



# **Study on the Role of Men in Gender Equality: Background and Discussion Papers for Workshop 1: Do Men Care?**

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Workshop 1: Do Men Care?

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# 1 Background paper

## Men, Fathers, Equality and Care

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Change in workforce composition and family structure has an impact on the role of men in society. Furthermore, it questions the definition of what it means to be a man, and above all what it means to be a father. As we shall see, in many countries men dedicate less time to domestic and parenting responsibilities than women do.

The involvement of men is therefore a major component of change. Professional inequality and sharing of parenting or domestic time between women and men are very related and evolve together in a systemic approach.

Since care work skills and abilities have no gender, how do men participate in caretaking?

Christine Castelain French sociologist, wrote (Castelain, 2005): *the movement that goes with women's emancipation is followed by another, which starts off the reactions of men to this emancipation, and it is already followed by another, the reaction of women to this change in men. We thus go into a construction of dialectic movement across history, in which losses and profits for both sexes lead to a new collective dimension, on the background of which each builds his/her individuality.*

To some extent, men's and women's education level, as well as their activity and employment level rates have considerably increased. However, there are still several models of sharing incomes, activities and family responsibilities. The model of the male breadwinner and the female caretaker is still present in Europe. As we shall see, the evidence is mixed and uneven. Even if this model is no longer the standard, several gendered patterns of paid and unpaid work still co-exist.

## 1. The connection of labour, gender, and care

55% of graduates from EU27 are **women**. The employment rate for women is currently 62.5 % (Eurostat, 2009)<sup>1</sup>. However, the rate of working women decreases with having children. According to Eurostat (2011, Table 1), in 2009 the labour market participation of mothers with 3 children is 21.7 p.p. lower than that of women without children, while the rate for fathers with 3 children is 5.1 p.p. higher than that for men without children.

**Table 1: Employment rates of women and men aged 25 to 54 by number of children, 2009**

	Men without children	Men				Women without children	Women			
		1	2	3+	≠*		0	1	2	3+
<b>EU-27</b>	80.3	87.4	90.6	85.4	5.1	75.8	71.3	69.2	54.1	-21.7
<b>Belgium</b>	80.4	89.1	93.1	87.1	6.7	74.6	74.8	77.2	61.7	-12.9
<b>Bulgaria</b>	79.7	86.4	86.9	67.7	-12	77.7	76.7	74.1	44.3	-33.4
<b>Czech republic</b>	86.6	92.8	96.1	89.5	2.9	84.4	70.2	68.9	52.6	-31.8
<b>Denmark</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Germany</b>	82.7	90.6	92.8	87	4.3	81.8	76.5	72.6	53.6	-28.2
<b>Estonia</b>	71.5	80.7	83.2	84.9	13.4	81.6	77.6	70	56.5	-25.1
<b>Ireland</b>	73.6	77.7	82.4	80.4	6.8	77.7	67.2	61.5	49.6	-28.1
<b>Greece</b>	84.4	90.8	94.4	93	8.6	64.8	61.3	59.9	54.5	-10.3
<b>Spain</b>	72.5	80.2	84.7	75.5	3	68.4	63.2	60.3	49.0	-19.4
<b>France</b>	82.3	90.3	92.9	89.2	6.9	78.7	78.0	78.0	58.9	19.8
<b>Italy</b>	79.8	88	91.1	87.7	10.9	63.9	59.0	54.1	41.3	-22.6
<b>Cyprus</b>	82.7	92.7	94.3	92.8	10.1	78.0	75.5	77.4	67.7	-10.3
<b>Latvia</b>	68.8	77.5	82.7	78.1	9.3	75.5	76.8	75.3	61.4	-14.1
<b>Lithuania</b>	65.2	81.5	83.0	76.9	11.7	78.2	81.3	78.8	66.7	-11.5
<b>Luxembourg</b>	87.9	91.2	95	93.1	5.2	78.9	72	69.4	53.1	-25.8
<b>Hungary</b>	75.2	82.5	85.1	73.9	-1.3	75.2	65.6	65.7	39.1	-36.1
<b>Malta</b>	83.9	91.7	95.6	88.5	4.6	56.6	45.7	37.4	29.6	-27
<b>Netherlands</b>	88.2	93.4	95.6	93.3	5.1	83.1	78.4	81.1	71.3	-11.8
<b>Austria</b>	85.5	92	93.2	90.1	4.6	82.3	81.3	77.3	60.1	-22.2
<b>Poland</b>	76.3	86.6	90.2	87.8	11.5	73.6	73.1	70.8	62.6	-11
<b>Portugal</b>	78.4	88.8	90.4	86.2	7.8	74.5	76.3	75.2	66.3	-8.2
<b>Romania</b>	77.4	82.1	84.6	75.6	-1.8	66.7	70.4	66.8	51.6	-15.1
<b>Slovenia</b>	80.5	90	93.7	89.5	9.0	78.5	84.8	89.1	79.3	0.8
<b>Slovakia</b>	78.5	88.8	90.3	83.8	5.3	77.3	70.2	69.6	53.7	-23.6
<b>Finland</b>	79	88.8	92.1	88.7	9.7	83.2	78.6	83.3	68.2	-15
<b>Sweden</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>United Kingdom</b>	82.5	89.3	91.7	82.8	0.3	82.2	75.0	72.0	48.8	-33.4

Source: Eurostat (2011), EU27 excluding Denmark and Sweden (data not available)

\*difference between employment rates of men and women without children and with 3 children

The impact of parenthood on the female employment rate is limited in Greece, Cyprus, Netherlands, Poland and Portugal but is high in Bulgaria, Czech Re-

1 20-64 age group, 2009. Eurostat

public, Hungary, Germany and Ireland. Slovenia had the highest employment rate for mothers in the EU in 2009, while the average rate for women with three children or more in the EU was only 54.7%, the rate in Slovenia was as much as 79.3%.

For men's employment, the consequence of having 3 children is positive, ranging from 0.3 p.p. in the United Kingdom to 13.4 in Estonia. Bulgaria Romania and Hungary are the three countries where the male employment rates decreased with having 3 children.

