. Moss (2005). *Leave policies and research. Reviews and country notes*, working document CBGS 2005/3.

Fathers who reduce their investment in paid work in order to look after children

Laura Merla

1. Introduction

In the context of doctoral research in sociology, I interviewed 21 men, who were fathers to one or more children, and who were or have remained at home with the explicit aim of looking after them – taking on, in fact, a “stay-at-home father” role. They all live in a couple with a professionally active female companion. The main characteristics of this sample are presented in a few tables. It is important to note that this does not claim to be representative of the population of stay-at-home fathers. It is furthermore very difficult to identify: the category of “stay-at-home father” does not exist as such in official statistics. They are scattered within various statistical categories (not-active, unemployment, self-employment, time credit or career break, parental leave). With the exception of parental leave, belonging to one of these categories does not automatically mean that the person concerned is actually in a stay-at-home father situation. Rather than attempting the impossible, we therefore ensured, as far as possible, that we covered as diverse a group as possible.

Table 1. Characteristics of the 21 stay-at-home fathers

Educational level

Lower	1
Medium	1
Higher, non-academic	6
Higher, academic	13

Previous employment type

Worker	1
Employee	9
Executive	4
Self-employed	3
Unemployed	4

Age at time of becoming a stay-at-home father

20-29	5
30-39	9
40-49	5
50+	2

Previous net monthly income level

Less than 1001 euros	7
Between 1001 and 1500 euros	5
Between 1501 and 2000 euros	4
2001 euros and above	5

Table 2. Characteristics of the companions/spouses

Type of employment

Employee	7
Executive	5
Self-employed	4
European official	5

Net monthly income level

Less than 1001 euros	1
Between 1001 and 1500 euros	9
Between 1501 and 2000 euros	1
2001 euros and above	10

Table 3. Characteristics of the children

Number of children

1	1
2	11
3 and over	9

Age of the youngest child at time of becoming a stay-at-home father

Between 0 and 1 year old	13
Between 2 and 3 years old	3
Between 4 and 5 years old	3
6 years old and above	2

In this report, I will focus on three points: the main factors that contributed to these men either stopping working, or stopping looking for a job, in order to become stay-at-home fathers; the costs and obstacles that they face, and the advantages they put forward in their narratives.

2. Main factors linked to the decision to become a “stay-at-home father”

2.1. A multiplicity of variable factors

The first observation that comes out of the interviews is the following: it is not one, but a multitude of factors that came together to in the end lead the men we encountered to withdraw their investment in the work sphere in favour of the domestic and family sphere. They combine in a variable way and are not all mentioned in each case. The main factors are related to time and quality of life values; the work sphere; the partner; a calculation of the costs and benefits; organisational difficulties; and the connection with the previous generation.

The first set of factors relates to conceptions regarding upbringing, and in particular to the emphasis placed by some fathers on the importance for them and their partner of raising their children themselves rather than entrusting them to others (whether to crèche staff, grandparents, etc.) It also relates to a series of statements that challenge the values of the consumer society, the emphasis on competition and competitiveness at all costs, the importance placed on money and material wealth, in favour of alternative values privileging in particular human values, social justice, respect for the environment, non-conformism, etc. Many state the desire to give priority to the quality of life and relationships between family members, a quality of life that involves the ability to take time to do things. It is a matter of tackling the stress created by the frantic pace of life that stems from the difficulty of reconciling family life and work life, whether it be in terms of timetables or mental burden, and to take the time to see the children (grow), to create the basis of a rich and solid relationship with them.

Certain elements of professional life are mentioned in order to explain the process that has led to the situation of the father staying at home. Two initial sets of situations can be singled out that have led to the fathers distancing themselves from an investment in the work sphere in favour of the family sphere. The first set encompasses the individuals whose attachment to employment in general or to their employment situation in particular grew thin as time went by because of the instability and the precariousness of their professional career or their employment status, difficult working conditions that were not very status-enhancing and/or did not offer them career pros-

pects, a change in the organisation of work, or difficulties in getting into or returning to the employment market. A lack of employment prospects, uncertainty regarding the future of a company, the feeling that projects are not implemented out as well and as quickly as planned, and the boredom and disappointment that sets in are also feature in an examination of the employment situation. The second set, on the other hand, groups together individuals who are considerably involved in their professional work, enjoying a status-enhancing and/or interesting job, but who are prevented, by its pace of work or the mental burden that it involves, from putting into practice their conceptions and values in terms of family life and quality of life.

Finally, the fact that the partner is, herself, considerably involved in a professional activity where she feels valued (in terms of salary and/or professionally), with good career prospects and job security, can also play an important, occasionally reinforcing, role when the partner/spouse is experiencing an opposite situation. In nearly all of the cases, the partner contributed to the decision-making. The support provided can range from the simple acceptance of the idea that the man stays at home and invests strongly in caring for the children, to an express request for this. The employment situation of each partner is not considered separately, but is compared to that of the father. In fact, all of the accounts attest to the carrying out of a kind of calculation of costs and benefits in the process that led to transition to being a stay-at-home father. Apart from a few exceptions, this calculation appears to have been made as a couple. This calculation contributes either to justifying the father stopping work, or to choosing which of the two parents will stay at home when both are prepared to do so. Both material and qualitative aspects are weighed up relating to the situation of each of the partners in the employment market and vis-à-vis their current job. The material aspects concern the respective salary levels, the costs related to the performance of a professional activity (taxes, travel costs between home and work, costs arising from the outsourcing of domestic tasks and/or childcare, the purchase of prepared meals, etc.), any compensatory benefits in the case of a career break, time credit, parental leave or unemployment, and any financial reserves that can be used to compensate for a loss of income. The qualitative aspects concern the working conditions (hours, employment prospects, working environment, etc.) and the attachment to the job, the time spent travelling between home and the workplace, the stress created by alternating between professional and family life, and more widely the current and desired quality of life.

The difficulties of reconciling family and professional life also play an important role. In some cases, childcare during the day, in the evening, in the event of illness or during the school holidays presents a problem, in particular because of the difficulty of finding a place in childcare facilities or their excessively high cost, and/or the lack of a network of family or friends that can be relied on day-to-day or in the event of unforeseen circumstances. The arrival of a second, or indeed a third or fourth child is also often mentioned.

Finally, some of the men encountered did not know their father or did not know him well, or were disappointed with the way in which he had invested in the father-son relationship. Staying at home to look after the children therefore is for them a way of investing more and avoiding the repetition of the previous generation's behaviour. The desire to also reproduce for their children the presence and the care provided by their own mother, who was very often at home, is also mentioned.

2.2. A milestone in life's journey: from an old desire to a sudden event

The abovementioned factors are not sufficient to explain why these men became stay-at-home fathers at a given moment of their existence. The narratives can be placed on a continuum that goes from the description of stopping working as the realisation of an old desire, that sometimes goes back to childhood or adolescence, to look after the children oneself and to put investment in the professional sphere on the back burner, to the occurrence of a sometimes sudden event (redundancy, illness, accident, unexpected pregnancy), which transforms habits and induces looking at investment in the family sphere in a new light. In the first case, this realisation is possible because the conditions have finally come together to be able to move on to the act. It may for example be a case of an appointment in teaching which opens up an entitlement to a career break, a promotion obtained by the spouse which provides sufficient income for the family, or the end of an employment contract. Between these two extremes are a whole series of narratives that attest to a more progressive evolution of conceptions, occasionally as more children are born.

3. Costs and obstacles

Being a stay-at-home parent today creates a series of costs both for the men and the women who find themselves

in this situation. We will present here three sets of costs and obstacles mentioned by the men in our sample: a lack of recognition; isolation and increased visibility; and invisibility and a lack of recognition of domestic work. The first two sets relate to difficulties that the stay-at-home fathers consider to be particular to their situation.

3.1. Lack of recognition

Stay-at-home fathers suffer from a lack of recognition of not only their existence, but also of the reality of domestic work and childcare that they perform at home. This lack of recognition comes both from the public authorities and their direct and indirect circle. As far as the public authorities are concerned, the lack of recognition consists of the absence of reference to their actual situation in certain administrative forms (difficulties in registering oneself as a stay-at-home father with the municipal authorities, the absence of a “father” box in certain surveys for questions on how children are cared for, etc.). It is also apparent in contacts with certain representatives of the public authorities (unemployment office employees who do not provide information about the possibility of requesting an availability exemption for family reasons, for example), and more widely in the fact that, in Belgium, the status of stay-at-home parent does not exist (this absence affects both stay-at-home mothers and fathers), and which, at best, forces them to resort to another status when this is possible and, at worst, deprives them of certain social rights.

With respect to their direct and indirect circle, stay-at-home fathers are regularly confronted, alongside signs of support and admiration, with negative comments and reactions from both men and women, close or unknown to them, young or older, reminding them that a man must perform a professional activity and provide for the needs of his family. Men’s assignation to paid work, apart from the function of income earner, weighs on the relationships that some fathers have with other men. It would therefore appear that paid work occupies a central place in many men’s construction of identity, as well as in their relationships. The very fact that a man can stay at home and feel comfortable is occasionally felt to be a threat, an example that upsets and challenges the view that some men have of themselves. We note that several fathers stress the fact that today the norm that is dominating more and more consists of both men and women above all investing in a professional activity. Nevertheless, even if the idea of women working is not questioned, in the event that a family places importance on not outsourcing childcare, it falls to the mother to put her professional activity on hold in order to look after the children. The fathers in our sample therefore often hear opinions stressing the fact that it is their wife and not them that should have stopped working. Their skills are also called into question: they have to prove that they are capable of properly looking after a child, and they actually do devote their time to this as well as to domestic work, rather than doing nothing or devoting themselves to hobbies. Childcare remains a female prerogative, and it is sometimes difficult to imagine that a man could actually take it on. Therefore in the early childhood sector, some professionals (nurses, teachers, nannies,¹¹³ paediatricians) consider the mother to be the primary parent, whether she is present or not. Male and female professionals, but also parents, friends or others occasionally consider that only women are capable of looking after a child, and refuse to accommodate the father. Stay-at-home fathers, owing to their situation, precariously balanced in relation to two competing norms: the traditional one of men’s assignation to paid work and of women caring for the children (which refers to model of the breadwinner father and the stay-at-home or part-timer mother); and the more recent one of the centrality of professional work for all, men and women, which is combined with the idea that aside from this professional commitment, the mother retains the main responsibility for childcare (and which would relate more to a model of a dual income couple with care reserved for the mother).

3.2. Isolation and increased visibility

Many stay-at-home fathers feel alone. This solitude, based on relative isolation, takes on a particular nature for these men: on the one hand they may experience difficulties in integrating into the support networks and groups that revolve around school or that are found in their neighbourhood – often made up of stay-at-home mothers –, and on the other hand they sometimes feel cut-off from other men and have difficulty in managing to maintain their presence in male groups built around the practicing of a sport or a hobby among other things. These difficulties are linked to several elements. Firstly, it may be a question of the distrust that some women demonstrate when faced with their presence, the fear they feel of seeing themselves attributed with motivations of a sexual nature, or the difficulty of adapting to subjects of conversation that they were not used to and with which they feel uncomfortable. Secondly, it is the discrepancy between the life they lead – and which is highly centred on childcare – and that which other men lead – centred on professional work – which may weigh on relationships, in particular through conversations. The pleasure that comes from participation in a sporting club, and the competitions that it organises, may also be reduced by the reactions of competitors who minimise the impact of a sporting victory by attributing it to the fact that a stay-at-home father who has “nothing to do all day”, would have more

¹¹³ These first three professions are mainly performed by women and in the narratives talking about the type of reactions described here, the fathers did not mention having encountered men performing these professions, which shows that we have not embraced the male version of these professions.

time to train than the others – a comment that has the effect of reducing the merit linked to the victory.

Isolation is also linked to the space-time configuration of public places. Some are more occupied or allocated to women or to men, be it permanently or at different times of the day. The spaces dedicated to children and their care (playgrounds and spaces in front of the school gates at midday or 3 p.m., day-care centres for parents and their children, etc.), are in some neighbourhoods frequented almost exclusively by women, as are shopping centres or shops, depending on the products sold or the time of day. The presence of a man in these locations, alone or accompanied by one or more children, may appear strange. This increased visibility and the reactions it provokes remind these men that they are inhabiting a place and taking on a role that is not granted to their gender. This reminder also applies when they go with their children to male “locations”, such as a DIY shop for example. The configuration of public spaces, and the location of spaces reserved for children in female places in particular, such as for example spaces to change nappies in the ladies’ toilets of a shopping centre, is another reminder of gender norms.

3.3. Invisibility and lack of recognition of domestic work

A great abundance of literature has widely demonstrated the invisible nature of domestic work. This invisibility is also felt by stay-at-home fathers, and is accompanied by the feeling that the companions/spouses do not grasp the reality of the situation for the stay-at-home parent. This manifests itself in different ways. Domestic work only becomes visible when it is not done and the companion makes no comment on it when it is done, but indeed does so when it is not; the fatigue related to performing professional work is considered to be more justified – the idea being that a stay-at-home father cannot be tired in the evening; and the conversations centering on the narrative of the mother’s working day, and leaving only limited room for the narrative of the father’s day, etc.

The set of costs mentioned here direct stay-at-home fathers to an image of themselves that is not very valued or status-enhancing, and even more so because many have integrated the idea that in order to grow, a man must have a professional activity.

4. Advantages advanced in the narratives

One of the ways of managing this type of negative image is to place an emphasis on the advantages brought by the situation of being a stay-at-home father, both to the father himself and his circle. These concern the quality of life, judged to be better, less stressful and more in tune with their values of the father and the couple; a relationship with the children, described as deep, special and based on mutual understanding – with the father often describing himself as primary parent for the child and telling with pride an anecdote showing how much their child is attached to them; a relationship with the spouse that is calmer and of a better quality, with the father being available to listen to her and support her on a personal and professional level. Some fathers furthermore place emphasis on the fact that their commitment at home frees the mother of the constraints linked to the reconciliation of professional and family life and allows her to fully invest in the former. Stopping work also provides an opportunity to take the time to reflect on themselves, to know themselves better, to discover unsuspected qualities and skills (empathy, listening, childcare, softness, organisational ability, etc.) Finally, it allows some fathers to invest in a parallel activity (sporting, artistic, etc.) that they would not have been able to do successfully if they had continued working.

To briefly conclude this report, I would like to highlight the fact that the study of situations outside the norm with regard to the sexual division of work, such as that in which the men in our sample find themselves, make it possible to shed light on the resistance of gender norms, contrary to a certain conception and to certain statements that would like to claim they have disappeared. Various authors have advanced the strength of the patriarchal system that perhaps lies precisely in its capacity to operate on different, more or less visible levels, ranging in this case from clearly verbalised comments to a more subtle reminder via the differential and gendered inclusion of individuals’ public spaces and social circles. By keeping them on the fringes, these obstacles harm the attempts to develop a model of masculinity that challenges one of the foundations of the domination of men over women.

Guaranteeing gender equality via paternity leave

Françoise Goffinet, Laure Lantier and Veerle Pasmans

5

We will say it again: our society is characterised by a continuous lengthening of life expectancy leading to a significant reduction of the proportion of the working population compared to the number of retired people as well as by a persistently low birth rate, not allowing generations to be replaced and which, furthermore, does not reflect the desired number of children.

The socio-economic context and the main challenges that both Belgium and the other States of the European Union must face are sufficiently synthesised in the Green Paper *Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between generations* produced by the European Commission in March 2005.¹¹⁴

Among the solutions outlined, there is in particular often a stress on the importance of a greater individualisation of social rights, on the increased participation of the female workforce in the employment market and on appropriate care for children and the elderly, by adopting a global approach concerning individuals' entire lifecycle.

Respect for equality between women and men basically lies at the heart of the problem related to an ageing population. Without the intervention of the State and all of the actors concerned, women are likely to continue to shoulder the build-up of tasks such as managing the upbringing of the children, actively participating in the employment market and looking after elderly and disabled parents,¹¹⁵ mostly without them being shared out, while men devote themselves to their professional career as a priority. It is therefore important to act in order to put a stop to these cultural tendencies, which are derived from unequal automatisms.

Guaranteeing gender equality is also about changing the fact that when a child appears, it is generally male workers that request a salary raise in order to provide for the needs of a larger family, whereas female workers seek more flexible working hours and perhaps reduced hours in order to look after at child. These behaviours may entail different repercussions, depending on the sex, for financial autonomy, promotion opportunities, pension benefits, etc.

