

Men in care

WORKPLACE SUPPORT FOR CARING MASCULINITIES

Men in Care: Workplace Support for Caring Masculinities. Country report. Slovenia



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ABOUT MiC PROJECT

Men in Care is a European 3-year project (March 2019-Feb 2022) of 12 national organizations (universities, social partners and NGOs) co-funded by the European Commission under the EaSI program (PROGRESS axis). Men in Care (MiC) aims to improve workplace conditions to promote men taking caring roles in seven countries (Austria, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Slovenia and Spain). MiC will assess how policies and workplace cultures can change to enable men to become more active in caring for children, elderly, partners, co-workers and friends. MiC partners are: National Distance Education University (project coordinator, Spain), Fundación 1 de Mayo (Spain), Verein für Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark (Austria), European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (Germany), University of Iceland, REFORM (Resources Centre for Men, Norway), Jagiellonian University (Poland), PLinEU (Poland), Diversity Hub (Poland), The Peace Institute (Slovenia), the Association of Employers of Slovenia and the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia.

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1.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This report¹ represents an overview about gender (in)equality in Slovenia by highlighting gender gaps in paid work, in care and domestic work, work-life balance (WLB) arrangements across the life course and the ways, how workplace and organisational cultures support caring masculinities. This report was prepared in the Men in Care (MiC) project (<https://www.men-in-care.eu/>), where twelve partners from seven European states (Austria, Germany, Iceland, Poland, Norway, Spain and Slovenia) work together on topics related to workplace support for caring masculinities. The MiC aims to improve workplace conditions to promote men's caring roles and to assess how policies and workplace cultures can change to enable men to become more active in caring for children, elderly, partners, co-workers and friends.

The context of Slovenia as a post-socialist country with more than 60 years of women's full time employment and relatively good family policy concerning parental rights and child care system shows an example of liberal ideas of gender equality as well as an example of traditional, gendered division of domestic and care work among men and women. The socialist legacy of extensive and affordable public network of subsidised quality child care and 100% paid parental leave scheme were preserved and the latter extended with paternity leave in the process of joining the EU. The parental leave scheme that is in force in the present Slovenia was introduced in 1986 with 365 days of fully paid leave: 105 days of maternity leave and 260 days of parental leave, which was upgraded with 30 days of paid paternity leave. The latest policy changes provide an additional 10 days of paid paternity leave for fathers of twins or more live births and an additional day of paid leave for working parents in private and public sector to accompany the child on a first school day of the first year of elementary school.

In Slovenia men as fathers are present at childbirth and they use the paternity leave in majority. However, their use of other care leaves, such as parental leave and carer's leave, remain low. The gender gap in division of household and care work is the highest when children are very young and slightly decreases when the children are older. In 2012, employed women spent 14 hours for household work and 25 hours

¹ Data and analysis included in national reports will be updated when post-covid19 data are available.

for child care on a weekly basis, while men spent 10 hours for household work and 15 hours for child care per week (Resolution on the Family Policy, 2018: 76).

In the labour market gender segregation is mostly visible in occupations related to education, health and welfare (EHW), where app. 27% of women work (and 6% of men), while men (36% men and 9% of women) dominate in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations. In general, in care occupations, the percentage of men among employees in educational institutions is increasing at each subsequent level of education. If there is slightly less than 3% of male kindergarten teachers or assistants in kindergartens, in tertiary education men present 54% among all employees (Vrabič Kek et al., 2016: 43; SURS, 2019). In the system of long-term care the majority of care workers are women (88.1%) (Smolej et al., 2016: 14).

Gender pay gap is increasing fastest among the EU countries and was 7.8% in 2016 (Poje et al. 2019), and is the highest for sandwich generation of women aged 45-54. The reasons for increase of gender pay gap remain under researched and in the public it is not perceived as an important public issue. The pension gap is decreasing, in particular for younger cohorts of women. The lowering of pension gap can be understood as the result of higher educational level in younger age cohort and increase in full time employment of women since 1970's.

In Slovenia work-life balance issues are merely focused on childcare with well developed family policy of parental leave scheme and child care system, while elderly care remains marginalised topic with urgent need for systemic regulation and integration into WLB policies. In the last 15 years caring fatherhood was promoted by introduction of paternity leave, campaigns, etc., while wider concept of caring masculinities is still rather unrecognized in the public as well as on the level of companies and working organisations. The latest survey of men as fathers in Slovenia in 2015 shows that fathers perceive their role in its entirety, including emotional support for the child, financial support of the family, spending leisure time with the child, and supporting the child in everyday tasks. As many as 80 % of fathers are facing conflicts in work-life balance, where worst positioned are the men on opposite ends of the employment spectre: fathers in precarious working conditions and fathers in managerial and leading positions (Humer and Frelih, 2016). Further, the national data reveal that 20% men experience stress very often or on a daily basis, where stress is mainly related to paid work (Vinko et al., 2018). There is a great need and potential to improve workplace conditions and organisational cultures for caring masculinities and wider, to integrate WLB measures - involving care for children, partners and elderly care - into organisational cultures.

1.2. GENDER GAPS IN EMPLOYMENT

According to EIGE 2019 Gender Equality Index data the employment rate (of people aged 20-64) is 72% for women and 79% for men (EIGE, 2019a). The full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rate remained stable for women (47%) and decreased for men (from 60% to 58%) between 2005 and 2017. The FTE employment rate increases and the relative gender gaps decrease as education levels rise. The FTE employment rates are equal for women and men with high levels of education (74%), while the gender gap persists between women and men with low and medium education levels (around 14 percentage points). Around 15% of women work part-time, compared to 7% of men. On average, women work 38 hours per week and men work 40.

EIGE 2017 Gender Equality Index data shows that 1.3% of working-age women versus virtually no working-age men are outside the labour market or work part-time due to care responsibilities.

Gender segregation in the labour market is a reality for both women and men. Around 27% of women work in education, health and welfare (EHW), compared to 6% of men. Fewer women (9%) than men (36%) work in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) occupations.

Slovenia is one of the EU countries with the highest rate of fixed-term employment. In 2015, 13.5% of men and 15.9% of women were in fixed-term employment. The rate of self-employed is higher in men (16%) than in women (8%). Recent research showed that men are significantly more exposed to inclement time flexibility than women as 31% usually work shift work (25% of women), 23% of men work evening shifts (11% of women), 16% work nightshifts (5% of women), 27% of men work on Saturdays (21% of women), 20% work on Sundays and public holidays (16% of women) and less men (57%) have an ordinary morning working time than women (67%) (Kanjuro Mrčela et al., 2016: 58).

1.2.1. Employment rates

Employment rate of childless women aged 25 – 49 is stable over the decade (with slight decrease in the recession years) and only slightly lower (80% in 2007 and in 2017) compared to male rates (85% in 2007 and 83% in 2017).

Female employment rate is the lowest when the child is aged 0 years, but compared to other countries it is still relatively high and it has remained almost unchangeable in the last decade (66% in 2007; 68% in 2017). The employment rate of men with a child aged 0 years is constantly high and considerable higher compared to female employment rate (84% in 2007; 91% in 2017). The gap between men and women is increasing and amounts to 18% in 2007 and 23% in 2017.

Compared to mothers of a child aged 0 years, the employment rate of mothers of a child aged 1-2 years and 3-5 years increased for 10% in 2007 (76%) and is even higher in 2017 (77% and 81%). In men's employment rate there is no substantial differences when children are aged 0, 1-2 or 3-5 years. Surprisingly, the employment rate of women with a child aged 6-12 years is slightly lower (71% in 2007 and 73% in 2017) compared to mothers of children aged 1-2 or 3-5 years. Also men's employment rate in this age group of children becomes lower (78% in 2007 and 79% in 2017). It can be assumed that this situation is not related to the care issues but to the labour market structure (see Figures 1 and 2).

Regardless of the age of a child (0 or 1-2), there is a remarkable difference between the employment rate of mothers with lower secondary education (30%, 38% in 2007; 35%, 31% in 2017) and with third level of education (82%, 91% in 2007 and 82%, 85% in 2017). The same goes for men, though the gap between the fathers with lower secondary education (52%, 68% in 2007; 66%, 68% in 2017) and with third level of education (92%, 96% in 2007 and 99%, 97% in 2017) is smaller compared to women's. Again, considering the statutory parental leave scheme and comprehensive public network of kindergartens there is no systemic need for a compulsorily leaving of labour market because of childcare. The educational gap for men and women can be explained by the higher structural unemployment of low educated people, and, for women specifically, by the trade-off between the low salaries in low education feminized sectors and kindergarten price (especially in the case of more than one child in the family) (see Figures 3 and 4).

To sum up, employment rate of women is the highest (80% in 2017) and the gender gap the lowest (5%) with childless women aged 25-49, while the employment rate is the lowest (68% in 2017) and the gender gap the biggest (23%) and has increased in last decade with women whose child is aged 0. Men and women with lower secondary education have considerably lower employment rate regardless of the age of children, however the gender gap is almost double.

1.2.2. Weekly paid work hours of parents

The weekly paid hours for both, mothers and fathers in Slovenia in 2007 and in 2017 amounts to full-time (40 hours) equivalent, though the mothers' working time is slightly shorter. In 2007 fathers were involved in paid employment 41,4 hours a week regardless of the age of a child, while in 2017 the working hours decreased to slightly less than 40 hours (with the highest involvement of 40 hours when a child was aged 0 years and the lowest involvement of 39,3 hours when a child was aged 3-5 years). Women's weekly paid hours were lower compared to male for approx. 2-3 hours in 2007 and approx. 2,5 hours in 2017 regardless of the age of a child, though when a child was aged 1-2 years the amount of paid hours for mothers was the lowest in both period (36,8 in 2007 and 34,5 in 2017). The weekly paid hours of both, male and female parents slightly decreased in the observed decade, however, it decreased less for fathers compared to mothers. In 2017 fathers worked approx. 1 hour less and mothers worked approx. 2 hours less compared to 2007. The lower working hours of women can be explained by the more frequent use of sick leave for a child and part time work related to childcare by women compared to men (see Figures 5 and 6).

In general, data show that working hours for men and women became shorter in last decade, for men 1 hour and for women 2 hours. Women's working hours are 2,5 hours

shorter compared to men's and are the shortest and even in trend of decreasing for women with a child aged 1-2 years (34,5 hours in 2017) which might indicate the increase of women's uptake of statutory right to reduced working time for childcare.

1.2.3. Inactivity rates 2007/2017

Inactivity rate of men aged 25-49 years was 6.8% in 2007 and 5.9% in 2017. Inactivity rate was obviously the highest for men with the lower secondary education (16.2% in 2007 and 17.4% in 2017) and the lowest for the men with third level of education (2.6% in 2007 and 2.8% in 2017). Comparatively speaking, the inactivity rate of women aged 25-49 years is low and only slightly (for 3% in 2007 and in 2017) higher compared to men. Like with men it is the highest for women with the lower secondary education (23.2% in 2007 and 29.3% in 2017) and the lowest for women with third level of education (3.6% in 2007 and 5.3% in 2017). In last decade the overall inactivity rate for women decreased for 1 percentage point but it increased for 6 percentage points for women with the lower secondary education and for almost 2 percentage points for women with third level of education, while, like with men, it decreased for women with upper secondary education (see Figures 7 and 8).

Inactivity rate of men aged 25-64 years due to family reasons is almost negligible, 0.1% in 2007 and in 2017. It even decreased for men with third level education (from 0.1 to 0%) but increased for men with lower secondary education (from 0 to 0.1%). Also for women aged 25-64 years inactivity rate due to family reasons is low (1.1% in 2007 and 1.4% in 2017), though it is higher than men's and increased for approx. 0.4 % in all educational groups in last decade (see Figures 9 and 10).

In general, gender gap in opting out of labour market is small and it's difficult to explain it by the WLB reasons. Relatively high inactivity rate of women with lower secondary education can be explained by the structure of the labour market or by the trade-off between low salaries and kindergarten price if children are more than one and aged 0-3 years when the prices of nurseries are higher.

1.2.4. Gender wage and pension gaps

In Slovenia, the gender pay gap (GPG) has been since recently reducing faster than in the EU average: according to the Eurostat the pay gap in Slovenia was in 1995 14%, in 2005 8% and in 2015 2.9% (Robnik, 2016: 75). The narrowing of the gender pay gap during the economic crisis was a consequence of men's lower employment rate and an increase in unemployment (Humer and Roksandić, 2013). However, the recent growth of GPG is steep and reached 7.8% in 2016 (Poje et al., 2019) with no clear explanation why is that so. According to the MIC data, the GPG grows with the age of women: the lowest is in the age cohort of women aged 25 years and less (i.e. childless women, the average age of women in Slovenia at the first childbirth is 31 years). For women aged 35-44 years it reaches 9.4%, the GPG is the highest for women aged 45-54 years when it reaches 12% (i.e., sandwich generation taking care of children and elder parents) while for women aged 55-64 years it declines on 7.5%.

The gender based pension gap is in trend of reducing: in 2010 it was 29 % (Bettio et al., 2013), in 2012 24% (Burkevica et al., 2015) and in 2014 17.4% (Robnik, 2016). Decrease is obvious also on the level of the age cohorts: in 2012 in the age group 65-69 pension gap was 16%, in the age group 70-74 20%, and in the age group 75+ 31%

(Burkevica et al., 2015: 38). It can be assumed that the lowering of pension gap is the result of higher educational level in younger age cohort and increase in full time employment of women since 1970s, which was actively supported by public care policies, i. e. by establishing a comprehensive public network of kindergartens, including for children aged 1-3 years.

Generally speaking, gender based pay gap is increasing and is the highest for sandwich generation of women aged 45-54 years, while pension gap is decreasing, in particular for younger cohorts of women.

1.3. ARRANGEMENTS TO COPE WITH WORK-LIFE BALANCE ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

Slovenia inherited a socialist scheme of parental leaves and financial compensations. Parental leave lasts 1 year: 105 days is maternity leave and belongs to the mother exclusively while child nursing and care leave (parental leave) takes 130 calendar days per parent (altogether 260 days) and can be shared between both parents. The mother may transfer 100 days of her entitlement to the father (30 days are the mother's exclusive right), while the father may transfer all 130 days of his parental leave to the mother. In 2003, this scheme was supplemented by 15-days of non-transferable paid and 75 days of unpaid paternal leave with the intention of encouraging fathers to be active in early childcare. In 2014, paternal leave was extended to 30 days of paid leave² while unpaid days of leave were abolished (The Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act). Compensation³ for parental leave amounts to 100% of the previous income from work and is funded partly from Parental Protection Insurance that forms part of Social Security Insurance. Contributions to Parental Protection Insurance are 0.1% of gross earnings for employees and the same for employers. However, as much as 92% of the total financing of the Maternity/Paternity/Parental leave earnings compensations is financed from the central government budget. Maternity/Paternity/Parental leave is fully included in the pension qualifying period (Stropnik, 2019).

A socially insured person is entitled also to take leave to care for an immediate co-resident family member who is ill (spouse, children, co-resident parents). Generally, seven working days of leave may be taken for each episode of illness per family, however, 15 working days may be taken for a child of up to seven years of age or a child who is moderately, severely, or very severely mentally and physically disabled. In exceptional cases, if required due to the health condition, the period may be extended to 14 and 30 working days respectively, or longer in extreme cases (up to six months). Leave to care for an immediate co-resident family member is paid at 80%

² The implementation was delayed due to austerity measures with a precondition of the increase in GDP. It was stated that in the three years that will follow the year in which the increase in GDP will exceed 2,5%, the paternity leave will be extended by 5 days a year and the unpaid part of the paternity leave will be reduced by 25 days a year (Stropnik, 2015: 288).

³ In 2012 during the economic recession and due to austerity measures the parental and paternal compensation rates were lowered from 100 to 90%. In 2018 the compensation rates were increased to 100%.

of the individual's average earnings in the preceding calendar year by the employer (Stropanik, 2019).

	TYPE OF ENTITLEMENT	TRANSFERABILITY	WHEN AND HOW LONG	PAYMENT LEVEL	FINANCING ENTITY
MATERNITY LEAVE	Individual based on contributions to social insurance	Limited on exceptions (sickness, abandonment, death, mother under 18 years old)	105 calendar days (15 weeks): 4 weeks before the birth and 11 weeks following the birth.	100% of previous wage	Central government budget and social security insurance
PATERNITY LEAVE	Idem	No	30 calendar days, up to 15 days of the total of 30 days may be taken until the child completes the first year of primary school.	100% of previous wage with ceiling of 2.5 times the average salary	Idem
PARENTAL LEAVE	Idem	Yes, except mother's 30 days	130 calendar days per parent.	100% of previous wage with ceiling of 2.5 times the average salary	Idem
BREAST-FEEDING LEAVE	Employed mother's entitlement	No	One hour per day, until child is aged 18 months	Minimum wage, after 9 months only social contributions	Idem
LEAVE FOR AN IMMEDIATE CO-RESIDENT FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS ILL	Family	No	Seven working days for each episode of illness, in exceptional cases (severe illness, disability) up to 30 days, in extreme cases up to 6 months.	80 per cent of the individual's average earnings	Employer. If more than 30 days Health security contributions.
REDUCED WORKING TIME	Employee's with a child entitlement	1 year is non-transferable	Until child is 3, or the second child is 6 or disabled child is 18 years old.	No payment, but social security contributions based on minimum wage are paid	Central government budget and social security insurance

Table 1. Slovenian Statutory Care Leaves, 2020. Notes: Leaves are rights regulated in The Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act, allowances are regulated in Social Security Law. Other care-related measures are: a parent leaving the labour market in order to take care of four or more children is entitled to have social security contributions (based on the minimum wage) paid

from the state budget, until the youngest child completes the first grade of primary school; all adoptive parents have the same entitlements to Parental leave as other parents (Stropnik, 2019).

1.3.1. Reduced working time for family reasons

In 2001, based on the argument of easing work-family balance and introduction 'women friendly policies' Slovenia introduced a measure that enables parents to work reduced working time. The right can be exercised until the child's age of 3 and in case of more children until the end of the first year of primary school of the youngest child; one year of exercising the right to reduced working time is non-transferable for both parents. Reduced working time consists of at least half of the weekly working obligations (20 hours, usually it is 30 hours), the employer ensures the right to salary according to actual working time while the state ensures the payment of social security contributions from the proportionate share of minimal wage to fulltime working obligation (The Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act).