According to Eurostat (2011), the pattern observed on an EU level, that the employment rate for women decreases as the number of children increases is confirmed in a majority of Member States. However, the pattern is slightly different in Cyprus, Hungary, the Netherlands and Finland, where the rate decreases for the first child but then increases for the second. For men, the EU pattern is confirmed in nearly all Member States.

There is a critical relation between labour market segregation and the unequal division of household/family work. Women's difficulties at work result from interactions between individuals, organizations and society. Female representation in the labor force reflects the image that the society displays. Generally speaking, cultural restrictions that weigh heavy on women in society are expressed inevitably somewhere at work. The corporation's behaviour follows closely social relations (Coutrot, 1996). Thus, the global policy and social regime rest, in some way, on the dominating productive system in corporations.

Indeed, to consider the public and private domains' interaction, undeniably links will be found: the way every society organizes gender roles and relationships has deep repercussions on the whole society's organization. These gender relations structures have social and economic involvement as well as involvement in the personal lives of individuals. By the « mirror effect » (Bachelot, Fraisse, 1999) women's and men's situation at work are closely linked to the social and cultural reality of the society in which they move. The work-family conflict is associated, for example, with the existing mentalities regarding the sharing of family and household responsibilities between men and women. These mentalities are more or less a marked reflection of family society structure, although also influenced by political and cultural factors.

The situation of women and men, the attitudes facing their work and family are related and closely dependent on the socio-cultural and institutional context in which they move.

According to Eurostat, Labor of Force Survey (LFS, 2009), at national level, significant differences exist throughout the EU. Malta, Italy and Greece have the lowest rates of working women while Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia have the lowest rates of men. However, the increasing rate of women's employment is offset by the fact that so many work part-time. In 2009, 31.4 % of European women and 8.1 % of men worked part-time. Significantly, the coun-

tries where nearly 75 % of women are working (Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden) have among the highest part-time rates (EC, 2009).

Netherlands Germany and Austria have the highest rates of part-time working women (75.8%- 45,3% and 42.9% respectively- against 24.9% 9.7% and 8.7% respectively for men).

Slovakia Bulgaria and Hungary have the lowest rates of part-time working women 2.7% 4.7% 7.5% respectively against 2% 2.7% 8.7% respectively for men. France is in the middle 29.8% of part-time working women and 6% of men (EC, 2009).

Working part-time can either be a choice or a constraint. According to Eurostat (2009)<sup>2</sup>, the main reason evoked by women for working part-time within the EU-27 is because they have difficulties balancing work and responsibilities in private life. In addition, the prevalence of part-time work among women is closely linked to the unequal distribution of the caring responsibilities between men and women. The motivation 'looking after children' was mentioned by 8.0% of men and 42.1% of women (Eurostat, 2009). Among men, the fact that they could not find fulltime employment was a major reason for taking up part-time employment.

Besides, a major reason for women's low employment rates or part-time work choice are related to having children and the challenge of harmonizing work and family life.

Furthermore, for the same work or work of equal value, women across the EU earn 17.5 %<sup>3</sup> less on average than men and there has been no reduction of the gender pay gap in the last few years. It varies from 31 % in Estonia to below 5 % in Italy.

There are six sectors that accounted for more than 50 % of women's employment in all EU Member States in 2005. Women made up over 73 % of the workforce in health and social work in all countries, apart from Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Malta, and for more than 70 % in education in most countries. (LFS, 2009)

We can draw the conclusion that occupational segregation, which has been at the heart of debates about gender inequality, has been considered to be responsible for the gap between men's and women's wages and for constraints on careers and even for the prevailing model of couples.<sup>4</sup>

According to Aliaga (2005), in Europe, among couples aged 20-49 with at least one partner working, the dominant model is the couple where both partners work, full time or part-time (66%), the most common models are:

- The model combines two full-time jobs (45% in average) especially effective in Slovenia, Slovakia, Portugal, Finland and France (more than 50%).

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<sup>2</sup> LFS, Main reasons behind part-time employment in the EU-27, 2006

<sup>3</sup> The gender pay gap is defined as the relative difference in the average gross hourly earnings of women and men within the economy as a whole.(ec-europa.edu)

<sup>4</sup> Due to research and political priorities, this paper focuses on different-sex couples and does not discuss the distribution of paid and unpaid work within same-sex couples.

- The model where only the man works (29%) developed in Malta, Italy, Greece, Spain.
- The model where the man works full time and the woman works part-time (19%) Netherlands, United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg.

The survey showed that there are very few examples of couples where both partners are working part-time or where the woman is full-time and man working part-time (2%).

Basically, the male breadwinner model has to disappear, however, according to Meda (2008), the dual earner/dual caretaker model is the only one that promotes gender equity and avoids the trap of an employment-centred model. The implementation of this model needs new programs and policies such as a deep reform in family policies and in working time (Meda, 2008).

## **2. Stereotypes and cultural barriers**

Everything indicates that women do less paid labour than men and that the presence of children is a very important determinant of this lower working rate. The underlying causes, which are numerous and complex, reflect inequalities linked to horizontal and vertical segregation of the labor market. As argued before, a major reason for women's low employment rates is related to having children and to the difficulty they face in conciliating work and family life, additionally to the unequal distribution of family and domestic responsibilities. In most countries, women continue to be responsible for most of the housework and caretaking and men and women still strongly believe that mothers are meant to take care of young children.

If parental time is defined as the time parents spend looking after their children, how do men really spend their time?

According to Aliaga (2006), women aged 20 to 74 spend much more time than men on domestic work, ranging from less than 50% more in Sweden to over 200% more in Italy and Spain (Table 3).

Around five domestic work hours per day is spent in Estonia or Slovenia for example. Less than four hours per day is spent on domestic work by women in Sweden, Norway and Finland. Men's share is the biggest in Sweden, where women's and men's shares of domestic work are more equal.