In order to shatter a number of stereotypes that constitute powerful barriers to the realisation of equality between women and men, it is therefore necessary to raise the awareness of the whole of society.

Succeeding in changing mentalities implies, for example, trying to provoke reflection by asking existential questions such as: "*Gentlemen, at the end of your lives, what aspect of your personality would you like to be remembered for: your quality of being a good work colleague, an effective manager and/or efficient worker... or, above all, because you endeavoured to be a present and involved spouse and father?*". Questioning of this type is likely to persuade men to give women increased access to high-ranking posts and to devote themselves more to the upbringing of their children and the development of their family relationships.

Transforming accepted ideas and causing attitudes to evolve could also lead to employers recognising that a person who stays at home has most likely been able to develop planning, budget management, multi-tasking, empathy and management skills that are likely to be valued in any paid job.

Alongside this obligation to raise awareness, the implementation of family policy that guarantees gender equality implies engaging in the adoption of concrete measures that, on the one hand, will stimulate and facilitate women's participation and retention in, and return to the employment market and, on the other hand, that will guarantee men's full participation in family and domestic responsibilities.¹¹⁶

114 *Communication on the Green Paper Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between generations*, COM (2005), 94.

115 Whereas bringing children into the world is, nevertheless, the only task that is undeniably their responsibility.

116 See: Vielle, P. (2001). *La sécurité sociale et le coût indirect des responsabilités familiales*, Brussels: Bruylant.

In order to achieve such objectives, it is recommended that specific measures be adopted that aim to:

- ensure the availability, quality, diversification and accessibility of childcare facilities as well as care facilities suitable for dependent adults, taking into account the great variety of needs and situations such as crèches, day nurseries, nannies for children regardless of whether or not they are ill, on weekdays but also on the weekend in order to help parents who work on Saturdays and/or Sundays, but also home-based childcare and the encouragement of company crèches;
- work towards an integration of extra-curricular activities (music academies, sporting and language-learning activities) actually on school premises or, at the very least, by organising transport enabling pupils to go, after class hours, without parents' involvement, to get to some extra-curricular activities rather than staying in the day nursery or in studies;
- rethink school holiday periods and school hours by taking more account of parents' professional obligations without neglecting the interests of children and, therefore, ensuring in particular a better balancing of the workload required during the two school semesters and changing the distribution of the holidays by reducing the summer holiday period;
- increase the flexibility of working hours in order to respond to the concern for reconciling work, family life and private life, by taking account of the variety of workers' family situations (single parent family, divorced and separated parents, etc.) For example, a male or female worker with alternating child custody would benefit from the possibility of their working hours being more suited to their personal situation so that he/she could leave work earlier when they have custody of the children and work overtime in the weeks when they do have them;
- encourage the taking of leave for parental and family reasons equally for men and women, which in particular requires better compensation for it in order to attract more male applicants;
- paternity leave is not yet accessible to all, in particular some Belgian municipalities, despite encouragement,¹¹⁷ have not yet transposed 10-day paternity leave into their leave schemes. We note that around ten Walloon municipalities have introduced paternity leave of 15 days like their relevant Ministry, the Ministry for the Walloon Region or the Ministry for the Brussels-Capital Region.

We are certain that the Law of 12 January 2007 "concerning the monitoring of the application of the resolutions from the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995 and introducing the gender dimension into all federal policies" (*Official Gazette* 13 February 2007), which establishes the principle of *gender mainstreaming* in all policies, may constitute one of these long-awaited major advances. This law in fact seeks the implementation of a range of effective instruments and measures (production of an impact report to accompany draft legislation, development of statistics broken down by sex, creation of a network structure of gender *mainstreaming* advisers in all federal public authorities, setting of strategic objectives) aimed at assessing the impact of any new measure envisaged, regardless of the field concerned, on the respective situation of women and men in order to avoid the introduction or reinforcement of possible inequalities. From this perspective, the Institute for the equality of women and men is responsible for complementing and supporting this process of the integration of the gender dimension at the federal level. As such, it will run the network made up by the different advisers.

This essential law may serve as a precedent for any legitimate demand advocating the integration of a generalised family *mainstreaming* approach in all policies in order for the interests of families to be duly and systematically taken into account.

Be that as it may, one must not lose sight of the fact that the establishment of an effective and coherent family policy requires the reconciliation and arbitration of various – indeed often diverging – crucial objectives, which are the pursuit of equality between women and men, the interests of children, the increase of the young, the elder and women on the employment market, the financing of the social protection system and not forgetting winning the participation and support of public opinion.

¹¹⁷ Within the framework of the European project "Active fathers", the Institute for the equality of women and men has developed an informative booklet and a stage play to sensitize the educational and trade-unionist circles.

For a realistic reconciliation of private life and work¹¹⁸

Fabienne Bister

In the 1980s and 1990s, the activities of social partners focussed on establishing conditions that provided equal opportunities. At that time, this concept covered all of the actions required to remedy an acknowledged imbalance in society in general and in the employment market in particular. This much sought-after balancing obviously had to benefit women.

At the beginning of the century, there was a clear turning point. Both the Government and social partners initiated a new approach: that of a more harmonious combination of family life and professional life. Time credit, parental leave and paternity leave are among the many instruments that would enable men to take their place more in the “outside work” sphere. One is forced to observe that these schemes remain largely something for women. The evolution of mentalities in men’s heads but also in women’s heads must continue.

In fact, I believe that women working part-time must not be criticised if they choose it freely. On the other hand, a woman cannot, in 2006, agree to reduce her working hours only in order to open the way for her spouse’s career.

While there remains a lot to do for equal professional opportunities, it is also necessary to measure and acknowledge the progress that has been made. Women are gradually taking their place in power structures – perhaps too slowly, but it will take time for the grey hairs to become female. More and more women can be seen rising to Vice-President posts, and it appears possible to envisage in around ten years many presidencies being in the hands of women. It is also up to them to be present in the lobbying circles where this is decided and to display the appropriate skills there.

The younger generations often find it “normal” to make room for women’s careers. Many new fathers completely naturally look after their children, including when their wives work staggered shifts. It is a good sign; we should not hesitate to show examples of this type in order for this to truly become “second nature”.

In my opinion, the time has come to continue to take “official measures”, but also to continue the evolution of mentalities in women’s heads. As a woman and the head of a company, I am often asked about this “phenomenon”. Like all the female company heads that I know, I do not really understand the question! It is being an entrepreneur in Belgium that is difficult, not doing it as a woman. Let us stop believing that “it is because I am a woman” that obstacles arise in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs encounter the same difficulties.

It would, in my opinion, be very useful to have actions that aim to give women greater confidence in themselves, in particular through examples of women who struggle to “make it”, who learn to stop being afraid and to not be hurt by comments or refusals.

Furthermore, let us not forget that if we introduce an entitlement to part-time working or credit time, each employee must also have to inform their employer sufficiently in advance for him (her) to be able to organise their replacement and perhaps the training of a replacement in the presence of the person who is reducing their hours, in order not to disrupt the work of all of their colleagues.

Finally, women will not be able to legitimately use their skills, their enthusiasm and their creativity in Belgium while there is a refusal to focus seriously on the lack of incentives for employment. It creates genuine problems for individuals and for the economy by preventing many talents from blossoming.

¹¹⁸ With the support and input of Sonja Kohnenmergen, First Councillor in the Social Affairs Department of the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FEB).

The seven “P’s” of men’s violence¹¹⁹

Michael Kaufman

1. Introduction

For a moment my eyes turned away from the workshop participants and out through the windows of the small conference room and towards the Himalayas, north of Katmandu. I was there, leading a workshop, largely the outgrowth of the remarkable work of UNICEF and UNIFEM which, a year earlier, had brought together women and men from throughout South Asia to discuss the problem of violence against women and girls and, most importantly, to work together to find solutions.¹²⁰

As I turned back to the women and men in the group, it felt more familiar than different: women taking enormous chances - in some cases risking their lives - to fight the tide of violence against women and girls. Men who were just beginning to find their anti-patriarchal voices and to discover ways to work alongside women. And what pleasantly surprised me was the positive response to a series of ideas I presented about men’s violence: until then, I was not entirely sure if they were mainly about the realities in North and South America and Europe - that is largely-Europeanised cultures - or whether they had a larger resonance.

Here, then, is the kernel of this analysis:

2. The first “P”: patriarchal power

Individual acts of violence by men occur within what I have described as “the triad of men’s violence.” Men’s violence against women does not occur in isolation but is linked to men’s violence against other men and to the internalisation of violence, that is, a man’s violence against himself.¹²¹

Indeed male-dominated societies are not only based on a hierarchy of men over women but some men over other men. Violence or the threat of violence among men is a mechanism used from childhood to establish that pecking order. One result of this is that men “internalise” violence - or perhaps, the demands of patriarchal society encourage biological instincts that otherwise might be more relatively dormant or benign. The result is not only that boys and men learn to selectively use violence, but also, as we shall later see, redirect a range of emotions into rage, which sometimes takes the form of self-directed violence, as seen, for example in substance abuse or self-destructive behaviour.

This triad of men’s violence - each form of violence helping create the others - occurs within a nurturing environment of violence: the organisation and demands of patriarchal or male dominant societies.

What gives violence its hold as a way of doing business, what has naturalised it as the de facto standard of human relations, is the way it has been articulated into our ideologies and social structures. Simply put, human groups

¹¹⁹ My thanks to those with whom I discussed a number of the ideas in this text: Jean Bernard, Ruth Finney Hayward, Dale Hurst, Michael Kimmel, my colleagues in the White Ribbon Campaign, and a woman at Woman’s World ‘99 in Tromso, Norway who did not give her name but who, during a discussion period of an earlier version of this paper, suggested it was important to explicitly highlight “permission” as one of the “P’s”. An earlier version of this paper was published in a special issue of the magazine of the International Association for Studies of Men, 6(2) (June 1999) (www.ifu.uio.no/~eivindr/iasom).

(editor’s note) This article is not a literal translation of Michael Kaufman’s speech at the “Violence: a men’s affair” conference. The article can be read in English and Spanish on Michael Kaufman’s web site: www.michaelkaufman.com.

¹²⁰ This workshop was organised by Save the Children (UK). Travel funding was provided by Development Services International of Canada. Discussion of the 1998 Kathmandu workshop is found in Ruth Finney Hayward’s book *Breaking the Earthenware Jar* (2000). Ruth was the woman who instigated the Kathmandu meetings.

¹²¹ Kaufman, M. (1985). ‘The construction of masculinity and the triad of men’s violence’, in: M. Kaufman (ed.), *Beyond patriarchy: Essays by men on pleasure, power and change*, Toronto: Oxford University Press. Reprinted in English in: L.L. O’Toole and J.R. Schiffman (1997). *Gender violence*, New York: NY University Press; excerpted in: M.S. Kimmel and M.A. Messner (1997). *Men’s lives*, New York: Macmillan; in German in: BauSteineMänner (1996). *Kritische Männerforschung*, Berlin: Arument Verlag; in Spanish in: *Hombres: Poder, Placer, y Cambio*, Santo Domingo: CIPAF, 1989.

create self-perpetuating forms of social organisation and ideologies that explain, give meaning to, justify, and replenish these created realities.

Violence is also built into these ideologies and structures for a simpler reason: it has brought enormous benefits to particular groups. First and foremost, violence (or at least the threat of violence), has helped confer on men (as a group) a rich set of privileges and forms of power. If indeed the original forms of social hierarchy and power are those based on sex, then this long ago formed a template for all the structured forms of power and privilege enjoyed by others as a result of social class or skin colour, age, religion, sexual orientation, or physical abilities. In such a context, violence or its threat become a means to ensure the continued reaping of privileges and exercise of power. It is both a result and a means to an end.

3. The second “P”: the sense of entitlement to privilege

The individual experience of a man who commits violence may not revolve around his desire to maintain power. His conscious experience is not the key here. Rather, as feminist analysis has repeatedly pointed out, such violence is often the logical outcome of his sense of entitlement to certain privileges. If a man beats his wife for not having dinner on the table right on time, it is not only to make sure that it does not happen again, but is an indication of his sense of entitlement to be waited on. Or, say a man sexually assaults a woman on a date, it is about his sense of entitlement to his physical pleasure even if that pleasure is entirely one-sided. In other words, as many women have pointed out, it is not only inequalities of power that lead to violence, but a conscious or often unconscious sense of entitlement to privilege.

4. The third “P”: permission

Whatever the complex social and psychological causes of men’s violence, it would not continue if there were not explicit or tacit permission in social customs, legal codes, law enforcement, and certain religious teachings. In many countries, laws against wife assault or sexual assault are lax or non-existent; in many others laws are barely enforced; in still others they are absurd, such as those countries where a charge of rape can only be prosecuted if there are several male witnesses and where the testimony of the woman is not taken into account.

Meanwhile, acts of men’s violence and violent aggression (in this case, usually against other men) are celebrated in sport and cinema, in literature and warfare. Not only is violence permitted, it is glamorised and rewarded. The very historic roots of patriarchal societies is the use of violence as a key means of solving disputes and differences, whether among individuals, groups of men, or, later, between nations.

I am often reminded of this permission when I hear of a man or woman who fails to call the police when they hear a woman neighbour or child being beaten. It is deemed a “private” affair. Can you imagine someone seeing a store being robbed and declining to call the police because it is a private affair between the robber and the store owner?

5. The fourth “P”: the paradox of men’s power

It is my contention, however, that such things do not in themselves explain the widespread nature of men’s violence, nor the connections between men’s violence against women and the many forms of violence among men. Here we need to draw on the paradoxes of men’s power or what I have called “men’s contradictory experiences of power”.¹²²

The very ways that men have constructed our social and individual power is, paradoxically, the source of enormous fear, isolation, and pain for men themselves. If power is constructed as a capacity to dominate and control, if the capacity to act in “powerful” ways requires the construction of a personal suit of armour and a fearful distance from others, if the very world of power and privilege removes us from the world of child-rearing and nurturance, then we are creating men whose own experience of power is fraught with crippling problems.

122 Kaufman, M. (1993). *Cracking the armour: power, pain and the lives of men*, Toronto: Viking Canada (Penguin, 1994); Kaufman, M. (1994). Men, feminism, and men's contradictory experiences of power', in: H. Brod and M. Kaufman (eds), *Theorizing masculinities*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Translated into Spanish as 'Los hombres, el feminismo y las experiencias contradictorias del poder entre los hombres', in: L.G. Arango et al. (eds) (1995). *Genero e identidad. Ensayos sobre lo femenino y lo masculino*, Bogota: Tercer Mundo; and in a revised form as 'Las experiencias contradictorias del poder entre los hombres', in: T. Valdes and J. Olavarria (eds) (1997). *Masculinidad/es. Poder y crisis*, Ediciones de las Mujeres No. 23, Santiago: Isis International and FLACSO-Chile.

This is particularly so because the internalised expectations of masculinity are themselves impossible to satisfy or attain. This may well be a problem inherent in patriarchy, but it seems particularly true in an era and in cultures where rigid gender boundaries have been overthrown. Whether it is physical or financial accomplishment, or the suppression of a range of human emotions and needs, the imperatives of manhood (as opposed to the simple certainties of biological maleness), seem to require constant vigilance and work, especially for younger men.

The personal insecurities emanating from the failure to make the masculine grade, or simply, the threat of failure, is enough to propel many men, particularly when they are young, into a vortex of fear, isolation, anger, self-punishment, self-hatred, and aggression.

Within such an emotional state, violence becomes a *compensatory mechanism*. It is a way of re-establishing the masculine equilibrium, of asserting to oneself and to others ones masculine credentials. This expression of violence usually includes a choice of a target who is physically weaker or more vulnerable. This may be a child, or a woman, as well as a social group, such as gay men, or a religious or social minority, or immigrants, who seem to pose an easy target for the insecurity and rage of individual men, especially since such groups often have not received adequate protection under the law. (This compensatory mechanism is clearly indicated, for example, in that most 'gay-bashing' is committed by groups of young men in a period of their life when they experience the greatest insecurity about making the masculine grade).

What allows violence as an individual compensatory mechanism has been the wide-spread acceptance of violence as a means of solving differences and asserting power and control. What makes it possible are the power and privileges men have enjoyed, things encoded in beliefs, practices, social structures, and the law.

Men's violence, in its myriad of forms, is therefore the result both of men's power, the sense of entitlement to the privilege, the permission for certain forms of violence, and the fear (or reality) of not having power.

But there is even more.