Statistical Office's data actually show important increase of using part time work for child care for men and women, though the share of women is higher: it increased from 0.7% in 2009 to 1.7% in 2017 for women, while men's uptake reaches 0.3% in 2017. In figures, in 2007 there were 421 fathers and 6,201 mothers, while in 2017 1,633 fathers and 18,814 mothers who use this measure for childcare (Table 3) (MDDSZ, 2019). The increase has not been perceived as an important public issue.

1.3.2. Use of birth/childcare/other family-related leaves

Resolution on Family Policy 2018–2028 reports that fathers' take-up of 15 days of paternity leave in first 6 months after childbirth is stable and relatively high, around 80%: in 2016, 16,291 fathers (altogether 20,345 children were born) utilized 15 days of paid paternal leave. However, according to Slovenian Statistical Office data there is almost no observable increase in the last decade in fathers that share parental leave (130 days of child nursing and care leave) with mothers: in 2007 966 fathers out of 26,442 parents and other carers and in 2017 1,067 fathers out of 26,868 parents and other carers used child nursing and care leave (Figure 15). Also, fathers that utilized childcare and nursing leave did not stick to it for long; two thirds of these fathers utilized up to three months of it.

National Institute for Public Health provides data about the number of days of leave for an immediate co-resident family member who is ill, however, we assume that this data mostly refers to children (not to eldercare, for eldercare people mostly use their annual leave). In 2007, men spent 81.684 and women 465.227 days and in 2017 men spent 124.233 and women 536.324 days of leave for taking care of ill family member (NIJZ, 2019a). It is evident that there is an important increase in the use of sick leave for taking care of sick family member for men and for women, however, the gap between men and women remains huge and constant (see Figure 12).

According to the MIC (LFS) data, there is a remarkable gap in men's and women's use of birth/childcare/other family related leave: men's use is stable with 2.7% in 2007 and 3% in 2017, while women's use is considerable higher and increased over the decade

with 71.6% in 2007 and 80.3% in 2017 (see Figure 13). According to the type of employment (self-employment or standard employment) the share of men in both types remains extremely low. We can assume that this is because self-employees' parental benefits are much lower compared to those of standard employees and self-employees often keep working even while officially being on parental leave. In 2007 3.5% of standardly employed and 0% of self-employed men with a child aged 0 were on leave, while in 2017 2.4% of self-employed and 2.7% of standardly employed men with a child aged 0 took leave. The increase of self-employed men's take-up of parental leave is due to the paid social contributions by the state. Women's leave take is much higher in both types of employment and in both periods: in 2007 31.1% of self-employed and 77.9% of standardly employed women with a child aged 0 were on leave; in 2017 65.2% of self-employed and 82.4% of standardly employed women with a child aged 0 were on leave. This points that self-employed women cannot that easily as men afford not to take birth/childcare/other family related leave.

2016 data related to the share of parental leave taken by parents of a child aged 0 according to the income show somehow expected situation: with the increase of income more men take parental leave, while for women it is the opposite - their share of leave take is reducing with the increase of income. For women this can be explained by the career reasons, for men we can assume that high salaried men are in the position where they can financially and in terms of career progress afford to take parental leave.

According to the sector of activity men who took up birth/childcare or other family-related leave in 2017 came in majority from sectors of education (1.9%), information technology (0.8%), finances (0.8%) and public administration (0.4%).

To sum up, women still use all statutory care leaves in a considerable higher share compared to men. Though men's take up of 15 days of paternity leave is quite high (approx. 80%), their use of other care leaves, like parental leave, care leave for an immediate co-resident family member, and the part-time work for child care, is extremely low. Because parental allowances for self-employees (which is a markedly masculinized form of nonstandard employment in Slovenia) are much lower compared to those of standard employees, self-employed men (and women, which push them in a very hard situation when they give birth) avoid using statutory care leaves.

1.4. GENDER GAPS IN CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

Like elsewhere in Europe, in Slovenia men spend less time in domestic and care work than women. In 2000, employed men spent 2 hours and 24 minutes per week for domestic and care work at home, which is 2 hours less than women (Aliaga, 2006). In the last four decades, the amount of time dedicated to domestic and care work has decreased by approximately an hour for women due to their full time participation in the labour market, while it is stable in the case of men.

	1965*		2000**	
	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN
PAID WORK	6:54	7:54	4:23	5:20
OTHER WORK OR DOMESTIC WORK - CHILD CARE	5:30 ; 0:30	2:30; 0:12	4:24 ; 0:29	2:24; 0:12
LEISURE TIME	2:16	3:42	3:50	4:49

Table 2. Daily use of time by employed men and women in 1965 and 2000. Source: *Boh, 1966: 35. **Aliaga, 2006: 8. The data are not directly comparable, as they are the results of various research and are acquired on the basis of various methodologies.

1.4.1. Unpaid domestic and childcare work among couples with children

In the Slovenian Public Opinion Survey (2012), men estimated that they spent for household chores, on average, 10.06 hours a week and their female partners 28.42 hours. Women, however, reported that they spent on average 22.69 hours per week for household chores and their male partners 9.87 hours. The data shows that men estimate that female partners spend more time on housework than they reported themselves, while in the case of men the difference is almost non existing.

Nowadays men in Slovenia are more involved in child care, but differences among women and men in time spent for domestic work remain high. On an annual basis, women spend on average 200 hours more for household work than men, and more than 500 hours more for child care. In 2012, employed women spent 14 hours for household work and 25 hours for child care on a weekly basis, while men spent 10 hours for household work and 15 hours for child care per week (Resolution on the Family Policy, 2018: 76).

The latest survey about division of care work and responsibilities in Slovenia, based on representative sample, was conducted in 2019. The data show that men spent weekly 15 hours and women 26,5 hours for care work (for children, elderly, partner). More than one third of men (37,5%) and slightly less than two thirds of women (62,5%) take over the care responsibilities for child(ren). 40,7% men and 59,3% women are engaged in care for (elderly) parents (Slovensko javno mnenje, 2019)⁴.

As part of the Eurostat time use survey, which is conducted every 10 years, in Slovenia the only such survey was carried out by the Statistical Office of Slovenia in 2000. In 2010 Slovenia did not participate in the survey, which leads to the lack of the most current representative data in this area of research.

Therefore, we only refer to data from 2000:

Particular household and child care tasks by gender and the child(ren) age, Slovenia, 2000:

The breakdown of data regarding particular household tasks, show that dish washing, laundry and ironing are done almost exclusively by women, living in a couple and with children (less than 6 years of age of the youngest child and when the youngest child is between 7 and 17 years of age). Men, living in a couple, and with the youngest child less than 6 years old spend 13 minutes for food management in comparison

⁴ Survey about division of care work and responsibilities is part of the project Masculinities, Equality, Care Practices (2017-2020), funded by the Slovenian Research Agency. The project is carried out by the Peace Institute in cooperation with the University of Ljubljana - Faculty of Social Sciences.

More information about the project: <http://www.mirovni-institut.si/projekti/moskosti-enakost-skrbstvene-praksemsp/>. The survey about division of care work and responsibilities was intergrated in the Slovenian Public Opinion Survey 2019/1, which was conducted by The Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre.

with women who dedicated 1 hour and 17 minutes to it (Figures 14 and 15). Time spent for food management slightly increases when the youngest child is between 7 and 17 years of age for women as well (1 hour and 25 minutes) as for men (17 minutes). Gendered nature of household tasks is obvious also in the construction and repairs, for which men, living in a couple, and with the youngest child less than 6 years of age, spent 28 minutes and women 2 minutes. When the youngest child is between 7 and 17 years of age, men spent slightly less time for construction and repairs (23 minutes), while women dedicate to it the same amount of time in comparison when the children are younger.

Women, living in a couple, and with the youngest child less than 6 years of age spent daily 1 hour and 35 minutes for childcare, while men, living in a couple, and with the same age of children spent 25 minutes for childcare. For teaching, reading and talking with a child women living in a couple and with the youngest child less than 6 years of age, spent 47 minutes per day and men 30 minutes. When children are older, the time for childcare, teaching, reading and talking decreases for women (8 minutes for childcare and 11 minutes for teaching, talking and reading with the child) and for men (2 minutes for childcare and 5 minutes for teaching, reading and talking with the child).

Particular household and care tasks by gender and age, Slovenia, 2000:

The breakdown of data regarding particular household tasks, show that laundry and ironing are done exclusively by women in different age groups. Men in the age between 25 to 44 years spent 12 minutes for food management, while women in the same age group spent 1 hour and 10 minutes. There is a slight increase in time for food management for men between 45 and 64 years (21 minutes) and higher increase of time for this household task for women (1 hour and 42 minutes). For dishwashing men in the age between 25 and 44 years spent 4 minutes and women 25 minutes. In the age group between 45 to 64 years men spent the same amount of time, while women dedicate to it slightly more time (33 minutes) (Figures 16 and 17).

Gender gap in time spent for cleaning dwelling is obvious in both age groups. Women in the age between 25 to 44 years spent for cleaning dwelling 36 minutes per day and men 4 minutes, while in the age between 45 and 64 years, men spent 8 minutes and women slightly less than an hour daily (47 minutes). For the household upkeep expect cleaning dwelling women from 25 to 44 years spent 14 minutes and men in the same age group 17 minutes. In the age between 45 to 64 years men spent for this task 30 minutes and women 18 minutes. For construction and repairs men in the age between 25 to 44 years spent 24 minutes, while men from 45 to 64 years spent 25 minutes for these tasks, while women in both age groups spent 2 minutes daily for this work. For household management and help to family member women between 25 to 44 years spent 3 minutes and men 2 minutes, while in the age between 45 to 64 years women spent for it 4 minutes and men 2 minutes.

In 2000, women, living in a couple and with the youngest child less than 6 years old, spent 6 hours and 18 minutes for household work and family care, while men

dedicate for these work 2 hours and 54 minutes per day. Women, living in a couple, with the youngest child between 7 and 17 years of age, spend less time for household work and family care (4 hours and 40 minutes) in comparison with women with younger children. Men, living in a couple, and with the youngest child between 7 and 17 years of age, dedicate slightly less time for household work and family care (2 hours and 19 minutes) in comparison with men who has younger children.

Women in the age from 25 to 44 years spent 4 hours and 38 minutes for household work and family care, while men in the same age group spent 2 hours and 18 minutes for these work. The amount of time for the unpaid care work increases with the age for both, women and men. This means, that in the age group from 45 to 64 years men spent 3 hours and 33 minutes and women 5 hours and 42 minutes for household work and family care. The increase of time spent on household work and family care for both, women and men in the 45-64 age group, indicates their role in the informal care of older family members and (adult) children. The middle generation, so-called »sandwich generation« of women (Grundy and Henretta, 2006), but also men, is increasingly strained between double demands and needs for support and care of the elderly family members and (adult) children.

The data from 2000 show the gender gap in division of household work and family care is the highest when the children are very young and slightly decreases when the children are older. Nevertheless, the majority of household work and family care is still done by women, living in a couple and with children.

According to Gender Equality Index 2019, women take on more care responsibilities in families comparing to men: 35 % of women and 28% of men care for and educate their family members for at least one hour per day. Since 2005 the gender gap has narrowed between them from 12 p.p. to 8 p.p.. However, the share of women doing cooking and housework every day for at least one hour is almost three times higher (81 %) than that of men (28 %). This gender gap has narrowed from 60 p.p. to 54 p.p. since 2005 (EIGE, 2019b).

1.5. INCREASE OF MEN IN CARE

1.5.1. Men on leave 2007 - 2017

Fathers' entitlement to parental leave has been in effect since 1975 following the Swedish parental leave model and was officially the mother's right that could be transferred to the father. In 2002, the 260-day parental leave became the right of either parent with parents having to agree in writing on how to take it. As written in the section 1.2., since 2014, parental leave has been an individual right of both parents, with 130 calendar days per parent with one difference: the father is allowed to transfer all 130 days of his leave to the mother while the mother may transfer 100 days to the father.

Paternity leave is intended for fathers and is not transferable right. As explained by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the paternity leave enables "fathers to be able to share with the mother the child's care and protection during the child's most sensitive period."

Paternity leave was introduced gradually in the period from 2003 to 2005: 15 days with full wage compensation and 75 days for which only social security contributions based on the minimum wage were paid for the father. As explained in the section 1.2., over time this ratio has changed in favor of paid leave, ending up at 30 days with wage compensation from 2018 on. With the amendment of the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act, fathers are entitled to additional 10 days for each additional child at the time of birth of twins or more live births. The amendment to the law entered into force on 1 January 2020.

In 2004, 70% of fathers (12,667) used 15 paid days of paternity leave, and in 2017, already 81% of fathers (16,366) used paid part of the leave. The uptake of paternity leave confirms its effectiveness as majority of fathers use it, while it is just an opposite with the use of parental leave. The share of fathers taking some parental leave has slowly increased from less than 1% in 1999 to between 6 to 7% in 2012 - 2016 (Stropnik et al., 2019). This slow shift may be understood as the result of the introduction of paternity leave in 2003. However, the percentage of fathers taking parental leave seems to decrease after 2017, which might be explained as a possible consequence of the extension of paternity leave from 15 to 30 days (Figure 18).

Besides, the involvement of men as fathers by using paternity and parental leave, it is important to emphasize men's involvement in earlier stages, like presence of father at childbirth. According to statistical data in the last ten years, the share of fathers,

participating at childbirth in the hospitals increased from 71.7% in 2007 to 79.5% in 2018 (Figure 19) (NIJZ, 2019b).

Leave to take care for a sick family member (Figure 13) is mostly taken by women and the percentage of men using the leave to take care of a sick family member (children, partner) is only slowly increasing. In 2000 86% of women and 14% of men took the leave to take care for a sick family member, while in the last years around 81% women and 19% men took the leave to take care of a sick family member (Resolution on Family Policy, 2018).

In 2016 on average, 1,825 people were daily absent from work due to the care of a sick family member. In 2016, 660,086 days of sick leave were used for the care of a family member, out of which 537,620 days were used by women and 124,466 days by men (NIJZ, 2017).

To sum up, the use of gender neutral types of leave, such as parental, carer's leaves is highly gendered with women as major utilizers of these measures. However, when the leave is gender specific, such as paternity leave (non-transferable), then the majority of men use it.

1.5.2. Men in care occupations

Gender segregation in care occupations is high, in particularly in early childcare. In the field of pre-school education, 98% of women and only 2% of men are employed, while in nursing associate professions there are 85% women and 15% men. Among the lower secondary education subject teachers there are 80% women and 20% men (Vrabič Kek et al., 2016: 43).

Data for the last ten years show that the number of all kindergarten teachers and assistants increased. The share of men as kindergarten teachers or kindergarten teachers' assistants increased very slow from 1.7% in 2007 to 2.7% in 2018. In general, the share of men among employees in educational institutions is increasing at each subsequent level of education. For example, in 2018 there was only 2.7% of male kindergarten teachers and assistants, while in tertiary education institutions the share of men was 54% (in comparison with the share of women - 46%) (Figures 18 and 19).

In the school year 2007/2008 kindergartens in Slovenia employed 8,286 persons and among them only 1.7% were men (or 140) and 98.3% (8146) were women. Among the 3863 kindergarten teachers, only 14 kindergarten teachers were men, which is 0.4%. Among kindergarten teacher's assistants there were 2.3% (90) men. On the level of management in kindergartens there were 5.9% men and among counselors there were 4.2% men (SURS, 2008). In the school year 2014/2015 11,658 persons were employed in kindergarten, among them 2.4% men (280) and (97.6%) 11,378 women. Men are mainly working with children in the age group from 3 to 6 as kindergarten teachers (1%) or kindergarten teacher's assistants (3.7%), among managerial staff there were less than 3% men and among counsellors there was less than 1% men (1) (SURS, 2015).

In the school year 2018/2019 there were 12,417 preschool teachers and their assistants in kindergartens, among them 97.5% women and 2.5% men. In the primary education 2,684 were men and 18,216 were women. Among all employees at this level of education, men were slightly less than 13% and among executives more than a quarter. There were 7,250 of all persons employed on the level of secondary

education: of these, 6,087 were teachers (67% women), 305 executives (56% women) and 299 counselors (93% women). In tertiary education institutions, 5,436 professionals were employed, among them 54% men and 46% women (SURS, 2019).

In the system of long-term care the majority of care workers are women (88.1%). The available data does not enable us to present the gender structure according to vocational profiles. Therefore we only mention the gender structure of employees in personal assistance and in private occupational activity centres, which slightly differs from the average, where in personal assistance work 23.5% men and in private occupational activity centres 21.2% men. In private patronage service only women are employed (Smolej et al., 2016: 14).

1.5.3. Self - care of men

According to Gender Index Slovenia's score in the domain of health is 87.1, which is 1 point below the EU's score and with no significant change since 2005. Self-perceptions of good health increased for both women (from 51% to 62%) and men (from 57% to 69%) between 2005 and 2017. Health satisfaction rises in proportion to levels of education and declines in proportion to increases in age. The gender gap is most significant between women and men with low levels of education (20 percentage points), and single women and men (14 percentage points). Women on average live six years longer than men (84 years compared to 78 years) (EIGE, 2019).

In 2016, approximately 56% of the population were adequately physically fit. The proportion was higher for men (59%) than for women (52%) (NIJZ, 2017).

The percentage of absenteeism for health reasons in Slovenia is higher for women than for men. The most common cause of sick leave for men are injuries (out-of-work injuries predominate), and for women, musculoskeletal diseases. The average duration of absence from work in 2017 was 17,50 days for men and 12,71 days for women (NIJZ, 2017).

The leading causes of temporary absenteeism for men in all age groups are injuries (especially injuries outside of work), and in the age of elderly men also diseases of the musculoskeletal and connective tissue, circulatory and neoplastic diseases, mental issues (NIJZ, 2017). Younger women are largely absent due to conditions related to pregnancy, family care and respiratory illnesses. In the older age groups of women respiratory diseases, injuries, mental and behavioral disorders, and neoplasms are prevalent (ibid.).

In 2016, just under a fifth (19%) of population, aged 25-64, did not drink alcohol in the last twelve months - twice as many of them were women. 71% drank within the limits of less risky drinking, and over a tenth (11%) drank excessively, with three times as many men as women (NIJZ, 2017). Among adult population 23.1% of them smoke. Smoking is higher for men (25.2%) than for women (20.9%) (Vinko et al., 2018). Among adult population, 48.9 % of men and 28.3 % of women are over-weighted, while 20% of men and 14.6% of women face obesity (ibid.).

