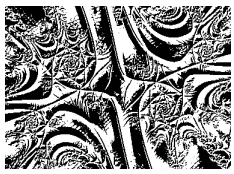

COMBINING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE IN SLOVENIA: AN ETHIC OF CARE PERSPECTIVE FOR NORMATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS

Alenka ŠVAB
Faculty of Social Sciences, Ljubljana

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Taking the ethic of care perspective, the paper deals with the way in which Slovenian family policy conceptualises the relationship between family and work responsibilities. While Slovenian family policy seems to be modern as far as recognition of heterogeneity of family life and promotion of equal opportunities are concerned, the approach through the ethic of care reveals several problems, such as the emphasis on the model of the economically independent individual; reduction of care to a child care within the family and omitting other aspects of care (care for elderly, for the self etc.). The analysis of the normative framework of Slovenian family policy shows that special priority in the work-family relationship goes to work, under the assumption that all adults are actively present in the labour force and are capable of taking care of them, while care is needed only by the really dependent people (e.g. disabled, elderly, children). The article ends up with some proposals for improving policy of reconciliation of family and work.

Key words: ethic of care, family, family policy, gendered division of labour, reconciliation of family and work, work, policies of equal opportunities

✉ Alenka Švab, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Kardeljeva pl. 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.
E-mail: alenka.svab@fdv.uni-lj.si

INTRODUCTION

In the mid seventies of the past century in Western countries the increase in the proportion of women in the labour force market becomes clearly evident (Hantrais, Letablier, 1996). In this period family policies start in their concepts and measures to connect employment and family. There are various initiatives for the state regulation of a reconciliation of work and family life. At the start of the 21st century, mass employment of women is no longer a new phenomenon, and in Slovenia it certainly has a long tradition.[1] The relation between work and family is, however, still problematic or at least uneasy. This is especially clear when one considers the actual (in)-effectiveness of various policies that aim to promote a reconciliation of work and family life.

Taking the ethic of care perspective this paper deals with the way in which Slovenian family policy conceptualises the relationship between family and work responsibilities. The ethic of care perspective enables a shift away from the dominant political model of thought that locates care in the private sphere, defining it as unpaid, socially insignificant and largely female work. It allows us to contest such traditional, reductionist understandings of care in today's policies. It aims at relocating care in the public sphere where it has not existed and turning it into a politically relevant theme, especially by relating it to the concept of active citizenship. In today's family– and social policies, actual attributes of care are often shrouded in ideological assumptions about family, gendered division of labour, mothering and childcare.

This paper aims to contribute to a new approach of care in family policy by looking at one of its core concepts – the concept of reconciliation of family and work. While family policy in Slovenia seems to be very modern as far as recognition of heterogeneity of family life and promotion of equal opportunities are concerned, analysing this policy from the ethic of care perspective reveals several problems, such as the emphasis on the model of the economically independent individual; particularity and segmentation of measures, e.g. parental leave and equal opportunities policy, and absence of care for the elderly in family policy.

THE ETHIC OF CARE AS A PERSPECTIVE AND A METHOD

The starting point of this analysis is the ethic of care perspective which can successfully clarify numerous aspects of family life as well as family policy which is the subject of present analysis. Or, as stated by Sevenhuijsen and Hoek: "care is an intrinsic aspect of human life, an ongoing activity and a human practice that implies moral questions and moral values"

(Sevenhuijsen and Hoek, 2000, 5). In discussions about care most people usually automatically think of people who are dependent on care being given by others (sick people, children, the elderly, the disabled etc.). Care is thus automatically reduced to a one-sided relationship between a care-giver and a care-receiver where the latter always plays a passive role, while in fact care is much more than that. The ethic of care overcomes this problem by defining care as "a species activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex life-sustaining web" (Tronto, 1993, 103). This notion is further elaborated by seeing care as a process that consists of four principal phases or dimensions, each with a corresponding moral orientation: caring about requires attentiveness for the recognition of the need for care; taking care of refers to the responsibility to take steps to ensure that something is done to provide for this need for care; care-giving refers to the actual care provision and opens up the question of the competencies of the care-giver; and care-receiving refers to the responsiveness of the care-receiver: it reflects the need for a reciprocal and interdependent relation between the care-giver and care-receiver (Tronto, 1993). The difference between "caring about" and "taking care of" is also the difference between actual work connected with care and the emotive significance of the relationship between the care-giver and care-receiver. Therefore, care is a complex phenomenon including both activities and feelings (emotions). In practice, both dimensions overlap and are often difficult to distinguish (Sevenhuijsen, 1998, 83; Morgan, 1996, 98). This approach clarifies that care should not be seen as a one-sided activity between an active caregiver and a dependent, passive care receiver, but that care rather establishes complex networks of intertwined relations of interdependency. Also it underscores that it would not make sense to trace a sharp dividing line between the givers and receivers of care. At closer range we can see that everybody is both giver and receiver of care, and especially so in the daily practices of family life.