6. The fifth "P": the psychic armour of manhood

Men's violence is also the result of a character structure that is typically based on emotional distance from others. As I and many others have suggested, the psychic structures of manhood are created in early childrearing environments that are often typified by the absence of fathers and adult men - or, at least, by men's emotional distance. In this case, masculinity gets codified by absence and constructed at the level of fantasy. But even in patriarchal cultures where fathers are more present, masculinity is codified as a rejection of the mother and femininity, that is, a rejection of the qualities associated with caregiving and nurturance. As various feminist psychoanalysts have noted, this creates rigid ego barriers, or, in metaphorical terms, a strong suit of armour.

The result of this complex and particular process of psychological development is a dampened ability for empathy (to experience what others are feeling) and an inability to experience other people's needs and feelings as necessarily relating to one's own. Acts of violence against another person are, therefore, possible. How often do we hear a man say he "didn't really hurt" the woman he hit? Yes, he is making excuses, but part of the problem is that he truly may not experience the pain he is causing. How often do we hear a man say, "she wanted to have sex"? Again, he may be making an excuse, but it may well be a reflection of his diminished ability to read and understand the feelings of another.

7. The sixth "P": masculinity as a psychic pressure cooker

Many of our dominant forms of masculinity hinge on the internalisation of a range of emotions and their redirection into anger. It is not simply that men's language of emotions is often muted or that our emotional antennae and capacity for empathy are somewhat stunted. It is also that a range of natural emotions have been ruled off limits and invalid. While this has a cultural specificity, it is rather typical for boys to learn from an early age to repress feelings of fear and pain. On the sports field we teach boys to ignore pain. At home we tell boys not to cry and to act like men. Some cultures celebrate a stoic manhood. (And, I should stress, boys learn such things for survival: hence it is important we do not blame the individual boy or man for the origins of his current behaviours, even if, at the same time, we hold him responsible for his actions).

Of course, as humans, we still experience events that cause an emotional response. But the usual mechanisms

of emotional response, from actually experiencing an emotion to letting go of the feelings, are short-circuited to varying degrees among many men. But, again for many men, the one emotion that has some validation is anger. The result is that a range of emotions get channelled into anger. While such channelling is not unique to men (nor is it the case for all men), for some men, violent responses to fear, hurt, insecurity, pain, rejection, or belittlement are not uncommon.

This is particularly true where the feeling produced is one of not having power. Such a feeling only heightens masculine insecurities: if manhood is about power and control, not being powerful means that you are not a man. Again, violence becomes a means to prove otherwise to yourself and others.

8. The seventh “P”: past experiences

This all combines with more blatant experiences for some men. Far too many men around the world grew up in households where their mother was beaten by their father. They grew up seeing violent behaviour towards women as the norm, as just the way life is lived. For some men this results in a revulsion towards violence, while in others it produces a learned response. In many cases it is both: men who use violence against women often feel deep self-loathing for themselves and their behaviour.

But the phrase “learned response” is almost too simplistic. Studies have shown that boys and girls who grow up witnessing violence are far more likely to be violent themselves. Such violence may be a way of getting attention; it may be a coping mechanism, a way of externalising feelings that are impossible to cope with. Such patterns of behaviour continue beyond childhood: most men who end up in programmes for men who use violence either witnessed abuse against their mother or experienced abuse themselves.

The past experiences of many men also include the violence they themselves have experienced. In many cultures, while boys may be half as likely to experience sexual abuse as girls, they are twice as likely to experience physical abuse. Again, this produces no single fixed outcome, and, again, such outcomes are not unique to boys. But in some cases these personal experiences instil deep patterns of confusion and frustration, where boys have learned that it is possible to hurt someone you love, where only outbursts of rage can get rid of deeply-imbedded feelings of pain.

And finally, there is the whole reign of petty violence among boys which, as a boy, does not seem petty at all. Boys in many cultures grow up with experiences of fighting, bullying, and brutalisation. Sheer survival requires, for some, accepting and internalising violence as a norm of behaviour.

9. Ending the violence

This analysis, even presented in such a condensed form, suggests that challenging men’s violence requires an articulated response that includes:

- Challenging and dismantling the structures of men’s power and privilege, and ending the cultural and social permission for acts of violence. If this is where the violence starts, we cannot end it without support by women and men for feminism and the social, political, legal, and cultural reforms and transformations that it suggests.
- The redefinition of masculinity or, really, the dismantling of the psychic and social structures of gender that bring with them such peril. The paradox of patriarchy is the pain, rage, frustration, isolation, and fear among that half of the species that enjoys relative power and privilege. We ignore all this to our peril. In order to successfully reach men, this work must be premised on compassion, love, and respect, combined with a clear challenge to negative masculine norms and their destructive outcomes. Pro-feminist men doing this work must speak to other men as our brothers, not as aliens who are not as enlightened or worthy as we are.
- Organising and involving men to work in co-operation with women in reshaping the gender organisation of society, in particular, our institutions and relations through which we raise children. This requires much more emphasis on the importance of men as nurturers and caregivers, fully involved in the raising of children in positive ways free of violence.
- Working with men who commit violence in a way that simultaneously challenges their patriarchal assumptions and privileges and reaches out to them with respect and compassion. We need not be sympathetic to what they have done, to be empathetic with them and feel horrified by the factors that have led a little boy to grow

up to be a man who sometimes does terrible things. Through such respect, these men can actually find the space to challenge themselves and each other. Otherwise the attempt to reach them will only feed into their own insecurities as men for whom violence has been their traditional compensation.

- Explicit educational activities, such as the White Ribbon Campaign, that involve men and boys in challenging themselves and other men to end all forms of violence.¹²³ This is a positive challenge for men to speak out with our love and compassion for women, boys, girls, and other men.

¹²³ White Ribbon Campaign, 365 Bloor St. East, Suite 203, Toronto, Canada M4W 3L4, Tel. 1-416-920-6684, Fax. 1-416-920-1678, www.whiteribbon.com.

Boys and men and the prevention of domestic violence

Nico van Oosten

2

1. Facts, figures and policy on domestic violence in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, domestic violence is defined as 'psychological and sexual violence by a person within the victim's family circle'. Friends and trusted individuals who visit the family are therefore also part of this family circle. In 1997 and 2002, the Ministry of Justice requested research into the incidence and the consequences of domestic violence. Here are some of the results of this research.

Table 1. Domestic violence: victims and perpetrators¹²⁴

	Native	Immigrant origins
Has been a victim	45%	24%
Gender of victim	Women: 50%	Women: 54%
	Men: 50%	Men: 46%
Gender of perpetrator	Men: 49%	Men: 66%
	Women: 13%	Women: 15%
	Unknown: 38%	Unknown: 19%
Victim-perpetrator relationship	Friend: 50%	(Former) partner: 39%
	(Former) partner: 24%	Friend: 28%
	Brother: 12%	Brother: 19%
	Father: 9%	Father: 5%

Table 2. Seriousness of the domestic violence¹²⁵

	Native	Immigrant origins
Intensity	Very high in women: 60%	Very high in women: 65%
	Low in men: 61%	Low in men: 56%
Duration	< 1 year: 32%	< 1 year: 25%
	1-4 years: 34%	1-4 years: 45%
	> 5 years: 33%	> 5 years: 30%
Frequency	Day/week: 27%	Day/week: 36%
	Month: 20%	Month: 30%
	Less often: 53%	Less often: 34%
Physical injuries	20%	28%

From recent police statistics it has emerged that men are the perpetrators in 80% of all cases of domestic violence and victims in about 20%. These figures however are only indicative of the proportions because the police only receive a limited number reports.

124 Source: Van Dijk, T. et al. (1997). *Huiselijk geweld, aard, omvang en hulpverlening*, The Hague: Ministry of Justice, Dienst Preventie, Jeugd-
bescherming en Reclassering; Van Dijk, T. et al. (2002). *Huiselijk geweld onder Surinamers, Antillianen en Arubanen, Marokkanen en Turken in
Nederland. Aard, omvang en hulpverlening*, Hilversum: Ministry of Justice, Research and Documentation Centre.

125 Source: Idem.

Table 3. Reports of domestic violence to the police and care and social assistance structures¹²⁶

	Native	Immigrant origins
Contact with the police	Report: 11%	Report: 12%
	Accusation: 7%	Accusation: 6%
Seeking assistance	Doctor: 9%	Doctor: 7%
	Mental health: 4%	Mental health: 5%
	Social assistance: 1%	Social assistance: 3%

The Dutch government has had a policy on domestic violence since 2002. The task of managing it has been entrusted to the municipalities. In other words, they are responsible for the development of the policy and they ensure the co-operation of implementing organisations in the areas of care, well-being and safety, and policy assessment. To that end, the municipalities also have a legal framework, in the form of the “*Wet Maatschappelijke Opvang*” (Social Support Act), which entered into force on 1 January 2007. Broadly speaking there are two chains, one under development and one that has already been developed: the criminal law channel and the care chain. The police and the justice system collaborate in the criminal law chain in order to develop the criminal approach, while the links of the care chain are organisations active in the areas of care, well-being and prevention. The police and centres providing advice and a place to report child abuse form the interface between the two chains.

Since the end of the 1990s, the Netherlands has experienced many innovations in the approach to domestic violence and interventions in this area. The key trends and developments are the following:

Tackling domestic violence by means of outreach work both by the police and social assistance structures;

- Multi-channel policy and systemic approach: offering help to victims and to children as both witnesses and perpetrators, but also assisting interpersonal relationships and whole families;
- Focus on information and help to migrant families, because domestic violence is more taboo for these families and because these communities are struck by a particular form of domestic violence: honour-related violence;
- Co-operation between the police and the social assistance structures;
- Deployment of national domestic violence advice and assistance centres, which have to act as a “front office” for both citizens and professionals;
- Introduction of a preventive ban prohibiting perpetrators of domestic violence from having access to the home (pilot projects were set up in February 2007 in the municipalities of Amsterdam and Groningen in order to test it in practice and to test the bill on a temporary ban on re-entry to the home in the event of domestic violence, before its introduction);
- Toolkit for public campaigns;
- National domestic violence registration system for the police, a special registration number for child abusers and the harmonisation of registrations in the care context;
- Improving the quality of women’s access to refuges;
- Focus on relational violence among young people and its prevention.

The systemic approach to domestic violence developed in the Netherlands is based on the principle that domestic violence is a very complex problem that is the result of biological, cultural and social factors. These factors play a part in the interactions between family members where violence brews and continues. For this reason it is necessary to tackle the problem at the relational level. All of the people concerned participate in the interaction and in the escalation of problems. Only adult family members who use violence are 100% responsible. Adult family members who are victims are responsible for their own safety. Due to the influence parents have over children, different rules apply to the latter.

The Netherlands has developed different systemic methods, including “*Intieme Oorlog*” (Intimate War), “*Begeleide Terugkeer*” (Escorted Return), “*De Aanpak*” (The Approach) and “*Eigen Kracht Conferenties*” (Self-managed discussions). TransAct provides training on these approaches for social and police officers.

126 Source: Idem.

2. Domestic violence roles

The basic roles in the case of domestic violence are the following:

- Potential perpetrator;
- Perpetrator;
- Potential victim;
- Victim;
- Witness.

In life in general, but also in violent relationships, people may switch roles. Many young people who have been victims of sexual or domestic violence, or who have witnessed it, later become perpetrators. Moreover, it is important to differentiate relationships in which violence is mainly one-sided and “combative relationships” in which the partners use and abuse violence and continually switch role. It is also very important to make the distinction between attacking violence and self-defence violence. Finally, we must mention violence following feelings of revenge.

Men generally assume a detached attitude to domestic violence. Perpetrators and potential perpetrators do not usually consider themselves to be violent men. They in fact consider that their anger and their aggressiveness are justified and refer to the behaviour of the victim and the circumstances.

Men who are witnesses to domestic violence are afraid to intervene for several reasons:

- They do not want to be involved in the private life problems of other families. They (neighbours, friends) fear destroying the existing relationship with the family in question. They have sometimes been able to observe the effect of their intervention: the partners remain together and the violence continues. Their intervention has therefore had no effect.
- They are afraid that they themselves will be confronted with aggression or violence.
- They do not know when and how to intervene.
- They have opinions that represent implicit support for the perpetrator. They believe that the victim is herself the cause of the violent episode, and they consider that men must remain the head of the family and the women must obey men. They believe that the emancipation of women leads to violence.

All of these reasons prevent men from intervening effectively and appropriately.

For this reason it is important to take into account in any project and activity aimed at preventing and putting a stop to domestic violence, men’s beliefs and opinions regarding masculinity and femininity; male-female relationships and in particular the balance of power; father-son and father-daughter relationships; and men’s roles and responsibilities within families and in the context of family relationships.

3. Loss of masculinity

In our Western culture, masculinity is inextricably linked to a certain number of dominant ideas: a man must prove himself by being strong, performing a paid job and by excelling in his professional activities, being the breadwinner, and by solving his problems without help from others, etc. These norms and values (codes of masculinity) conflict with everyday reality: men are vulnerable, they cannot always solve their problems themselves and being a good breadwinner is not the same as being a considerate and loving partner and father.

Many men also feel powerless or no longer able to control their lives and their environment (partner, children) when events do not go how they would like, when their partners become emancipated, their children take flight and no longer obey. Many migrants, but also men with Western ideas, feel that these situations are a loss of honour. All of these feelings can come under the concept of a “loss of masculinity”, because they are so closely linked to the codes and the ideal image of masculinity.

Given that the codes of masculinity “prohibit” the loss of control, vulnerability and fear, many men react by showing anger and aggressiveness often directed against their partners and children. This aggressiveness may take the form of domestic violence. For men from families living between two cultures, this situation is especially hard because they are unable to shut out the other (new) culture.

There are two solutions to this dilemma: either men apply themselves to doing their best to comply with the dominant norms of masculinity, which results in them becoming harder and a multiplication of conflicts; or they

endeavour to develop alternative solutions. Among these are:

To develop different beliefs (about masculinity) that better suit their situation and their qualities;

To develop other way of reacting and acting in order to be better equipped to achieve their goals.

Research shows that this approach is fruitful, for example for men who have been victims of sexual abuse. Men who hang on to their traditional masculine values more often become perpetrators of violence than men who change their beliefs.

4. Dutch examples

Using a certain number of Dutch examples, I will show how we appeal to boys and men's sense of responsibility in order to prevent and put a stop to domestic violence. The projects of which I will provide a brief overview are:

1. 'Stay in love' and 'Loving me, loving you';

2. Resistance training;

3. The missing link;

4. An anti-domestic violence run.

	(Potential) perpetrator	Witness	(Potential) victim
Prevention	Position and role of boys and men within families / relationships (as a father and partner) What kind of partner / father do I want to be? How do I keep my relationship on the right track?	Concern = point out that it is threatening violence; make sure an intervention takes place; intervene.	Point out your limits; assertive behaviour.
Projects	<i>Stay in love</i> <i>Resistance to violence</i> , among others <i>Rock and Water</i> (teaching daughters and sons to resist) <i>The missing link</i>	<i>Anti-domestic violence run</i> <i>The missing link</i>	Resistance trainings (Rock and Water)
Stopping domestic violence	Not on the conference agenda	Concern and responsibility: point out that it is violence; make sure an intervention takes place; intervene.	Break the isolation; seek help.
Projects	Not on the conference agenda	<i>Anti-domestic violence run</i> <i>The missing link</i>	Working on wishes <i>The ignored body</i> <i>Primary prevention of sexual abuse</i> (article)

4.1. 'Stay in Love' and 'Loving me, loving you'

'Stay in Love' is a collaborative project by TransAct, the Trimbos Institute and the prevention departments of two mental healthcare organisations: Parnassia and Riagg Zwolle. 'Loving me, loving you' is a project by GGD Nieuwe Waterweg Noord. The aim of both projects is the prevention of violence in relationships between young people, among others, through education.

Background – Violence in couples that are in the process of forming (*dating violence*) appears to be very common among young people from all levels of education. It is however more frequent among young people with a low level of education. It is not clear whether the cultural background of the young people plays a role (i.e. whether young native Dutch people are more subject to *dating violence* than, for example, Moroccans, Turks, Surinameses and Antilleans).

Objective – The objective of this project is to prevent relational violence among young people.

Target group – The project is specifically at 16-25 year olds with a low level of education, young boys and girls with various cultural backgrounds.

Message – The project has a dual emphasis: a relationship does not come naturally (how to stay in love, relational skills, etc), providing information on the importance of making sure that young people do not go beyond their own limits, and early signs of risks of relational violence (mental resistance).