Three women in ten and two men in ten experience stress very often or on a daily basis (Vinko et al., 2018). The most common cause of stress is stress at work, followed by family problems, poor material conditions, poor relationships between colleagues at work and loneliness. Women are more likely to experience stress due to poor relationships with co-workers, family problems and loneliness, while men are more

likely to experience stress at work (ibid.). According to the Eurostat data more working men (28%) than working women (24%) would like to work less than currently (Figure 20). In comparison with the EU more women and men report presenteeism. As much as 55.9% of men (in EU27 37.8%) and 63.1% (in EU27 41%) of women reported they worked when they were ill (Kanjua Mrčela and Ignjatović, 2012).

To sum up, alcohol consumption, smoking and obesity are presented as higher risks for men, but also more men than women are physically fit. Both, women and men experience stress, but men are more likely to experience stress at work.

1.6. HOW CAN WORKPLACES SUPPORT CARING MASCULINITIES ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

In the latest survey of fathers in Slovenia, conducted within the project “Fathers and Employers in Action (ODA)”, which directly addressed men - fathers and their work-life balance on the organisational level, the results show that as many as 80% of fathers are facing conflicts in work-life balance. Worst positioned are fathers in precarious working conditions and fathers in managerial and leading positions (Humer and Frelih, 2016). Likewise, fathers want to be a part of family life from the beginning and taking care of children, and they no longer ‘inherit’ the myth of traditional fatherhood having time for the children in their old age (Seidler, 2016).

The employers’ role in work-life balance policies in companies and work organizations is often overlooked due to the considerable state family policy provisions, in particularly for the childcare. According to Černigoj Sadar and Kanjuo Mrčela (2007) employees expect more support from their informal social network, especially parents and the state policies than from employers. Legislation, covering WLB issues, is gender neutral, enabling provisions equally to women and men with the exceptions of maternity and paternity leaves.

On a state level the WLB issues are part of family, labour and health care legislation with the main focus on childcare. The Employment Relationship Act (2013) addresses the WLB issues and job security for parents by providing job security during pregnancy, breastfeeding and during the use of parental leave. According to the law the employer has to take into account the needs of employees in reconciling work and private life. The act defines that the employee can propose a different distribution of working time (working schedule) for the purposes of reconciliation of professional and family life. The employer has to justify his/her decision in writing, taking into consideration the needs of the working process. Employees have one additional day of annual leave for each child who has not yet reached the age of 15 and the right to take at least one week of leave during the school holidays. Employees are also entitled to additional paid leave up to 7 days in total in one calendar year in connection to different personal or family reasons, such as death of a close family member, own wedding, serious accident suffered by the worker etc. The new amendment of the Employment and Relationship Act, which came into force from 2020, provides an additional day of paid leave for working parents in private and public sector to accompany the child on a first school day of the first year of elementary school. Both

parents are entitled to an extra paid day of leave. Further, the Health Care and Health Insurance Act provides carer's leave as introduced in the previous chapter and compensation to care for a co-resident family member (partner/spouse and children), who is ill. Seven working days of leave may be taken for each care episode, while 15 working days may be taken to take care for a child up to 7 years or for moderate, severely mentally and physically disabled child. The Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act (2014) provide the right to work part-time due to parenthood and the right to a breastfeeding break. The right to work part-time is held by one of the parents who is caring for a child up to three years of age and in case of two children or more this right may be exercised until the end of first grade of primary school of the youngest child (one year is nontransferable for each parent). Employer provides a salary based on actual working hours, while the state provides social security coverage based on the minimum wage for the difference to full-time work. However, the possibility of part-time work due to parenting is mainly used by women, which negatively affects their position in the labor market and, consequently, their economic independence both in the working age and in the old age.

A female worker who is breastfeeding a child under the age of 18 months and works full time has the right to a breastfeeding break of a minimum one hour a day during working time. Less than 10 women annually use this measure (Resolution on Family Policy 2018–2028, 2018: 38).

Besides the legislation also collective agreements cover the WLB issues with the most common clauses about the entitlement of different working time arrangements and additional paid days for family and personal reasons. Which activities that are included may differ, but typically include paid leave when the child is born, death of the family member, wedding, repairing a house or apartment, moving to another place. Some collective agreements also guarantee additional (un)paid leave for taking care of a sick child or other family member that is ill (when the worker has no right to a sick leave according to law) or for other personal occurrences. The coverage of collective agreements is reaching almost 80% in Slovenia and in the field of WLB covers, in particular, the childcare, while the care for the elderly requires systemic regulation in the nearest future (Helfferich and Franklin, 2019: 58-63). The latter is also expected in light of the new EU Work - Life Balance Directive with the extension of carer's leave to non-resident family members.

Among good practice examples of collective agreements, the Collective agreement for Slovenia's trade sector involves several clauses: it limits the work on Sundays and prohibits work on Statutory holidays for all workers. Regular worker should not work more than 2 Sundays a month and not more than 20 Sundays in total per year. Work on Sundays is prohibited for pregnant and breastfeeding female workers, working parents until the child's age of 3, and for single parents who take care of a seriously ill child or physically or mentally disabled child. If the employer violates this agreement, he/she has to pay to the worker 500 % of the monthly base wage of the worker.

In respect to family friendly working time arrangement Collective agreement for the Activities of Electro Industry Slovenia could be mentioned. Employer is obliged to enable the worker with family responsibilities to work in the most favorable working hours (schedule) for him/her, taking into consideration the needs of the working process. Family responsibilities that must be taken into account are: taking care of a

preschool child, a child in need of special care or an adult family member who requires constant care or assistance to perform basic life needs, serious illness of a spouse or of a partner.

Further, the Collective agreement for the Police Officers (2012) enables the parents of preschool children to use at least 10 day of annual leave during school holidays. It guarantees working time until 15:30 (morning shift) for pregnant and breastfeeding female workers, for parent taking care of a child until 3 years of age and for single parent families until the child is 7 years old (ibid.). In case of a police family (where both adults are employed in Police), the right may be exercised by one of the parents. One of the parents of the police family and single parents who are taking care of a child until 7 years of age cannot be transferred to work in another unit, that is located more than 30 km from their current place of work.

Collective agreements' clauses target both women and men. The only exception is paid leave (from one to three working days) when the child is born, which is defined in the collective agreements for fathers. This regulation was preserved from socialist system.

Among soft measures that promote work - life balance on the level of companies and working organizations is the Family-Friendly Enterprise Certificate, which was introduced in 2007 and aimed for companies, public sector and non-profit organizations with at least 10 employees. Acquiring the certificate has short and long term influences for both the management and the employees and the company. Family-friendly measures tend to improve organizational culture and cooperation between employees. The certification methodology is based on the European Work & Family Audit developed by the German organisation Berufundfamilie, which was adapted to the specifics of the Slovenian economic and legislative framework. By now 240 companies in Slovenia, employing more than 80.000 people, are holders of the Family Friendly Enterprise Certificate. The measures cover eight areas: working time, work organization, workplace quality and flexibility, information and communication policy, leadership, human resources development, wages and in-work benefits, and family services. Only one of 80 measures of the 'Family-Friendly Enterprise' certificate is targeted at fathers (stimulating fathers to use more days of the father's leave) and three are targeted at mothers (mentoring for women, breastfeeding, and setting targets regarding women in decision-making positions), while others are targeted at all employees. No organization has yet introduced this nor any other measure addressed at men as fathers (Knaflič et al., 2010; Konavec, 2015).

Equality plans in working organisations in Slovenia are present only in the last years and still rare. The equality plans, for example for the upcoming years, in the Municipality of Ljubljana and the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, involve as one of the main fields also WLB. Among measures, needs assessment of employees is foreseen, as well as enabling flexible working time and telework, enabling one day paid leave when the child start the first year of elementary schools, etc.

To sum up, in Slovenia WLB issues are merely focused on childcare with well developed family legislation. However, the elderly care remains marginalised topic

with urgent need for systemic regulation and integration into WLB policies. Besides, measures of the work-life balance are still mainly used by women, which reproduces inequalities in public and private sphere. In the last 15 years caring fatherhood was promoted by legislation, campaigns, etc., while wider concept of caring masculinities is still rather unrecognized in the public as well as on the level of companies. Therefore, it is important to foster caring masculinities at the level of working organizations and companies as well as to raise awareness among employers about the importance of work-life balance and in wider society.

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APPENDIX: FIGURES AND TABLES

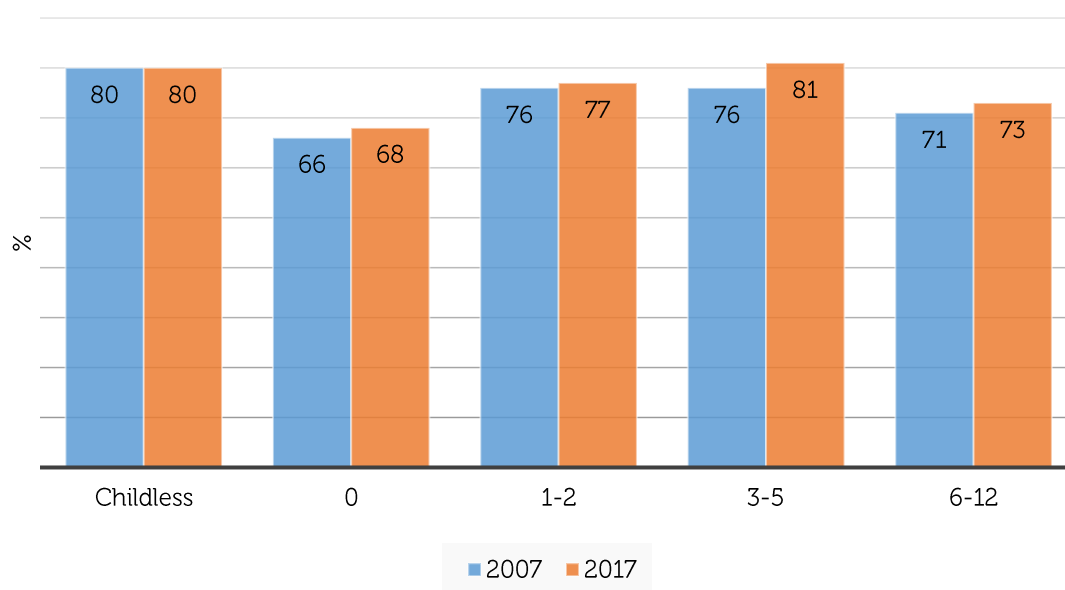


Figure 1. Employment rate of mothers by age of youngest child, 2007-2017 . Source: EU-LFS Microdata

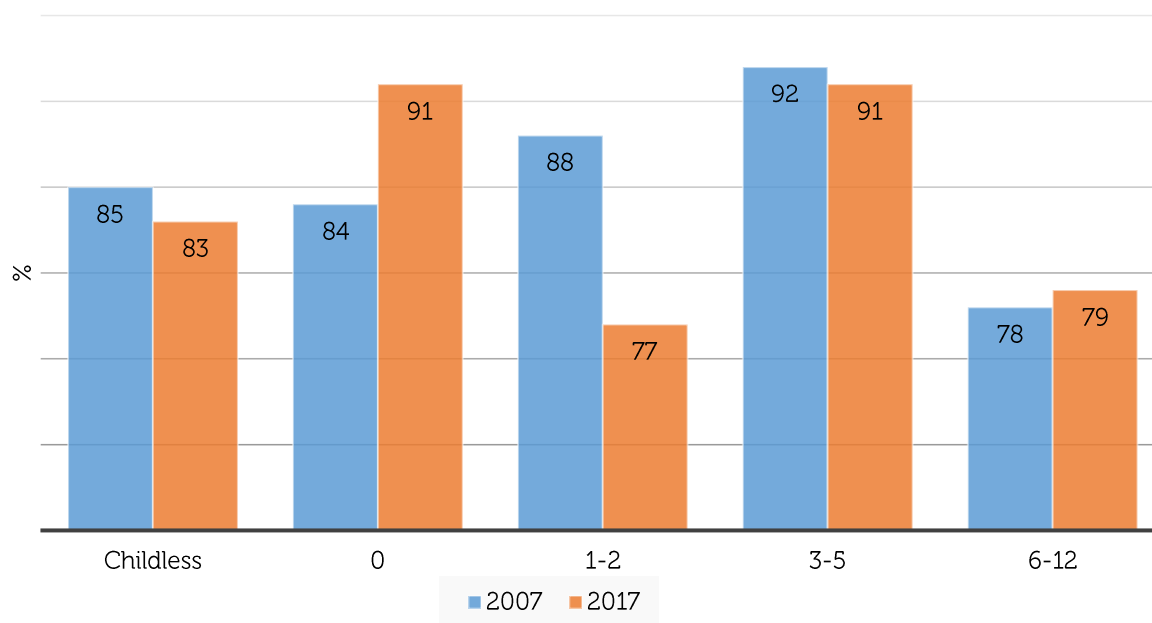


Figure 2. Employment rate of fathers by age of youngest child, 2007-2017. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

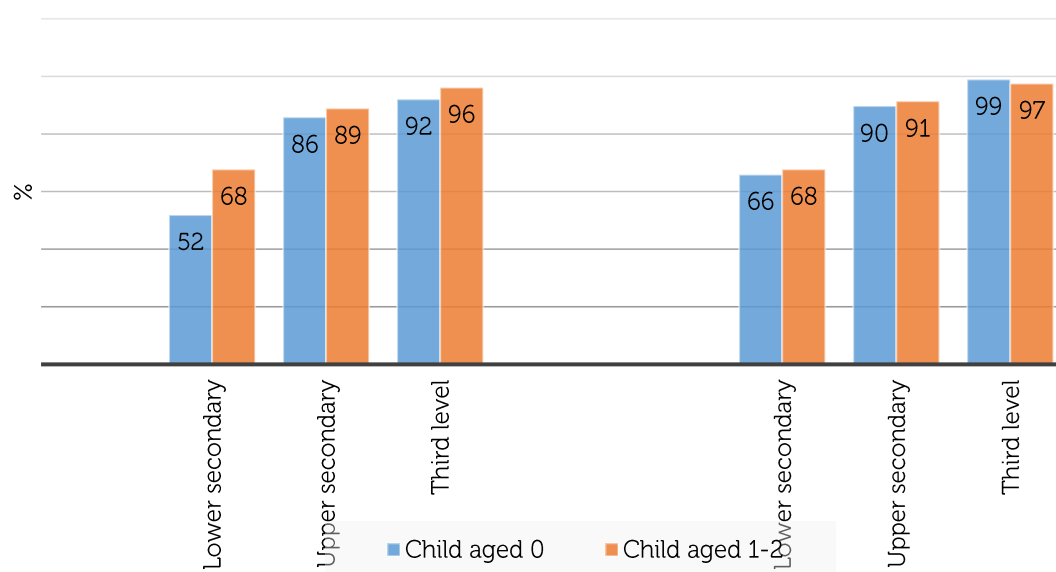


Figure 3. Employment rate by level of education, men, 2007-2017. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

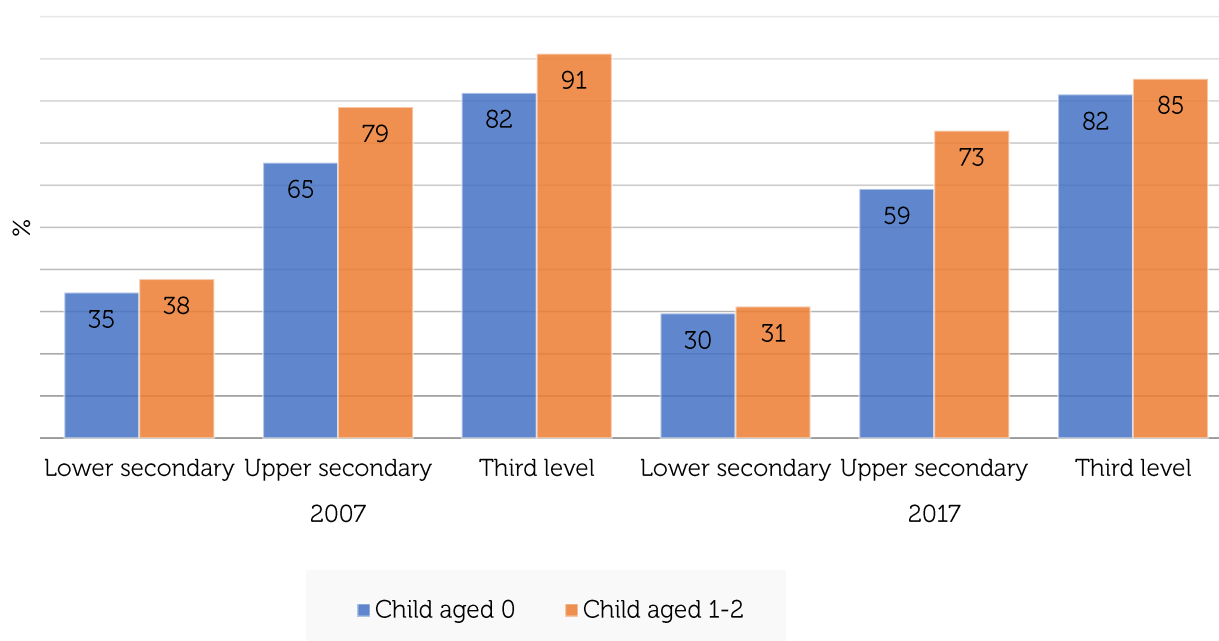


Figure 4. Employment rate by level of education, women, 2007-2017.