The ethic of care approach is not only useful as a theoretical approach in philosophical, sociological and other debates on care, responsibility, justice and citizenship, but is also readily applicable in its orientation. For example, it is useful in the analysis of various public policies – it raises different questions, rethinks different aspects of public policies and enables the formation of concrete proposals for changes of these policies. "In the context of family policies it may for example lead to the question if the social organisation of family care does

justice to the different dimensions and values of care" and similarly "how families can be supported through wider networks of social care, so that the different dimensions can be combined in the caring process as a whole" (Sevenhuijsen and Hoek, 2000, 5).

This article is aimed at analysing the concept reconciliation of family and work in family policy in Slovenia and is done with the principles of Trace method for policy analysis (Sevenhuijsen, 2004). It enables an analysis of normative frameworks of policies, the evaluation of policy-texts and formulation of proposals of new policies. The ethic of care here acts as an analytical tool: on one hand as a lens through which a certain normative framework and the problems within it are identified, and on the other as a standard for assessing this normative framework. Its starting point is that traditional normative frameworks on care are no longer satisfactory. In different policies, care is present and absent at the same time. Its presence is visible in the increasing recognition of care as an important human activity. It is simultaneously absent in that the paradigms of current care-policies only give little space to the actual practice of care and that the values of care are often missing in their moral vocabulary. Numerous obstacles hinder a fuller recognition of care. Care is, for example, still often understood through a gendered image of human nature, as female work and responsibility by nature, and thus as self-evident. Also, when care is associated with dependency it is easily seen as a form of control. Autonomy and independence then figure as a positive norm, while the everyday (inter)dependencies that make up caring practices are easily overlooked.

Among the starting points of the Trace method, there is the finding that policy texts characteristically deny normativity. Policy-makers usually work with the fictitious image of a neutral state. By implication, moral concepts and moral arguments lack reflexivity. They are often only present between the lines or wrapped up in empirical argumentation. They lack visibility because normative statements are taken as self-evident. Often policy documents also eclipse normative controversies, which results in inconsistencies as well as in forms of compromising that try to reconcile values that are on closer examination in fact incompatible.

This analysis will also examine these issues. A contention can be made at the very beginning that, from the ethic of care perspective, family policy in Slovenia, similarly to other policies elsewhere in Europe, is equally deficient in that it is based on a reduced notion of care, on the absence of a recognition of the complexity of caring practices and processes, on a series of ideological premises about traditional (harmonious)

family life and on a gendered division of labour and family roles.

THE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK OF FAMILY POLICY IN SLOVENIA

The Trace method for analysing normative framework of a certain policy includes several steps. The step one is tracing, step two evaluating and step three, renewal with the ethic of care (Sevenhuijsen, 2004). In this chapter we carry out the step one, tracing the main definitions, conceptualisations of leading values, human nature, care, gender, work, and the related issues.

Family policy in Slovenia is primarily defined by the Resolution on the Principles of the Formation of Family Policy in Slovenia (Official Gazette No. 40 – 17/VII/1993) (further the Resolution). The Resolution defines a family as a living community of parents and children. The family is seen as the primary social space that gives optimal possibilities for the emotional and social development of children and that thus bears the responsibility for their well-being. Moreover, according to the Resolution, a family is a life-long community of children and adults who permanently take care of these children: grandparents and grandchildren, foster parents and foster children, carers and children in care. The subjects of family policy are also couples or women expecting children.

