

Cross-National Research Papers

Sixth Series:

Improving Policy Responses and Outcomes to  
Socio-Economic Challenges: Changing Family  
Structures, Policy and Practice

## **5. Changing Family Structure in Europe: New Challenges for Public Policy**

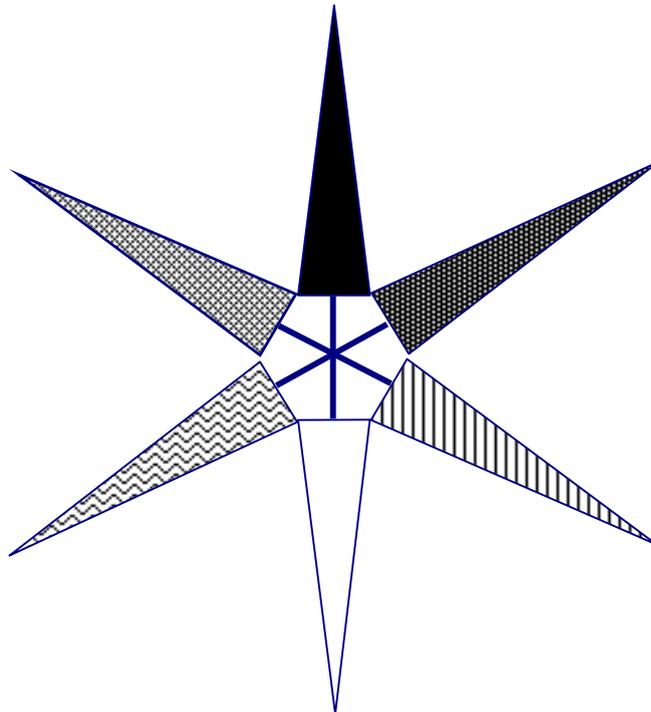
Edited by

**Marie-Thérèse Letablier  
Sophie Pennec**

Contributors

**Anthony Abela  
Olivier Büttner  
Ingrid Jönsson  
Kati Karelson  
Dagmar Kutsar**

**Valentina Longo  
Mária Neményi  
Olga Niméus  
Ene-Margit Tiit  
Olga Tóth  
Jutta Träger**



Cross-National Research Papers

Sixth Series

Improving Policy Responses and Outcomes  
to Socio-Economic Challenges:  
Changing Family Structures, Policy and Practice

**5. Changing Family Structure in Europe:  
New Challenges for Public Policy**

*Edited by*

*Marie-Thérèse Letablier and Sophie Pennec*

© The authors

All rights reserved. No part of this publication should be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the Copyright holders.

ISSN: 0956-1013 (online)

ISBN: 1 8985 64 20 6 (online)

Published by  
European Research Centre  
Loughborough University  
Leicestershire LE11 3TU  
Great Britain

Set by  
Laser Printer

First published April 2003

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.  
A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.



---

## Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| List of figures and tables   | iv  |
| Series editor's foreword   | vi  |
| Acknowledgements   | vii |
| <b>1. Changing family structure: new challenges for policies in Europe</b><br><i>Marie-Thérèse Letablier and Sophie Pennec</i>   | 1   |
| <b>2. An overview of changing family patterns in Europe</b><br><i>Marie-Thérèse Letablier and Sophie Pennec with Olivier Büttner</i>   | 4   |
| <b>3. Family values and social policy in Europe</b><br><i>Anthony Abela</i>  | 20  |
| <b>4. Perceptions of the impacts of public policy on family formation in Germany, Italy, Sweden and Estonia</b><br><i>Kati Karelson, Valentina Longo, Olga Niméus and Jutta Träger</i> | 35  |
| <b>5. Fertility changes and family policy in Sweden</b><br><i>Ingrid Jönsson</i>   | 52  |
| <b>6. Changing family structures and alternative paths to family formation in Estonia</b><br><i>Dagmar Kutsar and Ene-Margit Tiit</i>  | 67  |
| <b>7. Differential modernization in Hungary: families and family values after transition</b><br><i>Mária Neményi and Olga Tóth</i>   | 77  |
| Notes on contributors  | 86  |

## List of Tables and Figures

### Tables

|      |   |    |
|------|---|----|
| 2.1  | Life expectancy at birth for men and women in IPROSEC countries, 1960/2000  | 5  |
| 2.2  | Age dependency ratios for population aged 65 + as % of population aged 20–59 in IPROSEC countries, 1960/2000  | 5  |
| 2.3  | Average number of persons per household, one-person households as % of all households, and % of one-person households with one adult aged 65 +, 1999/2000 | 7  |
| 2.4  | Fertility rates and age at childbearing in IPROSEC countries, 2000  | 7  |
| 2.5  | Family size for 1935 and 1955 birth cohorts and teenage pregnancies in IPROSEC countries, 1980/2000   | 9  |
| 2.6  | Marriage rates and mean age at first marriage in IPROSEC countries, 1980/2000   | 9  |
| 2.7  | Unmarried cohabitation, 1997, and extramarital births, 2000, in IPROSEC countries   | 11 |
| 2.8  | Divorce rates and lone parenthood in IPROSEC countries, 1990/2000   | 11 |
| 2.9  | Education rates for men and women aged 15–24 in IPROSEC countries, 1985/2000, in %  | 13 |
| 2.10 | Employment rates for men and women aged 25–49 in IPROSEC countries by level of education, 2000  | 14 |
| 2.11 | Part-time rates for men and women aged 15–64 as % of all in employment in IPROSEC countries, 1985/2000  | 15 |
| 2.12 | Women in part-time employment by groups of hours usually worked per week, in EU IPROSEC countries, 2000   | 16 |
| 2.13 | Activity rates for women aged 20–59 by number of children in EU IPROSEC countries, 2000   | 17 |
| 3.1  | Value priorities in IPROSEC countries, in %   | 20 |
| 3.2  | Marriage and family relations in IPROSEC countries, in %  | 23 |
| 3.3  | Partners' and gender issues in IPROSEC countries, in %  | 23 |
| 3.4  | Factor analysis of marriage values in IPROSEC countries   | 24 |
| 3.5  | Marriage values in IPROSEC countries, in %  | 25 |
| 3.6  | Factor analysis of traditional/post-traditional values  | 26 |
| 3.7  | Traditionalism and marriage values in IPROSEC countries, in %   | 27 |
| 3.8  | Traditionalism, partnerships and gender issues, in %  | 28 |
| 3.9  | Traditionalism rankings for IPROSEC countries, in %   | 28 |
| 3.10 | Social policy in IPROSEC countries  | 31 |
| 3.11 | Traditionalism and social policies in IPROSEC countries, and chi-square tests   | 33 |
| 4.1  | Proportion of children in different age groups in childcare centres, 2000/01, in %  | 42 |
| 5.1  | Number of children per woman (TFR), 1960–65/1995–2000   | 54 |

|     |   |    |
|-----|---|----|
| 5.2 | Labour market participation among women aged 16–64, 1930–65, in %                                   | 55 |
| 5.3 | Labour market participation among women aged 25–34 in EU member states as % of age group, 1980/1997 | 56 |
| 5.4 | Children in public childcare by age and form, 1975–97, in %   | 59 |
| 7.1 | Key marriage and divorce indicators in Hungary, 1970–99   | 78 |

Figures

|     |  |    |
|-----|--|----|
| 2.1 | Employment rates for men and women in IPROSEC countries as % of total population of working age (15–64), 1985/2000 | 14 |
| 2.2 | Women working part-time by broad age groups in selected EU member states, 2000                                     | 16 |
| 4.1 | Total fertility rates in selected countries, 1960–2000   | 36 |
| 4.2 | Completed fertility rates by birth cohort in selected countries, 1930–60   | 36 |
| 4.3 | Employment rates for men and women aged 25–49 in selected countries, 1990–2000                                     | 37 |

## Cross-National Research Papers

### Sixth Series

Improving Policy Responses and Outcomes to Socio-Economic Challenges:  
Changing Family Structures, Policy and Practice

## **5. Changing Family Structure in Europe: New Challenges for Public Policy**

### **Series Editor's Foreword**

The papers included in this sixth series of *Cross-National Research Papers* build on the contributions published in the fifth series. They develop with greater breadth and in greater depth work previously carried out on the relationship between socio-demographic trends and policy responses in Europe.

The materials from which the present papers are derived were compiled for a three-year research project funded by the European Commission under Framework Programme 5 (HPSE-CT-1999-00031). The research extended earlier work for the European Commission, Directorate General 5, Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, between 1997 and 1998.

The primary aim of the IPROSEC project, launched in 2000, was to inform policy by developing a greater understanding of socio-demographic change in selected European Union member and applicant states, the social and economic challenges such changes present, and the policy responses formulated by national governments and at European level. The research was particularly concerned with changing family structures and relationships. The project team undertook to observe and analyse the policy process, inputs, outcomes and impacts, with a view to assessing how policy learning occurs, and how, in turn, policy development influences socio-demographic change. In keeping with the aims and objectives of the Cross-National Research Group, which was established in 1985 as an informal network of researchers interested in the theory, methodology, management and practice of cross-national research on topics in the social sciences, the project was also designed to document the cross-national comparative research process.

The IPROSEC project brought together researchers from a range of disciplines, from different parts of the European Union and from three candidate countries, with experience in carrying out cross-national comparative projects. Together with invited contributions, the papers in this sixth series track the development of the project and provide an appropriate means of disseminating comments on the operation of each stage of the research, while also reporting interim findings.

*Linda Hantrais*

## Acknowledgements

We should like to acknowledge the support received from the European Research Centre and the administrative services at Loughborough University. We are particularly grateful for the technical assistance provided by Julia Griggs and David Stirling.

\* \* \* \* \*

The research on which this publication is based was financed by and prepared for the European Commission, Directorate General Research, under the Key Action in Framework Programme 5: 'Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base'. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the Commission.

*Linda Hantrais, Project Co-ordinator  
European Research Centre, Loughborough University*



# 1. Changing Family Structure: New Challenges for Policies in Europe

*Marie-Thérèse Letablier and Sophie Pennec*

This issue of *Cross-National Research Papers* is devoted to comparisons of changing family structures in the European countries involved in the IPROSEC research project. The six papers examine different aspects of family changes in recent decades with reference not only to family structure but also to family values.

The first two papers explore changing family structures and values, providing an overview of similarities and differences across European countries. The other papers focus on specific aspects of the trends observed, mainly in patterns of fertility, in an attempt to track the disparities between demographic change, perceptions and attitudes towards family policies, and their possible impact on social practices. The authors consider the role of values in the process of change drawing on material from in-depth interviews.

The paper by Marie-Thérèse Letablier and Sophie Pennec provides an overview of changing family structures in the 11 countries included in the IPROSEC project. It uses data collected for the IPROSEC project, supplemented by information from national sources. Changing family structures are examined in relation to general demographic trends in population ageing resulting from the decline in fertility, the increase in life expectancy at birth, and the change in the age structure of the population as the baby-boom birth cohorts move through the age profile. Everywhere, family formation is being postponed, and unions are becoming less stable. The internal structure of families has also changed as the number of multigenerational households has decreased, lone-parenthood has become more widespread, and female employment rates have grown, creating more dual-earner families. The paper shows that changes have occurred in all the EU member states and candidate countries in the project, but that they have not had the same impact everywhere, implying different challenges for policy makers.

In his paper, Anthony Abela analyses family values, the value orientation and related options for social policies of a representative sample of citizens from EU member states and candidate countries. The paper is based on the 1999–2000 European Values Study and concentrates on family values and options for social policies. The paper highlights gender issues and the changing meaning of marriage. The author also identifies political profiles and attitudes towards social policy orientations. The findings show a significant relationship between post-traditionalism, political ideologies and most social policy issues.

The paper by Kati Karelson, Valentina Longo, Olga Niméus and Jutta Träger compares the impact of public policies on family formation in four countries: Estonia, Germany, Italy and Sweden. The authors combine quantitative and qualitative approaches, drawing on national data and interviews carried out for the IPROSEC project. In their paper, they bring together information about trends in fertility and female economic activity with the perceptions and attitudes expressed by individuals in face-to-face interviews. They examine how families perceive incentives and obstacles with

regard to family formation decisions, and look at the possible impact of social and family policy measures on decisions taken by families about fertility and family life.

The three following papers present country cases. The paper by Ingrid Jönsson deals with fertility changes during the twentieth century in Sweden and the resulting challenges for family policies. The development of modern family policy is examined as well as gender and labour market policies. Fertility trends are scrutinized in relation to family policies during various historical periods. Attention is given to the impact of family policies on fluctuations in fertility. The author points out that fertility decisions are not only determined by family policies but are closely interrelated with a set of environmental parameters, including the labour market situation, gender relations and the family-friendliness of the social context.

Dagmar Kutsar and Ene-Margit Tiit provide an overview of changes in family structure at the beginning of the twenty-first century in Estonia with a focus on unmarried cohabitation and policy responses to it. Since the 1990s, pre-marital cohabitation has increased dramatically in Estonia and is now a widespread living arrangement, as in the Scandinavian countries. In 2000, 55% of children were born out of wedlock. The authors examine the decision-making process with regard to living arrangement, using results from a longitudinal survey in combination with qualitative data collected for the IPROSEC research. Every year since the 1970s, similar questions are asked of a sample of Estonian students about the decision-making process leading to different forms of partnership and family formation. The study shows that, during the 1990s, whereas no radical change was observed in students' value orientations, gender remained an important factor explaining preferences in living arrangements. Girls intend to marry, whereas boys prefer to cohabit or are not interested in formal living arrangements. In addition, cohabitation has different meanings for students: nearly half of the respondents consider cohabitation as pre-marriage, while about 30% see it as an alternative to formal marriage.

The paper by Mária Neményi and Olga Tóth explores the contradiction between demographic data, attitudes and values concerning families in Hungary. Although radical changes in lifestyles and family life have occurred, family structures and gender roles have changed very slowly and tend to remain traditional. The Hungarian process of modernization since the 1990s has not led to a fundamental change in values: conservative values are still prevalent, except in younger generations. The authors show how values change more slowly than demographic behaviour.

All the papers in this issue attempt to track changing family structures with a view to identifying the new challenges faced by social and family policies in the 11 countries covered by the IPROSEC project. Scrutiny of the changes reveals common issues for policies in all European countries, whether they are already in the EU or applying to join the Union. These common challenges are primarily associated with population ageing, its consequences for the age balance and dependency ratio. Care for older people is becoming a major issue for social policies everywhere in Europe. The question is emerging in a context where families cannot deal with elder care as they did in the past when most women stayed at home to care for children and dependent adults.

At the same time, family structures have changed, marriage is less and less associated with family formation, the family is less institutionalized, and increasing numbers of children are being born out of wedlock, but without being socially excluded as they were 50 years ago. While alternative forms of families are developing, the great majority of young children continue to live with their two parents. Families are less stable, and the death of one of the partners is no longer the main reason for family breakdown. The increase in divorce is leading to an increase in the proportion of lone-parent and reconstituted families.

The diversification of family forms constitutes an important challenge for policies designed to preserve individual rights rather than protecting the family as a value. Individualization of social rights is becoming an issue in most EU countries. Changing family size is another challenge for policies. Family size is declining both because of the fall in fertility rates and because fewer generations are living together under the same roof. The two-generation family and cohabiting couple has become the norm for private life, with the result that family solidarity is being placed under strain, especially in caring for older people. In addition, the increase in the number of women in employment observed everywhere, although at different speeds and intensity across countries, is contributing to the spread of dual-earner families. Policies, therefore, need to respond to the growing demand from working parents for more childcare facilities and support.

Finally, as birth control techniques have become widespread, women and couples can decide on the number of children they have and the timing of births. The challenge for policy is to create a family-friendly environment allowing parents to have the number of children they want. The work and family balance is thus a major challenge for policies, as well as for demographic equilibrium and the well-being of parents and children.

## **2. An Overview of Changing Family Patterns in Europe**

*Marie-Thérèse Letablier and Sophie Pennec with Olivier Büttner*

Changing family patterns can be examined both from a dynamic perspective based on the evolution of demographic indicators and from a structural perspective dealing with family forms and gender relations within the family. This paper looks at the quantitative aspects of changing family structures and gender relations within households, using comparative secondary analysis of harmonized EU data, supplemented by information collected for the eight EU member states and three candidate countries studied in the IPROSEC project.

Changing family structure is related to general demographic trends, characterized by population ageing as a result of declining fertility, greater life expectancy and the arrival of the postwar baby-boom birth cohorts at retirement age, and by postponement of family formation and the instability of married and unmarried partnerships. The internal structure of families has also changed due to the decline in the number of multigenerational households, the increase in lone-parent and reconstituted families, the growth in female employment and, consequently, in the number of dual-earner families. At the same time, the gender and intergenerational contract has shifted towards more individualized relationships. However, domestic and parental responsibilities remain mainly a female issue. These changes have taken place in all European countries, but they have not developed to the same extent in every case.

### **Population ageing and changing household structures**

While the population is ageing due to the combination of the decline in fertility and the increase in life expectancy, the structure of households has also been changing. Life expectancy has increased everywhere. As shown in Table 2.1, among the IPROSEC countries today, male life expectancy at birth is highest in Sweden and Italy followed by Spain, Greece, France and the UK (all above 75 years). It is lowest in the three applicant countries. A striking feature of the candidate countries and, to a lesser extent, France is the gap between male and female life expectancy. In all European countries, life expectancy is higher for women than for men. France and Spain have the highest level for women among the IPROSEC countries, and in Italy, Sweden, Greece, Germany and the UK, women can expect to live to be over 80. The lowest levels are again found in the three candidate countries. The change in life expectancy has been most marked in the EU member states, whereas it has been much slower in the candidate countries, especially for men. Between 1960 and 2000, male life expectancy in Estonia remained almost stable, despite a decrease in certain years (to 61.7 in 1995).

The dependency ratio also varies markedly between countries. As shown in Table 2.2, the proportion of older people in the population is highest in Italy, Sweden and Greece, and lowest in Ireland and Poland. The ageing of the population has been particularly rapid in southern European countries, where the percentage of people aged 65 and over in relation to total population increased twofold between 1960 and 2000.

Meanwhile, household structure has been changing, as shown in Table 2.3. In all the EU IPROSEC countries, the proportion of one-person households has increased. It is largest in Sweden, as in other Scandinavian countries, and lowest in southern European countries. However, these figures refer to the whole population and reflect different definitions of households and children. In Sweden, for instance, only children under 16 are counted as children, whereas

**Table 2.1** Life expectancy at birth for men and women in IPROSEC countries, 1960/2000

|         | 1960              |                   | 2000              |                   |
|---------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|         | Men               | Women             | Men               | Women             |
| France  | 66.9              | 73.6              | 75.2              | 82.7              |
| Germany | 66.7              | 71.9 <sup>a</sup> | 74.4              | 80.6 <sup>a</sup> |
| Greece  | 67.3              | 72.4 <sup>a</sup> | 75.5              | 80.6 <sup>a</sup> |
| Ireland | 68.1              | 71.9              | 73.9              | 79.1              |
| Italy   | 67.2              | 72.3              | 76.2              | 82.6              |
| Spain   | 67.4              | 72.2              | 75.5              | 82.7              |
| Sweden  | 71.2              | 74.9              | 77.4              | 82.0              |
| UK      | 67.9              | 73.7              | 75.5              | 80.3              |
| Estonia | 64.3              | 71.6              | 65.1              | 76.0              |
| Hungary | 65.9              | 70.1              | 67.7              | 75.7              |
| Poland  | 64.9              | 70.6              | 69.7              | 78.0              |
| EU15    | 67.4 <sup>b</sup> | 72.9 <sup>b</sup> | 75.3 <sup>b</sup> | 81.4 <sup>b</sup> |

<sup>a</sup> 1999

<sup>b</sup> Eurostat estimate

Source: Eurostat, 2002a, table G–4 and G–5, p. 113, table J–18 and J–19, p. 147.

**Table 2.2** Age dependency ratios for population aged 65 + as a % of population aged 20–59 in IPROSEC countries, 1960/2000

|         | 1960  | 1975  | 1995 | 2000 |
|---------|-------|-------|------|------|
| France  | 11.6  | 13.4  | 15.0 | 15.9 |
| Germany | 11.5  | 14.8  | 15.4 | 15.8 |
| Greece  | 9.4   | 12.1  | 15.3 | 17.2 |
| Ireland | 11.1  | 10.9  | 11.4 | 11.2 |
| Italy   | 9.2   | 11.9  | 16.4 | 18.0 |
| Spain   | 8.2*  | 10.2  | 15.1 | 16.7 |
| Sweden  | 11.6  | 15.0  | 15.5 | 17.3 |
| UK      | 11.7* | 14.0* | 17.4 | 15.3 |
| Estonia | 11.7  | 12.3  | 13.2 | 14.5 |
| Hungary | 9.0   | 12.5  | 14.0 | 14.6 |
| Poland  | 5.9   | 9.7   | 11.2 | 12.1 |
| EU15    | 10.6* | 13.0* | 15.4 | 15.2 |

\* Eurostat estimate

Source: Eurostat, 1997, tables B–4, B6–7; Council of Europe 2001b, table T1.6.

in France and in most other EU countries, the household refers to the couple with dependent children, whatever their age (Eurostat, 1996).

A large proportion of one-person households are composed of people over 65, the great majority of them being widows. In 1999, the proportion of women aged 65 and over among one-person household ranged from 44.4% for women in Italy and Hungary to 7.7% for men in France (Table 2.3). Differences across countries in the proportion of one-person households according to age and gender result from differences in mortality rates between men and women and between countries. They are also explained by different conventions in living arrangements for older people. Today, fewer household units are living together under the same roof. Here, Ireland records the largest number of multiple households and Sweden the smallest (Eurostat, 2002b, p. 116).

### **Changing family size and formation**

Population ageing is due to the decrease in both mortality and fertility. The decline in fertility rates is also partly responsible for the reduction in family size. Total fertility rates (TFR) have been falling steeply in all the IPROSEC countries, but at different speeds. As shown in Table 2.4, the highest rates were found in Ireland and France in 2000, and the lowest in the former East Germany (1.22), Spain and Italy. The three IPROSEC candidate countries registered total fertility rates below the EU15 average, resulting from a steeper decline in fertility during the 1990s.

On average, women in Europe today are producing only 1.7 children (Table 2.4). Completed fertility rates (CFR) across the EU have fallen below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman for the 1965 birth cohort, except in Ireland where the CFR is above 2.2. The lowest fertility rates for this cohort are found in Italy and Germany. Among the IPROSEC candidate countries, Poland had the highest CFR, and Estonia the lowest in 2000. Hungary is between the two. The lower level of TFR compared to CFR for the youngest available birth cohort suggests that, in the future, the fertility of women of childbearing age is likely to be postponed and/or reduced.

At the same time, in several of the IPROSEC countries, the proportion of childless women has been increasing. This is especially the case in former West Germany, where one woman in five remains childless (for the 1955 cohort). The same trend is observed in Ireland. Yet, in Sweden the proportion has remained almost unchanged over time (12–14%). France has continued to display one of lowest rates of childlessness among EU member states (8.3% for the 1955 cohort) (Sardon, 2002, table 7).

Mean age of women at first birth is being postponed everywhere (Table 2.4). It is highest in the UK, and lowest in Greece. It is lower still in the candidate countries. Mean age at childbearing (all births) is also lower in the candidate countries than in the EU, where it is above 30 years in Ireland, Italy and Spain.

As a result of falling fertility rates, household size has been reduced across Europe. Average household size for EU15 fell from 2.6 in 1995 to 2.4 in 2000. The largest average household size is found in Ireland and Spain and the lowest in Sweden. France, Germany and Italy are closer to the EU average (Table 2.3). In general, average family size is higher in southern than in

Scandinavian countries, despite lower fertility rates, due to the large proportion of young adults living with their parents and the high percentage of

**Table 2.3 Average number of persons per household, one-person households as % of all households, and % of one-person households with one adult aged 65 +, 1999/2000**

|         | Average household size | Percentage of one person households | Percentage of one person households with one adult aged 65 and over |       |      |
|---------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------|------|
|         |                        |                                     | Men   | Women | Both |
| France  | 2.4                    | 13                                  | 7.7   | 30.8  | 38.5 |
| Germany | 2.2                    | 16                                  | 6.3   | 31.2  | 37.5 |
| Greece  | 2.7                    | 8                                   | 12.5  | 37.5  | 50.0 |
| Ireland | 3.0                    | 7                                   | 14.3  | 28.6  | 42.9 |
| Italy   | 2.6                    | 9                                   | 11.1  | 44.4  | 55.5 |
| Spain   | 3.0                    | 5                                   | 20.0  | 40.0  | 60.0 |
| Sweden  | 2.0                    | 20                                  | 10.0  | 20.0  | 30.0 |
| UK      | 2.3                    | 13                                  | 15.4  | 30.8  | 46.2 |
| Estonia | –                      | 10                                  | 10.0  | 30.0  | 40.0 |
| Hungary | –                      | 9                                   | 11.1  | 44.4  | 50.5 |
| Poland  | –                      | –                                   | –   | –     | –    |
| EU15    | 2.4                    | 12                                  | 8.4   | 33.3  | 41.7 |

Source: Eurostat, 2002b, pp. 116–17, 136.

**Table 2.4 Fertility rates and age at childbearing in IPROSEC countries, 2000**

|         | Total fertility rate | Completed fertility rate |                   | Mean age of women at birth of first child | Mean age of women at childbearing |
|---------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
|         |                      | 1955 birth cohort        | 1965 birth cohort |   |                                   |
| France  | 1.88                 | 2.13                     | 1.99              | 28.7 <sup>c</sup>                         | 29.4                              |
| Germany | 1.36*                | 1.67                     | 1.51              | 28.0 <sup>c</sup>                         | 28.7 <sup>c</sup>                 |
| Greece  | 1.29*                | 2.00                     | 1.73              | 27.3 <sup>c</sup>                         | 28.9 <sup>c</sup>                 |
| Ireland | 1.89                 | 2.67                     | 2.21 <sup>a</sup> | 27.8                                      | 30.6                              |
| Italy   | 1.24*                | 1.80                     | 1.49 <sup>a</sup> | 28.7 <sup>b</sup>                         | 30.4 <sup>b</sup>                 |
| Spain   | 1.23                 | 1.90                     | 1.63 <sup>a</sup> | 29.0 <sup>c</sup>                         | 30.7 <sup>c</sup>                 |
| Sweden  | 1.54                 | 2.03                     | 1.96              | 27.9                                      | 29.9                              |
| UK      | 1.64                 | 2.01                     | 1.86              | 29.1                                      | 28.5                              |
| Estonia | 1.39                 | 2.00                     | 1.81              | 24.0                                      | 27.0                              |
| Hungary | 1.33                 | 1.94                     | 1.97              | 25.1                                      | 27.3                              |
| Poland  | 1.34                 | 2.17                     | 2.00              | 24.5                                      | 27.4                              |
| EU15    | 1.53*                | 1.90                     | 1.70              | –   | 29.1*                             |

\* Eurostat estimates    <sup>a</sup> 1964    <sup>b</sup> 1997    <sup>c</sup> 1999

Note: First birth within current marriage for France, Germany and the UK; elsewhere biological order.

Sources: Eurostat, 2002a, tables E–4, E–5 and E–10; for completed fertility rates, Sardon, 2002, table 4.

multigenerational families. By contrast, in the Nordic states, the family is generally restricted to parents with young children, which is the norm in private life. The youngest age at which at least 50% of young people of the same age are not living with their parents varies from 20 for women in the UK to 30 for men in Italy (Eurostat, 2002b, p. 117).

Nowadays, one in four women in Germany for the 1955 birth cohort have only one child. The proportion is slightly lower in Italy (24%), in Spain (22%) and France (20%). It falls to 12% in the UK and 9% in Ireland. In most EU member states, two children tend to be the norm (more than 40% of women in the 1955 birth cohort). The proportion of women with three children has fallen dramatically in Spain and in Italy, but remains quite high in France, the UK and Sweden (Table 2.5). It has increased in Ireland, although the proportion of very large families has fallen. Ireland also has the highest proportion of women with four children: 28% of women in the 1955 birth cohort, compared to 11% in the UK, 10% in France, but only 2% in Italy, 6% in Germany and 7% in Spain (Eurostat, 2002a, table E-15).

Some countries encounter a specific social problem due to high teenage fertility rates. Although the rate has been decreasing rapidly in most EU member states, it has remained at a high level in the UK, at 145 for every 1000 women giving birth, far above other EU countries (Table 2.5). The proportion of teenage pregnancies is also high in the candidate countries, particularly in Estonia.

In sum, family size is declining across Europe, large families are becoming rare, and families with two children tend to be the norm. However, considerable diversity of patterns can be observed. In some countries, the smaller family size results from the fact that a growing proportion of women are remaining childless, especially well-educated women, and that families are having only one child. In other countries, most women have children but only a small number. Another trend is the decline in the number of extended families in favour of the nuclear family. Here too, the figures for the proportion of extended families continues to distinguish the southern European countries from those in the north.

### **Decline in marriage and diversification of institutional family forms**

Marriage rates have been falling across the EU and in the candidate countries since the 1960s, but with variations in pace and degree. By the year 2000, the EU countries displaying the lowest first marriage rate (male and female) in the Union were the UK, Sweden and Greece (Table 2.6). Estonia and Hungary started from a higher base but have seen their rates fall more steeply than in EU countries. Estonia registered the lowest rate of all the IPROSEC countries in 2000. The highest rate is found in Poland. Everywhere, not only are marriages less frequent and occurring later but also the meaning of marriage has changed. Marriage is no longer a prelude to the constitution of a family.