**Table 2: Breakdown of domestic activities for women and men aged 20 to 74 (in%)**

Women	BE	DE	EE	ES	FR	IT	LV	LT	HU	PL	SI	FI	SE	UK	NO
Food preparation	22	20	26	27	25	25	28	29	29	32	29	23	23	22	22
Dish washing	8	8	9	10	7	11	9	8	10	10	9	6	10	7	9
Cleaning and other upkeep	21	21	18	21	26	28	18	22	16	17	19	21	14	20	16
Laundry, ironing and handicrafts	14	12	12	11	11	11	9	9	11	9	11	12	10	11	12
Gardening	2	4	5	1	3	2	9	6	6	3	8	3	4	3	4
Construction and repairs	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Shopping and services	13	15	10	12	14	11	9	8	8	10	7	14	13	15	12
Childcare	13	10	10	10	10	9	9	9	12	14	10	12	13	13	15
Other domestic work	5	9	9	8	3	3	9	8	7	4	6	7	11	7	8
Domestic work total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Hours and minutes per day	4:3 2	4:1 1	5:0 2	4:5 5	4:3 0	5:2 0	3:5 6	4:2 9	4:5 8	4:4 5	4:5 8	3:5 6	3:4 2	4:1 5	3:4 7

Men	BE	DE	EE	ES	FR	IT	LV	LT	HU	PL	SI	FI	SE	UK	NO
Food preparation	14	12	13	20	13	12	14	16	9	18	11	15	17	19	17
Dish washing	6	6	4	4	4	5	4	3	3	4	2	3	7	7	6
Cleaning and other upkeep	13	18	21	13	16	15	25	30	18	20	20	26	13	14	14
Laundry, ironing and handicrafts	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	1
Gardening	11	7	7	9	13	16	15	9	20	9	20	4	7	9	7
Construction and repairs	15	13	20	6	23	6	15	13	11	13	15	15	13	12	17
Shopping and services	17	20	12	20	19	23	10	10	10	15	10	20	15	17	15
Childcare	12	7	7	13	6	12	4	5	9	11	7	8	11	9	12
Other domestic work	10	15	14	14	5	11	12	12	19	9	14	8	14	10	11
Domestic work total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Hours and minutes per day	2:3 8	2:2 1	2:4 8	1:3 7	2:2 2	1:3 5	1:5 0	2:0 9	2:4 0	2:2 2	2:4 0	2:1 6	2:2 9	2:1 8	2:2 2

Source: National Time Use Surveys (Aliaga, 2006)

A difference between women and men is also observed in the proportions of persons who do any domestic work on an average day.

A recent OECD<sup>5</sup> study shows that an individual spends an average of 24 hours of their week in unpaid work (defined as all domestic chores: cooking, cleaning, crafts, children's education). 2:30 is the daily average difference between the unpaid work of

<sup>5</sup> OECD (2011), Society at a Glance 2011 - OECD Social Indicators.

men and women. Even in Denmark where men spend more than three hours in unpaid work, a significant time gap of about 1 hour persists. Yet they are behind the Norwegian, who spend close to four hours in unpaid work, which is the lowest among women in the OECD countries.

According to the study, women spend twice as much time as men with children. Within childcare, women cover the least thankless task: 41% of the time that fathers spend with their children is related to recreational and educational activities versus only 27% for women. In contrast, 60% of women's time is dedicated to domestic and care work as well as to the supervision of children.

**Table 3: Women and Men's time spent on unpaid work**

	Difference	Female unpaid work	Male unpaid work
Denmark	57	243	186
Sweden	72	249	177
Norway	73	225	152
Finland	91	245	154
Belgium	94	245	151
Canada	102	248	146
United States	104	258	154
Germany	105	269	164
Netherlands	110	273	163
Estonia	119	288	169
Slovenia	120	286	166
France	122	258	136
United Kingdom	123	273	150
Austria	134	269	135
New Zealand	136	294	158
Poland	139	296	157
Australia	139	311	172
Hungary	141	268	127
China	143	234	91
OECD	148	279	131
South Africa	165	257	92
Ireland	167	296	129
Korea	182	227	45
Spain	187	294	107
Japan	210	269	59
Italy	223	326	103
Portugal	232	328	96
Turkey	260	377	116
Mexico	261	373	113
India	300	352	52

Source: Miranda (2011): Minutes of unpaid work per day for the population aged 15-64 over the period 1998-2009, OECD's Secretariat estimates based on national time-use surveys

It is not the case that the men who do more housework are unhappy with the situation. For example in France, the men least satisfied with the division of tasks – especially those related to children – are those who hardly take any.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand the highest satisfaction levels are expressed by men who share the most between couple (Bauer, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> French Survey GGS-ERFI

Smith (2004) analyzed the time spent looking after children by fathers across the European Union, between the years 1994-2001. She found that paternal time and gender inequalities in parental time vary substantially by country. The trend is for fathers to spend increasing amounts of paternal time. Level of education, having a working spouse, the number of children or the working time, are positively correlated to paternal time.

The results of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) [GESIS, 2004, Crompton, 2006], devoted to family roles, indicate that the Western world is certainly open to the idea that women can now work and contribute to the household income, but they still don't quite accept the consequences of this idea. Namely, that mothers with children will be less present at home which means fathers should share caretaking responsibilities.

The role of stereotypes and attitudes towards women and men are very strong barriers against gender equality. Moreover, there is a difference between countries according to respondents who agree or strongly agree with the idea that "when children are in preschool, a child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works". It means that women should stay at home or work part time, and the highest rates are from Portugal and Bulgaria. A relationship may exist between this opinion and the idea that "Children often suffer because fathers concentrate too much on work (Tables 3- 4 -5).