Among leading values, the Slovenian family policy promotes protection, freedom, solidarity, well-being and equality. Protection is prioritized as the basic stabiliser of the social position of citizenship, balanced with freedom (or with endeavours to establish such balance) as the second basic value orientation. The Resolution claims to support such forms of programmes and measures which would increase the freedom of the individual, without prejudice to his or her protection. It also expresses its awareness that protection cannot be guaranteed unless society provides a certain level of solidarity and that care for the quality of life or well-being of all people should present at least a long term goal of every developmentally oriented society. This ensures that not only there are services available to people, but also that welfare services work as "insurance for possible future needs" (Szebehely, 2003, 1).

The Resolution stresses the basic change in the value orientation of social policy (the transformation from an egalitarian value orientation to the values of protection and freedom) that happened in the process of transition from the socialist to capitalist system, as a positive one. This formulation is probably a result of linking equality with socialism (and collectivism), and therefore ascribing it a negative connotation, while

(social) protection and freedom are seen as "positive" (social--liberal) values that ought to be promoted and achieved through the processes of post-socialist transition. Although it is clear that equality is not excluded, this formulation could be seen as an attempt to untie the concept of equality from the "socialist" connotations. However, we must not overlook that this also means a shift to more liberal values that are based on employment status consequently leading to the creation of social inequalities.

In its normative framework, family policy in relation to work and family primarily provides the following statements/ starting points and concepts:

1. The family is seen as the primary social space which provides optimum possibilities for the emotional and social development of children, and is at the same time responsible for their well-being. Therefore, childcare is seen as the primary function of the family. Children are considered a constituent element of the family or as a precondition for its existence. Even more significantly, there is an implicit connotation that childcare is the only politically recognised type of care within the family (the definition of the family).

2. Equal opportunities for both sexes (the 5th principle of family policy) are (declaratively) promoted and should be implemented through different measures especially in relation to the reconciliation of work and family.

3. Conditions for the reconciliation of family and professional obligations of parents (mother and father) should be created, and equal responsibilities of both parents should be encouraged (the 8th goal of family policy).

In a separate paragraph, "Work, employment, employment policy", the Resolution further elaborates the intention of the state regarding the reconciliation of work and family. According to the Resolution, family policy and employment policy intersect at the point at which the individual distributes and reconciles his/her time between family responsibilities and professional activities. As stated in the Resolution, this presents the problem of spending and distributing time; of the assertion of equal opportunities for both sexes; of the consideration of family needs in the professional sphere; and of the reconciliation of the needs of family life and parental responsibilities with professional activities.

In the Resolution, the state binds itself to support the following activities promoting the reconciliation of work and family: a more adequate moral and material social valuation of work with children and a more equal distribution of responsibility for them between the mother and the father, between parents, companies (employers) and society; for reorganisation of working hours; for legal adaptations in the field

of the forms of employment; a more favourable arrangement of parental leave; the guarantee of equal employment at the return to work; full social insurance in case of part-time employment or temporary interruption of employment, for nursing of and care for a small child, and nursing and care for children with impairments in physical and mental development; and for the provision to all parents who wish so of places for their children in day-care institutions or other forms of childcare. The Resolution states the awareness that these confluence points demand a certain amount of social intervention, and therefore it states detailed measures in this direction, among them maternity leave and parental leave and a compensation for the income lost during the time of the leave, and the right to different working hours for parents with children under three.

Obviously Slovenian family policy also promotes the ideas that can be found in the ethic of care perspective, especially as far as the value orientation is concerned. However, as it will be shown later in the text, these ideas are promoted only at the declarative level, without any concrete measures to be implemented.

FAMILY AND WORK IN SLOVENIAN FAMILY POLICY – SOME PROBLEMS

Apparently, the major problem of the concept of reconciliation of work and family is that it is led by a special constellation of premises which prioritise certain aspects of the relationship between work and family, among other the child and his/her needs or well-being. Concretely, in Slovenian family policy this means that care within the family is reduced to childcare, which is also recognised as the most important "family function". No attention is paid to the fact that one of the main problems that family policy in Slovenia will have to face sooner or later is care for old people, who are becoming an important segment of the population in ageing Western societies and in Slovenia as well.[2] Since a great deal of care for the elderly is provided by family members and relatives, it should be also conceptualised within family policy and not only in social policy. Also, Slovenian family policy does not take into account the need for mutual care between (healthy) adults nor does it acknowledge the need for care for the self.

