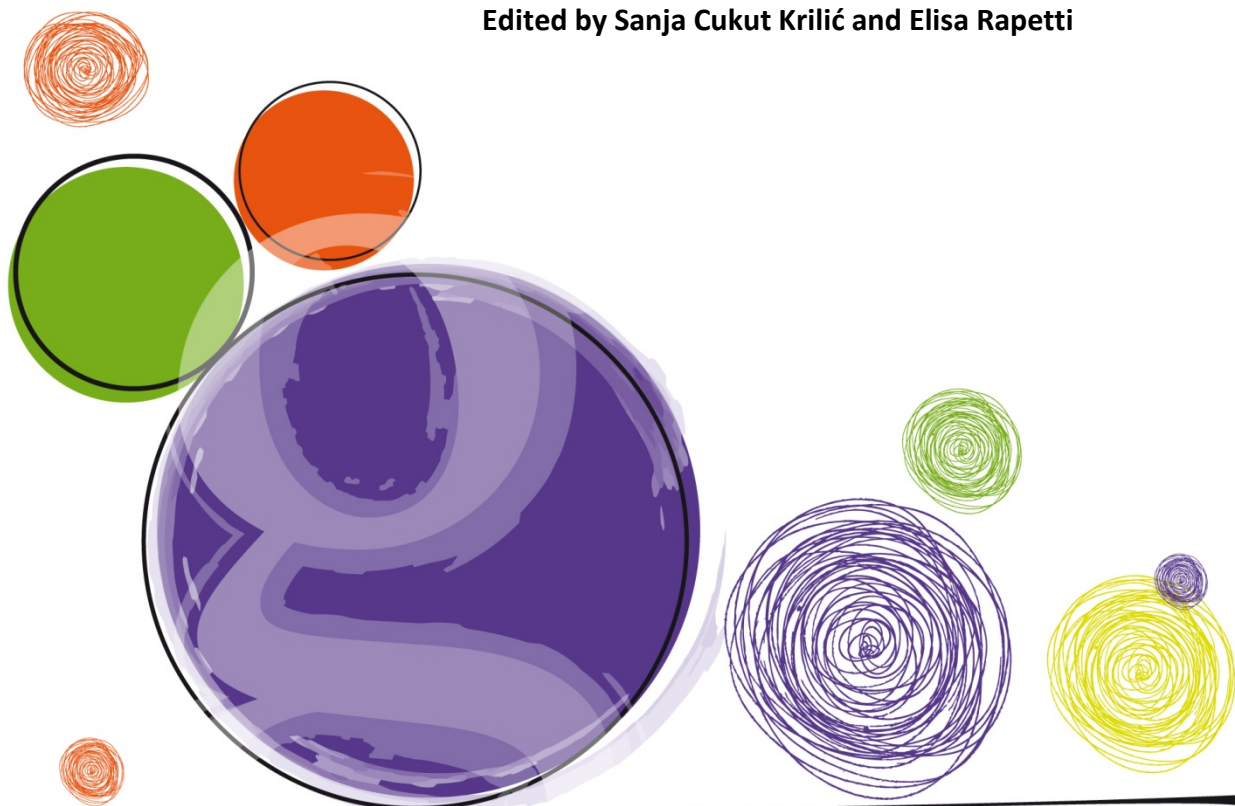**GARCIA WORKING PAPERS**   4

Mapping organisational work-life policies and practices

Edited by Sanja Cukut Krilić and Elisa Rapetti

GARCIA is an EU-Framework 7 funded project under topic SiS.2013.2.1.1-1 "Supporting changes in the organisation of research institutions to promote Gender Equality"
Grant agreement n. 611737 • Project coordinator:University of Trento • Homepage: www.garciaproject.eu

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SLOVENSKE AKADEMIJE ZNANOSTI IN UMETNOSTI

JOANNEUM RESEARCH POLICIES

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is twofold: first, mapping the existing work/life balance policies and programs available in each Garcia beneficiary institutions and universities. Second, pointing out the specific experiences and needs of conciliations expressed by researchers with a temporary position.

The focus are programs and policies designed to help researchers and the scientific personnel of each Garcia institution to balance the responsibilities of their professional and personal lives across various life stages and events such as pregnancy, childbirth, marriage/cohabitation, career/job change, continuous professional development or alternatively illness, stress and anxiety or disability. Particular attention has been paid to the availability of these policies in relation to the nature of the employment contract, e.g. temporary, tenure track or permanent.

Each national chapter is structured in three main parts.

The first part provides an overview of the work-life balance legislative framework and of the policies within universities/research institutions at national level.

The second part describes the work-life balance policies available in the Garcia institutions focusing on programs, provisions, services for researchers, with particular attention on the early stages of scientific career and on temporary positions. At organisational level, the map of different existing work-life balance policies and programs focuses on:

- maternity/paternity/parental leave and management of career breaks;
- flexible forms of work (e.g. part-time, working from home, flexi-time and compressed week);
- supports for care, childcare or elder care (e.g. the presence of services such as kindergarten or on-site childcare, financial support for childcare elsewhere, support for carers of adults);
- supports for personal health and wellbeing (e.g. counselling, courses on stress management, time management, etc.).

These two first parts were carried out both by desk-analysis of national and local laws, university regulations and documents, and information gathered through interviews and conversations with university personnel and experts.

The third part outlines the experiences and needs of temporary researchers related to work-life balance and it is based on the interviews realised with assistant professors and postdocs who work, currently or in the past, in the STEM and SSH departments of the GARCIA institutions. Each GARCIA beneficiaries have carried out the interviews from November 2014 to March 2015.

The comparison among the policies and practices on work/life balance gives the opportunity to point out the good practices at national level and promote a mutual improvement in the different contexts. In the meantime, gathering the experiences and needs of temporary researchers at early stage career provides a useful overview of the changes occurring in academia and the service that should be planned.

1. ITALY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the existing work/life balance (WLB) policies and practices in the Italian universities and focuses in particular on the implemented policies and future actions of the University of Trento. The interventions considered are addressed to the different components of the university community: students, administrative staff, academic staff with permanent contracts, and academic staff at early career stages with temporary contracts (PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers and fixed-term assistant professor). In the last part of the report the analysis focuses on the interviews conducted with researchers without a tenure track position in order to show their work conditions, WLB, and the needs.

Before describing the desk-analysis on the WLB policies ongoing in Italian universities, it is important to underline the main differences, in terms of work organisation, among the university community's components.

The administrative staff is characterized by a stable presence in the workplace and by a regularly scheduled administrative workweek controlled by a time registration system (clocking in and out). Therefore, in terms of WLB, the principal flexibility policies regard the possibility to access teleworking.

Members of the academic staff, with both permanent and temporary contracts, do not have a regular scheduled workday; they only have to guarantee their presence at the University for institutional meetings and teaching activities. However, in regard to postdoc fellows, it should be highlighted that they are hired on specific projects; and their substitution is not foreseen should they need to take leave for sickness, maternity or other personal/family reasons.

The above-mentioned features of the university community's components highlight the different needs that the university management should take into account in order to plan WLB policies.

A desk analysis of work/life balance policies and practices within Italian universities

The desk analysis of WLB policies in Italian universities was developed in two stages:

1. collection and analysis of the work/life balance actions described in the Affirmative Action Plans (AAPs). Among the 66 public Italian universities, 31 have approved and uploaded the AAP on their websites; 35 universities do not have an AAP approved or available on their websites. Some universities do not have an AAP, but they adopt various WLB policies.[1]

2. identification of the more common practices and the most innovative actions.

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[1] See Appendix 1 for details. Seventeen of the AAPs available on the Web are of universities in the North of Italy, 9 of universities in the Centre, and 5 of universities in the South and Islands.

The Affirmative Action Plan is a mandatory document for public institutions. It was introduced by art. 6 of Legislative Decree n. 198/2006 (Equal Opportunity Code), and by art. 48 of the Parliamentary Decree n. 246/2005.

At universities, the Supervisory Committee (former Equal Opportunities Committee) usually draws up the document in collaboration with the Rector's Delegate for Equal Opportunities and, if present, the university's research centres on *gender issues*. The Board of Directors approves and issues the AAP. The Supervisory Committee was introduced by art. 21 of Law 183/2010. This body replaced two different committees in their duties and functions: the Equal Opportunities Committee and the Anti-Harassment Committee. This change occurred at the same time as the Gelmini Reform; for this reason, the election of this new body was delayed. Several universities have nominated the Committee members in the past year and have not yet approved the AAP.

Examination of the AAPs of Italian universities revealed different strategies to promote equal opportunities. The main and the most widespread were: i) awareness-raising and educational initiatives to promote the culture of equal opportunities between men and women addressed to the academic community and local stakeholders; ii) data collection and promotion of organisational well-being; iii) work/life balance policies; iv) overcoming gender asymmetries in career and study paths, and in representation on governing bodies.

The following description of the common and innovative policies on WLB does not include those of the University of Trento (UNITN) because they will be described in detail in the next section.

Common policies

Among the WLB policies, it is possible to identify the three most common areas of intervention and actions developed at the Italian universities. They are:

1. Childcare services

    - University nursery.

    - Home-based/babysitting, baby parking and toy-library.

    - Summer camp.

These services are mainly addressed to administrative and academic staff with permanent contracts, but more and more universities are extending them to students, PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers (e.g. University of Rome Tre; University of Pisa; University of Padua and Polytechnic of Milan).

Moreover, there are some experimental projects of day nurseries and home-based babysitting involving students on education degree courses as babysitters and nursery staff through internships and scholarships (University of Rome Tre and University of Padua).

2. Economic support and subsidies

    - Maternity/ paternity and parental leave.

    - Nursery voucher scheme (agreements with public or private institutions and organisations).

    - Agreements, vouchers and discounts for services to employees caring for disabled or elderly relatives.

Parental, maternity and paternity leave is regulated by national laws, according to the type of work contract: dependent (permanent or temporary), autonomous or freelance. As said in the Garcia working paper n. 1 (Bozzon et al., 2015, pp. 17-18), "in terms of maternity leave entitlements, the Italian system is well designed for dependent employment: the leave duration is neither too short, neither too long and it is also relatively generous: 100% in the public sector and 80% in the private sector for five months. Much less generous benefits are foreseen for parental leaves (Murgia and Poggio 2009, 2013), which are paid at 30% of the parent's salary and unpaid if the child is aged 3-8 years old. Parents may be absent from work, even simultaneously, for a period of six months each (continuously or piecemeal) up to a maximum of ten months. But if the father takes leave of absence for a continuous period amounting to more than 3 months, the 6-month limit is extended to 7, and the total amount of leave entitlement for the two parents becomes 11 months. The administrative data (INPS) show that on average 88% of the time of parental leaves is taken up by women, and that each mother takes up 18 weeks of parental leave in the first three years of the child (Mundo 2012, in EP 2014: 27). In order to (symbolically) increase the involvement of fathers, the Fornero Reform (L. 92/2012) introduced a pilot compulsory paternity leave of one day at full salary, plus two optional extra days subtracted from the mother's mandatory leave".

The administrative and academic staff members with permanent (and consequently dependent) contracts benefit from this regulation; instead, so-called 'atypical' staff members such as postdoctoral researchers have very little protection. They have access to the compulsory maternity leave of 5 months paid at 80% by the National Social Insurance Agency (INPS). During this time, the work contract is suspended and the researcher can resume it after the maternity leave. Moreover, they have access to the parental leave of 3 months (which must be used within the child's first year of age). However, it should stressed that for PhD candidates and postdocs employed with external funds coming from projects or private companies – that is to say, in most cases – the costs are allocated, in large part, to the project's funds, and their replacement during the period of absence is not possible. This can have a significant effect on hiring practices, especially for women, and it can become pressure not to request maternity or parental leave. To limit these risks, some universities (e.g. University of Pisa, University of Turin, University of Parma and Polytechnic of Milan) have introduced special benefits for maternity leave. Furthermore, some universities (e.g. University of Bologna) supplement the payment of 80% of the 5-month compulsory maternity leave for postdoctoral researchers, but in the most cases this information is not reported in the AAP. Moreover, some other universities – for instance, the University of Trieste – focus on the possible discriminations that may affect the employee after the sick, parental, maternity and paternity leave, and they propose that these periods should be considered in internal evaluations of productivity performance.

3. Flexible working hours and distance work

- Part-time.
- Telework.

The part-time scheme and telework are two of the main policies implemented in order to meet the needs of the administrative staff, with regular workday schedules, to reconcile work and other life spheres. These are usually chosen more by women than men because of the gender asymmetries that still persist in family responsibilities. According to the national public sector contracts, universities have introduced or are developing different

kinds of flexible working hours arrangements: split shifts, one hour of flexibility at the beginning and end of the work day, and flexible lunch breaks, from a minimum of half an hour to a maximum of two hours. The University of Milano-Bicocca explicitly specifies these policies in its AAP. However, it should be stressed that several studies (e.g. Poggio, Murgia, De Bon, 2010) show that part-time and telework have a negative impact in the Italian context on the promotion/career opportunities of university employees (as mentioned, they are usually women).

As the list of common policies showed, at Italian universities, WLB policies are mainly translated into work/family policies. The focus is principally on the care responsibilities of women and men as parents; and, in general, free time, training and learning, leisure and personal or familial health conditions are not taken into account as WLB issues.

Innovative policies

The most innovative policies developed by the Italian universities concern mental health issues, childcare supplies and equipment.

The mental health services include:

1. Counselling services

Some universities have introduced counselling services in order to help employees with personal problems (e.g. affective, relational and behavioural); those who return to work after a long period of absence (parental, paternity, maternity, sick leave); those experiencing particular and temporary crises and hardships in the workplace. Experts deliver the counselling services in order to help the employees find the proper strategy to overcome their problems (e g. individual psychological sessions – face-to-face or by email and phone – accompaniment programmes). These services also include counselling sessions before the maternity and paternity choice. Services of this kind have been included in the AAPs of the University of the Marche, the University of Turin and the Polytechnic of Milan.

2. Well-being

In its most recent AAP (2014-2016), the University of Trieste has included as a WLB policy lessons and courses addressed to all the university community (administrative and academic staff with permanent or temporary contracts and students) on *good posture* in order to prevent health problems, and *yoga*. The action has not yet been implemented: only the study of logistical and economic aspects has been planned.

Several interesting policies have been introduced by some universities. They are:

3. Creation of diaper-changing areas and breastfeeding areas (Polytechnic of Milan and University of Molise).

4. "Welcome kids into the workplace" or "Kids in the office with mum and dad": during a workday, children visit the workplaces of their parents (University of Ferrara, University of Trieste and University of Udine).

5. Summer camp or training schemes (music, foreign languages or sports activities) addressed to employees' teenage children (University of Urbino).

6. Information and awareness campaign addressed to father-employees about the sharing of childcare responsibilities and the right to parental and paternity leave (University of Brescia).

7. Economic contribution to enable non-EU PhD students to return home during the third or fourth year of the course: the Doctorate School provides a refund of up to € 500 (International School for Advanced Studies of Trieste).

8. Carpooling: this is a method of transport based on the sharing of private cars by groups of people in order to reduce transport costs and pollution emissions (University of Urbino).

1.2. THE WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO (UNITN)

The Board of Directors of the University of Trento approved the Affirmative Action Plan on February 2014. As mentioned in a Garcia working paper on gender biases in management methods and decision-making (Rapetti et al., forthcoming 2015) the AAP includes 6 general goals, 4 axes of the intervention and 12 crosswise actions to promote equal opportunities, structural change, organisational well-being, and dialogue with the local community.

The 6 general goals are:

1. Promoting equal opportunities in terms of access and career advancement of all university employees, without distinctions on the basis of gender, religion and personal belief, race and ethnicity, disability, age or sexual orientation.

2. Overcoming asymmetries between women and men in terms of representation and responsibilities in governance bodies and decision-making processes.

3. Promoting a work/life balance policy addressed to the entire academic community (students, administrative staff and academic staff – with permanent and temporary contracts).

4. Promoting organisational well-being and combating discrimination, bullying and harassment.

5. Promoting the consideration of gender dimension in assessment of excellence, in both research and teaching.

6.   Making the University of Trento a standard setter on equal opportunities, substantive equity and integration of the gender perspective into teaching and research at local, national and international level.

The 4 axes of intervention are:

1. Data monitoring.

2. Removing asymmetries (introduction of equal opportunities and gender policies in human resources management and academic careers).

3. Training and awareness-raising actions

4. Dissemination of the Affirmative Actions Plan's results inside and outside the university.

Work/life balance policy in the AAP of the University of Trento

Two specific actions of the AAP are relevant to WLB policies.

1. Positive parenting policy.

This policy comprises several actions that will be implemented during the triennium (2014-2016) of the AAP's application.

The day nursery, opened in 2006, is a service for all the employees of the University. Postdoctoral fellows and PhD candidates are covered by the service; but academic and administrative employees, i.e. staff with dependent contracts, have priority on the waiting list. Initially, the nursery had places for 20 children; now it can take 30. The parents can choose a full-time service (8.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.) or a part-time one (8.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.); moreover, they can ask for an extension until 7.00 p.m.

The description of the activity stresses the innovativeness of the pedagogical model and stresses the importance of constructing good relations among the nursery staff, the children, and the parents. The purpose of the project is to use and enhance the university's internal resources. The cost of the service is calculated on the basis of the family's economic circumstances: the maximum monthly fee is fixed at 380,00 euros for a full-time service and 266,00 euros for a part-time one. Each academic year, employees access the service through a ranking list drawn up according to the state of health (disabled children or parents obtain higher scores), family composition (one-parent family or presence of brothers and sisters have higher scores); working time of parents (full-time workers have higher scores) and economic situation (lower-income families have higher scores).

The score associated with the working time of parents differs according to the work contract of each parent. The score for employees (administrative and academic staff) with permanent contracts working full-time is 5 points. The score for administrative staff working part-time from 19 to 24 hours per week, of postdoctoral researchers and PhD candidates, is 3 points. The score for administrative staff with part-time schedules of 18 hours per week, and of part-time academic staff, is 2 points. This method of classifying work contracts has negative consequences on access to the service by researchers in the early stages of their careers – postdocs and PhDs – who are considered to be part-time workers.

The "Spazio genitori-bimbi (Parents-children area)" is a service for all the University's employees (not admitted to the day nursery) that gives parents the opportunity to spend some hours with their children (once or twice a week) and improve the parent/child relationship in a proper location with qualified staff. The service is available from 3 to 6 p.m. and costs 10 euros per session.

The Cuscamp Multisport and Cuscamp Nautico are two programmes created by the University Sports Centre targeted on primary and secondary-school children, offering them opportunities to engage in sports activities at the Multisport Centre of the University of Trento. The services start on 15 June and finish at the end of August. The camp is organized on a weekly basis (Monday-Friday); the activities start at 7.45 a.m. and finish at 6.00 p.m. This service is available to the entire university community (and also to other research institutes). Those wishing to use the service must pay an enrolment fee to the UNI.SPORT (20€ for students, 30€ for employees of UNITN and 40€ for employees of other research

institutes). The fee is set from 85 € to 150 € per week (the amount depends on the kind of service, not on the user's characteristics).

As described in the previous section, maternity, paternity and parental leaves are regulated by national laws according to the type of contract. The UNITN supplements to 100% the payment of 80% of the 5-month compulsory maternity leave for postdoctoral researchers. This economic integration is paid directly by the University if the fellowship is funded by internal funds, and by funding of the project on which the postdoctoral fellow is hired if s/he is paid – as in the vast majority of cases – with resources external to the University.

Besides the above services the AAP foresees the introduction of other initiatives in order to improve the WLB of parents.

- Introduction of a *specific service addressed to students* with children of pre-school age.

- The introduction of specific solutions for *employees that work in university buildings distant* from the day nursery.

- Identification of services and economic support and subsidies, such as for example, the opportunity for students to pay their university fees in instalments, and the creation of breastfeeding areas.

- Integration of the existing childcare services, such as '*emergency' babysitting and the toy-library*, in order to facilitate the participation of parents in occasional events (conferences, teaching activities, or overtime).

- Integration of the existing summer camp through the establishment of external organisation in order to extend the service offer.

Finally to be mentioned is another new policy, even if it is not part of the AAP. Starting from 2015, the UNITN has a *carpooling* service, an experimental collaboration with *Inno.vìe*. This is a company, based in Rovereto (a town near Trento), which deals with innovative mobility solutions regarding people transport. The aim of the project is to support the use of this innovative mobility system so that users can respect the environment (reduction of traffic due to commuting, decongestion of the parking lots around the University, CO_2 emission reduction, lower number of vehicles, etc.) and save money, increasing the sense of belonging to the University.

2. Family Audit Certification

In 2008, the Autonomous Province of Trento (through its Agency for Family, Fertility and Youth Policies) initiated the Family Audit Certification (FAC). This project started in 2012, following national pilot schemes. The family audit is based on a well-developed methodology. A working group is set up with the organisation, which is advised by an external consultant. After carrying out an audit, each organisation develops a three-year Family Work/Life Balance Plan listing actions that the organisation plans to take in six areas: work organisation, work/family balance culture, communication, fringe benefits and

services, family district, new technologies. An external evaluator monitors its implementation.[2]

The University of Trento is the first and only Italian university to have started the process to obtain the FAC. The analysis phase was completed in January 2015, and the three-year action plan has been developed.[3]

When the organisation starts the FAC process, it obtains the "base certificate"; and after three years, if the defined plan of actions has been implemented, it obtains the "final certificate". This latter lasts three years; after that period, a new FAC certification process begins.

The work/life balance plan of UNITN is arranged under six headings divided into 11 topics:

A. Work organisation: 6 actions

1. Elaboration of the Guidelines on working hours scheduling.

Elaboration of a document in order to share the good WLB practices ongoing in the different units of the University. This has a twofold objective: to guarantee the operation of services, and to meet the personal needs of employees. The time scheduling flexibility is mainly addressed to administrative staff. The principal existing policies for them at UNITN are *teleworking*[4] and *part time*[5]. The 2014-2016 Performance Plan also includes teleworking among strategies for work flexibility (e.g. shift work, customized schedules, improvement of teamwork, on-call service).

2. Flexibility of working hours scheduling.

a. The action addressed to the administrative staff includes the introduction of an "hours bank" that employees can use to leave the workplace in the case of emergencies or specific needs. The working hours spent out of the office are gradually recouped.

b. The academic staff does not have fixed working hours; but the action targeted on employees with permanent contracts promotes consideration of the family and personal needs in the organisation of lessons and the scheduling of departmental activities.[6] Moreover, this action includes identification of gender asymmetries in terms of teaching, research and organizational workloads and, if they exist, seeks solutions to improve the situation. Postdoctoral researchers (and researchers on temporary contracts) are not included in actions of this kind.

3. Creation of a toolkit (tool box) for university managers in order to promote: a tutorship programme between "senior and junior" members of the administrative

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[2] http://www.trentino.familyaudit.org/?q=system/files/IT_Family%20Audit_final_EIGE.pdf

[3] The GARCIA team collaborated with the FAC team in the analysis phase and had the opportunity to point out the specific needs of researchers with temporary posts.

[4] Teleworking is a method of organising and performing work using information technology which enables employees to carry out their duties outside the regular workplace.

[5] The full-time schedule consists of 36 work hours a week (5 days), and the part-time schedule varies among 30, 24, 18 and 12 hours a week.

[6] For example, the DSRS (SSH) decided to schedule all institutional activities in the mornings. Instead, at the DISI (STEM), Council Board meetings are scheduled at 4.00 p.m.

staff (better workload distribution and effective substitution); welcome programme for visiting professors, postdoctoral researchers and new employees; dissemination of an information brochure on the regulation and rights of employees.

4. The "Welcome back" programme developed by the Equal Opportunities Committee plans a counselling service to ensure the good integration of employees returning to work after a long period of absence (e.g. parental, maternity, paternity, sick leave).

5. Evaluation and Careers. The action promotes consideration in evaluation and recruitment processes of gender and WLB issues in terms of: gender balance and role composition of evaluation/recruitment committees; definition of curriculum vitae standard/excellence; career advancement taking account of long periods of absence from the workplace; re-evaluation and enhancement of the activities carried out by academic staff and their skills and expertise. These aspects must also be taken into account in regard to research staff on temporary contracts.

6. Support the development and improvement of teleworking.

B. Work/family balance culture: 6 actions to be implemented in the next three years:

7. Training programmes and awareness-raising campaigns on WLB issues addressed to managers working in the Human Resources Area.

8. Organisation of a meeting with the Board of the Directors of Departments in order to explain the Family Audit plan and to identify the possible actions to develop in each department.

9. Training programmes and awareness-raising campaigns addressed to administrative staff for the promotion of a shared and more widespread WLB culture. Specifically, these programmes focus on WLB policies and actions, on the consequences of these policies (e.g. the effect of part time on retirement conditions), and on negotiation among colleagues to access WLB instruments considering individual and team (office) needs.

10. Monitoring the impact of the WLB policies introduced by the Family Audit. The action includes the administration of a questionnaire (every three years) to all university employees (with permanent and non-permanent contracts).

11. Conduct of a study on the organisational well-being of the academic staff, including researchers with non-permanent posts.

12. Definition of the duties and functions of the Supervisory Committee relating to the WLB policies and the Family Audit Plan (e.g. monitoring, dissemination and promotion).

C. Communication: 2 actions

13. Creation of a web page for the Family Audit Certification on the university website in order to disseminate information about the goals and the actions planned and implemented addressed to both internal and external audiences.

14. Organisation of a biennial event, called "Families Day"[7], in order to promote the participation of employees and their families in an occasion of community sharing.

D. Fringe benefits and services: 5 actions

15. Promotion of 'organizational citizenship': conduct of a feasibility study to evaluate whether WLB policies should be extended to research staff with non-permanent contracts.

16. Conduct of a study in order to evaluate the feasibility of introducing everyday life services. The analysis should include: estate agents (for visiting professors, foreign and postdoctoral researchers); a list of baby sitters and child minders, etc.

17. Conduct of a study in order to evaluate the feasibility of activating summer camps and training activities (foreign languages and workshops) for employees' children from pre-school to high-school age.

18. Conduct of a study in order to evaluate the feasibility of establishing or expanding the special agreements with private and public organisations for the supply goods and services for the administrative and academic staff, with both permanent and non-permanent contracts (in Trento and Rovereto).

19. Counselling service for parents with children of pre-school age.

Family district: 3 actions

20. Evaluation of whether to adhere to the Family District of the City of Trento.

21. Corporate social responsibility. Integration of the Family Audit goals into the Performance Plan.

22. Elaboration of a yearly monitoring report on the actions implemented and their results and impacts.

New technologies: 2 actions

23. Development of a "Work/life balance App" with two objectives: to test the knowledge of managers about WLB issues and policies, and to inform administrative and academic staff about the WLB instruments and services.

24. Promotion of the exchange of experiences and information among local stakeholders (organisations and institutions) in order to encourage the development of specific technologies to facilitate the WLB (e.g. cloud services, online badge, webcam of the canteen, etc.)

1.3. EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF TEMPORARY RESEARCHERS

Introduction

The analysis is based on 41 interviews with temporary researchers: 8 with fixed-term assistant professors, and 33 with postdoc fellows currently working, or who had worked in the past (from 01.01.2010 to 01.01.2014), at the Department of Information Engineering

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[7] This initiative took place in the past years and will be reintroduced in the framework of Family Audit actions.

and Computer Science (DISI –STEM) and at the Department of Sociology and Social Research (DSRS - SSH). Tables 1.1 and 1.2 set out the main characteristics of the interviewees included in the analysis.

Table 1.1 shows in detail the position of the interviewees who were working at the DISI and DSRS departments at the time of the interviews (September 2014-March 2015) and of the interviewees who worked there as postdocs from January 2010 to January 2014 (indicated here as ex-DISI and ex-DSRS). This information is relevant to the analysis presented because is strictly connected to the perception of the instability/stability of the job and the level reached in the academic career.

Table 1.1 Interviewees by relationship with institution, gender, and department

Interviewees	M	F	Total
DISI (total temporary researchers)	6	4	10
DISI FTAP*	3	1	4
DISI postdocs	3	3	6
Ex-DISI postdocs	6	5	11
DSRS (total temporary researchers)	5	4	9
DSRS FTAP*	2	2	3
DSRS postdocs	3	2	5
Total (DISI + DSRS)	20	21	41

*Fixed-term assistant professors

Table 1.2 shows in detail the characteristics of the researchers who were parents (or who were about to become parents). In particular: among the researchers working at DISI only men had children, and all of them were FTAPs; no women interviewees had children. These specific data are interesting because they are directly connected with the work/life balance issue in that they focus on the relationship between the maternity/paternity choice and the academic career.