Age at marriage is being postponed everywhere. Mean age at first marriage of men is higher than for women in all countries (Table 2.6). In 2000, mean age at first marriage ranged from 32.4 for men in Sweden to 23.9 for women in Poland. In the candidate countries, mean age at first marriage for women is lower than in the EU member states. These mean ages are close to

**Table 2.5** Family size for 1935 and 1955 birth cohorts and teenage pregnancies in IPROSEC countries, 1980/2000

|         | Proportion of women with three children by generation |      | Proportion of births to women under 20-years old per 1000 live births |                 |
|---------|---|------|---|-----------------|
|         | 1935  | 1955 | 1980  | 2000            |
| France  | 21  | 22   | 124   | 50 <sup>c</sup> |
| Germany | 20  | 13   | 185   | 65 <sup>c</sup> |
| Greece  | –   | –    | 273   | 56 <sup>c</sup> |
| Ireland | 21  | 27   | 120   | 95              |
| Italy   | 21  | 20   | 103   | 26 <sup>b</sup> |
| Spain   | 32 <sup>a</sup>                                       | 16   | 134   | 42 <sup>c</sup> |
| Sweden  | 22 <sup>a</sup>                                       | 22   | 83  | 35              |
| UK      | 21  | 20   | 156   | 145             |
| Estonia | –   | –    | 223   | 132             |
| Hungary | –   | –    | 340   | 119             |
| Poland  | –   | –    | 160   | 86              |
| EU15    | –   | –    | –   | –               |

<sup>a</sup> 1940<sup>b</sup> 1997<sup>c</sup> 1999

Sources: Council of Europe, 2001a; for proportion of women with three children, Eurostat, 2002a, table E–15.

**Table 2.6** Marriage rates and mean age at first marriage in IPROSEC countries, 1980/2000

|         | Total 1 <sup>st</sup> marriage rate<br>(for 1000 men or women) |                  | Mean age at first marriage |                   |                    |                   |
|---------|--|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|         | 2000   |                  | 1980                       |                   | 2000               |                   |
|         | Men  | Women            | Men                        | Women             | Men                | Women             |
| France  | 598  | 624              | 25.1                       | 23.0              | 28.9 <sup>c</sup>  | 27.7 <sup>f</sup> |
| Germany | 517  | 582              | 25.7                       | 22.9              | 29.7 <sup>g</sup>  | 27.2 <sup>f</sup> |
| Greece  | 492  | 521              | 27.9                       | 23.6 <sup>a</sup> | 30.4 <sup>g</sup>  | 26.6 <sup>g</sup> |
| Ireland | 604 <sup>f</sup>   | 591 <sup>f</sup> | 27.1                       | 24.7              | 29.7 <sup>c</sup>  | 28.2 <sup>d</sup> |
| Italy   | 564 <sup>g</sup>   | 618 <sup>g</sup> | 27.1                       | 23.9              | 29.6 <sup>c</sup>  | 27.0 <sup>e</sup> |
| Spain   | 581  | 612              | 25.9                       | 23.5              | 29.6 <sup>g</sup>  | 27.7 <sup>g</sup> |
| Sweden  | 493  | 528              | 28.6                       | 26.0              | 32.4               | 30.2              |
| UK      | 478 <sup>g</sup>   | 529 <sup>g</sup> | 25.2                       | 25.4 <sup>b</sup> | 29.4 <sup>g</sup>  | 27.3 <sup>g</sup> |
| Estonia | 390  | 399              | –                          | 22.6              | –                  | 24.8              |
| Hungary | 473  | 491              | –                          | 21.2              | –                  | 24.6              |
| Poland  | 631  | 628              | –                          | 22.7              | 25.7               | 23.9              |
| EU15    |  |                  | 26.0*                      | 23.3*             | 30.3 <sup>g*</sup> | 28.1*             |

\* Eurostat estimate <sup>a</sup> 1975 <sup>b</sup> 1985 <sup>c</sup> 1995 <sup>d</sup> 1996 <sup>e</sup> 1997 <sup>f</sup> 1998 <sup>g</sup> 1999

Sources: Mean age at first marriage, Eurostat, 2002a, tables F–3, F–8 and F–9; for female data, Council of Europe, 2001a; Polish data supplied by Polish partner; total first marriage rate, Sardon, 2002, table 8.

the EU15 figure observed in 1960. Mean age of marriage has changed very slowly in these countries. In most European countries, marriage is no longer the first step in family formation. More meaningful today are the first stable union rate and the age at first stable union, usually out of wedlock.

### **Unmarried cohabitation**

Unmarried cohabitation has become a widespread practice in the Nordic states accounting for more than 20% of all cohabiting couples in Sweden by the late 1990s, whereas rates in Mediterranean states were below 4% (Table 2.7). The rates in France and the UK were above the EU average. Estonia and Hungary fell between the two extremes. Unmarried cohabitation is a more common practice among younger age groups. Exactly 70% of the population aged 16–29 in Sweden live as unmarried couples, and 41% in France, 35% in Germany, 12% or less in the southern European countries (EHCP 1997 data supplied by Eurostat; for Sweden, Eurostat, 1998b, p. 118).

A similarly diversified pattern applies to extramarital births associated with unmarried cohabitation. The highest rates of extramarital births are found in Sweden and in Estonia (Table 2.7), but they represent only a very small proportion of total births in Greece, Italy and Poland. The proportion of live births outside marriage has increased very rapidly in the UK and in Ireland as unmarried cohabitation has become more common.

In France, the proportion of live births outside marriage grew from 6% of all live births in 1965 to almost 41% in 1999. Although births outside marriage were, in the past, limited to specific social categories, they are now widespread across society. It has been found that more than 90% of births outside marriage in France are legitimized by the father in the month following the birth (Munoz-Pérez and Prioux, 1999).

### **Divorce and lone-parent families**

Among the IPROSEC countries, total divorce rates are highest in Sweden. The lowest rates are found in southern European countries. Divorce rates are extremely diverse in the three candidate countries: they were already high in Estonia and Hungary by the 1970s. In 2000, Estonia registered the highest rate and Poland the lowest, and was close to the southern European countries, while Hungary fell between the two (Table 2.8).

The number of marriages ending in divorce has been increasing in all IPROSEC countries and had reached the highest level by the turn of the century in the Nordic states, the UK and Estonia. In these countries, more than 40% of marriages contracted in the early 1980s had ended in divorce by 2000. Whereas, for 100 marriages in 1980, 46 ended in divorce in Sweden, this was the case for only 8 in Italy and 12 in Spain and Greece. The mean duration of marriage is also lower in Nordic states and in the UK (roughly 12 years) than in southern European countries, where the duration for the 1980 cohort was over 16 years (Eurostat, 2001a, tables F–18, 19).

The number of lone-parent families has been increasing, among other things, as a result of marital instability. In 2000, the highest rates of lone parenthood with children under the age of 15 were recorded in the UK, and the

**Table 2.7** Unmarried cohabitation, 1997, and extramarital births, 2000, in IPROSEC countries

|         | Percentage of couples aged over 15 living in a consensual union | Percentage of live births outside marriage |
|---------|---|--|
| France  | 13.57   | 42.6                                       |
| Germany | 8.64  | 23.4                                       |
| Greece  | 1.85  | 4.1*                                       |
| Ireland | 2.45  | 31.8*                                      |
| Italy   | 3.83  | 9.6*                                       |
| Spain   | 3.32  | 17.0*                                      |
| Sweden  | 23.00 <sup>b</sup>  | 55.3                                       |
| UK      | 11.24   | 39.5                                       |
| Estonia | 9.90  | 54.5                                       |
| Hungary | 5.12 <sup>a</sup>   | 29.0                                       |
| Poland  | –   | 12.1                                       |
| EU15    | 8.32  | 28.4*                                      |

\* Eurostat estimate <sup>a</sup> 1990 <sup>b</sup> 1998

Sources: ECHP data supplied by Eurostat; Eurostat, 1998a, p. 40; for Swedish data, Eurostat, 2002b, p. 118; for extramarital births, Eurostat, 2002a, tables E–9 and J–12.

**Table 2.8** Divorce rates and lone parenthood in IPROSEC countries, 1990/2000

|         | Total divorce rate (per 100 marriages) | Crude divorce rate | Percentage of children (0–14) living with only one parent |      |
|---------|--|--------------------|---|------|
|         |  |                    | 1990  | 2000 |
| France  | 38.3 <sup>c</sup>                      | 2.1 <sup>a</sup>   | 6.5   | 8.7  |
| Germany | 39.4 <sup>d</sup>                      | 2.4                | 6.7   | 10.3 |
| Greece  | 15.7 <sup>d</sup>                      | 0.9                | 2.4   | 3.0  |
| Ireland | –                                      | 0.7                | 4.1   | 8.6  |
| Italy   | 10.0 <sup>b</sup>                      | 0.7                | 3.3   | 4.1  |
| Spain   | 15.2 <sup>b</sup>                      | 1.0                | 1.6   | 2.8  |
| Sweden  | 54.9                                   | 2.4                | –   | –    |
| UK      | 42.6 <sup>c</sup>                      | 2.6                | 11.9  | 19.8 |
| Estonia | 46.7                                   | 3.1                | –   | 9.4  |
| Hungary | 37.5                                   | 2.4                | –   | 6.3  |
| Poland  | 17.3                                   | 1.1                | –   | –    |
| EU15    | 30.0 <sup>a</sup>                      | 1.9*               | 6.0   | 9.7  |

<sup>a</sup> 1995 <sup>b</sup> 1997 <sup>c</sup> 1998 <sup>d</sup> 1999

Sources: For total divorce rate, Sardon, 2002, table 4; for crude divorce rate, and EU15 total divorce rate, Eurostat, 2002a, table F–15 and J–16; for % of children aged 0–14 living with only one parent, Eurostat, 2002b, pp. 117, 137.

lowest in Greece and Spain. The number of children in this situation has been growing rapidly in the UK. The increase was slower in other EU countries. Research by Elisabeth Algava (2002) in France shows that the concept of the lone-parent family covers a wide range of situations. In one case in 10, the lone parent lives together with other parents or relatives, generally in a three or four generation family. In southern Europe, 25–40% of lone parents are living within another household and benefit from family solidarity.

The reasons for lone-parent families are also diverse as are the employment and housing status of lone-parent families. According to Algava's (2002) research, the broad range of situations resulting in lone parenthood suggests that such families cannot be analysed solely with regard to their social marginalization, at least in France. Lone-parent families are, nonetheless, more likely to be recipients of social transfer payments than other families, and they receive larger amounts. In France, despite these transfers, their economic resources are lower by one quarter than those of all households. They are 40% lower in UK. In all the IPROSEC EU countries except Greece, lone-parent families are more likely to be living in poverty than the rest of the population (Chambaz, 2000).

The living conditions of lone-parent families are also diversified. In her comparative research, Christine Chambaz (2000) distinguished between five clusters of countries according to the economic situation of lone-parent families. The UK recorded the highest proportion of lone parents who were non-employed or employed part time on low incomes. By contrast in the Nordic countries, lone parents were more often single working parents and were not more likely to be living in poverty than other types of families. Data for the mid-1990s showed that, in Ireland, lone mothers displayed a specific profile compared to other EU countries: 61% of lone mothers were widowed compared to only 4% in the UK and Sweden. By contrast, 46% of lone mothers in Sweden were single and 41% were divorced (Bradshaw *et al.*, 1996, table 2.1).

However, despite the development of alternative family forms, the majority of children still grow up in two-parents families: for example, in France, 91,1% of children under six live in families composed of two parents. This proportion is even higher for children under three (Avenel, 2001).

These changes in patterns of family formation and dissolution raise new challenges for policy makers: how to sustain reproduction, what rights, responsibilities and duties family members should perform towards one another, what role the state, economic and civil society should play in family life, whether children should have the right to know their origins, to have two parents and to be offered a place in public childcare. Also of major importance is the support that should be given to lone-parent families in a context of increasing dual-earner couples. Finally, social citizenship is a challenge in countries where social rights are not yet individualized.

### **Families and gender relations**

Important changes have occurred in gender relations due to the combination of socio-demographic trends, and changing patterns of labour market participation, although here too significant differences persist both between and within countries.

In all the IPROSEC countries, the proportion of young people aged 15–24 in education or training has increased over the past 20 years. In general, Nordic countries register the highest proportion of young people in education or training, whereas the figures are lower in the southern European countries. The percentage of women aged 15–24 in education or training exceeds that of men in all EU IPROSEC countries, except in Germany (Table 2.9). This was not the case in the 1960s and 1970s. In 2000, the proportion varied from 53.6% in Italy to 69.7% in Germany for men, and from 58.3 % in Italy to 70.4 % in Sweden for women. The gap between men and women is particularly large in Spain (+ 7.6) in Sweden (+5.4) and Italy (+4.7), in favour of women. Everywhere except Germany, women exceed the number of men in higher education. The largest difference is found in Estonia, Sweden and Poland.

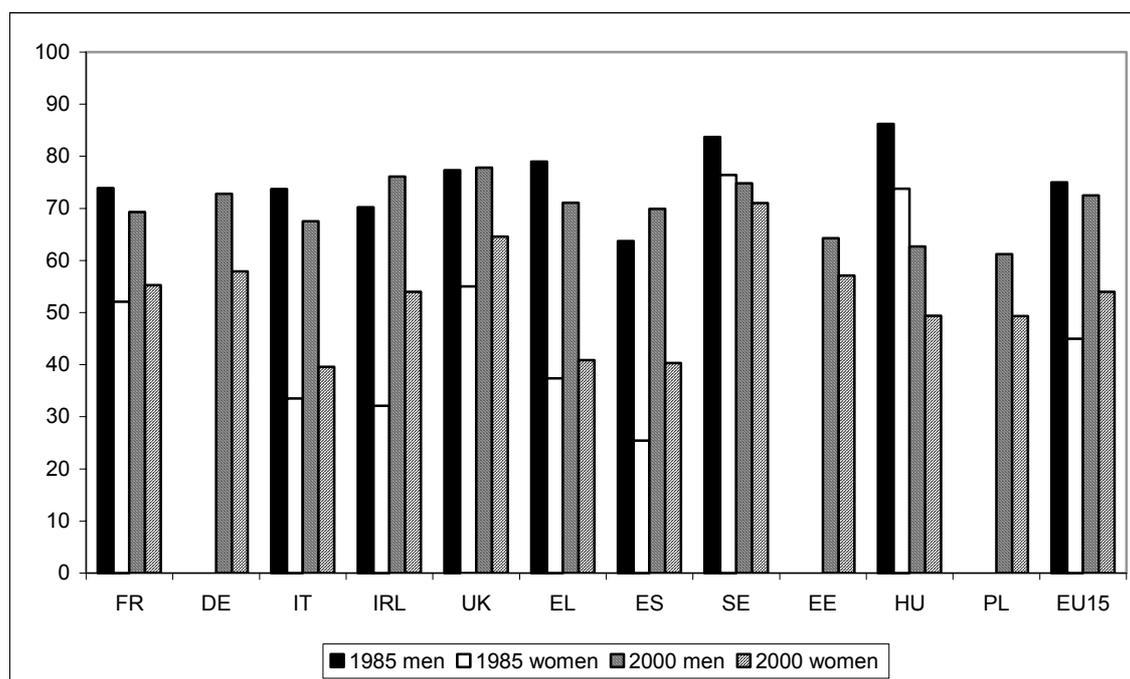
Within the EU, marked disparities are found concerning female employment rates between the northern and southern European countries, ranging from 71% for women as a percentage of total population of working age (15–64) in Sweden to 39.6% in Italy (Figure 2.1). The gap between men and women is particularly large in southern European countries and much smaller in Nordic states, suggesting that the male breadwinner model of families is still more widespread in the south, whereas dual-earner families are dominant in Nordic and continental countries. Women's employment rates exceed the EU average in Estonia and Poland, but are lower in Hungary.

Employment rates rise everywhere with the level of education (Table 2.10). The employment rate for women aged 25–49 with higher education ranged from 73.8% in Spain to 86.6% in the UK, where men with higher levels of education also have a higher level of employment. Employment rates are more dispersed for women with a lower education level (compulsory schooling): for women aged 25–49, they ranged from 40.5% in Spain to 63.5 % in Sweden in 2000.

**Table 2.9 Education rates for men and women aged 15–24 in IPROSEC countries, 1985/2000, in %**

|              | 1985 |       | 2000 |       |
|--------------|------|-------|------|-------|
|              | Men  | Women | Men  | Women |
| France       | 51.6 | 52.0  | 68.1 | 69.9  |
| Germany      | –    | –     | 69.7 | 69.5  |
| Greece       | 52.1 | 46.8  | 57.7 | 59.1  |
| Ireland      | 46.7 | 46.9  | –    | –     |
| Italy        | 46.1 | 43.9  | 53.6 | 58.3  |
| Spain        | 46.4 | 50.0  | 57.4 | 65.0  |
| Sweden       | –    | –     | 65.4 | 70.4  |
| UK           | 45.3 | 39.4  | 61.1 | 62.2  |
| Estonia      | –    | –     | –    | –     |
| Hungary (ft) | –    | –     | 43.1 | 46.2  |
| Poland       | 47.0 | 49.5  | 64.2 | 73.0  |
| EU15         | 51.1 | 49.1  | 62.8 | 65.4  |

*Sources:* Calculated from European Commission, 1996, pp. 147–62, 1999, pp. 127–49; Eurostat, 2000, table 6; Hungarian and Polish data supplied by IPROSEC partners.

**Figure 2.1** Employment rates for men and women in IPROSEC countries as % of total population of working age (15–64) 1985/2000

Sources: European Commission, 1997, pp. 117–32, 2001, pp. 111–36; data for candidate countries supplied by IPROSEC partners.

**Table 2.10** Employment rates for men and women aged 25–49 in IPROSEC countries by level of education, 2000

|         | Employment rates (25–49) |       | Compulsory education |       | Higher Education |       |
|---------|--------------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|         | Men                      | Women | Men                  | Women | Men              | Women |
| France  | 87.9                     | 70.3  | 80.5                 | 55.8  | 91.5             | 83.2  |
| Germany | 88.0                     | 72.2  | 77.2                 | 56.0  | 94.4             | 83.8  |
| Greece  | 89.3                     | 55.2  | 88.4                 | 43.7  | 90.9             | 79.4  |
| Ireland | 89.0                     | 65.5  | –                    | –     | –                | –     |
| Italy   | 85.6                     | 53.0  | 84.6                 | 37.7  | 90.5             | 78.8  |
| Spain   | 86.0                     | 53.3  | 84.2                 | 40.5  | 88.5             | 73.8  |
| Sweden  | 84.1                     | 80.3  | 75.7                 | 63.5  | 88.1             | 85.5  |
| UK      | 88.6                     | 73.6  | 67.4                 | 48.5  | 95.3             | 86.6  |
| Estonia | –                        | –     | –                    | –     | –                | –     |
| Hungary | –                        | –     | –                    | –     | –                | –     |
| Poland  | –                        | –     | –                    | –     | –                | –     |
| EU15    | 87.9                     | 67.2  | 82.5                 | 49.4  | 93.1             | 83.2  |

Sources: Eurostat, 2002c, pp. 100–1; and Eurostat, 2002a for educational rates.

Not all women work full time. Within the IPROSEC countries, women's part-time employment rates are very low in Greece, where relatively small numbers of women are in employment and much higher in the UK where relatively larger numbers of women are in the labour force (Table 2.11). Part-time work is a widespread form of employment in Nordic countries and in the UK and Germany, whereas it is rare in the southern European and candidate countries. Although the proportion of women working part-time has decreased steadily in Sweden since 1985, it has increased in most other countries, and especially in France. The fastest growth in part-time work was observed in Ireland.

Part-time rates vary not only across countries but also within countries according to the age group of women (Figure 2.2). In 2000 in France, for example, the percentage of women working part-time was roughly the same in all age groups (around 30%). But the structure of part-time has been changing rapidly during the 1990s. Until the end of the 1980s, part-time work mainly concerned women aged 25–49, but now it also affects women aged 15–24 and 50–64, implying that it is a means of transition to, or from, the labour market. In the UK, Ireland and Germany, women aged over 50 often take up part-time work. More than one woman in two in the age group 50–64 is working part-time in the UK, whereas very small proportions in this age group do so in Greece and Italy. The percentage of women part-timers is also high among the age group under 24 in Sweden, the UK and France, as it is for men.

Hours usually worked by women in part-time employment also vary across countries. In France and Sweden, a large proportion of women working part time have long part-time hours. By contrast, women part-timers work much shorter hours in Ireland, the UK and Germany (Table 2.12).

**Table 2.11 Part-time rates for men and women aged 15–64 as % of all employment in IPROSEC countries, 1985/2000**

|         | 1985             |                   | 2000 |       |
|---------|------------------|-------------------|------|-------|
|         | Men              | Women             | Men  | Women |
| France  | 3.2              | 21.8              | 5.4  | 31.0  |
| Germany | 2.0              | 29.6              | 5.0  | 37.9  |
| Greece  | 2.8              | 10.0              | 2.4* | 7.4*  |
| Ireland | 2.3              | 15.5              | 6.9  | 30.1  |
| Italy   | 3.0              | 10.1              | 3.7  | 16.5  |
| Spain   | 2.4 <sup>a</sup> | 13.9 <sup>a</sup> | 2.8  | 16.9  |
| Sweden  | 6.8 <sup>a</sup> | 46.6 <sup>a</sup> | 10.6 | 36.0  |
| UK      | 4.4              | 44.8              | 9.1  | 44.6  |
| Estonia | –                | –                 | 4.2  | 9.3   |
| Hungary | –                | –                 | 2.1  | 5.3   |
| Poland  | –                | –                 | 8.4  | 13.2  |
| EU15    | 3.7*             | 28.1*             | 6.2* | 33.3* |

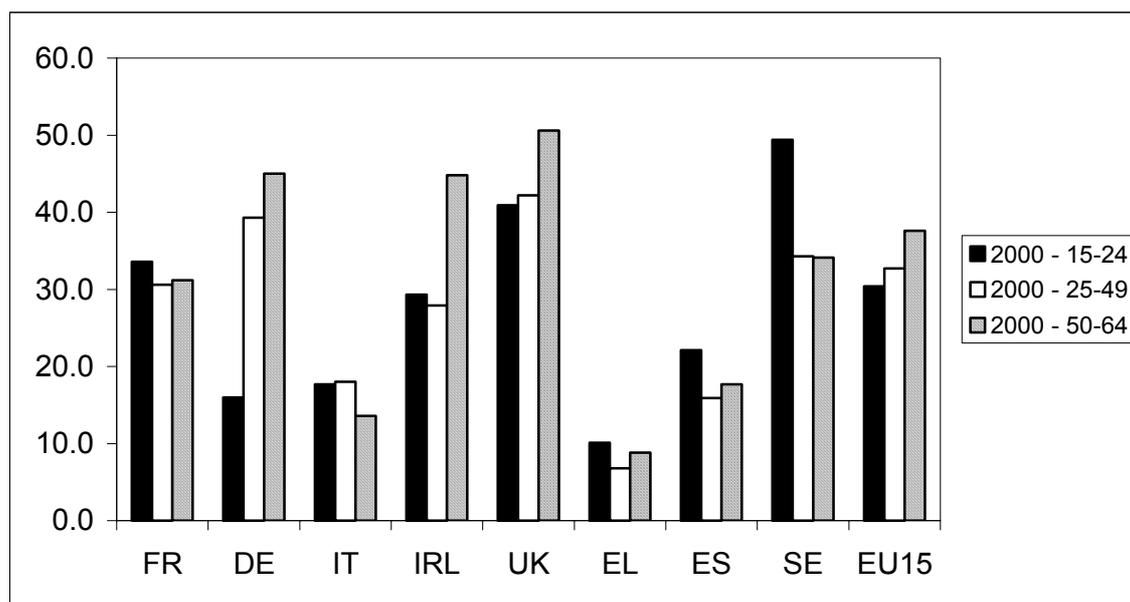
\* Eurostat estimate

<sup>a</sup> 1987

Sources: European Commission, 2000, pp. 85–100, 2001, pp. 111–33; data for candidate countries 1990–95 supplied by IPROSEC partners.

Reasons for women working part-time differ across countries: in the UK, Germany and Ireland, part-time work is a preference for more than 70% of women part timers, although in France and in southern European countries, roughly one women working part time in four would prefer to work full time if jobs were available (Eurostat, 2000). In EU candidate countries, 33.7% of women part-timers in Estonia declare that it is their preference, and 21.8% of women in Poland (data supplied by IPROSEC partners).

**Figure 2.2 Women working part-time by broad age groups in selected EU member states, 2000**



Source: Eurostat, 2000, table 34.

**Table 2.12 Women in part-time employment by groups of hours usually worked per week, in EU IPROSEC countries, 2000**

|         | 1–10 hrs | 11–20 hrs | 21–24 hrs | 25–30 hrs | 31+ hrs |
|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| France  | 9.9      | 35.6      | 9.0       | 26.3      | 19.3    |
| Germany | 22.9     | 46.1      | 7.0       | 23.6      | 0.4     |
| Greece  | 10.1     | 44.2      | 12.5      | 26.9      | 6.4     |
| Ireland | 16.4     | 56.6      | 10.7      | 12.6      | 3.7     |
| Italy   | 8.8      | 44.5      | 13.5      | 20.6      | 12.6    |
| Spain   | 19.5     | 55.0      | 6.5       | 18.7      | 0.3     |
| Sweden  | 14.4     | 21.4      | 7.4       | 42.5      | 14.2    |
| UK      | 20.8     | 41.5      | 13.3      | 17.9      | 6.6     |
| EU15    | 18.7     | 41.4      | 9.8       | 22.0      | 8.2     |

Sources: Eurostat, 2000 ; personal communication.

Mothers' activity rates vary across EU IPROSEC countries according to the number of children (Table 2.13). In most EU IPROSEC countries, women without children aged 20–59 have lower activity rates than mothers with one child. Activity rates of mothers with one child have been rising markedly since 1990. In 2000, for mothers with one child the figures for activity rates were lowest in Italy and highest in France. With two children, mothers' activity rates varied from 51.2% in Italy to more than 72.9% in France. In most countries, the fall in activity rates is not very steep after the first child, nor after the second, except in Germany (10 points). However, the arrival of a third child involves a steep fall in activity rates, especially in France and Germany. Here, the rates are highest in France, where activity rate of mothers with two and more children have been decreasing since the mid-1990s due to the implementation of the reform of the parental leave allowance. In the southern European countries, women's activity rates are relatively low whatever the number of children.

Families working arrangements appear to vary greatly between and within countries. Although the proportion of dual-earner families is growing in all countries, the total time devoted to economic activity differs considerably. Families with two full-time workers are most common in France, where working hours are shorter than in most EU member states, for men and women, and in southern European countries where part-time work is not developed, but where female activity rates are lower than in other countries. One-and-a-half-earner families are most common in Germany, the UK, and also in the Nordic countries. Men and women work longer hours in the candidate countries than in member states, and the differences between men and women is smaller.

Everywhere in the Union, except Sweden and Italy, women with children work shorter weekly hours than women without children. The difference, at six hours or more, is more marked in Germany, Ireland and the UK, where part-time hours are relatively short (Eurostat, 2000; personal communication).

Sweden and France are the IPROSEC countries that appear to have gone furthest in achieving equality at work and in public life, but only in Sweden is greater equality of opportunities matched by more equal sharing of household tasks, including caring responsibilities (Anxo *et al.*, 2002). Germany is the

**Table 2.13 Activity rates for women aged 20–59 by number of children in EU IPROSEC countries, 2000**

|         | 0 children | 1 child | 2 children | 3 or more children | Total activity rate |
|---------|------------|---------|------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| France  | 73.2       | 80.5    | 72.9       | 50.2               | 73.3                |
| Germany | 76.6       | 74.2    | 63.4       | 45.6               | 73.4                |
| Greece  | 57.6       | 61.1    | 59.5       | 51.3               | 57.7                |
| Ireland | –          | –       | –          | –                  | –                   |
| Italy   | 52.8       | 57.4    | 51.2       | 39.2               | 53.3                |
| Spain   | 58.9       | 59.4    | 56.8       | 46.4               | 58.5                |
| Sweden  | –          | –       | –          | –                  | –                   |
| UK      | 77.8       | 73.5    | 69.0       | 52.0               | 73.7                |

Source: Eurostat, 2000; personal communication.

IPROSEC country where equality of opportunity is less developed, while household sharing is least equal in southern European countries. Although women are more and more involved in economic activity, domestic and parental responsibilities are not being shared more equally.

Everywhere, irrespective of their employment status, women continue to perform a larger share of household tasks than men. According to their own reports, men are rarely responsible for household work and shopping (Fagan and Burchell, 2002, pp. 25–6). As a consequence of the unequal sharing of household tasks, the continuity of women's employment patterns is more likely to be affected during the family stage of their lives than that of men.

The figures concerning gender and family structure show broad differences across countries with regard to family models. Dual-earner families are more widespread in the Nordic countries, whereas the male breadwinner model is still prevalent in southern European countries, even though the employment patterns of women in the youngest generations are changing very fast. The decline in fertility could be an outcome of this change, while policies and state support for childcare and eldercare have not been adapted. The main challenges for policy are in organizing support for families to help them reconcile work and family life through a much greater diversity of provisions and facilities.