The result of the reduction of care in the family to childcare also means that in the framework of the reconciliation of work and family, measures are focused on caring for children (day-care, maternity leave) and not primarily on the promotion of equal opportunities for both sexes (as for example in Scandinavian countries). Therefore, equal opportunities for both sexes are considered only with regard to childcare and

are mainly related to it, while all other segments of care and gendered division of labour in the family are omitted.

Special priority in the work-family relationship goes to work or employment, under the assumption that all adults are actively present in the labour force market and are capable of taking care of themselves (and of their family). Family policy is still based on a traditional understanding of the monolithic nuclear family (Švab, 2001) as the socially desired model in which care is considered gender specific work.

The model of the economically independent individual in family policy

While in its introduction the Resolution states its intention of reaching beyond the industrial model of social policy in which social protection is provided primarily for the active part of the population (the employed), it also states that soon social policy will no longer be able to be based on full-time employment or the status of regular employment. But in this very introduction, there is a sort of protection valve added, namely that social protection of people will have to be based on the status of citizenship and only additionally on employment status. Nevertheless, it seems that the Resolution clearly favours the model of the independent employed individual when it comes to the objectives and measures.

One of the most obvious concrete examples of the privileging of employment status over the issues of care in Slovenian family policy is maternal or paternal leave. The right to compensation for the period of maternity leave is constructed as a right in employment law. Only women who were employed before the beginning of their maternity leave are entitled to it, while unemployed mothers and student--mothers only receive a minimal compensation or parental allowance. Unfortunately, the parental allowance is not high enough to guarantee even the basic survival. Relating care to employment status, therefore, leads to selectivity which deprives the most vulnerable social groups (the unemployed, students).

One of the main manifestations of the increasing individualisation is the norm of economic independence, which in Western countries, and in Slovenia, is clearly expressed by the premise of the model of the adult worker (Lewis, 2002) able to take care of him/herself. This model is based on the idea that all adults are potential members of the labour force. Lewis notes for England that policy makers have substantiated this idea in the change from the family model with male breadwinner to a family model in which both partners are present in the labour force market (model of adult breadwinner). This change enabled the formation of new premises in

policies in which the employment of women is often equated to the employment of men, without any consideration of differences between men and women (such as shorter working hours of women, frequent interruptions of work due to sickness of children, lower wages of women and so forth). Lewis states that in regards to changes in social reality, policy makers are often ahead of time (Lewis, 2002) when they speak about the presence of women in the labour market. Consequently, the assumption that all adults equally participate in the labour market makes the fact of an unequal division of unpaid labour invisible or at least not problematic, while in reality participation of women in the labour market has not contributed to a two-career model in which women can develop their professional career, which would presuppose an equal division of labour in the family. Instead, the prevailing model is a model of two adult breadwinners in which both partners earn an income and family work is predominantly done by women.

The relationship between work and family is characterised by contradictions in the valuation of work and family spheres. Indeed, the relationship between work and family in the concept of the reconciliation of work and family is not an egalitarian one. It is understood in a binary way – as a dualism in which the (values of the) two elements are in opposition, one element being subjected to the other: in the relation between work and family, the sphere of work occupies the dominant place and dictates the role of the family in this relationship. For example, the Resolution states that "the individual distributes and reconciles his/her time between family obligations and professional activities" – work is positively determined as an activity (it implies career building), while family is constructed as a burden (obligations), which implies that family obligations present an obstacle in career development, while conversely, it is not acknowledged that from the perspective of family life, working conditions impede the carrying out of family obligations or demand their constant adjustment to the conditions in the sphere of paid work. While, in contrast, good practice in the policy of reconciliation of work and family in Scandinavian countries shows that the result of family friendly policy measures is the creation of an environment in which work and family life are not understood as conflicting, but rather complementary spheres (Hantrais and Letablier, 1996, 127).