Source: EU-LFS Microdata

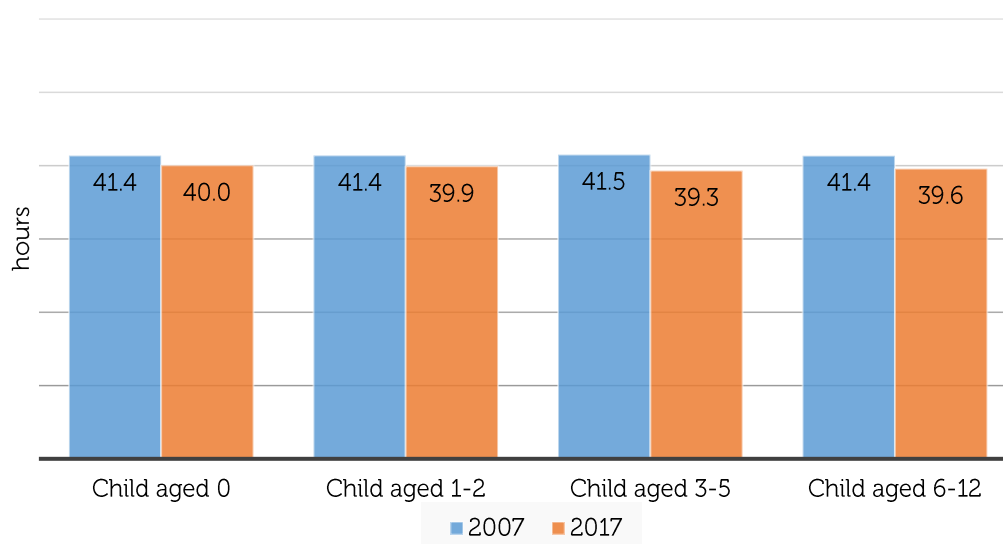


Figure 5. Average weekly paid work hours, men, 2007-2017

Source: EU-LFS Microdata

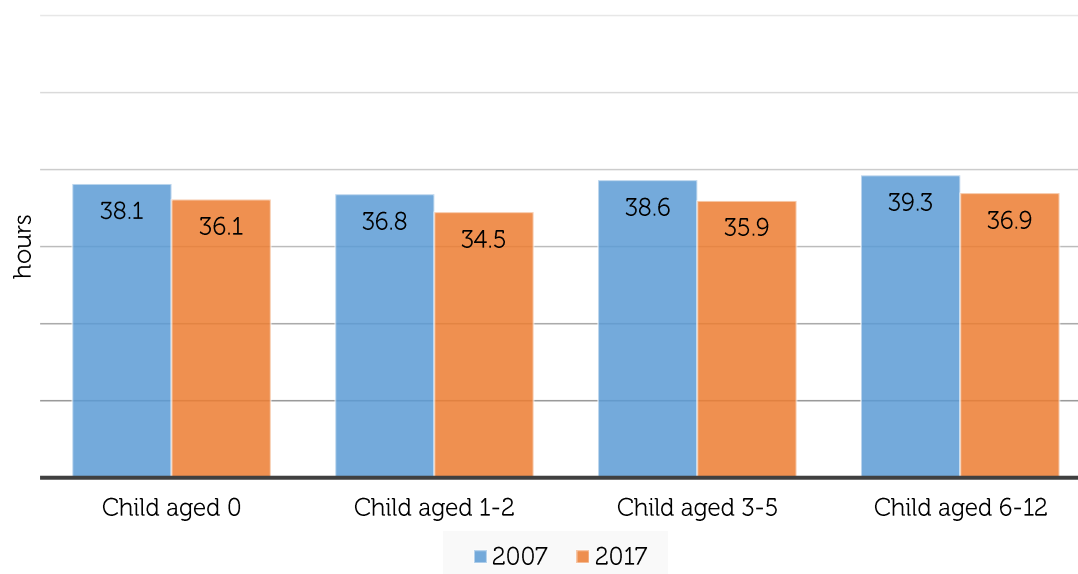


Figure 6. Average weekly paid work hours, women, 2007-2017
Source: EU-LFS Microdata

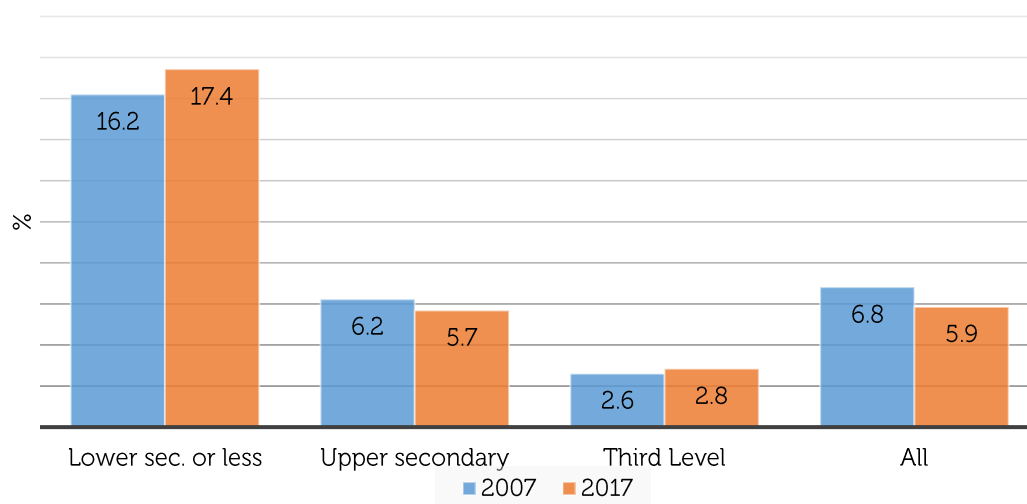


Figure 7. Inactivity rates 2007/2017 of people aged 25-49 by gender and educational level, men
Source: EU-LFS Microdata

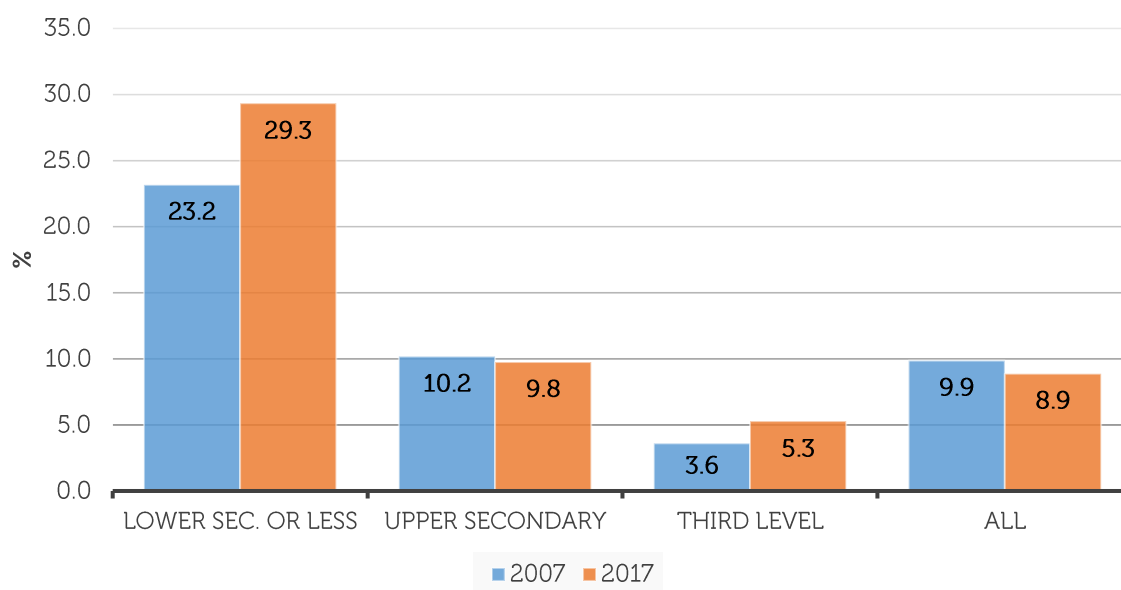


Figure 8. Inactivity rates 2007/2017 of people aged 25-49 by gender and educational level, women. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

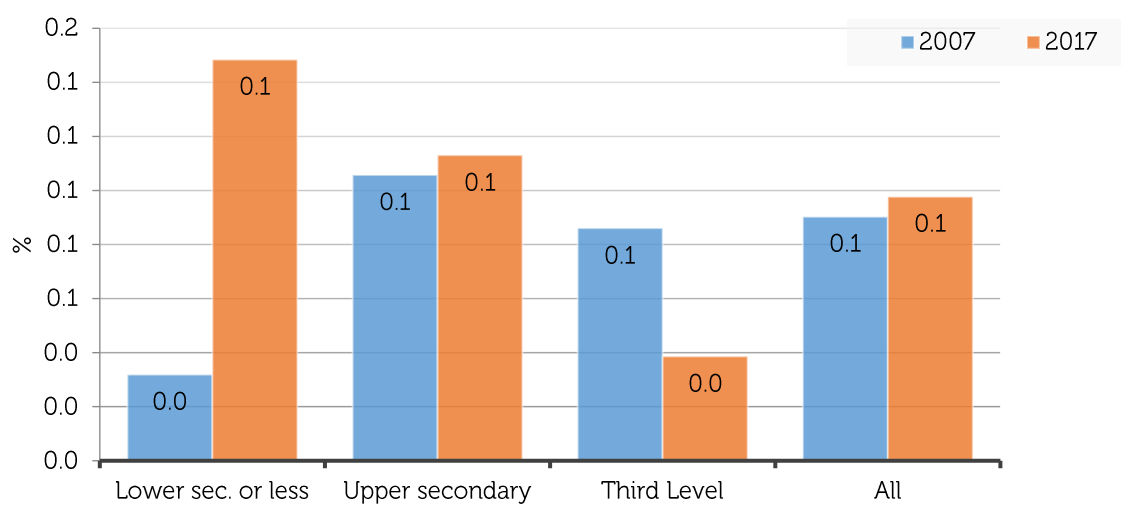


Figure 9. Economic inactivity for family reasons by gender, men, 2007-2017. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

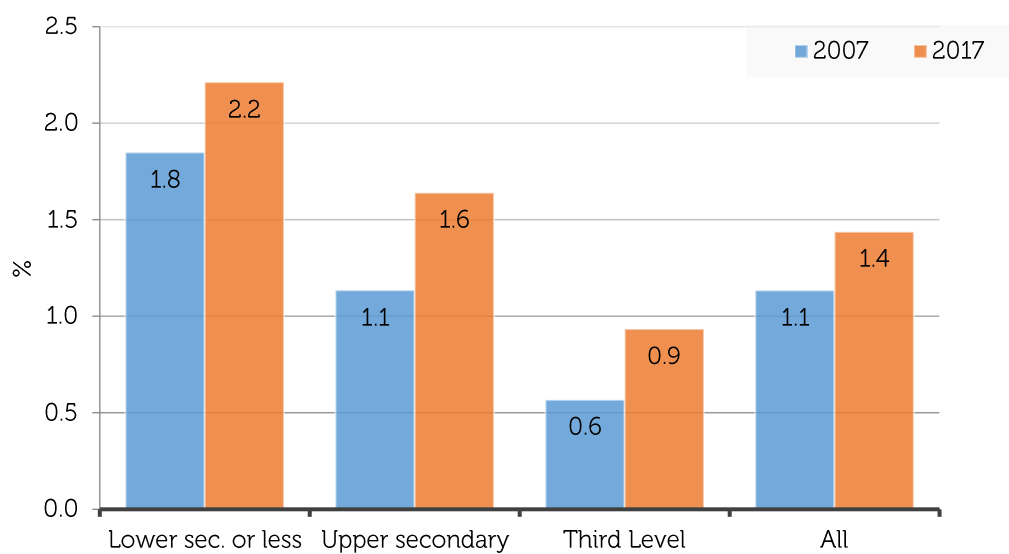


Figure 10. Economic inactivity rates for family reasons by education, women 2007/2017. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

Year	Up to 3 years of child's age			Between 3 and 18 years of child's age		
	Fathers	Mothers	Total	Fathers	Mothers	Total
2007	421	6.201	6.622	2	48	50
2008	640	8.476	9.116	4	47	51
2009	977	10.415	11.392	4	57	61
2010	1.423	11.893	13.317	5	56	61
2011	1.959	13.041	15.000	7	55	62
2012	2.422	13.544	15.966	10	54	64
2013	3.075	13.867	16.942	11	54	65
2014	3.639	14.284	17.923	12	53	65
2015	3.843	15.784	19.627	12	54	66
2016	2.612	17.550	20.612	10	64	74
2017	1.633	18.814	20.448	7	75	82
2018	1.111	19.860	20.976	5	78	83

Table 3. Part-time work due to parenthood by gender, 2007 – 2018.
Source: Ministry of Family, Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2019.

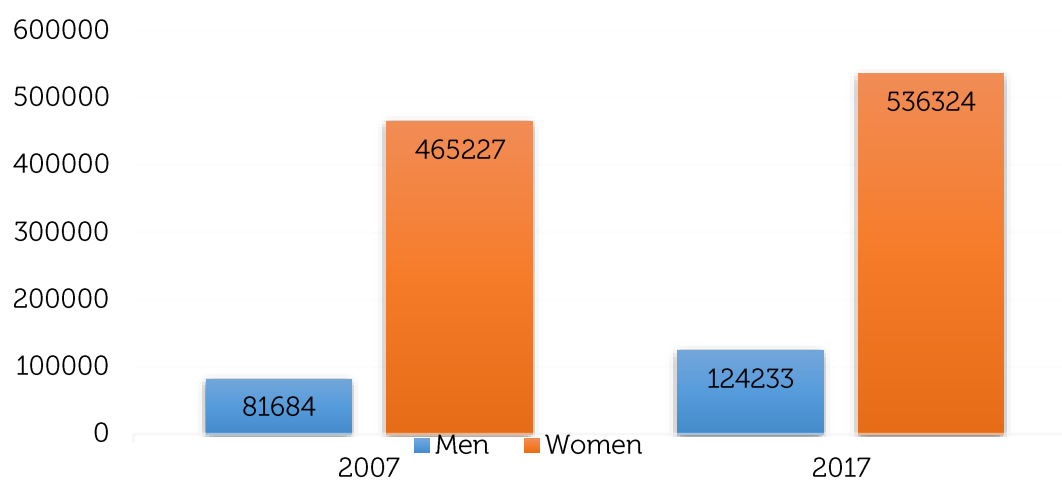


Figure 11. Uptake of leave for taking care of ill family member by gender (total days), 2007-2017. Source: Statistical Office, Slovenia

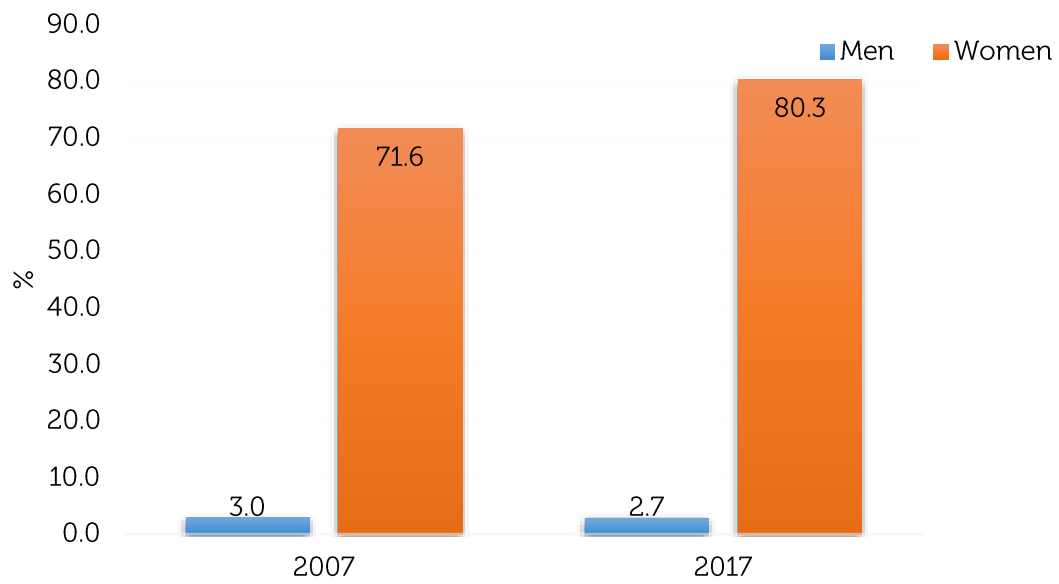


Figure 12. Use of birth/childcare/other family related leave 2007-2017 by gender.
Source: EU-LFS Microdata

		Person in a couple with youngest child less than 6 years old	Person in a couple with youngest child between 7 and 17 years old
	SEX/UNIT	Time spent (hh:mm)	Time spent (hh:mm)
(TOTAL) Household and family care	Males	2:54	2:19
(TOTAL) Household and family care	Females	6:18	4:40
Food management except dish washing	Males	0:13	0:17
Food management except dish washing	Females	1:17	1:25
Dish washing	Males	0:03	0:03
Dish washing	Females	0:28	0:28
Cleaning dwelling	Males	0:07	0:05
Cleaning dwelling	Females	0:39	0:40
Household upkeep except cleaning dwelling	Males	0:17	0:25
Household upkeep except cleaning dwelling	Females	0:16	0:15
Laundry	Males	0:00	0:00
Laundry	Females	0:09	0:11
Ironing	Males	0:01	0:00
Ironing	Females	0:20	0:19
Construction and repairs	Males	0:28	0:23
Construction and repairs	Females	0:02	0:02
Childcare, except teaching, reading and talking	Males	0:25	0:02
Childcare, except teaching, reading and talking	Females	1:35	0:08
Teaching, reading and talking with child	Males	0:30	0:05
Teaching, reading and talking with child	Females	0:47	0:11

Table 4. Time spent in the main activity by sex and household composition, Slovenia, 2000. Source: EU-LFS Microdata

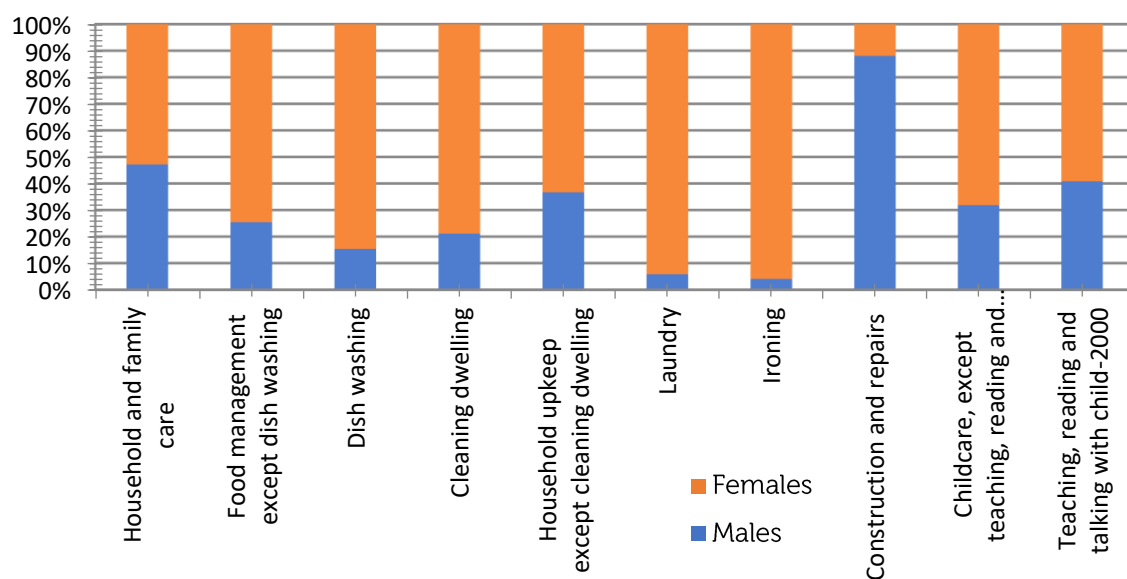


Figure 13. Participation rate (%) in household work and child care by sex, Slovenia, 2000. Source: Time Use Survey, 2010, Eurostat.