Resources

- Web sites: www.stayinlove.nl and www.lovingmelovingyou.nl
- Leaflet: A relationship does not come naturally
- Relationship test
- Credit card (sports club canteens): suggestions for a healthy relationship
- Poster: Do you have a good relationship?
- Teacher's manual and training
- Theatre production on relational violence (DVD)

4.2. The missing link (part of "Talking does not hurt")

Background – domestic violence appears to be a big taboo within families with a different cultural background and in their cultural environment. For this reason TransAct participates in the "Talking does not hurt" project, the aim of which is to end the taboo status of domestic violence in migrant circles so that it can be talked about. TransAct took the initiative of launching a project aimed at men. This project aimed to develop a methodology to make men aware of their responsibilities within the family, especially in domestic violence problems.

Objective – to address the theme of "being a man"; to manage problems and domestic violence among migrant men.

Target group – Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean men aged 20 and older with their partner.

Message – Men learn through their culture and upbringing what is expected from an adult man and father and how to solve problems. If you do not match up to these expectations, you may feel powerless. You experience a loss of status, position, prestige, strength and honour, and you lose face. This situation of powerlessness and loss may make you angry and make you react by showing aggression towards your wife and your children. It is important to avoid this type of negative behaviour.

Resources

- Educational meetings aimed at migrant men;
- Training for intermediaries.

4.3. Resistance to violence training for boys (and girls)

Background – In the last thirty years, many types of training in resistance to violence have been developed in the Netherlands. Such training has also been offered in schools with varying results. Unfortunately, there is still no national network in the area and this subject is not compulsory. American research has demonstrated the long-term effect of this type of training: women who had taken the training when they were children appeared less often to be victims of sexual abuse (8% as opposed to 14%). Parents should now be encouraged to enrol their children in a resistance to violence training (both girls and boys). There is a training course especially for boys and another for girls. These courses, which are currently being implemented on a small scale are "Marietje Kessels" and "Rock and Water".

Objective – To increase boys' mental and physical assertion. To prevent boys' behaviour from going beyond certain limits.

Target group – Boys aged 8-12.

Message – Developing your mental and physical self-confidence means you do not need to be violent.

Resources

- Training in resistance to violence for boys through primary and secondary education;
- Training for teachers;
- Resistance to violence training for teachers.

4.4. Men's and boys' run to fight domestic violence

Background – How can we make boys and men feel more responsibility for the problem of domestic violence? This was the core question during a TransAct internal working week. The "Anti-domestic violence run" project was one of the ideas that resulted from it.

Objective – The project has two objectives: to highlight the position and role of boys and men as witnesses of domestic violence in a large multicultural society; to encourage boys and men to mobilise actively and responsibly to prevent and put a stop to domestic violence.

Target group – Boys and men attracted to the underlying concept of this project; sports clubs, shopping centres, cultural activity centres and organisations mobilised to prevent and put a stop to domestic violence and companies and professional associations, Dutch politicians and celebrities, etc.

Message – Boys and men can prevent and put a stop to domestic violence.

Resources – Runs, T-shirts, Loesje texts, leaflets, sweatbands, website, etc.

The treatment of the perpetrators of violence: private and public constraints¹²⁷

Christian Anglada and Susanne Lorenz

1. Introduction

The services delivered by "*Violence et Famille*" (Violence and Family) are specifically aimed at French-speaking male and female adults who resort to domestic and family violence. Access to our service requires an appointment to be made by the person seeking an interview. Two or three individual induction and assessment interviews prepare the applicant for entry into a group process formalised by a contract. The criteria for admission are in particular: acknowledgement of a violence problem, demonstration of a minimum willingness to change, acceptance of a specific process in the case of dependence, medical supervision in the case of physical illness, non-involvement in criminal activity, and acceptance of the terms of the participation contract. People may be admitted into the therapy group voluntarily or under constraint. A financial contribution proportionate to the person's income is requested.

2. A section at the service of the "Fondation Jeunesse et Familles"

Since 1999, the "*Violence et Famille*" service has been incorporated within the "*Fondation Jeunesse et Familles*" (FJF - Youth and Families Foundation), which comprises eight hostels for minors, a day centre in Nyon, four community education agencies (Aemo) and all of the Vaud Meeting Points. The FJF works for the benefit of children and adolescents with social and family difficulties, and their families.

The FJF has developed the "*Violence et Famille*" service in order to support families in difficulty and to develop new skills in the management of violence. In fact, the young people and their families in the FJF facilities find themselves increasingly confronted with situations that are so difficult that problematic behaviour increases, with in particular the use of various forms of violence. This observation is corroborated both in residential centres (hostels for children and adolescents) and walk-in centres (Aemo, day centre and Meeting Points). The FJF's male and female workers support these people who express their suffering through violent and occasionally criminal behaviour.

The "*Violence et Famille*" service represents a resource section with the FJF. Since 1999, several FJF professionals have received training on this problem and indeed received specialist training from people involved in the area of domestic and family violence. These staff members have developed a consistent socio-educative practice by working within "*Violence et Famille*", and specific skills in the annual workshops organised in co-operation with the Centre d'accueil MalleyPrairie (MalleyPrairie Help Centre).¹²⁸ Thanks to FJF's initiative, "*Violence et Famille*" now constitutes Vaud's specialist facility in intervention with perpetrators of domestic violence.

3. Historical milestones

Reflection on the issue of domestic and family violence as a widespread social phenomenon opened up in Romandy in 1994-1995. This reflection was covered by the media and in particular by a programme on Swiss Romandy television programme: a *Temps Présent* coverage entitled "*Des coups pour le dire*" (Punches to say it).

In 1995, alongside and in co-operation with the Vires association in Geneva, the first facility coming to the aid of men using violence in a relationship and in the family opened in Lausanne. This facility, the "*Centre de recherche*

¹²⁷ The text presented here is in part adapted from the "*Violence et Famille*" intervention model described in the recent research led by Susanne Lorenz, researcher and teacher and the HEVS (Haute Ecole Valaisanne Santé Sociale) in Sion, in Switzerland. This research in fact gave us the opportunity to explain our practice in detail, and to question it at the same time. Lorenz, S. et al. (2005). *Générer un changement chez les hommes ayant des comportements violents dans le couple et la famille: modalités et contextes d'intervention* (photocopied document).

¹²⁸ The Centre d'accueil MalleyPrairie is part of the Fondation MalleyPrairie and constitutes the canton's specialist facility for female victims of domestic violence and their children. It offers walk-in support, couples meetings and accommodation.

et d'intervention sur la violence" (CRIV – The Centre for Research and Intervention on Violence), is supported by the MalleyPrairie Foundation. Due in particular to a lack of support from the State, this facility closed in June 1997.

On 6 November 1998, some of the CRIV participants created the Association Se DyRe, with the aim of continuing this work and to share the skills acquired. On 26 March 1999, the Association Se DyRe accepted a partnership contract with the "*Fondation Jeunesse et Familles*". On 1 May 1999 the Service "*Violence et Famille*" was born, a new facility aimed at men using domestic violence, operating in the framework of the partnership linking the Association Se DyRe and the "*Fondation Jeunesse et Familles*". After that, the "*Fondation Jeunesse et Familles*" gradually brought all of this new facility's activities under this new name. In August 2002, the Association Se DyRe was disbanded and all of "*Violence et Famille*"'s services were incorporated within the "*Fondation Jeunesse et Familles*". In 2003, The "*Service Violence et Famille*" was recognised as a non-profit organisation by the Canton of Vaud and the City of Laussane, which supported it financially with a grant. "*Violence et Famille*" received its first criminal orders. In 2005, "*Violence et Famille*" completed research work financed by the "*Fonds national suisse de la recherche scientifique*" (FN – Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research) and led by Susanne Lorenz. After ten years of experience of working with men and in agreement with the "*Centre d'accueil MalleyPrairie*", the service opened its services to women using violence in the family and/or in a relationship. In May 2006, "*Violence et Famille*" in co-operation with the "*Bureau cantonal de l'égalité entre les femmes et les homes*" (Befh – Canton Office for Equality Between Women and Men) and the "*Centre d'accueil MalleyPrairie*" started the first Romandy web site specialising in the issue of domestic violence offering professional assistance online.¹²⁹

4. Intervention with people using violence in a relationship and in the family

4.1. The model

The model offered by "*Violence et Famille*" is taken and adapted from the experience developed in Quebec since 1986 in the context of the community service "*Option, une alternative à la violence*" (Option, an alternative to violence) by Jacques Broué and Clément Guévremont (1999). The intervention proceeds in three stages:

1. Firstly, the man who is in a crisis situation makes a request by telephone. The counsellor fills in a telephone message form, makes sure that nobody is in danger and makes an initial appointment, as early as possible. The process of this first phase has evolved somewhat over time. The establishment of a minimal bond in this first contact has in fact become the priority objective, because it is a prerequisite for participation in the assessment interview.
2. Secondly, the counsellor meets the man who is in a crisis situation in order to assess his social situation during two or three assessment interviews. These two stages make it possible to establish the man's living environment and the last violent event. The counsellor stresses that it is the perpetrator's responsibility to make it stop.¹³⁰ At the end of these interviews, the aggressor signs a participation contract. The quality of the assessment interview is a determining factor in the aggressor's participation in the third stage.
3. The third stage places an emphasis of personal work within the group of men using violence. The man then undertakes to cease all physical violence, to reduce other forms of violence and to attend a minimum of twenty-one sessions.¹³¹ According to the counsellors' observations, the level of commitment in the sessions is generally high because emphasis is placed on this aspect in the assessment interviews. The building of a bond between the aggressor and the counsellor, which already began in the first contact, reinforces commitment in the group.

4.2. The areas of work

The interventions carried out by specially trained social workers¹³² aim as a priority to pass onto the participants concrete strategies that enable them to contain their violence and put a stop to acts of violence in the long term. The participants work on identifying and expressing their emotions without violence, developing more equal and harmonious relationships, and finally breaking their isolation.

The programme's basic postulate is that changing behaviour concerns a set of problems for which the solution lies in a process that integrates "knowledge (self-knowledge), know-how (acquired skills) and being in the know

¹²⁹ www.violencequefaire.ch

¹³⁰ This stage contributes considerably to "introducing" the notion of self-control, and that stopping the acts of violence is the responsibility of the perpetrator alone. Silvestre, M., Ch. Heim and M. Christen (1999). 'Du traitement de la violence conjugale', *Thérapie familiale* 20(4), pp. 403-424.

¹³¹ The signature of the participation contract also reinforces the notion of personal responsibility. Moreover, it promotes the realisation that the effort required is for a "limited" period. This is not a minimalist approach, but just that of demonstrating to the perpetrator and enabling them to see that the effort required is realisable. Silvestre, Heim and Christen, 'Du traitement de la violence conjugale'.

¹³² Epicene language is favoured in our written work but not used in a systematic way: it is therefore important to specify here that women and men participate equally in the service "*Violence et Famille*"'s six-person team.

(emotional integration of one's needs)"¹³³ This desire for change develops over a period of time, in which a coerced assistance order – imposed by third parties – transforms into an internal motivation. The group work becomes a "referent system" that enables the perpetrator himself to formulate his request for change, by means of the uncovering of the forms of violence and accountability.

The programme comprises systemic and cognitive-behavioural dimensions,¹³⁴ in this way distinguishing itself from a psychoanalytic approach. While it is about understanding the origin of the forms of violence, the treatment above all seeks to develop non-violent attitudes and alternatives.¹³⁵

Disclosure

In the context of the group work, the counsellors give priority to interventions that aim to make the participant disclose all the forms of violence used to control his partner and his children. The participants are therefore regularly asked to recount the latest violent event, that is, the one that triggered the process of requesting help, and then to state the other violent incidents perpetrated and suffered. The pace of the VIFA programme allows for periods of time between the various instances of disclosure, in order to allow the participant to reflect and reassess the act in the light of the content covered.

Accountability

The VIFA collective defines the link between responsibility and forms of violence as follows:

- The violent person does not act because of the behaviour or attitude of another person, but because something in them is reacting to what the other person does, and the forms of violence are the consequence of what this behaviour or this attitude causes them to relive from their past experience.
- An individual that makes use of forms of violence is seeking to counter that which is awoken in them by aiming to control the behaviour or attitude of another person. This other person is perceived as the trigger of the current suffering, although this suffering is in fact the reactivation of an earlier wound.¹³⁶ This process is linked to the perpetrator's own past, frequently marked by violence that has been suffered.

In order to enable to envisage a behavioural change, it is important that the perpetrator of domestic violence understand this link.¹³⁷ He will, throughout the process, have to focus on "what is happening inside him".¹³⁸ This model is therefore oriented towards the issue of responsibility rather than towards that of culpability. It seeks to support a problem-solving process on the basis of individual and collective choices.

This reflection is supported by different methods, from the signature of the participation contract (which sets the framework and the rules for participation in group work, while establishing the perpetrator's commitment), to the accountability diary,¹³⁹ via the continuum and the assessments.

The role of peers in the group: identification and confrontation

Group work¹⁴⁰ is an important part of the programme. It represents a framework that makes people secure and offers an opportunity for the "re-socialisation of the men" and the organisation of collective knowledge useful to the individual.¹⁴¹ This environment allows an understanding of the forms of violence, beliefs and emotions, but also the observation of new behaviours and strategies. There the participants "experiment" with equal relationships in which the management of conflicts requires discussion and a respect for difference. Personal development involves the observation of others who become models (in Albert Bandura's use of the term¹⁴²), but also confrontation – that is, the questioning of behaviours – and support for others who share the same problem.¹⁴³ Under these

133 Broué, J. and C. Guévremont (eds) (1999). *Intervenir auprès des conjoints violents*, Quebec: Ed. Saint-Martin, p. 61.

134 Systemic, insofar as the act is understood to result from a three-dimensional interaction: the perpetrator, the victim and that which is triggered by the victim in the perpetrator; cognitive-behavioural because it is based on individual beliefs and errors of thought, as well as on the acts presented.

135 Logar, R., U. Rösemann and U. Zürcher (2002). *Gewalttätige Männer ändern (sich)*, Bern: Haupt Verlag.

136 Free adaptation of: La Belle, F., 'Qui est responsable?', in: Broué, J. and C. Guévremont (eds) (1989). *Quand l'amour fait mal*, Quebec: Ed. Saint-Martin.

137 Avanzino, P. (2000). 'Violence conjugale domestique masculine', in: O. Amiguet and C. Julier, *Créer des liens, les pratiques systémiques dans le travail face à l'exclusion*, Geneva: IES, Champs professionnels, p. 220.

138 Collectif Violence et Famille (2000). Violence et famille intervient auprès d'hommes ayant recours à la violence conjugale et domestique (unpublished document).

139 See sub-section 3.3 on this point.

140 We will make a distinction here with the support group, an autonomous and open group, made up of peers who meet, support and encourage each other. If necessary, this type of group may be run by professionals. On the other hand, group work brings together people who enter into a process of change according to an institutional framework and predefined objectives. This type of group is run by professionals.

141 Graf, E. and E. von Salis (Hrsg.) (2003). *Erfahrungen mit Gruppen – Theorie, Technik und Anwendung der operativen Gruppen*, Zürich: Seismo Verlag, S. 17-42.

142 Bandura, A. (1980). 'Self-referent thought: A developmental analysis of self-efficacy', *Gestalt Theory* 2(3-4), pp. 147-174.

143 Broué and Guévremont, *Intervenir auprès des conjoints violents*.

conditions, the sharing of difficulties and dealing with issues that are delicate or that apportion blame¹⁴⁴ is less of a risk,¹⁴⁵ in particular because of a personal and collective recognition of the problem. Through this process, social isolation is reduced and the perpetrator is no longer alone with his problem.

There is a co-construction between the nature of the group and that of the “revelations”.¹⁴⁶ The method of intervention therefore promotes, according to the designers of the programme,¹⁴⁷ better involvement from the participants and allows each participant to confront each participant with their accountability, throughout the process, without this being the sole responsibility of the counsellors.

The repercussions of this group work for the participant are: “Internalisation of the law; changing of the belief system; a stemming of the pursuit of illusion following the commission of an act of violence; induction of a mental representation that serves to block the violent act and the effect on others; and the building of better self-esteem”.¹⁴⁸

4.3. The stages of group work

In addition to the telephone interviews and the social assessment, the programme comprises four stages.¹⁴⁹

The introduction ritual: The recalling by each participant of the latest violent incident, first of all by the older participants, then by the newcomer, facilitates the latter’s integration through renewed mutualisation of the event that triggered their respective process. This ritual counteracts denial and minimisation, while clearly positioning the objective of the group sessions. For some participants, the repetition of this ritual occasions the progressive reacquisition of responsibility for their acts.