Table 1.2 Interviewees by parenthood, gender, and department

Interviewees DISI	M		F		Total
	POSTDOC	**FTAP**	**POSTDOC**	**FTAP**	
DISI with children	1	2 + 1 expecting first child	0	0	4
DISI without children	2	0	3	1	6
Interviewees ex-DISI	**M**		**F**		**Total**
ex-DISI with children	1 expecting first child		1		2
ex-DISI without children	5		4		9
Interviewees DSRS	**M**		**F**		**Total**
	POSTDOC	**FTAP**	**POSTDOC**	**FTAP**	
DSRS with children	1	2	0	1	4
DSRS without children	2	0	2	1	5
Interviewees ex-DSRS	**M**		**F**		**Total**
ex-DSRS with children	0		4		4
ex-DSRS without children	3		4		7
Total	**20**		**21**		**41**

Temporary researchers at DISI

Working hours and workplace: autonomy, flexibility and self-obligation

The DISI researchers said that the typical work day was eight hours long (from 9 a.m. to 6 a.m.) and, often, when necessary they worked during the evenings and/or at weekends. These extra hours of work were usually dedicated to meeting deadlines and to writing papers or project proposals.

The majority of the interviewees stated that they could manage their workday as they preferred. They emphasised their autonomy in deciding the time and place of work – "*it's up to you*" – and this had positive and negative aspects in terms of WLB. On the one hand, the researchers were able to plan their work by themselves and manage work and personal tasks freely. On the other hand, not having fixed working hours meant never stopping work and being available around the clock. For example, they checked their emails during evenings, weekends and holidays.

> "The downside of working at university is that there are no fixed working hours. This makes people feel forced to work around the clock, without ever disconnecting" [ex-DISI, woman, 35 years old].

Some interviewees, in particular the fixed-term assistant professors who were also fathers, stressed that they worked at the department in the morning and then went home in the afternoon. They did not perceive the DISI as a stressful environment: they had some activities with their research group, like meetings or teaching activities, but no other constraints. The most important thing was respecting deadlines.

Instead, the large majority of the women interviewees described the DISI as a stressful and competitive work environment. Some of the women researchers (one postdoc and one fixed-term assistant professor) perceived the need to be present in department because

"*there are often impromptu meetings*" and because it was important that colleagues knew that they were working, even though the contract does not stipulate working at the university.

Also evident in the answers of female researchers was the difficulty of separating the work sphere from the personal one; in fact, they highlighted the need to be passionate about their jobs and devoted to them.

The majority of the interviewees, both men and women, described the PhD period as the most stressful and gruelling. After that period, they stated, the research work alternated between very intensive work periods and more relaxed ones.

Work/Life Balance: relationships and parental status

The WLB issue emerged in different ways between women and men on the basis of their position in the academic career structure (postdocs, fixed-term assistant professors), their relationship (if they were single or in a couple), and parental status (whether or not they had children).

It is interesting to note the differences in the relationship status between the women and men researchers interviewed; in fact, 5 women out 9 were single, but only 2 men out 12 were so.[8] The only woman interviewee who was also a mother was currently working as a researcher in a foreign country. The male interviewees who had children were two fixed-term assistant professors and one postdoc. Moreover, one fixed-term assistant professor working at the DISI, and one ex-DISI currently a lecturer at another university, were expecting their first child at the time of the interview.

According to the majority of the interviewees' stories collected, WLB was not a significant issue in terms of everyday life organisation; the interviewees did not express particular complaints. The single men interviewed said they had good social lives and engaged in leisure activities, such as sport or going out with friends. The single female interviewees did not complain about their WLB, even if most of them said that they did not have extra-work engagements such as sport, political, cultural or leisure activities. It seems that they accepted not having free time during the week and considered it sufficient to have the weekend off. They were aware that matters would be different with children because their needs in everyday organisation would change:

> "Now I'm fully devoted to research, but when the time comes, we'll see…" [DISI, woman, 31 years old].

The influence of work on private life emerged from the answers of the women interviewees when they talked about their relationships with partners or friends. The long working hours and the pressure of the work did not allow them to spend their free time like people with different jobs could. Some interviewees said that they had few friends, or that they did not spent a lot of time with their friends because of the workload. In some cases, they also had problems with their partners because of the working time, mobility periods (working abroad and participation in conferences), and *geographical* instability (frequent changes of workplace in different cities or countries).

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[8] See the details on relationship and parental status in Appendix 2 – Table 1.

Among male interviewees, only those in distance relationships said that it was not so easy to balance the work and the personal spheres, but they were looking for a solution with their partner and trying to get a job in the same city.

The woman researcher with a child stressed the change in her way of work after her child's birth in terms of working hours – e.g. she was too tired to work during the evenings – and her concentration.

> "I don't feel really good, I don't feel I work enough, and anyway I work in a different way from how I worked before. And I'm sure this won't be the same anymore". [ex-DISI, woman, 29 years old]

The interviewees who were fathers stated that they managed their work and family duties thanks to better organisation and changes in their work time: for example, working less during the weekends.

> "My son is turning four years old, so what happens is that I take him to the kindergarten in the morning and I come here. Then after lunch I can normally stay even until 15.00. I pick him up from school at 16.30 and then I go home with him for the rest of the afternoon. This is how I take care of both the children and the work, at home; this is what they call – in America – the supermom or *superdad*. My wife works but she has this time off work. I do think I have a good balance, because my family doesn't complain much that I'm not there for them or whatever. I try to play, I try to read, I try to do activities with my son and with my family in general. So yes, up to now – at least – I don't have any complaints". [DISI, man, 36 years old].

Mobility: international experiences, conferences and visiting periods

The interviewees considered participation in conferences and project meetings as part of their jobs, and as important opportunities for career construction. The research group or the department covered the travel expenses for conference participation. The postdoctoral researchers said that, in the majority of cases, they could participate in conferences if they presented a paper whose topic was connected to the project on which they were working. The fixed-term assistant professors had personal funds and could freely decide to attend conferences.

One interviewee said that postdocs, due to their professional degree, should have more autonomy and have their own travel funds – e.g. 1,000 euros a year – as at others European universities. At the moment, in fact, they did not have mobility funds that they could use for conferences.

In regard to international mobility, the women and men interviewed had different experiences, opinions and feelings.

Among the male researchers, all the interviewees except one participated in several conferences per year, and some of them (two people) also had visiting periods. Geographical instability did not emerge as a significant issue. The father-researchers continued to travel also after the births of their children:

> "for the moment it has never happened that I've had to stay less only because I have a family. It has never affected me" [DISI, man, 36 years old].

They did not mention problems about geographical instability, and they seem to be more settled in Trento, even if they did not exclude, if necessary, moving to other countries in the future.

Instead, for the majority of the women researchers the frequent changes of workplaces and countries emerged as problems in their answers: work experience abroad was an important element in the past, and/or of the present and/or of the future of the interviewees' career paths. They explained that geographical instability was a motivating and stimulating aspect of their jobs; but after many experiences they would prefer to find somewhere to settle down and no longer be a *stranger*.

> "Now I have to face a new change in my life and I am forced to leave my country and start all over again: new job, new friends, new everything. At 36 years old maybe I would prefer not to do so, if I had the chance I would be very happy to live here in Trento, but since there has not been this chance ... we'll leave and go to England" [DISI, woman, 36 years old].

Future: work, personal and family sphere

Planning the future was the most difficult aspect that emerged from the stories of the interviewees, above all for the postdoctoral researchers. In fact, the main concerns regarded academic posts (postdocs and fixed-term assistant professor) and the relationship status. Personal and family choices for postdocs, both men and women, depended on the chances of finding a more stable job, obtaining the National Scientific Qualification (necessary to obtain a position as associate professor) and identifying a city where to construct their futures. These interviewees seem to be trapped in the present and could not think about the future because of work instability:

> "I've stopped thinking about the future, it's better to focus on the present" [DISI, woman, 37 years old].

The majority of the single interviewees said that they could not clearly imagine their future family life.

The interviewees in stable relationships said that the decisions to buy a house and have children had been postponed because of the uncertainty of work. Those who had distance relationships were more worried about the possibility of starting to live together without both partners renouncing their careers and realisation.

The female researchers stated that their main worries concerned the future of the professional sphere, with particular regard to the ability to maintain the present workload, to deal with the high level of competitiveness, and to acquire more autonomy.

The interviewees who expressed the desire to become mothers (one postdoc, one fixed-term assistant professor, and one "ex-DISI") were well aware of the difficulties of achieving a work-life balance; they knew that it would be a challenge, but they did not want to renounce having a family. They thought it would be necessary to organise everyday life better and redefine their priorities. They did not have clear ideas about the work/life balance requirements; they generally referred to childcare services, such as nurseries and financial support.

The "ex-DISI" who was also a mother and now lived in another country, explained in details the difficulty of returning to work after maternity leave. She complained about the brevity of the leave (three months), saying that until the baby was six months old she had taken several breaks during the day in order to breastfeed him, and that her way of working had completely changed; she could not concentrate on work as she had done before becoming a mother.

The male interviewees with children, or expecting their first child, focused on achieving a permanent contract or a career promotion. They did not appear to be stressed by this situation and were confident about career advancement. In regard to personal and family life, they planned to remain in Trento in the short and medium period, while transfer to a foreign country was a remote possibility.

> "My partner is pregnant, so I don't think I'll move to a foreign country in the near future. I don't necessarily expect to live all my life in Trento – my partner and me, we are both at university, so finding a job in another country is not difficult – but in the short or medium term I think we will stay here" [DISI, man, 39 years old].

Policies and services

The women interviewed underlined their stress and anxiety due to the workload, uncertainty about the future, and the difficulty of achieving a work/life balance.

> "I take everything seriously so I'm easily stressed. So it's not easy to have a balance between work life and social life, even without a baby, even now. It's not easy. So my boyfriend is always complaining; he's trying to get used to it, but he's really had a problem accepting this" [DISI, woman, FTAP, 31 years old].

The men interviewees also suffered from these conditions but they did not focus particular attention on the situation.

This seems to emerge from a different perception of the characteristics of the DISI environment. As said above, more women researchers underlined the high level of competition and pressure in order to advance in the career.

Moreover, two "ex-DISI" women complained about the ambiguity of the work contract of postdoctoral fellows – "you don't have duties and rights" – they stated – since "a postdoc does not have rights to sickness leave and holidays, and the possibility to stay at home is like a favour granted by your supervisor".

The interviewees pointed out that certain services were necessary to improve the lives of temporary researchers. They suggested introducing social insurance for researchers with temporary contracts, and PhD candidates, and improving the pension provision of postdoctoral fellows. They thought it important to recognize that postdocs have jobs instead of scholarships. Some others thought that the Province of Trento should introduce specific benefits for researchers because they contribute to the well-being and progress of the province;

> "[…] maybe special things targeted on researchers or on people that are already working and let's say providing some sort of growth to the region. The people that are working and producing things, and maybe you want to keep them…" [DISI, man, 36 years old].

In regard to parenthood, on comparing DISI with the new workplace (a university in a foreign country), a male researcher proposed a *counselling service – It would be useful to have somebody in place to meet regularly just to find out how people are doing and if there's anything they could benefit from* [ex-DISI, man, 40 years old] – and asked for paternity leave for postdocs as well.

The foreign researchers were assisted by the "Welcome Office" of the university when they arrived in Trento, and they received help in finding an apartment and with formal documents to complete for the provincial administration and police headquarters. Some of

them benefited from economic contributions to apartment rents during their PhD degree courses[9] and health insurance.

Researchers from a foreign country suggest creating an information point or brochures about the obligations and rights (laws) of the work contract, taxes, and pension provision. Furthermore, one of the male postdocs stressed the importance of more support to their families in terms of social integration – specifically advice on the local labour market.

Finally, in regard to parenthood, none of the male interviewees with children had used the university nursery service, either because they had not been admitted to the service or because other solutions were preferred – e.g. a nursery closer to home.

Gender issues

Two "ex-DISI" female interviewees, both still in academic careers, and two male fixed-term assistant professors, expressed opinions on being a woman in a male career and discipline. One of them explicitly referred to the existence of discrimination against women:

> "Generally speaking, I think that a woman has more difficulties in this research sector. With or without children, women have more difficulties. Maybe also because in our field.. there are prejudices...I don't know, and there are no specific policies...For example, it could be useful to set a gender quota: in a department you must have women, you have to ensure a certain number or a percentage of women – I don't know what I would do – it is not possible that there are only men. And I think something would change... "[ex-DISI, man, 36 years old].

Concerning the relationship status, several women complained about the difficulty of constructing a symmetrical relation with a man:

> "I've noticed that women who are autonomous and are following their path alone, without help, have more difficulties [...] a woman who works in a technical field... well, maybe men are afraid of an independent woman - I don't know how to put it – maybe she adopts male forms of behaviour because she's always in that environment" [ex-DISI, woman, 36 years old].

Two male interviewees (one with children and one expecting his first child) pointed out the different consideration of paternity and maternity in the workplace and family life.

> "[...] Maternity is unfortunately seen as an obstacle in some way, [...]. there's a lack of ad hoc help to ensure that a person can somehow maintain a certain track while having a family life, especially for women; for men this problem is limited to handling a few family responsibilities, but not going forward in terms of the main commitment" [DISI, man, 39 years old].

Another one stated:

> "If I were a woman I would answer that there are obstacles on the career ladder when you have children. Being male I would say no. Yes, clearly the family affects the work organisation, in particular with regard to the extra time that typically one that who works in university dedicated to research... if you want to do excellent research, theoretically you should almost never stop thinking about it. If I were a woman with two children I would say definitely yes, this is inevitable. It is inevitable: it is neither

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[9] PhD candidates from other Italian regions and foreign countries receive a contribution of 150 euro per month from the University of Trento.

correct nor fair, but unfortunately it's something that happens" [DISI, FTAP, 37 years old].

Finally to be highlighted is that some female interviewees explicitly mentioned the fact that maternity was not part of their future plans

"[...] other people's children are nice, but I think maternity is really not in my nature, and I'm also an engineer... it's intrinsic. I don't have this predisposition, really [ex-DISI, woman, 36 years old].

Temporary researchers at the DSRS

Working hours and the workplace: autonomy and self-obligation

All the interviewees except one stated that they had complete autonomy in terms of working hours and workplace. The researchers worked at home or went to the office according to the activities planned and their personal preferences and needs: in the case of meetings and data collection they spent the day at DSRS; if not they could stay at home. The fixed-term assistant professors also had teaching duties and attended institutional meetings (Board of Department). They worked at the department more than the postdoctoral researchers.

The only person, a postdoctoral researcher, who had limits on this flexibility had to go to DSRS at least three days a week; but she did not consider it a problem in her everyday life.

Some postdoctoral researchers said that they preferred to work at home because they did not have a proper office at the department – they had a desk in an open space. Others lived in a city distant from the workplace and had decided to reduce commuting and go to the office only when necessary.

Likewise, the interviewees decided their working hours: at least 8 hours, but usually more. If necessary, all of them worked in the evenings and during the weekends and/or holidays. Most of them did not complain about this, and explained that there was an alternation between more intensive work periods and less intensive ones. The self-definition of working hours had positive and negative aspects connected to the instability of the work contract. Both women and men explained that during the PhD contracts (and for the assistant professors also the postdocs), the deadlines and pressure of evaluation were more intense.

Work-Life Balance: relationships and parental status

The work/life balance issue emerged from the interviewees' answers in terms of both every day time organisation and the overlap between the different life spheres. The majority of the interviewees said that they did not have a good work/life balance because the work was very demanding, and it was important to dedicate most of one's time to it. In fact, only a few interviewees (manly men) had activities besides work, such as sports and a social life during the week. They thought that this was part of the choice of doing research and pursuing an academic career, and they did not complain about it. The fixed-term assistant professors (mainly men) were more satisfied than the postdoctoral researchers with their work/life balance. They explained that having a medium-term perspective improved the capacity to strike a balance between the different life spheres.

The most interesting topic that emerged from the question on the work/life balance regarded the impossibility of managing work and family tasks in terms of energy and attention. The women interviewees described research work as a *vocation* and an *all-absorbing job*. In fact, dedicating most of one's time to research became a *forma mentis* and a *modus vivendi*.

The temporary researchers who were also mothers (1 DSRS and 3 ex-DSRS) explained that free time did not exist beyond the time dedicated to their families. They said that it was very difficult to maintain a good work/life balance, and after the child's birth they had not been able to work as before. The grandparents, the babysitter, and the nursery enabled them to continue working and not 'exit' from the academic context. For these interviewees maternity was consequently an obstacle to the academic career:

> "I calculated to become pregnant at the end of a contract, so as not to bother anyone. If I had decided to become a mother before, when I was on a one-year contract as a postdoc, I would have probably compromised my position at the university" [ex-DSRS, woman, 36 years old].

> "Being a woman with a child is disabling. You can't think of studying and working like before: so it would take some form of support for women and some kind of greater recognition" [DSRS, woman, 34 year old].

This issue did not emerge from the answers of male temporary researchers who were also fathers.

For those who did not have children the academic career was an obstacle to the maternity/paternity choice:

> "it depends on your priorities, but if you want children, you don't choose to became a researcher […] If I'd wanted a family, I would have continued working as a secretary, and I wouldn't have chosen to do research"[ex-DSRS, woman, 37 years old]; "you have no protection and you must have a total vocation. The instability of the work contract influences the decision to have children […] and the work stress level is very high and you wouldn't want to add other sources of stress, so you decide to postpone the paternity choice" [DSRS, man, 31 years old].

These examples illustrate the main interactions between work and family life in both directions, and they highlight the ambiguity of research work, the commitment that the interviewees said that they wanted to dedicate to their jobs but, at the same time, also the need to find a balance with private life.

Finally, the interviewees that had visiting periods in other European countries pointed out the differences from the Italian context in terms of working time organisation and maternity leave. In fact, the majority of academic contexts outside Italy seem to be more WLB–friendly, and also researchers in fixed-term posts (postdoctoral researchers and PhD candidates) more easily decide to have children.

Stress, guilt and inadequacy

The majority of the interviewees said that they were stressed for various reasons: the work conditions, the workload, and difficulties in finding a good work/life balance. The instability of contracts, uncertainty about the future, economic discontinuity, and the competitive context were characteristics of research work which provoked stress and anxiety. The majority of interviewees said that their work was characterised by "up and down" periods. Recognition of their efforts and their productivity compensated for the stressful periods

that impacted negatively on psychophysical well-being (e.g. tiredness). One female interviewee who had decided to leave academic work explained that research was not compatible with her psychophysical well-being, and that was the reason for her decision.

Moreover, some women postdoctoral fellows stated that the deadlines, the workload, and the impossibility of dedicating all one's energy to work, created feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Above all the temporary researchers who were mothers explained that they were unable to concentrate fully on their work or their children. They stated that there was always a tension between work that one likes and love for one's family. Among the 20 temporary researchers interviewed (DSRS and ex-DSRS), 8 of them have children (5 women and 3 men): only two of them, both men, were postdocs at the DSRS at the moment of the interview; one woman and one man are currently fixed term assistant professors at the DSRS; and the remaining 4 women are not working anymore at the DSRS.

Finally, it should be highlighted that the postdoctoral researchers were more stressed by the instability of their jobs than the fixed term assistant professors. Indeed, the latter described the need to rethink everyday life organisation, but they did not seem particularly worried about the possibility of pursuing their careers. Moreover, the postdoctoral researchers did not have access to any services and economic subsidies; the economic aspect relating to the WLB was more important in their answers compared with those of the FTAPs (e.g. payments for private nurseries or child minders)-

Policies and services

Three of the interviewees with children (two mothers and one father) accessed the University's nursery; four (two mothers and two fathers) did not use the service because they had chosen other solutions (e.g. a private/public nursery closer to home) or because they had obtained a low score on the ranking list. In fact, as already mentioned, the University nursery gives priority to permanent administrative and academic staff. The women researchers who had become mothers while working in DSRS (one as PhD candidate and 1 as postdoc) received 5 months of maternity leave, but did not obtain other benefits. Of the three male researchers with children, one accessed 6 months of unpaid paternity leave during his PhD course, and the other two (1 postdoc and 1 fixed term assistant professor) received grants to cover nursery costs.

Some interviewees with temporary posts did not know exactly if they were entitled to maternity, paternity and parental leave and "if" and "how" they could apply for it. They said that it would be useful to have a *vademecum* or an information brochure about the conditions of access to the different kinds of leave, contributions, and services for academic staff, with both temporary and permanent contracts.

In regard to social and work policies, the majority of the interviewees, both men and women, expressed the need for the greater protection of precarious workers. The instability of contracts and economic discontinuity had negative impacts on work conditions in terms of workload. They said that especially during one year of the postdoctoral contract they had to work on the research for which they were paid; they had to publish in order to improve their curriculum vitae; and in the meantime, they had to look for others posts, scholarships or research funds. This workload obviously negatively affected their private and family lives. For these reasons, access to economic support and social insurance would improve their quality of life. Moreover, they said that it is necessary to rethink the entire academic career system because it was difficult to live in precarious

conditions until the age of 45 – "it's unfair to be considered eternal interns" [DSRS, woman, 37 years old].

And that it would also be necessary to recognise the value of the PhD degree outside the academic work sector. Focusing specifically on work/life balance services, the female interviewees stressed the need for babysitting and emergency babysitter services, and a breastfeeding area.

Mobility: commuting and conference participation

At the DSRS the mobility issue emerged in relation to two topics. First, the interviewees said that they participated in several conferences during the year. The fixed-term assistant professors had a personal fund from the department and could use it as they preferred to travel to conferences, seminars and workshops. The postdoctoral fellows working in the frame of a national or internal project usually had access to funds to attend conferences. If they did not have this kind of funding, they had no access to funds, and they often had to pay for conference participation by themselves. Moreover, two postdocs stated that during the contract at DSRS they travelled to different parts of Italy or the region in order to collect data. They paid for these journeys by themselves and did not receive any reimbursements.

The second issue that emerged from the interviews concerned *commuting*. In fact, some interviewees lived far from Trento, the city in which they worked, and they did not receive any support or reimbursement for travel expenses. This affected the quality of life in terms of personal/family life and/or work life. They had not moved to the city where they worked for various reasons: the brief duration of the contract – usually one year – or because the partner could not change his/her job and move to another city – e.g. a female fixed-term assistant professor with a child travelled 400 km each week. These researchers usually stayed in the workplace city three days a week, and then returned to the city of "personal life" and worked from home. They complained about this because when they were in the city where they worked, time was short and they tried to do as much work as possible, but they could not avoid also working at home. Finally, some interviewees said that, because they worked far from the research group, they sometimes suffered from being and working alone.

International mobility did not emerge as a significant issue from the interviews: only one woman researcher (a fixed term assistant professor) who was also a mother had reduced conference attendance since the birth of her last child.

Some interviewees had some visiting periods abroad, but mostly during the PhD course. During the PhD course, in fact, an economic contribution is foreseen by the University (the income is increased by 50% during the visiting term?) while during a postdoc contract there is no contribution for mobility, for either conferences or visiting terms.

Finally, the possibility of continuing the academic career in a foreign country was mentioned; but did not have the same importance as for the DISI researchers in terms of possible opportunities.

Future: work, personal and family sphere

In regard to the future, the main issue that emerged from the interviews was the uncertainty of the work and the influence of this condition on the family and personal life.

The majority of the interviewees were willing to pursue their academic careers in the next few years and obtain a more stable job. They were well aware of the difficulties that they would encounter and expressed ambiguous statements about the opportunity to decide about their personal and family lives beyond the work career. On the one hand, they knew that they could not wait for greater stability before deciding, for example, to have children or buy a house. On the other hand, they underlined the risks of making these decisions without considering the work sphere. The two spheres are bound up with and influence each other.

In regard to work, the majority of the interviewees stressed the need to maintain or build a strong *curriculum vitae* in order to be competitive in the academic context – in Italy and Trento specifically, but also in other countries if necessary.

Two interviewees, one woman and one man, stated that they would leave the academic career if they could not achieve a good work/life balance.

To conclude, at the DSRS it seems that there were no significant differences between women and men in their approach to, or perspectives on, the future: uncertainty and precarious conditions were the main concerns of all the interviewees. The fixed-term assistant professors were less worried about the possibility of pursuing an academic career, even if they knew that they had to guarantee a hard engagement in the work sphere and maintain a high competitive profile, also because their posts were not tenured, but temporary ones, without any commitment to them by the University upon conclusion of the contract.

1.4. CONCLUSIONS

The most common WLB policies and services in the Italian universities are addressed to administrative staff with permanent contracts. Actions are developed for employees with regular work schedules who must guarantee their presence in the workplace. Part-time, flexible working hours and teleworking are examples of these actions. The Italian universities also offer services such as nursery and babysitting in order to promote the balance between family and work for parents, but mainly for employees with permanent jobs. In recent years, they have also introduced facilities for employees who have to care for elderly and disabled relatives. This is an important issue in Italy, where the welfare state – Mediterranean model – is based on the family, especially women, as care providers.

The innovative aspects of WLB policies regard:

• The introduction of more flexible facilities in terms of times and places of the childcare service (such as baby parking, emergency babysitting, toy library, etc.).

• The extension of some policies to administrative and academic staff on temporary contracts.

• The inclusion of wellbeing and health issues as WLB policies (counselling services, good health related lessons).

• Awareness initiatives to integrate work and family spheres and promotion of the fathers' participation in the childcare (e.g. *Welcome Kids into the workplace*).

The UNITN adopts the usual WLB policies and services; and with the present AAP 2014-2016 and the *Family Audit Certificate* it intends to introduce innovative elements, especially

in regard to the academic staff with permanent contracts, and in some cases also those with temporary ones.

The initiatives that take account of the reciprocal influence between the work and personal/family spheres in career construction and personal/family planning are particularly interesting for the target group of the GARCIA project: for example, considering the long period of absence from the workplace in definition of the recruitment and career advancement process.

The work organisation of the academic staff in terms of time, space and workload has specific characteristics that require specific interventions. In fact, the interviews evidenced the opposite aspects, positive and negative, of the high level of flexibility and autonomy in work organisation, particularly for researchers at the early stages of their careers. The WLB needs emerged in regard not only to everyday life organisation – and work-family duties reconciliation – but also to planning the future personal, family, and career path.

Autonomy was an ambiguous element of work organisation: in fact, on the one hand, the researchers stated that they were free to decide how to spend their time; on the other, they had to work harder and harder in order to meet deadlines and construct their competitive *curriculum vitae* (Bellé et al. 2015). The connection of a competition environment and the more demanding pace of work with precariousness generated stress and anxiety. These conditions increased work/family conflict and provoked feelings of inadequacy and guilt because of the impossibility of dedicating sufficient energy and concentration to their work and to their families. This was especially the case of female researchers with temporary contracts who had children. At the same time, female interviewees, both with or without children, stressed their determination to pursue an academic career, and their devotion to, and vocation for, academic work. This latter element was not present in the interviews with their male colleagues. According to Brevis (2000) and Nikunen (2012), this may be interpreted as an introjection of the organisation's requirement of a masculine work identity in order to assure permanence in the system. "Masculinity is often connected to devotion to work seemingly without other responsibilities" (Nikunen in Ahola and Hoffman, 2012, p. 277).

Precariousness, related to professional careers but more in general to biographies (Armano, Murgia, 2015), emerged from the interviews as the most problematic element, and it was strictly connected to the family/private sphere. The difficulties of planning the work career, in fact, influenced the private sphere; the interviewees explained that they had postponed the decision to have children or to buy a house because of the instability of their jobs and economic discontinuity. On the one hand, the academic career emerged as an obstacle to the choice of parenthood; on the other, maternity was considered an obstacle to the academic career, for both men and women interviewees. In fact, the main and most frequent requests made by the interviewees concerned access to social security for temporary researchers (above all postdocs) and a more transparent academic system, with fairer and more certain rules for career advancement.

Finally, in regard to parenthood, the interviewees stressed that they should have the same rights as other university dependent employees, and that the profile evaluation should consider temporary absence from the workplace (sickness, maternity, etc.).