## References

- Algava, E. (2002) 'Les familles monoparentales en 1999', *Population – Edition française*, 57 (4–5), 733–60.
- Anxo, D., Flood, L. and Kocoglu, Y. (2002) 'Offre de travail et répartition des activités domestiques et parentales au sein du couple: une comparaison entre la France et la Suède', *Economie et statistique*, n° 352–3, 127–50.
- Avenel, M. (2001) 'Les enfants de moins de six ans et leurs familles en France métropolitaine', *Etudes et résultats, Drees*, n° 97, Paris: Ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité.
- Chambaz, C. (2000) 'Les familles mono-parentales en Europe: des réalités multiples', *Etudes et résultats, Drees*, n° 66, Paris: Ministère de l'Emploi et de la solidarité.
- Council of Europe (2001a) *Demographic Yearbook 2001*. Website: [www.coe.int/t/e/social\\_cohesion/population/demographic\\_year\\_book/2001\\_Edition/default.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/e/social_cohesion/population/demographic_year_book/2001_Edition/default.asp)
- Council of Europe (2001b) *Recent Demographic Developments in Europe*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- European Commission (1996) *Employment in Europe 1996*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- European Commission (1997) *Employment in Europe 1997*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- European Commission (1999) *Employment in Europe 1999*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- European Commission (2000) *Employment in Europe 2000*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- European Commission (2001) *Employment in Europe 2001*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

- Eurostat (1996), *Population, ménages et logements en Europe – Principaux résultats des recensements de 1990/19*, Document statistique 3C, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (2000) *European Social Statistics: labour force*, 2000, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (1997) *Demographic Statistics*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (1998a) *Living Conditions in Europe: selected social indicators*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (1998b) *The Social Situation in the European Union*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (2000) *European Social Statistics: labour force*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (2002a) *European Social Statistics: demography*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (2002b) *The Social Situation in the European Union*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (2002c) *Yearbook 2002*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Fagan, C. and Burchell, B. (2002) *Gender, Jobs and Working Conditions in the European Union*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Munoz-Perez, F. and Prioux, F. (1999) 'Les enfants nés hors mariage et leurs parents. Reconnaissance et légitimation depuis 1965', *Population*, 54 (3), 481–508.
- Sardon, J.-P. (2002) 'Evolution démographique récente des pays développés', *Population – Edition française*, 57 (1), 123–70.

### 3. Family Values and Social Policy in Europe

*Anthony M. Abela*

This paper examines family values and attitudes towards social policy among representative citizens from 12 EU member states and candidate countries. It seeks to understand the values and value orientations supporting specific family structures and options for social policies in distinct groups of nations, corresponding to the various waves of accession to the European Union: those in the first wave, classified as continental (France, Germany and Italy); the British Isles (United Kingdom, Ireland) in the second wave; third wave Mediterranean states (Greece and Spain); a fourth wave Nordic state (Sweden); fifth wave Central and Eastern Europe (Estonia, Hungary and Poland) and Mediterranean (Malta)<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Values in comparative research on social policies**

It is intuitively obvious that social policies are profoundly affected by the wider cultures that surround them and in which they are delivered. Nevertheless, very few comparative studies of welfare have taken social values seriously. In fact, over the past 50 years, most academic research on social policy has avoided the issue of culture – understood as the values and norms represented in social behaviour – and its effects on welfare development. Whenever culture was taken into consideration, it was seen as a context variable and a problem, rather than an element of the welfare regimes. The ‘modernist view’, by far superseded in recent times, held that social policy should be used to change social values (Baldock, 2000, pp. 122–6). By contrast, contemporary sociologists are adopting new approaches to examine the impact of everyday life on social welfare (Cahill, 1994). Some have analysed welfare ideologies (George and Wilding, 1994) and elaborated theories derived from modern and late modern thinkers on welfare (George and Page, 1995). More recently, Esping-Andersen (1999, p. 5) has observed how public welfare is an expression of social values that are predominant when welfare services are institutionalized. The crucial question is which values and whose values are institutionalized within welfare systems.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the observed economic and social changes of late modernity were leading to substantial cultural shifts, often identified as post-materialism (Inglehart, 1990, 1997) and its related post-traditional (Harding *et al.*, 1986; Abela, 1991, 2000), individualized (Ester *et al.*, 1993) and masculine–feminine components (van Deth and Scarbrough, 1995; Abela, 2000). Distinct social groups are becoming increasingly differentiated in terms of the risks they face and the values they hold, and these changes have profound implications for social policy (Baldock, 2000, p. 121). In this social context, sociologists are investigating the fit between culture and social policies. They are examining whether and, if so, how the values of people from different social groupings – as distinct from the values of elite leaders and their respective organizations in the postwar welfare state – have an impact on, and shape, social policy. The postindustrial context is marked by ‘third way’ or

'eclectic social policy', where culture is believed to be 'riven with particularistic, contradictory, shifting sometimes bigoted, often exclusive value positions' (Baldock, 2000, pp. 132–4).

The aim in this paper is to identify those value priorities and their related issues in social policy that command the support of significant majorities in European countries. Accordingly, the paper looks at differences and similarities between and within the European countries studied. It explores the factors contributing to socially differentiated value orientations and corresponding policy options. What is the relationship between traditional/materialist and post-traditional/post-materialist value orientations and social policy? Is the left–right political divide relevant to understanding differences in policy options of distinct social groupings and of specific groups of countries with similar welfare systems in Europe? Alternatively, is the left–right divide giving way to middle ground positions, identified as 'third way' politics? Is any convergence discernible between European member states and candidate countries over core value orientations and the corresponding options for social policy?

The study reports results from the analysis of the 1999/2000 European Values Study on family values and options for social policies in 11 countries representing continental, universal, Mediterranean, Nordic, and post-communist welfare systems.

The European Values Study (EVS) was established in the late 1970s as a large-scale, cross-national and longitudinal survey research programme on basic human values. Since the early 1980s, the EVS has carried out three waves of the survey. The third wave took place during 1999 and 2000 in over 30 countries. In all participant countries, a random sample of over 1000 respondents was drawn from the total adult population, aged 18 years and above. For the 12 countries under consideration, an overall sample of 15 120 was obtained, representing nearly half the total for the 30 European countries. Specially trained interviewers carried out interviews in the homes of respondents. The questionnaire was designed to identify moral and social values underlying European social and political institutions and to explore changing values concerning family, work, leisure, religious, political and social issues. The English version of the EVS questionnaire and the main findings are reproduced in the source book of the third wave of the European Values Study (Halman, 2001).

### **Value priorities in the IPROSEC countries**

In all the European countries under consideration, the family has top priority over other values: in most countries, more than 80% of respondents find the family very important in their life. It seems that the importance of the family unites citizens of EU member states and candidate countries, irrespective of an observed diversity in personal family living arrangements.

Most EU member states assign secondary importance to work, closely followed by friends and leisure. They attribute much less importance to religion and politics. Respondents from the British Isles and Sweden, however, replace the importance of work by friends and leisure time (Table 3.1).

In contrast to Sweden or the European average, Malta and, to a lesser extent, Poland find religion very important in life. Respondents in Malta,

however, are closer to Sweden and the United Kingdom in the importance they assign to leisure time than either their neighbouring Italian, German or Polish counterparts. It seems that Malta's greater exposure to overseas travel and tourism from European countries leads to a greater appreciation of leisure time, but not of friends and acquaintances. Similarly, Maltese respondents are closer to Swedes in the importance they attribute to politics than the average for the IPROSEC countries, but this does not seem to undermine their high regard for religion. A strategic distance from friends and acquaintances, together with close family ties, family-oriented work and leisure appear to remain distinctive characteristics of their national identity. In the same way, closer ties and interaction between citizens in an enlarged Union might be expected to favour not only the sharing and shaping of common values but also a greater appreciation of national identities in an ever-widening European environment.

Closely related to the value of the family is the legitimacy of marriage as a social institution. As with the overriding importance of the family, the majority of respondents, with some variations between and within countries, consider marriage to be a valid institution. Thus, the greatest support for the institution of marriage is recorded in Malta, closely followed by post-communist EU candidate countries, the other neighbouring Mediterranean countries and Sweden. Slightly less support is found in EU continental countries, Ireland and the UK. With the exception of Sweden, most respondents from the other European countries think that a long-term relationship is important for a happy life, and that children need both parents to grow up happily.

Overall, the majority of respondents are of the opinion that parents should do their utmost for their children. Similar percentages, except in Sweden, think that children should always love their parents. Moreover, irrespective of living arrangements, the majority are concerned about the well-being of their immediate family, and an even larger majority are willing to help members

**Table 3.1 Value priorities in IPROSEC countries, in %**

| EU accession wave,<br>date | Country             | Very important in life |        |         |         |          |          |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
|                            |                     | Work                   | Family | Friends | Leisure | Politics | Religion |
| <i>Wave 1: 1951</i>        | France              | 69                     | 88     | 49      | 37      | 8        | 11       |
| Continental                | Germany             | 50                     | 76     | 45      | 27      | 8        | 6        |
|                            | Italy               | 61                     | 90     | 35      | 29      | 8        | 33       |
| <i>Wave 2: 1973</i>        | United Kingdom      | 37                     | 90     | 58      | 48      | 5        | 12       |
| British Isles              | Northern Ireland    | 39                     | 88     | 64      | 44      | 8        | 27       |
|                            | Republic of Ireland | 49                     | 91     | 60      | 40      | 7        | 37       |
| <i>Wave 3: 1981</i>        | Greece              | 59                     | 82     | 42      | 42      | 9        | 32       |
| Mediterranean              | Spain               | 63                     | 86     | 39      | 31      | 4        | 15       |
| <i>Wave 4: 1995</i>        |                     |                        |        |         |         |          |          |
| Nordic                     | Sweden              | 54                     | 90     | 71      | 54      | 12       | 11       |
| <i>Wave 5: 2004</i>        |                     |                        |        |         |         |          |          |
| a) Eastern                 | Estonia             | 51                     | 67     | 27      | 19      | 2        | 5        |
|                            | Hungary             | 57                     | 90     | 33      | 31      | 6        | 19       |
|                            | Poland              | 78                     | 91     | 28      | 24      | 6        | 44       |
| b) Mediterranean           | Malta               | 75                     | 96     | 32      | 49      | 13       | 67       |
| Total                      | IPROSEC 11EC        | 56                     | 86     | 45      | 35      | 7        | 22       |

Source: European Values Study 1999/2000.

of their family. The values of marriage and the family, or alternative long-lasting stable family-type relationships, thus serve as a foundation for solidarity and conviviality among people with different lifestyles in Europe (Table 3.2).

### Gender issues

As might be expected, respondents from post-communist candidate countries, Malta, Mediterranean and continental countries are more likely to hold traditional views about family relationships than their counterparts in Sweden or the British Isles.

**Table 3.2 Marriage and family relations in IPROSEC countries, in %**

| EU accession wave:                 | 1<br>Contin-<br>ental | 2<br>British<br>Isles | 3<br>Mediterranean | 4<br>Nordic | 5a<br>Eastern | 5b<br>Malta | Total<br>IPROSEC<br>11 EC |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Marriage valid institution         | 77                    | 76                    | 85                 | 80          | 86            | 93          | 80                        |
| Long-term relationship to be happy | 63                    | 35                    | 70                 | 41          | 77            | 64          | 60                        |
| Children need both parents         | 88                    | 64                    | 89                 | 56          | 95            | 92          | 82                        |
| <i>Immediate family</i>            |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| Concerned about                    | 89                    | 75                    | 94                 | 97          | 93            | 96          | 88                        |
| Willing to help                    | 95                    | 93                    | 96                 | 98          | 93            | 99          | 94                        |
| <i>Parent-child relationships</i>  |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| Do utmost for children             | 68                    | 78                    | 75                 | 67          | 65            | 92          | 70                        |
| No sacrifice of well-being         | 21                    | 13                    | 15                 | 22          | 21            | 5           | 18                        |
| neither                            | 11                    | 9                     | 10                 | 10          | 14            | 3           | 11                        |
| <i>Child-parent relationships</i>  |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| Always love parents                | 69                    | 71                    | 78                 | 44          | 81            | 92          | 72                        |
| Parents have to earn respect       | 31                    | 29                    | 22                 | 56          | 19            | 8           | 28                        |

**Table 3.3 Partners' and gender issues in IPROSEC countries, in %**

| EU accession wave:                  | 1<br>Contin-<br>ental | 2<br>British<br>Isles | 3<br>Mediterranean | 4<br>Nordic | 5a<br>Eastern | 5b<br>Malta | Total<br>IPROSEC<br>11 EC |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Partners' issues</i>             |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| Women need children                 | 55                    | 16                    | 58                 | 23          | 74            | 44          | 49                        |
| Men need children                   | 44                    | 14                    | 43                 |             | 63            | 34          | 39                        |
| Children need both parents          | 88                    | 64                    | 89                 | 56          | 95            | 92          | 82                        |
| Woman single parent                 | 34                    | 31                    | 46                 | 30          | 35            | 15          | 35                        |
| Marriage outdated                   | 21                    | 22                    | 14                 | 19          | 13            | 6           | 19                        |
| Long-term relationship to be happy  | 63                    | 35                    | 70                 | 41          | 77            | 64          | 60                        |
| <i>Gender issues</i>                |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| Working mother and children         | 67                    | 69                    | 70                 | 84          | 65            | 59          | 68                        |
| Job independence for women          | 77                    | 57                    | 76                 | 80          | 71            | 44          | 72                        |
| Household income contribution       | 75                    | 66                    | 78                 | 88          | 83            | 71          | 76                        |
| Fathers looking after children      | 71                    | 66                    | 66                 | 91          | 72            | 62          | 71                        |
| Children suffer with working mother | 66                    | 36                    | 62                 | 36          | 65            | 88          | 57                        |
| Women want home and children        | 53                    | 35                    | 59                 | 37          | 65            | 69          | 52                        |
| Being a housewife                   | 48                    | 52                    | 54                 | 46          | 55            | 86          | 51                        |
| Men handling emotions               | 49                    | 49                    | 47                 | 63          | 49            | 50          | 50                        |

Source: European Values Study 1999/2000.

Thus, most of the respondents from Sweden or Britain, agree that women, and to a lesser extent, men need to have children for fulfilment, that children need both parents to grow up happily, and that a long-term relationship is necessary for happiness.

Similarly, a large majority of respondents from Sweden support feminist positions on gender relations. They are also more supportive of working mothers with children, women's independence through work, both partners contributing to household income, and the statement that fathers are equally suited to looking after children. By contrast, they are significantly less in agreement that pre-school children suffer when their mother works outside the home, that women prefer homemaking and caring for children, or that being a housewife is equally fulfilling as having a job. Contrary to expectations, however, unlike their European counterparts, respondents from Sweden are more often of the opinion that men are less able to handle emotions than women. Such a situation suggests the cultural construction of country-specific feminist views on gender (Table 3.3).

### **The meaning of marriage**

As demonstrated by previous studies (van den Akker *et al.*, 1993, p. 102; Abela 2000, p. 61), the analysis of marriage values in the 11 IPROSEC countries and Malta identifies three basic orientations for a successful marriage, as illustrated by the factor analysis in Table 3.4. These consist of an interpersonal bond between partners, cultural homogeneity and situational conditions. The interpersonal bond in marriage is characterized by spending time together, discussing mutual problems, showing respect and appreciation, understanding and tolerance, talking about mutual interests, faithfulness and, to a lesser

**Table 3.4** Factor analysis of marriage values in IPROSEC countries

|                             | F1    | F2    | F3    |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Discuss problems            | 0.68  | -0.06 | 0.25  |
| Respect and appreciation    | 0.63  | -0.01 | 0.00  |
| Understand and tolerance    | 0.62  | -0.02 | 0.06  |
| Talk about mutual interests | 0.62  | 0.17  | 0.23  |
| Spend time together         | 0.59  | 0.16  | 0.26  |
| Faithfulness                | 0.54  | 0.14  | -0.16 |
| Children                    | 0.36  | 0.23  | 0.21  |
| Happy sexual relations      | 0.29  | -0.08 | 0.63  |
| Same social background      | 0.02  | 0.73  | 0.09  |
| Same religious beliefs      | 0.21  | 0.72  | -0.15 |
| Agree on politics           | 0.07  | 0.68  | 0.01  |
| Apart from in-laws          | 0.00  | 0.00  | 0.62  |
| Adequate income             | -0.07 | 0.48  | 0.51  |
| Good housing                | 0.05  | 0.52  | 0.50  |
| Share household chores      | 0.34  | 0.05  | 0.50  |
| Variance explained %        | 17.73 | 14.32 | 12.15 |

*Source:* European Values Study 1999/2000; Varimax Rotation.

extent, sharing household chores, enjoying happy sexual relationships and having children.

Cultural homogeneity refers to partners' common social background, sharing religious beliefs and agreement on politics. Finally, situational conditions include living apart from in-laws, having happy sexual relations, an adequate income, and good housing and sharing household chores.

In most of the countries studied, interpersonal relationships between partners have primary importance, whereas a common cultural background and situational conditions are of secondary importance. Thus, Sweden and also Malta, the EU Mediterranean countries, the British Isles and continental countries attach great importance to interpersonal affective qualities, including respect and appreciation, faithfulness, understanding and tolerance. Whereas Mediterranean and continental countries give greater importance to companionship qualities, like talking about mutual interests and spending time together, Sweden and the British Isles have a higher preference for partnership qualities, like the discussion of mutual problems, respect and appreciation, and the sharing of household chores. Similarly, Malta and EU Mediterranean countries attach greater importance to situational conditions and cultural homogeneity between partners than their northern counterparts. All this suggests that citizens of Sweden and the British Isles are more likely to hold post-traditional and post-materialist value orientations than their Mediterranean counterparts (Table 3.5).

The culture shift towards post-materialism observable in the public spheres of the advanced industrial societies (Inglehart, 1990, 1997) seems to have its counterpart in the private and intimate sphere of marriage and family. In most European countries, 'post-materialism' and its 'post-traditional' component are most evident in the changing values of marriage and the family. The silent

**Table 3.5 Marriage values in IPROSEC countries, in %**

| EU accession wave:                 | 1<br>Contin-<br>ental | 2<br>British<br>Isles | 3<br>Mediterranean | 4<br>Nordic | 5a<br>Eastern | 5b<br>Malta | Total<br>IPROSEC<br>11 EC |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Very important in marriage:</i> |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| Respect and appreciation           | 86                    | 83                    | 85                 | 94          | 81            | 97          | 85                        |
| Faithfulness                       | 83                    | 92                    | 84                 | 88          | 77            | 97          | 84                        |
| Understanding and tolerance        | 80                    | 82                    | 83                 | 87          | 72            | 94          | 80                        |
| Discuss problems                   | 72                    | 85                    | 77                 | 81          | 67            | 95          | 75                        |
| Happy sexual relations             | 61                    | 66                    | 69                 | 59          | 61            | 81          | 63                        |
| Children                           | 55                    | 52                    | 72                 | 58          | 72            | 69          | 61                        |
| Talk about mutual interests        | 54                    | 50                    | 59                 | 43          | 42            | 82          | 50                        |
| Spend time together                | 47                    | 55                    | 57                 | 37          | 48            | 87          | 50                        |
| Apart from in-laws                 | 47                    | 45                    | 41                 | 41          | 48            | 56          | 45                        |
| Household chores                   | 29                    | 49                    | 41                 | 52          | 38            | 54          | 38                        |
| Adequate income                    | 30                    | 38                    | 51                 | 19          | 43            | 40          | 37                        |
| Good housing                       | 27                    | 40                    | 48                 | 29          | 46            | 38          | 37                        |
| Same religious beliefs             | 17                    | 24                    | 33                 | 13          | 22            | 57          | 21                        |
| Same social background             | 14                    | 22                    | 24                 | 7           | 13            | 51          | 17                        |
| Agree on politics                  | 8                     | 8                     | 16                 | 6           | 8             | 24          | 9                         |

Source: European Values Study 1999/2000.

revolution is embedded in the transformation of the meaning of marriage, where intimate interpersonal relationships have come to have pride of place, despite the observed large differences in values and practices of different generations.

### Changing values

As in earlier European studies, people's values are organized into traditional-post-traditional, materialist-post-materialist value orientations (Inglehart, 1990, 1997). For this purpose, respondents were requested to choose five priorities from a list of 11 qualities they think important for children to be encouraged to learn at home. Indirectly, such an exercise reveals the value priorities of respondents in a given society or country, because respondents' options for the transmission of values to future generations are an expression of their deepest convictions. As previously, the main value orientations are identified through the application of factor analysis. This enables comparisons between distinct social groups, societies and countries.

The application of factor analysis to the 11 values under consideration extracts two factors for the IPROSEC countries taken together.

The first factor runs from a set of newly aspired qualities that obtain a negative polarity score, including independence, determination and perseverance, and responsibility, to conventional attributes with a positive polarity score for obedience, religious faith and good manners. The second factor extends from conventional society-oriented and materialist qualities that obtain a negative polarity score for thrift, saving money and hard work to positive polarities for the newly acquired values of unselfishness, imagination, tolerance and respect.

The first factor has a social conformity–autonomy orientation with contrasting traditional and post-traditional polarities, extending from conformity to external authority towards self-direction and a sense of responsibility. The second factor represents the materialist-post-materialist orientation with negative polarities for traditional hard work and materialist thrift, saving money and contrasting positive polarities for post-traditional and post-materialist qualities (Table 3.6).

**Table 3.6 Factor analysis of traditional/post-traditional values**

|                                | F1    | F2    |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Obedience                      | 0.63  | -0.02 |
| Independence                   | -0.51 | 0.28  |
| Religious faith                | 0.49  | 0.01  |
| Determination and perseverance | -0.45 | 0.04  |
| Feeling of responsibility      | -0.44 | 0.05  |
| Good manners                   | 0.36  | 0.04  |
| Hard work                      | 0.07  | -0.63 |
| Thrift                         | 0.16  | -0.54 |
| Unselfishness                  | 0.28  | 0.51  |
| Imagination                    | -0.12 | 0.46  |
| Tolerance and respect          | 0.02  | 0.40  |
| Variance explained %           | 14.12 | 12.81 |

Source: European Values Study 1999/2000; Varimax rotation.

As in earlier studies of European (Harding *et al.*, 1986) and Maltese values (Abela 1991, 2000), with some improvement to account for middle-ground positions, respondents choosing at least three out of five traditional values are identified as traditional, whereas those choosing at least four out of six post-traditional qualities are identified as post-traditional. To achieve greater accuracy, similar to the classification of 'materialists', 'post-materialists' and 'mixed materialists-post-materialists' on Inglehart's battery of questions, respondents opting for a mix of two traditional and three post-traditional qualities are identified as 'mixed' traditional-post-traditional. On this basis respondents are identified as traditional, 'mixed' traditional-post-traditional or post-traditional depending on their value options. The measurement of traditionalism and post-traditionalism makes possible the comparison between social groups, societies and countries. In this way, respondents with diverse social characteristics are situated on the traditional-post-traditional continuum.

The analysis of marriage values by traditional and post-traditional value orientations reveals how post-traditionalists are more likely to understand marriage as a partnership, where respect and appreciation, understanding and tolerance, discussing problems and happy sexual relations have priority. On the other hand, traditionalists give more importance to companionship, adequate socio-economic conditions and the sharing of a common culture for success in marriage. Thus, traditionalists compared to post-traditionalists give more importance to faithfulness, children, talking about mutual interests, spending time together, sharing household chores, adequate income, good housing, agreement on religion, politics and common social background (Table 3.7).

Traditionalists, in contrast to post-traditionalists, are also found to favour close family ties. Thus, traditionalists are more likely to think that people, women in particular, need to have children for fulfilment and that children need both parents to grow up happily. They are also more likely to require a long-term and stable relationship for a happy life. On the other hand, post-

**Table 3.7 Traditionalism and marriage values in IPROSEC countries, in %**

|                             | Post-traditional | Mixed | Traditional | Total |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| <i>Very important:</i>      |                  |       |             |       |
| Respect and appreciation    | 87               | 84    | 83          | 85    |
| Understanding and tolerance | 84               | 79    | 77          | 80    |
| Discuss problems            | 77               | 74    | 74          | 75    |
| Happy sexual relations      | 63               | 64    | 62          | 63    |
| Faithfulness                | 79               | 85    | 88          | 84    |
| Children                    | 51               | 63    | 68          | 61    |
| Talk about mutual interests | 48               | 51    | 53          | 50    |
| Spend time together         | 42               | 51    | 56          | 50    |
| Apart from in-laws          | 45               | 46    | 45          | 45    |
| Household chores            | 35               | 38    | 41          | 38    |
| Adequate income             | 26               | 38    | 45          | 37    |
| Good housing                | 25               | 38    | 46          | 37    |
| Same religious beliefs      | 9                | 20    | 34          | 21    |
| Same social background      | 10               | 16    | 23          | 17    |
| Agree on politics           | 6                | 9     | 12          | 9     |

Source: European Values Study 1999/2000.

traditionalists are more likely to think that marriage is an outdated institution, approve of a lone mother raising a child without a stable relationship with a male partner, and do not see any necessary connection between happiness and having children.

Similarly, post-traditionalists are more supportive of feminist issues, including women's reconciliation of motherhood with an employment career, women's independence through participation in the labour market, the contribution by both partners to household income, and for fathers to share in childcare responsibilities (Table 3.8). By contrast, traditionalists differ significantly from their post-traditional counterparts in their strong views concerning the effect on pre-school children when their mother works outside

**Table 3.8 Traditionalism, partnerships and gender issues, in %**

|                                     | Post-traditional % | Mixed % | Traditional % | Total % |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| <i>Partners' issues</i>             |                    |         |               |         |
| Women need children                 | 39                 | 51      | 58            | 49      |
| Men need children                   | 27                 | 41      | 48            | 39      |
| Children need both parents          | 75                 | 84      | 88            | 82      |
| Long-term relationship to be happy  | 50                 | 61      | 67            | 60      |
| Marriage outdated                   | 23                 | 19      | 14            | 19      |
| Woman single parent                 | 40                 | 36      | 30            | 35      |
| <i>Gender issues</i>                |                    |         |               |         |
| Working mother and children         | 76                 | 69      | 62            | 68      |
| Job independence for women          | 77                 | 72      | 67            | 72      |
| Household income contribution       | 77                 | 76      | 75            | 76      |
| Fathers looking after children      | 78                 | 71      | 65            | 71      |
| Children suffer with working mother | 49                 | 57      | 64            | 57      |
| Women want home and children        | 37                 | 53      | 64            | 52      |
| Being a housewife                   | 39                 | 52      | 60            | 51      |
| Men handling emotions               | 46                 | 50      | 53            | 50      |

**Table 3.9 Traditionalism rankings for IPROSEC countries, in %**

|                  | Post-traditional | Mixed | Traditional |
|------------------|------------------|-------|-------------|
| Sweden           | 65               | 27    | 7           |
| Germany          | 51               | 33    | 16          |
| Greece           | 36               | 40    | 24          |
| Italy            | 34               | 33    | 33          |
| Spain            | 27               | 40    | 33          |
| France           | 30               | 35    | 34          |
| United Kingdom   | 28               | 36    | 36          |
| Hungary          | 22               | 35    | 42          |
| Ireland          | 21               | 36    | 43          |
| Estonia          | 15               | 40    | 46          |
| Northern Ireland | 17               | 35    | 48          |
| Poland           | 14               | 29    | 57          |
| Malta            | 9                | 30    | 61          |
| IPROSEC 11EC     | 31               | 35    | 35          |

Source: European Values Study 1999/2000.

the home, women's preference for a home and children, the statement that doing housework is equally satisfying as working for pay, and that men are less able to handle their emotions.

On the traditional-post traditional continuum, Sweden stands at the extreme post-traditional end, whereas the candidate countries are situated at the extreme traditional end. Thus, in descending order of traditionalism, we find Malta and Poland, Estonia and Hungary. Equally traditional is Ireland, closely followed by the United Kingdom, France and Italy, and least of all Germany and Sweden. Greece and Spain obtain high scores for the 'mixed' traditional and post-traditional value orientation, possibly because people from these mediterranean countries seek to reconcile old and new values (Table 3.9).

### **Political profiles and attitudes towards social policy orientations**

The Values Study enquired about respondents' political orientations and their priorities on a number of issues in social policy. The questions are concerned with respondents' preferences between left and right political ideologies; their choice of either freedom or equality; their views on competition as either good or harmful; whether the state should give more freedom to firms or control them more effectively; whether individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves or whether the state should ensure that everyone is provided for; whether unemployed people should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefits or, alternatively, whether they should have the right to refuse a job they do not want; the importance, or otherwise, of guaranteeing basic needs for all in terms of food, housing, clothes, education and health; the need to recognize people on their own merits; and to eliminate big inequalities in income between citizens. For a number of political and social policy issues, respondents were requested to indicate their position on a 10 or 5-point scale, which, for our purposes, have been collapsed into three values: two opposite extremes and a middle value.

A final question, designed by Inglehart (1990, 1997) for the construction of a materialism-postmaterialism index, asked respondents to identify what they consider to be the first and second most important policy objectives for the coming 10 years in their country from a list of four items. On this basis, respondents choosing two materialist qualities ('maintaining order in the nation' and 'fighting rising prices') are identified as materialists; those choosing two post-materialists values ('giving people more say in important government decisions' and 'protecting freedom of speech') are post-materialists, whereas those choosing a mix of one materialist and one post-materialist value are termed 'mixed' materialists/post-materialists.

### **Social policy in European countries**

Overall, very few respondents support extreme left or extreme right political ideologies. Instead, the majority favour middle ground positions standing between left and right. A higher percentage of respondents from EU Mediterranean countries, Sweden and continental European countries support a leftwing political ideology. Middle-ground positions or 'third way' politics have the greatest support among respondents in Malta, post-communist accession candidate countries and the British Isles.