Seen from the ethic of care perspective, the privileging of employment status and the ensuing premises on the independent individual who is supposedly able to (take) care of him/herself on the basis of his/her income, has a series of

other deficiencies, such as the problem of individualisation discourse present in some social and family policies in the West. One of the dangers of the discourse of individualisation is that it only recognises care in relation to "genuinely dependent people", while all others supposedly do not need care (Sevenhuijsen and Hoek, 2000, 5) – or are able to (take) care of themselves. The ethic of care perspective refuses such polarization of dependence and independence, and, instead adopts a relational perspective which originates from the idea that care constructs relations/relationships between individuals. The opposition between the individual and society should thus be replaced by the concept of interpersonal dependency. We also need "to avoid equating independence with self-sufficiency, since care and responsibility then remain invisible. Even 'self-sufficient individuals' have to take account of their responsibilities for others and the care this entails on a daily basis in many situations of their lives". (Sevenhuijsen, 2002b, 30)

Particularity and segmentation of measures

Another problem of Slovenian family policy regarding the relationship between work and family is the segmentation of measures: that is, individual measures are not integrated into a systemic policy which would include the state, individuals/citizens and employers. Apparently, only those aspects of care which can easily be translated into concrete measures, such as maternity leave and public childcare are exposed. There are no concrete measures nor any systematic policy designed for issues related to privacy or everyday family life, and especially to care and the gendered labour division within the family. This lack of systemic policy is also reflected in the fact that by far the bulk of actual measures relate to several kinds of parental leaves, which are, however, mainly in the period of the first year of the child's life. Parental leaves are an instrument for financial compensation for the period of maternal and parental leave, and for job retention after the return to work. Considering the fact that the actual reconciliation of work and family continues in the post-return period, there is, indeed a lack of measures (with the exception of institutionalised childcare services). Beside the absence of systematic policy, or rather because of its absence, the final realisation of concrete measures turns out to be problematic as well. The following examples will tell us why.

Parental leave

The first example of measures coming from the policy mechanism of the reconciliation of work and family relates to parental leave. In Slovenia, there are four kinds of parental

leave: maternity leave, paternity leave, child care leave and adopter's leave,[3] while other countries of the European Union usually have three different types of "parental" leave: maternity leave, which is not transferable right of the mother at childbirth, paternity leave and parental leave. The latter is equivalent to child care leave in Slovenia, which is interchangeable and can be used either by the mother or by the father,[4] and the former (90 days in Slovenia) aims to encourage care for the newborn baby by both parents.[5]

In Slovenia, paternity leave was only introduced in January 2003, so it is not possible to foretell how frequently it will actually be used. Thus far the statistics show that almost all fathers take the first part of paternity leave (15 days fully paid after the birth of a child), when mothers with a newborn child need intensive care and help, especially if there is an older child in the family. The fact that only one percent of fathers make use of child care leave reflects the ineffectiveness of a measure which is not integrated in a policy system that aims at a reconciliation of work and family for both women and men. Therefore, the arrangement of paternity leave has had poor chances from its inception. The leave available for fathers to use at the birth of their children (or during the mother's maternity leave) is too short to actually contribute to a more constant, proportionate, balanced division of care between the parents. The empirical results show that fathers do play an active role in childcare during the first part of the paternity leave, while the division of labour remains gendered when they go back to work (Rener et al., 2005a). Moreover, the second part of paternity leave does not motivate fathers to take it as the state offers only the payment of a social security contribution from the minimum wage. The final success of paternity leave – an actual increased participation of fathers in childcare – cannot depend only on its legal arrangement; rather it should be accompanied by other mechanisms, such as the creation of family-friendly jobs, the enhancement of the motivation of fathers to choose paternity leave, changes in images of masculinity etc.

We can observe a similar situation as that recorded in Sweden, where "the options were set for a choice to be negotiated between the parents themselves. This left considerable room for manoeuvre in negotiations on the basis of highly gendered conditions, with the result that caring usually remained the mother's prime responsibility, even if fathers usually assisted to a greater or lesser extent" (Björnberg, 2002, 95). Taking parental and/or paternal leave by men is only an option (therefore a free choice). In such a conceptualisation, men are seen as potential carers (it is optional to take the

leave or not), while women are seen as primary carers. This creates the situation in which paternal and parental leaves have few chances to be implemented. Without any sophisticated mechanism that would promote paternal and parental leave and would also be an integral part of a more systematic policy on care, the parental and paternal leave as measures of equal opportunity policy have poor chance of achieving their primary goal.