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Documents of the University of Trento

Affirmative Action Plan 2014-2016
Performance Plan 2014-2016
Family Audit Actions Plan 2015-2017

Appendix 1

Table 1 - Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) in Italian Universities

	University	Period of the last available AAP
1	University of BARI ALDO MORO	Not available (n.a.)
2	Polytechnic of BARI	n.a.
3	University of BASILICATA	n.a.
4	University of BERGAMO	AAP 2010-2012
6	University of Bologna	AAP 2014-2017
7	University of BRESCIA	APP 2015-2017
8	University of CAGLIARI	AAP 2013_2015
9	University of CALABRIA	APP 2005-2008
10	University of CAMERINO	APP 2014-2016
11	University of CASSINO and LAZIO MERIDIONALE	n.a.
12	University of CATANIA	n.a.
13	University of "Magna Graecia" CATANZARO	n.a.
14	Catholic University of "Sacro Cuore" (private)	n.a
15	University "G. d'Annunzio" of CHIETI-PESCARA	n.a.
16	University of FERRARA	APP 2014- 2016
17	University of FIRENZE	APP 2014-2017
18	University of FOGGIA	n.a.
19	University of GENOVA	APP 2013-2016
20	Universiy INSUBRIA Varese-Como	n.a.
21	University of L'AQUILA	n.a.
22	University of MACERATA	n.a.
23	University of MESSINA	APP 2015-2017
24	University of MILANO	n.a.
25	University of MILANO - BICOCCA	APP 2009-2011
26	Polytechnic of MILANO	APP 2013-2015
27	University of MODENA and REGGIO EMILIA	n.a.
28	University of MOLISE	APP 2012-2015
29	University of NAPOLI "Federico II"	n.a.

	University	Period of the last available AAP
30	University of NAPOLI	n.a.
31	University of NAPOLI "Parthenope"	n.a.
32	University of NAPOLI "L'Orientale"	n.a.
33	University of PADOVA	APP. 2009-2011
34	University of PALERMO	n.a.
35	University of PARMA	AAP 2013-2015
36	University of PAVIA	AAP 2014-2016
37	University of PERUGIA	AAP 2015-2017
38	University for Foreigners of PERUGIA	AAP 2015-2017
39	University of PIEMONTE ORIENTALE	AAP 2013-2015
40	University of PISA	AAP 2014-2016
41	University of Sant'Anna, PISA	n.a.
42	Scuola Normale Superiore of PISA	AAP 2012-2013
43	Politechnic of MARCHE	AAP 2013-2015
44	University "Mediterranea" of REGGIO CALABRIA	n.a.
45	University of ROMA "Foro Italico"	n.a.
46	University of ROMA "La Sapienza"	n.a.
47	University of ROMA "Tor Vergata"	n.a.
48	University of ROMA TRE	AAP 2004-2007
49	University of SALENTO	n.a.
50	University of SALERNO	n.a.
51	University of SANNIO of BENEVENTO	AAP 2010-2011
52	University of SASSARI	AAP 2013-2016
53	University of SIENA	n.a.
54	University for Foreigners of Siena	n.a.
55	University of TERAMO	n.a.
56	University of TORINO	AAP 2013-2015
57	University of TRENTO	AAP 2014-2016
58	Polytechnic of TORINO	AAP 2007-2010
59	University of TRIESTE	AAP 2014-2016
60	International School for Advanced	n.a.

	University	Period of the last available AAP
	Studies of TRIESTE	
61	University of TUSCIA	n.a.
62	University of UDINE	AAP 2014-2016
63	University of URBINO "Carlo BO"	AAP 2013-2015
64	University "Ca' Foscari" of VENEZIA	n.a.
65	University IUAV of VENEZIA	n.a.
66	University of VERONA	n.a.

Appendix 2

Table 1 - Temporary Researchers at DISI

ID	Academic fields	Sex	Age	Relationship status	Children Number	Age	Current type of work
#1	COMPUTER SCIENCE	M	37	IN COUPLE	0	-	POSTDOC
#2	COMPUTER SCIENCE	M	39	IN COUPLE	0 (expecting first child)		FTAP
#3	HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION	F	42	SINGLE	0		POSTDOC
#4	INFORMATICS	F	36	MARRIED	0		POSTDOC
#5	COMPUTER SCIENCE	M	36	MARRIED	1	4 YEARS OLD	POSTDOC
#8	SOCIAL INFORMATICS	M	37	IN COUPLE	0		POSTDOC
#10	TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING	F	31	IN COUPLE	0		FTAP
#11	TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING	M	33	MARRIED	1	1 YEAR OLD	FTAP
#12	TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERING	M	37	IN COUPLE	2	3 YEARS OLD; 8 MONTHS OLD	FTAP
#17	COMPUTER SCIENCE	F	37	SINGLE	0		POSTDOC

Table 2 - Ex-DISI postdoctoral researchers

ID	Academic fields	Sex	Age	Relationship status	Children		Current type of work
					Number	Age	
#6	EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY	M	36	MARRIED	0		ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ON FILM)
#7	HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION	M	40	SINGLE	0		PROJECT MANAGER (UNIVERSITY)+EC CONSULTANT
#9	COMPUTER SCIENCE	M	33	MARRIED	0 (expecting 1st child)		PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY
#13	COMPUTER SCIENCE (Requirements Engineering)	F	34	SINGLE	0		POST-DOC FELLOW RESEARCHER
#14	COMPUTER SCIENCE/SOCIAL INFORMATICS	M	30	MARRIED	0		POST-DOC RESEARCHER
#15	COMPUTER SCIENCE	M	34	MARRIED	0		SENIOR EDITOR
#16	ICT	F	36	SINGLE	0		RESEARCHER (Unit Head)
#18	COMPUTER SCIENCE	F	29	MARRIED	1	9 MONTHS	RESEARCHER
#19	ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT	F	36	SINGLE	0		RESEARCHER
#20	INFORMATICS	M	38	SINGLE			RESEARCHER
#21	INFORMATICS ENGINEERING	F	35	MARRIED	0		PROFESSOR AT LOWER SEC. SCHOOL

Table 3 - Temporary Researchers at DSRS

ID	Academic fields	Sex	Age	Relationship status	Children		Current type of work
					Number	Age	
#1	SOCIOLOGY	F	34	IN COUPLE	0		POSTDOC
#2	SOCIOLOGY	F	40	MARRIED	3	1,5 YEARS OLD; 4 YEARS OLD; 9 YEARS OLD	FTAP
#4	SOCIOLOGY	M	42	IN COUPLE	0		FTAP
#8	SOCIOLOGY	M	33	IN COUPLE	0		POSTDOC
#12	SOCIOLOGY	M	39	MARRIED	3	9 YEARS OLD; 7 YEARS OLD; 3 YEARS OLD	FTAP
#15	SOCIOLOGY	F	44	MARRIED	0		FTAP
#16	SOCIOLOGY	F	33	SINGLE	0		POSTDOC
#17	SOCIOLOGY	M	31	MARRIED	0		POSTDOC
#19	SOCIOLOGY	M	42	MARRIED	2	2 YEARS OLD; 6 YEARS OLD	POSTDOC
#21	POLITICAL SCIENCE	M	40	MARRIED	1	6 YEARS OLD	POSTDOC

Table 4 - Ex-DSRS postdoctoral researchers

ID	Academic fields	Sex	Age	Relationship status	Children		Current type of work
					Number	Age	
#5	SOCIOLOGY	F	37	IN COUPLE	0		UNEMPLOYED
#6	SOCIOLOGY	F	36	MARRIED	1	4,5 YEARS OLD	POSTDOC
#7	SOCIOLOGY	F	39	IN COUPLE	0		FTAP
#9	SOCIOLOGY	F	37	MARRIED	0		LECTURER
#10	SOCIOLOGY	F	34	MARRIED	1	14 MONTHS OLD	FTAP
#11	SOCIOLOGY	M	38	SINGLE	0		POSTDOC
#13	SOCIOLOGY	M	33	IN COUPLE	0		FREE LANCER
#14	SOCIOLOGY	F	37	IN COUPLE	2	4 YEARS OLD; 7 MONTHS OLD	UNEMPLOYED
#18	ANTHROPOLOGY	F	48	IN COUPLE	1	8 YEARS OLD	UNEMPLOYED
#20	SOCIOLOGY	F	35	SINGLE			LECTURER

2. BELGIUM

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This report is composed of firstly a desk analysis of existing recent policies concerning work/life balance at Université Catholique de Louvain, which are applicable to all departments, including the Garcia institutes in SSH, the Institute of Analysis of Contemporary Changes in History and Society (IACCHOS) and in STEM, the Earth Life Institute (ELI). We have analyzed the most recent developments along with known intentions of Policy development in this area, which was extracted through interviews, informal exchange and by consulting Policy documents. We also acknowledge the resourcefulness of the report on "gender" compiled and written by Edithe Antoine of the Human Resources Service for the year 2013, which has been most informative.

The interview analysis was undertaken by looking at the WP4 interviews (26) with postdocs and newly tenured (five years) academics/researchers in both institutes on the one hand, and also the « movers » interviews (29) conducted for WP6 of postdocs, who were employed at UCL, mainly conducted by ourselves[10]. We were also lucky enough to have some additional interviews undertaken with former UCL PhDs, of a group of international "movers", which were undertaken in part by Hoda Chinifourouchan, a masters' student doing her internship in our centre and writing a thematically related dissertation. And some interviews with mainly permanently appointed FNRS (National Funds for Scientific Research) researchers also in part undertaken and transcribed/pre-analyzed by a host of masters students in the framework of a research seminar co-taught by the authors of this report.

According to a recent survey conducted in French-speaking Belgium, the question of the articulation of Professional life and family life discourages 50% of female doctorates and 27% of male doctorates to pursue a scientific career (Meulders et al., 2012: 59). This shows a non-negligible percentage of doctorates, particularly where women are concerned. A study that looks particularly at postdoctoral researchers of the National Fund for Scientific Research (Fusulier, del Rio Carral, 2012) underlines that 67 % of this group estimate that their professional life negatively affects their private and family lives, of which 77% are mothers. For 44% of these mothers, this sentiment also plays out in another sense: a negative effect of the family life upon the professional life, which is considerably less experienced in the other sub-groups (around 25% of male fathers and for women without children). It is therefore hardly surprising that a little less than one of two mothers experiences a conflict between professional and family life and this constitutes a factor that may lead them to re-orientate their careers: this opinion is shared by 29% of women without children, 27% of men without children and 23% of fathers. This study also shows that a little more than 60% of FNRS postdoctoral researchers have an affiliation with an association or a sports club, or cultural type of club, but that this percentage drops drastically to 26% for fathers and 33% for mothers.

These indicators underline that work/life balance as well as work/family interference constitutes or should constitute an undeniable dimension in a gender policy of universities and of the scientific field, notably during the early stages of the career. Of course, we can

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[10] The transcription was undertaken by four masters' students, who were remunerated accordingly.

hardly avoid the gendered order that structure society at large and the social engagements of men and women, but this does not mean that the university as an institution and organization cannot support the work/life balance of its researchers.

2.2. THE WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES AT THE UNIVERSITY CATHOLIQUE OF LOUVAIN (UCL)

The Université catholique de Louvain evidently respects legislations in the matter (which are regularly transformed and are very complex). It has also taken some own initiatives. However, there is not an official and integrated work/life balance Policy, which makes its identification difficult. Based upon some interviews, observations and an analysis of internal Policy and practice, as well as consultation of a « gender » report realized by a « gender » contact person Edithe Antoine, we have identified five fields of action:

- The autonomy at work and spatial-temporal flexibility;

- The leaves and work interruptions;

- The psychosocial supports;

- The support to the career of the researchers;

- The measures for children of personnel.

Autonomy at work, spatial-temporal flexibility and informal arrangements

UCL, in its institutional and organizational dimension, does not control the entirety of its working time of its researchers and academics, rather leaving autonomous regulations to operate on an individual basis. The very nature of research and academic work is difficult to formalize except in matters of teaching. The norm of the number of hours for a lecturer-researcher (appointed permanent academic) full time at UCL is 150 hours per year, without counting the supervision of masters' dissertations and PhD theses. However, there are variations between academics and the different disciplinary fields as to the application of this norm. A more equal distribution of teaching hours is a challenge for the academic authorities, who are thoroughly aware of the discrepancies, which remain a difficulty for various reasons (diversity of constraints that are attached to disciplines, the management of space, negotiating forces between academics, a question of a delicate equilibrium, which needs to be found between research/teaching and service to the institution…).

Essentially, without being based on any specific measurement of this, one can observe (via experience, observations, interviews, informal exchanges) that junior and senior researchers as well as the collective workforce, benefit of an important margin of manoeuvre in its organization of work, of working hours and of the place of work. Certainly there are constraints of a minimum presence required at the place of work, but a non-negligible part of work (although it is not quantifiable) is based on individual choices or arrangements within the local collective workforce. This permits, while taking into account the necessities of production, the researchers to have a relative freedom as to the managing of their own activities and of their spatial-temporal agency, which can help their work/life balance.

In order to favour mobility (Home-Workplace) and to facilitate the conciliation of private and professional life of its personnel (particularly administrative personnel), in January

2011, UCL has concluded together with the union delegation, a collective agreement of work with respect to teleworking. Of course, a number of persons work from home in an informal manner; UCL would like to propose some rules to apply to teleworking, in order to record the working hours in a formal and structured manner. The agreement was supposed to permit the recording and evaluation of around fifty situations of telework during a period of two years. After a quantitative and qualitative evaluation, which was presented to the Council of Enterprise, a new collective agreement was approved by the Administrative Council to regularize the experience. This agreement foresees a collective evaluation of telework every three years by a committee working on the information collected by the Service of personnel. However, the scientific and academic personnel seems little inclined to formalize telework, because this rigidifies their rapport toward time and space. It is precisely this autonomy that constitutes a condition of engagement and efficiency, as well as being an attractive feature of this career.

Leaves and work interruptions

In line with the legal dispositions of civil law (researchers employed in work contracts and administrative personnel – not the academic personnel), the employees of UCL benefit of a series of leaves or interruptions of the career, which are relative to the private and family circumstances: maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, sick leave, credit-time etc. Moreover, the academic personnel benefits from a specific status.

Despite this statutory difference, UCL has participated in meetings of the « Committee of women and science », which is raising the question of « family leaves » and of trying to increase the possibilities that are being offered to the academic and scientific personnel in the different institutions in the French-speaking Belgian community. UCL recognizes the following access to leaves of its scientific/academic personnel:

- *Maternity leave*: the women within the academic corps have the possibility of being dispenses of their classes during the academic year following a birth and can be replaced by APH (Academics paid by the hour). However, this replacement has to be negotiated case by case in a context where resources are rare and which do not cover the totality of tasks and functions, which are assumed by the lecturers.

- *Paternity leave*: it is 10 days for the researchers (legislation) and 4 days for academics (internal Policy).

- *Prophylactic leave for pregnancy or for breast-feeding due to the danger of the work place* (laboratories, centres), with an agreement by the work doctor.

- *Paid parental leave (women and men)* with certain restrictions for certain researchers, in relation to their status and type of contract.

- *Paid adoption leaves (men and women).*

Comments

The credit time, in other words the possibility to reduce temporarily the working time, is accessible to the administrative and technical personnel (under contract of work). It does not concern the academic staff. The same goes for the leaves of circumstance, in the case of certain family events, the law foresees a certain number of days of leave depending on the event, such as marriage, birth, communion, moving home, etc.

The academic personnel, due to its particular status, maintain a right to their salary in the case of absence for health reasons. Furthermore, they can negotiate with the authorities to find temporary arrangements. Effectually, in UCL the predominant logic is that of an academic corps, of which a community of peers is elected, whereby the rector is the Primus inter pares.

Health and psychosocial support

As all employers, UCL has to respect the sanitation norms and the rules relative to the medicine of work. The university has also taken two initiatives that we present as follows:

1. The 'Barometer of the psycho-social load'

Since 2011, at the request of the CPPT (Committee for the prevention and protection at work) UCL has introduced an evaluation tool for the psychosocial load of its workers. In May 2013, all members of personnel were invited to reply anonymously to a questionnaire, which aims at identifying the situations that are susceptible of creating a psychosocial load at work and which would allow an analysis and evaluation of its risks. The enquiry showed that the results obtained for the UCL personnel are situated at the average of a host of comparable institutions and enterprises. However, beyond its legal obligations and in line with its engagement/declaration in a Policy of well-being, UCL has nonetheless developed a series of collective actions destined to prevent stress and to improve well-being at work. Certain of these are specific to certain types of personnel; others are destined to all workers.

2. Persons of confidence and councilors of prevention

Customary to the legislation relative to the protection against violence and moral or sexual harassment at the workplace which was applied on the 1st of January 2003, UCL has assigned 'persons of confidence' to dispense of welcome, help, Council to persons, who deem themselves object of harassment or violence. In this assigning, a particular attention has been given to an equality of gender. And where the size of its unit permits, the UCL, tries to allocate at least two 'persons of confidence' in order to allow a choice for the member of personnel between one man or one woman. This parity has been also respected in the assigning of councilors of prevention, specialized in psychosocial risks at work.

Support for the career of researchers and academics

Three measures can be integrated in the support of the career of researchers; firstly, a financial support for young researchers at UCL for international mobility; secondly, the policy of sabbatical year for academics, notably with a financial aid for family stays abroad; thirdly, the definition of an individually defined academic project, which permits the academics to coordinate their requests and needs, and take into account their private engagements and those of the institution.

1. Measure aiming to favour journeys abroad for young researchers

In order to facilitate trips for young researchers in UCL in well known research centres, constituting a basis of the recruitment for engagement as academic personnel, UCL proposes some complementary financial aids for postdoctoral scholarships

These aids are reserved for doctoral degree holders in the UCL Framework or relevant external contracts, who wish to undertake a trip of at least six months in a research centre abroad to pursue their research and develop their scientific networks. This can be applied for within 3 years of having defended their PhD theses. Medical doctors can introduce an application as of their last year of specialization. Concretely, it is a supplementary aid, which helps the researcher to avoid having financial difficulties during their stay. During this stay, the researcher benefits either from UCL funds or an external funding or of a bursary from the host institution. The amount of complementary aid to the postdoctoral scholarship is calculated according to the scholarship in question, and amongst other things of the composition of the family of the applicant, if they intend to accompany him/her; the cost of living in the respective host country etc. The amount given by the FSR (Special Research Funds) represents a maximum of 50% of the funds allocated by the scholarship or externally allocated.

2. Measure to facilitate the departure of academics for a sabbatical year

The sabbatical leave constitutes an important lever in the formation and development policy for competences throughout the academic career. It also offers opportunities for international collaborations in research and for creating new projects. For these different reasons, UCL encourages its academics to take sabbatical leaves at regular intervals. To achieve this, it allows the academics to negotiate and to reduce or even suspend teaching assignments for the length of the leave. These are usually ensured by the colleagues, who are often either co-lecturers or members of the same teaching group, or members of the same research entity. Thanks to subsidies of the National Funds of Scientific Research, UCL also has the means to invite external professors for 30 hours of lectures.

Although a number of academics have been able to benefit from sabbatical leave in these last years, other academics have renounced submitting a request due to multiple constraints. Two obstacles have been identified in the application for a sabbatical leave:

- The fact of giving multiple lectures in large auditoria, generally at Bachelors' level, appears to be particularly difficult. It is effectively complicated to find colleagues, who would be disposed to ensure graciously these types of lectures (and exams) on top of their own teaching load. Academics with such teaching portfolios would then like to hand over more than 30h given by invited lecturers;

- Academics with children would often like to leave abroad with their respective families for a longer period. The cost of this journey is a barrier for some academics, which then often renounce their sabbatical project

With all the limits of its resources, the Policy of the Rectoral Council is to reduce the obstacles that have been described. In 2012, the FNRS had reviewed its criteria of distribution of its budgets for sabbatical leaves between the different universities of the Wallonie-Bruxelles Federation. The sum that UCL disposes of has been enlarged, and the university thus would like to help specifically those academics, which today have difficulties to go on sabbatical leave because of their heavy teaching loads or family responsibilities.

Concretely, academics can request a benefit for sabbatical leave as follows:

- 60 hours of paid academic hours, if their teaching load is particularly heavy (large auditoria) ;

- A Financial aid of maximum 3.000€ destined for the payment of their rent in case of family responsibilities.

Otherwise, UCL tries to disseminate the information concerning these new measures to facilitate the departure for sabbatical leaves as much as possible. They are object of a detailed description on the UCL web portal. Also, they are present at a precise information event called « the sabbatical lunch », which permits all interested academics to ask questions and to hear personal accounts of their colleagues, who have already benefitted from this measure.

The Individually defined academic project (PAIC)

The individually defined academic project aims at conciliating personal projects of each academic with the demands of the entities to which he/she is associated. It is based upon a reciprocal engagement between the academic and the institution. The objective is to: define the orientations of each academic in their teaching mission, of research and of the service to society; to regulate the investments throughout the career in order to avoid over-investment or dispersion.

The PAIC is based upon a discussion/negotiation meeting between each academic, the dean of the faculty, the president of institute and of the vice-rector of the sector. Until 2013, only the newly tenured academics were benefitting of this tool. Today, it is organized at two key moments of the career; at the end of the probationary period and after the nomination of the professor. The Rectoral Council and the vice-rector of the Policy of Personnel pilot the PAIC.

Measures towards children of personnel members

UCL has taken two measures in relation to the children of personnel members.

1. Crèche « Pomme d'happy »

Conscious of the difficulty that members of personnel meet of finding day care places for their children of low age upon the UCL site, UCL decided, under union pressure, to invest in the creation of a day care, on 31 March 2011, called « Pomme d'happy ». Under the Framework of the National Office of Childhood (ONE), this structure has 20 places for children between 3 months and 3 years, until their entry into Kindergarten (école maternelle). These places are reserved, as a priority, to children of members of personnel of UCL.

Beyond the investment, which was agreed upon for the creation of this crèche (renovation of the building, structuring, etc.), the annual functioning of this crèche represents a financial effort for UCL. The UCL is taking largely into charge the financing of the personnel (3, 11 ETP full-time) and ensuring the rent of the building. Presently, UCL is reflecting upon creating 4 additional places, in order to increase the total capacity to 24 children.

2. Activities for the children of personnel

In order to respond to the demands of day care structures for children during the Holidays, the Human Resource Service of UCL and the association "l'IFAC11"organize together

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[11] http://groupeifac.com

activities that are destined towards the children of members of personnel, during the months of July and August, on the site of Louvain-la-Neuve. These activities are for children between 3 and 12 years of age. UCL intervenes financially for children of staff members, who can participate in these activities during the month of July.

The no profit association "PROMOSPORT12" organizes diverse camps for children between 5 to 16 years. UCL financially assists for participation in camps organized during the school holidays of summer, with 15 Euros subscription of each child of members of personnel.

2.3. EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF TEMPORARY RESEARCHERS

This analysis on « well-being and work /life balance » was extracted from the WP4 and WP6 interviews conducted in our two departments/institutes SSH, the Institute of Analysis of Contemporary Changes in History and of Society, and STEM, the Earth Life Institute. The composition of the interviewees is as follows, 26 WP4 present postdocs (and some docs)/permanent lecturers and researchers, 29 WP6 movers (former UCL postdocs/docs, now in other sectors or research institutions):

Table 2.1 Interviewees by relationship with institution, gender, and department

Interviewee type	Institute	Female	Male
WP4 postdocs	IACCHOS	2	2
WP4 newly permanent FNRS researchers or/and academics	IACCHOS	4	4
WP4 postdocs (or docs in some cases)	ELI	3	2
WP4 newly permanent FNRS researchers or/and academics	ELI	4	4
WP6 movers	IACCHOS	9	7
WP6 movers	ELI	8	6

The organization of work and work/life balance: a difference in experiences and sentiments in men and women, in parents and non-parents, and in STEM vs SSH

Female ongoing postdocs from STEM were majorly women between 27 to 35 years of age, without children and often in a couple, newly married. There were some single women in postdocs, and more married women with children in newly tenured positions, or well into five years of tenurship. The ongoing female postdocs from STEM spoke quite differently depending upon whether they were in a couple or not; postdocs with a partner, in one case another female partner, were quite complacent about their career and their private life; they felt that they had sufficient or enough time for their couple, although in some cases they lived in different countries, or else that each partner had equally demanding jobs, which often *necessitates working late nights or in weekends*, but that this was something they took in their stride as it was the nature of the work and the way their couple life was lead. Only one single STEM postdoc female stated that this life style of overwork and highly demanding but unstable job, which required a lot of constant mobility, was not very suitable to her, and moreover seemed to slow down her own personal development in terms of finding a partner and having children etc. She also felt that home, which was Belgium, with her parents and close friends was something essential to her, and which she

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felt she could not compromise by moving abroad, where perhaps more job opportunities would be open and where she had already established research connections.

STEM males speak about the way that they went ahead with their family building plans, during their PhD and postdocs and also realized their careers; in some cases, their wives were also in research, also in ongoing PhDs, and had to break for maternity leaves (sometimes one, two or three breaks depending on amount of children), and in that case finished their theses later than their partners/husbands. Some wives/partners were in other jobs altogether, and then had more stable and often part time jobs, as opposed to the interviewee's own full time PhDs or postdocs. Most STEM male postdocs speak about how they do feel that family has changed their daily organization, but that it is mostly their female partners who have had to sacrifice or struggle a lot during this unstable period. Most of them state that it was a harder time for their female wives/partners than for them due to maternity.

SSH male postdocs or newly tenured researchers/academics speak similarly about work/life balance. They feel that their careers are/were *not slowed down or halted by family plans*, and that they *did not want to compromise their family building plans for their careers*. In fact, most male interviewees between 28 and 34 years of age from both departments in ongoing postdocs or newly tenured positions are fathers, more recently or since around three years, or else intending to build a family shortly, as marriage and settling plans were announced. In all cases, partners seemed also to be working in intense jobs, such as research, medicine, social service, social policy, and often worked part time. The male interviewees in STEM and SSH worked all full-time, but with some re-organization of their days by working late nights, or else working from home one day a week at least.

Female SSH ongoing postdocs with children spoke about the difficulty of having sufficient support to be able to be present physically at UCL their current working place. Several of them are originally from other countries, such as France, and have their partners still residing and working in France, whereas they travel back and forth and divide their time during the week to come once or twice to UCL and then work from home the rest of the week. In one case, the postdocs' mom lives with her and takes care of her baby while she resides in UCL. In another case, the interviewee is a single mom, and an archeology postdoc: she states that she has to travel a lot for her work and that she has a son in toddler age, and no support from either the institution or from family. So these periods are difficult for her, but that she does not want to give up the type of job as this is her passion. She speaks about having given up other activities in her life, sports or yoga, which she could do before her motherhood; when asked about her hobbies, she says "now I am in the mothers' club."

In all cases of researchers/academics who are parents, *a very stringent organization of their days/weeks and years* seems to be experienced, without which they cannot cope with achieving what they see as a work/life balance in their lives. Partners have to be equally flexible, either by sharing the child caring and house hold chores during the week and also being able to work from home, or leave early from work to pick up the children from school or nurseries. They do not speak about other hobbies or extra-work activities much; often saying that this used be possible before having the children, but that now this becomes more and more difficult. They speak much more about *mobility*, having to go on field trips or conferences etc., which seems to be around 3 to 4 times a year.

Movers' female interviewees, former PhDs or postdocs at UCL, both STEM and SSH, have a different kind of uptake on the work/life balance situation; for instance in some cases, interviewees experienced *taking maternity leaves during their PhD theses* as not having been taken into account in both their thesis development by their supervisors (not taking maternity leaves into account for the length of the thesis, completing the thesis), or financially in the case of a European funded project. It was a *source of stress* for the interviewees in some cases to be financially insecure during this period. Some movers' interviewees had two or three children during their PhD, or postdoc, and depending on the salary of their respective husbands or partners they felt more or less financially secure. More international or non-European docs or postdoc movers females experienced sources of financial stress during their period at UCL (from Cameroun, Mexico, Philippines for example). Belgian local or other European docs and postdocs, from France mostly, did not have financial difficulties.

Female former postdocs at UCL, mostly in SSH, and now in newly tenured positions elsewhere, or in other sectors, speak about having children is *not necessarily a discriminating issue for recruitment* in scientific careers; in one SSH mover interviewees' case, she was obviously pregnant during the recruitment period and she did finally obtain the position. However, what she points out is that generally this career is not very stabilizing or easy to manage in terms of having children, settling down geographically in one place with ones' family and partner, because often work places of the two partners are in two different regions or countries even. They often chose to postpone decisions about where to settle down, or where to buy a house, living often in more untied or loose ways, shifting from place to place whenever opportunities come along, or when some family support is available in one place or other.