**Table 3: “A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.”**  
**Figures indicate percentage of the sum of agreement or strong agreement.**

German West	German East	Austria	Hungary	Ireland	Netherlands	Sweden	Norway
55.8	32.7	64.6	66.1	35.5	39.8	23.7	24.9
Czech Republic	Slovenia	Poland	Spain	Latvia	Slovakian Republic	France	Cyprus
48.1	46.3	56.8	52.2	62.1	51	47.1	22.7
Portugal	Denmark	Switzerland	Flanders	Finland	North Ireland	Bulgaria	Great Britain
77.9	32.4	58.9	40.8	36.6	37.4	67	38.4

**Table 4: “All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a Full-time job”**

German West	German East	Austria	Hungary	Ireland	Netherlands	Sweden	Norway
43.7	47.8	62.6	53.9	38.3	43.5	25.6	28.5
Czech Republic	Slovenia	Poland	Spain	Latvia	Slovakian Republic	France	Cyprus
44.9	53.5	42.2	55.2	55.3	53.4	44.5	21.9
Portugal	Denmark	Switzerland	Flanders	Finland	North Ireland	Bulgaria	Great Britain
64.1	29.1	60.9	43.6	20.9	40.2	51.2	36.9

**Table 5: “A man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family”**

German West	German East	Austria	Hungary	Ireland	Netherlands	Sweden	Norway
21.6	23.3	29.5	39.2	18.5	12.4	7.6	9.4
Czech Republic	Slovenia	Poland	Spain	Latvia	Slovakian Republic	France	Cyprus
47.1	29.4	45.7	24.7	48.3	49.2	17.9	27.1
Portugal	Denmark	Switzerland	Flanders	Finland	North Ireland	Bulgaria	Great Britain
30.6	13.5	23	24.6	11.7	27.1	44.4	19.8

Data compilation from GESIS (2004), ISSP 2002 : Family and Changing Gender Roles III.

According to Smith’s research (2004), the biggest proportion of substantial childcare that fathers perform is around a third (Denmark and Finland) and the lowest proportion is a mere 10% (Greece and Portugal).

In her study, the two Scandinavian cases Denmark and Finland are clearly leaders in terms of the number of fathers spending considerable paternal time and sharing substantial parental time with mothers. She considers that there is a North-South pattern with the exception of Spain: the further South, the less paternal time is spent and the

greater the gender gap in parental time. A similar north-south dimension has been described in other studies too (Puchert et al., 2005).

Paternal time has, according to Smith (2004), perhaps increased in relation to the improvement of measures enabling fathers to spend more time with their children. But for certain, the number of hours worked are negatively associated with paternal time.

With reference to OECD (2008), while “parental choice” is the avowed aim of most countries, which means that parents themselves have to decide whether one or both parents should be in paid work and how to organize care arrangements, in reality, government policies affect the decisions that parents make.

The WP5 group of researchers (Rossier, 2010) analyzed a series of comparable in-depth interviews conducted with mostly middle-class respondents in their late 20s and early 30s living in cities of seven European countries: Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Germany (East and West), Switzerland, France, Italy. Their studies showed that whatever the group of countries examined, and the starting point of their investigation, all the analytical teams put forth the following three interrelated dimensions as the key individual level variables explaining fertility decision making in contemporary Europe:

- women’s participation in the labour market: representations and practices
- men’s implication in unpaid family work: representations and practices
- use of non maternal child care options: representations and practices

Their results showed that it is not women’s paid employment alone, or the lack of childcare options alone, but women’s paid work together with a lack of child care together with a lack of male family work, which explains below-replacement fertility.

According to Bernardi et al. (2008, in Rossier 2010), sometimes representations do not match practices and men’s ideal implication in family work differs from the actual share of family work they assume. Regarding the research conducted, there exists a high frequency of dissonances between men’s wished and actual implication in family work that remains to be explained. Rossier (2010) raised the concept of the “stalled gender revolution”: on the one hand, women have gained more power in the public sphere, including employment and education, on the other hand, not yet in the private or family sphere. *“Men wishing to do more at home (if only they had time) (a change in values when it comes to the divisions of tasks at home) make it more acceptable for women to have gained power in one sphere of social life, but to remain much more powerless in the other sphere of life” (Rossier, 2010)*

A similar “gap” between men’s attitudes and practices has appeared in many studies, and the term “the in principle man” was coined already in the early 1980s in Sweden (Jalmert, L 1984; cf. Holter, Ø 2003b).

In all European countries, the change in women’s roles has forced men to reassess their contribution, this impact and men’s reactions have differed. Under pressure from the women’s movement, the gender dynamics within the couple have necessarily been transformed, however, in some contexts, men have experienced the change as if they were under the effect of a backlash. As mentioned before, men’s desires in theory are to be more involved in parenting and domestic tasks, but in reality they act differently.

According to a survey conducted by Equilibre (2007) with a sample of 400 French fathers, managers and senior managers, with 1 to 4 children, there is a generational break between managers aged 30 or 40 years and those over 50 years. And in reference to the study, the thirties and forties are more likely to be “egalitarian and tightropes”.<sup>7</sup>

In short, the managers with children who were interviewed named to three kinds of barriers:

- Prejudices and stereotypes that lock men into an obsolete identity,
- Organizational commitment culture, “high tech” version, that overrides the cult of “presenteeisme”
- Parental leave, part-time work and professional “breath” time are still considered taboo.

Although many men remain in a traditional or semitransitional position, more egalitarian trends are more visible than before. Egalitarian changes among men have been studied e.g. in the Nordic region (Holter, 2003a), and in other contexts where these trends or potentials have become more manifest or appeared most clearly.

### **3. Institutional barriers**

According to OECD (2008), and looking across OECD countries, birth rates, work, and parenthood seem to be particularly difficult to grasp and combine in many southern and central European countries. Generally, on today’s sociogeographical map, as we move towards the south and east in Europe, gender equality regarding domestic caregiving becomes more imbalanced, more traditional family roles appear, although patterns are mixed in each region and country. Clearly access to childcare arrangements is crucial for parents, especially mothers, with very young children to allow them to enter the labour market and get paid for their work. On average across the OECD, three quarters of 3 to 5 year olds participate in kindergarten, childcare or other early education, but only one quarter of the 0 to 2 year olds is enrolled in some form of formal childcare. Given their high support, it is no surprise that the enrolment rates are high in Finland, Norway, and Sweden with around or more than 40%.

The biggest source of support for families with children has been public spending on primary and secondary education, which in the majority of OECD countries ranges from 3 to 4 % of GDP.

Fagnani et al. (2009) have compared the policy of support for families taken as a database several cases from 12 European countries.

The authors classified the countries according to their average level of generosity towards families. In their report, Austria appears to be a more generous country, then

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<sup>7</sup> Three categories of fathers:

Male breadwinner father: 15% of the population. They feel that their life is balanced, even if it’s in favor of work. They justify their sacrifice. But they are the most unsatisfied with work-family conciliation and think that this issue is a personal one and the company has nothing to do to fix it.