Another problem that results from the fact that the reconciliation of work and family is situated within family policy is that there are many different measures that regulate the relationship between work and family. Various forms of leave in the field of parental care are primarily designed for care giving by the parent. These refer to her/his temporary exit from the sphere of paid work, but they are not sufficiently integrated in equal opportunities policies. I see them as only one dimension of equal opportunities policies. An additional problem is that the latter are not designed in Slovenia as a systematic policy, which would include the different aspects (and consequently aims and measures) of achieving equal opportunities of women and men. Although paternal and parental leaves should be an integral part of equal opportunities policy and the policy of reconciliation of family and work, they should not be treated as the only one. After all, the period of early care for children (the 1st year) is a relatively short period of time in the life course of an individual or his/her family and the issue of gendered division of labour within the family goes far beyond it.

Childcare

Besides several forms of parental leaves, there are also several services providing day care when parents are at work. Job security when returning to work after parental leave is certainly an important measure in the policy of reconciliation of family and work; however it is not sufficient without a good system of day care. Slovenia has a well developed and well organised system of public day-care with its public kindergartens. There are also some private kindergartens, but their number is small (18 in the year 2005) (Ministry of Education and Sport). Public kindergartens have a long tradition in Slovenia and were one positive legacy of the socialist era. They include child care as well as an education component defined by the state within the curriculum.

However, there are also some problems regarding day-care services for children. One of the biggest problems is a private/ informal day-care, especially private nannies who in their services avoid state control and the standards set for

public and private day-care centres. This is not only the problem of the grey economy, but also of the quality of such care, which comprises a substantial number of preschool children. According to official statistics there were 54,815 children included in kindergartens in the school year 2004/2005 or 61.4% of all children (Statistical Office of RS). The rest attend various forms of informal day care (nannies, grandparents, other relatives).

Equally significant is the fact that a large proportion of informal day-care for children is provided by informal networks of relatives, most often grandparents. In the eyes of the employed parents, this form of childcare has several advantages over institutional day-care: it is cheaper, parents trust their relatives, and it is time-wise, it is much more flexible. It seems that although the system of public day care for children is well-organised in Slovenia and represents an important element of the reconciliation of family and work policy, parents still have to adjust their schedules to the kindergartens instead of the opposite. The problem of public childcare centres is the rigidity of their eight-hour morning-to-afternoon working hours[6] which are only slowly adapting to the variety of working hours of parents. Saturday or late afternoon care is only rarely provided. There is, thus, another problem with regard to the gendered division of care and child care in particular, namely that the process of redistribution of family work is not in the direction from women to men but from women to other women (grandmothers, neighbours, friends etc.) (Rerrich, 1996, 29; Rener, 1996, 143). The latest research results on active fatherhood in Slovenia show that female relatives most often step in with providing child care when parents are at work, also increasingly in the case when the child is sick, as employers often put pressure on women not to take sick leave for a child (Rener et al., 2006).

Employers and working environment

In several European countries the increase in the employment of both partners first led to measures towards the reconciliation of work and family and later to the establishment of family friendly policies in working environments. Family friendly working arrangements are an example of good practice in the reconciliation of work and family life. The Resolution is rather parsimonious in its definition of the role of employers in the policy of the reconciliation of work and family, and leaves this shift to their private initiative. Indeed, employers do not act as active partners in the division of the responsibilities for the reconciliation of work and family – this is largely seen as a matter between the state and family. While

the state promises to support, for example, "a reorganisation of working hours" and "legal adjustment of forms of employment", responsibility is left to the employer (without state interference): "while also the companies will have to do their part, namely with the organisation of work which will provide flexible jobs and flexible working hours (adapted to family)". The experiences of states where work and family are systemically reconciled clearly show that employers do not contribute to the creation of family friendly working environments without direct stimulation from the state. Existing family policy measures do not suffice for the working culture to change (the employers have to be stimulated to see advantages of family friendly working policy measures, for example in a higher quality of work).