The continuum of violence: After several sessions of group work, the participant is given a poster in order for him to illustrate with personal examples each type of violence that he has exercised in his relationship and his family. This poster, completed at home, is presented at a later session.

At a time deemed appropriate by the counsellors,¹⁵⁰ the participant, supported by one of them, is invited to describe the facts, the context, the emotions aroused, and the impact on his partner and his children, for each of the acts of violence noted by him. Negations and minimisations are also mentioned. He then endeavours to elucidate the purpose served in his view by resorting to violence, and the decision to do so in each of the situations illustrated. During this stage, no intervention by the other participants is allowed. Once the work is completed, the other counsellor then embarks on work with the group about the effect which the disclosure has on the participant(s), among other things on the theme of the impact of the violence in question, or also on the moment when they recognised their similarity to, or identified with the participant.

This two-stage ritual has considerable leverage in the group process. It relies on disclosure – by means of the listing of acts of violence – and acknowledgement of the impact of violence, that is to say consideration of the scope and intensity of the violence used. Personally taking note of his violent practices often constitutes the first time that the participant has considered all of his aggressive conduct together. Agreeing to carry out the task and to open up publicly constitutes another stage towards recognition of their accountability. Acting both as a personal and collective aide-mémoire, these posters remind each participant of the objective of the process, their presence in the group as well as the range and diversity of the domestic and family violence represented.

This central stage in the process of becoming accountable is experienced as a kind of rite of passage. Indeed this work is the basis on which several participants have affirmed full recognition that they have a problem with violence and that they are responsible for their conduct.

The accountability diary: The group work participants are required to keep a weekly accountability diary. Using this method, they are invited to scrutinise their use of violence between sessions, by making sure they specify in it the

144 Anzieu, D. and J.-Y. Martin (2000). *La dynamique des groupes restreints*, Paris: Ed. PUF.

145 Salomé, J. and S. Galland (2000). *Les mémoires de l’oubli*, Paris: Ed. Jouvence.

146 Anzieu and Martin, *La dynamique des groupes restreints*.

147 Broué and Guévremont, *Intervenir auprès des conjoints violents*.

148 Avanzino, P. and W. Laffely (1995). *Les hommes ayant recours à la violence dans le couple*. Rapport de recherche empirique et propositions pour la création d’une unité de traitement, Lausanne: CRIV.

149 Collectif Violence et Famille, *Violence et famille intervient auprès d’hommes*.

150 It is worth explaining here that the “couple” of co-counsellors ideally consists of a man and woman, and occasionally two men. For reasons of safety of the counsellors on the one hand and comfort for the participants on the other, the groups for male perpetrators of violence are never co-run by two women.

aim of the violence, the rationale underlying it and the feelings experienced at the time of the recourse to the act of violence.

This self-managed diary is a prerequisite for participation in the group session. It enables each participant to inform himself and to inform the counsellors about their aggressive conduct between the sessions. Ongoing use of this tool accentuates each person's accountability for their daily actions and their participation in the group.

When a relapse is noted, the counsellors use various intervention tools – in particular sculpture, role-playing and projection exercises – to demonstrate the impact of violence on each member of the marital and family unit. They make the participants specify and identify another participant's method of managing frustration and keeping control of their partner and their children. This work often forcefully reveals the repetitive or deliberate nature of the violent acts committed and allows the participant to realise the destructive consequences of recourse to violence.

The assessment: Between the eighteenth and the twentieth session, the participant, the group and the counsellors carry out assessment. The objective is to identify the positive changes and the aspects that still need more work. The counsellors complete the assessment with a recommendation for the participant's future course.

This three-stage process starts off with feedback from the other participants: the man concerned must here again show himself to be capable of listening without responding and to contain his remarks and reactions to the comments of the other members of the group for a limited time. He is offered an opportunity to speak at the end of the assessment, with the instruction to comment on the effect that the other participants' comments induce in him. This form of exercise is of course intended to "limit" certain illusions, but above all to pass on status-enhancing feedback. In a second stage, the participant undertakes self-assessment, during which he can share his own perception of his development in the group. In the last stage of assessment, the two counsellors pass on to him their comments on his future course, with a reminder of the objective agreed in the contract. This last stage of the group work is centred on achievements, a process that reinforces the participants' belief in their own abilities to change their own attitude. A coerced participant may also during the assessment take charge of the course he is following, that is he can announce the continuation of his participation in the group for his own sake and not to meet an external demand.¹⁵¹

4.4. The programme participants

The number of men that contact VIFA and announce they are ready to undertake a process to change their violent behaviour has increased since the creation of the service. This is in particular due to the provision of information to the general public – articles, conferences – and professionals, but also the collaborations established with the justice system, the prison service and the 'Fondation vaudoise de probation' (Vaud Probation Foundation). A support service "imposed", by means of judicial and administrative pressure, supplements the users' own motivation. Partnerships with social and health services are being established.

Table 1. Number of telephone and assessment interviews, and group sessions

	Telephone interviews with perpetrators (N)	Number of assessment interviews for all of the participants	Number of group sessions for all of the participants	Number of people encountered who participate in the group
1999	25	25	61	7
2000	22	37	70	12
2001	31	45	146	12
2002	47	82	241	16
2003	50	98	274	20
2004	73	109	387	15

Source: VIFA statistics from 1999 – December 2004, Christian Anglada

The group work offered by VIFA is aimed at a circle of people, which does not correspond to that which is to be found in psychotherapy. The men that contact the VIFA service are generally being asked to change by someone else, a third party¹⁵², and do not for the most part experience serious problems of generalised violence or mental health.¹⁵³

151 Indeed, once the 21 sessions have been completed, the participant is no longer 'coerced' to continue the work. He may from then on do it on his own initiative.

152 Broué and Guévremont, *Intervenir auprès des conjoints violents*.

153 Guévremont, C., M. Lajeunesse and G. Rondeau (1986). 'L'intervention auprès des hommes violents: le programme C.H.O.C', *Intervention, revue de la corporation professionnelle des travailleurs sociaux du Québec* (75), pp. 15-25.

The people who contact VIFA in the majority maintain stable relationships and are responsible for children. This attachment is a determining factor in undertaking the process. Their female companions exert not only a determining coercion, but this is furthermore frequently combined with a notification of the violent event to the socio-judicial network.

The participants therefore contact the VIFA service when they begin to see the consequences to themselves of their violent behaviour.

5. Conclusion

We observe that the perseverance and development of the participant results from different personal and environmental factors: a realisation of the acts committed, the capacity to trust the group and the maintenance of restraint combined with prospects for achievements.

Actions against violence: inclusion of men

Roland Mayerl

1. Introduction

Since 1997, the European Commission's Daphne Programme has supported over 400 projects that take part in the fight against acts of violence committed against children, adolescents and women. Its main aims are to come to the aid of victims of acts of violence, to raise awareness among at-risk populations and to promote appropriate policies in all of the Member States of the European Union. Very few projects to date focus their actions on men or the perpetrators of acts of violence. In what follows, six projects supported by the Daphne Programme, which attach more importance to the roles and responsibilities of men, will be presented.

2. Reducing sexual abuse and trafficking around military bases¹⁵⁴

The aim of this project was to assess the extent of the phenomenon, to train army professionals and to increase the awareness of the victims. To this end, interviews were held with military authorities, medical personnel, social workers, soldiers and prostitutes of immigrant origins in particular.

This resulted in a series of recommendations that were sent to national armies and organisations such as NATO. One of these recommendations concerned the need to create appropriate advice centres for the various actors in each base. One such centre was actually opened in this instance to help women, returning to France, who are victims of acts of violence committed by soldiers.

3. Violent men: what to do with them?¹⁵⁵

This project concerned violent men who were involved in acts of domestic or sexual violence. The project started from the conviction presented by the coordinating organisation: "The problem of violence against women is not chiefly the victims' problem but a problem of men with violent behaviours. Violence is not a normal calamity, but a clearly defined human behaviour that is monopolised by men. In this sense, this violence is not of the private domain and it must be taken into account as a moral and political problem. From this perspective men's violence against women is becoming a symbolic sign of the power that sets the genders and therefore individuals apart. We continually observe in Italy that it appears much easier, more evident and more taken for granted, to take care of the victims instead of facing the reality of men's violence. We conclude by reaffirming that programmes for violent men can usefully and effectively contribute to the fight against domestic violence."

This project essentially consisted of comparative search for good practices, an awareness raising campaign, and an exchange of information between partners on their existing experience regarding the monitoring and treatment of violent men.

4. Working with Men as part of a multi-agency approach to tackling domestic abuse¹⁵⁶

The idea behind this project was to develop a model that could be exploited by various public services working as a network. Awareness-raising work was done among men working in these services and a working group was

154 Daphne Project 1998/043/WC: Sexual abuse and trafficking around military bases - Developing best professional practice (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, United Kingdom / Les Traboules, France).

155 Daphne Project 1998/211/W: Violent Men: What to do with them? Responses to men who use violence against women: a European comparative analysis (Municipality of Modena, Italy).

156 Daphne Project 2000/DAP/269/WC: Working with Men as part of a multi-agency approach to tackling domestic abuse (The City of Edinburgh Council, United Kingdom / Male Violence Against Women - Multi-agency Intervention).

created, which developed a plan of actions outside the existing judicial system comprising among other proposals the creation of centres for violent men who wish to change their behaviour.

5. Gender, masculinity and violence: a European tour of representatives from men's organisations¹⁵⁷

This project was presented somewhat as a voyage of initiation during which various audiences were able to take advantage of the experiences and accounts of men involved in organisations working on the masculine model and tackling violence against women.

These men came from Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic where very innovative initiatives are being developed aimed at involving men in the process of tackling men's violence. These men spoke in several cities – also in Belgium – and in this way provoked a number of passionate debates. One of the major conclusions of this tour was that it was possible to get men and women to cooperate .

6. Evaluation of programmes for violent men¹⁵⁸

The aim of the project was to evaluate the social position of centres for violent men and their effectiveness in tackling violence against women. It aimed to compare their methods and the discourses that underlay their creations, in order to better understand the correlation between the financial and political implications and the importance of these centres. A quadrilingual guide to good practices was created as part of the project.

7. The White Ribbon Campaign in Europe¹⁵⁹

The aim of this project was to promote the Canadian concept of the White Ribbon Campaign in Europe and in particular in France, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Spain and Belgium. It aimed to give visibility to men who declare themselves to be opposed to violence against women and to inform as many actors as possible about the initiatives that already exist. There were opportunities to disseminate brochures, posters, and CD-ROMs on which various tools can be found such as the educational kit adapted from the one developed in Canada. Activities to increase the awareness of pupils were also carried out in several schools in La Louvière and Madrid.

There are plans to set up a formal European structure that would centralise those means, together with a structure on Belgian level. But this still remains to be done! In Belgium various actions have been carried out, for example at the World March of Women and in the Parliament. A working group has been operating for some time.

The most probative outcome since then has been the www.euowrc.org internet site, which is fairly popular (10,000 hits per week) in spite of the fact that it is not up-to-date due to a lack of time and resources.

157 Daphne Project 2000/027/W: Gender, masculinity and violence: Conference/speaking tour with representatives from men's organisations CIIR, United Kingdom / Catholic Institute for International Relations).

158 Daphne Project 2002/041/WYC: Evaluation of programmes for violent men: social position, effectiveness, quadrilingual guide to good practices (Les Traboules, France).

159 Daphne Project 1999/DAP/156/WC: The White Ribbon Campaign in Europe: Men working to end men's violence against women (City & Shelter, Belgium).

The White Ribbon Campaign: an evolving campaign

Daniël Bollen

5

1. Introduction

The White Ribbon Campaign was launched in the Province of Limburg in 2000 in collaboration with the working group on violence of the *Limburgse VrouwenRaad* (Limburg Women's Council), deputy for Equal Opportunities Policy, Sonja Claes, and the *Dienst Gelijke Kansen van de Provincie Limburg* (Province of Limburg Service for Equal Opportunities). At the end of 2004, a provincial study unit devoted to Intra-Family Violence (IFV) was set up. This roundtable of all of the actors of the IFV sphere (police, justice system and social sector) aims to develop a common strategy in order to derive solutions to problems with all of the partners and to guarantee both an integrated and integral approach.

2. Background of the White Ribbon Campaign in the Province of Limburg

The 2000 edition of the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC) in Limburg was completely inspired by the Canadian campaign, which commemorates the massacre in cold blood of fourteen women on 6 December 1989 in Montreal (Canada). On that day, a 25-year-old man burst into a classroom in the institute of technology and chased out the men to then kill all of the women. This tragic event drove a few Canadian men to assume their responsibilities to tackle acts of violence against women. To this end, they created the White Ribbon Campaign in 1991.

To this date, the White Ribbon Campaign is the largest global initiative of men who are calling for a stop to men's violence – who oppose men's violence against women, children and other men. The wearing of a little white ribbon symbolises a personal vow to never use violence against women, to play it down or to conceal it. While it is true that physical and sexual violence against women is chiefly male violence, the WRC also considers that men also hold the solution to this violence.

In the Province of Limburg, the White Ribbon week begins on 25 November each year, i.e. on the International Day for the Abolition of Violence Against Women, and ends on 6 December (anniversary of the tragedy in Canada). The men of the Province are encouraged to wear a little white ribbon during this period, attesting to their promise never to use violence, close their eyes to violence, seek excuses for the perpetrators of violence, think of the victims as having "asked for it", pass over violence in silence and also to persuade others to put a stop to violence.

At the same time, Limburg families, companies, schools, professional associations, etc., are invited to organise activities and training events in order to place the campaign in the spotlight, to be able in this way to debate domestic violence and to tackle it in a preventive way.

3. Five campaigns in words and images



Province of Limburg White Ribbon Campaign Poster, 2001

In addition to leaflets and the white ribbons, it had been decided for the 2001 campaign to create a poster campaign in order to show the subject in images. In 2001, a famous Limburger (Dominique Deruddere) was also presented as a patron of the campaign and he was featured on the posters alongside a model (with the trademark black eye). Working with a famous personality offers advantages through the interest shown by the press.

These photos were used over three years, with slight modifications. This continuity gave the campaign a certain identity, which is an important element. During the course of this period, the slogan of men who say “no” or “stop” to violence against women continued to be used.

In 2002, the campaign focused not only on physical violence, but also psychological violence. It was distinguished with the slogan “An eye heals quicker than a soul”.

The more successful the campaign became, the more criticism multiplied in different spheres. This criticism was in the main

from men who considered that the centre of interest of the campaign, namely men’s intra-family violence against women, was far too limited, all the more so because the campaign was organised by the ‘Dienst Gelijke Kansen’. Even so, there can be no argument over the statistics: within a partner relationship, men’s violence (physical) against women is still markedly more common than the reverse.



Province of Limburg White Ribbon Campaign Poster, 2004

In 2004, the campaign managers opted for two individuals being in the photo. This time, the woman is not represented as a victim but as a woman with spirit who is calling on the solidarity of everyone. The campaign’s new slogan urged “Limburgers [to be] standing together against violence against women”. The female and male patrons of the campaign, Andrea Croonenberghs and Ludo Hellinx, were featured on the posters. These two individuals from the TV1 series *Flikken* were not chosen by coincidence since the specific target group for training was also the police. Alongside the WRC, the ‘Dienst Gelijke Kansen’, in co-operation with the police, has also set up a training module relating to IFV, which can be incorporated into the training of police officers.

The texts published in the context of the White Ribbon Campaign point out increasingly explicitly that everyone can be a victim of violence. For this reason we place a firm emphasis on solidarity in the sense of an awareness of the cohesion and will needed to accept the consequences. It is important that the victims know they are not alone. It is perhaps even more important that they know where to go and where to take their problem. This is why all of the publications relating to the White Ribbon Campaign mentioned one or more telephone numbers, to make help sufficiently accessible to victims who saw themselves in the narratives.

Previous campaigns have taught us that while it is the case that the distribution of little white ribbons proceeds smoothly, the actual wearing of the ribbons nevertheless left something to be desired and the concept of the awareness-raising campaign needed a new boost. A photo competition was launched to encourage the wearing of the ribbon and was open to individuals, families, associations, companies, schools, etc. To participate in it, all one had to do was to send a photo showing people wearing the white ribbon. Furthermore, the *Het Belang van Limburg* newspaper and the White Ribbon Campaign publications gave coverage to the competition, since they used some of these photos as a catalyst for raising awareness.