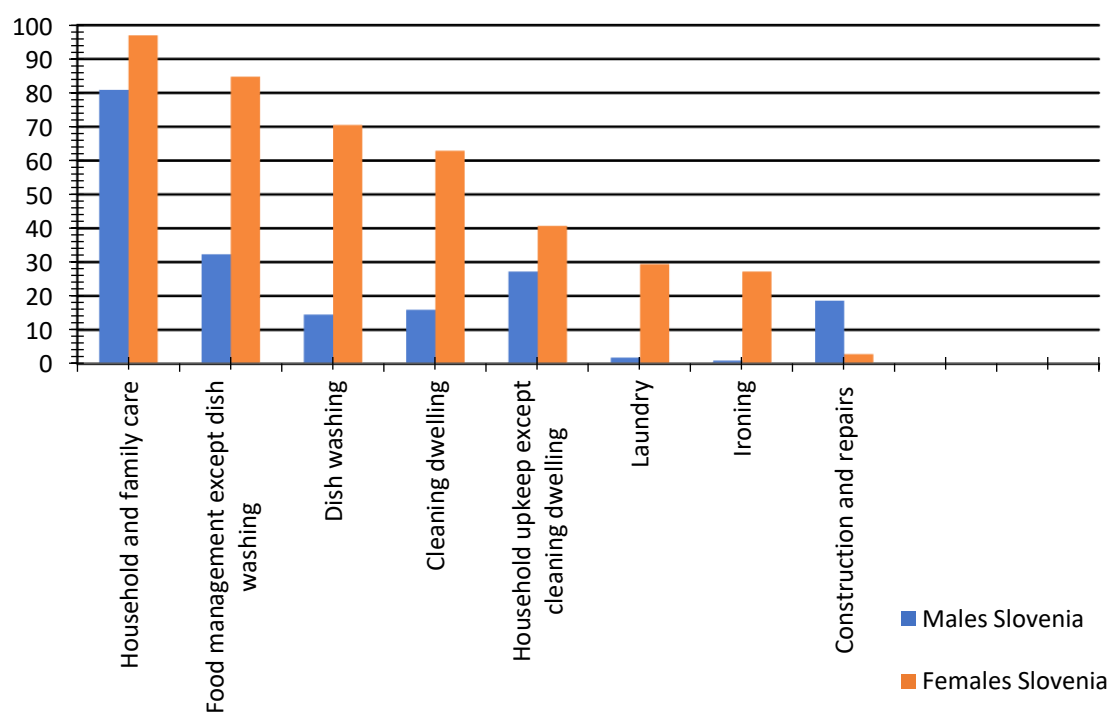


Figure 14. Participation rate (%) in household work by sex (25 - 44 years), 2000. Source: Time Use Survey, 2010, Eurostat.

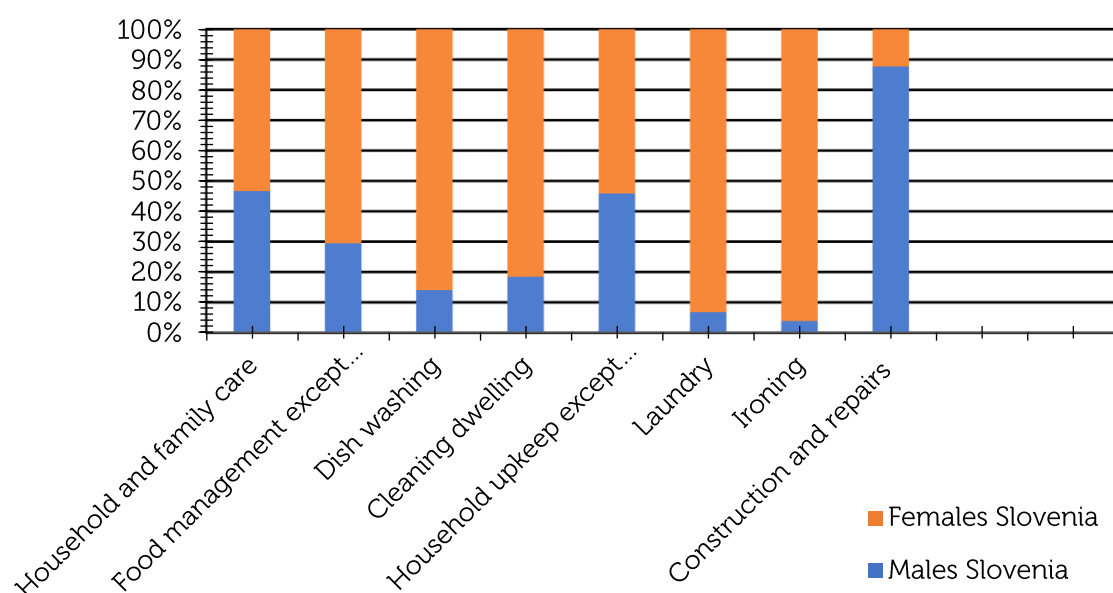


Figure 15. Participation rate (%) in household work by sex (45 - 64 years), 2000. Source: Time Use Survey, 2010, Eurostat.

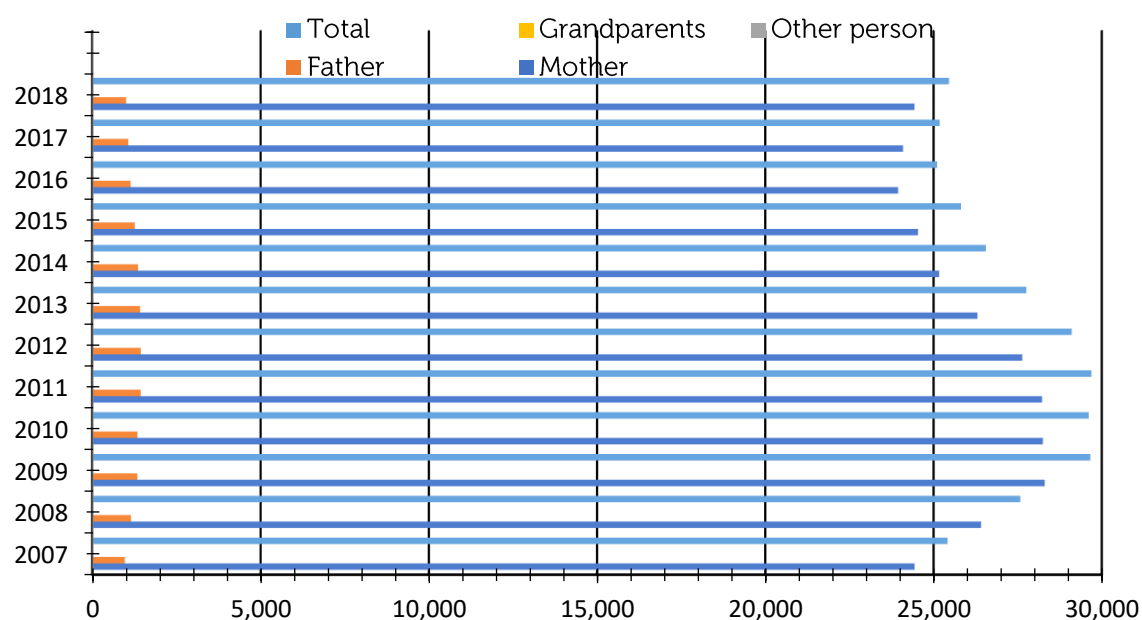


Figure 16. Uptake of parental leave by gender, 2007 - 2018. Source: Ministry of Family, Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2019..

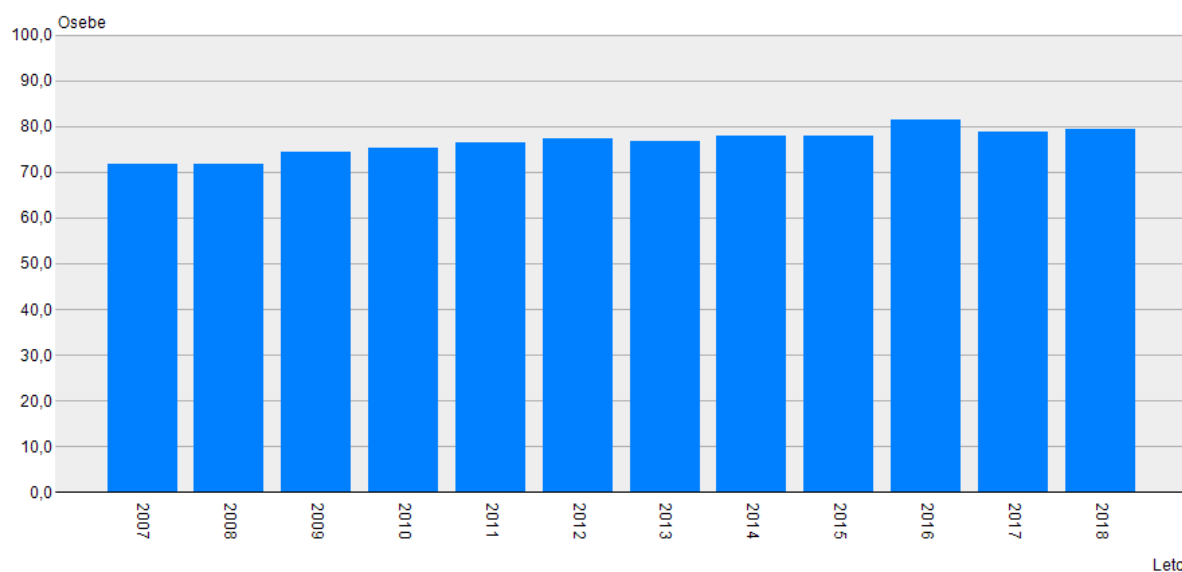


Figure 17. Percentage of fathers at child birth leave, 2007 - 2018. Source: NIJZ, https://podatki.nijz.si/Table.aspx?layout=tableViewLayout2&px_tableid=PIS_TB_4.px&px_path=NIJZ_podatkovni_portal_1_Zdravstveno_stanje_prebivalstva_03_Porodi_in_rojstva&px_language=en&px_db=NIJZ_podatkovni_portal&rxid=2fa53ef4-3c68-4839-bc69-7b302e61236c

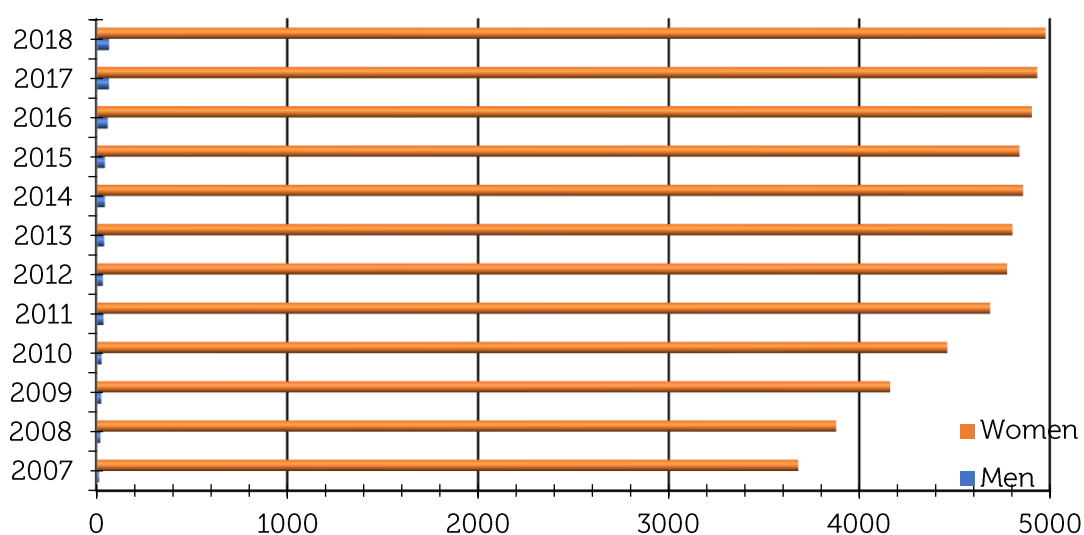


Figure 18. Kindergarten teachers in public kindergarten by gender, 2007 - 2018. Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

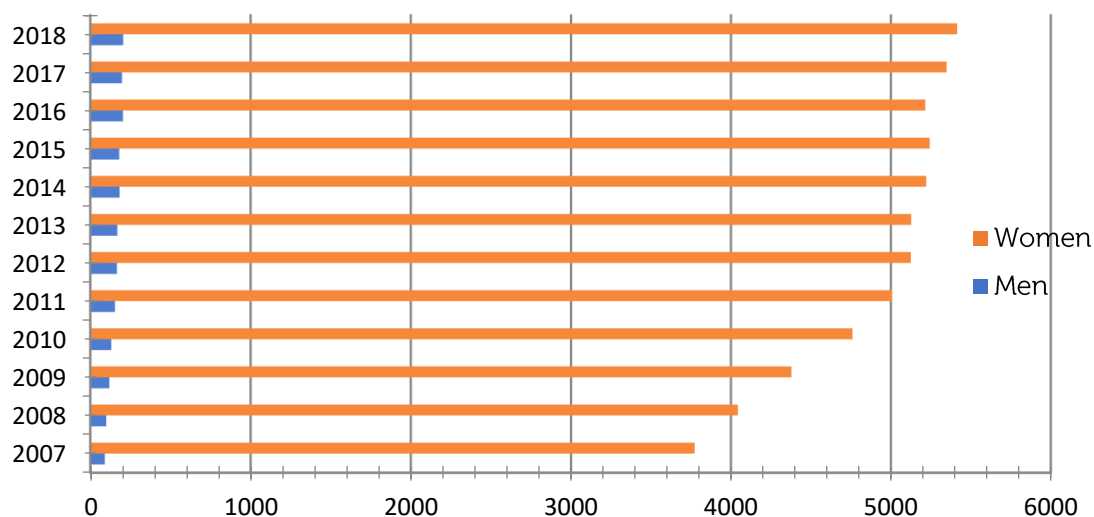


Figure 19. Kindergarten teacher's assistants in public kindergarten by gender, 2007 - 2018. Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

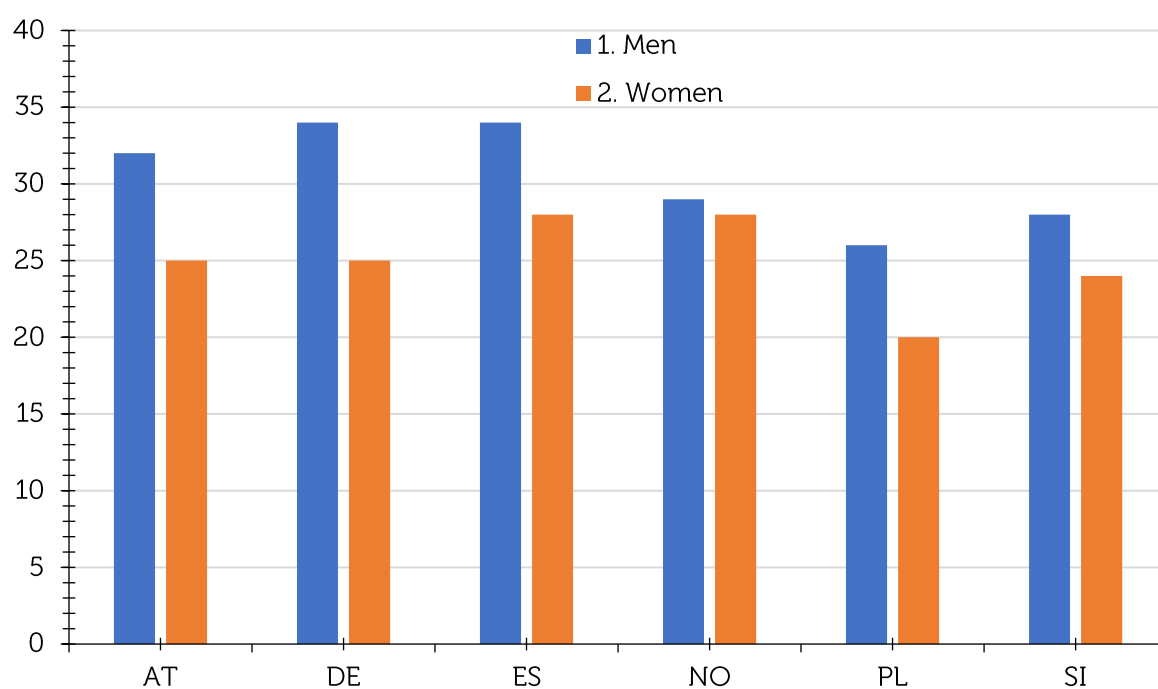


Figure 20. Percentage of working people who would like to work less than currently, by gender and country. Source: European Working Conditions Survey, Eurofound, 2015

2.

BEST PRACTICES IN SLOVENIAN
COMPANIES

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. Welfare regime

Historical and contextual developments in gender and welfare regimes have different impact on the importance of caring masculinity and the role of employers.

- > Slovenia has a tradition of a dual career model with women full-time participating in paid jobs since 1960'. This has been supported by the state with leave policies and childcare system. Generous maternity/parental leave policies were established in the second half of 1970's and the paternity leave policy in 2003.⁵ Childcare system is based on widely accessible and subsidized network of kindergartens for children age 1 – 6 years and later on by meals and childcare⁶ in primary schools.
- > When after a reasonable long, fully paid parental leave (1 year), which is in majority taken by women, who return to paid work, the partners do not need to negotiate who will take over childcare while they work, because the state takes over. Dual career regime implies sharing family work (childcare, eldercare and household chores) between partners, however, this sharing could be improved in order to dismember women (who are in the European context disproportionally overburdened with a combination of full-time paid and unpaid family work). In particular, we see the space for improvements in uptake of parental leave by men. While uptake of the one month of paternity leave is high (over 80 %), the share of parental leave continues to be very low (around 6-7 % between 2012 and 2016 and is now decreasing).
- > In the context of decent parental statutory rights and universal public childcare services, the importance of employers' WLB policies is relevant to ease the everyday choreography of work and care while children are small.
- > On the other hand, in elderly care the state largely lags behind the actual caring needs of people, and also employers are not fully aware of the consequences of

⁵ In Slovenia, the currently applicable paid leave scheme consists of 105 days of maternity leave, 30 days of paternity leave and 260 days of parental leave, which can be shared among parents. Maternity, paternity and parental allowances are 100% and base on employment status.