The demands of the job were named as being tough for working mothers, both STEM and SSH women state, and some, *more often SSH women have frustrations about not being able to be sufficiently present in their children's' lives*, having to leave them too often in day care, far from their working place, whereby the travel time is tiring. Also the period of the PhD thesis, towards the end is perceived as being a particularly difficult time for the family, as children often don't get to see the interviewee parents often.

However, there was *a striking difference in the way male and female researcher/academics spoke about fatherhood and motherhood*; fatherhood was experienced as being something they definitely wanted, did not want to compromise on and that work did not interfere with the possibility of fatherhood. Only regrets voiced was the *difficulty of organizing journeys abroad or upon the mobility issue*, due to lack of support for the kids other than their wives, who were seen to be overburdened. Most women speak about their *motherhood as being challenging at some given time during their careers*, during the PhD due to the work or financial lack of support, or else during their newly tenureships *due to the high demands of the job* (producing research/publishing, mobility, institutional engagement, meetings etc., long distance from work, guilty about leaving at child care, guilty about not being present mothers) and difficulty of work/life balance, mainly motherhood.

Support from the Garcia department(s) for maintaining work/life balance: flexibility, parental leaves and mobility

Most male postdoc and newly tenured researchers/academics at the two departments spoke about how they *perceive the flexibility of the nature of work to be a definite advantage* in order to allow a family or life outside of work. Colleagues or supervisors did not seem to comment or the centres where they were based did allow them this flexibility or working hours, or sometimes working from home. Moreover, one important difference between the experience of the two sexes, is that male interviewees did effectively work from home and were not taking care of kids during that time, whereas female interviews worked from home, while having the kids at home simultaneously, and that the work efficiency or amount was seen to be reduced in this case, which they seemed to take in their stride. So teleworking seemed to be a regularly used option, but with very different gendered experience.

Some newly tenured STEM females spoke about the *difficulty of taking parental leave or any kind of leave* at their job in UCL; this was paired with the general difficulty to speak about your family or have any kind of understanding about family issues in their research centres or departments. Working with majorly male colleagues, maternity seemed perceived as a taboo topic sometimes, and in one case parental leave requests were downright refused by the head of department. They seemed to cope overall with what they perceive is a *very male dominated and non-family friendly environment*. Another female STEM tenured academic speaks about how her mother fell ill a couple of years back and required regular care during the week, where she would once a week take a day or afternoon to visit her. This seemed to be ok in terms of personal organization, but was not officially declared to her colleagues: generally she felt free to organize her working time, apart from when lectures or meetings were organized. Also, sometimes she brings her little daughter, who is three years old, to her office during work, where she would leave her to play and get some work done at the same time. All tenured females spoke about the difficulty in the case of being a mother of working from home while children were present: the concentration levels were lower and work was seen to be sometimes impossible and often reduced in efficiency.

Some newly tenured SSH women spoke about how during their postdocs they travelled a lot, and had children at the same time, often in different countries. The difficulties attached to maternity leaves were not perceived as being too hard, but *childcare seemed more of an issue*. In some cases, partners were present to take care of children, either on the same level as themselves, or else in one case, was a "house-father" looking after the children all the time. *Often financial difficulties were experienced during maternity leaves or for child-care services* and living expenses were experienced depending on the host countries during postdoctoral scholarships such as Marie Curie funding. The scholarship amounts varied according the host country, and enabled an easier family life or not. However, most female interviewees did not feel that this slowed down their research development: they seemed to have seen the benefits of having been abroad, of the research and personal collaborations and networks they created. However, the role of UCL does not stand out as being prominent in these experiences: the interviewees, in this case both male and female, feel that they have been establishing their own connections, doing their own job hunting and journey planning/managing, except in some rare cases where local supervisors or contacts or host universities helped in finding apartments/homes or even child care.

Movers interviewees (WP6), more female than male, see *the nature of this work as being incompatible with their idea of a healthy working/family life.* They state that workload is still as much if not more in the current sectors and jobs they work in (teaching in higher colleagues, social or policy sector, ministry, private enterprises, book shop), but that it was easier to stop working at given times, and also more personally gratifying, which reflected on their overall well-being. Stress was seen to be of a different kind, less unsettling, and more manageable.

An interesting detail is that *none of the male interviewees, whether in the present WP4 group or the movers group WP6 spoke about paternity or parental leaves.* They speak about flexible working hours, which they accommodate to make their work/life balance possible, but never about taking leaves for family purposes. Maternity leaves in contrast took up a big space in both female and male narratives.

The offer and use of institutional childcare and other type of services/tools

The *UCL crèche was used in very few cases of male interviewees*, who had at least two children, one or both of whom were visiting the UCL crèche, and therefore enabling them to drop and pick them up, and perhaps saving their partners, who were working further away some time in mornings and evenings. Some priorities were given to siblings of already existing places at the UCL crèche. However, the UCL crèche has a very limited number of places as can be referred to in the first part of this report. In some cases, other crèche or day cares closer to their respective homes were used.

Female academics/researchers did not have their children at the UCL child care services, and often also speak about the *geographical distance of having to go and to child care service* in their respective home towns/villages and the distance of their work place. Some were trying to change their location to the UCL environment, in order to make more time during their days and be with their children more.

At the nomination after successful recruitment for a permanent position as a lecturer at UCL, the nominee has a three year probation period during which he/she has to fulfil what is called an individually defined academic project (PAIC; see policy above) that is usually devised with the president of the institute. This tool however is experienced according to interviewees in WP4, who have been nominated or appointed as more of a probation tool, a kind of initial examination of competences or requirements that need to be reached by three years of nomination at least. They mostly involve teaching and the obtaining of research project funding. It is not really experienced as a mentoring, although some advice is offered by the councilor in question, who is often a senior colleague. This relationship is not seen as a mentorship nor guidance, but more of a control mechanism and did not seem to contribute a lot to helping with the workload, orientation or achieving a balance between the three missions of the nomination (teaching, research, service).

Working additional hours or travelling to conferences/research visiting

There seems to be *a lot of mobility lived out by STEM male ongoing postdocs (WP4)*; they either are doing their postdocs abroad or else did so in the past, whilst their female wife/partner sometimes stayed back in Belgium or other country, or else the situation of living in two separate countries for work and travelling back and forth and living in one of the countries. In many cases, the female partner is doing the travelling, and also looking after the children while male partner interviewee is travelling either for regular work

purposes or for short research related stays. The only "regret" or negative statement coming from STEM and SSH ongoing postdocs and newly tenured *is the need to settle into one place for the sake of the children mainly, because mobility becomes reduced. Trying to organize oneself as a family*, especially for the partner staying back with the kids is seen not being easy. In some cases, some family support is available, although mostly in a limited way, in which parents of interviewees or partners are happy to support during trips, but not on a regular basis.

Or else there are situations where *no family support is available* and it is mostly the partner who has to stay back during that time. The other way round occurs more rarely according to male interviewees. They have to accommodate their days in a more flexible way, by picking up kids a bit earlier and cutting short their working days, but they compensate by working nights. This is seen as a clear necessity to be able to keep up with the workload. Most male interviewees think this is necessary, although some are trying to reduce the work on weekends, in order to spend more time with their children. Partners are experienced of being sometimes weary of this late night working, and often their female partners do not work nights, because they put the children to bed and attend to other chores, or that their nature of work allows a clearer cut of the days.

Personal/ family future plans and projects (changing the job, buying a house, change city, having a child, live together, get married, etc.)

Most female interviewees in WP4 postdocs and newly tenured research/academic positions speak about how they are happy in what they are doing, and would want to continue in research/academia, although in the postdocs' case the chances for getting jobs are perceived to be slim. *The juggling with children, family, care and work seemed to something that they took in their stride*, although STEM women did voice some *indignation about how difficult it was to speak about this aspect of their lives with their colleagues and heads of departments*.

Male interviewees for WP4 (ongoing postdocs and newly tenured) do have *very clear family building plans and are going ahead with them, and imagine them to be a necessary part of their life and well-being*. Getting settled geographically in one place seems to be experienced as more of a challenge, as male interviewees were generally more mobile, with either having experienced more postdocs abroad or else regularly travelling for research purposes, in STEM somewhat more than for SSH.

There is a clear difference in the way male WP4 present postdocs and newly tenured researchers/academics speak about their concerns and "mover" males from WP6. Often in WP6 male interviewees, there is a more similar discourse as their female counterparts; a regret voiced about the kind of *rhythm of work, overwork, working late nights and weekends as being a problem for family reasons*. Often, they also experienced some frustrations on the behalf of their partners or wives, who felt that their family building plans were delayed due to their unstable careers, either that of the interviewee in question, with the instability of the research careers, and non availability of stable jobs in one place. Or due to the need to be open to move to other countries and being far from their families. The reasons for leaving the scientific career paths did contain amongst others the sentiments of not being comfortable with this kind of no-boundary work, especially paired with little sense of gratification or sense made of the kind of "hollow" research standards and "non-socially useful" productions, and lack of real collaboration or social interaction that this job brought with it. They felt the need to look elsewhere, and although

the amount of work did not seem to have reduced for the majority of WP6 interviewees, both male and female, they felt that the personal sense making of their jobs and the gratification/satisfaction was much higher, and that they could relate to their work, and consequently also be more happy in their family lives and with their children. Some WP6 former SSH interviewees, both male and female, spoke about how they could explain much better what their current jobs (book shop keeper, teacher at technical colleague etc.) were about to their children, and that in research it was much more abstract and that kids would sometimes not understand the exact nature of that work.

What is striking in movers' female and in most female interviewees is that they speak about *how much*, the *partners' attitude matters,* in terms of how they live their work/life balance: most state that they have support from partners, who assume an equal amount of care and house work. The interviewees state specifically that *without this equal share their research/academic careers would not be possible or be difficult to manage to a greater degree*. More than one female mover interviewee states how their partner also has a research career and was/is more comprehensive about the situation. The most crucial support is therefore seen as being their partners, and less so of other family members, which is often not given, and if given then without comprehension about their choice of life/work.

There are some female SSH women in exceptional situations, one of which is in a couple and not yet mother, and who being from Cameroun and engaged in a UCL doctorate which is financed by her home country teaching institute, and whose husband is working/living in Cameroun. He did spend some time in UCL with her, but she sees this as having been more of an obstruction as she was able to concentrate less on her thesis work. She is currently 38 and will return to Cameroun to assume a public adult education position. She speaks about the difficulty in this career, which she absolutely adores and does not want to give up, *to build a family in the time that is "supposed to be dedicated to family and home building"*. Other friends and family of her age have already settled down, bought a house, got married and have kids and a stable job. However, she thinks that this delay in family projects is worthwhile in order to achieve in this career and get what she wants (*personal investment*). She also speaks about cultural issues, in which her prolonged absences from home are considered unseemly, as she is absent from what are considered important social events in her hometown social circle.

Another female SSH mover interviewee stopped her scientific career path to take up a part time work in social policy field, but regrets her decision and her part time work, as it is only fictional part time, doing full time in real time, and getting paid less. Also she has two children and a husband in research, whose position is more stable. There seems to be a group of female movers, from both STEM and SSH, who do not seem to have moved away from the research/academic works willingly, and have a *sense of regret and frustration that also is seen to effect their family life*.

In both present postdocs and movers former docs or postdoc females there is sometimes a *concern voiced about the biological clock for women*, delays in building a family and pursuing a career that is perceived as very un-stabilizing and unsettling. Moreover, these struggles are perceived to be solitary or lonely, as family themes and issues are often considered as taboo or not easy to speak about with male supervisors or heads of departments, who are not seen as understanding in these matters.

In the cases of women wanting to stay and pursue the career at UCL or elsewhere, there is a an idea that this kind of *personal delaying of family plans is a necessary investment* in order to be able to advance in their careers. However, in the case of female movers interviewees, who have merely changed the university for a newly tenured position or other postdoc, there is often much concern voiced about the high demands of the research/academic positions, of being omnipresent, of the incapacity of being institutionally engaged to level that was required, and of being a present mother to their children and spouses, and home building. There seems to be a sense of "high cost" of research/academic careers.

At the nomination after successful recruitment for a permanent position as a lecturer at UCL, the nominee has a three year probation period during which he/she has to fulfil what is called an individually defined academic project (PAIC; see policy above) that is usually devised with the president of the institute. This tool however is experienced according to interviewees in WP4, who have been nominated or appointed as more of a probation tool, a kind of initial examination of competences or requirements that need to be reached by three years of nomination at least. They mostly involve teaching and the obtaining of research project funding. It is not really experienced as a mentoring, although some advice is offered by the councilor in question, who is often a senior colleague. This relationship is not seen as a mentorship nor guidance, but more of a control mechanism and did not seem to contribute a lot to helping with the workload, orientation or achieving a balance between the three missions of the nomination (teaching, research, service).

2.4. CONCLUSIONS

Policy

There is strictly speaking not an integrated work/life balance Policy, but various frames and measures are nonetheless available. They do not however by themselves resolve the tensions generated by the nature of the scientific/academic work in a context of competition, a pressure for excellence and a public under-financing, which weigh down even more the workload of the lecturers and researchers.

It is however not negligible that work/life interference is beginning to be taken into account by the university.

One of the aids of conciliation, although it constitutes a « double-edged sword » in one interviewee words, is the flexibility that gives choice as to working hours and spaces. This is indeed « double edged » (see interview analysis) because this flexibility signifies that work is not limited to the spatial-temporal and can therefore engender a never-ending work, but simultaneously offers a margin of manoeuvre in the allocation of time of Professional and other activities. Consequently, the informal arrangements and local cultures that are well disposed constitute a central measure of conciliation.

On the other hand, the different types of leaves that are offered are quite large from a formal point of view. Their actual use is however quite contradictory, on the behalf of non-regularized or appointed researchers, by the perception that taking a leave of multiple weeks could put the person in question into disadvantage as to the competition of permanent posts, and could engender difficulties to attain research results. For the academic personnel, in a context of tighter financial resources, the taking of a leave often implies a local arrangement with colleagues, who have to then increase their workload to compensate for these absences.

For newly nominated/appointed lecturer-researchers, the individually defined academic project has the merit of fixing in a negotiable way, the frames of projected engagements, whilst knowing that academic work, in its three missions of teaching, research and service, is often difficult to plan and has to respond frequently to contingencies, opportunities and urgent deadlines.

The other measures have some momentary support for researchers and academics and have a symbolic character. They demonstrate that work/life balance is not read by the institution as a purely private affair and that it also elicits a responsibility on the part of the university as employer, which sees itself institutionally as a « large family ».

Practice and experience of early stage researchers/academics at UCL

It can be said that the experiences and sentiments of young researchers in early stages of their career, during their postdoc and early tenureship differ largely according to four major criteria of difference**:**

- sex

- parent vs. non-parent

- STEM vs SSH

- movers vs present employees

Women and men experience work/life balance in very different ways, although situations and family contexts are largely coinciding in the two groups. There is a small number of still single women and men, of which some women experience a sense of frustration or lack in terms of not being able to develop their personal and family life, and which they do attribute partially to a research/academic career (overwork, presence, isolated nature of work, mobility, instability…). This manifests itself particularly prominently in SSH female movers, as much in mothers as well as non-parent women. Men 'movers' speak more similarly when it comes to the nature of this work, which they feel does contribute to less presence for partners or children. When it comes to women movers or ongoing postdocs without children or partners, there is also a clear reference to the biological clock or the important dimension of maternity, playing itself out in duration of PhD thesis, in interactions with supervisors or colleagues (not being able to speak about this aspect of their lives) and less so in the actual advancement of their careers or in recruitment.

There is a strong sense in ongoing employees, both male and female that for instance, late night working or weekend work, or else a lack of stability due to few jobs and following the job to other countries, in short mobility, is something to be taken into their stride, as a kind of "personal and professional investment". However, spouses/partners are often seen to struggle with this, or else have similar working hours.

Generally, male ongoing postdocs and newly tenured researchers/academics do not feel any hurdles or imbalances in terms of their private or family lives. In the case of fathers, they mostly feel supported by their spouses/partners, who are also working, albeit usually part time. They esteem that the hardships or struggles are heavier for their spouses due to maternity leaves. Interestingly, men rarely refer to paternity leaves or parental leaves. They also account for spouses being often a little more present for the care of children, or in the case of mobility for research trips. Most female ongoing postdocs and newly tenured speak about a certain sense of achievement of work/life balance, however with accounts of much

mobility experienced, during which their babies were born often in unstable conditions experienced abroad, both financially or due to lack of family or other support.

All female ongoing postdocs and newly tenured researchers/academics and most movers' females, who are either in a couple or parents, speak about how their partner or spouse is the main support for the maintenance of work/life balance. The attitude and amount of care and household work that the partner does (which they feel to be equal to theirs in most cases) determine their continuity in the work force, whether it be in research/academia or other sectors of work and their time with children or spouse. Family support is present in some cases, which are rare, more often the couples seem to live away from family members in other countries, or else in quite a few cases, and couples themselves live apart due to different work institutions. Travelling is often spoken about in a resigned way, as though a normal part of work and family life: some women and also few men movers relate how this mobility is unsettling, not allowing stabilizing family plans, or of acquiring property etc, in short to settle. This is more pronounced in international postdocs, returning to home countries after being at UCL. There is also a definite difference in the way mobility is referred to by women and men, the latter being more enthusiastic and open to travel, also in terms of support (both financial and family-wise). Getting settled geographically in one place seems to be experienced as more of a challenge, as male interviewees were generally more mobile, with either having experienced more postdocs abroad or else regularly travelling for research purposes, in STEM somewhat more than for SSH.

There is a *difference in the way interviewees from SSH and STEM speak about parenthood and work/life interference*, as in STEM women experienced *more hostile environments*, where speaking (or asking for) about maternity or parental leaves was considered more taboo than in SSH; generally the STEM department was perceived be less family-friendly by women. Generally, women, both from SSH and STEM, who are movers and present employees, speak about how it was difficult to speak to male supervisors and colleagues about maternity in conjunction with their work. Some female STEM employees speak about keeping family and personal issues "low profile" and being "as masculine as possible" in their work environment. SSH mover women did not experience this so harshly, but generally state that they would speak rather to friends than to male colleagues about personal issues.

There is a *difference in way women and men perceive the flexibility of the nature of work*, men perceive this mostly to be a definite advantage in order to allow a family or life outside of work without any reduction of quality or efficiency at work, whereas women have more trouble organizing themselves to be efficient or productive, for instance while teleworking or during thesis writing: this seems to be mainly due the fact that women are with kids during telework and men are usually not. There is however a large difference in the way mover men and women spoke about the compatibility of this research/academic type of career with work/life balance and those presently employed at UCL: movers definitely stated that this type of career organization, culture and nature of work was not compatible with a work/life balance, especially paired with the lack of real gratification from the work itself.

In sum, the work/life balance issue and the work/family interference are a key dimension of the work experience and show the difficulty to be performative in the scientific field with a high level of commitment in such a greedy institution and, at the same time, to maintain an equilibrium with the other aspects of the life (private and family life). However the reality is

complex, depending on several variables such as sex, age, status, discipline, private situation (single, in couple, parents). The UCL has some formal policies to help its personnel to find a better work/life balance, but it's a very small answer to a huge issue. In fact, the increasing pressures for productivity, international mobility, competition and accountability contributes to create a strong inequality between researchers depending on their capability or not to find in their professional environment some family friendly support (in general informal) and in their private life a social solidarity (parents, spouses…) in order to adjust the private life to the needs of their working life. In general, men have more professional and private supports than women and in particular fathers than mothers, but some mothers can be in a very supportive environment for their career in their everyday life and some fathers not. Certainly, we need have a broader analysis on the university and the science regulation with its criteria of excellence. We have to reduce the pressures if we want to promote the quality of scientific research results to improve both its efficiency (knowledge qualitatively better, more innovative…) and the control by researchers of their time budget. Gender equality in science presents an invaluable opportunity to shift the paradigm.

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3. The NETHERLANDS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the policies and practices regarding work/life balance at the Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The report is based on the study of policy documents (e.g., Collective Labour Agreement), conversations with HR staff members, and interviews with current and past employees of the Institute for Management Research (IMR) and the Institute for Mathematics, Astrophysics, and Particle Physics (IMAPP). We first discuss the organization of work/life balance policies in the Dutch academic sector as a whole, then the Radboud University's vision on work/life balance, and continue with the analysis of employee practices of work/life balance within the two departments under study. Finally, we discuss several points of attention for work/life balance policies at the Radboud University.

General agreements on work/life balance policies in the academic sector are laid down in the Collective Labour Agreement (CAO in Dutch) for the fourteen universities in the Netherlands.

The Association of universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) together with four labour unions (FNV overheid, VAWO/CMHF, AC/FBZ and CNV overheid) recently signed a new collective labour agreement (CAO) for Dutch universities for the period 1-1-2015 until 1-7-2016 (CAO-akkoord 2015). Two country-specific issues are relevant in the context of work/life balance issues that get specific attention in the current labour agreement: firstly, the high number of temporary contracts among academic personnel in the Netherlands (40.7% in 2012, VAWO 2013)[13], and, secondly, the Dutch government's emphasis on citizens' own responsibility to take care of each other (e.g. informal care giving - *mantelzorg* in Dutch).

In reaction to the high number of temporary contracts among academic personnel, the current labour agreement includes a note saying that the parties signing intend to improve the legal position and career perspective of temporary employees. More specifically, they agreed to reduce the percentage of temporary contracts of four years of less for full professors, associate and assistant professors, and lecturers to 22% (CAO-akkoord 2015, Article 3). Employees can only be employed on temporary contracts for two years, with possibilities for extension to maximum four years for certain exceptions (e.g. for postdocs). Academic employers are only allowed to give their employees three temporary contracts in a row, if else, the employees need to be given either a permanent contract or they need to leave the university for six months and then come back – and start over with a new series of maximum three temporary contracts. Additionally, female employees who have children during their temporary contract only get compensation that fits within the period of maximum four years[14].

Secondly, the labour agreement writes that the approach to the so-called modernization of the conditions of employment is own responsibility of both employee and employer. This means that the employee is "responsible for their own career and durable availability" (ibid.) More specifically, the employee has to manage their own career and together with

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[13] Note that women more often than men have temporary contracts: 52% of the female academic personnel work has temporary jobs against 33.4% of the men (VAWO 2013).

[14] This information was given by one of the university's legal experts during an information seminar on 16 June 2015, organized by the TRAP network (see p. 6).

their employer is entitled to make tailor-made agreements on the basis of the employee's stage of life, individual circumstances and wishes with regard to conditions of employment (CAO-akkoord 2015, Article 2).

A bit further in the agreement (point 2c) it is stated that possibilities to take leave for informal care (looking after elderly family members and friends in need and/or children) should be brought to the attention of employees and supervisors. This particular task of informal care gets a lot of attention in recent Dutch social policies, and has become a new duty for Dutch citizens. Moreover, in an earlier note to prepare the new labour agreement the involved labour unions write that employees that fulfil informal care tasks need to get more support in the form of agreements that should guarantee the employee's balance between work and private life (Joint Commitment CLA Dutch Universities 2014). According to them, regulations to facilitate informal care should be part of university's policy on sustainable employability.

3.2. THE WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS AT RADBOUD UNIVERSITY

Within the framework of the Collective Labour Agreement, the Radboud University formulates local regulations at the central level. Units within the university are allowed to have their own specific agreements that may very well deviate from these local regulations (Personal communication with HR staff member, March 20, 2015). Yet, in practice, according to HR staff members at the Faculty of Science (for the Institute for Mathematics, Astrophysics and Particle Physics) and the Nijmegen School of Management (for the Institute for Management Research), there is no faculty specific policy regarding work/life balance issues and they follow the local regulations set out by the general HR policy of the Radboud University (Email correspondence, March 16, 2015 and March 17, 2015; personal communication, March 19, 2015). However, the staff member of the Nijmegen School of Management explained in individual cases they try to create tailor-made solutions (personal communication, March 19, 2015).[15]

Radboud University's strategic plan

In the Radboud University's strategic plan for 2015-2020 the university has introduced a vision on work/life balance issues of their staff: "family-friendly attitude" (Radboud University towards 2020, 2015). According to the HR staff member working at the central level, not only employees with (young) children are targeted, but also (older) employees who want to take care of their parents (Personal communication, March 20, 2015). He emphasized that both women and men are addressed. The existing regulations are:

- Flexible working time regulation, which enables employees to either gain or reduce their holiday hours by working 2 hours per week more (plus option) or less (minus option) than the standard 38 hour work week (full-time contract)

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[15] The HR staff member explained that in the case of an employee who has to take care of a sick relative (partner, parents or children) they would see what would be the best solution for the employee and employer. That is, when this employee would be able to work a couple of hours per day while fulfilling the care duties this could in some circumstance be done using holiday hours instead of taking care leave which imply a reduction in salary (70%) in the case of short leave period and an unpaid leave period in the case of a long period of care leave (see also: https://www.radboudnet.nl/personeel/lokale-regelingen/).

- A regulation in which an employee can exchange employment conditions (such as holiday hours, salary, end-of-year bonus, holiday allowance) for example to buy extra time (the so-called Employment Conditions Selection Model)

- Parental leave, in which parents are entitled to take up partially paid and partially unpaid parental leave for each child until they reach the age of eight years. Based on a full-time contract (minimally a 1-year contract), employees are entitled to a maximum of thirteen weeks of paid (62.5% of their salary) and thirteen weeks of unpaid full-time leave.

- Child care facility on the campus. There is a Child Day care Centre run by the Child Care Heyendael Foundation on the University campus, which can provide day care until children enter primary school.[16]

- The central HR department is developing an experiment in which employees make an agreement about concrete "results" (tasks) during their yearly evaluation with their supervisor. These so-called "function contracts" (term mentioned in Article 2 of the 2015-2016 labour agreement) should enable employees to be more flexible to combine work and private life, especially with regard to working hours (Personal communication HR staff member, March 20, 2015).

Existing regulations that apply to Radboud University regarding different life stages

The regulations concerning childbirth are written down in the 1995 Dutch Working Time Law (*Arbeidstijdenwet*). The most important rights are summed up here.

- Pregnancy and maternity leave, breastfeeding regulation: The employee is allowed to take time off for examinations during their pregnancy. The employee is entitled to sixteen weeks of paid pregnancy and maternity leave (100% of their salary). Women have to stop working at least four weeks before the due date and are allowed to stay with their newborn at least ten weeks after giving birth. The first nine months after child birth, employees have the right to spend one fourth of their working time to breastfeeding or pumping breast milk. Employers have to facilitate a room.

- Marriage and registered partnership: Employees have the right to one day of paid 'short-term leave' to issue an intended marriage, and four days of paid 'short-term leave' for a marriage or registered partnership (University Intranet). In general, the university has set up a list of activities related to 'family responsibilities' (depending on the degree of consanguinity or affinity) for which employees can make us of so-called short-term leave. Beside marriage, this includes amongst others, child birth (two days for the partner), death of a relative, moving house, illness of a child or partner, wedding and employment anniversaries[17].

- Career/job change and professional development: All employees are entitled to paid job coaching on the campus, which encompasses an intake and about six coaching sessions. For academic personnel the university provides specific coaching programs,

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[16] http://www.ru.nl/@718503/pagina/

[17] http://www.radboudnet.nl/vm/zoeken/@722281/leave/#Short-termcareleave

amongst others for postdocs and for academic personnel over 35 years of age. Radboud University also offers courses related to career development (University Intranet).

- Illness/stress/anxiety/disability: The University offers social work counselling to employees. Initially, the counselling is free of charge for employees, in cases of long term counselling a financing plan is set up.[18]

Self-organizing of academic personnel

In addition to the university regulations, the academic personnel of the university engages in several self-organizing initiatives to bring up and challenge issues regarding, amongst others, temporary contracts and work/life balance.

Since March 2015, the previous *Radboud Postdoc Network* was renamed to *Radboud Temporary Academic Personnel* (TRAP) (www.ru.nl/trap). One of the aims of the network is to have representatives in the Radboud University works council (Email to Radboud employees, March 9, 2015). The new faction won two seats in the elections (23 June 2015). Additionally, the network organizes activities for all postdocs, assistant professors, lecturers and researchers of the Radboud University, with themes as 'the new flexible work act' (June 2016) and 'the role of education on your résumé' (September 2015).

In 2012 a women's network was set up (www.ru.nl/halkes) which organizes activities for all Radboud women academic personnel (PhD candidates to associate professors), including seminars, workshops and round-table discussions. Work/life balance is a recurring theme within these activities. This network has close bonds with the university's women's professors' network (www.ru.nl/nvh), which is mostly concerned with lobbying and discussing policies with the Executive Board of the university regarding issues that concern women's careers and work environment.