Care for the elderly

With its increasing share of elderly people (over 14% of people are over 65 years), Slovenia is an example of an ageing society. This phenomenon opens up a series of important questions concerning elderly care. Primarily, two questions seem important. Firstly, the question of the dividing line between public and private responsibilities of care for the elderly. Secondly and related to this, the question of the effectiveness of the system of public care for the elderly (institutionalised care, support networks for families etc.) and the associated question of the availability of public resources. In this context, we can expect that the role of families in the provision of elderly care will be put on the agenda again and that the state will once again try to transmit responsibilities to the family (Švab, 2003). According to Morgan, Western countries are already facing this problem with the "widening awareness of the defects of institutional care, and an increasing desire on the part of successive governments to reduce levels of taxation and public expenditures. In the case of Britain and North America, at least these combined with a reassertion of the centrality of family life within the nation as a whole" (Morgan, 1996, 96).

Regarding care for older generations in Slovenia, two situations are symptomatic of its family policy. First, inter-generational relations that include the older generation are completely absent in the formulation of family policy. Family policy is exclusively oriented to two-generational family relations between parents and their (dependent) children. This is clearly evident from the very definition of the family. Grandparents are only acknowledged here when they – in the absence of parents – take over the role of the parent and take care of their grandchild/grandchildren. In this situation, the

community of (grand)children and grandparents who take care of them acts as a two-generational nuclear family. The definition of the family does not presume or foresee three--generational relationships as the subject of family policy, not even in cases of extended families which consist of three (or even four) generations, which are not so uncommon in Slovenia. In social policy in a broader sense, inter-generational relationships are only the subject of consideration in a minor way when it concerns the division of responsibilities for elderly care between the family and the state. Here again, old people are placed in the role of persons who passively receive care when they are dependent on it. Thus, care for the elderly is removed from everyday inter-generational family practices and relationships.

Another important aspect of such elderly (care) policy is the silent assumption that it is primary the responsibility of the family to take care of the elderly: care for the elderly is assumed to be unpaid, informal work supported by the state only to a limited extent. This problem is especially urgent if it is put in the context of balancing domestic life and employment. Existing European studies show that people who try to balance care giving responsibilities, domestic life and paid employment often suffer from psychological, social, interpersonal, practical and health-related stress, which is especially intensified when they combine paid work with care for elderly relatives (Phillips, 1998, 70).

The second symptomatic situation is that inter-generational relationships are excluded from consideration in the framework of the Resolution. The older generation has proved to be an important source of support for families with children. In Slovenia, grandparents are an expanded source of help regarding day-care for their grandchildren. In many cases, grandparents also offer other forms of material and non-material help to families. It is thus relatively one-sided to only depict the elderly as passive receivers of care. Caring relations between the generations are much richer and imbued with reciprocity. Public policy-making would have to take into account the broader, fluent and ever changing nature of inter-generational relationships.

Policy of equal opportunities

The isolation of the reconciliation of work and family policy measures is also visible in the attitude towards equal opportunities policy. In Scandinavian countries, the policies of equal opportunities is the guideline and the basis for measures towards the reconciliation of work and family (Hantrais and Letablier, 1996, 126) – the reconciliation of work and family is

a topic within the policy of equal opportunities, while in Slovenian family policy the case is just the opposite.

Considering the relationship between work and family, we cannot avoid the sociologically relevant question of different gender roles in the processes and practices of care in the changing conditions of late modernity. There has been an ongoing debate about changing gender roles and especially the roles of women entering the labour market and the public sphere in a broader sense, and about the consequences of the double burden for women as a result of conflicts and different intensities of change in the sphere of work (mass employment of women) and the sphere of family (persisting gender asymmetrical division of work and especially care). In the 1980s Italian sociologists Balbo, Bimbi, Saraceno (in Rener, 2000, 289) put forward a provocative thesis on dual presence. The thesis exposes the positive aspects of the position of women in late modernity through their double presence in private and in public spheres. "Women are everyday migrants between times and places, exchanging real and symbolic registers several times a day and becoming much greater masters of organisation, coordination and adaptation than their male colleagues, companions, friends and partners. Besides this undoubtedly being a burden for women, it is also an experience of living in two worlds, it is a double presence" (Rener, 2000, 290).