⁶ Childcare in elementary schools is available for children up to the age of 12 in the aftrenoons after the classes are finished.

the aging population. However, equal share of elderly care between the partners in the family and employer's support for employees' elderly care needs are not deemed as main way to go, but rather as supportive conditions. Instead, in order to enable working people a proper WLB and gender equality at the labor market and in private sphere, the civil society and feminist movement are arguing strongly for the similar level of the state's co-responsibility in elderly care as it is at place in childcare.

- > Men spend more time at work than women, who remain the main carers in the family, which is also reflected in women's greater take up of parental leave and care leave for a close family member. On the other hand, men are more likely to report dissatisfaction with a lack of time for family and stress at work.

2.1.2. Stakeholder's view on WLB in companies

The MiC team at the Peace Institute conducted two interviews with stakeholders: The Ekvilib Institute and the Gender Equality Research Institute, which collaborate with companies and have continuous overview of WLB development in companies in Slovenia. The Ekvilib Institute is in charge of two certificates, Family-Friendly Enterprise Certificate which is in place since 2007 and Socially Responsible Employer Certificate present since the beginning of 2020, while the Gender Equality Research Institute introduced GEMA certificate (Gender Equality Management Assessment) in 2019.

Their assessment of WLB in companies in Slovenia is the following:

- > Management/leadership has the main role in the topics of gender equality and WLB in companies (sensitivity, role model, etc.).
- > Gendered perceptions are strong in Slovenia and the social expectation is that after the child is born, mother will use maternity and parental leave and will stay at home with a child for 1 year. On the other hand, men are not perceived in the context of care and care obligations.
- > Men with care obligations in companies face a lack of understanding of the middle management and perceptions of being irreplaceable are strong on the side of employers and employed men.
- > Childcare and care for the elderly: if the former is perceived as a public matter (parental leave scheme, kindergartens, 1 paid day for accompanying a child on the first day of school to 1st grade for public and private companies, etc.), care for the elderly is pushed into the private lives of employees. Care for elderly parents/partner's parents is individualized in Slovenia.
- > Proposal for WLB measure on a systemic level: part-time work due to care for elderly with paid social contributions.

- > Good practices of WLB measures in companies: flexible working hours, work from home.
- > Measures for men (from the list of measures of Family-Friendly Enterprise certificate⁷): in addition to additional paid days of paternity leave, the new measure was recently added and involves accompanying pregnant partner for check-ups and an additional day of paid leave at the birth of a child.
- > Companies are more reluctant to introduce WLB measures that interfere with the work processes (e.g. the introduction of special leave) because they fear that employees will take an advantage of it.

2.1.3. Methodology: selection criteria, access to organization, ways of conduct

The qualitative method of individual interviews was based on guidelines with selected topics and questions, prepared by the MiC consortium. Interviews were conducted with different actors in the selected companies, which included leadership, middle management, trade union representatives and men - employees with caring responsibilities, and their partners. The 360° degree research approach enables comprehensive insight of WLB of men in their working environments.

The selection of companies⁸ was based on the following conditions:

- > company having good practice examples in WLB,
- > diversity of companies with regard to sector (private, public), size (large, medium, small, micro)⁹, significant share of male employees and geographical region.

Four companies were selected and invited for cooperation. A contact person enabled entrance into the company to researchers, selected interviewees (management, employed men with care responsibilities, sometimes also their partners) and organized interview schedules.

Between February and August 2020 the MiC team at the Peace Institute conducted 36 interviews:

- > 2 interviews with stakeholders and
- > 34 interviews in 4 companies.

⁷ The "Family-Friendly Enterprise" certificate was introduced in 2007 and aimed for companies, public sector and non-profit organizations (with at least 10 employees). By now there are 260 companies in Slovenia (employing more than 80.000 people), holders of the Family Friendly Enterprise Certificate. WLB measures cover eight areas: working time, work organization, workplace quality and flexibility, information and communication policy, leadership, human resources development, wages and in-work benefits, and family services

⁸ In the report we use the term company for private companies as well as for public service, which participated in the study.

⁹ Micro companies have up to 10 employees, small up to 50 employees, medium up to 250 employees and large more than 250 employees.

The interviews were conducted in the working places of interviewees, in the Peace Institute's library and other public places, depending on interviewees' wishes. Three interviews were conducted via the phone due to the Covid-19 restrictions in March and April 2020.

Selected companies are not anonymized as they present examples of good practices in WLB, while interviews with leadership, men with care obligations and their partners were recorded and anonymised for the purposes of the analysis.

The four selected companies:

- > Police is a large organization, a public service with 8.189 employees in total, out of which 3/4 of employees are men.
- >
- > Saubermacher-Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o. is a medium size, private company in North-Eastern part of Slovenia with 56 employees, out of which 90% are men. Its main activities are collection and disposal of non-hazardous waste.
- >
- > Mikro+Polo d.o.o. is a medium size, private and family run company in Maribor, the second largest city in Slovenia (North-Eastern part of Slovenia). Among 106 employees, 59% are men. It is one of the largest Slovenian supplier of laboratory accessories, equipment, chemicals, and diagnostics.
- > Donar d.o.o. is a small size, private company in Ljubljana with 14 employees, among which 57% are men. The company is one of the key players in design furniture focusing on ergonomic chairs, sofas and other furniture with highest environmental standards.

In Saubermacher-Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o. interviews were conducted before the lockdown in Slovenia (16.3.2020), as well as some interviews in the Police, while some of them were conducted during the lockdown (by phone), and some after the reopening in late May, June and August, like in the company Donar d.o.o. and Mikro + Polo d.o.o.. During the lockdown, we needed to stop with the interviews at the Police, as they are considered as crucial occupations, like health care workers, and were overworked at that period.

COMPANY /WORKING ORGANIZATION	EXPERTS IN THE COMPANY	MEN	PARTNERS	
POLICE	2 Representatives of the Police Academy	6	3	
	3 Representatives from different Police Directorates			
	1 Representative of trade-union			
SAUBEMACHER -KOMUNALA MURSKA SOBOTA D.O.O.	1 Representative of the leadership	3	3	
	1 Representative of the Finance and Controlling Office			
DONAR D.O.O.	2 Representatives of the leadership	2	/	
MIKRO +POLO D.O.O.	2 Representatives of the leadership	3	2	
TOTAL	12	14	8	34

Table 5. Interviews in companies

Table 6 summarizes the main demographic data (age, education, household structure, occupation) of interviewed men, including the information about their caring responsibilities and WLB measures used by them. Interviewees are men between 32 and 58 years of age. Half of the interviewees have secondary school, slightly less than half university degree and 1 interviewee finished elementary school. All of them work full time, occupying variety of working positions, from driver to middle management. The majority of interviewed men live with wives/female partners and child(ren), few of them are divorced and live in new partnership, while one is single father with full child custody. Most men take care of preschool and school children, while few also take care of elderly family members (parents, partner's parents).

COMPANY/ WORKING ORGANIZATION	INTERVIEWEES (PSEUDONYM)	AGE	HOUSEHOLD	CHILD & AGE	CARE OF OTHERS	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	WLB MEASURES
POLICE	Robi	47	wife and child	1 (5)	His and partner's parents	secondary	Shift manager assistant	changing work shifts, paternity leave
	Jure	38	wife and 3 children	3 (1, 4, 7)	no	university	Shift manager	change of working position due to parenthood; paternity and parental leave; sick leave when children are ill; paid leave of 1 day to accompany child to the first grade of elementary school; change work shifts
	Matej	39	wife and 2 children from partner's previous relationship	2 (6, 6)	No	secondary	Police officer	sick leave to take care of ill children; change shifts
	Marjan	47	2 children	2 (14, 14)	For his father	university	Police inspector	flexible working time; parental leave; additional 2 days of annual leave (for children until 15 years of age) for employees in public sector

	Aleš	45	wife and 1 child	1 (16)	For mother	secondary	Criminalist	Change of work place closer to home due to care for elderly mother; change of work shifts; additional 5 paid days of leave to take care of disabled family member;
	Tine	37	wife and 2 children	2 (2, 4)	No	university	Head of the police district	paternity leave; sick leave to take care of ill children; change shifts
SAUBEMACHER -KOMUNALA MURSKA SOBOTA D.O.O.	Smilko	35	wife and 1 child	1 (2)	No	BA	transport organizer, referent	paternity leave and sick leave for the child, the day for introduction to the kindergarten, certain days of the week flexible working hours due to the working hours of the kindergarten
	Dejan	39	wife and 2 children	2 (7, 13)	No	secondary	driver	paternity leave, paid leave on the child's first day in elementary school
	Marko	32	wife and 1 child	1 (4)	No	BA	field work coordinator and supervisor	paternity leave, the day for introduction to the kindergarten
DONAR D.O.O.	Bob	58	wife and children	4 (29, 22, 20, 14)	No	secondary	Commercialist	Paternity leave for the fourth child; shorter working week

MIKRO + POLO D.O.O.	Gorila	40	Divorced every second weekend and his two children stays with him	2 (10, 8)	No	vocational	printmaker working in production	Shorter working week
	Gregor	50	wife and 1 child	2 (27, 22)	His wife's mother and grandmother	secondary	line manager	Unplanned leave, extra exists ¹⁰ , free ¹¹ breakfast in company's canteen
	Jaro	32	wife and 2 children	2 (2, 7)	No	elementary	informatics	extra exits, flexible working time (arrival/departure)
	Darg	40	wife and 1 child	1 (14)	No	university	international logistics	Paternity leave; unplanned leave

Table 6. Profile of interviewed men

¹⁰ Unplanned short-term exits during the working day due to family/personal reasons. According to our interviews, men/fathers of small children often use this WLB measure for fetching a child to or from kindergarten, after-school activities, doctor etc., in particular when their partner works in a company, where such flexibility is not at place.

¹¹ In addition to covering the costs of commuting to work and a meal during the workday, which is a statutory employee's right in Slovenia, Mikro+Polo d.o.o. also provides free breakfast for employees in company's canteen. With this the management aims to increase the general well-being and satisfaction of all employees and, specifically, to encourage self-care in healthy nutrition for all employees.

2.2. Company summaries

Table 7 summarizes data about analyzed companies including the main WLB measures. Statutory measures, such as parental and paternity leaves, are not included in the table. The main WLB measures in the Police are part of the Collective agreement for Police Officers, while in Saubemacher Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o. WLB measures are part of the Family Friendly Enterprise certificate. WLB measures in Donar d.o.o. and Mikro + Polo d.o.o. are based on specific company's policies, in Mikro + Polo d.o.o. also as part of the Family Friendly Enterprise Certificate.

Table 3 also shows gender segregated data about short working week. The data are available for three out of four analyzed companies and show that standard full-time (40 hours) working week represents a norm for men and women in Slovenia, which has historical, cultural, economic and social welfare reasons.

WLB measures in all four analyzed companies are gender neutral. The only two exceptions are paternity leave (statutory measure) and 1-3 paid days of leave when the child is born (collective agreement).

	NO. OF EMPL.	% OF MEN	% OF W IN MANAGEMENT	% OF W/M WORKING SHORT WORKING WEEK	MAIN WLB MEASURES IN THE COMPANY
POLICE	8.189	75%	2%	no data available in publicly accessible sources	<p>Collective agreement: Working time with flexible arrival/departure from work for certain work place;</p> <p>3 paid days when the child is born;</p> <p>1 paid day to accompany child on first school day for the first grade;</p> <p>Additional days of annual leave for police officers due to working conditions;</p> <p>Protection of parents of children up to 7 years old to enable working close to their home;</p> <p>Police officers - parents of small children can work only in morning shift (until 3.30pm);</p> <p>Ban on working in difficult conditions (radiation, chemicals, etc.), at night and overtime for pregnant women, who are on maternity leave (105 days) and one year after the birth of a child;</p> <p>Use of annual leave during school holidays.</p>

SAUBER MACHER KOMUNALA MURSKA SOBOTA D.O.O.	56	90%	65%	0% / 0%	Family Friendly Enterprise measures (selected): flexible working hours (fixed working hours with the choice of arrival and departure time); meetings in the administration are organized between 8:00 and 14:00; child time bonus (an additional paid day off to introduce the child to kindergarten or school or for accompanying children to "information day" or to spend some leisure hours with children during different days); additional day of absence with salary compensation due to extraordinary family reasons; measure for health protection or health promotion at the workplace ...
MIKRO + POLO D.O.O.	126	59%	60%	2% / 0%	Unlimited paid leave; free breakfast in company's canteen; telework; flexible working time; extra exits; children are welcome in the company; family members are welcome at parties, trips, sport activities, which are fully paid for employees and partly for family members.
DONAR D.O.O.	14	57%	50%	100%/100%	shorter working day; telework; flexible working time; coaching; children are welcome in the company

Table 7. Companies and WLB measures

The Police is part of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Slovenia and performs its service on state, regional and local levels. Organizationally the Slovene Police is composed of:

- > The General Police Directorate,
- > Police Directorates and
- > Police stations.

The General Police Directorate involves: Service of the Director General of the Police, Uniformed police Directorate, Criminal Police Directorate, National Forensic Laboratory, Police Specialities Directorate, Police Academy and IT and Telecommunications Office. There are 8 Police Directorates in different cities across Slovenia (Celje, Koper, Kranj, Ljubljana, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Nova Gorica and Novo mesto) and 111 police stations in Slovenia.

In General Police Directorate and Police Directorates the highest leadership positions are held by men, while in 111 police stations, there are 2 female commanders and 18 female assistants of police station commander.

In 2019, the Police employed 8,189 employees, among them 4,658 male police officers and 943 female police officers. The average age of police officers was 41.6 years; the average age of male police officers was 42.6 years and the average age of female police officers was 37.4 years.

Saubermacher - Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o. is a company working within the sector of public non-financial corporations, located in North-Eastern part of Slovenia. The company is responsible for the collection and disposal of non-hazardous waste. Currently Saubermacher - Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o employs 56 people, among which 90% are men. The management staff includes 5 men and 6 women (11 altogether). Among them there are 3 men in leadership positions. One man is on the top of the administration and one as a leader for the section waste disposal. Vast majority of employees have the long-term contracts (48 men and 6 women), while 2 men have a temporary work contract.

Caring for a living environment is the foundation and guiding principle that has guided Saubermacher company to provide economical waste management services for more than a quarter of a century. Their beginnings started in 1990, when the company was the first in the former Yugoslavia in Lenart to start introducing separate waste collection using the BioPaS system. The company Saubermacher Slovenia was formed into its current organizational form in 2007, when the companies Saubermacher Slovenia, Letnik-Saubermacher and Eko les merged. While the life and path of their work on the map of Slovenia are divided between five strategically diverse and important locations for their existence, the main company and 100% owner of their company, Saubermacher DAG, is based in Graz, Austria.

Mikro+Polo d.o.o. is a family run company founded in 1980' in Maribor. During this period, it has grown into the largest Slovenian supplier of laboratory accessories, equipment, chemicals, and diagnostics. Over the years the company developed its own programme of laboratory and processing equipment, accessories and chemicals for development, research, and diagnostic laboratories, apparatus manufacturing, design and execution of laboratory construction works, laboratory furniture manufacturing, and full servicing and validation of apparatuses and equipment sold. Today it has 106 employees of very different profiles, from production workers, warehouse(wo)men, developers, engineers, marketers, management, informatics working at the company's premises in Maribor and at the representation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The company is very successful, growing and internationally recognized in the field of laboratory equipment and it has an extensive track record of award winning for their products. Its business model is based on social responsibility and sustainable development in relation to customers, business partners, employees, and to the environment, in which it works. The company is

engaged in the local community by organizing and supporting different cultural, humanitarian and other projects and events. Human resource management approach clearly builds on satisfaction of employees as a company's competitive advantage. In 2007 the company was one of the first in Slovenia that holds a Family Friendly Enterprise Certificate. It is also certificated as LGBT friendly by The City Municipality of Ljubljana, age friendly and has a diversity charter. It is eco aware paperless company, and cooperates with disability company Ozare. In 2019 the company was a winner of the prestigious European Business Awards in the category The Workplace and People Development among 150.000 companies from 33 countries. One of their leading motto is *'Because we care'*.

Donar d.o.o. was established in 1989 in Slovenia as a small operation of three people in a response to the needs of office interior development. Since then it has developed in one of the key players in design furniture, with focus on chairs, with highest environmental standards. The company is focusing on sustainable design management as a response to the overwhelming growth of consumerism. The company follows circular economy principles to contribute to a carbon neutral and waste free society. The company has an extensive track record of award winning for their products. Over 70% of products are exported, mostly to Scandinavian countries, UK, USA, Australia, and Italy.

The company's previous director, now its owner, integrates his vision of ecological and social sustainability into the business and turns the company into international story of success in furniture production branch, which was otherwise ruined in transitional Slovenia. Today the company employs 14 people (5 in office, 9 in production; 8 men and 6 women) and cooperates with many subcontractors. The main characteristics of the company's profile are that it is a small, private business competing on a global market with a distinct philosophy of environmental and social responsibility used as its marketing niche, organizational principle and a brand.

2.3. Comparative analysis I: 3-Phases Model

2.3.1. Organization, phase, indicators & quote

Police: "From macho organizational culture to gender sensitive organization" - Medium phase

The Police as one of the largest employers in public sector in Slovenia has well developed WLB measures as part of the Collective agreement for Police Officers with the clauses about the entitlement of different working time arrangements and additional paid days for family and personal reasons. The entry of women in the police service and the role of the leadership are two dimensions that mainly influenced the shift from "macho culture" to a more gender sensitive organizational approach involving also implementation of WLB measures, including self-care.