The little white fabric ribbons attached to leaflets with a safety pin were replaced by ribbon stickers out of a concern for reducing the campaign's costs. The little ribbon stickers also enabled easier and wider distribution by post. During the course of the 2004 WRC, it was therefore possible to distribute 42,000 white ribbons, 2,500 campaign posters and 27,000 leaflets (with information about the campaign). Families, schools, associations, companies, municipal councils, etc., considered the issue, stuck on the ribbon and took part in the photo competition.

A very "graphic" site that guarantees the presence of men in large numbers is always sought to kick-off the campaign. For the sixth edition of White Ribbon Campaign, Lisa del Bo, Willy Sommers and the deputy for Equal Opportunities Policy, Sonja Claes, officially launched the 2005 Campaign on Saturday 5 November 2005 in the Fenixstadion, Racing Genk's football stadium. At the start of the KRC Genk - KSV Roeselare fixture, all of the supporters received a little white ribbon. Lisa del Bo, Willy Sommers and deputy Sonja Claes placed the first ribbons on a KRC Genk delegation before the kick-off. This press conference was transmitted in its entirety using the internal television circuit, meaning that all of the spectators present (21,167) received the message. The football supporters also received a white ribbon when they entered the stadium. A total of 15,000 little white ribbons were distributed by 12 volunteers. Before the kick-off, the KRC Genk Chairmen, Mr Jos Vaesen, invited all of those present to wear the white ribbon.



Province of Limburg White Ribbon Campaign Poster, 2005

The 2005 White Ribbon Campaign adopted a new line of attack. Firstly, the term "Limburgers" disappeared from the slogan. Next, the message no longer only targeted violence against women, but was extended to violence within the family. Given that the term "intra-family violence" was incomprehensible to many, the 2005 slogan was as follows: "Standing together against violence in the family".

In 2005, a total of 57,071 little white ribbons (stickers), 24,523 leaflets (with information about the campaign and the rules of the competition) and 2,133 posters were distributed. In other words, this campaign is increasingly visible with society.



White Ribbon Campaign Poster, 2006

In order to really reach all Limburgers, we called on two important media partners for the 2006 White Ribbon Campaign.

Eight presenters from TV Limbourg lent their faces to the campaign and, like the other TV invitees, they wore a white ribbon in each television appearance. On each day of the campaign, the TV Limbourg news focused substantial attention on the issue of intra-family violence and on the White Ribbon Campaign.

Het Belang van Limburg was also a partner of this campaign: in addition to a long article, a white ribbon sticker was attached to each newspaper (24 November 2006 edition). In this way, we reached more than 80% of Limburger newspaper readers. The readers were called on to order white ribbons for their family, colleagues, associations, etc.

The attention of visitors, passers-by and members of staff of the provincial house was captured by a publicity tour.

4. Training

Alongside a wide-ranging awareness-raising campaign, the 'Dienst Gelijke Kansen' in the Province of Limburg is also continually expanding the training activities and study days intended for various target groups: for young people, there is, among other things, the promotion of the play *Tiran-ni-soe*; study devoted to the profiles of perpetrators of intra-family violence and the dependency of the victims, intended for the police, the justice system and social workers; the service has developed a training course on intra-family violence aimed at the police, which features in police officers' programme of standard functional training.

At the present time, a training course is being finalised on the consequences of intra-family violence on the workplace aimed at managers, social services, mediators and persons of trust, unions and occupational health services. We are indeed convinced that employees who are victims of intra-family violence experience difficulties in the performance of their duties (or in the search for a job). Victims of intra-family violence will more often be absent from work for both physical and mental reasons (more than for absenteeism due to illness, leisure, etc.). In fact, the violence does not stop when victims close their front door of their homes and go to work.

By lending an attentive ear and by steering the victims towards the right authorities (e.g. the social services, human resources managers, etc.), persons of trust can provide victims with precious support. Of course, these people will not tackle the problem themselves. The training aims to dispense basic information on the issue IFV (recognition of victims, understanding of perpetrators of violence, cycle of violence, dependency of the victim, etc.) and on the organisations towards which the victims can be directed. This training is supported financially by the Institute for the equality of women and men.

5. Future of the White Ribbon Campaign: a common approach?

For some years, different actors have focused, around 6 December, on the issue of violence (between partners) and of violence against women. Unfortunately, all of these initiatives are realised in a scattered way. The campaign is diluted between different sites by adopting different names and different slogans and methods of actions are implemented. Furthermore, these actions are simultaneously devoted to men's violence against women, to violence between partners and to intra-family violence.

The Province of Limburg has already for some time been urging those responsible to organise a common campaign at the Flemish, National and European levels. There are in fact any number of advantages to such a common approach:

- a common univocal message;
- if possible a group of strong personalities (male and female patrons) who can continuously mobilise to resolve the problem of intra-family violence (also outside of the actual campaign period);
- efficient exploitation of resources (least cost);
- interest of regional and (inter)national pressure;
- central coordination (possibly on a permanent basis) with local diffusion and content and thorough work (training and study days);
- emphasis on the experience and creativity of provincial coordinators.

6. Provincial study unit on intra-family violence

A provincial study unit on intra-family violence was created at the end of 2004, in Limburg, through the impetus given by the deputy for Equal Opportunities Policy Sonja Claes and the Public Prosecutor Marc Rubens. This study unit includes all of the actors of the IFV sphere such as the police, the justice system and the social sector, in cooperation with the police and public order coordination unit. This unit aims to develop, with all of the interested parties, a strategy with a view to solving the problems and guaranteeing an integral and integrated approach.

The starting point and the basic requirements consist of working the logic of area or of prosecution. All of the sectors involved in the approach to intra-family violence are increasingly convinced that only a targeted approach to violence resulting in a synergy of the actions of the justice system, the police and social work can lead to a univocal strategy to take on this violence in a preventive and curative way.

A certain number of inter-sectoral working groups have been set up in order to work on improvements geared towards a few problematic areas detected in the context of IFV, including:

- the realisation of a pattern in order to anticipate intra-family violence;
- the verification of the legal framework for the application of professional secrecy regarding the issue of IFV;
- the establishment of a dialogue on local inter-sectoral matters;
- improvements in the application of and the procedure for visiting rights.

The White Ribbon Campaign in Wallonia¹⁶⁰

René Begon

1. Introduction

This text describes the achievements of the White Ribbon Campaign in Wallonia, first of all in Liege and then in the Province of Luxemburg. What characterises the White Ribbon Campaign in Liege is that it developed within the body of municipal staff in the broadest sense of the term, that is first of all in the police, then among the officials. In fact, a woman and a man are at the origin of the Liegeois campaign: on the one hand, from 2003, Joëlle Vanblaere, the person in charge of the “*Violence conjugale*” (Domestic Violence) issue within the municipal police, took the initiative of proposing to her male colleagues that they wear the white ribbon, while the following year, the mayor Willy Demeyer, responsible for equal opportunities within the municipal council, decided to extend the movement to the staff of the city of Liege.

2. 2003 – within the Liegeois municipal police

In 2003, during the course of an event devoted to domestic violence, Joëlle Vanblaere heard Roland Mayerl and Jean-Paul Graver, two of the rare French-speaking representatives of the movement, talk about the White Ribbon. She right away went to Hasselt, where the campaign had already been in existence for four years, in order to find out about the subject.

Next, having obtained the agreement of her Management Board to organise the campaign within the police force, she appealed for volunteers in the various departments to play a relay role for their colleagues. Around thirty police officers (out of 1,800 officers of both sexes) were these relays for the campaign. They were gathered together in small groups to be informed about the objective of the campaign and about the type of co-operation that was expected from them.

A press conference was organised to launch the White Ribbon Campaign in Liege. It was a considerable success: the media coverage was very good. Of the thousand pins available, 700 were distributed to the police officers, who reserved an excellent reception for the campaign. It is, unfortunately, important to add that a dramatic news event had at the time drawn the attention of the Liegeois to violence against women since, a few days before, a man had beaten his companion to death, leaving her dying before calling the emergency services.

The second edition of the campaign with the police took place at the end of 2004. The “*Tolérance zéro*” (Zero Tolerance) circular regarding domestic violence had just begun to be applied at the Liege Public Prosecutor’s Office. Advantage was taken of this news to organise a conference with the Public Prosecutor, Annie Bourguignon, as well as with the associations in the field: the *Collectif contre les violences familiales et l’exclusion* (CVFE – Collective Against Family Violence and Exclusion), which accommodates and supports female victims of domestic violence and Praxis, which works with violent men. Approximately sixty police officers took part in this conference. Several hundred pins were again distributed for this second campaign, but less than the previous year. In fact, many police officers had kept their white ribbons and some even wore them all year round.

3. 2004 – the municipals officials enter the scene

Furthermore, it was also in 2004 that the mayor Willy Demeyer, seeing the success found by the White Ribbon Campaign among police officers, decided to extend the movement to the municipal staff (with the exception of

¹⁶⁰ I am not acting here as a spokesperson for the White Ribbon Campaign. Even though I fully share its concerns regarding violence against women, I have to date not participated in it. On the other hand, the association for which I work, the “*Collectif contre les violences familiales et l’exclusion*” (CVFE – Association against family violence and exclusion), is associated with the Liegeois campaign. It is therefore in this context that my intervention should be seen. The small survey presented here comes within the framework of the CVFE’s continuing education service.

education and the CPAS (Public Social Welfare Centre)). The press coverage of the event was unfortunately not as good as in 2003, since the campaign had not been as well promoted by the College of Aldermen.

Within the municipal staff, the campaign was organised in the same way as with the police: it relied on around thirty volunteers in the departments. These were contacted using an information sheet that accompanied their payslip, as well as through the city's internet site.

These "relays", which were called "referees" within the staff, received information about violence against women during the course of two half-days of training, but, unlike what happened for the police, the sessions were run by external trainers, namely members of associations in the field specialised in dealing with domestic violence (the CVFE and Praxis), as well as representatives of the municipal police's prevention department and the '*Contrat de sécurité*' (Urban Safety Agreement).

During this initiative, the CVFE presented the perspective of the female victims of violence, while Praxis addressed the process of making the perpetrators accountable. The two female workers from the CVFE presented in particular the different stages of the cycle of domestic violence, which they also defined as resulting from a process of domination within the couple and as a crime that must be reported and punished.

The initiative was designed to quickly lead to discussion leaving a lot of room for participants' questions and enabling discussions on subjects such relationships between women and men, or male and female stereotypes. An effort was made not to only discuss the role of the perpetrator, but also to go into the perspective of the victim, by specifying the effects that violence has on them, on family life and on children. The issue of provocation was also raised, which is often put forward by aggressors to justify their actions.

Next, between 25 November, the international day against violence against women, and 6 December, the anniversary of the slaughter in Montreal from which the campaign originated, the relay officials made themselves available to their colleagues in order to answer questions and to distribute information material. In 2004, nearly 2000 pins were worn by male members of staff (which numbers 6000 officials of both sexes).

4. The 2005 campaign

In 2005, the police officers and municipal officials wore their white ribbons in accordance with the same principles as in the previous years. As regards the police officers, the female trainer wished to expand the perspective beyond domestic violence, by tackling other types of violent acts, such as those suffered by women in countries of the South (forced marriage, circumcision, stoning, rape) or issues such as inequality in access to studies, salary inequality, discrimination in recruitment, etc.

The police's electronic messaging network was used to pass on information, thanks to which high impact phrases, differing each day, were disseminated. This arrangement met with considerable success.

As regards the city, each year the mayor appoints the male or female official who will take on the coordination of the campaign: in the first two years, women were approached: Anne-Marie Mariani and Maryse Hockers. From the beginning of September, the different department directors are notified by post of the campaign dates and they are requested to appoint referees within their departments. For the 2005 edition, the search for relays was in particular directed towards the works department, the participation of which had been low in 2004. Fourteen of the department's sixteen sites responded to the appeal by sending volunteers. A total of twenty-two referees participated in the information mornings about the campaign that were held at the end of October. The city's administrative staff, on the other hand, first received information about the campaign in a letter attached to their October pay slip (received at the beginning of November).

However, it was also during the course of the 2005 edition that the first signs of a loss of momentum appeared. On the one hand, the press campaign was a failure: no journalists attended, which suggests that the issue was somehow wearing thin in the media, whereas its support is critical in order to reach the general public. On the other hand, according to the referees, their colleagues, who had already been made aware of the issue the previous year, were asking themselves why the operation had to be repeated every year.

Nevertheless, 1200 pins were distributed in 2005. Throughout the campaign, two large white ribbons, made by the works department, were hung on the balconies of the Town Hall. Furthermore, an exhibition on domestic violence was also presented in the hall of the Town Hall. Every day, when they turned on their computers, the mu-

municipal officials could peruse, via their intranet, a stage of awareness-raising, as well as the details of all of the referees. This information did not concern only acts of violence, but also illiteracy (two in three illiterates are women), employment (37.7% of women work part-time as opposed to 5.9% of men) or rights (in Belgium, all men have had the right to vote since 1919, but women have only had this right since 1948).

In anticipation of the 2006 campaign, the female initiators wished to expand the movement by offering some state-owned enterprises (the large hospitals, the post office, the TECs (the local branch of the Walloon public transport company)), and the staff of the CPAS, the judiciary, the province, some social services (Cripel (the regional centre for the integration of people of immigrant origins), the AIGS, the non-profit organisation "*Gestion Centre Ville*" (City Centre Management) and the *Relais social* (Social Relay)), as well as the federal police the opportunity to join the campaign. The mayor sought their co-operation by letter from the beginning of October 2005.

We detected a note of dissatisfaction in Joëlle Vanblaere, the Liegeois pioneer of the campaign at the conclusion of the first three editions: "In my opinion", she told us in April 2006, "the problem with the White Ribbon, is the lack of male organisers. The volunteers with whom we work certainly have good intentions but they are not the stakeholders of the project. It is often women that are behind these initiatives."

Another reason for dissatisfaction: the total absence of financial support from the federal public authorities, in particular as far as the provision of promotional material was concerned (posters, leaflets, etc.).

Nevertheless, there was also the positive assessment that things were perhaps made somewhat easier by the testing ground role played by the Liegeois region regarding equality between women and men. Some examples: since 17 December 2001, the city has had a female/male equality Charter, adopted by the Municipal Council on the initiative of the Liegeois Coordination of the World March of Women. And, since 14 February 2005, there has been a "*Femmes et Ville*" (Women and City) municipal consultative committee set up by the mayor. This committee in particular organised exploratory marches in eight districts of the city and it has included support for the White Ribbon Campaign on its agenda.

The initiative of the *Service d'Égalité des chances de la Province de Liège* (Province of Liège Equal Opportunities Service) of creating two committees, one of which deals with violence against women. This committee very quickly became an important place of dialogue between, on the one hand, the actors in the field such as Praxis, the CVFE and the family planning centres, and, on the other hand, the judiciary. It is here especially that the first contacts took place, which lead to the implementation of the "*Tolérance zéro*" circular by the Liege Public Prosecutor, which then gave rise to a new federal directive.

5. The 2006 campaign

Following slight fragility in 2005, the 2006 White Ribbon Campaign was considerably revitalised. While still proceeding in the two large pioneer sectors of the police and municipal staff, it passed an important stage by successfully opening itself up to the general public with the involvement of Liège Basket. Two club stars, Morris Finley and Ronnie Mc Collum, wearing the white ribbon on their shirts, in fact lent their image for the 2006 campaign poster of which three-thousand copies were made (with also five thousand postcards). The press conference announcing the event was well-attended and gave rise to articles in the local press and to television pieces.

The city sent the posters to more than three-hundred doctors, sixty-six pharmacists and approximately sixty bookshops. They were disseminated in district police stations, schools, the administrative city centre, the decentralised municipal services (population centres and CPAS), crèches, libraries, youth centres, pensioners' clubs and sporting clubs, while the '*Gestion Centre Ville*' distributed one-hundred and fifty of them to merchants in the centre. The '*Agents de prévention et de sécurité*' (APS – Prevention and Safety Officers), recognisable by their mauve jackets and the *Stewards urbains* (Urban Stewards) contribution to increasing the awareness of the Liegeois, by offering them pins in the street.