Similar political middle-ground positions are accompanied by a greater preference for the principle of freedom over, and above all, equality, and support for the free market, where the state has only a limited control over firms. Thus, many respondents from Sweden and continental Europe, in particular, agree that the unemployed should have to take any job available or lose their unemployment benefits. Very few agree that they should have the right to refuse a job they do not want. In fact, most respondents from Malta, Mediterranean countries, the British Isles and continental countries, prefer middle-ground positions between a total imposition of duties by society and the protection of absolute individual rights. Middle-ground political ideologies are also supportive of joint welfare responsibilities to be shared by the individual and the state. Respondents from Sweden, the British Isles and continental states are more likely to agree that individuals should take more responsibility to provide for themselves. By contrast, respondents from post-communist candidate and Mediterranean countries are more likely to agree that the state should ensure that everyone is provided for. In most member and candidate countries, a general consensus is found for the state to guarantee the basic needs for all in terms of food, housing, clothes, education and health (92%) and to recognize people on their own merits (80%). Fewer respondents, however, consider it is important for the state to eliminate large inequalities in income between citizens. State intervention to ensure an egalitarian society is supported more strongly by respondents from EU Mediterranean countries and post-communist countries than by their counterparts from the British Isles or Continental states, Malta or Sweden in particular.

On Inglehart's index of materialism/post-materialism, respondents from post-communist countries, closely followed by those from Malta, are in the main materialists, whereas their counterparts from Sweden are more post-materialists. The majority of respondents from Continental, EU Mediterranean countries, Sweden and the British Isles, however, are 'mixed' materialists-post-materialists (Table 3.10).

### **Post-traditionalism and social policy**

Finally, this section examines the relationship, if any, between traditionalism/post-traditionalism and respondents' options on issues of social policy in the European countries under consideration. These issues are cross-tabulated by the constructed variable of post-traditionalism and, in turn, examined by the chi-square test of significance for relations between variables.

A significant relationship is found between post-traditionalism, political ideologies and most issues of social policy. Thus, on the one hand, traditionalists are more likely to support a rightwing political orientation and, contrary to expectations, give greater importance to equality over freedom, think of competition as harmful, expect the state to control firms more effectively, favour state responsibility for social welfare, give importance for state intervention to eliminate big income inequalities in society, and possess a materialist value orientation. By contrast, post-traditionalists and 'mixed' traditionalists/post-traditionalists, in particular, are more likely to support a leftwing or 'middle way' political orientation, give greater importance to freedom over equality, favour competition and a measure of free enterprise, require

**Table 3.10 Social policy in IPROSEC countries**

| EU accession wave:                    | 1<br>Contin-<br>ental | 2<br>British<br>Isles | 3<br>Mediterranean | 4<br>Nordic | 5a<br>Eastern | 5b<br>Malta | Total<br>IPROSEC<br>11 EC |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| <i>1. Political ideology</i>          |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| a) left                               | 20                    | 11                    | 25                 | 22          | 13            | 8           | 18                        |
| b) middle way                         | 66                    | 77                    | 59                 | 62          | 70            | 78          | 68                        |
| c) right                              | 14                    | 12                    | 16                 | 16          | 16            | 15          | 14                        |
| <i>2. Freedom or equality</i>         |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| Freedom above equality                | 50                    | 52                    | 48                 | 62          | 51            | 57          | 51                        |
| Neither                               | 9                     | 7                     | 6                  | 4           | 8             | 4           | 8                         |
| Equality above freedom                | 40                    | 41                    | 46                 | 35          | 41            | 38          | 41                        |
| <i>3. Competition good or harmful</i> |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| a) competition good                   | 44                    | 47                    | 40                 | 55          | 48            | 63          | 45                        |
| b) middle way                         | 44                    | 46                    | 48                 | 41          | 41            | 32          | 44                        |
| c) competition harmful                | 12                    | 7                     | 12                 | 4           | 11            | 5           | 10                        |
| <i>4. Firms and freedom</i>           |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| a) state to give freedom to firms     | 37                    | 31                    | 22                 | 46          | 18            | 34          | 30                        |
| b) middle way                         | 43                    | 55                    | 49                 | 48          | 39            | 45          | 46                        |
| c) state to control firms             | 20                    | 14                    | 29                 | 6           | 43            | 21          | 24                        |
| <i>5. Individual versus state</i>     |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| a) individual responsibility          | 38                    | 37                    | 20                 | 41          | 18            | 33          | 31                        |
| b) middle way                         | 44                    | 49                    | 51                 | 51          | 51            | 45          | 48                        |
| c) state responsibility               | 17                    | 14                    | 29                 | 8           | 31            | 23          | 21                        |
| <i>6. Unemployed take any job</i>     |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| a) take any job                       | 51                    | 28                    | 35                 | 50          | 36            | 28          | 41                        |
| b) middle way                         | 35                    | 48                    | 48                 | 40          | 39            | 48          | 41                        |
| c) right to refuse a job              | 14                    | 24                    | 17                 | 10          | 25            | 24          | 18                        |
| <i>7. Basic needs for all</i>         |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| d) important                          | 91                    | 94                    | 94                 | 88          | 92            | 96          | 92                        |
| e) middle way                         | 6                     | 5                     | 4                  | 8           | 6             | 3           | 6                         |
| f) not important                      | 2                     | 1                     | 2                  | 4           | 2             | 1           | 2                         |
| <i>6. Recognizing merits</i>          |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| d) important                          | 77                    | 82                    | 80                 | 75          | 86            | 88          | 80                        |
| e) middle way                         | 16                    | 13                    | 14                 | 18          | 9             | 9           | 14                        |
| f) not important                      | 7                     | 5                     | 6                  | 7           | 4             | 3           | 6                         |
| <i>9. Eliminating inequalities</i>    |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| d) important                          | 63                    | 62                    | 83                 | 45          | 74            | 36          | 67                        |
| e) middle way                         | 25                    | 26                    | 13                 | 32          | 19            | 32          | 22                        |
| f) not important                      | 12                    | 12                    | 4                  | 24          | 7             | 32          | 11                        |
| <i>10. Postmaterialism</i>            |                       |                       |                    |             |               |             |                           |
| Materialists                          | 23                    | 21                    | 23                 | 6           | 43            | 35          | 26                        |
| Mixed                                 | 56                    | 62                    | 60                 | 71          | 53            | 57          | 58                        |
| Post-materialists                     | 21                    | 16                    | 17                 | 22          | 4             | 7           | 16                        |

**Notes:** Respondents scoring (a) 1-3, (b) 4-7, (c) 8-10, on 10 point scale; (d) 1-2, (e) 3; (f) 4-5, on 5 point scale. Materialists: respondents choosing two materialist values. Post-materialists: choosing two post materialist values. Mixed: respondents choosing one materialist value and one post-materialist value on Inglehart's battery of questions.

**Source:** European Values Study 1999/2000.

individuals and intermediate social groupings to be responsible for the provision of their needs, give less importance to state intervention as an instrument for eliminating big inequalities in society, and possess a post-materialist or 'mixed' materialist/post-materialist value orientation. The great majority of traditionalists, 'mixed' traditionalist/post-traditionalists and post-traditionalists, however, give great importance to the state in guaranteeing basic needs for all in terms of food, housing, clothes, education and health. This suggests that, in all the countries studied, irrespective of political ideology or value orientation, a general consensus exists for the state to provide for the basic welfare needs of all citizens. On this basis, after the elimination of material scarcity, the majority of respondents tend to favour middle-ground positions requiring the joint efforts by the state, individuals, families and intermediate social groups for the provision of post-material social needs (Table 3.11).

The observed statistical relationship between the present rightwing politics and egalitarian policies of representative citizens from 11 European countries generally associated with political 'old left' ideologies is counterintuitive. It seems that, in certain European countries, the 'new left' ideology of citizens is shifting towards a 'third way' politics, reconciling traditionally liberal rightwing positions with new leftwing ideologies. It remains to be seen, however, whether similar political ideologies are successful in radically changing the policies and practices of long-established European welfare states.

### **Welfare complexity in the EU**

The analyses in this paper have identified the family values, value orientations and the corresponding options for social policy of a representative sample of citizens from EU member states and candidate countries. The study has noted differences, but also similarities, in specific values and social policies between and within countries. Irrespective of the observed differences regarding specific values, constituting distinct cultures and welfare state traditions, the study has identified common value orientations of social groupings that cut across conventional political ideologies of European welfare states. Accordingly, the traditional/post-traditional value orientation and its materialist/post-materialist component, common to citizens holding similar value orientations in a variety of European countries, have a direct bearing on people's options for social policy. The study suggests that the 'old' left-right political divide and the corresponding options in social welfare, when measured at the individual level, as distinct from institutional or organisational levels, is giving way to middle-ground positions, variously identified as 'third way' politics.

In all the countries examined, a general consensus is found for state provision to meet the basic welfare needs of all citizens in society. On this basis, when material needs are secured, the majority of respondents tend to favour social policies requiring the joint effort of the state, individuals and intermediate social groupings to meet post-materialist social needs in a free-market society. The findings suggest that a culture shift is taking place from traditional materialism towards individualized postmaterialism, displacing contrasting ideologies of conventional welfare states by an increasingly complex multicultural, post-materialist and post-traditional European welfare society.

**Table 3.11** Traditionalism and social policies in IPROSEC countries, and chi-square tests

|                                       | Post-traditional<br>% | Mixed<br>% | Traditi-<br>onal<br>% | All<br>% | Pearson Chi-Square<br>Tests |    |       |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----|-------|
|                                       |                       |            |                       |          | Value                       | df | Sig.  |
| <i>1. Political ideology</i>          |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| a) left                               | 24                    | 17         | 13                    | 18       |                             |    |       |
| b) middle way                         | 66                    | 69         | 68                    | 68       |                             |    |       |
| c) right                              | 10                    | 14         | 19                    | 14       | 242.1                       | 4  | 0.000 |
| <i>2. Freedom or equality</i>         |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| Freedom above equality                | 56                    | 49         | 49                    | 51       |                             |    |       |
| Neither                               | 8                     | 8          | 7                     | 8        |                             |    |       |
| Equality above freedom                | 36                    | 43         | 44                    | 41       | 67.4                        | 4  | 0.000 |
| <i>3. Competition good or harmful</i> |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| a) competition good                   | 44                    | 47         | 44                    | 45       |                             |    |       |
| b) middle way                         | 46                    | 43         | 44                    | 44       |                             |    |       |
| c) competition harmful                | 10                    | 10         | 12                    | 10       | 21.4                        | 4  | 0.000 |
| <i>4. Firms and freedom</i>           |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| a) state to give freedom to firms     | 33                    | 31         | 26                    | 30       |                             |    |       |
| b) middle way                         | 49                    | 45         | 43                    | 46       |                             |    |       |
| c) state to control firms             | 19                    | 23         | 30                    | 24       | 188.0                       | 4  | 0.000 |
| <i>5. Individual versus state</i>     |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| a) individual responsibility          | 35                    | 31         | 28                    | 31       |                             |    |       |
| b) middle way                         | 50                    | 48         | 46                    | 48       |                             |    |       |
| c) state responsibility               | 16                    | 21         | 25                    | 21       | 145.2                       | 4  | 0.000 |
| <i>6. Unemployed take any job</i>     |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| a) take any job                       | 37                    | 41         | 45                    | 41       |                             |    |       |
| b) middle way                         | 44                    | 41         | 38                    | 41       |                             |    |       |
| c) right to refuse a job              | 19                    | 19         | 17                    | 18       | 57.9                        | 4  | 0.000 |
| <i>7. Basic needs for all</i>         |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| d) important                          | 92                    | 91         | 92                    | 92       |                             |    |       |
| e) middle way                         | 6                     | 6          | 6                     | 6        |                             |    |       |
| f) not important                      | 2                     | 2          | 2                     | 2        | 4.6                         | 4  | 0.335 |
| <i>6. Recognizing merits</i>          |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| d) important                          | 78                    | 81         | 83                    | 80       |                             |    |       |
| e) middle way                         | 16                    | 14         | 12                    | 14       |                             |    |       |
| f) not important                      | 7                     | 5          | 5                     | 6        | 45.9                        | 4  | 0.000 |
| <i>9. Eliminating inequalities</i>    |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| d) important                          | 62                    | 67         | 72                    | 67       |                             |    |       |
| e) middle way                         | 26                    | 22         | 20                    | 22       |                             |    |       |
| f) not important                      | 13                    | 11         | 8                     | 11       | 117.7                       | 4  | 0.000 |
| <i>10. Postmaterialism</i>            |                       |            |                       |          |                             |    |       |
| Materialists                          | 15                    | 24         | 37                    | 26       |                             |    |       |
| Mixed                                 | 57                    | 61         | 55                    | 58       |                             |    |       |
| Post-materialists                     | 27                    | 14         | 8                     | 16       | 915.7                       | 4  | 0.000 |

**Notes:** Respondents scoring (a) 1-3, (b) 4-7, (c) 8-10, on 10 point scale; (d) 1-2, (e) 3, (f) 4-5, on 5 point scale. Materialists: respondents choosing two materialist values. Post-materialists: choosing two post materialist values. Mixed: respondents choosing one materialist value and one post-materialist value on ingelhart's battery of questions.

**Source:** European Values Study 1999/2000.

## Note

1. The analysis presented in this paper was conducted by the author for the countries participating in the IPROSEC project funded by the European Commission. Although Malta was not one of the participating countries, the author was a member of the IPROSEC Advisory Committee and has included his own country for comparative purposes.

## References

- Abela, A. (1991) *Transmitting Values in European Malta: a study in the contemporary values of modern society*, Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana.
- Abela, A. (2000) *Values of Women and Men in the Maltese Islands: a comparative European perspective*, Valletta: Commission for the Advancement of Women, Ministry for Social Policy.
- Baldock, J. (2000) 'Culture: the missing variable in understanding social policy', in N. Manning and I. Shaw (eds), *New Risks, New Welfare: signposts for social policy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 121–36.
- Cahill, M. (1994) *The New Social Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1999) *Social Foundation of Postindustrial Economics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ester, P., Halman, L. and de Moor R. (1993) *The Individualizing Society: value change in Europe and North America*, Tilburg: Tilburg University Press.
- George, V. and Page, R. (eds) (1995) *Modern Thinkers on Welfare*, Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- George, V. and Wilding, P. (1994) *Welfare and Ideology*, Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Harding, S., Phillips, D. and Fogarty, M. (1986) *Contrasting Values in Western Europe: unity, diversity and change. Studies in the contemporary values of modern society*, London: Macmillan and EVSSG.
- Halman, L. (with A. M. Abela, H. Anheier, S. Harding and 53 others) (2001) *The European Values Study: a third wave. Source book of the 1999/2000 European values study surveys*, Tilburg: European Values Study, WORC.
- Inglehart, R. (1990) *Cultural Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, Princeton: New Jersey, Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, R. (1997) *Modernization and Postmodernization: cultural, economic and political change in 43 societies*, Princeton: New Jersey, Princeton University Press.
- van den Akker, P., Halman, L. and de Moor, R. (1993) 'Primary relations in Western Europe', in P. Ester, L. Halman and R. de Moor (eds), *The Individualizing Society: value change in Europe and North America*, Tilburg: Tilburg University Press.
- van Deth, J. W. and Scarbrough, E. (eds) (1995) *The Impact of Values. Beliefs in government*, vol. 4, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## 4. Perceptions of the Impacts of Public Policy on Family Formation in Germany, Italy, Sweden and Estonia

*Kati Karelson, Valentina Longo, Olga Niméus and Jutta Träger*

Over the past few decades, low birthrates have been an important concern in many European countries. In this paper, recent trends in fertility are presented and discussed with reference to social and family policies in four of the countries studied in the IPROSEC project, namely Germany, Italy, Sweden and Estonia. The main objective is to analyse how families perceive incentives and obstacles with regard to family policies and to examine whether social and family policies have an impact on prevailing ideas and views about family life<sup>1</sup>.

The paper begins by giving a brief overview of trends in fertility in the four countries and examines what respondents see as ideal family size and structure. It then goes on to compare social benefits and services for families and the knowledge and awareness that families have of policy measures. In the final section, an attempt is made to assess whether a relationship exists between the availability of public support for families and patterns of family formation.

### **Trends in fertility**

Analysis of the total fertility rate (TFR) for a given year provides an indication of the actual number of births, while the completed fertility rate (CFR) (the average number of children born to women aged 50, belonging to different birth cohorts having achieved their fertility) presents a picture of trends in fertility among cohorts of women over time. TFR across the four countries (Figure 4.1) in the immediate postwar period was characterized by high fertility, or a baby boom, in Germany, Italy and Sweden, while Estonia experienced a moderate decrease in the number of births over the same period. During the 1960s and 1970s, many West European countries started to experience a decline in fertility at the same time as larger numbers of women were entering the labour market.

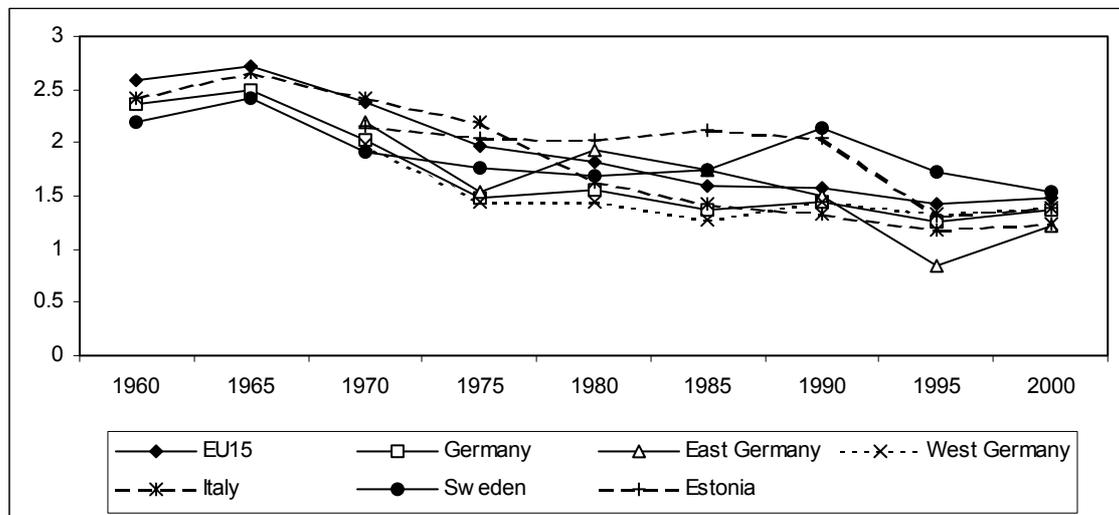
The absence of a postwar baby boom in Estonia is attributed to the fundamental change in political and economic life during the Soviet era. In the 1970s, Estonia experienced an increase in fertility, due primarily to increasing immigration of younger workers mainly from Russian-speaking parts of the Soviet Union, and the younger age at which mothers had their first child. Until 1990, the absolute number of births grew continuously, and the TFR rose to 2.26 at the time of the Singing Revolution in 1988–89 (Statistical Office of Estonia, 1996, p. 59). Since then, the transformation towards a market economy appears to have had a negative impact on fertility: in 1998, TFR had fallen to 1.28 (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2001, p. 38). A similar trend is found in East Germany after reunification: TFR decreased from 1.50 in 1990 to 1.06 in 1998. In West Germany, the steep decline in fertility had stabilized by the 1980s, and TFR has since ranged from 1.28 in 1980 to 1.45 in 2000. In Italy, the decrease started in the late 1970s, a trend that has continued to date: the TFR in Italy

was 1.15 in 1998. In 1990, Sweden momentarily had the highest TFR in Europe (2.13), though it had fallen to 1.54 in 2000.

Today, all four countries are experiencing relatively low TFR. It was below the EU average in Germany, Italy and Estonia in 2000, and slightly above the EU average in Sweden at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

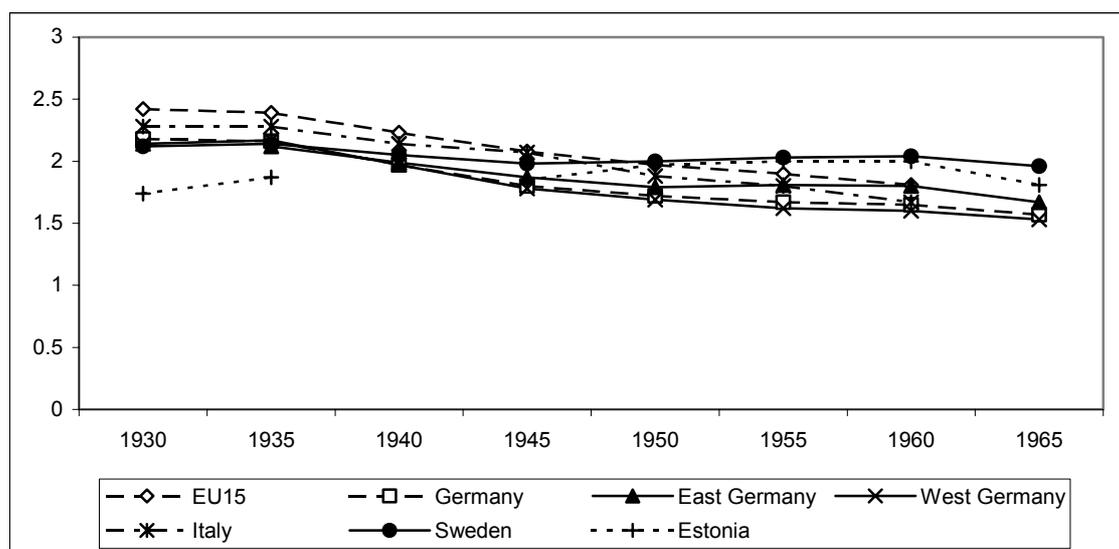
The figures for CFRs indicate negative trends for West and East Germany, and Italy, while the rate has been more stable over the years in Sweden and Estonia (Figure 4.2). In West and East Germany, as well as in Italy, the CFR has decreased continuously since the 1940 cohorts, while the 1955 and 1960 cohorts in Estonia point to increasing completed fertility rates compared to

**Figure 4.1 Total fertility rates in selected countries, 1960–2000**



Sources: Eurostat: 2002, tables E-4, J-8; for East and West Germany, Sardon, 2002, table 3.

**Figure 4.2 Completed fertility rates by birth cohorts in selected countries, 1930–65**



Source: For EU15, Eurostat, 2002, table E-6; Sardon, 2002, table 4.

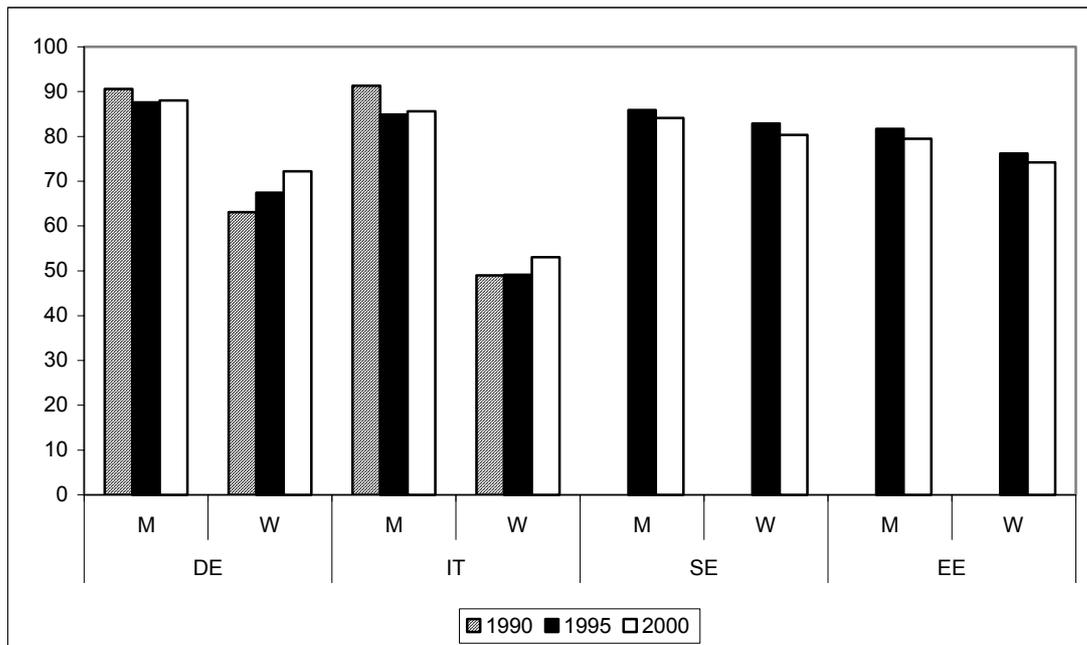
previous birth cohorts. Sweden has remained fairly stable at around two children per women, despite changes in TFR over time, reflecting shifts in the timing of childbearing rather than in the final number of children. The effects of decreasing total fertility rates, especially during the 1990s, are still not noticeable in the CFR, as the fertility period of the 1965 cohort has not yet come to an end.

The three EU-countries have experienced an increase of about four years. The trend in the mean age of women at the birth of their first child is moving in the direction of higher mean ages in all four countries. In 1998, it had reached between 27.8 and 28.7 in the three EU member states, compared to 23.6 years on average in Estonia (Council of Europe, 2001, table T3.4).

### Women's labour market participation

Trends in fertility are often compared to trends in women's labour market participation. As shown by Figure 4.3, women today leave the labour force during their childbearing years more than they did a decade ago. In Western Europe, larger numbers of women were entering the labour market from the 1970s. The majority of Swedish women aged 25–35 were already in the labour market in 1980. In Italy and Germany, however, the main change in female labour market participation within this age group took place from the 1980s. In the Soviet times in Estonia, men and women alike were integrated into the labour force in line with the ideology of full employment, and the differences between male and female rates are still closer to those in Sweden.

**Figure 4.3** Employment rates for men and women aged 25–49 in selected countries, 1990–2000



Sources: Eurostat, 2002b, pp. 100–1; for Sweden and EU15 (female employment, 1995), Eurostat, 1995, table 006; for Estonia, European Commission, 2001.

The lowest employment rates for women in the 25–49 age group are found in Italy (61%), while the highest rates are in Sweden (82%). The female employment rate in Estonia was high after the collapse of the Soviet-style socialism. However, since the beginning of 1990s, Estonia, like other transition countries, is facing the new social phenomenon of unemployment.

When examining female employment rates, it is important to bear in mind the proportion of women engaged in part-time work in different countries. In Sweden, as many as 34% of employed women aged 25–49 were working part time in 2000 (SCB, 2002, p. 43). The rate for the same age group is higher still in Germany (39%), though it is lower in East than in West Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2002a, 2002b). In Italy, only 18% of women in this age group are employed part-time (Istituto nazionale di statistica, 2002). Data are not available for women in the same age group in Estonia, but the rate for women of all ages was around 13% at the end of the twentieth century (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2000). These data suggest that women in Sweden and Germany are more likely to work part time when they have children, although part-time work does not appear to be necessarily associated with high fertility rates.

### **Ideal family size and living arrangements**

The in-depth interviews carried out for the IPROSEC project examined two aspects of ideal family size. Firstly, respondents were asked to describe their own ideal family size. Their ideal was found to be influenced by their age, economic circumstances and personal living arrangements. Secondly, they were asked to describe the most widespread ideal number of children found in their countries. In all four countries, substantial agreement was expressed about the need to be free to choose family size: everybody should be in a position to decide whether or not to have children and to choose the number of children.

The answers on ideal family size point to wide variations between the four countries. Ideal family size ranged from one to five children in Germany and from two to six children in Estonia. In Italy, most of the respondents claimed that it was not possible to be specific about ideal family size without taking account of a family's economic situation. Italian respondents rejected the concept of an ideal family size because it was seen as part of the legacy of fascism and does not help to ensure the future well-being of children. In addition, such intentions are seen as endangering the position of women in the labour market. A married woman aged 45 with two children pointed out that:

*I would prefer company policies, policies on working conditions, because economic pressures to make people have children would only force women to give up work; they would deprive women of the opportunity to work.*

Italian respondents, who depended solely on their income from work, considered the monetary value of family allowances to be derisory and completely unrelated to the real needs of children. Only in two cases were incentives to encourage parents to have children viewed positively: if they could guarantee maximum autonomy about decisions to have children, either through the provision of services, or through an effective incomes policy.

Furthermore, ideal family size is mainly determined by the concept of the ideal model of children in a specific society. In Estonia, ideal family size in

general is strongly connected with the prevailing model of three children, which was already prevalent in the late 1980s and was used in public rhetoric. The reasons for this model are mainly related to present conditions in society where births rate have declined rapidly, and population ageing is one of the biggest challenge for public policy. The majority of respondents supported the model of three children, which is already seen as less than ideal because they would really prefer four or more children if the state provided higher benefits. Consequently, some of the respondents, especially those with only one child, but also those with at least three children, would ideally have liked to have more.

In Germany, Italy and Sweden, no ideal model of family size exists in public debate. In Italy, the trend is to have one child or a maximum of two. In Sweden, the norm of two children is strong (Landgren Möller, 1997) and was shared by most respondents. Most of the German respondents preferred one or two children as an ideal family size, with small gaps between children so that they are able to grow up together, and the parents can return to their previous lifestyles (in particular women can return to work) more quickly. These results are reflected in the CFR in the four countries. In Germany and Italy, the number of births is low, on average 1.6, compared to Sweden and Estonia, where completed fertility reaches on average 2.0 children per women for the 1960 cohort.