With the entry of female police officers in the police service after 2000, more attention has been paid to the area of WLB, for example, in the collective agreement with the ban of working in night shift for employees with young children, the possibility to work in the morning shift until the child is very young. More focus was put also on self-care, introducing the psychosocial support, police trustees and mediation. Working groups in the Police, such as the Committee for Integrity and Ethics, Research and Social Skills Center, the Advisory board for gender mainstreaming play an important role in conducting research, providing trainings and lectures for employees and future police officers on different topics, involving gender equality and WLB issues. They also hold trainings about gender equality for the future police officers in the Police Academy. Self-care measures (psychosocial support, police trustees) and its use by male employees also show the change of norms and perceptions about masculinity with the possibility for caring masculinities. One of the expert interviewee explained that:

"the police is a powerful subculture that used to be mostly characterized by machismo. At the time I came (in the Police, added by Ž.H.) in the late 1980's, we were mostly boys, men. And machismo was the main characteristic, we are not weak, we cannot cry, we cannot moan, but we are macho. And it took quite some time to take a step forward to accept that sometimes you are weak, that you have problems. And of course a lot of persistence from the Police leadership ... We started in

2001 and it took quite a few years to create a network of psychologists and to be accepted by the police officers.”

However, in the last 20 years there has been an increase of female employees at the Police, while in the leadership positions there were no major changes. The only exception was the former female director general of the Police, who was leading the Police from 2018 to 2020 and was the first female director general of the Police in Slovenia.

WLB is perceived in terms of employee's rights to reconcile between work and family obligations as a 'win-win' situation for employee and for employer. Emphasis is on personal well-being, on understanding that one is not only a worker, but in his/her private life also a mother, father, care taker, etc. One of the experts, based on his own parental experience, explains the importance of WLB rights:

“After all, I’m a parent myself, I have 4 kids and I know how it goes. In fact, if you have family life, that you know that if everything is fine at home, then you are also more relaxed at work. If you know that the system allows you to reconcile, you also feel more committed to the system ... ”

WLB measures on systemic as well as on organizational level are gender neutral, with two measures for men: paternity leave and 3 paid days when the child is born. The Police follows the perception about WLB as a 'win-win' situation for employee and for an employer with gender neutral measures. As one of the largest employers in public sector, the Police made some important steps when introducing WLB measures for parents in the Collective Agreement for Police officers. Caring masculinities are not promoted by specific measures.

Saubermacher - Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o.: The employee has to take care of him/her-self first in order to be able to take care for the work in the company - Medium phase

During the last years, the company went through various phases, including the replacement of the director, moving to new business premises. These changes did not influence on employees' fluctuation. The company works in accordance to the EU waste policy and its principles. The core values, deriving from their mission and vision, point out at creating a healthy environment:

“But this doesn’t mean caring for a healthy environment as a waste-free nature, but for a healthy environment in relation to the various stakeholders that the company encounters in its work and this also includes employees. Another key value is the care for employees and our vision is to become the leading company in Slovenia in the field of waste management. However, this is not measured in the market share,

but is measured by three internal criteria, among them one is employees' satisfaction."

The company strives for employee-friendly environment as pointed out in interview:

"If we look narrowly economically, it is definitely a cost that can be calculated very quickly. Unlike the vast majority, I do not look at it that way because it's short-lived. I look at it on the long run. That is, someone who has had the opportunity to dedicate himself to his family and the company has made it possible for him his affiliation with the company and, consequently, the results of his work are so much better."

Organizational culture as a whole in this company is in accordance with the state family policy, for example in case of paternity leave or extra leave for the first day of children entering school etc. Nevertheless, the company offers much more WLB measures that are included within the frame of state family policy. WLB became a relevant topic within the last 10-12 years. According to the interview with Executive Director and their Finance and Controlling Officer the company started with introducing some informal measures for all employees and they formalized these practices officially while they received the certificate "Family Friendly Enterprise" in December 2011. The initiative for the certificate came from the employees, since many of the measures prescribed by the certificate were already in place in the company and were being implemented with additional measures.

WLB is understood as a win-win situation for employer and employee. According to the interviews with leadership and men, the company is supportive in regards to WLB issues of employees. The management supports paternity leave and men's involvement in family care. Introduction of flexible working hours (fixed working hours with the choice of arrival and departure time) allows employees to work under less stress thus supports carers to balance paid and unpaid (family) work better. This measure is in principle accessible to all, but is not feasible for field workers.

WLB measures are gender neutral, however still socially expected in this rural environment and consequently in the company, to be used by women. As emphasized in the interview with the leadership, men take paternity and/or sick leave, and by that also the mind-set is slowly changing:

"In a way, we are still a very traditional society here, where the prevailing mentality is that primarily women's responsibility is to take care of children, and men are the ones who have to take care of the family's existence. But even in the company we notice that more and more men are taking paternity leave, that in some way even in the case of a child's illness it is the father who asks for leave because the mother for one reason or another cannot. So, slowly this mindset is also changing here in the environment where we operate and in the company."

The concept of gender equality or caring masculinities are not prevailing in the company (neither at the management nor at employees' level). There are no measures promoting caring masculinities in the company.

Mikro+Polo d.o.o.: 'The employees should feel as good at the workplace as they feel at home' - Medium phase

At Mikro+Polo, formally and informally WLB stands as one of the most important value and is practiced on a daily basis. The company's approach is innovative from the perspective that its focus is not on 'reconciliation' of work and private life, but on blurring the sharp divisions between them. The idea is to bring private life like family issues (caring responsibilities, working schedules of partners, family members), and personal interests (hobbies, skills, projects) in the company.¹² The company pursues good working environment to make employees feel as comfortable as at home. This goal is pursued by the company's (management's) friendly, open, informal, individual and approachable attitude towards employees and by many benefits available to employees (including WLB flexibility). The company is willing to adjust to the employees' needs coming from their private life. However, it expects reciprocal attitude from employees: when the company needs you, also out of and beyond formal working hours, it is your turn to give back the benefits that you are receiving from the company. It is framed as a win-win situation, where moral obligation and commitment of the employees is underlined and expected even beyond statutory labour rights.

The goal of being an employees' friendly company (including WLB friendly) is not motivated by gender equality, but is considered as a competitive advantage on the market, it stands as a value in itself and as an expression of the director's personality. The unique and for Slovenia pioneer WLB measure in this company is unlimited paid leave available for all employees.¹³ They use it instead of sick and care leave (because it is paid 100% while sick leave is paid 80%), for personal projects like traveling, for extra situations, etc. On general, younger employees spend 5 days more than their statutory leave would be, while older employees spend less days compared to their statutory leave is. According to the actual satisfaction of employees and their partners with their WLB situation, the company could be placed in Advanced stage. However, given that WLB measures are not framed in the company as explicitly following the objective of gender equality or supporting men in care and that employees are regarded in a gender neutralized way, that gender is not 'visible', not important, and men are not specifically addressed, the company, according to the 'rules' of the three-

¹² For instance, attention has been paid to comfortable, nice and homely decoration of offices and common spaces; employees are invited to organise presentation of their hobbies, travels, skills to the colleagues; company parties are organised on Fridays with family members being invited; in the company newsletter employees have a voice; the management encourages further professional development of employees; personal coaching and different trainings are provided; adjusting labour processes to caring responsibilities of employees is a normalized practice.

¹³ For details see Chapter 6 Good practice, where this measure is closely analysed.

stage model, can be regarded as belonging into Medium Phase. This company does not mainstream gender equality specifically, but equality in general.

The company follows the logic of general wellbeing of the employees and in the last 5 years it made significant improvements in this field: employees' friendly organizational culture, the motto of the management is 'to be the best employer', awarded for being a good employer nationally and internationally. However, no one in the company expressed particular interest for or progressive attitudes about gender equality.

Clearly, WLB is important part of the organizational culture and is strongly integrated in the company on the informal and formal level. Employees express satisfaction with their WLB, they do not perceive negative effects of their caring obligation on their job or vice versa. In particular, they are positive about extra exits, company's canteen, good relationships, the feeling that the company cares for them. No specific measures for men.

Donar d.o.o. - Pioneer in reduced working time as a business and social responsibility model - Medium phase

At Donar d.o.o., informally WLB stands as one of the most important value and is practiced in everyday life of the company. Paid work is definitely not seen as independent from private/family life but as depending on it. The prominent and for Slovenia pioneer measure in this regard is shorter working day, paid and in pension period defined equally as a full-time standard working day (not comparable with precarious short-time or part-time jobs). In April 2018, the company made a step further in following its vision 'less is more' and introduced a shorter working time. The owner said: *"Having observed the work processes in the company for a while, we realized people worked efficiently for six hours at the most. The goal was to improve productivity, not with more hours but with better-quality work."* The push moment for introducing shorter working time was a situation when the company experienced economic hardship because of completing a bigger order.

Officially, the employees still have 8-hours working day and their social contributions (including, importantly, pension period!) are calculated as for standard working time given that labour legislation does not enable shorter working time without reduction in labour rights. The employees also continue to receive the same salary as for 8-hours working day. To be precise, the standard 8-hours working time includes 30 minutes for brunch, meaning that effective work time amounts to 7 hours and half. In Donar d.o.o, the effective working hours amount to 6 hours, while 30 minutes for brunch and twice 15 minutes for coffee breaks are excluded from working time, meaning that employees are present at the workplace for 7 hours, officially between 7 a.m. and 2 p.m. Though the difference between previous standard and new shorter working hours is actually small, after 6 months of testing this employment model they found out that employees were less tired and experienced less work-related health problems while performance did not decrease. The owner says their employees now have more time for their families and have fewer

problems, so they are consequently more diligent at work. What is more, relationships in the company have improved. Also work processes are planned more carefully. A shorter working time enabled the company optimization and economization of working processes, keeping most of the employees and even improve their working conditions (including salary, as it was not reduced). Better WLB was a side effect of this experiment.

Though the director stressed that in business the results and profits are crucial, he was also personally interested not only in business impact, but also in wider societal effects of such organizational innovation: that employees can spend more time with their families; that shorter working time reduces psychological pressures, fatigue and health problems which might impact the creativity; that state's health system can save by more healthy elderly when employees retire if shorter working hours would be a norm; that people are happier and in better relationships; that less stress at work can reduce traffic accidents, drug addictions, divorces, young delinquency because of the absent parents etc. He thinks that many societal problems are sustained by pressure, fatigue and stress at the workplace and believes that the greatest benefit of the 6-hour workday is that after working for 40 years, people's total workload would be lower by 20%. He says: *"So after 40 years, they could still be active and contribute to society instead of retiring and be lying at home at the expense of the public health fund."*

Given that this is a small company, rooted in tradition of the furniture production and upholstery which are usually family businesses and are transmitted within the family, the organizational culture is family oriented – 'company equals family' (as stated by the managing director). Such organizational culture provides for taking care of each other, mutual solidarity and support and for day-to-day informal arrangements, including bringing children (and pets) at the workplace after school or during school holidays (which is enabled also because of the company's big show-room where children can play). Also, they had a case of men employee who had alcohol, financial and housing problems and the company organized for him to get out of this.

Gender equality, mutual support, WLB and care for the close ones are somehow implicated as 'goes without saying' in this broader normative framework. The company follows the logic of general wellbeing of the employees and in the last decade, but in particular in the last 3 years it made many improvements in this field: WLB oriented organizational culture and working time, care for health at work, educational courses including personal coaching and courses on personal development. Care for family members is considered as a fundamental element of the general wellbeing of the employees and is integrated in working processes via informal organizational culture and shorter working time.

2.3.2. Results: Context & care in the organization

Four companies are diverse in terms of its size, sector (private/public) and areas of work / businesses. Ranging from 14 to more than 8000 employees these four companies with different types of working time /schedules represent clear evidence that WLB measures are possible to implement in any size and type of company, area of work/business. However, there are no universal WLB measures that would suit any type of company. Some measures are only possible to implement in office types of work, such as flexible working time, telework. Field work, for example, work of police officers, drivers, work in production, etc., request other type of WLB measures. This means, that the universal set of measures for all employees even within one company is impossible, thus it is crucial to have broader and inclusive measures available among which employees can choose or adjust to their current care needs.

In the context of Slovenia statutory WLB measures, such as parental leaves, sick leave to take care of ill child, etc., together with measures stated in collective agreements intertwine with measures on organizational level. WLB measures are gender neutral and do not involve measures promoting caring masculinities. The only two measures directly addressing men as fathers are paternity leave (systemic level) and from 1 to 3 paid days when the child is born in collective agreements, which was preserved from socialism. At the company level, holders of the Family-Friendly Enterprise certificate have the option to select a measure of additional paid leave for fathers (at the expense of the employer) and a recently added new measure of accompanying the partner for medical examinations during pregnancy. For the latter there are no reports yet whether companies opt for such a measure and whether men use it, while for the former it is known that companies with this certificate have not introduced this measure assumingly due to the costs.

Organizational analyzes of the four companies show that there are no specific measures for promoting caring masculinities and that WLB measures do not necessarily stem from gender equality. On the one hand, this can be understood in the specific context of Slovenia with the socialist heritage of the childcare system and the system of paid parental leaves, which enabled the participation of women - mothers in the full - time employment. The employers' role in WLB policies in companies is often overlooked in Slovenia due to the considerable state family policy provisions. On the other hand, WLB measures - statutory and organizational - are gender neutral, allowing them to be used by both women and men, with women as major users, which was also highlighted in the interviews with men and leadership. Statutory rights have a legal ground and Labour Inspection would sanction a company violating employee's statutory rights. Therefore, statutory rights are unquestionable, respected and implemented in companies, while some companies, for instance the 4 analyzed in this report, provide additional organizational measures. However, no discussions about gender equality, which would address specifically men in their caring roles can be observed. Organizational analyzes of the four companies show that paternity leave is a fully accepted measure both at the level of management and at individual level of the men who used it. It is also positively accepted in work collectives that men take sick leave to care for a sick child.

Among 14 interviewed men, who take care of the child(ren), 4 of them also care for elderly family members (parents, partner's parents). Men, who participated in the interviews, take care of children, they used paternity leave, some also parental leave, sick leave to care for a sick child, some also changed working places due to parenthood or change work shifts to better meet care needs, while some opted for flexible working time. In various contexts of the interviewed men different supporting factors were important, which enabled them to reconcile between their working and caring obligations. The crucial seems to be the sensitivity of the leadership about WLB of employees, solidarity among co-workers, good relations and good communication in the company. In Donar d.o.o. employees work short working time, which allows them more time for themselves, for families, while Mikro + Polo d.o.o. enables free breakfast at company's canteen, unplanned leave and extra exits. The analyzed companies do not specifically encourage men to reconcile between paid work and care obligations or to engage in care responsibilities at home, but support them when they do. Interviewed men did not report of situations, when they were not able to reconcile between paid work and caring obligations. In four organizational analysis the support of superiors in taking into account employees' WLB needs is highlighted by leadership and interviewed men. Interviews with men show practices of caring masculinities, involving also elements of traditional masculinity and gendered stereotypes on parental roles, which plays against greater gender equality.

Among interviews with leadership the awareness of caring masculinities is mainly recognized in active fathers, while in terms of care for elderly it is overlooked. However, the awareness of aging working population in the Police was emphasized in the interviews with leadership. There are also high expectations about the EU Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers, which will introduce 5 days of carer's leave.

Self-care was emphasized in interviews, in particularly in the Police due to the specifics of police work. In the Police the self-care measures mainly involves psychosocial support (24-hour on call psychological service), police trustees and mediation. These support services are available to police officers as well as to their families. In Donar, Saubermacher and Mikro+polo it is more reflected as care for general wellbeing of employees offering employees massage at workplace, trainings about personal competence, personal development coaching, and other types of trainings and workshops, joint sport and social activities.

Besides formal measures in four companies also informal arrangements among employer and employee and among co-workers, such as, changing shifts, are very important for exercising employees' WLB. Interviews with men confirmed the importance of informal arrangements, which work well in smaller working collectives. However, informal arrangements are possible where communication and relations in work environment are good and when (middle) management changes it might happen that these informal arrangements are no longer possible. Nevertheless, it is a

question whether all the measures can be formalized (to predict every possible situation covering WLB).

Some, interestingly, private/market companies clearly follow the logic of corporate responsible business with clear awareness that working organisation is an open system, which produces wider social, environmental and economic impacts. In these cases, gender equality and caring masculinity, but also diversity, are implicitly embedded in a wider frame of environmental awareness, social responsibility and the general wellbeing of the employees in order to be more productive, creative, but also to pursue personal development and thus bringing more benefits and fewer costs not only for the company, but also for society in general. The role of the director seems prominent in such companies, as an initiator of the change, as having uniquely informal attitude towards employees, as an open, innovative, approachable person. WLB measures follow the business case as a competitive advantage. As the representative of management in one company says: "With these measures we provide employees with a feeling of safety. ... Good atmosphere in the company brings success. People are satisfied, they put more efforts in their work, they feel that they belong to the company...". This outstanding social responsible and employees' friendly orientation has become a publicly recognized brand of such companies.

2.4. Comparative analysis II: Supportive factors & barriers for caring masculinities

2.4.1. Supportive factors enabling men's taking up of unpaid care tasks

Working structures (staff composition, time and spatial structures, work conduct etc.)

Staff composition with regards to gender varied across the companies participating in the study. Staff composition of companies analyzed have at least 50% of employed men with varying share of women in leadership position from 2% to 65%. The Police is traditionally very male dominated working organization, which in the last two decades showed certain development with the increase of employed women. However, the entry of women in the Police did not result also in the increase of women in leading positions.

Official working time in analyzed companies varied a lot. Saubermacher -Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o. and Mikro + Polo d.o.o. exercise typical working time with some flexibility, while Donar d.o.o. introduced shorter working day. In Mikro + Polo d.o.o. working time is from 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at the company's premises, however time and spatial flexibility are possible upon the agreement with director. In Donar d.o.o. the official working time is from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the company's premises and again with time and spatial flexibility possible. In Saubermacher- Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o. working hours are between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. (flexible arrival and departure). The most specific is working time at the Police, especially of police officers is atypical: three shifts work, including work on weekends, holidays, at night. The interviewees, both experts and carers, reported about the so-called "Russian" work time of police officers, which means working 4 days in a roll and of 12 hours (two days from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and two days from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.) followed by 4 days off work. Atypical working time in the Police cannot be understood as supportive factor to WLB of men with caring responsibilities. However, many measures have been implemented in relation to parental protection, which strives for better WLB of employees.¹⁴

¹⁴ The Collective agreement for Police officers stipulates that in case of relocation the place of work (the majority of request are related to care needs: children and elderly) should not be more than 30 km from the previous place of work. Due to the lack of police officers in some parts of Slovenia, there were many such relocations and police officers were also relocated more than 70 km from the previous place of work, which increased daily commuting and negatively impacts WLB. Employees who have a child up

On one hand, shorter working day enabled the company optimisation and economisation of working processes and improved working conditions (including salary, as it was not reduced), while on the other hand work-life balance of employees was improved. Shorter working day represents the most important supportive factor enabling men (and women) in analyzed companies more time, which can be dedicated to care needs for family members as well as for self-care and other free time activities. Also time flexibility of typical 8-hour working time in analyzed companies can be recognized as supportive factor enabling men with caring responsibilities to reconcile between work and care more smoothly. For example, flexible hours of arrival/departure to and from work, enable men to take children to kindergarten and/or school in the morning or to pick them up in the afternoon without stress and rush.