3.3. EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF TEMPORARY RESEARCHERS

Having explained the policies regarding work/life balance at the national and university level, we now turn to the actual practices of work/life balance of early career employees of the university. The following analysis of work/life balance practices is based on interviews with 18 'movers' (either away from the Radboud University to other universities or research institutes, or out of academia) and 16 'stayers' from the GARCIA research institutes IMR (*Institute for Management Research*) and IMAPP (*Institute for Mathematics, Astrophysics, and Particle Physics*). These interviews were conducted from January to April 2015. In the table below you find an overview of the interviewees.

Table 3.1: Overview interviews used for the summaries

	Men	Of whom parent:	Women	Of whom parent:	Total
IMR movers	4	2	4	1	8
IMR stayers	5	2	4	2	9
IMAPP movers	6	5	4	2	10
IMAPP stayers	4	1	3	2	7
Total	19	10	15	7	34

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[18] http://www.ru.nl/amd/arbo-gezondheid/werk/

We will discuss several themes which appeared from the analysis: work as a hobby and boundless jobs; flexibility and working hours; university arrangements; going abroad; future plans; and academic stayers versus leavers.

Work as a hobby and boundless jobs

A general picture that emerged from the interviews is that work is seen as an extended *hobby* or a *passion*, and also something that is never finished. Some see this as an inherent part of being an academic, others experience it negatively:

> "You always have a bad conscience about something you should be doing."(IMAPP mover, m)

Because it was seen as a job of passion, several interviewees said to cope with sometimes long and variable working hours. Multiple interviewees spoke of making a 'sacrifice' to succeed in academia, the sacrifice being their personal and social life, and sometimes health. It was explicitly or implicitly seen by most interviewees that the norm for advancement or for tenured positions was to work (more than) full-time.

> "It is kind of expected that you give it your all. Especially if you want to come to the level of full professor. And if you have kids or want to have kids then there is a certain inequality I think."(IMAPP mover, m)

> "There certainly is something wrong with the pressure people put on themselves. And a sort of unspoken "you have to work hard". Nobody looks weird at you when you say all you did was work. Then it's like: 'Everybody does that'...everybody has the feeling that this is the only way to survive." (IMAPP stayer, m)

In contrast, however, some interviewees did not perceive much pressure from inside the institutes to work more than full-time. An IMR stayer (m) said for instance:

> "People do not work that hard here anyway. It's not an American institute, it's just Dutch. It's just, basically, a 9 to 5 mentality." (IMR stayer, m)

This mentality was also mentioned by IMAPP interviewees. Interviewees thus decoupled to a certain extent the requirements of a successful academic career to the culture they perceived inside the institutes.

It may be interesting to note that of the 34 interviewees only five (all men) were single. One of them had recently divorced because of his moving abroad and busy schedule. One other man was the interviewee with the highest mobility, moving to different countries, and now having moved to a different continent. A few interviewees believed that being single in academia gave scholars an advantage as they had the most time to work on their output and were seen as more eligible for an academic career.

From the interviews the general sense appeared that combining children or a social life and an academic career is difficult (most interviewees) if not impossible (a few interviewees). A tension exists between these two dimensions of life:

> "I want to spend a lot of time with my daughter, but I also have to work, because otherwise I am not competitive."(IMAPP mover, f)

This tension is also indicated by a few men interviewees who were thinking of leaving academia to be able to ensure stability for their young families (see also the section on *academic leavers* below). One IMR stayer (m) believed that it is harder for women than men to make a career due to potential wishes for getting a child.

Flexibility and working hours

Flexibility is the key word for the interviewees concerning academic work/life balance. Interviewees indicated they were able to determine for themselves when and where they worked. Some adhered to the Dutch standard of working from 9AM to 5PM, others preferred starting early, or late. Several IMR movers did mention how they felt pushed into more or less standard working hours, as the office building of the IMR closes early in their opinion.

Interviewees said that their job is about how they perform, their output, not how they get there. They perceive no control from supervisors, bosses or colleagues over their working hours. In that sense most interviewees stated they perceived to have freedom and autonomy in how, when and where to do their job.

It was not uncommon for interviewees to work from home on multiple weekdays. Working during weekends or evenings was also a common practice. Some explicitly went against this practice though:

> "Now I choose for [my social life]. It's nice that I might get a tenured position in ten years in astrophysics, but if I now have to give up ten years of my social life [to get there], you can keep that tenured job." (IMAPP mover, f)

People with children perceived *and* built in more restrictions on working outside of 'standard' working hours than interviewees without a family. One IMAPP stayer (f), for instance, used her flexibility and part-time work to compensate for her husband's non-academic job hours.

Almost all interviewees had a fulltime contract and almost all worked overtime in practice. Few of the interviewees worked part-time. The need to generate output and provide education put pressure on the interviewees to perform and spend extra hours on their job. One of the interviewees (IMAPP mover, f) bought off time through a part-time contract so she was still able to take care of her children - but still worked full-time. One of the movers (m) worked nine days every two weeks, to have one day off to take care of his child. Some women and men compared themselves to their supervisors or other colleagues who are men with a housewife or single women/men who can afford to work longer hours.

Having said that, interviewees generally acknowledged that they experienced variable periods of busyness. They experienced 'peaks' of activity at certain scholarly periods, such as before deadlines.

An IMR mover (m) and leaver of academia stated he had had trouble with maintaining work/life balance and said that without the flexibility in academia, he would have had three burn-outs during his PhD trajectory. Being able to have 'slacking weeks', he was able to endure the stress that came along with his PhD. An IMR stayer (m) put it in the following way:

> "I think [early career researchers in this field] have a hard choice to make. If they want to have a position in academia, if they want to stay, they will risk that their private life is ruined." (IMR stayer, m)

Being asked about work/life balance, several interviewees talked about home-work commute. Some used long hours of commuting in the train to do work, others saw commute time as wasteful and preferred to live in biking distance of the university. One

IMAPP mover (m) who now worked on the other side of the country had arranged for a bed & breakfast for two nights per week to avoid having to travel four days a week. Before, he had lived abroad during the week and with his family in the weekends. The fact that many colleagues did not live in Nijmegen influenced the work environment: it was mentioned by interviewees from both IMAPP and IMR that it was sometimes quiet at the offices.

University arrangements

From the interviews it appeared that people had little knowledge of the facilities available at the university, nor did they use them much. Mostly, work/life was organized individually, without the university involved, but with the partner and, if available, other non-work related people. Three things were mentioned by interviewees through which the university helped or could potentially help: 1) flexible working culture; 2) child care nurseries; 3) parental leave.

Regarding the first, it was mentioned by several interviewees who were parents that the flexibility provided by the academic culture helped to make work/life arrangements. Being able to arrange their own working hours, they could schedule when to work from home and provide care to their children and when to go to university. Informal cares giving for parents or others were not mentioned by any of the interviewees, except by one interviewee who worried about this for the future. There were also critical notes, however: for instance, an IMAPP leaver (f) mentioned how the 'coffee hour' happened at 3PM instead of in the morning, which disrupted her work flow and planning and meant she had to skip the coffee. She found this indicative for how the institute and academia at large are not geared towards other people than the full-time scholar occupied with nothing else but work.

Second, several parents mentioned child care nursery as a potential supporting facility. Child care was for the large part arranged by the parents themselves: agreements with the partner regarding working days and times, a 4+4 arrangement (both partners work 4 days and stay at home one day), babysitters, grandparents (mostly grandmothers), and day care nursery at the place of residence. Several parent-interviewees preferred a day care at the place of residence over a day care at the university (in the case that they did not live in Nijmegen), so as not to have to take the children all the way to Nijmegen. The opening times of the day cares determine the structure of the work days of parents. An IMAPP mover (f) mentioned how day care has become more expensive and unaffordable for her and her (academic) partner in the Netherlands.

The third facility mentioned was parental leave. There were a few interviewees (m) who made use of it; one of the parents did not. As said in the policy section, paternity leave is set at two days by law in the Netherlands, which was seen by several interviewees as very few. One IMAPP stayer (m) believed it was harder for men than for women to get parental leave approved, because

> "As a woman, everybody has seen it, you are getting a baby. As a man, you just go back to work, and you have a baby, and you have cake and then you continue [working]." (IMAPP stayer, m)

An IMAPP mover (f) critiqued the tenure track system in her new university for not allowing people to work part-time or be compensated for maternity leave. Multiple women interviewees mentioned this compensation and acknowledgement as an important issue, for instance for grant proposal evaluations.

In addition to these three facilities, several foreign scholars mentioned how they had no support system in the Netherlands as they had no family or friends nearby, so they were dependent on their partner and the arrangements they made with each other.

Another note regards the Working Time Law, which allows new mothers to spend a quarter of their time on breastfeeding, and requires employers to provide a space for doing so. Yet from interviews with several women who had become mothers, this regulation seemed unknown to them and no time or space was provided for them.

Finally, it seemed that role models were important for learning how to construct work/life balance. Several women mentioned how they actively sought contact with other women to learn how to better balance their private lives and careers. One used the university's women's network (not at the GARCIA institute) for that purpose. Doing so, the women said to perceive support for their situation. Some women stated how their supervisors or mentors had not been helpful in their work/life balance support, as these men had no partner or no partner with a job, and/or no children to take care of, and so did not understand the women's situation. One IMR interviewee (m) mentioned how he was able to talk about his home situation and work/life balance issues regarding his new-born with his (female) supervisor, who was in the same situation.

Going abroad

Going abroad was mentioned often in relation to work/life balance. This related to either moving abroad or going on short trips for research visits, field work, or conferences.

Moving abroad

Although mainly IMAPP interviewees acknowledged that doing at least one postdoc abroad was essential for success in their field, this seemed also true for IMR. An IMR mover (m, single) said the flexibility to sacrifice a part of your life to move abroad was inherent to making a successful academic career.

The '*two-body problem*' was mentioned explicitly by several stayers and movers, especially coming from the IMAPP. This refers to the problem where both partners are scientists and they have difficulties finding a job in the same place. Partner's careers and choices were important for the decision whether to move abroad or not.

> "The people who want to continue in science need to be willing to put a lot to the side, which implies not seeing for a while the friends and acquaintances they have in the Netherlands. And it gets more complex if you have a partner that wants to come with you, or not."(IMAPP stayer, m)

Several explained how the choice for a place of residence depended on whether the interviewee or the partner first found a job. A few (full time working) men who had moved abroad for a position had a wife with a small job, less ambition, or who were currently looking for a job. One woman interviewee's partner had arranged with his (non-academic) employer that he could take a one-year sabbatical to come abroad with her. Another interviewee's (f) partner tried to come but her staying abroad eventually led to a long-distance relationship of six years. Other interviewees (men and women) followed their partner abroad, or to Nijmegen. One IMAPP mover (f) showed how this can have a downside: she mentioned how she had missed the opportunity to build a successful career for herself by following her husband to the United States, instead of taking up one of the postdocs she was offered right after her PhD was finished. An interviewee stated how she

believed solving the two body problem was also a problem of the university, and could help employee's performance:

> "I think universities should care about this thing, because you may have a much better productive employee if they don't have this problem." (IMAPP stayer, f)

Another stayer (f, IMR) believed universities should accommodate dual academic careers, the lack thereof she saw as problematic.

Visits and conferences

The other aspect related to going abroad were shorter trips like conferences and research visits. What is notable is that interviewees with children mentioned how they travelled less (and felt less urgency to travel) since they had children. Their trips abroad were fewer and shorter than before they had children. As one IMR mover (m) said about him and his partner:

> "As of 2006 we have children, and well, I think [going abroad] for longer than a conference is unethical. That's not how we do things." (IMR mover, m)

An IMAPP stayer (f) stated that going abroad would be harder if she had had children:

> "If I had a family this could have been problematic. But as long as I don't have children, I just enjoy going to conferences, to meet new people, to hear new ideas and discover new places and new cultures. And so, I think, I feel privileged from this point of view." (IMAPP stayer, f)

Indeed having children affected the trips abroad. A stayer from IMAPP said:

> "Now I travel terribly little of course. During my postdoc projects I went away for a week every month, but now…that doesn't work anymore. So if there is something stopping me from traveling, it's my family and nothing inside [the institute]." (IMAPP stayer, f)

Again, this quote shows the individual approach of the interviewees regarding their arrangement of work and private life.

On the other hand, one interviewee mentioned how his partner and him both being scientists helped in making care tasks more equal: they were able to take turns going to conferences or doing field work. Both partners being academics thus provided them flexibility.

It was mentioned by a few interviewees that having a Veni scholarship (a prestigious research grant for early career scholars in the Netherlands) gave them the freedom to travel. Within the IMR, one section made small funds available for field work, which enabled one of the interviewees to go abroad from some time and collect data.

Future plans

Multiple interviewees were in doubt about whether to start a family and when, where to live with their partner (and family), or whether to buy a house. The insecure character of academic careers influenced the future plans of interviewees:

> "I am happy to delay my starting of a family until I have more security." (IMAPP stayer, f)

One IMR stayer (f) was happy that her husband had a permanent contract, as they had a mortgage on their house. She stated that mortgages are still geared towards having a

permanent position, and it is difficult to get one having fixed term contracts like in academia. An IMR mover (f) had been jobless for two years. This, and the uncertainty that comes with working in academia, made it difficult for her to make plans for buying a house or getting children. She said not to want to be far away from her partner because of the latter. She stated how she believed it is difficult to combine an academic career with having children.

Academic leavers

Interviewees who had left academia gave exit reasons, some of which were related to work/life balance.

One IMAPP mover (f) did not see going abroad - a requirement for an academic career in her eyes - as an option because of her partner who had a permanent position in the Netherlands and who did not want to leave his job or the country. This, in combination with her need for more practical-oriented work, led her to decide she did not have enough interest in an academic career or to go abroad for it.

An IMR mover (m) said he could not cope well with the pressure of full-time work, and felt less stress in his non-academic job. He spoke ('dramatically' in his words) of academia as an inhuman and 'parasitical' system that 'completely breaks you', because of the work pressure. He was not willing to participate in this competitive rat race and 'brag culture'. In his current job he had more control and oversight. Moreover, now his children got priority over his job.

An IMAPP mover (m) considering leaving academia said:

> "I would love to have both, I would love to have both an academic career and a social life, but if I have to choose between the two, academia has to go." (IMAPP mover, m)

He did not feel the work pressure coming with an academic career was worth the sacrifice of his personal life.

An IMR mover (f) had doubts whether to go back to academia after she left, among others because of her four children (two and two underway) and her difficulties with balancing private life and work. When she accepted a non-academic position at a university

> "It offered me much more peace of mind, a good salary, a permanent contract." (IMR mover, f)

Additionally, several men and women stayers considered leaving academia because of the continuous uncertainty and series of temporary contracts. Job security and their personal/family life in the end would get priority over their succeeding in academia.

3.4. CONCLUSIONS

In this report we have given an insight in the work/life balance policies and practices at the Radboud University. All in all, we see that the national regulation approaches work/life balance as a largely individual matter, and that is how the interviewed employees perceive it to be as well. The university does (plan to) make arrangements concerning work/life balance of its employees.

The increasing insecurity and growing number of temporary contracts was a reason for several interviewees to consider leaving or actually leave academia. Although the new Collective Labour Agreement is intended to challenge this trend, under current financial

pressures it is questionable whether the agreement will help scholars in the Netherlands and at the university in particular to indeed gain more permanent contracts and hence more security. Question is whether universities will take the shortened time frame for temporary contracts as an impulse for providing more permanent contracts, or whether they find ways to work around this.

Work/life balance is arranged for the large part individually by the interviewees and only limitedly with the help of the university's provided arrangements. For instance, employees arranged for day care by themselves. Informal care giving was not mentioned by interviewees and thus does not seem to be an important issue. The flexible working culture and parental leave arrangements tend to support work/life balance. Yet despite this flexible culture it is hard to come to work/life balance due to the high work pressure and publication pressure.

The norm for a successful academic career seemed to be a work week that is (more than) full-time. Flexibility is key, which is enabled as individual performance is measured by output (publications, education), not process and presence. However, the work and publication pressure put a strain on the advantages of this flexibility. An academic job/career is perceived as boundless. Having a partner and/or a family did set boundaries for many interviewees. The down side of the relative freedom to arrange hours and work is that the work never ends, weekends and evenings are used as working hours as well. Juggling both home and work blurs the boundaries between the two dimensions (e.g. working weekends, evenings, arranging day care, taking partner with you).

It appeared from the interviews that having (to take into account) a partner and children makes an academic career even more complex and sometimes more seemingly impossible than it is for single people. Having a partner who does not prioritize his or her career (either permanently or temporarily) helps, but two successful (scientific) careers combined with a relationship and family seemed difficult to attain. However, though this may be many people's perception, singles also experience work pressure and lack of work/life balance. The work pressure and job insecurity thus do not so much lie with individual choices for a relationship and/or a family, but in the academic system.

The picture emerges from the interviews that only the dedicated and truly passionate can stay in academia, even though the interviewees themselves show that not all of the 'passionate ones' succeed. The interviews showed that passion for research could not always withstand the perceived work pressure or the need to take a partner or children into account: some passionate researchers decided to leave or were considering leaving academia due to job insecurity and lack of work/life balance, despite their love for the job.

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4. ICELAND

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The available work-family policies within the University of Iceland are predominantly a reproduction of the country's national family policies, but academic employees also obtain work-life balance rights through the UI Equal Rights Policy, and through the regulations and allocations of their trade unions. The first part of this report will describe these rights and outline how the annual evaluation report of academic employees take family life into account. To our best knowledge, informal family-related initiatives are quite rare at UI, and unavailable within the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. However, there has been an experimental informal initiative within the School of Social Sciences that takes family-life into account, and this initiative will be discussed in more detail in section 4.2.

Until the 1990s family policies were an underrepresented topic in Icelandic national politics, but during the UN Year of the Family in 1994 a proposition was put forth in a parliamentary debate that called for such policies. Subsequently, in 1997 the Icelandic parliament passed a resolution on both the formation of an official family policy as well as the implementation of measures that had the primary task of strengthening the status of families (Eydal, 2003).

In Iceland, according to the law on birth and parental leave (nr 95/2000) both parents have the legal right to paid maternity/paternity leave as well as to unpaid parental leave. The Act on Parental Leave from 2000 states that the legal right to paid maternity/paternity leave is 9 months. This entails that each parent has the right to a three months' non-transferable leave, and parents get an additional three months period that they can split between themselves as they see fit. During the paid leave, parents with a full-time employment contract receive a payment up to 80% of their total average earnings, ending six months before birth, up to a ceiling of ISK 370,000 per month before tax. Parents that have a 25-49% work contract receive a minimum payment of ISK 97,786 per month and those working less than 25% receive ISK 59,137 (Eydal and Gíslason, 2014). The payments for these paid parental leaves derive from a special fund that is financed through an insurance levy.

While the Act on Parental Leave was well received in Icelandic society, the economic crisis has resulted in a reduction of the days that men take as paternity leave. Men took on average 80 days paternity leave in 2013, as compared to 102 days in 2008, while women took 181 days in 2013 as compared to 178 days in 2008 (Landshagir, 2014).

Additionally, both parents also have the legal right to 13 weeks unpaid parental leave before the child has reached the age of 8. Pre-primary education has formally been the first level of the educational system since 1994, and pre-schools are provided by the municipalities but also to some extent by private pre-schools. In 2013 84% of children were in preschool (Statistics Iceland, 2014). However, Ingólfsdóttir (2014) has pointed out that the system is partially flawed as pre-school places are generally unavailable for children younger than 18-24 months. Private child-minders do take care of children from 6-9 months, but these places can be expensive and the demand is usually higher than the supply.

4.2. THE WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND (UI)

The UI staff handbook

When looking more specifically at the work/life balance situation within UI, the handbook of academic staff provides guidance. Of the 176 terms described in the handbook, two of the terms bear reference to the work-life balance: "maternity/paternity leave" (fæðingarorlof) and "parental leave" (foreldraorlof). The descriptions in the handbook are accompanied by a link that redirects the reader to the official website of Alþingi (the Icelandic legislative assembly) where the laws on birth leave and parental leave (lög um fæðingar- ogforeldraorlof nr 95/2000) are specified and described as mentioned earlier.

The handbook does not contain concepts that include the word "family". However, the description of the term "working-hours" (vinnutímistarfsmanna) does mention the possibility of taking up flexible working hours. Here it can be read that academic employees can work flexibly providing that they deliver their forty working hours per week by full-time employment. The description also explains that it is allowed to omit coffee- and lunch breaks, in order to fulfil the working hours within a shorter time period. While the coffee breaks (15 and 20 minutes a day) form part of the working hours, it is stated that the lunch break (30 minutes per day) is not.

In light of the flexible working hours topic, it is worth mentioning that a study by Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra (2013) among academic staff in Iceland revealed that while these flexible work arrangements help parents to organize their working day and fulfil the ever changing needs of family members, this same flexibility does not prevent academic women from feeling like hamsters on wheels running between work and family obligations. It turned out that men were still more able than women to control their time at home and work, while the women because of this very same flexibility remained responsible for domestic and caring chores. This was also something, which emerged from the qualitative interviews, which will be discussed in paragraph 4.3.

A further term that is mentioned in the handbook is the annual evaluation system of the university. Academic staff is required to send in an annual report on teaching and research progress. Promotions and a monetary bonus are connected to this report, with mean scores being calculated over a three years period. Academic employees with a full time employment contract are supposed to collect a minimum of 7 annual points. Any additional points collected will provide the employee with a monetary bonus. This evaluation point system takes maternity/paternity leave into account by lowering the minimal amount of points that academics need to acquire. For instance an academic employee that has worked 6 months of the year and taken 6 months parental leave, has to collect 3.5 points that year as bear minimum instead of the regular 7 points. Nevertheless, parental leave can still result in a setback for academic career making if it involves less research productivity. Moreover, it seems plausible that parental responsibilities influence academics' research productivity in the long run, even though the scientific evidence for this notion is somewhat ambiguous (Heijstra, Bjarnason, Rafnsdóttir, 2015).

The UI Equal Rights Policy

Within the University of Iceland Equal Rights Policy 2013-2017 (2014) there is a clause on work-family balance in the chapter Fostering diversity among employees of the University

of Iceland. Here it can be read that one of the work objectives of the Equal Rights policy is "to create a work environment which enables students and employees to coordinate studies or work with family life". The measures taken to reach this goal consist of data gathering of previous conducted research. Subsequently there will be an evaluation on whether there is "the need for a special plan of action on family matters within UI to ensure that students and staff are able to coordinate their responsibilities in work or studies with their family responsibilities". The University Council Equal Rights Committee and the equal rights opportunities officer in collaboration with specialists bear the responsibility for the execution of this clause.

The role of the academic trade unions

There are two trade unions that look after the interests of academic staff. The largest one is the Association of University Teachers, which welcomes all non-full professor academic staff, and the smaller sized State University Professor Union, which is only open to full professors.

With regard to family-related rights that can be obtained through trade unions, the members of the Association of University Teachers have rights to allocations from the Public Sector Relief Fund (Styrktarsjóður BHM). Before being made eligible to any of these allocations the academic employee has to have paid its union fee for a total of 6 months, whereof at least 3 consecutive months. Fund members who take maternity/paternity leave and continue to pay their union fees during their leave maintain their full rights to the allocations of the Relief Fund.

With regard to family-related rights of these union members, they are eligible to a financial allowance from the Public Sector Relief Fund if their child is suffering from a serious illness. In the handbook of the Association of University Teachers (Félagháskólakennara, 2015) it can be read that "In case of serious illness of a fund member's child he/she can apply for an allowance for up to a period of 6 months. The Board will assess each case individually with consideration of all the circumstances, including any other compensation". If it concerns the long-term illness of a spouse, which has caused the union member to take unsalaried absence from work, the Fund will pay a daily allowance covering living expenses for a time period up to two months. However, no payment is made for the first 10 days of illness. In case of serious illness of other family members the Fund may pay a sickness allowance for up to two working weeks in case the employee is not entitled to an absence of work without salary reduction. However, also here no payment is made for the first 10 days of illness. Furthermore it can be read in the handbook that "In the event of the death of a spouse, a common-law spouse or a child, the Fund will pay a sickness per diem allowance for up to 2 working weeks if an employee is not entitled to absence from work without a reduction in pay. The same applies in the event of the death of other close relatives" (Félagháskólakennara, 2015).

With regard to family-related grants, the Fund pays 30% of the costs from microscopic or in vitro fertilization treatments (not including medicinal products). The maximum allowance per calendar year is ISK 120,000. Once a child is born both parents have a right to a birth grant provided that they are members of the Fund and fulfil conditions for fund membership. The birth grant is given to parents on presentation of a birth certificate and a copy of a new salary slip (stating the correct employment ratio). A full grant is a single payment of 200,000 ISK to parents for each child, but the amount is digressively

proportional to employment ratio. In the event of a miscarriage after 18 weeks of pregnancy, the Fund pays half a birth grant (Félagháskólakennara, 2015).

The information distributed by the State University Professor Union is less detailed with regard to family-related rights. The Union's webpage contains links that refer back to the webpage of the Alþingi (the Icelandic legislative assembly) were all national laws are specified and described. As the academic employees of the University of Iceland work in the public sector, the regulation on sickness and absence for employees in the public sector applies to them as well. This means that one of the two parents has the right to be absent from work 12 working days (96 working hours for fulltime employment) per calendar year in order to take care of a child under the age of 13 because of sickness. The employee has a right to full reimbursement during these days (Fjármálaráðuneyti, 2008).

Informal Initiatives

With regard to less formal initiatives, to our best knowledge, family-related informal initiatives have been unavailable in the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The School of Social Sciences however experimented in 2015 with a project in which the (grand) children of employees were invited to the workplace for one day during the Elementary School winter break in February. This winter break, which lasts for 3-5 days, can be problematic for working parents with small children, as they need to come up with alternative child-care arrangements during these days. To meet these (grand) parents part of the way, students within leisure studies (School of Education) organized a special program for the employees' children. In total forty children between the ages of 6-12 attended the program, which lasted from 9.00 to 16.30. This gave the (grand) parents the opportunity to fulfil their work obligations during the day despite this winter break. The initiative was called a success and other Schools may follow this example in the near future.

4.3. EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF TEMPORARY RESEARCHERS

The following analysis is built on information from 32 qualitative interviews. 20 of these are part of WP4, 12 part of WP6. The reason for the missing 8 interviews is that it has simply been impossible finding people who have quit the University of Iceland. As one assistant professor in the humanities told us in an email exchange: "You are going to have a hard time finding people who quit a steady job during times of crisis", referring to the economic crisis following the collapse of the Icelandic banks in 2008.

Of these 32 interviews, not all participants were equally eager to talk about work/life balance, most likely because some participants did not have children. Consequently, we are quoting from 15 different participants that we felt elaborated on the theme of work/life balance in ways that were vivid and descriptive. Of these 15 participants, 9 were women and 6 were men. All 6 men had children at home under the age of 18. Of the women, 5 were raising children under the age of 18, 2 had grown-up children and 2 did not have children, but were planning to have them in the future. Of the men, 3 were in STEM and 3 in SSH. Of the women, 3 were in STEM and 6 were in SSH. Two of the participants had left the University of Iceland to pursue an academic career elsewhere: one woman from STEM and one man from SSH. Two participants were post-docs working for the University of Iceland, but outside campus in collaboration with private companies: one woman from STEM and one man from STEM. 12 participants were assistant professors, 6 men and 6 women. 1 female participant was a post-doc working at the University of Iceland.

During the process of data analysis, issues relating to work-life balance emerged in different ways. In this section we provide an analysis of the most importunate themes to emerge in our interviews. They relate to research participants' way of thinking of family responsibilities; their immersion in the world of academia at the expense of family and private life, and the role of 'flexible' working hours in relation to work/life balance.

It is important to mention that some interview questions appeared to be more importunate than others and some interview questions did not resonate with Icelandic research participants at all. For example it is virtually impossible to find working couples with children in Iceland that do not make use of institutional childcare services. As such, for the Icelandic research participants with families (of whom no one had a stay-at-home partner) institutional childcare services were seen as a given.

In the same vein, questions relating to the ability to attend academic conferences found little resonation among research participants. Also, questions relating to services offered by the departments in question became redundant in the Icelandic context, since, as stated in the introduction, the University of Iceland reproduces national family policies rather than offering any particular services to employees with families. However, research participants were happy to share information about their use of national family policies such as parental leave and their experience with the flexible working hours of academia.