From the beginning of November, the municipal administrative officials again received, with their October pay slip, an information letter about the campaign, as well as a reminder concerning the two different bloody events during the course of which little girls and students were the victims of maniacs this autumn, in a school in the Amish community in the United States and in an English-speaking college in Montreal (Quebec), respectively. Furthermore, a new exhibition about domestic violence, realised on the initiative of the '*Service provincial d'Égalité des chances*' (Provincial Equal Opportunities Service) and consisting of twelve two square metre panels, was shown in the hall

of the Town Hall from 25 November to 6 December. Finally, as in the previous year, the police officers and officials every day received a high impact phrase through the police's internal messaging system or the municipal Intranet.

In accordance with the wishes of the female organisers of the campaign, two large state-owned enterprises also joined the movement: the Liegeois TECs, the local branch of the Walloon public transport company, reserved one hundred and fifty spaces for A3 posters in their buses, while the Centre hospitalier universitaire (CHU) du Sart-Tilman (Sart-Tilman University Hospital Centre) did its part, in particular by creating its own pin bearing its acronym and those of the city and the police.

Furthermore, the Socialist Mutual Societies decided to take part in the campaign. The proposal, made by the *Femmes prévoyantes* (FPS - Provident Socialist Women), had been endorsed at the beginning of the year by the mutual societies steering committee, which brings together the (predominantly male) regional secretaries, and the campaign featured in the programme of the Wallonia and Brussels regional federations of the *Fédération des Mutualités Socialistes et Syndicales* (FMSS - Federation of Socialist and Trade Union Mutual Societies).

In Liege, the campaign was organised in two ways within the socialist mutual societies movement. On the one hand, with regard to the mutual society's satellite services, namely the *Centrale de soins à domicile* (CSD - Centre for Home Care) and the André Renard clinic, the pins, fastened onto cards carrying informative text, were distributed in a classic way to the male staff. On the other hand, in the departments of the FMSS, three trainers from the '*Enfance et Jeunesse*' (Childhood and Youth) section voluntarily took on the work informing and raising the awareness of their male colleagues (one third of the three-hundred members of staff). They toured the departments, distributing the pins and providing information on the campaign.

At the Brussels headquarters of the *Union nationale des Mutualités socialistes* (National Union of Socialist Mutual Insurance Companies), the distribution of information on the campaign to the male staff of the two Dutch-speaking and French-speaking wings was taken on by the human resources representatives.

From now on, it is envisaged that the exercise will be repeated next year, but that the programme will be expanded through recourse to interventions from associations outside the mutual societies, in this case probably from the non-profit organisation Praxis.

6. Elsewhere in Wallonia

Since 2003, the two female trainers from the '*Service de l'Égalité des chances*' of the Province of Luxemburg have also organised a White Ribbon Campaign. In the first year, this was aimed at the staff and the provincial elected representatives (provincial permanent deputies and advisors), which represents a thousand people in all.

In 2004, the campaign relied on the support of three '*Action en milieu ouvert structures*' (AMO – Action in the Community structures, in this case managed by men) and was aimed at adolescents. A survey carried out on the initiative of the AMOs among a certain number of young people from Arlon and Bastogne revealed that one boy in twenty had faced or was facing some type of violence from their partner. Among the girls, this figure moved up to one in ten, i.e. it doubled.

In 2005, the activities on the markets of Arlon, Bastogne and Marche-en-Famenne were mainly aimed at men. Around three-hundred ribbon pins were distributed on these occasions.

Finally, in 2006, the female trainers innovated again, on 6 December, by distributing pins and a post card bearing the phrase "*Que l'amour et le respect rythme tous vos jours*" (May love and respect give rhythm to all of your days)¹⁶¹, to the travellers on the 6.45 a.m. train between the Arlon and Marloie stations. In a very convivial atmosphere, they were able to talk to people and distribute between five and six-hundred pins to them, while from seven o'clock in the morning at the Marloie station, a team dispatched by the provincial deputy responsible for equal opportunities, Mr Jean-Marie Carrier, spoke to commuters bound for Brussels.

¹⁶¹ This postcard was sent to all of the restaurant owners of the Province of Luxemburg for them to be offered to their customers on the occasion of Saint Valentine's Day 2006.

7. Conclusion

We observe therefore that in Liege and in the Province of Luxemburg, the White Ribbon Campaign has known real vitality since 2003, but we also see, rather paradoxically, that it is often women who are responsible for its

organisation. The women lament, in Liege in any case, the lack of male trainers who are prepared to take charge of the movement, as well as the absence of any financial resources made available by the federal public authorities. The men's relative discretion as stakeholders of the campaign perhaps also explains the absence of reference to reflection on the relationships between violence and masculinity such as exist on the campaign's European site or that of the "profeminist" men.¹⁶²

Nevertheless, following a relative loss of momentum in 2005, the Liegois movement found new dynamism in 2006 thanks to a significant poster campaign realised with the support of two local basketball stars and the entry on the scene of new actors: the TECs, the CHU and the *Mutualité socialiste FMSS*.

162 www.euowrc.org; www.europrofem.org

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Laure Lantier has obtained a Masters in Employment Sociology and a Research Masters in the Sociology of Employment, Politics and Gender. She wrote her dissertation on the impact of the reduction of working time on the division of domestic and parental work within the couple and on the construction of masculine identities. In 2005-2006 she did an internship within the Institute for the equality of women and men, where she worked on the theme of the reconciliation of private life and professional life.

Susanne Lorenz is an Education Sciences graduate (Université de Genève). Following a Postgrad in Criminology (Université de Lausanne) and continuous vocational training in assessment (Universität Bern), she has worked for several years in prison and walk-in environments with toxico-dependent people. She is currently a Professor at the Haute Ecole Valaisanne (Switzerland) - Institut Santé Social since 2002, where she participates in and is responsible for training modules on crime. Lorenz has carried out several pieces of research financed by the Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research which concern the course of the lives of young adults with difficulties and violence within the couple and the family.

Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi is a Professor of Social Psychology at the Université de Genève, and co-manages the Ecole doctorale de psychologie sociale des Universités de Genève et de Lausanne. He has been an Associate Editor of the European Journal of Social Psychology, and is currently Editorial Manager of the "Vies Sociales" collection at the Presses Universitaires de Grenoble. Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi is the author of, among other things: *Individus dominants et groupes dominés* (1988); *Les androgynes* (1994); *Questions de méthodologie en sciences sociales* (1996); *Homogénéité et statut social des groupes* (2002); and *Les représentations des groupes dominants et dominés* (2002).

Roland Mayerl represents the City & Shelter association in Saint-Gilles which has coordinated some projects that take the gender dimension into account and among others projects supported by the European Commission (*Le mode de prise de décision des femmes et des hommes en matière d'espace urbain et d'habitat* (1993), *la Charte européenne des femmes dans la cité* (1994), *le Réseau européen des hommes proféministes* (1997), *la Campagne du Ruban blanc en Europe* (2000) and the Daphne-toolkit site and DVD for the Daphne Programme (2004-2006)), the national Mainstreaming of gender and mobility project (Ministry of Transport) and a project supported by the King Baudouin Foundation which deals with a strand on gendered habitat.
www.cityshelter.org

Laura Merla is a Doctor of Sociology (Université catholique de Louvain, 2006). Her doctoral thesis concerned the "Appréhension et présentation de soi et transgression des normes de la division sexuelle du travail: le cas des pères "au foyer" (Apprehension and presentation of the self and the transgression of the norms of the gendered division of work: the case of "stay-at-home" fathers). She is currently working on a post-doctorate, financed by the European Commission (Marie Curie "Outgoing International Fellowships") at the University of Western Australia in order to successfully complete the research project "Transnational care practices of Brazilian low-qualified migrants living in Australia and Portugal: a comparative perspective".

Veerle Pasmans is an educational criminologist (K.U.Leuven). She is currently working at the Turnhout Legal Advice Centre. From 2004 to 2006, she held the position of Deputy Director of the Institute for Equality Between Women and Men Institute for the equality of women and men. She was previously a Deputy Advisor at the Ministry of Interior Affairs (1997-1998) and Director of the Antwerp Legal Advice Centre (1998-2004).

Sophie Pioro is a sociologist. As the policy manager for male/female equality in the Office of the Belgian Minister for Employment, she was the coordinator of the European "Et les hommes?" study which ran from December 2002 to February 2004, in France, Belgium and Greece.

Hugo Swinnen (1949) is a Senior Researcher and Director of International Relations at the Verwey-Jonker Institute in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The Verwey-Jonker Institute is a national independent institute of applied scientific research into social issues. Alongside the coordination of trans-national research projects, he himself carries out research in the field, in various areas: urbanism and citizen participation, local social policy, the tackling of poverty and equal opportunities. On behalf of the Netherlands Ministry of Public Health, Well-Being and Sports, he has since 1999 held the post of International Relations Attaché at the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Vienna). Swinnen is the co-author of European cities and local social policy. Survey on developments and opinions in six European countries (2003); *Het soortelijk gewicht van sociaal beleid* (2004); *Europäische Städte und Sozialpolitik / Villes européennes et politique sociale* (2004); and *Breed welzijn Vlaanderen - Nederland. Inventarisatie van samenwerkingsverbanden en -activiteiten* (2004). Since 2003, he has participated in the drafting of assessment reports of the National Social Inclusion Action Plan (Netherlands).
www.verwey-jonker.nl

Nico van Oosten is a psychologist. He has been a staff member, trainer and adviser at TransAct since 1997. He has more than 5 years of experience as a trainer in the area of the systemic approach to domestic violence and voluntary assistance to perpetrators. He has for three years been working as an adviser for domestic violence policy in municipalities. He regularly gives lectures on domestic violence and is the (co)-author of various publications in the areas of domestic violence and diversity in social welfare and well-being, in particular: *De Aanpak: systeemgerichte hulp bij geweld in relaties*; *Relatiegeweld en (verlies van) mannelijkheid*; *Primaire preventie van seksueel geweld*; *Seksespecifieke hulpverlening voor maatschappelijk werkers*; *Dronken mannen, depressieve vrouwen*.
www.transact.nl

Jessie Vandeweyer is a researcher attached to the Department of Sociology - TOR Research Group of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Her work chiefly concerns the organisation of time, the allocation of time and social integration. In this context, she has produced the analyses and the reports of the vast Belgian survey on time use (1999) conducted by the National Statistics Institute. Aside from her analyses of models time allocation at the national level, she collaborated on a study on the same subject in Flanders (TOR'99). She then participated in the preparation, data cleansing and analysis of the next survey on time allocation in Flanders (TOR'04). Since 1 July 2005, she has worked on the FWO project "*Loopbaanonderbrekers onder de loep*", a study of living conditions and time allocation among the credit time users in Flanders. She is the author of among other things *De 24 uur van Vlaanderen. Het dagelijkse leven van minuut tot minuut* (2006, with I. Glorieux, S. Koelet, I. Mestdag, J. Minnen en M. Moens).
www.vub.ac.be/TOR/

Annex 1. Participants list

1. Men and change: the role of men in equality between men and women

(9-10 September 2005)

- Monique Chalude, President of the non-profit organisation Amazone (Chairwoman)
- Pascale Vielle, Director of the Institute for the equality of women and men
- Bruno De Lille, Alderman of the City of Brussels for Equal Opportunities
- Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi, Professor of Social Psychology, Université de Genève (Switzerland)
- Pascale Jamouille, Sociologist, Université catholique de Louvain
- Suzana Koelet, Researcher at the Department of Sociology – TOR Research Group, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- Laura Merla, Sociologist, Université catholique de Louvain
- Sophie Pioro, Coordinator of the European “Et les hommes?” project
- Martine Corbière, Sociologist, Université Toulouse-Le Mirail (France)
- Veerle Pasmans, Deputy Director of the Institute for the equality of women and men
- Françoise Goffinet, Attachée to the Institute for the equality of women and men
- Gratia Pungu, Attachée to the Ministry for the Brussels-Capital Region, Administration of Local Authorities

2. Working together on equality: men as bearers of change?

(7 March 2006)

- Monique Chalude, President of the non-profit organisation Amazone (Chairwoman for the morning)
- Pascale Vielle, Director of the Institute for the equality of women and men (Chairwoman for the afternoon)
- Celia Alexopoulou, Deputy Head of the Equal Opportunities Between Women and Men: Strategy and Programme Unit, European Commission
- Hugo Swinnen, Senior Researcher and Director of International Affairs, Verwey-Jonker Institute (Netherlands)
- Anne-Marie Faradji, Administrator in the Equality Division, Directorate General of Human Rights, Council of Europe
- Veerle Pasmans, Deputy Director of the Institute for the equality of women and men
- Jessie Vandeweyer, Researcher at the Department of Sociology – TOR Research Group, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- Fabienne Bister, Chairwoman of the Committee on SMEs of the Federation of Belgian Enterprises, Managing Director Moutarderies Bister
- Peter-Jan Bogaert, freelance journalist at De Morgen
- Marcel Crochet, Honorary Rector of the Université catholique de Louvain, Chairman of the Women and Science Committee in the Office of Marie-Dominique - Simonet, Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and External Relations of the Walloon Region
- Hadelin de Beer de Laer, President of the Federal Public Planning Service for Sustainable Development
- Vincent Van Damme, Director of Human Resources Development, Euromut
- Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi, Professor of Social Psychology, Université de Genève (Switzerland)
- Jeff Hearn, Swedish School of Economics, Helsinki (Finland) and University of Huddersfield (United Kingdom)
- Ortwin de Graef, Professor at the Department of Literary Sciences, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
- Marleen Heylen, Contextual Family Therapist, Lecturer Department of Social Studies at the Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven
- Olivier Nyssens, President of the non-profit organisation Relais Hommes
- Gratia Pungu, Attachée to the Ministry for the Brussels-Capital Region, Administration of Local Authorities
- Christian Dupont, Minister for the Civil Service, Social Integration, Urban Policy and Equal Opportunities
- Michael Kimmel, Sociology Department, State University of New York, Stony Brook (United States)

3. Violence: a men's affair! The role of men in preventing and ending violence

(7 April 2006)

- Veerle Pasmans, Deputy Director of the Institute for the equality of women and men (Chairwoman)
- Michael Kaufman, Founder of the White Ribbon Campaign (Canada)
- Nico van Oosten, TransAct staff member (Netherlands)
- Christian Anglada, Violence and Family Coordinator, Youth and Families Foundation (Switzerland)
- Roland Mayerl, Head of Projects at the non-profit organisation City & Shelter
- René Begon, Project Manager at the Collective Against Family Violence and Exclusion
- Daniël Bollen, Province of Limburg, 2nd Directorate Welfare, Equal Opportunities Service
- Mileen Koninckx, Office of Christian Dupont, Minister for the Civil Service, Social Integration, Urban Policy and Equal Opportunities

Annex 2. Introduction, by Bruno De Lille, 9-10 September 2005

First of all, I would like to welcome the speakers at this conference as well as all of the participants. Your presence attests to your interest in equal opportunities and I can only delight in it!

What does it mean 'equal opportunities'? Equal opportunities is giving every woman and every man the same possibilities, and this is what the City of Brussels aspires to; a society where everyone has the same opportunities. 'Everyone' means women too... But this is not always obvious!

This is especially due to the fact that the inequality between women and men is very often denied. "Hasn't this issue been dealt with? Women have the same rights and opportunities. If they do not seize them, it is because they do not want to. Do you know how many men are victims of discrimination?" These reactions resurface each time the need to introduce an equal opportunities policy for women is addressed. Just as this discrimination is occurring less often in an open way, the fight for equal rights is becoming much more complicated. People are afraid of change or they look for arguments to prove that change is impossible.

For a long time, upbringing has been accused of being at the origin of certain forms of discrimination against women. "Daddy works and so does Mummy... but she prepares the food, she makes the older kid do his homework while she gives the little one a bath and Daddy watches television..." When this image (exaggerated surely!?) is lodged in the minds of children from their earliest years, how can we in that case judge the behaviour of some men in relation to women since "it is not their fault, they were brought up like that"?

Now, we can observe that, when the situation requires it, men who are obliged to adapt to a division of roles within the household, do so. And this is not a problem. Can we really blame upbringing at this point?

Others claim that it is just a question of the period: the new man is born, you know, and he assumes his responsibilities in the household, shares the tasks fairly and looks after the children. Only, this man has quite a few remarkable qualities. First of all, we start off by only considering his willingness to help: he wants to take on his share of the tasks (but what happens when suddenly he does not want to do that any more?). Next, in reality, it appears that above all he is a man that knows how to sell himself. The results of a survey by Professor Ignace Glorieux have shown that men do not help with the housework any more than they did around 10 years ago. We only think they do. For these men, it is therefore just a good marketing ploy!