In all four countries, respondents agreed that parents should have freedom of choice in relation to ideal family structure. Thus, the decision about family size is mainly an individual one, influenced by the social, legal and cultural context. In Estonia, the ideal family is almost exclusively a nuclear family, composed of the biological mother and father and their children. Respondents' own experiences have a strong impact on their view of the best living form. Legal marriage is not considered as a decisive factor for family structure, but lone-parent families are not regarded as ideal either for themselves or for others. Respondents living alone aged over 40 (widowed), as well as young single respondents, confirmed they would rather live in larger household. In contrast to Estonia, Swedish respondents pointed out that the structure of the family was not of great importance for them. Only one of the four cohabiting couples with children planned to get married. One cohabiting woman with three children commented:

*If you haven't got married before you have children, then I think that it's not the same thing to get married; it is no longer very attractive. If it was, it would be for practical reasons, but we've already signed an agreement. We'll inherit from each other. We signed an agreement when our daughter was born. So we have checked all that kind of thing.*

Additionally, the general view among respondents was that it is irrelevant whether cohabiting parents are married or not. In Germany, as well as in Italy, different factors influence family living arrangements. In Germany, respondents can be divided into two main groups. One group, in particular older people, mentions the preference for marriage. They had chosen to marry because marriage was the social norm, and they had married at an early age. Social pressure on young couples to marry was greater in the past than today and influenced the ideal family form. Younger respondents preferring marriage made a conscious decision about their family status and structure. They

claimed that to be married implies a greater personal and public commitment. A few respondents remarked that they had taken account of administrative or financial factors when they married, such as the tax system and, in one case, it was a way of avoiding military service. Some of the respondents decided to marry when their children were born because of the advantage for legal status and social security. Most of the respondents who preferred cohabitation as an ideal structure pointed out that marriage is an institution without any meaning. The German tax system favours married couples compared to cohabiting couples (through the tax splitting system) but, for most of the respondents who are cohabiting, this is not an inducement to marry. Only a few of them claimed they preferred marriage to cohabitation due to the tax system. A few respondents argued that it would be better to give cohabitation the same legal status as marriage. In Italy, most of the respondents pointed out that families are formed only by the union between a married couple with their joint children. Some would want to give same-sex couples the same status as married couples, and a few consider that living with close friends constitutes a family.

In Germany and in Sweden, the multigenerational family was not seen as an ideal living arrangement by the majority of respondents. Especially in Sweden, the great majority were grateful that the municipality offers service for older people. One of the respondents told of his experiences from his own childhood of having his grandmother cared for in his parent's home:

*With regard to my own parents, I hope I can be there and help them. And you should do as much as you can. Then it is, of course, very good to have public home-help. My grandmother lived with my parents until I was 12. It was very good but it was also very tiresome, for my dad anyway. So you should not romanticize the picture of having the older generation in your home. On the other side, if you live in the same town then you can support them as much as you can. That's OK. That's something you want to do. Besides, some things are better done by professionals.*

Only one woman among the respondents could imagine having her mother living with her when she grew older, but her partner did not like the idea. A few respondents received financial help from children or paid maintenance for a child.

In Estonia, the general attitude is that adult children and their families should live apart from their parents. Reasons why they live together are strongly connected with the children's welfare and solidarity between different generations. As one widowed male respondent with three adult children explained, he had a positive view towards multigenerational households:

*I think it's normal [to live in a multigenerational household]. I like this kind of lifestyle. Grandchildren get to know older people and vice versa. It's even more important for grandchildren to have commitments and to communicate with grandparents. It's the basis for respect towards older people.*

Multigenerational households are more common in rural areas in Estonia where dwellings are bigger than in towns. People who are under the age of 40 and live together with their parents confirm that, in rural areas, grandparents often take care of grandchildren, since access to childcare is sometimes problematic because of distances. In addition to childcare, another function of multigenerational households is to provide elder care. Two characteristics of multigenerational living arrangements can be identified in Italy. On the one

hand, the level of responsibility for relatives seems to be very high, and caring for family members is a concern for the respondents. On the other, they stress the importance of living independently from their original family. In the future, it will be necessary to look to both local authorities and the private sector for alternative solutions to care for relatives.

### **Public provision for families**

Forms of family support differ between the four countries and are related to the historical and socio-political background of each country. Large differences are found between them with regard to taxation, family allowances, child allowances and parental leave and in the provision of public childcare.

Present-day Swedish family policy has its roots in the 1970s and builds on three main pillars: individual taxation, parental leave and public childcare. Social and family policy is closely related to labour market policy and gender equality policy. Women and men alike are expected to support themselves through paid work, and parents are enabled to do so due to the availability of parental leave and public childcare. The provision of public childcare is generous and was expanded continuously from the mid-1970s (Jönsson, 2002).

Since 1949, the constitution in Germany has attributed responsibility to the state for protecting marriage and family formation. As a consequence, families are supported by tax relief and dedicated social benefits. In addition to national family policy measures, like financial support for large families (*Familienlastenausgleich*), child benefit, parental leave (*Erziehungsgeld*, or benefits paid to parents who give up work to raise their children), child tax allowances and financial support for students (*Bafög*), individual federal states may provide additional payments (Peuckert, 1999).

In Italy, the family is expected to provide care for family members, and the state offers only limited services for families. State support is given to the family as a unit in the form of tax concessions and through income policies. Direct policy measures, except measures to deal with poverty, are rare. The universal state child benefit introduced in 1993 for all children up to the age of 16 can be supplemented by other allowances, such as additional birth allowance, family benefits and school allowances from local authorities. They are, however, often related to the type of household or number of children in the family. It was not until 2000, with Law 53, that the concept of parental leave was introduced, which means that women and men alike have the right to take parental leave. After compulsory maternity leave, each parent can take a maximum of 6 months leave paid at 30% of salary.

As the result of societal development, the basis of Estonian family policy is the child rather than the family unit. The transition to Western style democracy has brought a growing awareness of the value of children in society. In Estonia, targeted social policy measures are aimed at the household rather than family. A household is a group of people living in the same dwelling, sharing joint economic resources and considering themselves as belonging to one household. The main objective of family policy is to ensure the well-being of all children and families regardless of family composition.

The concept of family policy is similar in Sweden and Estonia, despite the different levels of provision and services. In both cases, family policy stresses

universalism rather than targeting poor families. In Germany and Italy, the family is very important as an institution, but social expenditure differs substantially between countries. In 1998, Germany spent 1.93% of GDP on family cash benefits, while Italy spent only 0.58%. Germany spent 0.80% of GDP on family services, and Italy spent 0.30% (OECD, 1999).

#### CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

The provision for childcare varies between the four countries, as shown in Table 4.1. In Sweden since 2001, all children aged 1–12 are entitled to a place in public childcare: in day-care centres, pre-schools or after-school-care. At the age of one, about a third of children are in some form of childcare. The proportion doubles by the age of two. In 2001, 77% of children aged 1–6 were enrolled in day-care centres; 66% of children aged 7–9 and 9% aged 10–12 were enrolled in after-school care (SCB, 2002). In Sweden, the percentage of children enrolled in privately organized childcare increased from 5% in 1990 to 15% in 2000.

In Germany, a distinction must be made between East and West. State provision of services for families is less widespread in West Germany since the provision at the local level is often delegated to voluntary/non-profit organizations. In East Germany, a public childcare system similar to that operating before reunification still exists. Territorial differences are reflected in the percentage of children aged 0–2 cared for in crèches. Also, among children aged 3–6, a larger proportion in East Germany are enrolled in pre-schools compared to West Germany. In contrast to West Germany, the East German public childcare system offers full-time care, while care in West Germany is often offered on a part-time basis (Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, 2003).

As in West Germany, public childcare for children under the age of two is rare in Italy, while most children aged 3–6 are enrolled in pre-schools (Censis, 2002). Large differences also exist between the North-East and South: in the North-East, almost 14% of children below three are enrolled in crèches, compared to 5% in the South.

In Estonia, as in Italy and Germany, crèches are provided until children reach the age of three. The next level is kindergartens for children aged 3–7, with special kindergartens for disabled children to the age of seven. The 1999

**Table 4.1 Proportion of children in different age groups in childcare centres, 2000/01, in %**

|              | 0–2 | 1  | 2  | 3–6 | 3  | 4  | 5  |
|--------------|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|
| Estonia      | na  | na | 53 | 77  | na | na | na |
| East Germany | 35  | na | na | 87  | na | na | na |
| West Germany | 5   | na | na | 77  | na | na | na |
| Italy        | 9   | na | na | 98  | na | na | na |
| Sweden       | na  | 36 | 67 | na  | 71 | 76 | 78 |

*Sources:* Estonia – Statistical Office of Estonia, 2002; Sweden – Swedish Institute, 2001; Italy – Censis, 2002; Germany – Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, 2003.

law on Pre-School Child Institutions obliges local authorities to create places for all children of pre-school age in kindergartens or crèches.

In Estonia, enrolments for the 1–6 age group increased by 10% from 56% in 1990 to 66% in 2000. The rate for the 3–6 age group rose from 69% in 1990 to 77% in 2000 (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2002).

Sweden and Estonia have a welfare system based on individual rights, while Germany and, especially, Italy protect the family as a unit. These different conceptions have consequences also for the childcare system. All the countries considered have a high enrolment rate for children aged 3–6 in pre-schools, but for children aged 0–3 the situation varies: the Swedish childcare system, in association with the parental leave regulation, ensures the highest coverage of needs. Estonia as well has a comparatively high coverage, but large territorial differences are found between cities and villages.

Local authorities have primary responsibility for providing childcare in all the countries considered. The private sector is present in the four countries, but it plays a minor role, with the exception of Italy and, especially, Germany for children aged 3–6. Some differences are to be found in the services offered to families, with regard to the private sector and in the rules for access to services.

In Sweden, the privately organized facilities are state funded. The fees paid by parents are means-tested, and they represent about 13% of the costs. State financed childcare offers day-care centres as well as day-care homes (Swedish Institute, 2001). The role of the private sector is broader in Italy than in Sweden: childcare is provided for children aged 3–6 primarily by the municipality or the state (71%) or by consortia or Catholic organizations (29%), mainly the parish. Public pre-schools cover 65% of the places for children aged 0–3; 35% are private and organized by third sector associations (Addabbo and Olivier, 2001). Access is universal for children aged 3–6, while the eligibility criterion for children 0–3 is the employment status of both parents. Fees are means-tested and the municipalities and regions fund the services. Some municipalities now offer family day-care homes.

The private sector plays a bigger role in Germany and Italy, where the services managed directly by local authorities are less widespread. In Germany pre-schools for children aged 0–3 are mainly run by local authorities, while kindergartens for children aged 3–6 are mainly managed by private organizations that are state funded.

In Estonia, as in the other countries considered, both the public and the private sector offer childcare. Local authorities and the general state budget finance public childcare with the help of fees paid by parents. The latter may not exceed 20% of the official minimum wage set by the government according to the 1999 Law on Pre-School Child Institutions. In 2001, the ratio of private to public childcare institutions was 26 to 624 (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2002). The collapse of the Soviet Union brought fundamental changes in the economic situation. Local authorities took over the responsibility for crèches and kindergartens previously run by collective farms or enterprises. As a consequence of declining fertility and shortage of resources, about 20% of childcare institutions have been closed down since 1990 (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2001).

#### PARENTAL LEAVE REGULATIONS

In Estonia, according to the Health Insurance Act (October 2002), pregnancy and maternity leave amount to 140 days. In the case of multiple births, the length of leave is 154 days. During this period, a woman has the right to receive maternity benefit. The amount of compensation is 100% of the mother's average wage over the previous six months. Parents are entitled to care allowance for 14 days to stay at home with a sick child under the age of 12 (Health Insurance Act of 2002).

The social welfare system in Germany provides maternity leave of 14 weeks, including six weeks before birth, paid at 100% of the salary, and parental leave for two years after the birth of a child with an income-tested replacement salary. The compensation in Germany and Estonia entirely covers the mother's wage, but the length of leave is much shorter than in Sweden (Peuckert, 1999).

In Sweden, parental leave insurance covers 13 months (one extra month since 2002) of income-related benefit (80% of salary). Two of these months are to be used by the parent not taking the main part of the leave period, which in most cases is the father (the so-called daddy's months). Parental leave insurance has also become more flexible, so that it can be calculated in hours rather than days (Försäkringskassan, 2002).

In Italy, compulsory leave for mothers lasts five months, paid at 80% of the employee's wage. After this time, the mother, or the father, can take a maximum of six months, not necessarily consecutive, until the child is one year old. This allowance amounts to 30% of the wage. After compulsory maternity leave, both parents are entitled to 10 months parental leave until the child is eight years old. As in Sweden, the 'daddy's months' are also provided for Italian fathers. If the father applies for a period of over three months, the possibility of using parental leave increases for him from 6 to 7 months, and the total period of parental leave rises from 10 to 11 months. The main difference between Italy and Sweden regarding parental leave concerns the economic replacement. Although the law in Italy allows fathers to take the leave, this is paid at 30% of the employee's wage and, since women are paid less than men, it is almost impossible for the father to use it (Law 53/2000 on Parental Leave).

#### CHILD BENEFIT

Child allowance in Sweden is a universal benefit paid to all families irrespective of income. The Swedish government has developed a more generous family policy, and a new proposal was presented in 2000. The proposal was intended to provide economic incentives to increase the birthrate. Following the acceptance of the proposal, child allowances have been raised from approximately 87 to 99 euros per month per child (Riksförsäkringsverket, 2003). The benefit for three or more children has also been raised to 127 euros per month. In Estonia in 2002, child benefit was approximately 10 euros for the first child. The next children receive twice the rate for the first child (approximately 20 euros) per month under the State Family Benefits Act of 2001.

Universal benefits are paid in Sweden and Estonia, while in Italy and Germany the benefit depends on family income. In Germany, family benefits have been used to redistribute income from families without children to families

with dependent children, as testified by the so-called *Familienlastenausgleich*, and/or to redistribute income from high-income families to those with low income. The income threshold is 16 464 euros a year to receive 154 euros a month for each of the first three children, and 179 euros for subsequent children.

In Italy, allowances and subsidies depend on the type of job, whether self-employed, and on the family income: family allowances are paid to low-income earners. The amount depends on the number of family members and the income of the family unit. It varies from 10 euros per month to a maximum of 227 euros. Families with more than three children and a low income are entitled to receive an allowance from the municipality, amounting to a maximum of 104 euros per month (Istituto nazionale di statistica, 2002).

### **Knowledge and awareness of family policy measures**

The respondents' knowledge and awareness of family policy measures in the IPROSEC study varies considerably between the four countries. In Italy and Germany, the majority of the respondents assume that they are not well informed about current family policy and family policy measures. Especially in Italy, knowledge of family policy measures differs between the southern and the northern part of the country. In both Italy and Germany, some variations are found according to the level of education: more educated people have a better overview of available services, but they do not have detailed knowledge of provision. In Italy, respondents use networks of friends when they want more specific information, but they rarely try to find out for themselves. Italian women, in particular, are more likely to be aware of the lack of social services, whereas men show much less interest. The lack of information concerning services and benefits provided by public administration may also be attributed to people wanting to feel self-reliant and self-sufficient. They do not want to depend on others outside the family. Another reason might be that those with medium or high socio-economic status tend to organize their own services, rather than seeking solutions provided by the state, which they consider as mediocre. In Italy, women were more aware of family policy measures, which can be explained by the fact that applications for household benefits are mainly seen as a woman's issue.

In Germany, in general, family policy is considered less important than other political issues and has only recently become a new priority for political parties. A few key terms, such as 'all-day schools' or 'regulations on part-time work', were often mentioned by respondents. Furthermore, many of them felt that family policy is only developing very slowly, and that changes happen very gradually. Some of the respondents indicated that, although Germany has a ministry for the family, the interests of families only have a small influence on government policy.

In Estonia, the level of awareness about policy measures is quite low. Most of the respondents receive publicly provided benefits, but slightly less than one quarter of the interviewees were unfamiliar with the public provision to which they were probably entitled.

In comparison to Germany, Italy and Estonia, Swedish respondents are considerably better informed about family policy and measures, especially those

with children. With only a few exceptions, families make plans to use parental leave in a very deliberate and optimal way. In all countries, services that are provided by the private sector play a subordinate role in family life.

### **Impacts of social policies on family formation**

The general view, in all four countries, was that family policy or social policy does not have an important impact on decisions about family life. It is rather the lack of family or social policy that has an impact on family size, especially in Italy, Germany and Estonia.

In Italy, several respondents expressed discontent with the inadequacies of childcare services, and the level of family allowance was considered to be ridiculously low. The provision of family services and knowledge about them differ between northern and southern Italy. In southern Italy, public social services are less common and, in places where they do exist, they are often experienced as negative because they do not function properly. Rapid changes in family size and family structure, together with changes in female labour market participation, are reducing the effectiveness of current family policies, which were originally designed to deal with typical family situations that are less common today. In southern Italy, ideas about the traditional family remain strong, and women are still expected to be the main carers for children and other family members. As a mother of two children living in the south argued:

*I believe that women shouldn't go out to work, or that they shouldn't try to have a career if they also have a family and children, because the two are incompatible.*

Tradition prevented one married woman with two children in southern Italy from using existing services, as she explained:

*I know there's a nursery, but I can't take my son there because I'm at home and I must obey my husband and my in-laws, and so I sacrifice myself. Even if these services exist, I can't take advantage of them because of the mentality of my husband and his family and they also prevent me from doing so because they think that if I'm at home, I'm not doing anything.*

In Germany and Italy, full-time working mothers found inadequate childcare facilities made their everyday lives problematic. The opening hours of nurseries were not scheduled to coincide with working hours. To stay out of the labour market to look after the family was not an option, as the long-term consequences for pensions were seen as negative. When childcare facilities are not available and do not match working hours, parents are forced to rely on family support networks or private childminders to look after their children. Private childcare arrangements are widespread in Italy, which is the opposite of the situation in Sweden, where the majority of children are looked after in public childcare.

The lack of social services is also regarded as a problem in Estonia. Many respondents did not feel satisfied with current social policy, as benefits are low, and it was difficult to get access to services, especially in rural areas where the quality of education is often poor. Also, the general economic situation was experienced as a factor preventing parents from having the number of children they want. A mother of two children living in a rural area pointed out that, if the

social conditions had been better, she would have had one more child but under the present circumstances she found it impossible.

Thus, it was not only low rates of benefits and poor quality of social services that limited the number of children, but also the general economic situation. A divorced Estonian woman with two children explained:

*To my mind it all goes back to material issues. If you have no money to feed the kids and buy them clothes. ... At work there are so many young women, they don't dare to have a child. I would like to have another child but I don't dare either. If my first ones had not been born during the Soviet time, I hardly believe they would have been born at all.*

In Sweden, access to public childcare and eldercare is important for the ideas about family life that many interviewees reported. One male respondent, who had shared parental leave with his wife, claimed that Swedish family policy probably facilitated or prevented certain decisions in family life:

*It depends how you look at it. I actually think it's easier to decide to have a family with all the basic social services that are available in Sweden, to be able to take parental leave, to know that you don't have to work the heck out of you because you have children. And it's the same with public childcare. You know it exists and that it's reasonable. It might be easier for me. If I persuade my wife to have children, she knows that she can return to her job. I can't say that it's state measures but rather the basic social services.*

A second kind of obstacle for having children is related to the labour market. It is mainly mothers who are adjusting their careers to balance work and family. Women in all four countries argued that children have a negative impact on their careers. In Italy, women pointed out that reconciliation of work and family life was complicated as they had difficulty in finding part-time work. In the northern part of the country, part-time working hours can be obtained only with great difficulty. One married woman with two children explained:

*I would like to be able to look after my child and the whole of his upbringing myself. I have managed to distribute my holidays and to work for 6 or 7 hours a day without a break, but now I have used up my holiday entitlement and I don't know what will happen. I hope to be able to have a reduction in working hours accepted, but I'm worried that it won't work out.*

Respondents from Italy, Estonia and Germany also argued that employers are reluctant to employ mothers with young children. They prefer to employ people who will not be away from work caring for sick children. In Italy, a highly educated woman told us about the difficulties she had in finding work particularly when pregnant. Swedish women also encountered such difficulties, and the increasing tendency to discriminate against pregnant women in the labour market has been brought to public attention by the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman.

The majority of Swedish mothers take up paid work after the parental leave period but often on a part-time basis. Some of the female respondents had planned their working life in a very deliberate way to have time for both family and work. One mother with a one-year old child left her job to spend more time with the baby, although she enjoyed her job very much. She was not worried about her career, and was convinced she would find suitable work when

she wanted to. Her partner was in a different position, however, and did not take any parental leave.

*It has to do with his job. He has just got a permanent position. He was promoted not so long ago and, unfortunately, he can't then start his new position if he's on parental leave. If he had been working there for a longer time, then it might have been possible for him to take parental leave. We have to wait and see if it's possible when we have the second child.*

A number of respondents mentioned that fathers experienced special difficulties in taking parental leave. To be able to maintain a reasonable standard of living, it is generally women who took time off from their jobs. The opportunity to choose whether to take time off is quite rare and only occurs in Sweden. It is more common in Italy, Estonia and Germany for women to have to choose between work and family. One of the Estonian mothers with one child did not believe it would be possible to continue working if she had another child: 'Sometimes I have read how women can manage well in both spheres: work and family tasks. Then I think they must be bluffing. Not possible, just not possible.' Most women do not have the opportunity to stay at home for longer periods for economic reasons. Unsatisfactory living conditions were mentioned as a reason for postponing the decision to have children, especially in Estonia.

The postponement of the birth of the first child is also related to more individualistic values in the four counties. The desire to remain independent and to be able to enjoy freedom from the responsibility of children was quite often mentioned by younger respondents. The importance of work in life has increased. A young Estonian woman claimed that '*work is my family*'. She was, however, not totally convinced that this was a healthy way to live and added. '*I don't know if it's a vicious circle but it really is my life.*' A Swedish woman also commented on the same point: she argued that self-fulfilment and career have become more important than having a family for some young people today.

The increasing importance given to work by young European women is confirmed by a comparative study including Italy, Germany and Sweden (Sundström, 1999). The study looked into men's and women's attitudes towards the traditional division of household labour and attitudes towards family and female employment in the three countries. The author found that young Italian and German women 'seemed to express a wish to "step out of" the role of being exclusively home-making wives and to become wage earners', while Swedish women have the opportunity to reconcile work and family life to a greater extent due to Swedish social family policy (Sundström, 1999 p. 202). Work was also seen as an important part of life for the great majority of the Swedish women in the IPROSEC study. One woman aged 34 with two children argued:

*The social part of the job is important. It's not the same as meeting other mothers and playing with children. Not to have just the family but to have a life of one's own as well. For me this is very important. I liked being on parental leave, but I think the length of the leave period was long enough and, all the time, I had in the back of my head that I had a job to return to. You ought to be able to choose if you want to be at home or not.*

## **Public policy as a (dis)incentive for family formation**

Comparison of patterns of family formation and public policies for families in Germany, Italy, Sweden and Estonia suggest that a relationship exists between the availability of public support and patterns of family formation, and that they are, in turn, closely linked to female labour market participation.

The decline in fertility in Germany, Italy and Sweden began in the 1960s and the 1970s, when more women were entering the labour market, though to differing extents in the countries under consideration. In Estonia, the decline in TFR did not come until 1990 as a consequence of the transformation towards a market economy. Whereas women had been fully integrated into the labour force under Soviet rule, the fall in their activity rates occurred at the same time as the reduction in TFR. However, another important difference between the four countries is that completed fertility in Estonia and Sweden remained fairly stable in the 1980s and 90s, whereas the decline was much steeper in Italy and West Germany. In East Germany, it was more moderate.

For women, the possibility to reconcile work and family life was found to be strongly linked to the social services available to families. Services provided for families differ considerably between the four countries. In West Germany and Italy, provision of childcare place for children under two is limited. The issue of care for young children is resolved by private provision. In East Germany, public childcare is more widely available as a remnant of the Communist era. In Estonia, where childcare provision is still more generous, it is rather the difficult economic situation that is making couples reluctant to have children. Despite regulations on parental leave and childcare, many of the mothers interviewed for the study complained about the difficulties they encountered in reconciling work and family life. In addition, employers are reluctant to recruit mothers with young children. Changing value systems, which imply postponement of the birth of the first child and attribute greater value to work, also seemed to influence the respondents' family decisions.

Ideal family size and structure among the respondents in the four countries seemed to be influenced to a greater extent by economic and social circumstances than by policies for families. The decision not to have children or to have only one or two children, while ideally wanting to have more, was determined primarily by difficulties in reconciling paid work and family life, the fear of a reduction in family income and the general lack of social protection.

## **Notes**

1. The empirical material referred to in this article is drawn from a Framework Programme 5 project funded by the European Commission entitled 'Improving Policy Responses and Outcomes to Socio-Economic Challenges: changing family structures, policy and practice'. Following on from a larger survey, in-depth interviews were conducted with up to 50 men and women in each country in the study. The national research teams were asked to identify respondents with different family living arrangements (married, unmarried cohabiting couples, with and without children, lone parents, reconstituted families) belonging to specified age and socio-economic categories. The contents of this article do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the Commission or the other contributors.

## References

- Addabbo T. and Olivier F. (2001) 'Offerta di lavoro e servizi all'infanzia in Italia, l'effetto dell'introduzione dell'ISE', paper presented at the XVI national seminar of AIEL, Firenze, 4–5 october 2001.
- Censis (2002) *35 rapporto sulla situazione sociale del paese 2001*, Rome: Milan: Franco Angeli, City.
- Council of Europe (2001), *Recent Demographic Developments in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (2003) <http://www.diw.de/deutsch/publikationen/wochenberichte/docs/02-31-2.htm>.
- European Commission (2001) *Employment in Europe*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Union.
- Eurostat (1995) *Labour Force Survey 1995*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (2000a) *European Social Statistics: labour force survey*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (2002b) *Statistics in Focus: population and social conditions*, 17/2002, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Eurostat (2002) *Yearbook 2002*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Försäkringskassan [Social Insurance Office] (2002) [www.fk.se/](http://www.fk.se/)
- Istituto nazionale di statistica (2002) <http://www.istat.it>
- Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale (2002) [http://www.inps.it/Doc/TuttoINPS/ap/ap\\_menu.htm](http://www.inps.it/Doc/TuttoINPS/ap/ap_menu.htm)
- Jönsson, I. (2002) 'Demographic changes and family policy in Sweden'. Working paper, University of Lund.
- Landgren-Möller, E. (1997) 'Att ha familj' ['To have a family'], in SCB *Välfärd och ojämlikhet i ett 20-års perspektiv 1975–1995* [*Welfare and Equality in a 20 Year Perspective 1975–1995*]. Göteborg: Svenskt Tryck, pp. 269–87.
- OECD (1999) <http://www.oecd.org/xls/M00029000/M00029383.xls>
- Peuckert, R. (1999) *Familienformen im Wandel*, Opladen: Leske und Budrich.
- Riksförsäkringsverket (2003) [www.f.fk.se/sok/forald/info/#bbidrag](http://www.f.fk.se/sok/forald/info/#bbidrag)
- SCB (2002) *På tal om kvinnor och män* [*Speaking of Women and men*], Stockholm: Statistiska Centralbyrån.
- Sardon, J–P. (2002) 'Recent demographic trends in the developed countries', *Population-E*, 57 (1), 111–56.
- Statistisches Bundesamt (2002a) *Erwerbstätigkeit* [http://www.destatis.de/themen/d/thm\\_erwerbs.htm](http://www.destatis.de/themen/d/thm_erwerbs.htm)
- Statistisches Bundesamt (2002b) *Arbeitslosenquote* <http://www.destatis.de/indicators/d/arb210ad.htm>.
- Statistical Office of Estonia (1996) *Statistical Yearbook of Estonia 1996*, Tallinn: Publishing Section of the Statistical Office of Estonia.
- Statistical Office of Estonia (2000) *Statistical Yearbook of Estonia 2000*, Tallinn: Publishing Section of the Statistical Office of Estonia.
- Statistical Office of Estonia (2001) *Statistical Yearbook of Estonia 2001*, Tallinn: Publishing Section of the Statistical Office of Estonia.
- Statistical Office of Estonia (2002) *Statistical Yearbook of Estonia 2002*, Tallinn: Publishing Section of the Statistical Office of Estonia.

Sundström (1999) 'Should mothers work? Age and attitudes in Germany, Italy and Sweden', *International Social Welfare*, 8, 193–205.

Swedish Institute (2001) <http://www.si.se/docs/infosweden/engelska/fs86k.pdf>

## 5. Fertility Changes and Family Policy in Sweden

*Ingrid Jönsson*

At the beginning of the 1990s, Sweden had one of the highest total fertility rates in Europe (2.14). By 1995, the birthrate had fallen to 1.74 and to 1.50 in 1999. In 1997, Sweden experienced negative natural population growth, with the number of deaths exceeding the number of births for the first time since 1809. The trend continued in 1998 and 1999, while a slight increase has been recorded for 2000 (1.55). Without net immigration, population size would have declined. Much attention has been given to the situation in the media, among researchers and demographers and by the Swedish government. Concern is expressed about the possible effects of an ageing population for the dependency ratio and the future provision of welfare. In December 2000, the Swedish government appointed a special working party charged with finding out more about the reasons behind falling fertility and why young adults are postponing having children, despite improvements in the economy, the labour market and the welfare system. The economic recession of the 1990s meant high unemployment rates, deficits for public finances and cutbacks in benefit systems for families with children. However, by the end of the century, the economic situation had improved, unemployment had decreased, and benefits were restored to previous levels.

The first part of the paper looks at population trends in the twentieth century, in general and especially in European countries. A brief overview is then provided of the development of modern family policy and its interrelation with gender policy and labour market policy. Reference is made to studies of how young adults in the 1990s discuss work and family life to show how, since the 1960s, changing attitudes towards children and family life help to explain recent developments. In conclusion, some possible reasons are proposed to explain why the present development of fertility rates is attracting attention, not least from the government.