Some General Observations

Overall, research participants agreed that the current academic climate is one in which the workload is very high and that it can be hard to fit all of one tasks into a daily routine that does not involve working in the evenings and on weekends.

As one female assistant professor in STEM put it:

> "Teach[ing] takes a lot of time and it takes a lot of hours of working and you want to still find time for research, so the consequence is that you do research on the weekend or in the evening when you maybe finish prepar[ing] the teaching".

This is just one of many examples showing that the combination of teaching and doing research is a challenge for anyone in academia. Other examples showed increased expectations on behalf of students to have their needs met and their questions answered at their discretion. A woman assistant professor in SSH expressed it as such:

> "I feel that work is always there, especially with email and Facebook, all the little Facebook chat groups they have for the school here. And I might be on Sunday morning on Facebook, and a question pops up, and can't even have THAT to myself. I might be sending my sister a TED talk that I find interesting and suddenly I'll have a student yelling at me, like 'I don't understand!!' and I'm like —- it's Sunday morning, I'm wearing a pyjamas … LEAVE ME ALONE!"

On top of this comes the challenge of being able to participate in research conferences, which is not factored into the working routine of employees. As one woman assistant professor in STEM put it, "since teaching is so spread throughout the year, you have to find someone to substitute you for your class", meaning that it is the responsibility of the employee to make their own arrangements. However, for those who have started a family or are thinking about doing so, this presents even more challenges. Interviewees, depending on different factors, handled these challenges differently.

In the following sections we look at the themes relating to work/life balance that emerged as most importunate in our data analysis.

A Choice or a Fact of Life?

In relation to work/life balance, one theme that emerged was related to the pressure of performing on both fronts. Both men and women experienced the feeling of never being off work; that there was always more to be done. For example, a woman assistant professor in SSH said that working in academia is to be in "a constant conflict" with one's conscious in that

> "you can always do better, you can always publish more, [and] you can always do more research. And there is always a lot of work waiting. I find it difficult always feeling guilty because I could always do more."

Whereas this constant pressure of work was a very common theme for both women and men, only women described the pressure of home life in the same way as they would describe working circumstances. Like one woman in SSH stated in relation to her home life:

> "You can always do better and [I have to] stop beating myself up for not being everywhere for everybody all the time — that is just a demand that is too high to have for myself."

Not only does she take it for granted that she must find a way to tackle her work/life balance, she also experiences a lot of internalized expectations to be both a good mother/wife and a good academic. Notice that her being there for her family is not constructed as a choice she has made for her, but as an inevitable consequence of starting a family in the first place.

For women interviewees, this pressure to perform on both fronts did not just emerge in the interviews as a seemingly internalized point of view as in the previous example. Sometimes the pressure came directly from the source. One woman assistant professor explained that:

> "During my pregnancy I … was having a lot of workload and was not coping, and I kind of broke down and I was saying that I was having too much work and it was not taken seriously [by a person in charge]."

Another woman echoed this sentiment when saying:

> "it is not enough that your son is sick, no, I got whipped into full teaching responsibilities. Total lack of sleep and – just no considerations."

In general, many women interviewees, both postdocs and assistant professors tended to speak of hardships and challenges when it came to compromising work and family life. Like one woman in SSH put it:

> "It becomes this conflict between the academic way of living and family life … If you are constantly working, how do you take care of yourself and your family? How do you take time?"

Men, on the other hand, tended to talk about the difficulties of juggling work and home life in terms of concern, priorities and choices. As such, one male assistant professor expressed concern by saying:

> "I wouldn't be surprised if my kid, at 17, asked to reflect upon her childhood […] would probably remember me working a lot."

Notice that while he expresses concern, he does not take it for granted that he ought to be home more. During the interview he also expresses the clear need to perform at work, but never mentions the same pressure to perform at home. Another former male employee from SSH, who went on to working at a different university, expressed concerns that were more priority-related when saying:

> "I came to that point that I wanted some other qualities in life — living with my family … It was a tough decision because I have ambitions for the academic development of [my academic field]."

Take note of the fact that while this former employee prioritized family over work, he clearly experienced that *he had a choice*. Yet another male researcher from STEM echoed this when saying:

> "If I would have stayed here [during evenings and weekends] and been super driven and not … be with my family … I probably could have advanced faster."

Taken together, when faced with a lack of time to perform all of one's roles in life, there might plausibly be a tendency among men to prioritize, i.e. *choose* either family or work and accept the consequences of prioritizing one over the other, but not to think of family responsibilities as a *condition*. This might also be connected more broadly to men's position in the labour market, where they experience a level of possibilities and choices that women do not (Pétursdóttir, 2009).

In short, both male and female interviewees were aware of the importance of prioritizing family, but only for the men was this experienced as a choice – not a choice without consequences or possible regrets, but a choice nonetheless. On the whole, for women interviewees, the challenge of balancing work life and home life was not a choice, but a fact of life. Another clear example of this came from a female postdoc in STEM, who we asked about the way time was spent when both parents were home. She said:

> "we might both be at home, and I have to be playing with my son or attending to him constantly, but his father can, you know, be on the couch and read a book for some time."

Without rushing to steep conclusions about the details of this woman's life, her experience is an example of family as condition on one hand, and family as choice on the other. She has to be attending to her son constantly (*condition*) while he can make a decision to do something else (*choice*).

We might venture that this is strongly related to broader gendered societal discourses in which women are still perceived as having the main responsibility for the well being of the family. Another example of this from the interviews was a woman assistant professor, who, in a manner of speaking, was one of the exceptions to confirm the rule. She said:

> "I shouldn't be recording this, because it doesn't reflect really well on me … but I didn't even take maternity leave when I had my second child. Because of work and because of financial circumstances, I just couldn't really afford it."

The fact that she has concerns about even saying this out loud on tape – that she made a *choice* no different from that which men often make – shows the extent to which the discourse on women's eternal presence at the centre of the family and their taken-for-granted role as mothers has been internalized in the minds of some.

It is possible that this tendency towards an asymmetry between male and female academics when it comes to work life and family life has an impact on the leaky pipeline. As a woman postdoc in STEM (without a family) put it:

> "If I'm gonna have a family, then I'm gonna be there for my family ... But if you look at the examples of women [in academia] who have been able to have kids, [been on] maternity leave ... then you start giving up a little bit in relation to this project."

Once again, being there for one's family is constructed as a taken-for-granted fact of life, and the concerns that this entails makes this woman question her future options in academia. Oppositely, as previously shown, the men tended towards thinking of prioritizing family as a *choice*. In this way, we might ask: Is it a possibility that some men might plausibly not consider the hardships of compromising work life and family life in the same way that women do, because in the end, the underlying assumption is that women will take care of the family?

However, the question of maternity leave is not just a concern for women before they begin their academic career. It might influence how fast their career takes flight after they land their first job in academia. One woman put it like this:

> "I do think that the system is very far from sufficiently taking into account maternity leaves, breaks away from work because of birth and maternity leave … Because especially my second pregnancy, I was — my health wasn't that good. Or I was able to work, but I spent all my focus on teaching, because teaching is what can't wait… So I worry a little bit that I'm now stuck with few points — and if you're stuck with few points its harder to get the grants, and I do feel the system does not take that sufficiently into account — it worries me quite a bit."

The fact that it is a woman who worries that her maternity leave might be a setback for her career because she will lose time from research could, for all we know, be entirely coincidental and not gendered at all. However, the fact of the matter is that throughout the interviews, it is almost only women who raise these concerns. Again, based on these interviews alone, it would seem that men tend to *choose* family, while women tend to accept it as a *fact of life.*

Immersed in Academia

On the whole, women interviewees tended to take family responsibility as a given. As with any pattern, however, there are of course exceptions. One former female employee in STEM, for example, explained how her

> "sons have complained a lot that I was so preoccupied with work and that I always worked nights, always on weekends and was never off work."

However, she adds:

> "I realize this, but I have to admit that in some way, this work is also my passion … and it interests me way beyond what it is needed to carry out a job. And for exactly that reason it is so fucking dangerous. The working class, if you can call it that, that is at the universities is being abused and we're at a level where people [demand] more and more of themselves until it becomes difficult to turn the debate around and lead a normal life."

In this example, this former employee explains how academics' love for their jobs is sometimes used against them. Because their work is also their passion, or as another interviewee put it: "We're not in this business for the money", it follows that an academic

can be expected to perform at work at the expense of their home life and the little free time they have. In another example a woman assistant professorwas asked if she felt her work life and family life was appropriately balanced to which she answered:

> "Yes, I can't complain [frown on face, not sounding enthusiastic]. What I do for a living is something I'm very interested in, so — but obviously I'd like to read more novels and be more of a spiritual person than I am — when you have low wages you tend to spend a lot of time thinking about how you're gonna, sort off, fit everything in — eh, and ehh — not that I can complain, I am adequately compensated as a whole, but — for example, if my [other jobs] would disappear, and they can — they're only for one year ahead in time — ehm — you tend to overly worry about that."

Obviously, her situation is far from ideal in that she has to work other jobs next to her job in teaching and research in order to keep everything afloat at home. She is also acutely aware that while she finds her job satisfying, it does compensate for the free time she could potentially spend with herself to increase her life quality. Yet, because what she does for a living is something that interests her, she does not feel that she can allow herself to complain about her low wages. In this way, she has somehow convinced herself that her passion for her job must necessarily devalue it at the same time and that this is perfectly fine. This sentiment is mirrored in previous research on women and men on the Icelandic labour market, where women, unlike the men, used the passion they had for their jobs to justify their low wages (Pétursdóttir, 2009: 223).

In the second to last example, a former employee was able to recognise that academics' passion for their job can be "dangerous", while the woman in the last example appeared to have internalized this exact kind of academic self-devaluation. This might be a reminder that those who rely on the system for survival, are less likely to consciously criticise it. Someone outside the University of Iceland, a former male assistant professor, explained in a sarcastic tone of voice what he believed to be the underlying discourse of the inner workings of the University of Iceland:

> "You should be so grateful that you have work, and that you work at such a great institution, and if you complain about the work you need to do —- that is just because you are investing in the future, and even though you need to work a lot, it's just a part of the life of an academic — if you want to be an artist, you have to starve first."

This quote perfectly embodies the way in which academics may feel immersed in the systems for which they work. If a person happens to work with something that is connected to their interests, it becomes legitimate to put unrealistic demands on them in terms of workloads and to under compensate them for their work, the underlying assumption being that their work will advance their career towards a more lucrative existence. However, academics still consent to being part of this system in spite of all the downsides. This might be explained by the lack of a self-reflective class-consciousness among academics in general, but more research is needed in this regard.

The potential implication of having your passions used against you, as in the previous examples, is that work might no longer be an adequate means for supporting a family. This is because institutions have the leverage to extort its employees beyond what is reasonable. As one male participant said:

> "I get a lower salary as an [assistant professor] in Iceland than I did as a PhD student in [another country]. So I mean, it's — it's just ridiculous. And then you're supposed to do your research in the evenings and weekends and on the summer holiday, so — but we're not in this business for the money, so…"

In other words, judging from these interviews there is little doubt that academics in general are very unhappy with their working conditions. However, some still choose to continue working within this framework, and not only that, they seem to do it quietly without making fuzz. While most interviewees were willing to complain behind closed doors, no one mentioned having ever come together with their colleagues to demand higher pay or better conditions or having spoken to their union, because after all, "[you] should be so grateful that you have work."

Overall, there appeared to be widespread dissatisfaction with pay and workloads in academia, but also a general culture of inaction in which interviewees just tried to make things work the best they could. For some of the men we interviewed this eventually meant that one had to make a choice whether to prioritize work or prioritize family. For most of the women interviewees, this was not perceived as a choice between family and career. For them the question appeared to be whether they were prepared to make family and their academic career work simultaneously, or quit the academic career and do something else. The women who were still in academia seemed determined to make a family and their academic career work out simultaneously. We end this section by letting the following quote by a woman assistant professor in SSH be an example of that:

> "I wake up at, eh, sometimes at 6.00, sometimes at 5.30 … I have [x number of children] and I can only work until 16.00 three days a week — so to compensate for that I have to just wake up a little bit early, just to, you know, read and be up to speed with what I'm gonna do during the day and we all get up at 7.15 and we're out on the road at 08.00, but I drop my [children] off at the school … at 07.50 for me to be able to make it to class at 8.20 when I have to be …and then I simply - it's a mixture of preparing for classes, to do the lecturing, interact with students, eh, interact with the department, eh, go to department meetings, quorums, eh, and I also [name of side occupation] that's like an added 25% job, so I have to do that either in the morning, in the evening or during the weekend."

Flexibility

However, a "service" or work arrangement offered not just at UI, but in academia in general is the promise of flexible working hours, which supposedly help busy academics balance work and family life. As such, one male assistant professor from STEM explained how he tried to "use the flexibility to spend more time with the family". As he pointed out, "that's the good thing about academia, you have this flexibility, there's no [time clock]."

In this way, flexibility was greatly appreciated by interview participants in general, but the way in which flexibility was appreciated was not so straightforward.

A woman assistant professor in SSH tried

> "to start my day early … then I can leave earlier cause my daughter is at home, so they're really flexible here, sometimes if she is sick or something I can work from home and that's great".

Another woman in SSH maintained that flexibility is

> "one of the perks of academia … so — if I have some duties towards my [children], or — my mother who is growing older, I can obviously go and nobody cares." Yet another woman really appreciated the fact that "if I have to go pick up my son if he is sick or something like that, no one has anything to say about that."

In these examples it is obvious that flexibility becomes a means of simply performing other responsibilities in life, such as caring for one's family. During the interviews, participants were allowed to reflect freely on their experiences with balancing work and family life, and we would venture here that it is somewhat revealing that it was almost only women who explained the ways in which flexible working hours was used to see to family responsibilities.

Oppositely, two male researchers from STEM had very different perceptions of what flexibility meant. Whereas one believed flexibility to be "fun" because you have the freedom to "do what you want", another asserted: "There's no clock you have to punch when you go home, and I think that results in … more than an 8 hour work day", insinuating that flexibility entices you to perform extra duties at work, i.e. not using flexibility to tend to the family.

For other women interviewees, flexibility was used to recuperate, but not in the way one might think. One woman put it this way:

> "Because I can allocate time in my own fashion, even when I have to work 45-55 hours a week or more, it doesn't matter because I feel that when I need the rest, I can take the rest, you know, I have a chair here and a blanket [points to a comfy looking chair and blanket], so I can just nap if I need to."

Another woman described a similar scenario from when she was pregnant:

> "I'd come here after teaching and I'd have a mattress here in the office, I would just lie on the floor and sleep, I was completely, like, my energy levels were like this much [using thumb and index finger to indicate tiny amount], so I had a pillow and a camping mattress and would just take a half hour nap, recuperate and go back to work."

In both of these examples, recuperation becomes instrumentalized. Its function is not to enhance life quality or even improve work/life balance. It becomes a way for the academic to work even harder.

As such, as an institutional "service" or work arrangement, flexible working hours are supposed to be a "perk of academia" as one participant put it. A woman assistant professor ventured into an explanation about what she needed in life next to her job in order to feel content and happy. Consider the following brief conversation:

> "Participant: I need a lot of free time, because I enjoy doing a range of different things. I need to go skiing, I need to sing and I need to dance a lot, and I also need to talk to my friends, go to coffee houses and just live my life.
>
> Researcher: And do you have time for that?
>
> Participant: No.
>
> Researcher: No?
>
> Participant: Not enough, I try making time for it; I use Christmas."

The sad implication here is of course that this participant does not have the time on a daily basis to do the things that make her happy, much less live the life she wants to live. As such, while the thought of flexible working hours conjures up thoughts of more free time, it often ends up being simply a way for academics (mostly women it would seem) to live up to the expectations put on them to invest equally in both family and work.

4.4. CONCLUSION

While the University of Iceland does not offer up any particular services or arrangements in relation to work-life balance, the flexible working hours of academia are generally perceived as an opportunity for creating this balance. However, as both recent research (Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra, 2013) as well as our own thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews has shown, it is predominantly women, who speak of flexible working hours as an opportunity for tending to family responsibilities.

This reflects a national tendency for women to take more maternity leave than men, who have generally been taking less paternity leave since the Icelandic economic collapse. The implication of this is necessarily that, on the whole, women in academia tend to experience overall bigger workload than men because they do not have a choice to make an existing family arrangement work out – it simply has *to.*

In the same vein, while the publication point system at the University of Iceland supposedly takes maternity/paternity leave into account, it still creates a setback for anyone who goes on leave in that they will be able to publish much less for an extended period of time. It also does not take into account the fact that it is primarily women who often end up taking on the brunt of the responsibility for child raising *after* maternity/paternity leave has ended. The fact that the underlying assumption of modern Icelandic society is that it is primarily women who raise the children ensures, at least to some degree, that it is more often women than men that end up not being able to keep up with the competitive atmosphere and the high productivity standards in academia.

The qualitative interview process also showed that some women and men felt that their passion for their work was used against them. Because they, as academics, were in a job, which they found interesting, they expressed that this passion for their livelihoods was used as leverage against them to work them harder and pay them less, the implication being that they should be thankful for the opportunity to even be in academia to begin with. Others complained about their pay and workload while paradoxically maintaining that they could "not complain" or that they were "not in it for the money".

Most importunate in the interviews, however, was the implication that women interviewees tended to think of their responsibility towards their family as a given, whereas men thought of it as something they could select or deselect at their discretion with the consequences that this entailed.

On the whole, the work-life balance for employees at the University of Iceland appears to be strongly affected by a combination of big workloads and gendered traditions that construct women as the main family caretakers. Also, the heavy workloads might not just be a result of unfortunate developments in academia in general in recent years; it also appears that an institutionalized pressure on employees to be grateful for their jobs and not complain help to uphold the existence of this work ethic. The gender dynamics that work alongside unreasonable workloads are so that women primarily insist that career and family should work simultaneously, while men do not seem to be giving this a lot of thought. The end result is that women are not just more overworked than men. Women also risk a setback in their publication records and careers, both because they take maternity leaves that are proportionally longer than men's and because they generally end up taking on the most of the responsibility for raising children.

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5. SWITZERLAND

5.1. INTRODUCTION

As in other domains, Equal Opportunities (EO) and Work-Life Balance (WLB) policies vary between the 26 *cantons* in Switzerland, and these differences are reflected at the university level. However, some common trends regarding the Swiss gender regime and childcare facilities can be identified at national level. In a first chapter, we will summarise some elements already discussed in Garcia working paper n. 1 (Le Feuvre et al. 2015), in order to draw a general picture of WLB policies at the Swiss national level, before presenting some policies drawn up by national research institutions. In a second chapter, we will present the detailed situation of the UNIL and the two GARCIA departments. This desk-based analysis will be followed by the results of the interviews we conducted with members of our GARCIA target group.

The Swiss gender regime and its consequences for work-life balance in academic careers

Women's part-time work

Switzerland has never been a forerunner in the adoption of EO measures. The first version of the Federal Law on Gender Equality (LEg) was adopted in 1996, and represents the main contribution to the constitutional duty to promote equality between women and men, which was defined as early as 1945. We should here also remember that women's right to vote and stand for election was enshrined in the Federal Constitution only recently in 1971, some 123 years after male suffrage. As the cantons remained free to implement (or not) women's suffrage at their level, the canton of Appenzell Inner Rhodes was the last canton to refuse women's suffrage. It was forced to include them by the Federal Court in 1990.

The dominant Swiss gender regime is characterised by relatively high activity rates among women, but also high levels of women's part-time work (one of the highest rates in Europe, second only to The Netherlands), particularly among mothers, who also take extended breaks from the labour market when their children are young. As indicated in Table 5.1, women's share of full-time jobs has been relatively stable since the beginning of the 2000s (28%), whereas their share of part-time employment has marginally fallen over time (from 80% in 2000 to 77% in 2013). In Table 5.2, we can see that about a quarter of the female labour force worked less than half-time, while a third worked between 50% and 90% of full-time(the remaining 41.5% work full-time). Even if the proportion of men working part-time almost doubled between 1991 (7.7%) and 2012 (13.8%), the proportion of women working full time decreased during the same period from 50.8% to 41.5%. This means that the Swiss "modified male breadwinner" gender regime, with men being the principal breadwinner of the family and women working part-time in order to care for their relatives is relatively stable over time.

Table 5.1 - Women's share of full- and part-time employment, 1980-2013

Women as % of all part-time workers	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
Austria	85.6	84.1	80.8	80.9	81.2	79.9
Belgium	83.8	80.5	79.5	78.6	79.0	79.4
Iceland	77.3	79.1	73.1	74.2	72.4	72.2
Italy	72.3	78.1	78.1	77.2	75.3	74.1
Netherlands	73.3	72.9	71.9	72.2	71.5	70.5
Slovenia	58.5	56.4	59.2	58.9	61.3	60.5
Switzerland	**80.2**	**80.5**	**78.3**	**77.7**	**77.5**	**77.2**
Women as % of all full-time workers	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013
Austria	35.5	34.8	34.8	34.6	34.4	34.7
Belgium	32.9	33.3	34.4	34.3	34.2	34.9
Iceland	34.8	37.6	40.3	41.1	41.4	41.2
Italy	33.4	33.4	33.7	34.0	34.3	34.5
Netherlands	21.5	20.7	21.1	21.2	21.2	21.5
Slovenia	45.4	44.6	44.1	44.4	44.2	43.7
Switzerland	**28.1**	**27.9**	**27.7**	**28.0**	**27.9**	**28.2**

Source: UNECE Statistical Database, compiled from national and international (Eurostat) official sources.

Table 5.2 - Full and part-time activity rates, by sex, 1991 and 2012
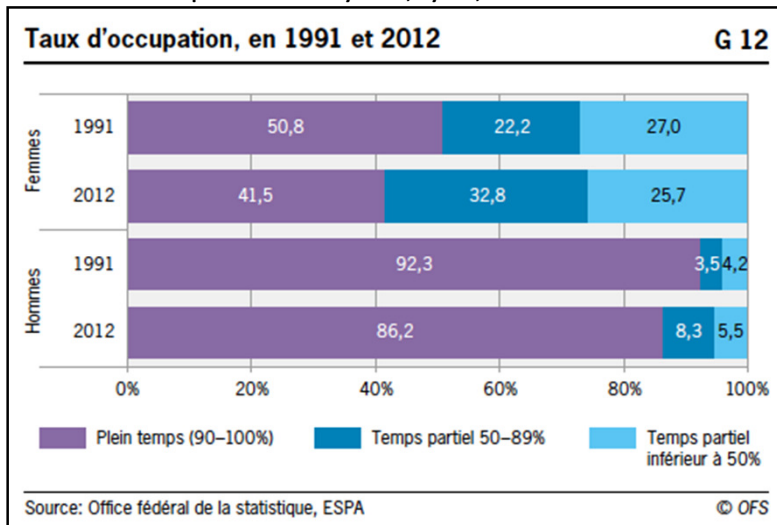
The variability of women's activity rates is bolstered by a number of structural characteristics of Swiss society: the lack of affordable childcare, long working hours for full-timers (42 hours per week on average), a low male unemployment rate, high levels of

horizontal and vertical segregation, a relatively large gender pay gap, particularly at the upper reaches of the occupational hierarchy.

In addition to these elements the combination of a household-based income tax system and the "redistributive" pricing system of pre-school childcare arrangements often makes it economically counterproductive for mothers of young children to work full-time. This is almost always the case for mothers of two or more children (Bütler, 2006) as shown in a study carried out in 2006 by an economist from Saint Gallen University. A follow-up study on the French-speaking cantons was commissioned by the Federal Bureau of Equality and published in 2008 under the title "When it costs women more to work than it pays" (Bütler, 2008). This study had a significant impact on public opinion and led to the decision to increase the provision of crèche places in a number of Swiss cantons, including the Vaud canton.

A more recent study based on the same methodology as the Saint Gallenstudy (marginal cost of each 20% increase in women's working time) reaches much the same conclusions. When they are married with two children, it is economically disadvantageous for most Swiss women to work more than 40% of full-time (i.e. two days a week). This is true whether they are living in households with relatively high or relatively low-income levels. The only case where it is financially viable for women to work full-time concerns female-headed single-parent families in the low-income bracket (Schwegler&Schultheiss, 2014).

Parental leave

With a birth rate that currently stands at 1.53 children per woman, Switzerland is located in the middle to bottom range of European countries as regards fertility; childlessness is stronger in the German-speaking cantons and in the largest cities (Miettinen&Szalma, 2014: 37).

Issues around fertility rates and working mothers have been relatively high on the Swiss political agenda over the past 10 years, with an initial focus on paid maternity leave being slowly replaced by debates on paternity/parental leave policies (Valarino, 2013). Although maternity leave as a right has been enshrined in the Swiss Constitution since 1945, it took no fewer than five parliamentary debates (in 1974, 1984, 1987, 1999 and, finally, 2004) and some 60 years for the principle of paid maternity leave to be imposed by law. Thus, it is only since the 1st of July 2005 that Swiss mothers have been entitled to 14 weeks statutory maternity leave, paid at 80% of their previous salary. In some cases, the adoption of this Federal paid maternity leave legislation was disadvantageous for women in the more progressive cantons or working for particular (usually multinational) companies. For example, prior to 2005, public-sector employees in Bern were entitled to 16 weeks leave, paid at 100% of their salary. Some of these more advantageous provisions have been maintained whereas others have been brought into line with the Federal legislation. In order to be eligible for this leave, women must have worked continuously for a minimum of 5 months in the period prior to the birth / adoption of their child.

As yet, there is no legal provision for paternity leave in Switzerland (Valarino, 2013). As was previously the case for maternity leave, some employers do provide some opportunity for fathers to spend time with their newly born children, but the duration of these provisions is extremely limited (from 1-2 days to 2 weeks at the most). Research has shown that, even in companies that have introduced a short period of paternity leave on a voluntary basis,

social acceptance of such measures is still very limited, particularly for men with management responsibilities (Valarino, 2013).

The lack of childcare facilities

In a cross-national comparative perspective, Switzerland appears in the group of countries where childcare facilities are the least developed, both for pre-school children and as regards extra-curricular activities for older children (for example, most Swiss primary schools do not provide a canteen service at lunchtime). In 2014, almost two-thirds of under 3 year-olds did not spend any time at all in institutional care structures, and only 5% of this age-group were taken care of in crèches or day-care centres for more than 30 hours a week (Table 5.3). Even when we consider a broader age range (0-12 years), it appears that 40% of Swiss children receive no formal or informal care services; beyond the time they spend in school, they are exclusively looked after by their parents, usually their mothers. Again, it is quite frequent for working parents to combine some kind of formal and informal care solutions for their children, always on a part-time basis (Table 5.4). This implies a lot of "juggling", according to the availability of professional or family carers. It is quite common for grandparents to take care of their grandchildren one day a week, in order to reduce the cost of institutional childcare services, even when these are theoretically available (Table 5.5).

Table 5.3 - Number of hours formal childcare for the under 3s, by country, 2012
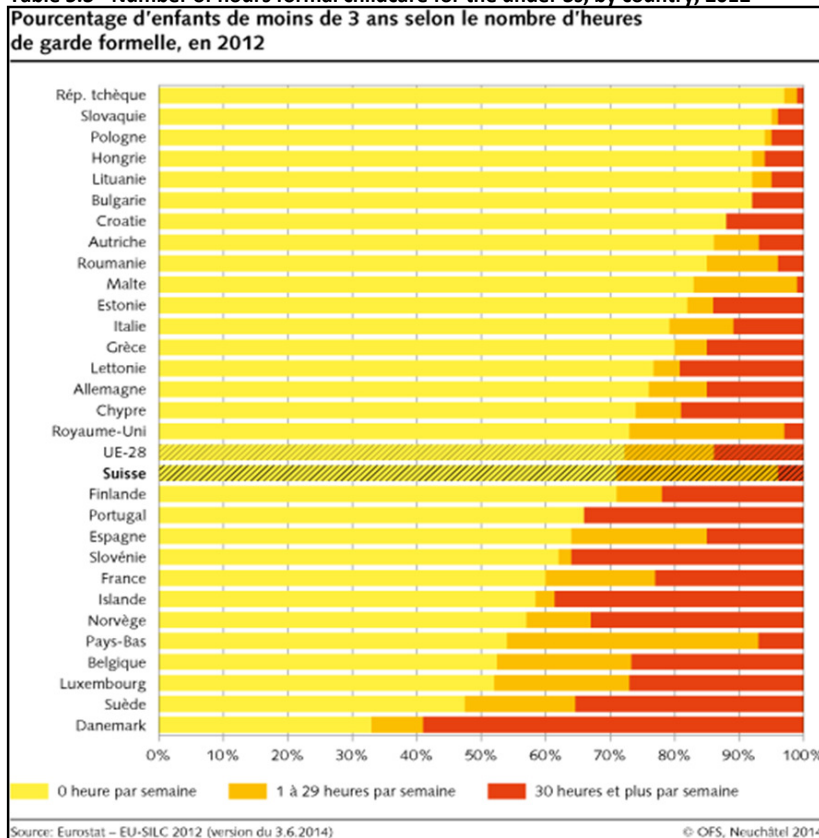
Source: OFS (2013).