Organization of work in the selected companies serve as supportive factors with the purpose to encourage men to use WLB measures, even though the rationale behind was not caring masculinities concept. WLB measures specific for men, introduced by the state family policy, were very positively accepted in the companies.

Company cultures (also hegemonic mind-sets, social environment etc.)

Analyzed companies do not put barriers to men who express their care needs in family life, but support them in finding the solution. In general, companies strive for family friendly and healthy environment with good atmosphere and good relations among colleagues and in regard to the management. The company culture in some of the analyzed companies strives to feel as good at job as at home, where the company equals family with strong informal arrangements and emphasis on care for each other. Such organizational culture provides for taking care of each other, mutual solidarity, support and for day-to-day informal and formal arrangements. Employed men with care responsibilities are aware of organizational support in reconciling private and professional responsibilities. It is widely understood in the interviews by both employers and men, as a win - win approach: 'when I need the company, colleague's support and from the superiors, I get support, and when the company and/or colleagues need me, I am there'. Active fatherhood, for example, is positively accepted in the companies, perceived as part of men's role in family life and as emphasized by one of the interviewees in the Police, the employer's role is to enable employee to exercise his parental rights. Changes of the organizational culture and in the society towards active fatherhood is well commented by one of the interviewed man, who 14 years ago used parental leave and received responses from his colleagues: *"Are you crazy? Why are you doing that? She should take parental leave"*. Nowadays that kind of responses are rare.

The lack of supportive company cultures in partner's company can be understood as a push towards men's use of WLB measures in the analyzed companies. In the expert interview in Mikro+Polo d.o.o. it was emphasized that employees, including men, use

to 3 years of age or up to 7 years of age can request for morning shift (until 15.30). In case of police family, working in the morning shift can be used by one parent.

the WLB measures more often compared to their partners, because partners usually do not work in such 'employees friendly companies'. He considers it as an 'uncompetitive cost' for the company. Similarly it was emphasized in the Police, that men - police officers often use WLB measures, because their partners, working in private sector, have not many possibilities of WLB.

Gender culture / gendered substructures

Gender equality and caring masculinities are not driving forces in 4 companies and WLB measures are not explicitly following the objective of gender equality or supporting men in care. In some of the analyzed companies, gender equality, care in general and caring masculinity are implicated in 'caring for each other' family-wise organizational culture and in the HR philosophy that the company should take care of the general personal wellbeing of the employees regardless of their gender. Equality in general is a high priority of the company with stress on respect for diversity and as a necessary condition of the good and stimulative working environment.

Taking paternity leave and/or sick leave to take care of ill child by male employees is supported as reported in the interviews by leadership and men with care responsibilities. The notion of active role of fathers in childcare is perceived as part of their engagement in family life.

The individual efforts of men as fathers towards caring masculinities and greater involvement in family life are important as observed in some of the interviews with men. However, in addition to individual efforts, systemic incentives are also needed at the state level and in companies based on the recognition that caring and paid work are inter-related domains in the lives of women and men. This approach in a wider context of equality was recognized in some of the analyzed companies.

Also one of the expert interviewees estimates, that it is a benefit for a company if employees prioritize care over paid work in some periods of their career. He thinks that women are more loyal to the company exactly due to their family and care responsibilities, while men, regardless if they have children or not, are more unstable and they more often desert the company. The loyalty to the company is more important than absenteeism because of care.

Leadership: style/type of management, the role of managers

Leadership style is based on formal rules and legislation, but differs from company to company. In Mikro+Polo d.o.o. it is officially formal and hierarchical, but actually flat, informal and with great amount of personal touch. In Donar d.o.o. formally, on the top are the owner of the company and the managing director (both men). However, given that the firm is small and that the organizational culture follows the principle 'company equals family', the relationships are horizontal and informal. The owner of the company has a position of the visionary of the company and has a strong moral authority. He observes a hierarchy between office and production workers, which finds as a deeply rooted societal pattern, difficult to overcome, expressed even in the spatial organization (production at the ground floor, offices in higher levels; 'we below, you above'). In Saubermacher- Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o. the leadership

is determined by clear formal hierarchies, however also very cooperative. Director at least once a year spend a day in the field work collecting waste. The Police is highly hierarchical organization and leadership is determined by hierarchies with clear formal rules and regulations. In the Police the role of direct superior is of crucial importance. In particular, informal agreements among direct superior and colleagues refer to changing shifts, to replace the employee who is absent, to take day off due to the family/care obligations, etc.. Informal arrangement means that personal care needs are taken into account when preparing work schedules in police stations.

The above presented various leadership styles in analyzed companies show that WLB can be successfully exercised by employees in different companies (size, branch, region, etc.). The common stand point in four companies is the sensitivity of the leadership/management about employees' WLB. This means that besides formal measures (systemic and organizational) in four companies also informal arrangements among employer and employee and among co-workers are very important for exercising employees' WLB.

Implementation of official regulations

All statutory rights are unquestionable, respected and implemented in four analyzed companies.

Additional incentives

In Mikro + Polo d.o.o. additional incentives or benefits can be recognized in company's canteen, free breakfast for employees, joint sport and social activities, trips and trainings. In Donar d.o.o the additional benefit is shorter working week, which is described above. In Saubermacher -Komunala Murska Sobota d.o.o. there is an additional paid day to accompany children on the first day of kindergarten or school (by the national regulations) or to national competitions (additional in this company). One of the measures in this company is also that all the meeting are organized between 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in order to enable employees to fetch their children from kindergartens, schools on time. In the Police additional incentives, which is also part of Collective agreement, are additional 2 days of annual leave (for children until 15 years of age) for employees in public sector.

Role models within companies

In Micro + Polo d.o.o. the co-owner and director has an outstanding role and impact as visionary, progressive, egalitarian, charismatic, unconventional. Similarly, in Donar d.o.o., where the owner stands as a visionary and moral authority. In the Police, for example, male care role models (men who use WLB measures) and peer-to-peer exchange information about rights and possibilities for WLB are very important as recognized also in the interviews with men. In the Police we observed male care role models in working units and peer-to-peer exchange information about rights and possibilities for WLB.

Role models within companies are important on both levels: on the level of leadership as well as on the level of the team/working unit. As such they co-develop organizational culture, where care is recognized as integral part of employees' life and not as separated part from working life.

2.4.2. Barriers against men's taking up of unpaid care tasks

Working structures (staff composition, time and spatial structures, work conduct etc.)

Atypical working hours specifically interfere with possibilities of WLB. 3-shifts work, work at night time, on public holidays, 12-hours working day certainly limit the possibilities of WLB. However, interviews with men, show the reconciliation of work and care responsibilities are negotiated, shared and organized between partners and sometimes with the help of grandparents in childcare. Reconciliation obstacles and barriers are mainly related to atypical working time, daily commuting and lack of police officers in smaller police stations. Due to the lack of police officers in some parts of the country, some interviewees also pointed out self-limitation in use of WLB measures (for example, 'if I take day off, then my colleagues would have to work more'). In the last few years the Police is working on the promotion of the occupation of police officer, also through the awareness raising work in educational institutions (like kindergartens, schools). In the other three companies no particular barriers on the level of working structure were observed.

Company cultures (also hegemonic mind-sets, social environment etc.) are also barriers against men's taking up of unpaid care tasks.

Gender culture / gendered substructures

Slovenia is still quite traditional society with variety of perceptions from traditional gendered ones to perceptions, which are based on gender equality. Also in the interviews it was emphasized that gendered roles where primarily women's responsibility is caring for children, and men are the ones who have to take care of the family's existence, are slowly changing, in particularly observed with younger generation. In society as well as in minority of the interviews with men, men are still expected to take care of the family financially, while on the other hand, they are expected to be actively involved in family/care responsibilities.

Barriers against men's taking up care tasks are still closely connected to gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles in society, which is also present in organizational cultures. As one of the partner's interview clearly shows gendered division of parental roles:

"He also gets involved, but Mom is Mom. With partner we agree spontaneously. You see, we read each other's thoughts, so there's no

problem. We never argued about it. He sees that I am capable and trusts me. And so do I to him."

Leadership: style/type of management, the role of managers

Majority of interviewees had positive experience with their superiors regarding WLB. A couple of interviewees from one company pointed out that their WLB needs were met, but with some resentment from direct superiors who did not show understanding or sensitivity for their care responsibilities.

Implementation of official regulations

Implementation of official regulations is respected in all analyzed companies and working organization. As already pointed out, there are only two measures that directly address men as fathers: 30 days paid paternity leave and from 1 to 3 paid days when the child is born. Paternity leave as the only measure addressing the caring role of fathers illustrates how the state through family policy also reproduce gendered expectations of parental roles. More efforts are needed to foster caring masculinities through state's policies.

2.5. Care during the COVID-19 pandemic

In Slovenia kindergartens and schools were closed for 2 months across the country during the first lockdown on March 16, 2020. Parents who stayed at home due to childcare were entitled to 50% compensation from their salary or in case of minimum wage up to at least 70% of it. Where both parents or in the case of single-parent families were employed in critical occupations, including service members, the state offered organized child care at home for preschool children and children up to 5th grade of elementary school. There is no data on how many parents opted for organized childcare at home, but according to media reports in the first days after the lockdown was announced, the parents mostly organized individually and took over the care of preschool and school children and distance learning.

According to Aragon,¹⁵ which conducted a survey in late March and early April, just under a third of respondents went to work as usual, just under a third of respondents worked from home, and 16 percent were at home waiting for work. Five percent of respondents worked part-time, and the same number were on sick leave. Nine percent took annual leave, and two percent of respondents did not work because of childcare. The study also revealed that men were more likely to go to work as usual compared to women, while women were more likely than men to stay at home for childcare.

During the lockdown, some interviewed men at the Police pointed out that they reconcile childcare, distance schooling with their partners, while some took annual leave, paternity leave, and in some cases the partners took care of the children and stayed at home with them. While in the company Donar d.o.o. and Mikro + Polo d.o.o. some employees worked from home and production took place in rotation, so that as few people as possible were present at the premises of the companies at the same time.

¹⁵ Aragon (2020): Vseslovenska raziskava COVID-19 Insight #vol2. Dostopno prek <https://www.aragon.si/vseslovenska-raziskava-covid-19-insight-vol2/>, 22. 4. 2020.

2.6. Good practices

- > **Shorter working time**, i.e. 6-hours working day, as implemented at Donar d.o.o.
- > **Company's canteen** as in Mikro + Polo d.o.o., where also family members are welcome, provides fresh lunch and in the morning free breakfast for employees every day. Meals can be also taken home. This arrangement has many benefits: it liberates employees from preparing meals at home, it takes care of employees healthy diet along with enabling their socializing.
- > **Unlimited paid leave**: An employee can use as many days of leave as s/he needs as long as the work is done on time and properly. For that purpose, an employee has to obtain approval of his/her leave by his/her immediate co-worker, who will replace him/her during his/her leave and take over his/her job. After a co-worker's approval, the leave must be confirmed also by the head of a department (line manager), but this is then only a formality. This measure represents a scaling down the responsibility for the organization of work from the management to the employees and introduces a self-regulation/self-disciplining of employees. After the introduction of this measure, the company observed less sick leave (as employees rather take leave when they or their children or family members are sick, because sick leave is paid less), better atmosphere, higher mutual trust and less stress. The management assesses this measure as a win-win situation.
- > The organizational culture which follows the logic that **work and private life/family do not contradict but cooperate** and that the employees should feel as good at the workplace as at home ('company is family'; 'company is a place where we have fun'; 'company takes care for me therefore I take care for the company'; win-win approach).
- > **Flexibility and individual approach in working arrangements, including working from home, flexible working time.**
- > **Extra or emergency exits during the workday** for different personal or family reasons when replacement is arranged informally between the immediate co-workers (the director needs to be informed).
- > **Self-care**: massage at workplace, personal competence coaching, personal development coaching, joint sport and social activities, psychosocial support, mediation, etc..
- > **Supportive and sensitive management to WLB measures and solidarity among co-workers**
- > in regard to one's WLB needs.

2.7. Recommendations

- > Information flow about measures seems to leave space for improvement and available measures could be shared more often. The topic of WLB measures in the companies could be added to the regular (at least monthly) staff meetings agenda.
- > To improve information and awareness raising not only about rights and possibilities, but also about the positive aspects of WLB measures among employees (the importance of role models, information meetings or provided guidelines for new employees, etc.).
- > The universal set of measures for all the employees are impossible, thus it is very important to have a **broader list of possible measures available among which each employee can select or adjust to current care needs**. It is relevant to consider variety of working places/positions and to adapt measures to particular working places. For example, work from home was mentioned as a recommendation, but it is a possible measure only for some working places. If introducing work from home for some working place, for example, in the Police, then it should be at the same time necessary to implement measures for police officers.
- > The companies should work on the **extension of the WLB measures to elderly care and to a certain extent to self-care** (in accordance with the employees' needs).
- > WLB measures need to address elderly care also on a systemic level;
- > Measures for older employees, in particularly measures related to health and safety at work, which includes also WLB, will be needed in companies in the near future.
- > The relation between WLB and security and health at workplace should be highlighted, because they intertwine. The trainings that will link men, care, gender equality with security and health at the workplace are recommended.
- > To increase the share of women in leadership positions in some companies (the current leaders could aim at additional encouragement of certain women with leader skills within company to take over the leadership positions in the future).

2.8. Reflection of the results

Gender equality and caring masculinities are not driving forces in 4 companies - WLB measures are not explicitly following the objective of gender equality or supporting men in care. In the interviews, we observed a kind of avoidance, even aversion on the side of the interviewees (management and employees) to relating care to GE and CM. It should be taken into consideration, that gender issues are contested, potentially conflictual topics, for many a matter of their intimacy, and it does not seem wise to push it. Also, motives of the companies to offer WLB mechanisms are often different than GE, but they still can have positive effects on GE and CM. This could be considered in developing contents for trainings.

Also, the ideology of care does not necessarily follow the frame of gender equality and caring masculinity. Instead, care is framed as a business case, in the sense of **care for the general wellbeing and satisfaction of the employees' as the basis of the HR strategy, competitive advantage and social responsibility**. Self-care and care for family members are implicated in such organizational culture as 'goes without saying' and represent important priorities of management, who is open to negotiate in order to enable the employees to pursue it. Without explicitly referring to GE and CM, this approach has important positive impact on enabling men to be included in family care. The company does not need to address GE and CM at all, but it provides excellent WLB conditions as part of their HR strategy to be a good employer.

WLB as a 'win-win' situation and understanding of the interconnectedness of private / family and work life: Emphasis is on personal well-being, on understanding that one is not only a worker, and if s_he is able to care of him_ herself and the family, s_he will perform better at work.

Crucial role of the leadership for WLB in companies: in four companies the leadership plays a crucial role in recognition of the importance of WLB measures and its introduction.

Sensitivity of leadership and solidarity among co-workers: besides formal measures (systemic and organizational) in four companies also informal arrangements among employer and employee and among co-workers are very important for exercising employees' WLB.

In two of the analyzed companies the expert interviewees noticed that employees, including men, use the WLB measures more often compared to their partners, because partners usually do not work in such 'employees friendly companies' or in public sector. In terms of private company it is considered as an '**uncompetitive cost**' for the company. It implies that men in this company or working organization can be more involved in care not because of their gender equality or caring masculinity attitudes, but as a **side effect of inflexibility in their partner's companies**. It also implies that opportunity structure in medium size as well as large organization can

positively affects involvement of male employees in family care **despite not explicitly intending so and despite those measures are gender neutral**. The effect of the normalized **dual earner context** with women working full time should not be neglected - in such context, men do not have many chances for avoiding family care work if their partner does not have a possibility for WLB at her job.

Some interviews clearly point, that men can be highly involved in child or elder care, but they keep traditional gender roles (for instance, avoiding household work, 'supporting' a female partner in 'their' care obligations, daughter helps with care and household but not son etc.). The **question** is whether **participation of men in care** can be considered as a **change in traditional gender patterns**. However, men's high commitment to job and to high earnings does not exclude his caring. One can be highly involved in both as many women and men in Slovenia prove this.

It seems that in some modern, urban, cosmopolitan, diversity inclusive companies 'private/personal time' stands as an important value, however, private time has a broad meaning and is not necessarily limited on the family nor the family always stands as the highest value. This brings in the limits of the WLB ideology in young, dynamic, diverse, international collective, where people pursue a range of different life styles and life course stages, complex social identities and variety of intimate partnership arrangements. Framing 'private/personal life' as referring primarily to the (nuclear) family and (child)care, addressing traditional gender roles and binary gender concepts (men vs. women) sometimes appear as anachronistic.

In analyzing the interviews in four companies **two conceptual dilemmas** appear as important for further thinking. One conceptual dilemma refers to **how we define care**. If we define care from strictly feminist, gender equality perspective mostly as care for dependant family members and household chores, than some men, who actually do a lot of care work, would be considered as an example of care-free masculinity, though they were indeed examples of care-full masculinity. One interviewee, for instance, spoke how he was engaged with different care tasks over his life course: building a family home, demanding job (sometimes involuntarily 12 hours) for contributing to the financial provision of the family, care for the extended family (brother/sister and parents), returning favour to friends who helped him with building a family home. Is feminist definition of care too narrow, too one-sided from the perspective of complexity of gendered life's demands?

The second conceptual dilemma refers to the **relation between WLB measures and gender equality**. Sometimes it feels like the two of them are used as a synonym. However, some cases show that the company can provide excellent WLB working conditions (not even labelling them like that) motivated by business case and not by gender equality. Clear commitment to WLB does not necessary tackle prevailing gender norms regarding care and social roles of men and women. Availability of WLB measures does not necessarily mean that the company is progressive in terms of gender equality, but they can still have positive impacts on gender equality and caring masculinities.