In fact, when you dissect men and women's use of time, you realise that men will more easily use their "free time" to invest in their hobbies whereas women will invest their time in domestic tasks.

We therefore still have some way to go. And this is also the reason why the City of Brussels is supporting an initiative like this one today. Changing people's mentalities is however a long-term job, a job that we must all do together, each one of us in our own fields. In the City of Brussels, for example, we are above all seeking measures that we can take within our very own organisation.

There are 3600 people working in the direct administration of the City of Brussels alone. A little more than half of these people are women; there is therefore nothing to be concerned about on that score. But if we take a look at these women's duties, we discover a problem: up to and including level 2, everything is equal; but at the management levels of the executives, we all of a sudden have double the number of men compared to women. That is the glass ceiling...

With the aim of introducing a policy of equal opportunities between women and men, the City of Brussels is first of all attempting to apply concrete measures within its own administration so that women have the same opportunities as men. These measures concern among other things a person of trust to deal with sexual harassment and intimidation. A person working within the personnel department is responsible for pinpointing measures that harm women in order to then adjust them. The promotion system is being revised. Until now people were almost obliged to following evening courses for months, which is difficult for some women.

Furthermore, as it appears that in a number of cases, women have less opportunities when they have to go before a male selection board, we are seeing to it that people of both sexes sit on these boards. We are also trying to inform our officials as effectively as possible of their rights regarding maternity, parental or paternity leave, and we are trying to encourage men who work in our administration to make use of these provisions.

Aside from these measures, the City is also working in co-operation with women's organisations to develop aware-

ness-raising actions concerning certain women-related issues such as for example prostitution, forced marriage, violence against women, etc.

Alongside these “selective” activities, we are preparing the third edition of the “Women and the City” - two weeks of raising awareness of women’s rights. This two-week period begins on 10 November, the eve of Armistice Day but also of the National Women’s Day, and ends on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The goal of this two-week period is to inform the population about the different forms of violence against women, to increase its awareness and, with the help of organisations in the field and professionals, to cause it to reflect on what the City of Brussels could do to overcome these types of violence to which women are often subjected.

Finally, this year, the City of Brussels is supporting the World March of Women and Confèttia, on 16 October 2005, a unique event that gathers together a large number of Dutch-speaking and French-speaking women’s organisations in the context of the festivities surrounding the 100th anniversary of the Council of Belgian Women.

Of course, even though we focus our activities on women in general, we willingly collaborate in projects that highlight the role of men in equality between women and men. This is why the City of Brussels was proud to participate in the survey carried out by the University of Toulouse on men’s attitudes. This survey on equality between women and men was also carried out in France and in Greece with political, administrative and trade union representatives, company heads and so on.

I am very proud, with the Ministry for the Brussels-Capital Region and the Institute for the equality of women and men, to offer you this conference, which is born of co-operation between the federal, regional and municipal authorities. It is a conference that, for the first time in Belgium, addresses men’s role in equality between women and men. I hope it reaches as many people as possible and in order to be able to give men and equality a much wider scope.

Bruno De Lille

Alderman for the City of Brussels for Flemish Affairs, Equal Opportunities and International Solidarity
(2001-2006)

Annex 3. Conclusions, by Gratia Pungu, 9-10 September 2005

The Administration of Local Authorities, an institution placed under the authority of the Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region, is an administration that exercises its task of being a supervisory authority over the 19 municipalities of the Brussels Region. Since 2001, thanks to an agreement concluded with the Institute for the equality of women and men (IEWM), a unit responsible for initiating projects for equality between men and women at the municipal level is active in it. It is in this context that these two study days devoted to the theme of men and change, and more particularly to the role of men in equality between men and women, have been organised.

Within the Civil Service in general, equality between men and women originally essentially concerned formal equality and very logically the actions and demands were preferentially actions aimed at legal equality. The limitation of the demand for equality to this dimension alone is, today, still present in the minds of many of its managers. The bulk of the policies carried out, in particular for the municipal staff, still almost exclusively match this definition. However, the inadequacy of this device in ensuring equality and non-discrimination in a concrete sense has led, through the influence of the women's movement, to the attainment of policies specifically intended to correct de facto discrimination.

These specific policies and positive actions, while being likely to respond to the concrete problems facing women in the majority of cases, have at least two major disadvantages: on the one hand, they do not re-examine the situation of inequality in terms of social, structural and functional relationships. And on the other, they may well reinforce the existing stereotypes rather than combat them. The speech by Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi, devoted to the impact of these policies on the representations that they engender from their beneficiaries was fascinating and provokes reflection and examination. Finally they require perpetual correction since, because they do not question the social relationships of sex (gender), they prevent the search for the causes of inequality and in this way even its definitive remedy.

The idea of this conference was born out of two experiments carried out by the Administration of Local Authorities. In 2001, a survey created and carried out with the IEWM in the municipalities confirmed what was then only an impression. It was at the time a matter of asking the municipalities to choose, from a range of possible measures for positive actions, those which had been adopted and also to indicate whether or not they were suitable to achieve a concrete improvement in the situation regarding equality.

The results obtained showed, importantly, that among the least adopted measures and the least associated with equality in the minds of the respondents were those that affected men; as though, all in all, equality only concerned women. On the other hand, all of the measures relating to part-time working, the adjustment of women's working hours and childcare achieved great success and were ranked highest among the positive actions adopted and were considered to be the most capable of achieving equality.

The results of this survey were not isolated. It is important to recall in this regard the international organisations did not take an interest in the issue until very late: the UN at the beginning of the 2000s and a few mentions at the Council of Europe in the form of general recommendations and specific themes: domestic violence, AIDS, the tackling of stereotypes and paternity.

It was on the initiative of the University of Toulouse-Le Mirail that the second survey took place, in the context of the European project of which Sophie Pioro and Martine Corbière gave us an account. This survey asked questions that are essential to our debate. Let me recall them for you and further widen their scope: What did the men understand by the social relationships of sex and the policies related to them? Does equality between men and women not suffer from the absence of the participation of men in the process? And if the response to this question is shown to be positive, it is important to examine ways of making them participate more in it. How can men's "egalitarian" demands be taken into account in the face of the impoverishment of the welfare state and the increase in male demands? How can allowances be made within the demands for equality without ending up with a reversal of the situation in public policies which would be indicative of a retreat? The issue at stake for women's issues is how to not lose everything or see the movement's breakthroughs disintegrate. While at the policy level, and I include the administration in this field, the question which must be considered more is how to cope in the face of sometimes very contradictory demands for equality.

The target group for the Brussels survey was made up of male administrative or political representatives, who were professionally active in the sphere of equality, or areas connected to equality. The survey's conclusions are striking: all of the men have a low awareness of the segregation operating in the professional world, including in their organisation; its gendered nature is not seen and felt to be part of a system. Furthermore, few see it as the

result of an interaction between the unequal sharing within the couple of household and domestic burdens and the demands of the working environment; as Suzana Koelet demonstrated to us in the TOR Group study. From the moment that formal equality is respected, the rest is seen as an individual choice and not as a social construction.

I wish to be very clear on this point - it is not a question here of denying the difficulties and injustices that are encountered by some men, in particular in the performance of their parental role, and even less so of questioning the necessary nature of a paternal presence. Pascale Jamouille's speech made us remarkably aware of the distress of these fathers who must "externalise themselves" as she so cleverly puts it, to be able to, in a rather unreasonable way, provide for their own needs or those of their family. That said, the cause is not the shrinking of social services. And I wish to recall here that the first women's organisations, gathered together within the Liaison Committee, fought as far as the Luxembourg Court of Justice, in order, regarding the granting of unemployment benefits, to prevent the division of beneficiaries into unequal categories (head of household, single, cohabitant, etc.) from leading to discrimination or an unjust impoverishment of women in the receipt of unemployment benefits. Of course, they did it in the name of women's rights but, twenty years later, one is forced to note that the consequences of these redefinitions in the policy for granting unemployment benefits had the effects on families that are currently observed.

I have also heard the concern of organisations at the idea that the IEWM's budget, already considered to be meagre in the extreme, be used for new research and grants in aid of men and so on, and therefore, as always, to the detriment of women. They also insist on wanting equality policy, of which the allocation of grants is a strand, to not be managed by a single Institute but that each department take a share of the responsibility corresponding to its remit.

Finally, while the IEWM's missions and ambitions are meeting with success, there is no question of abandoning the old preoccupations and priorities; the IEWM's role as regards helping victims and legal support in the event of a complaint must not hinder or mask the collective dimension of gender inequality.

I will conclude by saying that quite obviously a society cannot claim to be democratic if it is to the detriment of women's rights but conversely no equality is possible without the participation of the half of the population made up by men. It is according to these conditions, by mobilising the social actors, women and men, that we will be able to make equality a socially shared challenge. It is the idea, dear to the IEWM's management, that a new social contract on gender is still to be drawn up.

Gratia Pungu

Former attaché to the Ministry for the Brussels-Capital Region, Administration of Local Authorities

Annexe 4. Conclusions, by Minister Christian Dupont, 7 March 2006

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A century ago, the Swedish writer Klara Johansson declared:

“The day that men start to challenge themselves as males, humanity will enter a new age.”

Men certainly have been challenged, and still are, by the voices of these women who, one day, stood up to say “no, this is enough” and by the struggle of those women who have not ceased campaigning for a society that is finally egalitarian, i.e. rid of the intolerable injustices carried for millennia by the patriarchal model.

As for challenging THEMSELVES, it was only really from the 1970s that men, a few to start with, began to think of themselves outside the stereotypes and conditioning.

As we know, you are not born a man, you become one.

It is a social construction, very often perceived to be especially comfortable since it confers powers and privileges.

This dominant status may partly explain why many men have remained outside of debates on gender equality.

At first sight, there is much more to lose than to gain in this evolution, all the more so because the market model, which is truly internalised, finds in patriarchy a mirror that faithfully reflects the values on which it is based: performance, hierarchy, the rewarding of the strongest.

What the men in the 1970s discovered was that classic masculinity is, itself, in its own way, a prison, an enclosed space of tension, frustration and violence.

And that participating in the struggle led by women for gender equality was an opportunity, for them, to refuse the alienation, the conditioning and the competition imposed by the patriarchal society and the market society.

We certainly have not yet entered this “new age” mentioned by Klara Johansson.

Nevertheless, progress has been made, and it is by no means little.

Our Constitution has been revised in order to feminise political life more within the parties, the legislative assemblies and the executives.

The law or decree, imposes parity between men and women in regional, federal and municipal elections.

Belgium has been one of the drivers of a strong European position during the last New York Conference where it was a matter of consolidating the achievements of the Beijing Conference.

The concept of gender mainstreaming has just been accepted in a draft law that incorporates the male/female equality dimension into all political and administrative decision-making processes.

It is a decision that places us among the most advanced countries in the world as regards equality.

Tackling domestic violence has ceased to be a private matter to become a public one, and a matter of human rights.

It is now the subject of a National Action Plan consisting of 90 measures that concern every level of power.

And to ensure that women of foreign nationality or origin can fully enjoy their rights, we have established Legal support points with the mission of going in search of these women and informing them about the legislation on which they depend regarding marriage, divorce, child custody, like, for example, the new Moroccan Family Code (the moudawana).

These are a few examples, among others, which must not of course mask the injustices that persist as regards

employment, salary disparities, access to positions of responsibility, the sharing of domestic tasks, the upbringing of children, balance between professional activities and family activities, etc.

We will not beat these injustices and, more fundamentally perhaps, the persistence of clichés, of ready-made images that go back to the dawn of time, just with directives, recommendations and laws.

Without deep conviction in the human merits of the changes in the field and without men's concrete engagement in the ongoing transformations, there will be no real substantial progress.

We will only, one day, talk about a "new age" if all men, still spectators of history that continues to be made without them, leave behind their indifference and their idleness.

Creating a world where gender is no longer a source of hierarchy and domination, also concerns men!

Of course, beyond individual or collective wishes, and you have already established this throughout this day, specific actions need to be brought to the attention of the male audience:

- offering them others models for the reconciliation of professional life and family life;
- formulating genuine reflection on masculinity aimed at children and adolescents;
- leaving behind the male issue of university debate and providing a wider forum to the different male movements that are reflecting on this issue; (This third type of action was presented as a genuine necessity by Dr Walter Hollstein at a Council of Europe seminar in June 1997: have things moved on since then?)
- encouraging all those who enjoy a "visible" position, who hold a decision-making post, to commit themselves in practice to begin to in some way become "examples", or "referents".

It is in this perspective that today, on the eve of International Women's Day, we unveil our Charter of men for change, as well as the names of its first signatories.

Our wish is that these initial commitments, both symbolic and concrete, will carry in their wake all of those men who are keen to put a stop to the injustices and to challenge a model of society that, in the end, does not really make anyone happy.

Conscious of the human, democratic, cultural and economic challenges represented by gender equality, the men who place their signature at the bottom of our Charter are committing to doing their utmost to do away with discrimination of all kinds, to promote genuine gender equality between women and men, in the private sphere and in the professional sphere throughout the City.

For human beings, regardless of their sex, have the right to develop their personal capacities, to make choices shielded from imposed roles and prejudices, and to enjoy full and complete freedom to build their lives as they intend.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like, by way of conclusion, to share with you... my pride!

That of being the first male federal Minister for Equality Between Women and Men.

Other than for me personally, of course, this "first" has symbolic value: it is a symbol that perhaps times really are changing and that the "new age", called for by Klara Johansson, has finally materialised in the present.

To end, I would like to invite Mr Vanvelthoven, Minister for Employment and e-Government, to join me so that we can sign the Charter, while behind us you can see the names of those who were the first to commit themselves to the path to change.

I also invite all of those who have not yet done so to sign this precious document and to drop it off at the reception when leaving the conference or to send it, by fax, to the number provided.

I remind you that this Charter concerns all men and I hope that those who build the "new age" will be many in number.

Thank you.

Christian Dupont

Minister for the Civil Service, Social Integration, Urban Policy and Equal Opportunities (2004-2007)

Annex 5. Charter of “Men for the Equality of Women and Men”

The equality of women and men has been the subject of sustained attention from public authorities, the media, the private sector and the associative sector for several decades. However, it is still too often assumed that it is a women's cause and the responsibility for analysis, coming up with answers and the implementation of solutions, essentially lies with the female half of humanity.

Any profound and sustainable change requires the participation and the commitment of the whole of society. It is therefore a challenge that women and men must take up jointly.

There are multiple challenges to this necessary transformation:

- A *democratic* challenge because the position occupied by women in a country attests to their level of progress along the path of democracy;
- An *economic* challenge because professional equality between women and men is at once a factor for social dynamism and economic growth;
- A *societal* challenge because while skills are increasingly shared by women and men, men's failure to share in domestic tasks, the taking care of dependent people and the upbringing of children continues to hinder the promotion of women in the public sphere;
- A *cultural* challenge in the widest sense of the term because women and men are but two faces of the same humanity;
- A challenge for *humanity as a whole* since, in many States, and in particular in developing countries, women are a force for change and modernity.

In the name of the universal principle of equality between women and men, the male signatories of this Charter have chosen to actively commit themselves in partnership with women with a view to promoting:

1. The equality of women and men in rights, dignity and full citizenship;
2. Political and social parity for a better sharing of private, social, political, economic and professional responsibilities between women and men;
3. Professional equality for an enhanced contribution from women to economic development, for a reduction of inequalities and the abolition of discrimination in the employment market;
4. A better reconciliation of the areas of life for a new balance of social roles between women and men, both in the public sphere and in the private sphere;
5. European and international solidarity and Belgian actions for the fundamental rights of women and equality between women and men in the world.

To achieve these objectives, they commit to implementing a series of actions:

1. To ensure, on a daily basis, both in their public lives (professional, associative, social) and in their private lives, that they demolish the habits, received ideas, predefined notions and the stereotypes that obstruct the concrete realisation of gender equality;
2. To expose and systematically tackle acts of violence against women;
3. To increase the awareness of all of the male and female actors with whom they are in contact;
4. To establish analysis on the respective situations of women and men in all their fields of action;

5. To integrate concrete actions for the promotion of equality between women and men in their spheres of action, accompanied by quantified objectives for progress;
6. To regularly assess the actions they carry out in order to take equality between women and men forward.

This text is freely inspired by The Charter of Equality – France committed to the equality of women and men, a document produced by the French government in March 2004.