Table 5.4 - Type of formal and informal childcare services used by Swiss families, according to the age of the children concerned, 2013
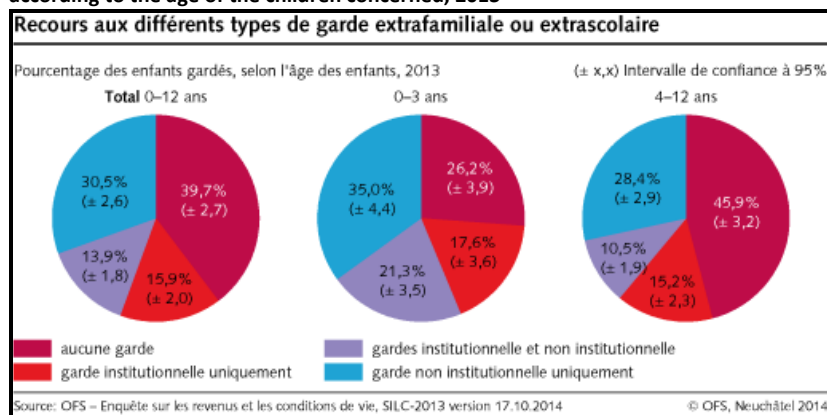
Source: OFS (2013).

Table 5.5 - Duration of formal and informal childcare provision, according to the age of the children concerned, 2014

Pourcentage d'enfants avec un accueil extrafamilial ou extrascolaire

selon l'âge des enfants, le type et le nombre d'heures de garde par semaine, 2013   Intervalle de confiance à 95%

Garde institutionnelle   Garde non institutionnelle   0–3 ans
                                                                       4–12 ans

Source: OFS – Enquête sur les revenus et les conditions de vie, SILC-2013 version 17.10.2014   © OFS, Neuchâtel 2014

Source: OFS (2013).

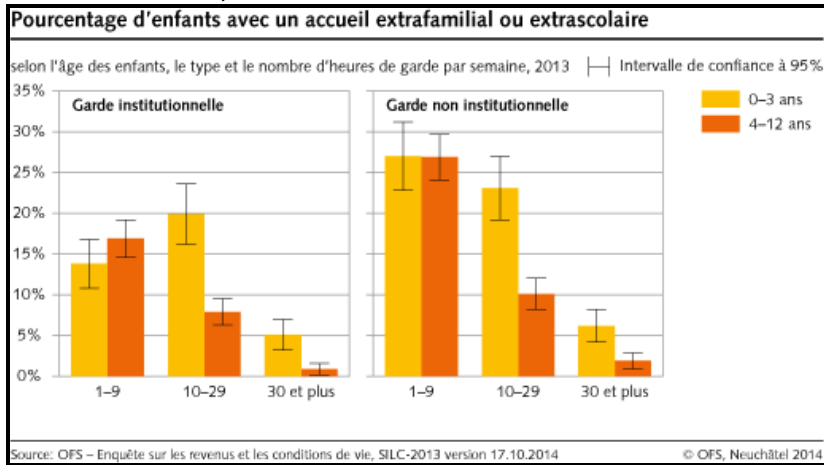In the Swiss context, women are sometimes stigmatised as "bad" mothers when they work full time. In the run-up to a 2014 referendum on the proposition for the cantons to increase spending on the provision of pre-school childcare services, billboards across the whole country were covered with posters of babies crying behind prison bars. Needless to say, the proposal to increase pre-school childcare provision did not obtain a majority vote.

These findings help to understand the compromises that Swiss parents have to make as regards work-family arrangements. Although there is a tendency for men and women to adhere to relatively "conservative" or "traditional" values, which condemn full-time employment for the mothers of young children, structural factors would seem to have more influence than their attitudes on their actual practices. Several studies on the transition to parenthood have shown that almost all Swiss parents end up adopting the so-called "modified male breadwinner" gender arrangement (men working full-time (long hours) + women working part-time (half-time) when the children are young), even when they had expressed clear and shared aspirations for gender equality and women's financial autonomy before the birth of their first child (Bühlmann, Elcheroth and Tattamanti, 2010).

In conclusion, we can say that part-time employment for women is clearly a norm that permeates all aspects of Swiss life and this is likely to influence their chances of access to an academic career and particularly to the top of the academic occupational hierarchy.

Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

The SNSF, which is Switzerland's foremost research funding organisation, has an EO department and "with appropriate measures, the SNSF aims to contribute to gender equality in research funding. It has adopted the principle of gender mainstreaming and defined gender equality as a target for all its bodies and across all its activities."[19] One of

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[19] http://www.snf.ch/en/theSNSF/research-policies/gender-equality/Pages/default.aspx
(retrieved 24/06/2015).

the measures of its "Mission Statement on Equality between Women and Men" is the "reconciliation of scientific or academic work with family life receives support for women and men through mechanisms such as the possibility to work part-time. Appropriate measures are undertaken to counteract gender-specific disadvantages."[20]

The following family support measures provided by the SNSF (beside other measures to support women's academic careers) can be identified:

- "The 120% support grant is aimed at postdoctoral researchers who need to look after children during an important stage in their career and who therefore need more flexibility. The grant helps researchers to find the right balance between their academic career and family commitments by enabling part-time employment. The grant allows researchers to reduce their working-time and to hire a support person for the same period."[21]

- Maternity and paternity leave. For persons working on a SNSF funded research project and who have a contract with a Swiss university: "During maternity leave, the SNSF will provide supplementary funds through the project budget. This support will be in line with local regulations. Under certain conditions, it is possible to apply for a prolongation of the project or to hire a replacement." For recipients of an SNSF mobility grant and it is stated that: "Grantholders who become mothers in the course of the research fellowship are entitled to paid maternity leave of four months. Fellowship holders who become fathers may be granted paid paternity leave of up to four months in the course of a fellowship if an application giving reasons is submitted."[22] Even if this measure seems to be generous, we must keep in mind that the SNSF international mobility grants available to post-docs do not count as employment and do not, therefore, provide access to standard social insurance cover, including pension contributions. Therefore maternity and paternity leave were not financed some years ago.

- Part-time work: surprisingly (or maybe not, in the Swiss context!), part-time is considered as a gender equality measure: "the SNSF accepts that grant holders may wish to employ part-time staff in their project."[23]

Federal Gender Equality programme

Since the beginning of the 2000s, four successive Federal Gender Equality programmes (FGEP) named "Equal opportunity in Universities" have demonstrated a tangible political will to promote women's access to all levels of academic institutions. The actions and recommendations of the SNSF, the Swiss University Conference (CUS) and the Rectors' Conference of Swiss Universities (CRUS) have all contributed to various aspects of these

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[20]http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/wom_leitbild_gleichstellung_e.pdf
(retrieved 24/06/2015).

[21]http://www.snf.ch/en/funding/supplementary-measures/120-support-grant/Pages/default.aspx (retrieved 24/06/2015).

[22]http://www.snf.ch/en/funding/directaccess/gender-equality/Pages/default.aspx
#Maternity%20and%20paternity%20leave (retrieved 24/06/2015).

[23]http://www.snf.ch/en/funding/directaccess/gender-equality/Pages/default.aspx#Part-time%20work
(retrieved 24/06/2015).

programmes. Each of these programmes has formulated several distinct but interrelated objectives:

1. Encouragement for the recruitment of more women to tenured academic positions;

2. Mentoring services for junior researchers;

3. Support for the development and institutionalisation of gender studies and research on equal opportunities and gender discrimination;

4. Measures to promote work-life balance in academic careers, including direct support for the provision of university-based day nurseries and/or emergency childcare services.

5. Since 2008, a budget has also been dedicated to support for dual-career couples (DCC) within the Swiss academic labour market.

The fourth stage of the FGEP (2013-2016) enabled each university to define its own priorities and objectives, in the form of a specific Action Plan, within the framework of this programme. At the UNIL, this institutionally tailored plan has been further decentralised, in order to take internal (e.g. disciplinary) variations into account. Thus, each of the seven Faculties has been invited to adapt the University-level Action Plan (Vision 50/50) to their particular profile and needs. Below (see point 5.2), we will focus on the elements of the fourth track (WLB) implemented in the frame of the FGEP in general in the whole UNIL but also in the FBM faculty, where a special grant was created.

5.2. THE WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LAUSANNE (UNIL)

People working at the UNIL have the same social benefits as other employees of the Vaud Canton. These employment conditions are mainly regulated at national level by the Swiss Code of Obligations, which establishes the minimal standards. The cantons are in a position to offer better conditions. For example, in 2008, paternity leave for the staff of the federal administration was increased from two to five days.

Regarding the employees of the UNIL, those who are paid by SNSF grants can apply for special SNSF measures, while the regular employees of the UNIL do not have access to these programmes (for example the 120% grants). For all other questions, the rules of the UNIL also apply to SNSF grantees.

WLB policies in the UNIL

The Unil is committed to promoting WLB (termed as *l'équilibre entre activité professionnelle et responsabilités familiales*) By Article 2c of the "Directive of the Rectorate 0.2 Gender equality at the UNIL". As WLB issues have been incorporated into the field of equality, the EO office of the UNIL is in charge of this domain.

Parental leave

At UNIL, there are seven different types of parental leave,[24] the first four being paid up to 100%, while the three last ones are unpaid:

- Maternity (4 months) & breastfeeding (1 month) leave: mothers who breastfeed their children can take an additional month paid after the 4 months of maternity leave;

- Paternity leave: 5 days;

- Adoption leave: 2 months for mothers or fathers;

- Leave for sick child: 5 days/year – N.B. From 01.01.2015 employees of the Vaud Canton can have 12 additional days/year (subject to medical certificate) to care for a sick family member;

- Parental leave (6 to 12 months) for mothers and fathers;

- Extended leave (2 weeks to 12 months) for mothers and fathers;

- Partial leave (up to 12 months) with reduced activity rate for family reasons.

The total of all leave cannot exceed 12 months.

While the parental and extended unpaid leave provisions do not count as worked periods, all other leaves are part of the working time in the fixed-term contracts. But for mothers the fixed-term contract can be extended from one year if they have taken maternity, breastfeeding, adoption, parental or extended leave. For fathers having taken adoption, parental or extended leave the contract can be extended for a maximum of 6 months. In the case of tenure track positions, the evaluation and tenure procedures can be postponed by one year maximum.

Nurseries

In Lausanne, the EPFL and the UNIL have three day-nurseries for children between 2 months and 4.5 years and a joint nursery school, which are open to children who has at least one working or studying at either the EPFL or the UNIL. These structures are subsidised by both institutions. Despite the hard work done by the EO offices to create more childcare places on both campuses, places are still in short supply (137 places among the three day nurseries) and in great demand so that the waiting lists are long (270 children in September 2014).[25] The situation is the same in the whole canton and in the whole of Switzerland. Other solutions for childcare are public or private day-care or nurseries, nannies ("*mamans de jour*") and domestic childcare workers, but they are often much more expensive. For families with modest incomes, there are some possibilities for subsidies. There is also an emergency service called *Profawo* for sick children, who cannot attend the nurseries and/or schools, which is available to parents of the UNIL who live in the Vaud Canton and is free of charge (the fees being reimbursed by the EO office of UNIL).

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[24] See Directive 1.35, http://www.unil.ch/interne/fr/home/menuinst/documents---formulaires/textes-legaux/directives-internes-de-lunil.html (retrieved 24/06/2015).

[25] As reported in *Uniscope* 594: 15, the monthly magazine of the UNIL, http://www.unil.ch/unicom/fr/home/menuinst/publications/uniscope/archives-de-luniscope.html(retrieved 24/06/2015).
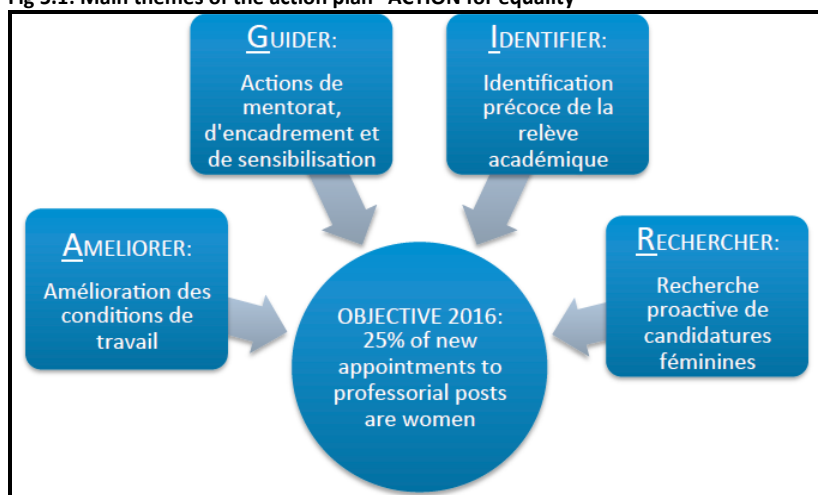
WLB policies in the STEM department (FBM - SSF)

As already mentioned, in the frame of the fourth stage of the FGEP (2013-2016), the seven Faculties have been invited by the Rectorate to adapt the University-level Action Plan (Vision 50/50) to their particular profile and needs. While the Action Plan for SSP (our GARCIA SSH department) is still being drawn up, the FBM faculty (the Basic Sciences Section of this faculty is our GARCIA STEM department) elaborated its action plan entitled "ACTION for equality"[26] in the frame of a working group on equality created in 2012. One additional part-time member of staff (equality officer) was hired to carry out a survey on women in junior academic positions and afterwards to implement the action plan inside the faculty.

While the main focus of the action plan is to identify women with high potential who could reach professorial positions in the future, there is also a focus on WLB in one of the main themes that reflect the problems identified by the survey (see Figure 1).

Fig 5.1: Main themes of the action plan "ACTION for equality"

GUIDER:
Actions de mentorat, d'encadrement et de sensibilisation

IDENTIFIER:
Identification précoce de la relève académique

AMELIORER:
Amélioration des conditions de travail

OBJECTIVE 2016: 25% of new appointments to professorial posts are women

RECHERCHER:
Recherche proactive de candidatures féminines

IMPROVE: Improve working conditions. The aim is to create framework conditions that make it easier to reconcile work with family life. One particularly urgent requirement is that of childcare (crèches, nurseries, childcare out of school hours).

Source: "ACTION for equality", p. 3.
http://www.unil.ch/fbm/files/live/sites/fbm/files/shared/egalite/EN_plan_AGIR.pdf
(retrieved 24/06/2015).

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[26] http://www.unil.ch/fbm/home/menuinst/la-faculte/egalite-femmes-hommes/plan-daction-de-la-fbm.html (retrieved 24/06/2015).

We reproduce here some results of the survey presented in the action plan that show clearly the needs for WLB:

Overall, equal percentages of participants (43%) agreed and disagreed with the statement that it is possible to satisfactorily reconcile family life with a professorial career in the FBM, the remaining 14% having no opinion on the matter. Furthermore, most participants in the survey (77%) were satisfied with their rate of activity, with a higher percentage among men in the FSS (82% versus 66% of women). Twice as many women as men would like to increase their rate of activity (22% versus 10%) however the number who would like to reduce it is three times higher in the CSS than in the FSS (14% versus 4%). Interpretation of this data requires caution however since some people who for example have an 80% contract but in fact work full-time may simply want to see their official rate of activity reflected in the time they actually spend working. In addition, 62% of members of intermediate staff who took part in the survey indicated that they "would envisage" or "would perhaps envisage" job-sharing if such an option were possible (34% and 36% respectively).

Two thirds of those questioned feel that measures are needed within the FBM to allow women and men to reconcile work with family life more satisfactorily, with 10% believing that this is not the case and one quarter having no opinion in the matter. In answer to the question of whether or not there is a need for measures to encourage the next generation of female academics in the FBM, 57% agree, however the number of negative answers this time exceeds a quarter of respondents (27%) and the differences are more marked according to sex and academic group: many more women (70%) than men (48%), and many more professors (72%) than intermediate staff (53%) believe that measures are needed to encourage the next generation of female academics.

Suggestions made in answer to the question "If you have you any suggestions as to actions that could be taken to encourage the next generation of female academics in the FBM, please write them here" for the greater part (27%) concerned improving the childcare situation, with some people even saying that if this problem is not resolved, all other

measures will be in vain. Working conditions was the subject of 18% of suggestions. Among these, more than half of respondents asked for part-time work and job sharing to be possible or encouraged (46% and 14% respectively) for women and for men, even at professorial level. In addition, 14% of suggestions in this category concerned the planning of meetings, committees and seminars, which should be scheduled during nursery and school hours rather than early in the morning or in the evening.

These considerations are all the more important insofar as 22% of all participants in the survey (nearly a third of those living as a couple) live with a spouse/partner who is also pursuing an academic career, which poses the question of dual careers.

Source:FBM "ACTION for equality", pp. 4-5.

As is often the case, the most important requirement is for childcare structures, but this raises a problem that neither the facilities nor the University can solve by themselves. Some other important measures to improve working conditions have been proposed in the FBM action plan:

- The automatic introduction of a one-year extension in the evaluation period for tenure track assistant professor positions in the case of childbirth or adoption during this period.

- The introduction of the possibility to adapt (reduce) working hours for parents of young children with the possibility to return to a full-time position when desired.

- The possibility to do job-sharing including for professorial posts.

- The planning of meetings and seminars to the middle of the day to avoid problems with the opening hours of childcare structures in the early morning or evening.

- The allocation of a support post for parents.

This last measure is regulated by the "Directive of the dean's office on the provision of a support post for a researcher of either gender in the fundamental sciences section during family leave,"[27]which came into force on 1 January 2015. This grant for a support post limited to one year was created to give additional workpower to researchers, both male and female, who take leave for family reasons. The aim of the support post is to permit the recruitment for a temporary person to support the candidate (for example, research technician, research nurse, data manager etc.). Beneficiaries of the support must satisfy the following criteria:

- they must have embarked upon an academic career in the FBM from the postdoctoral level to the maximum level of tenure track assistant professor;

- they must provide evidence of research activity of at least 0.7 EPT in the Basic Sciences Section;

- they must show that they have already embarked upon an autonomous research project;

- they must be on leave for not less than 4 months for family reasons during the period surrounding the birth or adoption of a child.

The purpose of this measure is to facilitate the continuity of current research work and avoid career delays that may be caused by the reorganisation of professional and family life following the arrival of a child.

In theory, this post should be partly financed by the amount received, in the case of maternity leave, from the Loss of Earnings Insurance (APG), but this would not seem to be the case at the present time.

5.3. EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF TEMPORARY RESEARCHERS

As might be expected in view of the standard childcare infrastructure and gender regime in Switzerland, almost all our interviewees pointed out the difficulties they faced in achieving a satisfactory WLB. However, the issues were not framed in exactly the same way according to the personal and family circumstances of the respondents. Table 5.6 presents the family circumstances of our interview sample.

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[27]www.unil.ch/fbm/files/live/sites/fbm/files/shared/egalite/directive_poste_soutien_en.pdf (retrieved 24/06/2015).

Table 5.6 - Interviewees by personal circumstances, sex and department

	Women	Men	Total
FBM (total)	**9**	**8**	**17**
With children	7	7	14
Without children	2	1	3
SSP (total)	**10**	**8**	**18**
With children	9	4	13
Without children	1	4	5
Total	**19**	**16**	**35**

Difficulties in balancing work and private life

Two main tendencies appear. One group of interviewees presents WLB as an almost impossible state to achieve in the academic world, whereas a second category of interviewees describes how they juggle with many constraints in order to fulfil the expectations and obligations of an academic career, whilst also trying to be as present as possible for their families.

Interviewees in the first category explain their situation with the following words:

"It's true that if you haven't, haven't got, if there isn't a cast-iron support logistics to rely on, well, children ruin your career [laughs]" [...] "the big problem with the post-doc is that there's a very, very, very strong correlation between the postdoc age and the time when it's right or not so bad biologically speaking to have children, thirty [laughs] [...] We need some sort, I dunno, at least an understanding among the colleagues of the fact that, er, because in the end often people say yeah, yeah, we understand but that was what you chose. Well, I chose to have kids but I didn't choose not to have a job, actually." (017, W, STEM in couple with 2 children, non permanent teaching and research position[28]).

Question: "So you had a heavy week [laughs] it seems?

Answer: "Yeah, one more reason why it's terrifying to have a child [laughs]!" (029, W, STEM, married without children, postdoc)

And the sense of missing out on daily life with their children is sometimes an additional psychological burden they cannot easily resolve:

"I really try to get home by seven thirty, that's when we both have […] yesterday I got home late,I missed it and that got on my nerves, because you only have one moment like that. From one day to another thing change so much, and my father was terribly absent when I was a child because he always worked late […] I don't want it to be like that for my daughter." (031, M, STEM, married with a child, non permanent researcher position)

This burden of WLB can also turn into a feeling of guilt:

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[28]The numbers refer to the numbering of our interviews and the letter indicates the sex of the interviewee, when noting is indicated the persons are still working in the two GARCIA departments and when not, we indicate "leavers").

"There are so many constraints in all directions, plus the fact that at family level, there's an enormous sacrifice because I'm abandoning my little daughter four days a week and incidentally my partner is doing the same. […] Basically, I slog from 6:30 a.m. to 9 p. m. They are very, very long days and I, I… It's terribly difficult to be efficient, that's the fact of it. Yeah, I don't know how much longer I can keep going." (017, W, STEM in couple with 2 children, non permanent teaching and research position).

Regarding the second category of persons, who describe how they juggle to allocate more time to their family or to work, they described how they took the opportunity to work while their baby was sleeping (015, W, SSH, in couple with 1 child, substitute lecturer position; 030, M, STEM, married with 2 children, tenure track assistant professor), to stay at their workplace late once a week to have more time for work without being disturbed, or work in the train when commuting to their workplace. They also take work home, but only tasks that "you can interrupt at any moment" (003, M, SSH, married with 2 children, assistant professor), so as to take care of the children.

In some cases (but more likely for fathers than mothers and more often in FBM than in SSP), people are able to set clear limits, for example to avoid working at weekends: "it's a family choice" (018, M, STEM leaver, married with 1 child, non permanent lecturer).

The positive impact of the flexibility of academic work on WLB

The flexibility of academic work was often cited as positive for organising one's own schedule of activities taking into account family obligations and the tasks to be done at the workplace. Being allowed to work from home was seen as very positive for parents:

"I have children, but in fact I can be with them a lot of the time because I can easily work at home" (030, M, STEM, married with 2 children, tenure track assistant professor).

But it also means that there is no clear boundary between work and family, because people work in the evenings and at weekends and "there are no limits, there are no boundaries" (007, W, SSH leaver, single with one child, tenure track assistant professor) when you are doing research; "you never stop working" (008, M, SSH leaver, in couple without children, professor in an university for applied studies), the machine "is always running" (030, M, STEM, married with 2 children, tenure track assistant professor). But for several interviewees, this also means that you are under stress all the time and you get very tired because "you finish preparing your classes at 3 a.m." (002, W, SSH, single without children, non permanent researcher). Leisure time and hobbies tend to be sacrificed, especially when the children are young because of a lack of time and of energy. Several interviewees "dream" of having more time to dedicate to leisure, but "there's no point any more, you don't have time" (022, M, SSH, married, 2 children, non permanent lecturer).

Working from home is also positively valued to reduce the burden in the event of family problems:

"during my postdoc at the Uni, I had family problems […] then you do what you can if you can't be there [at the workplace] all the time, it's not a big deal, you can work at home […] and that's an enormous advantage" (027, W, SSH leaver, married without children, permanent position as a lecturer).

Family support for childcare

Both private and public institutions for childcare (crèches) are very expensive and finding a place is considered a real "fluke" (009, W, STEM leaver, in couple with 2 children, permanent teacher in a secondary school) with their "endless waiting lists" (016, W, STEM married with 1 child, permanent lecturer), so much so that one (female) interviewee even said, laughing, that "you first get a crèche place and then you decide to have a child" (009, W, STEM leaver, in couple with 2 children, permanent teacher in a secondary school) and another that you have to "scour the horizon to find a crèche" (017, W, STEM in couple with 2 children, non permanent teaching and research position). For people coming from outside Switzerland, the lack of institutional childcare is something they are not prepared for:

> "the childcare problem smacks you in the face […] it is isn't complicated, it's complicated beyond belief" (017, W, STEM in couple with 2 children, non permanent teaching and research position).

Even for people who have places in nurseries, these are often part-time (only for certain days in the week) their opening hours are not always adapted to working hours. When this is the case, help from the extended family (grandparents) is much needed to make everyday life bearable. Strangely, the interviewees describe the chances of finding a place in a crèche with the same words that others used in WP7 to describe getting an academic position: it's "a stroke of luck" (026, M, STEM leaver, married with 2 children, permanent position as researcher in public administration) or a matter of accidentally being "in the right place at the right time" (030, M, STEM, married with 2 children, tenure track assistant professor).

If no place is found in a crèche, parents have to implement a "plan B" which might be more expensive when no family support is available. The constraints of time management organisation can be very restrictive to the point that one interviewee declared "I feel totally handicapped" (017, W, STEM in couple with 2 children, non permanent teaching and research position).

Finally, the lack of provision for school-age children at lunchtime (no school canteen provision) is also seen as a major problem, as it cuts the day in half.

International mobility

Mobility is obligatory for anyone receiving their PhD from the UNIL, since they cannot be employed on a post-doc contract until they have spent at least 12 months elsewhere (usually in another university, preferably abroad). But it is analysed as a "sacrifice" (005, M, SSH leaver, in couple with 2 children, permanent position in public administration) or an "uprooting" (030, M, STEM, married with 2 children, tenure track assistant professor) for some of our interviewees, particularly when they have children or elderly and sick parents.

The obligation to leave Switzerland is sometimes difficult and engenders feelings of guilt and uncertainty in close relationships, particularly with partners. One male interviewee explained that his partner wanted to stay in Switzerland but for him this was a disadvantage for his career. His wife said to him, "If you go, we'll split up" (018, M, STEM leaver, married with 1 child, non permanent lecturer). Another person told us that he went to the UNIL because "given my partner's background, French and German, we were a bit

restricted as regards the countries" (032, M, STEM, in couples, postdoc). When both partners are looking for a job a sort of bargain is made between them:

> "But I'd say at the same time my husband was also applying and we had kind of decided, whoever gets a job first, something decent, we will move" [because] "it's a mess, and, and in general, well, not everybody's so lucky to find two post-docs and in the end if someone has to give up, most likely it's the woman who will give up" (021, W, STEM leaver, married with two children, researcher in a private company).

This moment in the career is very complicated for finding the "best match"[of places and projects] (029, W, STEM, married without children, postdoc) to "keep our tracks together" (026, M, STEM leaver, married with 2 children, permanent position as researcher in public administration) in "a dual project" (031, M, STEM, married with a child, non permanent researcher position) where "there's no question of one career having the upper hand over the other" (030, M, STEM, married with 2 children, tenure track assistant professor).

For another interviewee, the fact that her partner is also pursuing an academic career is seen as an advantage because they share the same need for mobility:

> "there aren't many academics who are together as a couple, as we are. Right away, what simplified life for us as a couple is that, having the same job, we knew we'd have to be mobile" (027, W, SSH leaver, married without children, permanent position as lecturer).

Women' biological clock and career steps

For women, the best moment for having children often corresponds to the most crucial steps in their academic career, i.e. when they are on tenure track or in postdoc positions where they have to demonstrate excellence and speed, notably in order to improve their publication record:

> "If you don't publish, you've had it forever" (018, M, STEM leaver, married with 1 child, non permanent lecturer).

One of our interviewees spoke of having to make "a rational life choice" for this time" (010, M, SSH, single, permanent researcher) and another said that "you miss the train" (009, W, STEM leaver, in couple with 2 children, permanent teacher in a secondary school) when you decide to have a family. But at the same time, people need a minimum of stability and security to start a family and one person said: "If I hadn't had a stable job, I don't know if we'd have had a child". Another one on a fixed-term position said

> "I didn't want to have a child until I got a stable job, and then one day I realized I would never have a stable job" (031, M, STEM, married with a child, non permanent researcher position).