### **Fertility patterns in the twentieth century**

In Sweden, declining mortality preceded the general decline of fertility. The decrease in fertility rates in the late nineteenth century is attributed to effects of the transformation of living conditions in general, due to industrialization, urbanization, migration, and the shift from family-based to market-based production. The possibility of remaining independent in old age also influenced the number of children being born. Increased levels of education and labour market participation among women were of crucial importance. Other contributing factors have been the general trend towards secularization, changes in value systems, with increased emphasis on democratization and individualization, as well as improved methods of family planning.

In the nineteenth century, the decline in fertility rates was unevenly distributed over social groups: many women remained childless while others had large numbers of children. By the end of the nineteenth century, one in every three or four women was estimated to be childless. The number of large

families decreased over time, while the declining proportion of childless women sustained the fertility rate. Over time, more women gave birth to the number of children they actually wanted (SCB, 1992).

The general decline in fertility throughout the twentieth century in Europe was interrupted only by brief periods when rates increased, as during the postwar period. This was to be followed by falling fertility rates, starting in Eastern Europe in the 1950s. The decrease accelerated in western and northern Europe in the mid-1960s and occurred in southern Europe in the mid-1970s. While fertility rates stagnated or declined in many European countries during the 1980s, Sweden experienced a baby boom after 1985 and actually exceeded replacement level in 1990 (2.14). The increase was accompanied by growth in the proportion of women in the labour force from 78% to 81% (Kohler, 1999), while the economic recession in the 1990s was associated with a sharp decline in fertility.

### **Fertility measures**

Fertility rates are measured in different ways. The total fertility rate (TFR) projects the number of children per woman from the age-specific fertility rates in a given year. This is the figure generally used in the media. It gives an idea of the present 'fertility climate' but does not apply to any real women. Rather, it represents a hypothetical cohort, while cohort or completed fertility records the average number of births for real women having completed their fertile period. In Sweden, only small variations have been reported in completed fertility, whereas large fluctuations are reported in the TFR. Women and men born during the twentieth century until the 1960s had on average 2 and 1.9 children respectively. This implies that women and men have children at different ages at different periods, while the total number of children remains about the same. At times when women and men postpone having children, the total fertility rate is low, and the average age at childbearing increases.

In 1999, for the 1960 birth cohort, which had almost completed their fertility period, few European countries (France, Iceland, Ireland, Poland, Romania, Macedonia and Turkey) were replacing their population, which requires 2.1 children per woman. Norway came close with 2.09 and Sweden with 2.04 (Ds, 2001). It is, however, doubtful whether the generations born in the 1970s will have the same average number of children as previous generations in the twentieth century due to postponement of the birth of the first child. However, the use of medically-assisted methods of conception can also enable older women to have children. In 2000, the death rate exceeded the birthrate, while the latest figures for 2001 indicated an upturn in the number of births. In Sweden, as in many other European countries, population decline is mitigated by immigration.

Table 5.1 shows that fertility rates have decreased worldwide and also indicates large variations in fertility between different regions. At present, the lowest fertility rates among European countries are found in the south, but large variations also occur within countries and between social classes and ethnic groups.

### Fluctuations in fertility rates

The 1990s were not the first time in the twentieth century that falling birthrates were on the political agenda. This was the case in the 1930s, when the fear in Sweden, as in many other countries, was of population decline. Fertility had fallen since the 1870s along with the fall in mortality. In 1933 and 1934, Sweden had the lowest fertility in the world. In 1934, Alva and Gunnar Myrdal published the book *Crisis in the Population Question*, in which they urged social reforms for families and children. They saw declining population as a socio-political issue and argued that improved living conditions would lead to rising birth rates. They claimed that the cause was economic rather than moral (as stated by Conservatives). According to the Myrdals, the refusal to have children was rational when having children often meant poverty. They advocated action to promote voluntary parenthood, sex education, birth control and women's labour market participation as a means of raising the fertility level and ensuring a stable population. In the long run, low fertility rates were expected to have negative economic consequences and lead to an ageing population. The Myrdals recommended preventive social policy in contrast to the then current symptom-oriented poor relief. The state, they claimed, should take increased responsibility for the upbringing of children. The aim was to remove obstacles to people getting married and having children, but at the same time they saw the traditional family as outdated. The family had lost its meaning as a unit for production, education and security. They suggested that children should be raised in day-care centres and that the modern family should be regarded as a part of the great national household (Hatje, 1974; Carlsson, 1990).

**Table 5.1 Number of children per woman (TFR), 1960–65/1995–2000**

| Region/country              | 1960–65 | 1995–2000 |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Africa                      | 6.78    | 5.27      |
| Asia                        | 5.62    | 2.70      |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 5.97    | 2.69      |
| Europe                      | 2.56    | 1.41      |
| North America               | 3.34    | 2.00      |
| Oceania                     | 3.95    | 2.41      |
| USA                         | 3.31    | 2.04      |
| Canada                      | 3.61    | 1.60      |
| Japan                       | 2.02    | 1.41      |
| China                       | 5.72    | 1.80      |
| France                      | 2.85    | 1.73      |
| Italy                       | 2.55    | 1.20      |
| Poland                      | 2.65    | 1.46      |
| UK                          | 2.81    | 1.70      |
| Sweden                      | 2.34    | 1.51      |
| Germany                     | 2.49    | 1.33      |

Source: UN World Population Prospects, 'The 2000 Revision' quoted in Ds, 2001, table 4.7.

The kind of family life envisaged by the Myrdals in the 1930s did not occur after the war. People were still marrying and living in traditional families, most women stayed at home after having a child, children were mainly cared for in the home, the number of abortions was low, and sexual traditionalism was still prevalent. Taxes, wages, social policy and family policy were adjusted to the male breadwinner family model, namely a full-time working husband and a full-time home-making housewife.

The situation slowly started to change in the 1950s when mothers with dependent children began to enter the labour market and continued to do so in larger numbers in the 1960s. Housewives were regarded as the largest untapped labour supply in Sweden, and Swedish women were expected to assimilate more easily than imported workers from abroad (Baude and Holmberg, 1962).

Table 5.2 illustrates the development of female labour market participation from the 1930s until the mid-1960s. It shows that married and previously married women, often mothers, increased their labour market participation in the 1950s and to a greater extent in the 1960s. As pointed out by feminist researchers (Leira, 1993; Bergqvist and Nyberg, 2001), this actually means that many mothers entered the labour market before the expansion of public childcare. The results of a study conducted in 1966 clearly indicated the lack of day-care places. In 1966, 155 000 women with pre-school children had paid work for more than 15 hours per week. Only 9% of these children were cared for in a day-care centre, while more than half of them (52%) were cared for at home and about one third (31%) were taken care of by private childminders. The study also showed that another 200 000 mothers with pre-school children wanted to enter the labour market if childcare of good quality was available (SOU, 1967; SOU, 1972b).

As indicated above, the general trend of decreasing fertility in the twentieth century was interrupted during the postwar period. In Sweden, the total fertility rate reached 2.5 in 1965 and then declined continuously until the beginning of the 1980s, when it reached about the same low level as in the 1930s. The decline is usually interpreted as a result of increased female labour market participation and difficulties encountered by mothers in reconciling work and family life. However, the period from the 1960s onwards also meant changes in traditional attitudes and values about families and gender relations. The contraceptive pill enabled women to decide when they wanted to have children (Ds, 2001). In the 1970s, three major political decisions were taken with

**Table 5.2 Labour market participation among women aged 15–64, 1930–65, in %**

| Year | Unmarried | Married | Previously married | Total |
|------|-----------|---------|--------------------|-------|
| 1930 | 59.1      | 9.0     | 47.4               | 34.1  |
| 1940 | 61.0      | 10.1    | 43.6               | 32.3  |
| 1945 | 63.9      | 10.9    | 46.6               | 31.0  |
| 1950 | 68.1      | 15.6    | 52.3               | 33.6  |
| 1960 | 61.3      | 26.3    | 57.4               | 38.2  |
| 1965 | 58.3      | 36.7    | 59.3               | 44.3  |

Source: SOU, 1972a, table 33.

implications for family life: the introduction of individual taxation (1971), parental leave (1974) and the decision to expand public childcare. In the 1980s, public childcare was further expanded and parental leave insurance was improved with regard to both economic compensation and duration. The fertility rates expanded continuously from the mid-1980s until 1992 when the sharp decline began. The baby boom in the late 1980s is usually explained by the introduction of a 'speed premium' encouraging short intervals between children, a favourable labour market and bright prospects for the future. The economic crisis in the 1990s changed these conditions.

In all European countries, the same trend is found in the labour market: women are increasing their labour market participation, while the male rate is decreasing. Single women have always been in the labour market, while the new trend of the 1960s and 70s in the Nordic countries and, later on, in the rest of Europe, was the entry of mothers with children. In other European countries, the participation of mothers in large numbers in the labour force started after 1980. Table 5.3 illustrates the development in labour market participation among women during their childbearing years over time.

### **Modern Swedish family policy**

Modern Swedish family policy was shaped in the 1970s. It is closely linked to labour market policy and gender equality policy. Although the term 'family policy' did not appear in political documents until later, many issues related to family life were already on the political agenda in the 1950s and 60s, for example support for mothers and the need for social services for families with children. In documents of the time, care for children was still considered as solely a women's issue (Ohlander, 1989). In addition to economic support for families with children, the aim was to equalize living conditions between

**Table 5.3 Labour market participation among women aged 25–34, 1980/97 in EU member states (% of age group)**

| Country     | 1980            | 1997            |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Austria     | –               | 74              |
| Belgium     | –               | 82              |
| Denmark     | –               | 81              |
| Finland     | 82              | 77              |
| France      | 69              | 77              |
| Germany     | 61              | 74              |
| Greece      | –               | 65              |
| Ireland     | 36 <sup>1</sup> | 72 <sup>2</sup> |
| Italy       | 49              | 61              |
| Netherlands | 41              | 77              |
| Portugal    | 62*             | 78*             |
| Spain       | 36              | 70              |
| Sweden      | 81              | 82              |
| UK          | –               | 73*             |
| EU          | –               | 73              |

*Note:* <sup>1</sup> 1983 data    <sup>2</sup> 1998 data    \* estimates

*Source:* OECD, quoted in Ds, 2001, table 5.2

households with and without children and give special support to families in vulnerable situations. From the 1970s, family policy also aimed at supporting opportunities for both parents to combine work outside the home with family responsibilities. Men as fathers were not brought into the discussion until the 1970s. This indicated changing views of the role of men and women as carers. Modern Swedish family policy does not address the family *per se* but includes a range of 'measures geared to influencing families' (a definition used by the European Observatory on National Family Policies). In Sweden and other Scandinavian countries, policy measures were steered away from the family as a unit in line with increased individualization and gender equality principles. The situation is different in Austria, France, Germany and Belgium, for example, where explicit family policy addresses the family as a unit. In countries like Ireland, Italy and post-Franco Spain, the family is regarded as a private domain and the state undertakes few direct actions targeting families as a unit. The difference can be illustrated by the introduction of family allowances in the 1930s in France and Germany, whereas in the Scandinavian countries children were identified as the target for benefit. Since 1947, all Swedish children have received a child benefit paid to the mother. This is an individualized right targeted at the child and not at the family as such.

#### GENDER EQUALITY

In the 1960s, the influence of the feminist movement became more noticeable. An article entitled 'The conditional emancipation of women' (Moberg, 1961) attacked the traditional family. It questioned where women's first responsibility was as a housewife and claimed that men and women have one principal role, that of human beings. The article fuelled public debate. A document on gender equality prepared by Alva Myrdal for the Social Democratic Party in 1969 influenced Swedish equality and family policies introduced in the 1970s. General agreement was reached among Social Democrats, the Centre and Conservative parties that gender equality was a core element of the political and socio-cultural life of the nation (OECD, 1999). In theory, men and women were regarded as equal in the homes and in the labour market, and the male breadwinner family model was abandoned for the dual-earner family model.

In addition to the three main pillars of modern Swedish family policy, family planning also constitutes an important component. The term refers to various measures to assist couples in their own planning, such as sex education at school, access to contraceptives and subsidized abortions, which were made available during the postwar period. It is a fundamental right for Swedish parents to decide about the spacing and the number of children they want. In 1938, the use of contraceptives was permitted, while the abortion law remained restrictive. Since 1975, abortion has been available free of charge until the twelfth week of pregnancy. In addition, free health care for mothers and children as well as the provision of maternity clinics offering regular health checks and preparing them for childbirth are components of Swedish family policy.

#### PARENTAL LEAVE

Parental leave was designed to meet three goals: the well-being of children, women's economic independence and men's involvement in family life and

childcare. It includes a pregnancy benefit for women with physically heavy jobs, a parental leave benefit and temporary parental allowance to care for sick children. To offer an economically stable situation for families is one way of securing children's well-being. Children benefit psychologically from having their parents at home when they are very young, without them being under stress financially. Secondly, women as well as men are expected to have a lifelong attachment to the labour market. The construction of the parental leave system enables women to have a paid job and become economically independent. Thirdly, the Swedish gender model requires the father's involvement in family life and care for children.

When introduced in 1974, parental leave lasted six months. Since then, it has been increased to 390 days of income-related benefits, plus another 90 days of flat-rate benefit. At present, 80% of income is paid up to a ceiling. Some employers offer another 10% (Haas and Hwang, 1999). If a second child is born within 30 months, parents are entitled to the same income replacement as for the first child, irrespective of the level of income between the two births. This 'speed premium' had a strong impact on the birthrate in the 1980s. It covered 24 months when it was introduced in 1980 and was extended to 30 months in 1986. Since 1995, 30 out of the 390 days of parental leave have been reserved for the other parent, mostly the father, often called 'daddy's months'. In 2002, the daddy's quota was extended to 60 days at the same time as the period of income-related parental leave was extended to 13 months. Parental leave can be used until the child is eight years old and on a flexible basis. All parents with children under 12 are entitled to reduce their working time by 25%. However, parents generally use most of the days before the child reaches the age of two. In comparison to most other European countries, parental leave was introduced at an early stage in Sweden and more than 20 years before the EU directive on parental leave in 1996. Despite the fact that many working mothers were already in the labour market before the expansion of public childcare, the objective of modern family policy was to make it easier for women to reconcile work and family life. The replacement of maternity benefit by parental leave insurance was designed to change male and female roles inside as well as outside the family. Although almost 30 years have passed since the introduction of parental leave in 1974, only 14% of available days are used by fathers. About one third of all fathers take some time off to care for their child, over a four-year period: half are found to have taken some time off (Bekkengen, 2002).

Fathers are more likely to use the shorter leave options such as 'daddy's days', temporary parental leave to take care of sick children and 'contact days' for visits to day-care centres and schools. The great majority of fathers used the ten daddy's days at the birth of the child (79% in 1995), while around 40% took time off to take care of a sick child, and 30% visited day-care centres or schools (Riksförsäkringsverket, 1998).

#### PUBLIC CHILDCARE

The major industrialization of Sweden took place in the 1870s, which was late by European standards. The urbanization process meant large-scale social transformation and an influx of workers from the countryside to the cities. Many working-class children were left without organized care when the parents went

to work. To a large extent, children were out in the streets, which resulted in social unrest. The care of working-class children became an issue for many bourgeois men and women in the late nineteenth century who started voluntary organizations. The aim was twofold: to mitigate poor living conditions for working-class children and to prevent the spread of socialist ideas. Few care options were available for poor parents. Within the framework of municipal poor relief, crèches were opened for poor children. These continued to carry the stigma of poor relief until the 1950s. Children of wealthier parents could attend kindergartens for 3–4 hours a day, based on a specific pedagogical programme. Present-day childcare includes both aspects: physical care and the pedagogical and psychological development of the child (Persson, 1994). At the beginning of the twentieth century, the role of the state was minor, but its importance grew with increased legislation in the field. In the 1930s, many actions were taken to improve living conditions for children, for example housing allowances, free school meals, free books at school and support for children's summer holidays. A small degree of economic support was given to day-care centres, pre-schools and after-school care in 1944. A larger share of the costs for children was successively transferred from families to the state.

In the postwar period, discussions took place about the care of children of working mothers, as they were looked after by private childminders. The quality of care was not taken into account. Until the 1960s, public childcare was, to a large extent, intended for lone mothers (49% of the children in public childcare in 1966 were children of lone mothers). By the mid-1960s, public childcare was available for only 6% of children of working mothers. Thus, in the 1960s and 70s, many children were privately cared for by relatives, neighbours, baby-sitters or private childminders. A study in the mid-1970s showed that several people were involved in the care of pre-school children during the day (Lindström, 1975).

The role of the state increased from the 1950s, and childcare gradually became a public issue with regard to both financing and provision. The introduction of pre-schools, implying an integration of crèches and former part-time groups, was justified on educational grounds (the late starting age of schooling), integrative reasons (including disabled children) and as a means of achieving gender equality. Such objectives brought an end to the influence of earlier traditions of philanthropy and charity (Persson, 1994).

Public childcare comprises day-care centres, childminders and open pre-schools (Table 5.4). High quality childcare is a hallmark of Swedish welfare

**Table 5.4 Children in public childcare by age and form, 1975–97, in %**

| Year | Age |     |     | Day-care centres | Child-minders | Age |                 |               |       |
|------|-----|-----|-----|------------------|---------------|-----|-----------------|---------------|-------|
|      | 1–2 | 3–6 | 1–6 |                  |               | 7–9 | Leisure centres | Child-minders | 10–11 |
| 1975 | 16  | 17  | 17  | 10               | 7             | 9   | 5               | 4             | 1     |
| 1980 | 31  | 38  | 36  | 21               | 15            | 22  | 13              | 9             | 3     |
| 1985 | 45  | 55  | 52  | 32               | 19            | 37  | 22              | 15            | 5     |
| 1990 | 44  | 64  | 57  | 40               | 17            | 49  | 35              | 14            | 8     |
| 1995 | 53  | 74  | 67  | 49               | 19            | 54  | 48              | 6             | 6     |
| 1997 | 59  | 78  | 73  | 53               | 20            | 56  | 53              | 3             | 9     |

Source: Skolverket, 1998.

policy. Until recently, access was limited to parents who were working or studying and to children with special needs. Access became universal in 2002.

After-school care at leisure centres, by childminders or in leisure clubs until the age of 12 is also included in the official definition of the concept. It was not until the late 1990s that the demand for public childcare was more or less satisfied while the supply of places did not meet demand over most of the postwar period. In the 1970s and 80s, general support was given to the expansion of public childcare. In the late 1980s and 90s, greater freedom of choice was introduced in the debate in line with a neo-liberal trend. The non-socialist government in power during the first half of the 1990s introduced childcare allowances. They were, however, abolished six months after the return of the Social Democrats.

During the period of expansion of childcare in the 1970s and 80s, large differences were found in how parents from different social and educational backgrounds used the public childcare system. More parents in the higher social status groups with higher educational levels used the public childcare system, whereas working-class parents made their own arrangements for the care of children, for example by reorganizing working hours, using relatives. Due to a lack of places, all social groups made quite extensive use of childminders. However, the gap between social groups decreased when the number of places expanded, but variations are still found between parents from different social backgrounds (Skolverket, 1998).

### **Trends in the 1990s**

During the first half of the 1990s, Sweden experienced a severe economic recession. Unemployment rose to EU levels, and deficits in public finances led to cutbacks in the welfare systems. Among the losers in the 1990s were families with children, lone mothers, young adults and immigrants (SOU, 2000). The Swedish economy recovered by the turn of the twentieth century, and the government expended a lot of effort restoring the welfare benefits and mitigating unemployment. An extensive educational programme was launched for less well-educated adults to raise their general level of competence, and the number of students at universities increased.

#### CHANGING FERTILITY PATTERNS

According to official statistics since 1992, fertility has started to decrease (Ds, 2001). The fall was especially marked for women below 30 and especially among the age group 25–29, and for those on low incomes. The fall in fertility rates is found among all educational groups except the most highly educated. The shorter the educational experience, the sharper the decline. In the older age groups, the decrease is more moderate. In 2000, an increase in the rates is found among women aged 27–35. Despite this late trend, the number of women and men who remain childless at the age of 30 has increased, which means that at the end of their fertile period, they may not have the same number of children as previous cohorts. In 2002, the average age at first birth was 28 years for mothers and 31 years for fathers, while in 1970s, it was 23 for mothers. In the 1960s parents were even younger.

Since the 1930s, the general norm in Sweden has been to have two children. About 80–84% of mothers with one child will have a second child. However, in the 1990s, fewer second children were born to women under 35, while an increase was reported in second births among mothers over 35. Since 1997, an increase has occurred in the number having a second child for all age groups (Andersson, 1999).

In the 1980s, mothers had their children at shorter intervals. This was also the case for the third child. The trend continued in the 1990s, although the number of births of a third child in 1999 was back to the level of 1980. The interval has decreased for the age groups: from 50 months between the first and second child among mothers born in the 1940 to 36 months among mothers born in 1965.

The proportion of childless women has decreased over time, with the exception of a slight increase for the youngest cohort. Proportionately, one-child families and large families have become more unusual, whereas the proportion of families with two and three children has increased. It is difficult to predict the development for younger generations.

The fertility rate among immigrant women is higher than among women born in Sweden, but the trend is in the same direction as for Swedish-born women. Higher birthrates are noticeable among immigrant women during the years following immigration, then the rate falls. The rate is also lower for those who immigrated under the age of 15 (Andersson, 2001).

The marked decline in fertility in the 1990s is not a new phenomena in Sweden: a similar sharp decline occurred in the 1930s and in the early 1970s. The large variations in fertility rates over time can to a large extent be explained by economic variables. The total fertility rate reflects changing economic conditions as well as related changes in lifestyle. In cases where women's incomes make up a considerable part of the income of dual-earner households, the household will be sensitive to changes in macro-economic conditions. The three periods of decline in fertility rates during the twentieth century are all related to periods of considerable change in the economy and society as a whole. During these periods women changed their behaviour more than men: they increased their participation in education and in the labour force, moved into new sectors and occupations and began to break down male dominance. The changes also had an impact on the gender division of labour and gender roles, including family planning and the postponement of fertility. Thus, fertility fluctuated markedly during the twentieth century, concealing the consistency of the two-children childbearing pattern of fertility among cohorts of women over time (Stanfors, 2003).

#### CHANGING LABOUR MARKET BEHAVIOUR

The crisis in the Swedish economy meant rising unemployment and a larger number of students. The rate of unemployment rose from 2% in 1990 to almost 9% by the end of the decade. At the end of 2002, it amounted to about 4%. A larger proportion of young adults remained in education, which meant that they postponed having children. The proportion of study grants among women aged 21–24 years increased from 13.3% in 1989 to 31.6% in 1996. The rate of unemployment benefit also increased for this group of young women: from 2.2

to 17.5% over the same period (SCB, 1998). Another trend of importance for family building was reported during the 1990s. The number of permanent jobs decreased while the rate of fixed-term contracts increased from 9% in 1990 to 14% in 2000. A similar trend is found in Italy, Belgium, Germany, Spain and France. Fixed-term contracts are, however, not evenly distributed among groups of employees: women are over-represented among those who spent a smaller length of time in education. Among working class women aged 25–29 (in the workers' trade union), the rate doubled from 15% to 30% during the 1990s. Growing social differences are also reported for working hours, the scheduling of working hours over the day and for irregular hours. The largest increase in the number of fixed-term contracts occurred among women and men during their childrearing years. The insecurity in the labour market in the 1990s is believed to have had an impact on family building and the willingness to have children (LO, 2001).

#### CHANGE IN THE WELFARE SYSTEM

The Swedish welfare system is closely related to full employment, and increasing unemployment has an effect on individuals. The close connection between social benefits and labour market participation contributed to wide fluctuations in the fertility rate. Access to social benefits is related to prior employment (generally six months), which means that unemployed people without previous labour market experience and students receive lower economic benefits from the parental leave insurance. However, fertility is not declining among unemployed people with previous working experience, as they have already qualified for income-related social benefits. As noted above, young adults experienced a difficult labour market situation, and many remained in education. Between 1990 and 1999, the average age when 75% of a cohort was in receipt of an income rose from 21 to 26 for men and from 21 to 30 for women (Ds, 2001). Despite the decrease in unemployment in the late 1990s and the restoration of benefit levels, fertility rates have not increased accordingly. By the end of the 1990s, the fertility rate was also declining among employed women, but fertility rates varied depending on the type of employment. The inclination to have children is lower among women and men with fixed contracts than among those with permanent contracts (Persson, 2001).

#### **Changing attitudes and values**

In 1999, 95% of young women and men still said that having children is one of the main purposes of life. Young women are more positive than men. At the same time, young adults show a greater tolerance of different lifestyles. About 40% did not find it unacceptable for couples not to have children. Having children must be a free choice. The tolerance of alternative living arrangements has increased since the beginning of the 1990s, although the process already started in the 1980s (SCB, 1982). In spite of the fact that young adults see children as one of the purposes of life, not all are becoming parents, voluntarily or involuntarily.

In 2000, women born in 1960 and men born at the beginning of the 1950s had on average 1.97 and 1.85 children. As younger generations start to have children at a higher age, it might become difficult to reach the same level as previous generations. Results from a study in the late 1990s reported a reluctance among young adults to have children, although few totally rejected the idea (Hoem and Bernardt, 2000). Younger adults are more positive than older ones, while it is more likely that younger age groups will change their plans several times.

More time spent in education and a shrinking labour market has led to an extension of youth. Young adults in Sweden, as in many other countries, consider themselves as grown-ups when they have established a relationship, have finished their education, have a place to live, a job with a reasonable income, and when they feel secure enough with their situation in life to look ahead to the future (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 1998). Young adults often experience difficulties in getting established in the three 'markets': marriage/cohabitation, housing and the labour market. Not having a partner is only one of many reasons for not having children reported by singles. Cohabiting couples as well as singles mention several other reasons, such as education, a secure job, wanting to do something else or they say they 'just did not want children yet'. Unemployed and less-well educated young adults are most hesitant: for them whether to have children is not a question they are asking at the moment. The question is, therefore, how they will behave in the future (Hoem and Bernardt, 2000). Another study related to the falling birthrate conducted in 2000 illustrates some of the conditions that young adults refer to when discussing having or not having children (SCB, 2001). A quotation from an interview with a 35 year-old woman expecting her first child points to issues related to the labour market, the division of labour in the household and to difficulties in finding housing at a reasonable cost.

Why this question? For me the answer is obvious:

1. Difficulties in entering the labour and housing markets. There is no housing where the jobs are, and there are no jobs where the housing is.
2. High pressure in the labour market. Time for leisure and family life is disappearing more and more. If you work part time, you are considered to be disloyal to the company.
3. Becoming a mother hampers women's careers. They will lag behind their male colleagues with children. For men having children is an advantage.
4. Women are still expected to carry the main responsibility for children. Who wants to work 2 x 40 hours per week, of which 50% is unpaid and undervalued?

I look with anxiety at my own situation when I become a mother in the autumn....

Another quotation from the same study points to changing values as a contributory factor to decreasing fertility. According to a woman who had her first child at the age of 32:

My generation has been brought up with the message: look to your own interests in education, in your career, in your spare time and personal development. Family, morals and politics have not been among the priorities. Travelling, partying, developing your talent, getting a well-paid job, making a career and advancing (this is the way I experience it as a person living in a big city). I think

that my age group is afraid of the thought of taking the responsibility for somebody else.

### **Encouraging family formation and family life**

The Swedish government's concern about low fertility is related to gender equality issues but also to future shortages of labour and welfare as a consequence of an ageing population and rising dependency ratios.

In their final report, the working party appointed by the Swedish government in 2000 identified some factors preventing young adults from becoming parents. A weak labour market with high unemployment has a negative impact on incomes and family building. Fixed-term contracts influence feelings of security. Other factors are discriminating against mothers in the labour market, the negative impact of motherhood on wages, negative attitudes at the workplace towards part-time working mothers, the impact of motherhood on careers, double workloads for women and increasing stress in working life with implications for family life. Issues of tolerance for working mothers and fathers, secure incomes, improved employment conditions and measures mitigating stress and health risks in working life are regarded as crucial in discussions about how to create a more favourable situation for having children. However, it is also essential for society to continue to provide families with high quality childcare and parental leave on reasonable economic terms. Despite the restoration of social benefits to previous levels, fertility has only increased slowly during the early years of the new century. Changes in values among young adults might be a contributory factor in understanding why young men and women postpone having children, despite the fact that they actually see this as one of the purposes of life. Increasing individualization and aspirations for self-fulfilment play a role, and the question is whether they will have time to achieve the average of two children during their fertility period, which previous cohorts of women have done. The use of different kinds of fertility treatments might help when the average age at the birth of the first child is rising. The combination of high labour market participation among Swedish mothers is supported by a generous family policy, although alone it cannot counteract the decline in fertility rates when the economic situation is deteriorating.

### **References**

- Andersson, G. (1999) 'Childbearing trends in Sweden, 1961–1997', *European Journal of Population*, 15(1), 1–24.
- Andersson, G. (2001) 'Childbearing patterns of foreign-born women in Sweden', Working paper 2001–020, Rostock: Max-Planck-Institute of Demographic Research, [www.demogr.mpg.de/Papers/Working/wp-2001-011.pdf](http://www.demogr.mpg.de/Papers/Working/wp-2001-011.pdf).
- Baude, A. and Holmberg, P. (1962) 'The position of men and women in the labour market', in E. Dahlström (ed.), *The Changing Role of Men and Women*, Boston: Beacon.
- Bekkengen, L. (2002) *Man får välja. Om föräldraskap och föräldraledighet i arbetsliv och i familjeliv* [You have to Choose. About parenthood and parental leave in working life and family life], Malmö: Liber.