Tightropes: 52% of the population. Fathers who try to balance work and family, find arrangements daily. More equal in sharing, often have children under 3 years old. They experience paternity and work-family conflict.

The egalitarian, 33% : Fathers who are very sensitive with work family balance and have already made choices. They have a very clear vision of their transformed life choices. And they act as they say.

come the United Kingdom, followed by a group of five countries France, Ireland, Belgium, Germany and Denmark. The average benefit is lower in Sweden, Finland, Norway, Iceland and the Netherlands. These are the countries that give the least financial support to families. Note that some of this may be due to more welfare generally – special family support is not so much needed.

As for the so-called vertical distribution, the Nordic countries (except Iceland), the United Kingdom and Ireland, focus more on low-income families than others. In contrast, Austria, Germany, France and Belgium support for high-income families is higher. This method, however, did not take into account other major support for family such as parental leave, facilities and other caretaking arrangements. For instance, the childcare system is more developed in the Nordic countries due in part to the development of community services. This seems to be caused both by internal regional trends like “high standards” regarding gender equality, and to successful uptake of advanced aspects of EU policies. For example Norway is often described as “best boy in class” even if not a EU member.

In addition, according to OECD (2008), in 2003, the same amount was spent on family benefits including child allowances, paid parental leave, fiscal support and family services including child- and out-of-school hours (OSH) care. Among the countries that took advantage of such help and services are: Luxembourg, Denmark, France, Hungary, Sweden, Australia, the UK, Belgium, Iceland, Austria, Finland and Germany. However, spending large amount of money is no guarantee for good work and a better family life. Effectively, high resources are allocated to childcare support in Nordic countries. But no country can opt for the same system of Nordic public spending and tax levels. Therefore, in many countries, **there are gaps in the support of a child’s life**, for instance, between the end of parental leave and the start of childcare support, and/or family support is concentrated on single-parents categories and/or low-income families (OECD, 2008).

**Many women with low-paid partners receive weak or no financial incentives from their work.** To support gender equality, strong financial incentives such as low effective tax rates on paid work should be given equally to both parents in order to motivate them to work (OECD, 2008).

**Both parental and paternity leave** are a major difference between the countries; they have deepened the gap of gender equality. The paternity leave differs from 0 day in Italy for example to 3 months in Iceland.

According to OCED (2008) and other researchers (Méda, 2007), the optimal period of parental leave seems to be around four to six months, and longer leave periods of mothers can permanently damage their employment and earnings profile. This is disputed in the Nordic region evidence however, some studies finding that maternity is no longer a clear minus. Iceland set the example of a country that succeeded to a great extent in giving fathers the opportunity to spend more time with their children<sup>8</sup>. Denmark is a country of the highest paternity leave rate; about 89 %, and 24 % of fathers, take the parental leave<sup>9</sup> (Grezy, 2011). However, unlike Iceland, Norway and

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8 Each parent has the right to a non-transferable three-month paid leave period, with another three-month period of paid leave to be shared among partners):

932 weeks up to the 42th weeks following the child’s birth. Each parent can take those 32 weeks

but the total family leave should not exceed 32 weeks. There is a 100% of wage compensation with a ceiling. The part-time work is possible during the leave extended up to 64 weeks.

Sweden, Denmark does not have an extended paternal leave period (father quota). There is some south-east variation in the Nordic region too – the answer to „do fathers care“, in the sense of using parental leave time including an eventual father-only period, is more towards „yes“ in Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and more „mixed“ in Denmark and Finland (Holter, 2007b).

Concerning the impact of the paternity leave on fathers' involvement in parenthood, Salmi et al. (2009, in Gresy, 2011) conducted a study which revealed that mothers are present during the exercise of the "daddy month". These results raised the question whether it is necessary to provide time off to the father during which he could be alone with the child. Nordic studies have indicated that the father being the main caregiver on his own, rather than with the mother "at his shoulder", may make a difference. Flexible fathers need regulated norms not least to keep the women out of the conventional position of "overseer" ((Brandth & Kvande, 2003).

The **lack of formal childcare support and out-of-school-hours (OSH)** care can be a major barrier to gender equality and does not help women to spend more time on paid work. In Nordic countries, the fees of quality childcare centres are generally so expensive (OECD, 2008). The cost of childcare in the United Kingdom for example is so high that in the short-term, the work is not a good compensation for the second income earners of the family. It is also the same situation of single-parent families in France.

**Family-friendly workplace supports for a balanced work and a family life** could be a great incentive to reduce the gap between gender equality. This includes part-time work, flexible working hours, days off to care for sick children, employer-provided parental leave and/or childcare support, teleworking or school-term working. In France, since 2006 State strongly encourages companies to create companies' crèches (day nurseries) through financing 75% of the overall costs. In other respect, in Sweden, for example, working parents have the right to reduce working hours until their youngest child enrolls primary school.

Traditionally in working life, gender equality has been seen as a burden, a cost that one can only afford if times are good and perhaps in the future. Recent Nordic gender equality studies instead point to an overlooked investment factor. Gender equality seems to play a role regarding company profit (Nutek, 1999), to contribute to company innovation (Damvad, 2007), and to be a key element of effective welfare systems (Kautto, et al 2001).

If we compare Germany and France (Fagnani et al., 2009) in terms of public support to families / children in France, we come up with the following results. In France, the public support to children and /or families make up 2.5% of GDP vs. 3.2% in Germany bearing in mind that 0.77% of it, is devoted to childcare services compared to 1.6% in France.

**The structure of childcare institutions, their systems and their place of implementations are partially influencing and shaping women employment compared to men (Fagnani et al., 2009).** In France<sup>10</sup> the system of childcare under 3 is

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10 In France three ways of childcare exist when both parents work:

\*Cribs-crèches (children from 2 months to 2.5 years), the cheapest childcare because it is indexed on the parents' incomes.

\* Childminders (assistante maternelle), very accessible and flexible, the state supports the "employment charges", a childminder can keep up to 3 children at her house.