So, the succession of various postdoc fixed term positions creates a particular stress for women who know that it is

> "very difficult to keep the two [professional and private life] running together […] in an optimal way" (027, W, SSH leaver, married without children, permanent position as lecturer).

Additional help during the postdoc period to have more time for the family is needed and would be appreciated:

"It would be nice if in the future, I could, e.g., have someone part-time who could do administrative work for me, then I could definitely reduce my working time whilst keeping the same research load and, and all the rest and, and yeah I would definitely spend more time with my family. I mean, I can't complain about my timetable, it's a very flexible working environment, whenever my son is sick, I can just drop everything and go" (023, M, STEM, married with 1 child, non permanent researcher).

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

Perhaps the most significant characteristics of family-formation patterns and policies in Switzerland - in and outside the academy - concern 1) the very limited provision of childcare facilities, including lunchtime and after school activities for older children and 2) the very high cost of access to the rare childcare services available. In addition to these structural difficulties, the pattern of the academic career, with a long period of precarious working conditions below professorship level (fixed-term contract, relatively modest salaries, particularly for lower intermediate staff) is an aggravating factor.

In line with this situation, the pattern that a lot of Swiss women choose is to work part-time, particularly after having had a child and it tends to be also the solution to WLB problems in academia as the SNSF is, for example, offering to reduce 100% jobs to 80 or 60% posts. In doing so, women wish to ensure that they will be 100% available when they are at work and as far as possible prevent their "private" life from encroaching on their "professional" life. But this kind of solution can also have negative impacts on WLB as, for example, in the fact that a part-time job is rewarded with a lower salary even if the workload may be more or less the same as for a full-time job (this is particularly the case in research and teaching). In a previous study, a professor told us that a part-time job in academia was simply a career "suicide" (Fassa et al. 2012: 277).

In a workshop on mobility, we were discussing the criteria of a successful career and a person made an ironic remark linked to the Swiss gender regime by asking: "What is a successful career? If a woman drops out of her professional career to care for her children, isn't she is just adapting to the local gender regime, for which the 'good' mother, wife and maybe even the woman, is the one who stays at home?" There is still a long way to go on before mothers working full-time cease to be stigmatised in Switzerland.

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6. SLOVENIA

6.1. INTRODUCTION

This report examines policies and practices related to work-life balance at the organisational level of two institutions: Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language at ZRC SAZU (SSH department)[29] and the Department of Agronomy at the Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana (STEM department). The first part of the report is mainly based on the analysis of main policy documents related to work-life balance both at national and organisational levels (e.g. collective agreements, working hour's regulations, regulations regarding maternity/paternity leave, paid annual leave, trade union initiatives). Its aim is to situate existing organisational work-life balance policies in a wider national-level framework. To achieve this goal, both national - and organisational-level statistics were used. Data and information at the organisational level were provided by human resources departments of the participating institutions. Some data were also provided by institutional accounting offices.

Following such contextualisation of data, the main findings from the answers to interviews relating to the issue of "wellbeing and work-life balance" were analysed. When deemed appropriate, these were analysed separately by type of research institution, by type of employment (temporary/permanent), by partnership/marital status, by having/not having children and by gender.

It is argued that the interviews relating to the issue of "wellbeing and work-life balance" confirm the findings of other national-level research that pervasively demonstrate that work-life balance is a gender issue. This is evident not only in the parts of the interviews that analyse the division of work and family responsibilities, but also at the level of internalised expectations and more implicit beliefs of both genders about work and family life. These structure the opportunities and actions of our interviewees. Examples of such beliefs as well as concrete practices in which they are manifested are illustrated by concrete interview excerpts. It is also argued that both institutional arrangements regarding work-life balance and individual work-life balance practices are mainly in line with the welfare state characteristics and social, family and other related policies in Slovenia. The conclusion provides some implications of findings for devising concrete policy actions and initiatives.

6.2. THE WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES AT THE RESEARCH CENTRE OF THE SLOVENIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS (ZRC SAZU)

Family Leaves (Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leaves)

As more thoroughly described in the Garcia working paper n. 1 (Ana Hofman et al., 2015) on gender, employment, care and science regimes, a dual-earner family model has been traditionally promoted in Slovenia through policies to facilitate female employment and to greatly involve men in childcare, especially from the 1970's. With social and economic changes during the transition from the state to the market economy since the year 1991, and with the effects of the economic crisis since 2009, job insecurities have been increasing and relations between employers and employees have been changing. Nevertheless, in the

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[29]Some of the interviews within the scope of WP6 were conducted at other departments of ZRC SAZU, as it was impossible to find leavers in the interviewed institute.

area of family policy, Slovenia has retained most of the legacies of a well-developed welfare state.

Relatively generous maternity, paternity and family leave benefits are characteristic of the social policy in Slovenia. The Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act define maternity leave as being aimed at preparation for childbirth and childcare after the birth for the duration of 105 days. A mother must begin maternity leave twenty-eight days before the expected date of delivery. Paternity leave was introduced in 2001 and is intended for fathers to participate in childcare in their most tender age. The father is entitled to ninety calendar days of paternity leave and must use fifteen days of such leave before the child is six months old (before one year in exceptional cases) and the remaining seventy-five days before the child is three years old. The state provides 100% wage compensation for the first fifteen days of paternity leave (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2014). Parental leave lasts for 260 days per family (it can be longer depending on the number of children and special health needs of a child). The compensation rate is 90% of the average salary, based on salaries for which contributions were paid during twelve months prior to the leave (maximum two average salaries). Although both parents can go on parental leave, mothers still predominantly take it. However, some improvements have occurred – in 2001, only 1% of fathers took parental leave for child nursing and care, while in 2012, this share increased to 8%.

The data at the organisational level confirm the above-described trends at the national level. At the Biotechnical Faculty (STEM department), there were twenty-one people on paternity leave in the period from 2010 to 2014. Among these, there was only one man (e-mail communication with the HR department). At ZRC SAZU, there were sixty-seven people who took parental leave in the period from 2010 to 2014. Among these, there were only five men, out of whom one took parental leave twice (personal and e-mail communication with the HR department).

Flexible Forms of Work and Organisation of Working Hours

In Slovenia, it is possible for parents of small children to work part-time with the state paying social security contributions for the full-time job before a child is 3 (in some cases 6) years old. At ZRC SAZU, there were 15 people working part-time due to caring for a small child in the period from 2010 to 2014. All of these were women (e-mail and personal communication with the HR department). At the Biotechnical Faculty, such data are not available. The available data persuasively demonstrate that working part-time for family reasons is not a very widespread pattern in the SSH organisation, as is the case at the national level. However, individuals who are making use of such an arrangement are almost exclusively women (there is a case of a male working part-time for family reasons in 2015). Additionally, it is quite possible that some people resort to this option when financial coverage for their job is not fully available. Such an arrangement can thus be more favourable for them as the state covers their social security contributions for the difference to the full-time working hours. This would not be the case if working within a regular part-time arrangement. According to the Employment Relationship Act, the employee may also propose a change in the work schedule in order to reconcile professional and family life and the employer has to provide his arguments in a written form, taking into account the needs of the work process (Stropnik, 2011).

At the organisational level, actual working time policies and practices are, as will be shown later in the section describing the findings from the interviews relating to the issue of

"wellbeing and work-life balance", largely dependent on individual agreement with employers, in most cases the superior (head of the department/institute). Although some formal rules exist in this respect, these are generally not defined in written form. At the Biotechnical Faculty, there are no formal regulations regarding the organisation of working hours (e-mail communication with the HR department). At ZRC SAZU, the Rulebook on Working Hours and Performing Telework (*Pravilnik o delovnemčasu in opravljanjudelanadomuna ZRC SAZU*) regulates these issues. The Rulebook specifies that the working time at ZRC SAZU starts at 7 a.m. and finishes at 3 p.m. with possibilities to arrive at work from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and to leave from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Other arrangements are possible upon individual agreement and in cases when the work process requires other types of engagement. Telework can be performed to ensure better working conditions, higher work productivity and/or lower expenses (Rulebook on Working Hours and Performing Telework, 2015). For permanent telework (more than three days a week), an agreement to perform telework can be arranged upon individual arrangement and is signed by the employee, head of the Institute and the authorised person at ZRC SAZU. The Rulebook does not mention family responsibilities as a justified reason to arrange working time differently. Such arrangements are largely considered as an individual agreement between the employer and employee. In practice, these individuals would be the head of the Institute (department) and the employee.

In Collective Labour Agreements, circumstances under which paid leave is possible are defined. Some of these, in their broadest sense, pertain also to achieving work-family balance. The Collective Labour Agreement for Research applies to employees at ZRC SAZU and the Collective Labour Agreement for Education applies to employees at the Biotechnical Faculty. Annual paid leave increases for each child an employee has. Employees are entitled to extra days of annual leave for getting married or childbirth (3 days), child getting married (2 days), death of a family member (1 to 3 days, depending on the family member), moving (2 to 3 days). Moreover, when determining redundant workers, collective agreements take into account family circumstances - having an unemployed partner, the number of children, health issues. Employees are also entitled to thirty days of unpaid annual leave to take care of a family member when such care is not medically induced. Also, solidarity funds have been established and can provide financial compensation for families in case of employee's death or severe disability. Nevertheless, none of the collective agreements directly deal with the issue of work-life balance. Moreover, most of these provisions are based on national-level laws and regulations.

6.3. EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF TEMPORARY RESEARCHERS

Characteristics of Interviewees

This analysis is based on 39 interviews conducted in STEM (20 interviews) and SSH (19 interviews) departments in the analysed institutions. Among the SSH stayers in the selected department, nine were women, out of whom eight have children. There was only one man with children interviewed. Among the 'leavers' at the SSH department, 3 women have children, while 4 do not have children. Among men, one has children and one does not have any. In the STEM department, the gender structure of the interviewees was more balanced. Among the stayers, 2 women have children, while 3 do not; the same balance is among male stayers. Among the leavers, 2 men and 4 women have children, while 3 men and 1 woman do not have any. Some of the interviewees have grown-up children, and they gave their answers about work-life balance practices in retrospect. However, the majority

has small children and were able to elaborate on the issues of work-life balance to a greater extent.

Managing Family Responsibilities in Academic Environments

In line with other research on work-life balance, the interviews at both departments confirm the fact that women adjust their schedules to childcare to a greater extent than men do. It seems that men generally tend to feel they can incorporate children into their everyday life, while women generally organise their work and other arrangements (e.g. time for oneself) to childcare duties and responsibilities. Below is given an indicative example of one of the female interviewees from SSH:

> I used to be more self-disciplined in this area, but now I have lost control. This is because I have to adjust to children's schedules. When you adjust to somebody else, you neglect yourself and your things. You eat lunch when you have time. When there are a lot of things to do at work, we don't even go out for lunch. I lack discipline. And I need to restore some. […] I adjust my spare time to my children. It is definitely not what I want, but this is only possible option at the moment, and I am trying to organise things so they suit me. While I am waiting for the kids at music school, I go for a walk.

Many interviewees mentioned that when they got children, their job mainly had to be finished by three or four o'clock in the afternoon in order to pick up children from day-care. Some men implicitly admitted that having children caused a decline in time they can devote to work and research and prompted them to reorder their priorities. However, none of them directly stated that their research production "suffered" as a consequence. For some of female interviewees, lower scientific production resulted from demanding job schedules and obligations of their partners. With regard to this, most female interviewees provided accounts of how they were forced to give up teaching and/or other extra research and editorial activities. This can be illustrated by open claims of two interviewees from the SSH department:

> "You know, I intentionally subordinated work to children, because my partner works with the Army and he often has long absences from home. So I feel that with his absence, his devotion to his job, which is special and also implies a specific way of life, I cannot do the same."

> "I have done this quite consciously, of course, at the expense of scientific writing. I realise that now I have reached a dead end, I do things very, very slowly, but this happened because that is what I wanted."

A male leaver from the STEM department also claims that it is harder to publish after you become a parent. Interestingly enough, his view is quite opposite to the perception of female interviewees. He says that due to the pressure to publish, his family obligations are neglected, not the other way around.

Some of the interviewees also started to prioritise their family lives over work after their health issues or health issues of their family members, and/or after some other changes in their personal lives. Most of them were aware that the culture of long working hours and constant pressure to be available influenced their health and personal, i.e. family lives. Such "resistance" attitudes were not only limited to researchers with children, but all the interviewees were aware that their decision to devote more time to their personal lives had a bad influence on research productivity, which was majorly perceived as crucial for achieving scientific success and excellence. A STEM researcher without children claims that

she has organised her schedule in such a way that she no longer works in the afternoons, but is aware that this bears an impact on her promotion prospects. She said:

> "If you are at the faculty, you are expected to produce scientific articles, and if you don't have them, you might appear as a person who is not working".

She added that fatigue after finishing her PhD and changes in her personal life contributed to such an attitude.

However, interviewees relate their ability or inability to "say no" not only to their workload, but also to the type of their employment contracts and existential concerns. Only one of the interviewees openly stated that he prioritised work over his personal time. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees report on more or less intense stress related to their attempts to achieve work-life balance. When asked if she was able to balance her work and family life, a researcher at the SSH department admitted that her free time was incorporated into job-related activities and she did not really feel she had any free time. However, she admits that her family situation, lack of social networks and long partner absences due to commuting sometimes made her feel that her job was less demanding than caring for a small child. The following account of a SSH stayer is also quite indicative:

> "Maybe that is what a typical scientist looks like. I am constantly searching for boundaries between being good, professional, healthy, and in good shape. Really, all the time, every day. When I come home, I have to go for a walk in the woods for an hour. And that is it."

As stated in the previous section, parental leave at both interviewed institutions is still predominantly taken by women. All the female interviewees went to the maternity leave and used most of the paternity leave available to them. There were only two exceptions. In one case, a woman's partner used three months of paternity leave. In the other case, the interviewee acquired a research project and returned to work earlier. While most men have taken paternity leave, although for various lengths, only one man in our sample has taken parental leave (two times for three months). Nevertheless, he admits that his wife is the one who performs most of domestic chores:

> "A more significant share of work rests on her shoulders, and this doesn't mean it is exclusively her work or anything. We both do pretty much everything. Maybe someone likes something more and then we split the work, but in practice, she does more than I do. I admit it."

Such a perception of the division of household/childcare responsibilities, however, was quite atypical in interviewees' accounts. Both men and women tend to feel their division of household tasks is quite fair and equal, and that their partners are generally supportive of their job responsibilities. This was especially important during the time they were working on their PhDs, when their workload and stress were at the highest level.

Nevertheless, more careful scrutiny of interview materials reveals some interesting gender-related peculiarities. This can be seen from the following account of a SSH researcher. She does not currently work from home, but says she used to practice such a job arrangement in the past. It is quite interesting that she feels she was able to perform more household chores (e.g. cooking), due to the fact she was working from home, and she actually admits that she was able to manage more household responsibilities in this period. A SSH leaver that is currently unemployed also feels that one of the differences is that she was able to cook when working from home. Constant project applications and combining PhD writing

with a regular job, however, were perceived as one of the major factors that increased her exhaustion and stress levels.

Another example is of a SSH leaver who feels that her partners' lack of understanding for her career aspirations was among the main reasons why they separated. She feels that her work greatly suffers due to family obligations as a single mother of two children:

> "Yes, it is very difficult. I must say that my work suffers. I had quite significant problems with my ex-partner, who is also employed at the university, to get him to understand, although he is an intellectual. We had a sort of a class struggle. One of the reasons we broke up is that he perceives himself as the one having priority. And he feels it is supposedly natural, as I am the one who wanted to have children. He did not actually say it, but in the end, he is the guy who, in addition to other problems, cannot understand a woman having a career, or spending more time on something outside the family than he does. That was one of the biggest minuses. Then, I was left alone and it was almost impossible because in those eight hours I had to do everything, not only in terms of job obligations, but also everything you cannot manage while you are with children."

A female leaver from the STEM department, who is now employed at a lower research position than her previous post at the university, feels that the division of home responsibilities between herself and her partner is quite equal. Nevertheless, when asked whether he is supportive of her academic career, she provides the following reply:

> I don't know. I think in a way he supports me, but still, he is so focused on his work and he is quite a fighter by character. But if I achieved rapid professional development and became very successful, I believe that things would not run so smoothly.

The notion of being replaceable also emerged as quite important in the interviews. An interviewee from the STEM department says how colleagues from different working environments sometimes ask why she does not take sick leave. She explains how difficult this is for her as there is no one to replace her in teaching and research work.

In terms of family being a potential obstacle to travelling abroad, it was generally concluded that self-restraining when choosing to travel to conferences abroad is more present among female interviewees than it is among men. An indicative example is that of a SSH researcher talking about her partner being supportive of her career:

> "He openly supports me. Also, when I was writing my PhD he really helped me, but the burning issue with him is that I have a PhD and he doesn't. And he has a desire to make up for that. So he organises more professional trips abroad and conferences than I do. My conferences are more thoroughly considered, we plan them much in advance, and they are shorter, a day or two. […] It is not really a reproach or anything, but I choose them in this way. It is a kind of self-discipline. I don't apply in the first place."

In addition to family responsibilities, especially when longer periods abroad are concerned, the interviewees also reported lack of funding possibilities as the main factor preventing them from organising research visits abroad.

Some overtly discriminatory attitudes and practices regarding achieving work-life balance also emerged in the interviews. These were expressed exclusively by female interviewees. A researcher from STEM reports how she was suggested at her workplace to arrange for a nanny and cleaner to be able to work more. Another researcher from STEM explained how it was quite explicitly said to her that it had not been expected that she would have

children while participating in the young researchers' programme.[30] Another leaver from the STEM department explains how one of her superiors warned her during her first pregnancy that it was not yet time for her to have a child, as she had not yet had any published articles. She also claims that comments such as "the child also has a father" also occurred when her children were ill. Nevertheless, such practices were reported in a minority of cases. Most interviewees claimed their institutions were generally supportive of their absences caused by care for a family member and/or maternity/parental/paternity leave.

Formal and Informal Arrangements to Balance Work and Family Life

The general finding that emerged from the interviews is that the level of care for family provided by the state at the national level is quite satisfactory. In this respect, institutional care (kindergartens and nurseries) in public childcare facilities has been most widely used form of childcare after the age of one. Part-time work was not a strategy opted for by interviewees in order to better balance work and family responsibilities. Instead, informal care by interviewees' parents and/or their parents-in-law was widely used as a form of childcare, especially of children under the age of three. The most frequently mentioned difficulty with regard to institutional childcare refers to unsynchronised parents' and kindergartens' working hours. Parents and parents-in-law were highly helpful in this regard as well. They also often provided care for a sick child. Such findings are quite in line with trends and practices at the national level, described in the previous section. While most of the interviewees live without their parents or in-laws there were also those who stated that living with parents or parents-in-law enabled them to achieve better work-life balance. A SSH stayer feels it is "great that there is someone around who can take care of the children, but I have to endure some things at that expense". Only one of the interviewees reported hiring a person for helping with household chores. The lack of parental social support was thus seen by interviewees as one of the major obstacles in achieving work-life balance. Parents and parents-in-law living far away and/or having health issues or professional obligations were given as the main reasons why interviewees could not rely on such support.

Flexible Working Hours?

While, as outlined in the previous section of the report, formal rules and procedures regulating working hours exist at the institutional level at the SSH department, but not at the STEM department, flexibility in working hours is more dependent upon individual agreements with superiors than upon such formal requirements. The interviewees did not mention any major problem with the organisation of their working hours. Generally, they perceived flexible working hours as one of the advantages of working in academia giving them a certain degree of freedom and autonomy.

Some of the interviewees, however, believe that their specific academic environment requires them to be present at their workplace and limits their quality of life. One of the SSH leavers, currently working on contracts, expressed this in the following way:

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[30] Within the young researchers' program , postgraduate (doctoral) study and research training for young researchers is financed by the Slovenian Research Agency.

> "Yes, I work from home now. More or less from home. I plan my working week; I don't have to report to anybody. If I do fieldwork, I let people know that I am not available by Skype, e-mail, and that they can call me on the telephone. Working from home is an important factor for me. I can have mornings for myself. I get up at seven, and start to work at nine. This means that for these two hours I can work out, eat, or read the newspaper. Then I get to work and sit by the computer, or go out if I have meetings or fieldwork. Time is organised in accordance with the needs."

For others, the requirement to be present at their workplace on certain hours was perceived as contributing to a greater structure and discipline in their research careers. The majority admitted that children were also instrumental in providing them with more work discipline. Long working hours and/or work over weekends were reported as usual practices by interviewees from both departments, especially at the time of project applications and other deadlines.

The possibility to work from home was perceived by some of the interviewees as a means to achieve better work-life balance. This is the case of a SSH long distance commuter who asked to work from home when her child was small and did not report on any problems in assuring such an arrangement. Currently, she has an arrangement to work from home two days a week and to be present at the institute three days a week. Rare were the interviewees who reported on problems when attempting to arrange more flexible working schedules. Some of them, however, openly admitted they had not even considered such possibilities. Some also stated that flexibility in working hours also enabled them to better divide care for a sick child with their partners and gave them time for their personal activities. Flexibility in working hours can thus be interpreted as instrumental in more efficient performance of responsibilities in the family area.

Imagining the Future in Precarious Working Environments

Insecurity, instability and the possibilities of precarisation in their scientific careers were generally perceived by interviewees as major issues influencing both their family and their work life. One of the former SSH researchers termed such conditions as "an invisible threat". Another SSH interviewee explained this issue quite vividly: "if I don't have permanent employment, I am afraid to take autonomy". However, these factors were not perceived, with rare exceptions, as the most significant in their decisions whether or not to have children. A male STEM stayers' account is illustrative in this respect:

> "If there was this sense of certainty, I think I would decide to have a family earlier. However, until I have a sense of certainty to be able to support this family and provide them with some sort of quality of life, I cannot decide to take such a step. And the fact that employment contracts are extended for, I don't know, half a year at a time, does not provide any sense of certainty."

For other interviewees without children, such conditions are perceived as limiting their intentions of having or not having children. Stress and heavy workloads in research, however, were perceived by some of the interviewees as reasons why they do not consider having more children. A SSH interviewee stated that a decision to have a child is one taken by herself and her partner. She also feels it has proved difficult to find a partner supportive of the nature of work in research organisations. She gives the following account:

> You just come to a conclusion, a peculiar one I guess, that it is too hard if someone imposes additional burden on you besides the fact that your job is demanding and

there are many things that bother you. Then you rather say – I cannot cope with this. Eventually, at some point, you are old and it is too late for certain things.

6.4. CONCLUSIONS

This report gives an overview of the work-life balance policies and practices at two examined departments at SSH and STEM. The first part of the report presents main work-life balance policies both at national and organisational levels. It was found that organisational work-life balance policies mirror policy provisions at the national level and that these policies are firmly based on national laws and provisions. In line with the national tendencies, the data at the level of organisations demonstrate that women predominantly take parental leave and leave to care for a sick child. Additionally, most individuals continue to work full-time after having children, while part-time work is not very common, which is corroborated by organisational-level data. Nevertheless, it is mostly women who work part-time after having children. The provisions of the National Research Agency, the system for evaluating scientific publications and promotion criteria do consider gender by excluding maternity and parental leave from the timeframe used for evaluating individual researchers. Nevertheless, part-time work when caring for a small child, absences caused by caring for a child or another dependent family member, and the still persistent gendered division of household chores and childcare are not taken into account when evaluating individual researchers. In this vein, it seems reasonable to argue that female researchers are disadvantaged in their research careers due to their greater involvement in childcare and household tasks.

The second part of the analysis, covers the accounts of 39 individuals from both, SSH and STEM departments. Employees at both institutions generally make use of work-life policy provisions available to them (e.g. maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, flexible forms of work, especially in terms of work schedules, institutional childcare). For example, childcare is usually arranged individually by using either institutional childcare and/or having assistance of parents and parents-in-law. Their work institutions were not perceived as an important source of potential childcare, neither did they express a desire for childcare to be organised at work. This is probably due to a well-developed network of institutional childcare facilities in Slovenia and the fact that parents provide an important source of informal support in childcare. Paid domestic work and care did not emerge as important sources of assistance for the interviewees. Such a finding is in line with previous national research on this issue.

Interviewees generally assessed that their organisations support work-life balance. Only in rare instances did they report on problems arranging sick leave and/or leave to care for a child at the organisational level. However, many of them were quite aware that high demands for academic productivity and heavy workloads caused significant amounts of stress, fatigue and health issues. Productivity in terms of numbers and/or impact of research publications were seen as crucial in constructing the notion of a good scientist. Presence at the workplace and the number of hours devoted to scientific work were not seen as being so essential. The notion of not being replaceable in terms of research and/or teaching activities emerged as quite relevant in the interviews. However, having children and/or health issues caused by work overload prompted some of the interviewees to reconsider their life priorities and orientations. Most of them admitted that having children did set limits on their research productivity. This attitude was mostly openly expressed by female respondents.

Flexibility in working hours, especially in the organisation of time, was generally perceived as enabling work-life balance. They assessed their institutional environment as supportive in such terms. On this basis, for instance, the interviewees were able to use more innovative and flexible practices of childcare – e.g. sharing care for a sick child with their partners if his/her employer provided for such flexibility.

Among the interviewees with children, most of them had a partner or a spouse. While most of them perceived the division of household chores and childcare as relatively fair and equal, also depending on the stages in their life-courses and/or current job, interesting gender-related peculiarities emerged. When asked in more detail whether their partners are supportive of their careers, some female interviewees implicitly or even directly stated that their partners have stereotypical views on the gender division of roles, especially regarding women who had achieved success in their academic careers. For both genders, although it seems more so for men, having a partner who is more involved in household chores and childcare and does not highly prioritise his/her career, seems to relieve permanent or temporary (e.g. during PhD writing) stress related to academic careers. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that declarative norms of work-life balance that are related to a relatively well-developed network of welfare state initiatives in the field of social and family policies are certainly endangered under increasingly insecure and precarious working conditions that characterise the academy in Slovenia as well. Such conditions were perceived by the interviewees as imposing increased strain on their work-family balancing practices.

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Stropnik, Nada. 2011. Exchange of good practices on gender equality: new forms of work, The Netherlands, 24–25 October 2011, *Flexible working and gender equality: the case of Slovenia*. In: *Exchange of good practice on "new forms of work"*.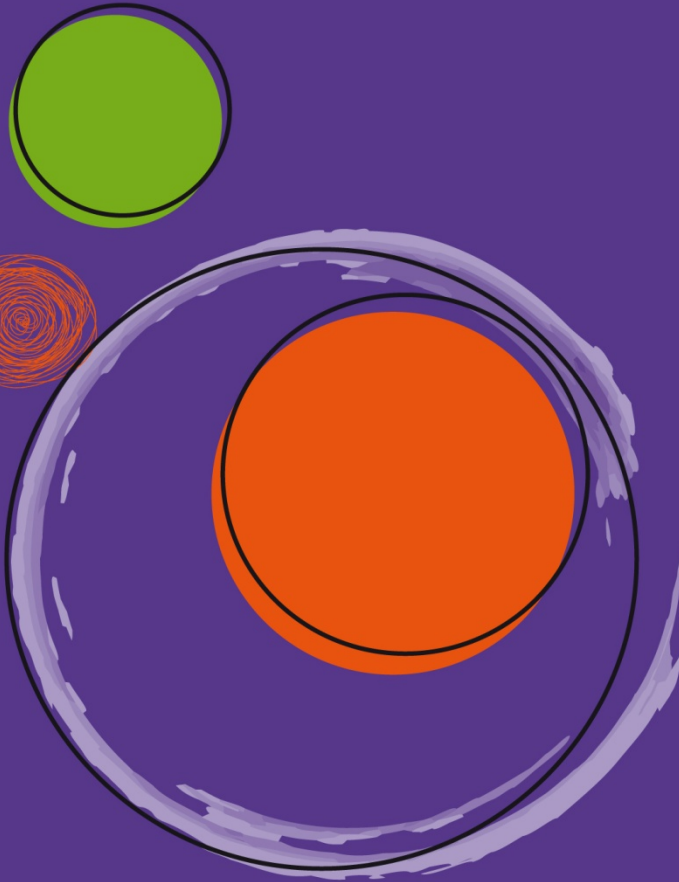 Brussels: European Commission.