- Bergqvist, C. and Nyberg, A. (2001) 'Den svenska barnomsorgsmodellen – kontinuitet och förändring' ['The Swedish childcare model – continuity and change'], in SOU (ed.), *Välfärdstjänster i omvandling [Welfare Services under Transformation]*, n° 52, Stockholm: Socialdepartementet.
- Carlsson, A. (1990) *The Swedish Experiment in Family Politics. The Myrdals and the interwar population crisis*, New Brunswick/London: Transaction Publishers.
- Ds (2001) *Barnafödande i fokus [Focus on Child-bearing]*, n° 57, Stockholm: Socialdepartementet.
- Haas, L. and Hwang, P. (1999) 'Parental leave in Sweden.' in P. Moss and F. Deven (eds), *Parental Leave: progress or pitfall? Research and policy issues in Europe*, Brussels: NIDI/CBGS Publications, pp. 45–60.
- Hatje, A-K. (1974) *Befolkningsfrågan och välfärden: debatten om familjepolitik och nativitetsökning under 1930- och 1940-talen [The Population Question and Welfare: the debate about family policy and increasing birthrates during the 1930s and 1940s]*, Stockholm: Allmänna Förlaget.
- Hoem, B. and Bernhardt, E. (2000) 'Barn? ja, kanske' ['Children? Yes, perhaps'], *Välfärdsbulletinen [Welfare Bulletin]*, n° 1, 18–19.
- Kohler, H-P. (1999) *The Swedish Baby Bomb and Bust of 1985–1996. Revisited: the role of tempo, quantum and variance effects*. Working Paper 1999–007, Rostock: Max-Planck-Institute for Demographic Research. [www.demogr.mpg.de/Papers/Working/WP-1999-007.pdf](http://www.demogr.mpg.de/Papers/Working/WP-1999-007.pdf)
- Leira, A. (1993) 'The "women-friendly" welfare state: the case of Norway and Sweden', in J. Lewis (ed.), *Women and Social Policies in Europe*, Aldershot: Edward Elgar, pp. 25–48
- Lindström, U. (1975) *Barntillsynen ur historisk belysning [Childcare in a historical perspective]*, DS, n° 12, Stockholm: Socialdepartementet.
- LO (2001) *Anställningstider och arbetstider [Employment Time and Hours of Work]*, Stockholm: LO.
- Moberg, E. (1961) 'Kvinnans villkorliga frigivning' ['The conditional emancipation of women'], in Hederberg, H. (ed.), *Unga Liberaler. Nio inlägg i idédebatten [Young Liberals. Nine contributions to the debate]*, Stockholm: Bonniers, pp.68–86.
- Myrdal, A. (1969) *Jämlikhet: första rapporten från LO-SAP:s arbetsgrupp för jämlikhet [Equality: 1<sup>st</sup> report from LO-SAP working party on equality]*, Stockholm: Prisma.
- Myrdal, G. and Myrdal, A. (1934) *Kris i befolkningsfrågan [Crisis in the Population Question]*, Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag.
- OECD (1999) *OECD Country Note. Early childhood education and care policy in Sweden*, Paris: OECD.
- Ohlander, A-S. (1989) 'Det osynliga barnet? Kampen om den socialdemokratiska familjepolitiken' ['The invisible child. The struggle over the Social Democrat family policy'], in K. Misgeld, K. Mohlin and K. Åmark (eds), *Socialdemokratins samhälle. SAP och Sverige under 100 år [The Social Democrat Society, Swedish Social Democrat Party and Sweden during 100 years]*, Stockholm: Tiden, pp.170–90.
- Persson, L. (2001) 'Otrygg anställning – färre föräldrar' ['Insecure employment – fewer parents'], *Välfärdsbulletinen [Welfare Bulletin]*, n° 3, 9–11.

- Persson, S. (1994) *Föräldrars föreställningar om barn och barnomsorg [Parents' Perceptions of Children and Childcare]*, Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International.
- Riksförsäkringsverket (1998) *Statistikinformation Ia-1*, 1998:009, Stockholm: Riksförsäkringsverket.
- SCB (1982) *Kvinnor och barn. Intervjuer med kvinnor om familj och arbete [Women and Children. Interviews with women about family and work]*, Stockholm: SCB.
- SCB (1992) *Fruktsamhet ur livsperspektiv [Fertility in a Life Perspective]*, Stockholm: SCB.
- SCB (1998) *Barnafödande och sysselsättning [Fertility and Employment]*, Stockholm: SCB.
- SCB (2001) *Varför föds det så få barn? [Why are so Few Children Born?]*, Stockholm: SCB.
- Skolverket (1998) *Barnomsorgen i siffror 1998: barn och personal [Childcare in Figures 1998: children and personnel]*, Rapport 152, Stockholm: Skolverket.
- SOU (1967) *Samhällets barntillsyn – barnstugor och familjedaghem [Public Childcare – Daycare Centres and Daycare Mothers]*, n° 39, Stockholm: Socialdepartementet.
- SOU (1972a) *Familjestöd [Family Support]*, n° 34, Stockholm: Socialdepartementet.
- SOU (1972b) *Förskolan del 1, Betänkande avgivet av 1968 års barnstugeutredning [Pre-school. Part 1. Report from the Investigation of Childcare Centres in 1968]*, n° 37, Stockholm: Socialdepartementet, n° 26.
- SOU (2000) *Välfärdens förutsättningar [Preconditions for Social Welfare]*, Stockholm: Socialdepartementet.
- Stanfors, M. (2003) *Education, Labour Force Participation and Changing Family Patterns. A study of women and socioeconomic change in twentieth century Sweden*, Lund Studies in Economic History 22, Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International.
- Ungdomsstyrelsen (1998) *Ny tid – nya tankar. Ungdomars värderingar och framtidstro [New times – New Ideas. Values and beliefs in the future among young adults]*, Stockholm: Barn- och ungdomsdelegationen, Inrikesdepartementet.

## **6. Changing Family Structures and Alternative Paths to Family Formation in Estonia**

*Dagmar Kutsar and Ene-Margit Tiit*

During the second half of the twentieth century, the family as an institution underwent a number of major changes in Western societies. Nuclear families replaced multigenerational families as the dominant family form. The patriarchal model of the working husband (head of household) and housewife was progressively replaced by a more egalitarian family with both partners in employment. Remaining single and living in one-person households became an acceptable alternative to founding a family. A new trend that Elina Haavio-Mannila and Osmo Kontula (2001), as well as Jan Trost and Irene Levin (1991), have referred to was the development of sustainable partnerships where couples lived separately, or lived apart together (LAT). Lone-parent families became more widespread alongside two-parent families. The family came to be viewed no longer as a lifelong commitment terminated only by the death of one partner but as a transitory phase in the life course. Establishing a new family following divorce became socially accepted. The use of effective forms of birth control to regulate the number of children gained approval within society.

Sexual relationships are today no longer considered merely as a means of procreation, but rather as a form of communication that creates mutual satisfaction. Families based on informal cohabitation are an increasingly widespread alternative to formal marriage-based families. Homosexual family-like associations have won the right to exist alongside heterosexual families. Reconstituted families have become more common, whereby children are biologically related to only one parent, and at least one of the spouses/partners has previously been married or has living in an unmarried cohabiting relationship.

The most important change observed in the development of Western families in the 1990s, and one also regarded previously as significant, was the plurality, or the multitude of different family forms (Coontz, 2000). This trend is confirmed by the fact that the changes taking place within the family and social institutions have not all been in the same direction (Bengtson, 2001). Just as age at marriage has increased, fallen and then risen again, and reproductive rates have oscillated (Council of Europe, 2001; Raley, 2001), the intensity of the reciprocal influence of different generations is not one way. Although the trend a few decades ago was towards a decline in the number of extended, multigenerational families in favour of nuclear families, some researchers have noted a significant trend in the opposite direction, as the bond between the generations is reinforced (Bengtson, 2001). One possible reason is the increase in the number of lone-mother households, where grandparents have an important role to play in raising and looking after their grandchildren. At the same time, improvements in health and living standards are creating opportunities for older people to maintain independent households, thus expanding individual choice.

A new trend is for younger people to remain in the parental home to a much later age, due to easier access to tertiary education, as well as high levels

of unemployment among young people. A significant additional factor in the Central and Eastern European transition countries is the issue of adaptation and the stress associated with change (Hraba *et al.*, 2000), as well as the economic problems connected with moving into a separate dwelling.

Behind all the polemics, family researchers have always been interested in the question of whether the family based on marriage is in retreat. They are asking whether the importance of the family is decreasing for people in general. The decline of the lifelong family based on a single formal marriage is not a recent phenomenon. By the end of the twentieth century, almost half of all marriages resulted in divorce in many countries (Wang and Amato, 2000). Unmarried cohabitation, which a few decades ago applied to only a relatively short period of time prior to marriage, has become a significant alternative to formal marriage in many European countries today (Raley, 2001). However, the decision whether to cohabit or to marry is less socially determined. Social pressure still exists, but the decision whether to marry or live together increasingly reflects individual circumstances and preferences rather than pressure exerted from outside, particularly in the Scandinavian case. People may simply not want to contract a formal marriage or may wish to avoid bureaucracy (Trost, 1981).

The aim in this paper is to provide an overview of family structural changes at the beginning of the twenty-first century, to examine unmarried cohabitation and policy responses to it in Estonia from an international comparative perspective, drawing on data from statistical offices and social surveys. Particular reference is made to a study carried out among students in Estonia with regard to their understandings of different forms of partnership as a basis for family formation, and to the IPROSEC European project, which involved the analysis of policy responses to the growing trend towards unmarried cohabitation as an alternative to formal marriage in 11 EU member states and candidate countries<sup>1</sup>.

### **Changes in the family in Estonia**

Transition countries like Estonia have undergone different social, economic and political experiences compared to most EU member states. Their development has been shaped by a totalitarian system, which diverted them from their own developmental tracks. The collapse of the totalitarian system provided the opportunity for change, turning transition countries towards the European mainstream (Kutsar and Tiit, 2000).

In analysing the adaptations that Estonia as a transitional country has undergone in its shift towards the mainstream, this paper examines the status of women, family structural change and societal impacts of transition.

Individual educational attainment in Estonia has been only slightly affected by regime change. The general level of education in the population has remained relatively high, particularly among women, and cannot, therefore, be said to have contributed to any change in women's labour market opportunities. Women's labour force participation had almost reached its ceiling in the 1980s, even exceeding the rate for men. In this respect, an interesting situation arises: although equal opportunities between men and women were not a topic of interest for the communist regime, the high educational level and labour force

participation rate of women in Estonia is a reality that the countries in the mainstream are aspiring to achieve in the future. Structural changes (cohabitation, divorce, extramarital births) took place within families in parallel to what was happening in the other Nordic countries, where these new features of family life were most widespread.

The high human costs of transition are revealed by the deterioration in socio-demographic indicators (decreasing life expectancy, worsening conditions in health, unemployment, poverty, social exclusion). Some of these indicators, for example life expectancy, had returned to their previous level by the end of the decade or had even improved, while others had worsened, notably unemployment and poverty.

Revolutionary periods of social and political changes uncover high social risks of upheaval in the family-related behaviour of the population. One of the consequences is family de-institutionalization. In former times, making a marriage contract was the only way of legalizing private life, by setting the interests of the community above personal interests. 'Privatization' of family behaviour (Ditch *et al.*, 1994) means extending personal choices, aspirations and values that come to override community interests.

Soviet-type family policy was developed to support working mothers in reconciling paid work and childcare tasks, but it prevented women from being able to choose between home and work. Lone mothers were, for example, permitted temporarily to hand over their children to state-supported children's homes. In the more general framework of liberal economic policy today, Estonian family policy has remained rather modest, and satisfaction with family policy is low, as demonstrated by respondents in the IPROSEC project and in work carried out for the Ministry for Family and Population Issues (Kutsar and Tiit, 2002b). State intervention through the provision of benefits and services is widely accepted, although the low level of financial support has no power to influence family events. Family members believe that the main responsibility for family welfare lies with the family itself. Some respondents also expressed low awareness of family policy and hardly knew to whom to turn when they had a problem.

The age at which women make family-related decisions is the most sensitive indicator differentiating Western Europe from the transition countries. In 2000, the mean age of women at first marriage was 23.9 in the transition countries and 27.4 in Western Europe; the age at first birth was, respectively 24.3 and 27.7 years, a difference of 3.5 years for both indicators. During the 1990s, mean age of women at first marriage in Estonia increased by more than two years (from 22.5 in 1990 to 24.8 in 2000), while the average age at first birth increased by about one year (from 22.9 in 1990 to 24.0 in 2000) (Council of Europe, 2002). Although these figures rose in Estonia over the decade, and were higher than average for transition countries, the difference was very marked compared to the Scandinavian countries, where the age of women at first marriage was 29.2 in 2000 and the age of first birth was 27.0.

The proportion of women never marrying also changed during the 1990s in Estonia: the marriage rate showed a two-fold decrease over the decade (Council of Europe, 2002). By 2000, the total female first marriage rate (below age 50) was 0.39 in Estonia, making it among the lowest in Europe.

According to data on other EU member states and candidate countries, Estonia, like the Scandinavian and other Baltic countries, recorded a very high divorce rate (Drew *et al.*, 1998; Council of Europe, 2002). The total divorce rate was slightly below 50% in 2000, as in the 1980s, which means that one in every two marriage being contracted ends in divorce. However, the total divorce rate was decreasing in the late 1990s, and the fall can be linked to the steep decline in marriage since the end of socialism (Sardon, 2002).

Historically, changes in marriage and family patterns in Estonia have mirrored developments that have taken place in Scandinavia. During the postwar period, the trend was towards higher marriage rates and earlier family formation. Whereas in Western Europe, this trend was being reversed in the early or mid-1970s, in Estonia (as in other Communist countries), it continued until the late 1980s (Council of Europe, 2001). In 1987, Estonia was the country that underwent a dramatic decline in marriage levels from the 1990s. By 1995, the marriage rate had reached the same level as the EU member states with the lowest rates (Drew *et al.*, 1998 ; Hansson, 2000). Since 1998, the decline seems to have been stopped.

The multigenerational family model has always been unpopular in Estonia. At the start of the twentieth century, the trend was already towards adult children leaving the family home when they married. Since then, multigenerational families have gradually been replaced by the nuclear family model. During Soviet times, this trend ceased due to housing problems, and the same factor still applies for low-income families today. Since the 1970s the proportion of extended families remained stable at 10–15%, but was falling in the early years of the twenty-first century.

According to data from the Civil Census carried out in 2000 (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2002), one-person households represent the most widespread household type<sup>2</sup>, constituting 34% of the total. In line with the nuclear household pattern, almost 18% of households are made up of couples without children (including 14% married and 4% consensual couples) and 28% are couples with children (23% married and 6% consensual respectively). Single-parent families form 15% of households (13% are single mothers and 1.4% are single fathers). The remaining 5% are other household types, including 2% of multinuclear households and 3% of 'non-family' type households (without parental or partnership bonds between members). Cohabiting couples account for 22% of all couples and 19% of couples with children. About 8% of extended households contain married or cohabiting couples, and the proportion is doubled for lone-parent families.

Changes in Estonian families in the 1990s came to be characterized not only by the declining number of marriages, but also by the large number of children being born out of wedlock. The rate of extramarital births in Estonia was 18.3 % in 1980, over 50% in 1998 and reached 54.5% in 2000, while the proportion was 55.3% in Sweden and 65.8% in Iceland. At the same time the number of teenage births decreased. Most of the children born outside marriage have both a mother and father who are cohabiting. About 10% of all births are accounted for by mothers living alone, while the percentage of children born to divorced women living alone and to widows is relatively small, even though the number of divorces in Estonia is higher than in EU member states (Council of Europe, 2001). Estonian Civil Census data for 2000 show that about 75% of all

children are living together with both parents, including 20% whose parents are cohabiting without being married. Another 20% of children live in a lone-mother household, of whom 20% are in an extended family arrangement.

The increase in the number of couples living in unregistered cohabitation, as well as the number of children born out of wedlock explains the growing variability of family structures based on new forms of partnership (Selizer, 2000).

### **Decisions about partnership and family formation**

Since the 1990s, unmarried cohabitation has developed from so-called premarital cohabitation ('trial marriage') in Estonian society to become an alternative to formal marriage. Researchers have introduced the concepts of 'legal' and 'real' family status to describe the variety of family statuses of respondents (Kutsar and Tiit, 2002a), and they were used in the Civil Census. 'Legal' family status denotes being never married, married, divorced or widowed; 'real' family status means living with a partner (or spouse) or living without a partner. By combining these two variables, information can be obtained about the formal and informal aspects of different partnership arrangements, such as living in a consensual union with a former married person, or still married but cohabiting with another partner. The third option of having a partner but not living together, for example going steady while living apart together (LAT) is still not included in this concept; nor are cases where couples are living together under the same roof and sharing some part of resources and mental worlds but not identifying themselves as cohabitants.

Young adults are having to decide between different types of partnership and further family formation. Many factors aggravate the problem they have in deciding between formal marriage and other alternatives forms of partnership. The difficulties with which they have to contend are further complicated by the ambivalence in Estonian society as a result of the general liberalization of attitudes, the spread of individualistic values and openness, on the one hand, and the low birthrate, postponement of the birth of the first child and of marriage to a later age, high educational and employment rates of women of reproductive age and low stability of marriages, on the other.

To gain a better understanding of new pathways to family formation, 336 students from Tartu University and the Estonian Agricultural University were surveyed in Autumn 2001 by the Unit of Family and Welfare Studies at the University of Tartu (Kasearu, 2002), continuing a long tradition of over 30 years of asking students about their ideal marriage and spouse. The decision-making process in choosing between different types of partnership and family formation was a focus of the survey.

The study revealed that during the 1990s, no radical change had taken place in the students' value orientations. Individualistic values, such as personal leisure time, self-improvement, career and material wealth remain characteristic of young people in contemporary Estonian society. At the same time, the desire to establish a family, based on formal marriage is diminishing, which means that consensual unions are more clearly acceptable alternatives to formal marriage.

A cross-sectional survey in 1998 (Hansson, 2000) showed that 21% of male and 26% of female respondents in the 20–24 age group were cohabiting

in the late 1990s. Our survey with students revealed that 25% of respondents had decided not to register their union, and 33% maintained liberal attitudes towards unmarried cohabitation. For them, it did not matter whether couples marry or just live together in an informal relationship.

Other cross-sectional studies carried out in the 1990s have confirmed that marriage continues to be highly appreciated in Estonian society as the basis for families to raise children. Marriage is still seen as essential for young people. At least 50% of the respondents from the students' survey intend to marry in the future, including 25% who expect to have a religious marriage. Only 1% of the students questioned claimed they would not wish to marry or start living together with someone in the future and preferred to remain single.

Gender is an important factor in predicting students' intentions to cohabit or get married. Female students intend to marry. Male students either prefer to cohabit, or do not attach much importance to the type of living arrangement. The students who choose marriage are committed to the traditional values of marriage, but students who prefer unmarried cohabiting relationships stress the importance of factors determining the postponement of marriage. Female students want to marry because of emotional and economic well-being, whereas male students prefer to cohabit because it involves fewer mutual responsibilities.

Cohabitation itself has different meanings for students. About 48% of respondents regarded it as a pre-marriage period, but 30% confirmed that it is the start of family formation; they see it as an alternative to formal marriage. About 10% of respondents held the most liberal attitude towards cohabitation, seeing it as a temporary arrangement for living together with someone before changing to another partner. They did not make a direct connection between cohabitation and family formation. The remaining 12% did not connect cohabitation with any of the meanings listed. Their understanding of the concept of cohabitation was not further probed.

For about a third of the respondents, cohabitation means family formation that is an alternative to a formal marriage, but it is not clear under what conditions a temporary arrangement for living together turns into cohabitation. The survey among students revealed that the presence of a child is a determining factor in defining a partnership as cohabitation (without the intention of marrying in the future) or a pre-marriage (with the expectation of marriage). In this respect, in the minds of students, cohabitation has taken on a meaning equal to that of formal marriage.

Behind decisions about whether to live temporarily with someone else, cohabit or marry, lie similar motives: the wish to live together with the person one loves, to find support and to be cared for, as well as the intention to normalize sexual relationships. The most widespread reasons in the population at large for moving from a consensual union to formal marriage are connected with the birth of a child as well as traditional beliefs that family members should share a common name and that children should be born inside wedlock.

The reasons why some cohabitants, who intend to get married one day, are still postponing formalization of their relationship were also revealed by the study. In a situation where the number of divorces is very high, young people recognize the importance of getting to know each other better and of testing their mutual relationship during pre-marital cohabitation. They also want to

develop their own social maturity, study, improve their living conditions and cement their careers. The group of respondents who found that formal marriage constrained freedom and individual choice do not expect to marry some day but want to continue cohabiting.

The respondents from the IPROSEC project were older than those involved in the student survey and revealed different patterns of family development. The most widespread family formation path started from formal marriage while the partners were in their early twenties, and the first child was born very soon after the marriage was contracted. Unmarried cohabitation with another partner followed only after the dissolution of the formal marriage. Cohabitation was not socially accepted, and children were expected to be born within marriage. Thus, pregnancy was a powerful factor pushing couples towards marriage. A survey conducted in Estonia in 1972 among couples intending to get married revealed that 44% of the respondents said pregnancy was one of the important motives for marriage (Talve and Talve, 1975).

### **Policy responses**

Students who participated in the survey described in the previous section maintained that close relationships among people do not need state intervention. This attitude confirms the fact that many young people do not attach much importance to differences between informal cohabitation and formal marriage. The decision to contract a marriage may be affected by legislation: formal marriage makes relationships more secure, creates mutual obligations and sets clearer barriers against the breakdown of the union. Even more significantly, this decision is affected by personal values and politics. Those who value personal life perspectives highly are more likely to favour unmarried cohabitation or not to define their preference. Those who follow more traditional family values expect to marry and to have more children on average than those biased towards cohabitation (Kasearu, 2002).

Changing family patterns have received wide press coverage in Estonia. Writers in daily newspapers and magazines, in the main, are worried about the decline in the number of first marriages and the increasing trend towards cohabitation, accompanied by the growing number of children born out of wedlock. They also express their concern about dysfunctional families (violence, child abuse, conflicts within families and alcohol addiction) and the instability of marriages, including high divorce rates. The continued weakening of bonds between the generations (parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren) is also a source of concern. In general, family matters are dealt with more as private concerns if the focus is not economic well-being, which is considered a more public issue and a justification for political intervention.

The student survey showed that the respondents who were most attracted to informal cohabitation instead of formal marriage also preferred fewer children on average in the family. Consequently, the spread of cohabitation as an alternative to formal marriage points to a further risk of decline in the birthrate. Two-thirds of the Estonian respondents in the IPROSEC project expressed the opinion that the state should not interfere in issues associated with marriage. A minority thought that marriage should be supported rather than unmarried

cohabitation. These were mainly the representatives of the older generation and more often male respondents.

What are the policy responses to increasing evidence of unmarried cohabitation and the larger number of children being born out of wedlock rather than from formal marriages? Hitherto, the state has not introduced legislation for unmarried cohabiting couples in Estonia. Such couples may not adopt children and do not have the same rights as married couples. The family referred to in the Family Law Act of 12 October 1994 is confined to the family created by marriage. As the number of stable but informal partnerships continues to increase in Estonia, family law is under review. Mostly, the revisions concern the division of property acquired during marriage. Unmarried cohabitation is, nonetheless, a source of concern for policy makers due to its impact on fertility. The Estonian Civil Census in 2000 revealed that the highest average number of children (1.68) live in a nuclear marriage-based family. The average number of children is slightly smaller (1.58) in a nuclear family of unmarried cohabiting partners. Lone-parent nuclear families contain the smallest average number of children (1.41 for lone mothers and 1.27 for lone fathers). Although data are not available on average completed fertility for these family types, none of them could exceed the threshold for population replacement (2.1 children).

The fall in the number of marriages is a new trend in Estonia and has not yet been addressed in law by introducing contracts for unmarried partnerships. By contrast, Estonia has a long history of legislation on divorce. After a period of restrictive legislation, the divorce law reform of 1965, which was designed to make divorce easier, was followed by a rapid increase in the divorce rate in the late 1960s. The 1995 reform of Family Law made divorce easier still, by removing the requirement to have recourse to the courts. Where divorce is by mutual consent, it is sufficient to register the divorce with the Civil Census Bureau. Family Law is again being revised under pressure, among other things, from the development of the social practice of unmarried cohabitation. The main focus of discussion is over common *versus* separate property ownership by couples.

Together with the abrupt decline in the number of new marriages, a situation has arisen in Estonia today where the rate of first marriages is the same as for divorce. In addition to the growth in the divorce rate, the number of separations of legally married and cohabiting couples is also increasing, but they are not shown in national statistics. However, these separations also create social and economic problems for children, and require policy responses. The focus on legal marriage and the divorce rate has meant that little attention has been paid to any other family living arrangements and their breakdown.

As in most other EU member states, the policy response to increasing cohabitation as an alternative to marriage can be described as passive in Estonia, although the rights of children from unmarried cohabiting relationships have been recognized. Several countries have introduced formal cohabiting contracts for unmarried couples to ensure that they have certain rights in everyday life (social security, property), as for example the *pacte civil de solidarité* (Pacs) in France, which was introduced in 1999. In Sweden, legislation was first introduced in 1987 to regulate unmarried partnerships. Progressively, the situation has been brought into line with that of marriage,

even though unmarried partners do not automatically inherit from one another unless they have drawn up a will, whereas married partners do.

In Hungary, cohabitation is codified only in the case of 'life companions'. Statute 1959/IV of Hungarian Civil Law provides partners with only limited rights, and no legal forum exists where these companionships can be officially registered. The concept of 'life companionship' (referring to cohabiting partnerships) can, however, become more important after the relationship ends due to the death of one of partners when matters regarding property are being settled.

As elsewhere in Europe, new principles of child centeredness have gradually been introduced into family policy in Estonia. Between 1920 and 1940, the first period of independence, a child born out of wedlock was granted the same rights as a biological child only in cases where the parents married. The mother's opinion was not listened to. Children in Estonia today are given priority, irrespective of whether their parents are living in a formal marriage or a consensual union. According to the survey with students, children are the central figures determining whether their parents decide to live together informally or move into a formal marriage. The marriage-based family is, however, likely to remain as a traditional construct and romantic symbol in people's imagination. It is also one of the options for making rational choices in the face of increasing diversity between the different types of partnership that form the basis for changing family structures.

## Notes

1. This paper draws on interview materials collected for the European Commission Framework Programme 5 funded project: 'Improving Policy Responses to Socio-Economic Changes' (IPROSEC). The interviews with political, economic and civil society actors and members of different family types were carried out in eight EU member states and three candidate countries between 2001 and 2002. The authors of the paper wish to acknowledge the contribution of the project team. The interpretations of the material are their own.
2. A household in Estonia is defined as a group of people living at the same address and sharing joint monetary resources and whose members consider themselves to belong to the same household (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2000).

## References

- Bengtson, V. L. (2001) 'Beyond the nuclear family: the increasing importance of multigenerational bonds', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63 (1), 1–16.
- Coontz, S. (2000) 'Historical perspectives on family studies', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62 (2), 283–97.
- Council of Europe (2001) *Recent Demographic Developments in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Council of Europe (2002) *Recent Demographic Developments in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Ditch, J., Barnes, H., Bradshaw, J., Commaille, J. and Eardley, T. (1994) *A Synthesis of National Family Policies 1994*, European Observatory on National Family Policies, York: Social Policy Research Unit, University of York.

- Drew, E., Emerek, R. and Mahon, E. (1998) *Women, Work and the Family in Europe*, London: Routledge.
- Haavio-Mannila, E. and Kontula, O. (2001) *Seksin trendit meilla ja naapureissa* [Our own and our neighbours' trends in sexual behaviour], Helsinki: WSOY.
- Hansson, L. (2000) 'The changing family in Estonia and Europe', in UNDP (ed.), *Estonian Human Development Report 2000*, Tallinn: UNDP, pp. 42–8.
- Hraba, J., Lorenz, F.O. and Pechačova, Z. (2000) 'Family stress during Czech transformation', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62 (2), 520–31.
- Kasearu, K. (2002) 'Üliõpilaste kooselulist käitumuslikku kavatsust mõjutavad tegurid. Bakalaureusetöö' ['Factors influencing students' behavioural intentions towards cohabitation'], BA dissertation, University of Tartu.
- Kutsar, D. and Tiit, E.-M. (2000) 'Comparing socio-demographic indicators in Estonia and the European Union', *Cross-National Research Papers*, 6 (2), 27–34.
- Kutsar, D. and Tiit, E.-M. (2002a) 'The individual life course in the context of family development', in D. Kutsar (ed.), *Living Conditions in Estonia Five Years Later*, Tartu: Tartu University Press, pp. 7–36.
- Kutsar, D. and Tiit, E.-M. (2002b) 'Pereliikmete väärtushinnangud ja demograafilised käitumiseelistused ning perekonna diskursus Eesti sotsiaaltöö praktikas. Lepingu lõpparuanne' ['Value orientations and preferences of demographic behaviour of family members and family discourse in Estonian social work practice. A Final report to the Ministry of Family and Population Issues'], Rahvastikuministri Büroo, Tartu: Tartu University.
- Raley, R.K. (2001) 'Increasing fertility in cohabiting unions: evidence for the second demographic transition', *Demography*, 38 (1), 59–68.
- Sardon, J.-P. (2002), 'Recent demographic changes in the developed countries', *Population*, 57 (1), 123–70.
- Selitzer, J. (2000) 'Families formed outside of marriage', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62 (5), 1247–68.
- Statistical Office of Estonia (2000) *Statistical Yearbook of Estonia 2000*, Tallinn: Statistical Office of Estonia.
- Statistical Office of Estonia (2002) *2000 Population and Housing Census*. Part VI: *Household*, Tallinn: Statistical Office of Estonia.
- Talve, M. and Talve, V. (1975) 'Abiellumismotiivide analüüs Eesti NSV-s 1972.a aandmetel' ['Analysis of the motives for marriage in the Estonian SSR based on data from 1972'], in A. Blumfeldt, I. Kraav, H. Kurm, H. Kadastik, H. Kaarma, S. Lepik and E.-M. Tiit (eds), *Perekonnaprobleemid II* [Family Problems II], Tartu: Tartu University Press, pp. 214–40.
- Trost, J. (1981) 'Cohabitation in the Nordic Countries. From deviant phenomenon to social institution', *Alternative Lifestyles*, 4 (4), 401–27.
- Trost, J. and Levin, I. (1991) 'Living apart together', *Community, Work and Family*, 2 (2), 279–94.
- Wang, H. and Amato, P.R. (2000) 'Prediction of divorce adjustment: stressors, resources, definitions', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62 (3), 655–68.