\*Home custody by a nanny, flexible, but more expensive, there are tax reduction.  
At 3 years old or sometimes 2.5, children start public and free school.

developed, pre-school for children are available from 8:30 am to 4:30 p.m, and for 4 days a week. Moreover, there are accessible extra care services at the beginning and at the end of the day provided by local authorities (municipalities).

In contrast, in Germany, the childcare system has less to do with the educational system, the enrollment criteria are different from France<sup>11</sup>. This difference explains, according to Fagnani et al. (2009) the rates<sup>12</sup> differences between the French and German working women. Indeed, in comparison with Germany, twice more French children under 3 years are covered by formal arrangements, and regardless of the age, more children are taken in charge in France for long hours per week (about 30h/week).

The results of Fagnani et al.' study are difficult to summarize because of the divergence in families support mechanisms. As far the vertical distribution is concerned, the Nordic countries (except Iceland), the UK and Ireland are clearly targeting low-income families. Conversely, a strong horizontal redistribution exists in France, Belgium, and Austria and to a lesser extent in Germany, which is particularly in favor of large families.

Do these differences in distribution and allocation of family support have an impact on gender equality? There is a good chance that the direct or indirect influences are obvious and this is why the Nordic countries, the most egalitarian in terms of gender, are also egalitarian in terms of social classes.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The sociology of work began in a male framework. Women were not really missing, but rather invisible.

In the seventies, the sociology of work started to include women. However, for a long time domestic work had no sociological existence. The words, rhetoric and semantic categories that are used are thus quite significant. Women who devote themselves to domestic tasks are called "inactive" while an unemployed person is designated as "active"<sup>13</sup> (Margaret Maruani, 2002).

Delphy (1970) highlights domestic work as the material basis of the "patriarchal exploitation." Indeed, the position occupied by women and men in the workplace, which is different, is related to the sexual division of labor in the family sphere.

What society do we wish to have tomorrow? What roles for women and men?

According to (Meda & Périvier, 2007), a just and egalitarian future, in which roles are balanced between parents, and between parents and institutions, must generalize the "dual earner/dual caretaker" model. This configuration must meet four principles:

1. Guarantee women's employment, under the same conditions as men, so they can have access to the same positions, the same sectors and the same pay. More-

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11 According to OECD Education Database (2005), three countries do not reach 100% of enrollment of children aged 6 years: Netherlands (99%) Denmark (99%) and Germany (94%). In Germany, the childcare systems and the enrollment criteria are different from France. The difference comes from the schooling system in France which is available from 3 years old for all children, and ensure 100% enrollment for children aged 6 years. That is a major reason why France has the highest rates of working women.

12 About 20 points difference in the employment of women, with children under 3 years.

13 Official statistical definition in France: "activity" includes people who have jobs and those who seek a job.

over, guarantee that having children would be a barrier neither to women's employment nor to men's.

2. Take into consideration children's well-being. It has long served as a war machine against women's employment. Taking into account children's well-being leads to the conditioning of parental employment development by the quality of the child care system in which they can be truly confident.
3. It is important to take into consideration the aspirations of parents who wish to spend more time with their children, especially when they are young. And it's important to give them the opportunity to do so during a length of time that the community judges reasonable to fund.
4. The ability of such a model to equalize the living conditions of young children.

Above all, the idea is not to import recipes, but to evolve into an institutional configuration that meets the four principles and that fits the society's history, its strengths, by learning from foreign experiences (Meda & Périvier, 2007).

Theodore Zeldin wrote: "Every time that within a couple, one treats the partner as an equal and listens carefully to what he or she says, it is changing the world, even though in an infinitely small way. He or she can personally enjoy the immediate results. Equality in respect has replaced economic equality as an immediate goal." (Le Monde des livres, 24 janvier 2003 in *Hommes, femmes, la construction de la différence*, Héritier, 2005).

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### **Annexes:**

Data compilation from GESIS (2004), *ISSP 2002 : Family and Changing Gender Roles III*.

**Men ought to do a larger share of household work than they do now.  
(Percentage of individuals who agree and strongly agree)**

<b>German West</b>	<b>German East</b>	<b>Austria</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Norway</b>
<b>26.3</b>	61.4	55.6	54.7	70.4	50.1	66.9	66.7
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Slovenia	Poland	Spain	Latvia	Slovakian Republic	France	Cyprus
<b>64.3</b>	59.3	68	88.4	52.5	54.6	76.5	33.8
<b>Portugal</b>	Denmark	Switzerland	Flanders	Finland	North Ireland	Bulgaria	Great Britain
<b>86.2</b>	65.1	69.2	59.6	73.3	65.9	66.8	63.1

**Men ought to do a larger share of childcare than they do now.**

<b>German West</b>	<b>German East</b>	<b>Austria</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Norway</b>
<b>66.1</b>	71.3	63.3	58.7		52.4	66.6	68.9
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Slovenia	Poland	Spain	Latvia	Slovakian Republic	France	Cyprus
<b>70.8</b>	74.1	76.4	90.8	64.6	60.9	78.4	51.1
<b>Portugal</b>	Denmark	Switzerland	Flanders	Finland	North Ireland	Bulgaria	Great Britain
<b>86.6</b>	63.6	72.8	59.9	84.3	75.1	81.7	64.5

## 2 Discussion Paper

### Men and gender equality: potentials, changes and perspectives

*Author: Øystein Gullvåg Holter, University of Oslo*

What is the role of men in developing gender equality? How can this role be strengthened? This text is focused on care and caregiving, the topic of the first project workshop<sup>14</sup>. It argues that men can become more engaged in developing gender equality, and that three steps are especially important in this regard. The first is to recognize potentials for change and increased gender equality. The second is to create a change model based on these potentials. The third is a new and improved view of gender equality that avoids making it into a “women only” issue and instead recognizes the contributions of both genders. These three topics will be further discussed in the workshop keynote.

Why do we need a change model? It is needed in order to understand ways forward and how a situation with small involvement from men can be changed into a situation with greater involvement. Better change models and perspectives are also needed in order to understand the current mixed and varied EU situation.