## 7. Differential Modernization in Hungary: Families and Family Values after Transition

*Mária Neményi and Olga Tóth*

This paper explores the contradiction between demographic data on families, on the one hand, and ideas and attitudes towards families in Hungarian society, on the other. While for decades radical changes – in the direction of a ‘Western’ modern lifestyle – have been taking place in Hungary in family life, family structures and the repertoire of roles that family members play, research shows that the value system related to family life has followed these changes slowly and only partially, and remains essentially traditional.

In Hungary, during the four decades of state socialism, a changing but nevertheless always present ambivalence existed, producing a contradiction that shaped social representations of marriage and the family. The traditional concept of the family as upheld and transmitted by family socialization was seemingly in conflict with daily life, since the bourgeois ideal family with the working husband and homemaker wife raising the children could not be realized in practice. Moreover, this bourgeois ideal was no longer considered to be desirable, since women were better educated, professionally trained and actively participating in the workforce. Despite these factors, public opinion polls and other research continued to demonstrate that the family as an ideal had not lost any of its popularity. The entire arsenal of means for reducing cognitive dissonance was needed to maintain the notion that the family, more specifically the family with children, is the primary source of happiness, against a background of real life decisions on divorce, remarriage and unmarried cohabitation.

Many observers have tried to explain this ambivalence, some by exploring the ‘double bind’ social pressure that the political leadership and its subservient economic, scientific and cultural elite exerted on society. The so-called ‘state feminism’ was one such pressure: the top-down introduction and acceleration of the emancipation of women. An objective of this project was the total inclusion of women in the labour market. It was asserted that taking part in the production process was the best guarantee for being regarded as a member of society with full and equal rights. At the same time, a category of ‘inactive workers’ was created, which effectively drove women from the labour market, downgrading them to the status of a second-rate labour force, and maintaining their subordinate position. This external, macro-societal pressure was compounded by patriarchal notions of gender roles shared by members of society as a result of their upbringing or their aversion to external pressure (Neményi, 1999).

The reference to families and family values has been the main element and the common denominator of the social policies pursued by the various governments since the democratic transition. ‘Family’ – undefined, without the article – became the main keyword in politics. This was not only true of the conservative, rightwing parties that have been in government twice since the democratic transition. Family refers implicitly to young families with children; older people, those living alone, or who have already raised their children no longer seem to fit into the category. The notion of the family has again become

politicized. Once more, politicians consider the family to be the basic unit of society, rather than addressing individual men, women, pensioners, young people, city or village dwellers, Hungarians or members of other ethnic groups, on the basis of a realistic interpretation of the processes taking place in society.

The representatives of the various political currents that have been in power since the democratic transition – perhaps not independently of the influence they themselves exercised on public opinion – were right to rely on the assumption, supported by various researchers, that the family, and the security afforded by a family, are at the top of the hierarchy of values of the Hungarian population, and a preference that does not depend on whether or not the people who were polled were themselves living in a family. This unquestioning support for the family is hard to explain when we realize that families themselves have gone through significant change over the past decades, and that, despite the radical effects on all aspects of society of the democratic transition of 1990, these changes seem to be the continuation of a process that started earlier. As in other European countries, the changes that affected families are symptomatic of the so-called second demographic transition. The main symptoms of these changes are falling numbers of marriages, the growing frequency of cohabitation, a general decrease in fertility, coupled with a growing number of children born out of wedlock, as well as a rising or high divorce rate.

### **Facts and attitudes**

Hungarian statistics on marriage illustrate the process of modernization: until the 1970s, the so-called non-European type of marriage (most people married at an early age) was characteristic of Hungary (Hajnal, 1965); after that time, people increasingly moved in the direction of Western European marriage patterns. This trend is clearly illustrated by the statistical data in Table 7.1. In the second half of the 1970s, the marriage ratio began its long-term decline, while at the same time the average age of marriage rose, and childbirth was postponed (Csernákné, 1996). Whereas, in the 1970s, the average age at first marriage was 24 for men and 21 for women, by the year 2000, it had risen to 27.2 for men and 24.7 for women. The increase in the average age at which people get married is connected to women's increasing level of education, and, especially, to women's mass enrolment in secondary and third-level

**Table 7.1 Key marriage and divorce indicators in Hungary, 1970–99**

| Year     | No of marriages | Marriages per 1000 inhabitants | No of divorces | Divorces per 1000 inhabitants |
|----------|-----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1970–79* | 97097           | 9.2                            | 25671          | 2.4                           |
| 1980–89* | 72854           | 6.9                            | 27940          | 2.6                           |
| 1990     | 66405           | 6.4                            | 24888          | 2.4                           |
| 1996     | 48930           | 4.8                            | 22590          | 2.5                           |
| 1999     | 45500           | 4.5                            | 25500          | 2.5                           |

\* average number of marriages per year for the 10-year period

Source: Csernákné, 1996.

education. The traditional status of a married woman is not compatible with being a student, so that most women only marry after finishing their education. Public opinion also considers it 'normal' for people to complete schooling first and only then start a new phase in life as a married person. Another important factor is that educational qualifications enhance women's position in the labour market, give them better opportunities in life and make it possible for them to reject traditional forms of marriage if they choose to do so.

It is clear from the figures in Table 7.1 that the second demographic transition has taken place in Hungary: the fall in the number of marriages has been counterbalanced by the growth in divorce. The number of marriages and the marriage rate have been divided by two in the space of 30 years, indicating a decreasing interest in marriage, in particular among young people, as reflected by the increase in the mean age at marriage by three years. Nevertheless, not only has a change occurred in the timing of marriage but also a decrease in the probability of getting married during the life course. Thus, according to the total first marriage rate in 1999, nearly 54% of never-married women at the age of 50 will remain unmarried (Council of Europe, 2000, table H4).

The re-marriage indicators have also declined significantly. While in the 1950s, 270 out of 1000 divorced men remarried, in the 1990s this number went down to 35. For women, the number fell from 115 to 23. These are all signs that society's ideas about marriage have changed. Marriage is no longer the only type of man–woman relationship; unmarried cohabitation is becoming equally acceptable. Census data show that, in 2001, 11% of those living together as if married were not married. The proportion of people who, if they choose to live in a long-term relationship at all, decide not to get married has increased markedly (among the younger age groups). In 1980, 3% of the women aged 15–19 who had a long-term relationship were not married, while in 2001 the proportion was 71%. In 2001, 39% of women aged 20–24 who had long-term relationships were not married, while in 1980 it was only 1%.

Another characteristic feature of the second demographic transition is the high incidence of divorce. This is not a new phenomenon in Hungary, as the divorce rate has been high since the 1970s.

After peaking in the 1980s, the number of divorces fell sharply in 1992. After 1992, the upward trend continued and the number of divorces has been fluctuating around 24–25 000. As already indicated, the number of marriages fell while the number of divorces remained constant, so that the number of divorces per 1000 existing marriages rose to 11 per year in 1998. If the divorce rate remains high, more than one-third of the couples who married in the 1990s will eventually divorce.

The democratic transition temporarily increased the stability of marriages, but this proved to be a short-lived effect. In studying this aspect of change in family life, we have to take into account the combined effects of a number of simultaneous, partially contradictory phenomena. The social and economic effects of transition, primarily mass unemployment and the resulting poverty, arguably increased solidarity and cohesion in some families. The rise in the number of small, family-based businesses may have had a similar effect. However, the growing level of education of women, which improves their

economic situation, and their opportunities in the labour market, and influences their attitude towards traditional marriage, kept the divorce rate high.

A characteristic symptom of the 'second demographic transition' is the rapid rise in the number of children born out of wedlock. This is not a first-time, unexpected demographic effect of the democratic transition either. Rather, it is the acceleration of a trend that was already present. While the number of births in wedlock has been falling continuously since the mid-1970s, the number of children born to unmarried parents continued to rise, slowly at first, and then rapidly from the 1990s (Kamarás, 1998). In 2000, 29% of children were born out of wedlock. Research has shown that unmarried mothers typically belong to one of two groups (Molnár and Pongrácz, 1998). One group consists of women under the age of 20 who have a low level of education and primarily belong to the Roma ethnic minority. These women follow the reproductive habits that are common in their environment and become mothers at a very young age, while not necessarily being legally married. In many cases, however, the women are living in a long-term relationship, with a father in the family. Often, the women plan, or hope, to legalize their relationship by getting married. The second group consists of well-educated women close to the age of 30, who may or may not have a long-term relationship, and who do not plan to marry the father of their children at all.

### **Changing attitudes to family life**

A variety of research has pointed out the paradox that unmarried parents themselves – as does public opinion in general – consider it better to be married because of the secure environment it creates for raising children, although this does not necessarily motivate them to marry themselves. However, Hungarian society is growing more tolerant in this respect too. It is a sign of modernization that unmarried mothers are much less often discriminated against than a few decades ago. Another sign is that, while differences exist in the number of children born out of wedlock between the regions and between the various types of towns, the number of such births is rising in all parts of the country, including in small villages.

As we have seen from the statistical data, the demographic behaviour of the Hungarian population is similar to that of other industrialized European countries. However, if we look at attitudes and opinions on this topic, the situation is contradictory. It seems as if the Hungarian population is less consistent in this respect than respondents in other countries; strongly conflicting values and ideas exist side by side. These value conflicts are exemplified by the findings of separate, but similar studies. Sometimes contradictions are even found within a single research project, as discussed in the examples below.

According to the findings of the 1993 Fertility and Family Survey (Molnár and Pongrácz, 1998), the majority of the adult men and women interviewed were in favour of marriage: 80% rejected the notion that marriage is an outdated institution. According to the authors, similar proportions of both the older and the younger generation subscribed to this idea. However, many young women were not able to answer this question, or were not sure how to answer, which could mean that opinions and values were already changing. Perhaps their

insecurity could be explained by their conflicting ideas about marriage. This same survey showed that, while the large majority of the population was in favour of marriage, '...they give evidence of considerable tolerance vis-à-vis people who have children without being married or even without having a stable relationship' (Molnár and Pongrácz, 1998, p. 40). The number of people who agreed that a woman should be able to have a child on her own if she wants to was almost equal to the number of those who considered marriage not to be outdated.

According to another study in the early 1990s, attitudes towards marriage underwent interesting changes between 1988 and 1994 (Tóth, 1999). The number of people who accepted marriage as a goal in itself – irrespective of whether the marriage in question is successful – was steadily falling. In 1994, only one in ten women and one in eight men agreed with the statement that 'It is better to have a bad marriage than none at all'. Especially for young people, this statement proved to be unacceptable. The study showed that young, well-educated city dwellers were more sceptical of marriage as an institution than the older generation. They saw marriage primarily as financially advantageous, and as a stable arrangement that was well suited for raising children; they did not consider marriage provided stronger emotional support than other types of relationships. This finding has repeatedly been supported by the opinion polls (Molnár and Pongrácz, 1998).

A more recent study in 2002 revealed an unquestionable shift in public opinion in this area. In the course of the survey, young people aged 22–27 were asked about their attitudes towards marriage and the family (Tóth, 2002). In the 1994 survey discussed above, 35% of the respondents of similar age (18–27) agreed with the statement that 'People who are married are generally happier than those who are not'. In 2002, only 27% of the respondents in this age group agreed with the statement. Another shift was found in the same direction – towards modernization – in the results relating to the statement: 'These days, the main goal of marriage is having children'. In 1994, 45% of young people agreed with the statement; in 2002, the proportion had fallen to 31%.

As far as marriage is concerned, demographics and attitudes seem to have moved in the same direction in the years since transition to democracy. It seems that, on the one hand, people 'know' that a well-functioning, loving marriage is an ideal type of relationship. On the other hand, they also, pragmatically, consider other types of relationships to be a perfectly acceptable substitute if for some reason marriage is not possible. They do not object to having children out of wedlock either. As far as cohabitation is concerned, the situation is similar, as the 1994 International Social Science Program (ISSP) and the 2002 Youth Survey attested. Both surveys found that the great majority (85% and 86% respectively) of the young people who were interviewed agreed with the statement: 'There is nothing wrong with an unmarried couple living together'. A survey of unmarried mothers by Molnár and Pongrácz (1998) in 1995 also revealed that it is only the least educated mothers in small villages who insist on getting married, because they see marriage as intrinsically more valuable than unmarried cohabitation. It is noteworthy that, in the same study, only 17% of unmarried mothers accepted the opinion: 'If the parents insist that their children be married, then the children should obey that wish in order to preserve peace in the family'. This very low percentage seems to be the result

of two factors: on the one hand, parents do not put much pressure on their young adult children to convince them they should marry. On the other hand, young adults live their lives much more autonomously than previous generations; they are much less tolerant of parents' interference.

It is not only with regard to marriage and cohabitation that public opinion has changed, attitudes towards divorce are also changing. Here too, demographic trends and attitudes are moving in the same direction. Hungarian society generally accepts divorce as a way of 'solving' family conflicts (Tóth, 1999). A study of the attitudes and habits of the middle classes with respect to marriage and divorce, performed after transition, compared practice with the opinions on this topic of three socio-economic groups – lower-middle, middle, upper-middle – who rated themselves as middle-class in a country-wide representative sample. It was found that the proportion of divorced, unmarried partners, and single people was 12.3% for the entire sample, 16% for the lower-middle class group, and 27% for the upper-middle class group. It also turned out that the higher the socio-economic status of the respondent, the more accepting s/he was of cohabitation, divorce, or living apart together (Utasi, 1996).

It seems that norms and values in Hungarian society relating to demographic questions are slowly changing, reflecting the more rapid changes in demographic behaviour. The change is most obvious among the young, clearly because they are the ones who are most open to trying out Western European patterns of demographic behaviour. However, public opinion is almost universally conservative on two family-related issues. One is having and raising children: a large number of studies by Edit Molnár and Tiborné Pongrácz (1996, 1998) have revealed that Hungarian society is strongly 'child-centred'. This is expressed by the fact that a large majority of people – and the percentage is higher than what surveys find in other countries – whether young or old, whether or not they have children, feel that the lives of parents are more valuable, richer, and better than the lives of people who do not raise children. A majority of the Hungarian respondents, as opposed to people in other countries, give greater importance to the family and to raising children in questions that deal with the dilemma between career and family. While the number of children per family is falling, up until transition it was rare for a couple to decide consciously not to have children. Change is expected in this area as well, however slow it may be. Perhaps if families that decide not to have children become more common in Hungary, the prejudices against life without children – which is seen as a sad and wasted life – will become less strong. At present, however, it is clear that, in spite of the fact that Hungarians have fewer and fewer children, parenthood is still highly respected by the value system of society.

The other set of decidedly conservative values that also concern the family, and which have gained importance since transition, regard family roles and women working. In Hungary before the transition, all men and women worked. This provoked considerable criticism from family policy experts. Before transition, both public opinion and scientific research were very much concerned with the problem of women's double workload (at home and at the workplace). Understandably, many commentators saw a solution to this

problem in a fairer and more equal sharing of household tasks. However, after transition, criticism has grown of women's employment, and especially of women's full-time employment (for example Pongrácz, 2002). Some researchers and family policy makers blamed women's employment for the demographic changes described above and for the various signs of crisis in the lives of families. While in Western European countries in the past few decades, the second demographic transition was accompanied by (and closely related to) women's increasing participation in the labour market, in Hungary the reverse process took place. The number of employed women fell from 2.3 million in 1990 to 1.7 million by the end of the decade (Frey, 2002), as a result of unemployment, early retirement, disability pensions, withdrawal from the labour market, and the various childcare allowances.

Attitudes towards women doing paid work have always – at least since this has been a topic for research – been relatively conservative, and it seems they have become even more conservative. Pongrácz's (2002) 1978 survey revealed that only one-quarter of mothers with two or three children approved of women who have full-time jobs. It could be argued that this attitude is the result of the peculiar problems that families with small children have. However, the 1994 ISSP study showed that one third of the adults interviewed disapproved of full-time employment, even for women who were already married but did not yet have children. Pongrácz found similar results from a nation-wide representative sample in 2000: 70% of women and 76% of men agreed with the statement: 'It is the job of the husband to provide financially for the family, and the job of the wife to take care of household tasks'. These findings point to a very striking contradiction not only between actual behaviour and the value system, but also within the value system itself. On the one hand, society (especially young people) is completely tolerant of the fact that young people postpone marriage, more and more people choose not to get married, the birthrate is falling, an increasing number of children are born out of wedlock, and one third of marriages end in divorce. On the other hand, for most people (including young people), the ideal family is a classical bourgeois family in which the husband is the breadwinner, and the wife only deals with the household and childcare. Most Hungarians prefer to see women's employment as the result of the reduced financial circumstances many families live in: if they had a bit more money, the ideal of the providing husband and the kept wife would be within reach.

### **Assessing change**

The 12 years that have passed since transition are too short a time for the conditions that shape the behaviour of society, or the associated opinions, ideas, and attitudes, to stabilize. The changes, however, have resulted in marked differences between various age groups, socio-economic strata, and – last but not least – between men and women. When, in the title of the present text, reference was made to Hungary's process of modernization as 'differential modernization' from the point of view of family patterns, family life and ideas about families, it was to the structural and attitudinal differences that form the lives of individuals and hence of families, as well as ideas about families and family roles. Over a longer period of time – and since the paper is about

processes of modernization, it would be reasonable to look at the period from the Second World War until the present – it can be seen that the chasm between the societal and political processes that affect family life on the one hand, and professional and individual ideas about families on the other, has gradually become less deep. During the 1970s and 80s, individual and collective ideology relating to families was very close to societal expectations. However, with the crisis and collapse of state socialism, and the radical economic and political changes that took place after transition, structure and ideology began to grow apart again, although neither applies as universally to all layers of society as before. Striking differences appeared between the various groups of society – women versus men, town-dwellers versus people from the countryside, members of the majority versus those belonging to the Roma minority for example – in level of education, capacity to assert oneself professionally, economic participation and financial security. Simultaneously, the differences between expectations related to families in the various societal groups are also growing. The changing political circumstances that Hungarian families have had to adapt to since transition have only reinforced the differences. Especially conservative governments have tried to use state family policy to influence actively not only ideology but also individual decisions relating to families. It is difficult to predict whether, in the years to come, conservative ideology, which is based on a traditional notion of the family, will be influential at all and, if so, to what extent. The accumulated grievances that total employment caused families, and especially women, under socialism, seem to have made society amenable to conservative ideas. It is an open question whether the hoped-for economic stabilization and accompanying proliferation of a Western European lifestyle will relaunch the process of modernization, which society returned from as if it were a dead-end street in the recent past, or whether the current inclination towards tradition will continue to become stronger.

## References

- Council of Europe (2000) *Recent Demographic Developments in Europe*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Csernák, J. (1996) 'Házasság és válás Magyarországon 1870–1994' ['Marriage and divorce in Hungary'], *Demográfia [Demography]*, 1996/2–3, 108–35.
- Frey, M. (2002) 'Nők és férfiak a munkaerőpiacon' ['Women and men in the labour market'], in I. Nagy, T. Pongrácz, and I.Gy. Tóth (eds), *Szerepváltozások. Jelentés a nők és a férfiak helyzetéről [Changing Roles. Report on the situation of women and men]*, Budapest: TÁRKI, Szociális és Családügyi Minisztérium, pp. 9–29.
- Hajnal, J. (1965) 'European marriage patterns in perspective', in D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley (eds), *Population in History*, London: Arnold, pp. 127–151.
- Kamarás, F. (1998) 'Házasságon kívüli szülések' ['Childbirth outside marriage'], *Népeségtudományi Kutató Intézet Kutatási Jelentései [Research Reports of Research Institute of Demography]*, n<sup>o</sup> 61, Budapest: KSH.
- KSH (1970–99) *Demográfiai évkönyv évfolyamai [Editions of the Demographic Yearbook]*, Budapest: KSH.

- Molnár, E.S. and Pongrácz, T. (1996) 'Változások a gyermeknevelési támogatások rendszerében és azok megítélése a közgondolkodásban' ['Changes in childcare system and their image in public opinion'], *Népességtudományi Kutató Intézet Kutatási Jelentései [Research Reports of the Research Institute of Demography]*, n° 57, Budapest: KSH.
- Molnár, E.S. and Pongrácz, T. (1998) 'Az 1995-ben házasságon kívül szült nők életforma-választásainak vizsgálata' ['Research into life-style strategies of women giving birth outside marriage in 1995'], *Népességtudományi Kutató Intézet Kutatási Jelentései [Research Reports of Research Institute of Demography]*, n° 61, Budapest: KSH.
- Neményi, M. (1999) *Csoportkép nőkkel [Group Picture with Women]*, Budapest: Új Mandátum.
- Pongrácz, T. (2002) 'A család és a munka szerepe a nők életében' ['The role of family and work in women's life'], in I. Nagy, T. Pongrácz, and I.Gy. Tóth (eds), *Szerepváltozások. Jelentés a nők és a férfiak helyzetéről [Changing Roles. Report on the situation of women and men]*, Budapest: TÁRKI, Szociális és Családügyi Minisztérium, pp. 9–29.
- Tóth, O. (1999) 'Marriage, divorce and fertility in Hungary today', in A. Pető and B. Rásky (eds), *Construction. Reconstruction*, Budapest: CEU, pp. 127–45.
- Tóth, O. (2002) 'Kamaszkor után' ['After Adolescence'], *Fordulópont [Turning Point]* 2002/2, 24–30.
- Utasi, Á. (1996) 'Házasság és válás középosztályi identitással – praxis és attitűdök' ['Marriage and divorce with middle-class ideology – praxis and attitudes'], *Szociológiai Szemle [Sociological Review]*, 1996/2, 57–70.

## Notes on Contributors

**Anthony Abela** is Associate Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Malta. He is principal investigator for the European Values Study (Malta) and member of the European Values Steering Committee (Tilburg). He has served as Director of the Institute of Social Welfare at the University of Malta and as Professore Aggiunto in sociology at the Gregorian University in Rome. His research interests encompass comparative European Values Studies, sociology of the family and religion, and youth, gender, poverty and social policy. His recent publications include *Values of Women and Men in the Maltese Islands: a comparative European perspective* (Commission for the Advancement of Women, Ministry for Social Policy, Valletta, 2000); 'Poverty and social exclusion', in European Commission, *A Study of Social Protection Systems in the 13 Applicant Countries: Malta country study* (European Commission, 2003).

**Olivier Büttner** is a Research Fellow with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). He works at the Centre d'Études de l'Emploi in Paris, in the 'Employment and Welfare State' section. His research interests are in balancing work and family life, employment and family public policy issues, and European comparisons. His publications include 'La protection constitutionnelle des familles dans les états de l'Union européenne', *Informations sociales*, September 2002; *L'action publique face aux transformations de la famille en France* (with M-T. Letablier and S. Pennec, Centre d'Études de l'Emploi, Rapport de Recherche, 2002); *Opinions, attitudes et aspirations des familles vis-à-vis de la politique familiale en France* (with M-T. Letablier and S. Pennec, Centre d'Études de l'Emploi, Rapport de Recherche, 2003).

**Ingrid Jönsson** is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, Lund University, Sweden. Her research interests cover education, welfare systems and gender studies. Her recent publications include 'Women and Education in Europe', *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*, 36 (2), 1999; 'Vereinbarkeit von Berufs- und Familienleben in Schweden', *Schwerpunktsheft. Konturen einer modernen Familienpolitik. WSI Mitteilungen*, 03/2002; 'Policy Perspectives on Changing Intergenerational Relations', *Social Policy and Society*, 2 (3), 2003; 'Kinderbetreuung und politische Handlungslogik', in U. Gerhard and T. Knijn (eds), *Berufstätige Mütter in Europa. Alltagspraxis und Sozialpolitik* (with M-T. Letablier, Bech Verlag, 2003).

**Kati Karelson** is a masters student in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at Tartu University, Estonia, and a member of the Nordic Family Researchers' Network. Her main research interests are related to social policy, changing family structures and kinship networks, reconciliation of family tasks and employment.

**Dagmar Kutsar** is a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Policy, and head of the Family Studies Unit, University of Tartu, Estonia. Her main research interests are in family policy, social welfare and poverty, social change, living conditions, social exclusion, social cohesion, family relationships

and cross-national comparisons of social indicators. She has directed research projects on issues of societal change and living conditions in Estonia and the Baltic and Nordic countries, sponsored by the Estonian Science Foundation, United Nations Development Programme and Nordic Council of Ministers. The findings from these projects have been published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Social Welfare* and several edited collections. She is co-author of *Poverty Reduction in Estonia* (Tartu University Press, 1999) and editor of *Living Conditions in Estonia Five Years Later* (Norbalt II, University of Tartu/Fafo Institute for Applied Social Research, 2002).

**Marie-Thérèse Letablier** is a Director of Research (CNRS) at the Centre d'Études de l'Emploi. Her research interests are in women's employment, labour market and welfare state relationships, European comparisons of public policy issues concerning women's work, childcare and balancing work and family life. Her recent publications include *Familles et travail: contraintes et arbitrages* (with J. Fagnani, La Documentation Française, 2001); *L'action publique face aux transformations de la famille en France* (with O. Büttner and S. Pennec, Centre d'Études de l'Emploi, Rapport de Recherche, 2002); 'S'occuper des enfants au quotidien: mais que font donc les pères?' (with J. Fagnani), *Droit social*, n° 3, 2003.

**Valentina Longo** is based in the Department of Historical and Political Studies at the University of Padua. Her main research interests are in gender issues with reference to labour markets, social policy, migration policies and employment patterns. Her publications include *Lavoratori marittimi. Profili sociali e nuove domande di servizio* (with G. Merotto, D. Sacchetto and V. Zanin, Osservatorio politiche sociali, Venezia, 2002).

**Mária Neményi** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Science. Her main research interests include gender and ethnic minority issues, and the sociology of health inequalities. She is co-ordinating a national research project on law enforcement of ethnic and minority rights of the Hungarian Roma. Her publications include *Cigány anyák az egészségügyben [Gypsy Mothers and the Hungarian Health Care System]*, (NEKH, 1998); *Csoportkép nőkkel [Group Picture with Women]*, (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2000); *Egy határszerep anatómiája [The Anatomy of a Borderline Role]*, (Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2001).

**Olga Niméus** is a research assistant in the Department of Sociology, Lund University, Sweden, where she obtained a Masters of Sociology. Her main research interests are gender issues with reference to social policy and employment patterns.

**Sophie Pennec** is a Researcher at the Institut National d'Études Démographiques, Paris. Her research interests are in family kinship, families with four or five generations, family policy and pension systems using micro-simulations. She is involved in a European project on 'Future Elderly Living Conditions in Europe', which is projecting the number of older people according to their marital, health, socio-economic status and living arrangement with a

view to assessing future care needs. Her recent publications include *Le contrat social à l'épreuve des changements démographiques* (ed. with J. Véron, J. Légaré and M. Digoix, Actes, 2èmes Rencontres Sauvy, Montréal, 2000); *L'action publique face aux transformations de la famille en France* (with O. Büttner and M-T. Letablier, Centre d'Études de l'Emploi, Rapport de Recherche, 2002); *Opinions, attitudes et aspirations des familles vis-à-vis de la politique familiale en France* (with M-T. Letablier and O. Büttner, Centre d'Études de l'Emploi, Rapport de Recherche, 2003).

**Ene-Margit Tiit** is Professor Emeritus of Mathematical Statistics at the University of Tartu, and Honorary Doctor at the University of Helsinki, Finland. In the late 1960s, she pioneered sociological research into families in Estonia, and she has subsequently supervised social surveys on different aspects of family formation and structure. Since the early 1990s, she has worked for the Statistical Office of Estonia and has initiated the use of statistical analysis in sociological research. She is President of the Estonian Society of Statistics. Her publications include 'Comparing socio-demographic indicators in Estonia and the European Union', *Cross-National Research Papers*, 6 (2), 2000 (with D. Kutsar); 'The individual life course in the context of family development', in D. Kutsar (ed.), *Living Conditions in Estonia Five Years Later* (Tartu University Press, 2002).

**Olga Tóth** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Science. Her research interests are in family and gender issues, family violence and generations. Her recent publications include 'Kamaszkor után' ['After Adolescence'], *Fordulópont [Turning Point]*, 2002/2; 'Hungarian adolescents' attitudes toward their future, peace and the environment', in J.J. Myers and P. Somlai (eds), *Families as Educators for Global Citizenship* (Ashgate, 2001); and 'Hungary', in J.J. Ponzetti (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family* (Macmillan Reference Library, 2003).

**Jutta Träger** is a researcher and lecturer in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Gießen. Her research interests are in labour market and social policy. She is participating in a project on combating discrimination in the labour market in the European Union. Her dissertation is concerned with changing family structures, changing employment and family policy in Germany in comparison to other European countries.