#### a) Between love and economy – potentials for men and equality

One starting point is that most men want to be part of a process they can be proud of. For example, most men want love in relationships and families, and they want their children to think well of them. In some parts of Europe, men’s increasing participation in household tasks has become more visible, especially in the last decade. Although some men are negative or ambivalent towards women’s professionalization, most men support it.

These are examples of *potentials for a wider change* for gender equality. Many men support gender equality values, even if their practice may be lagging behind their opinions. Making these latent potentials into manifest realities depends on an “alignment” of forces. Not just gender equality by itself. Gender equality processes usually work on many levels, and when solutions and ideas from these levels come together, changes become more manifest and widespread.

For example, why do most men in Norway favor gender equal sharing of caring, housework and the provider role between men and women in the family, when asked about their opinions? Although gender equality norms and culture play a role for this type of result, these are not just “ideological” or rhetorical answers. New studies show that experience plays a large role. *Men experience less trouble if the family is gender-*

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<sup>14</sup> I would like to thank my project colleagues, especially Sophia Belghiti and Marc Gärtner, for inputs to this paper.

*equally managed*. In Norway, a detail survey of gender equality shows that gender equality is seen as important for family life, and that both men and women connect it to less conflict, less chance of violence, and less chance of breakup or divorce. Further, there are clear positive health and quality of life effects of gender equality, especially among women, but also in some areas among men, like caring for children (Holter, Svare og Egeland 2009)..

In other words, gender equality in families has become more of an even playing field, even if the match is by no means won.

Why has this happened in Norway, more than in central and southern Europe? Why is there a socio-geographical pattern in Europe in terms of how much men are involved in care? This is not just because of “family ideology”, “culture” or similar, but also due to the variation in the actual situation faced by families, the types of family and work contracts, the possibilities for a good life. In Norway and the Nordic region, gender equal developments are partly due to male dominance and patriarchy being weaker historically, and to democratic political developments where gender equality policies managed to “*mingle*” quite effectively in many areas, and *align* with other forces. It is probable that gender equality gets more force and manages to become a viable social innovation in less stratified societies compared to more stratified ones.

Besides ideology (gender norms and expectations) and experience (how family and work has developed in the life of each person), the *material situation* plays a large role for the degree of gender equality in a family. If the economy downplays gender-equal, dual career and balanced provider type of work contracts, chances are that family life will do so too. Gender equality becomes a strong norm when it actually functions, not just internally in the family, but in family interaction with the rest of society, including working life and politics, especially work/family regulation, formal and informal. Families are linked to labour markets and caught up in family/work *regulatory regimes*, even if the state holds high the banner of “free family choice”.

Families exist in a material interchange with the official wage work economy as distinct from the unofficial service economy of the household. Does the economy prioritize more or less masculine wage work contracts, “strong” or “weak” masculine provider regimes? Does it favour “encumbered” labor power, employees who have caring obligations, or “unencumbered” labor, employees who instead have others, at home, to do their share of the caring ( (Acker, J 1990; Halrynjo & Lyng 2009) )? Beyond gender equality as declaration and goal, how far are European politicians willing to go, putting action behind the words? Labor market regulations, working hours, taxation, and many other areas have a big impact on family life.

Change models and policies regarding men must therefore be seen in a wide perspective. Recognizing potentials also means to face challenges and dilemmas. What are the optimal relations between care and other work, and between non-wage and wage work, for European development? One issue for the EU is how to favor a broader cross-class gender equality, with different patterns of equal care sharing, and how to make it a principle both to the majority where these tasks are done by household members themselves, and within cultures where the delegation of such tasks (to nannies for example) is accepted.

Should the EU average, ten years from now, be in the middle group, on measures like the *Gender gap index*, due to inertia and slow learning, or should it aim to be in the frontline, due to fast learning of the wider gender equality perspective, change and innovation perspective, and other key perspectives?

One broad answer to the question “*do men care?*” is that it depends on love, or the perceived potential for happiness. If gender equality is perceived as best for family life, it will receive more support. However this must work out in practice also. If in practice, instead, society privileges gender-traditional families, if gender equality is not credited, for example since working life devalues care-obliged or “encumbered” employees, the norm becomes less strong, or becomes a vague ideal only.

How to cope with stress and how to change conditions, in everyday life, and for the European majority, so that living as gender-equal families is *not* so hard to achieve? How to make gender equality work for extending care (not just for careers), and thereby also, the strategical goal of extending the conditions for love? How can men be proud professionals *and* proud carers? A main task is to reduce the actual “uphill climb” that many couples experience, trying gender equality, and limit the “downhill benefits” that still follows from gender inequality and traditional gender role models.

In some situations, men do care, but are not rewarded or protected as carers, and end up as helpers. In other situations, men believe care is for women, and the men themselves “care” only in the larger sense of “provider care”, bringing home the income.

## **b) The men and gender equality change model**

A model of change, showing main patterns and developments among men, can help our understanding of the large variation in European men’s gender (in)equality situation. The following model was first developed in the EU project “Work Changes Gender” (Holter, Riesenfeld & Scambor 2005).

*The change model can be defined by three major stages of the process towards more equal gender relations:*

- Stage 1, “initial”: not much to see, changes are mainly isolated, latent, not manifest.
- Stage 2, “mixed”: gender and other trouble and conflict, also new alliances; “partial diffusion”.
- Stage 3, “advanced”: the innovation of gender equality becomes the main practical pattern.

*Parental leave as example* of how the model can be applied:

In stage 1, leave time is called maternal leave and taken by mothers (fathers = carers for the family income, not much around in childcare).

In stage 2, fathers participate some more, mainly as mothers’ helpers. The leave is typically called parental leave (neutralized. Some introduction of father quotas, bonuses and similar.

In stage 3, fathers are substantially involved, both parents are seen as important carers. Extended use of quotas and other regulations. Families are rewarded for gender-equal sharing of tasks (e.g. the Iceland approach: two thirds quota, one third family choice).

This is obviously a rather simple model. The idea here is not that European developments follow one line of change only (or that the EU should develop a “one-track” strategy), but that a general outline is nevertheless useful as a starting point.

In one interpretation, we still have mainly a “stage 1” type of situation in today’s Europe. In another view, Europe is now into stage 2, or in some regions, even stage 3. The situation varies and different data may give different impressions.

The change model can help understand change – and lack of change, or resistance towards change. Men are kept “down” (non-caring, gender unequal) by several tendencies, associated with their own ambitions, traditional definitions of masculinity, their wives or partners’ wants and aspirations, social tradition, culture, employers, work life organizations, rules and regulations, and so on. This wide combination is typical, but what is most important varies with the context.

In sum, these “retro forces” often make men’s care run into conflict with their work ambitions or their wider sense of social security and social class. Gender equality, then, may seem like a *loser project* in terms of social class, even if culture increasingly supports it and politicians endorse it. Men, in this stage 1 (or 2) scenario, basically pay lip service but stay put. Gradually, however, with more women in government, and other key changes, this old order of operation is being challenged – although it still has much force.

### **c) Towards a new gender equality view**

The three stages may be defined also in terms of the typical gender view in each stage of the change model.

Stage 1 – Here, the feminist gender view is still quite revolutionary, as alternative to the traditional “neutralizing” or unreflected “male as norm” view. Gender is not just a variable, it is a relation involving society as a whole, the oppression of women is a vital matter.

Stage 2 – The gender view is academically established and becomes the leading view on gender matters. Also, there is a gradually growing interest in a gender equality view. The gender equality view is not just about gender (like differences, discrimination, or power imbalances), the central focus is gender equality, which also means that, partly across gender, attitudes change towards pro-equality. This is, for instance, very visible in Germany, where also men’s attitudes changed from a “breadwinner and leader” model (Pross 1978) to equality orientation (Zulehner & Volz 2009).

Stage 3 – The new gender equality view is more developed, with better understanding of gender equality processes and setbacks, including indirect and relatively gender-neutral patterns and forces that influence gender equality, and how the gender hierarchy can be transformed and democratized.

At each stage, the understanding of gender equality widens, from a “women’s issue”, to “men too”, and from “gender matters”, towards society and culture as a whole. The new gender equality view retains some elements of the feminist gender view, including a critical view of gender power and realistic analyses of different gender interests. However it does not *presuppose* that gender equality is mainly a matter of opposed genders. It looks at other social variation too. Empirically, this “other” variation, for example regional variation, plays a large role, but it is not well explained in the gender view. For example, it highlights how patterns like “care devaluation” or downgrading of care-obliged employees can hit men as well as women. The aim is to move out of “*the gender trap*”, that is, the tendency even in feminist and critical views, that gen-

der stereotypes are reproduced, and that gender equality tendentially is reduced to a “women’s matter”.

New views are not all, but they are certainly important for change. Using the newer and more advanced view may make the difference between being stuck in stage 1, in the change model, or moving on to more change in stage 2 or 3. When we get out of the cognitive gender trap, we start looking for wider gender equality change possibilities, recognizing potentials among men as well as women. We recognize that gender equality is a major matter for *all of society*, not just a gender issue.

Today no one knows exactly what this new view is like, and it is important to emphasize that the agenda is open, not closed. The empirical research on the gender equality dimension is only in a beginning phase. Our project, and especially the participants in the workshops and other activities, can make a big difference.

#### **d) Conclusion**

I have described potentials, a change model, and a new view. There are many potentials, but the situation is very uneven and varied. A three-stage change model helps clarify the situation and serves as a starting point for a new approach. The new view retains feminist and realist analyses of men, yet it widens the perspective, so that gender equality rather than gender as such is the central variable. The main European variation concerns gender equal and gender unequal patterns and groups, rather than men or women as such. This gender equality variation has not yet been fully studied, but it is clear that it often cuts across gender divisions.

I mentioned a “materialist” or realist component of the new view, since these factors clearly impact on men’s change. Yet discourse and culture are very important also. How we name things, and how EU policies treat “men” and “women”. In the new view, gender equal and gender unequal tendencies are central, for example, in caring and family settings. Some families try to apply what Fraser (1997) calls the universal care model. Others practice more traditional models. As society becomes more gender-equal, differences become visible between gender equal and unequal practices on the one hand, and between women and men on the other hand. This is often first seen on the level of opinions, men and women appear more alike regarding gender equality, but it emerges in practice studies too.

Finally, let us look at an example of this new gender equality evidence. According to the detail survey mentioned above (Holter, Svare and Egeland 2009), gender equality amongst parents plays a major role for reducing the chance of *violence against children*. The material showed that one of four adults that had grown up in father-dominated homes had experienced violence or physical punishment as a child – compared to one of ten of those who had grown up in gender-equal homes. Parental gender equality reduced the chance by almost two thirds, and this effect remained strong and clear regardless of the respondent’s age, the parents’ education level and eventual divorce, violence in the childhood environment, and other control variables.

The results showed that 10 percent had experienced violence in gender-equal homes, 17 percent in mother dominated homes, and 27 percent in father-dominated homes. The proportions among the men and the women were very similar. We also asked who was the main person doing the violence or punishment. The results showed that generally, fathers were more often violent than mothers, but this varied strongly with the gender equality context. The fathers were the main agents in father-

dominated homes, and also somewhat more often in gender-equal homes, but not in women-dominated homes; there, the woman was the main adult using violence or punishment against the child. Again, men and women told the same story.

Similarly, we found a strong connection between gender equality and lower chance of *conflict and violence among the adults*. Not just women, but men also, associated low gender equality in the current relationship with greater chance of having considered break-up or divorce. On the other hand, among those practicing a more balanced care model, we found better relationship satisfaction and quality of life, most clearly among women, but more than in earlier studies, among men also. For example, among mothers with a small child, those with men who had taken long parental leave were more satisfied with the relationship than the women with men who had taken little or no leave, and among the men, most of those who had taken long parental leave told of improved relation to the child later.

This evidence shows that even if domestic violence is partly “gender-based” (fathers / men more often violent), it is primarily “gender inequality based”, “Gender-based” can become a misleading term – leading us back to the “gender trap”, where we perpetuate stereotypes even as we try to end gender discrimination.

This example illustrates the importance of extending the perspective, looking more closely at gender-equal and unequal categories of *people*, not just *gender* categories. Thereby, we will be better able to recognize potentials and problems among men as well as women.

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