In the critique of Giddens' idea that "more and more people are looking for opportunities for commitment outside of work", Selma Sevenhuijsen calls attention to other aspects of various gender positions regarding the division of work and care. In her view, this statement by Giddens represents a male position, while for women, the situation is quite the opposite – women try to spread their commitments from the private to the public sphere (in the labour market, in politics, etc.), that is the sphere which, historically, was closed to them. Men, on the other hand, through caring, have to change their commitment to and identity in a sphere where they already live: the intimate life sphere (Sevenhuijsen, 2002a, 138). We can agree that at the level of politics the problem lies in that these complex relationships between the sexes regarding work and care belong to the normative assumptions of modern states and the creation of the term "of the modern individual" (Sevenhuijsen, 2002a, 139).

The thesis of the double burden of women exposes primarily the negative aspects of the transitions of late modernity, while the thesis on their double presence exposes primarily the positive aspects of women's presence in several spheres of life. They thus seem to be part of the same story

and are indeed complementary – the double presence of women in the world of late modernity being their advantage, and the double burden being an impediment and a result of the gender asymmetrical division of labour, of the low value of care and of other problematic aspects of the reconciliation of work and family to which this article attempts to call attention.

Care is not only about the particular work done, but also about (gender) identity. "Caring tasks and emotional labour are not just any set of tasks; they constitute a central set of tasks in constructing gender identity and sexual difference" (Morgan, 1996, 101). However, this does not imply that caring activities are (thought to be) done only by women or that women possess some kind of virtue to care for other that men do not. After all, not all women do the caring work and not all do it in the same amount. There are other social dimensions that crosscut the gendered character of care, like class and ethnicity (Morgan, 1996, 102).

CONCLUSION

It is clear that family policy in Slovenia is promoting some of the primary values of and ethic of care such as equality, protection, solidarity, and well-being. The concept of reconciliation of family and work is itself an admission by the state that care is important and it shows that the state views itself as an important actor in care provision. In fact the reconciliation of family and work is one of the most important policy fields through which the principles of the ethic of care can be put forward. In Slovenian family policy there is at least a partial recognition that care is a collective responsibility. But since the very understanding of care is insufficient and limited (to child care), we cannot yet speak of "a new politics of care … [which] is a collective responsibility, the basic principle being the social importance of care" (Sevenhuijsen, 2002b, 33). From the way the state formulates care when speaking about the relationship between family and work (and also the state itself), it is clear that it locates care in the family. And although it recognises care as an important element of everyday life and sustainment, it gives priority to the model of the independent, self-sufficient working individual.

From the perspective of the ethic of care, several proposals for improving the conceptualisation of care and of reconciliation of family and work can be made. First of all, as already stated at the beginning of this paper, the Resolution as the main family policy document needs to be rethought in its basic conceptual premises. What is needed is rethinking about the core concepts that define the family policy frame-

work. Firstly, the resolution would need a new definition of the family that would actually take into account all possible family arrangements. While the intention of family policy makers is to recognize the changeability of family life, and their ambition is that family policy comprises all families ("the inclusion of the entire population or the orientation towards all families" reads the first principle of family policy), the concrete conceptualisation of the family and the ensuing measures are exclusive to the extent that we can speak about the position introducing a kind of "exclusive pluralism" (Švab, 2003), with at the same time, the notion of traditional, heterosexual family still latently present.

Here, the burning issue is the exclusion of an important family form – single parent families which should get a special protection on the part of the state, especially regarding parental care and the reconciliation of work and family, and not only as far as the danger of poverty is concerned. While family policy argues for a shared responsibility between parents, this often remains unrealised in single parent families, which is the result of the general socially accepted idea on the gendered division of care, and not the result of the phenomenon of single parent families as such. The lack of specific measures for the protection of single parent families (especially in relation to care) springs from the fact that family policy makers understand the problem of single motherhood exclusively as a problem of the absence of economic protection (the prevention of social exclusion or rather its material aspect – poverty), which in Slovenia is the domain of social policy. This leaves an open space for moral worries about the phenomenon of single parent families. Selma Sevenhuijsen implicitly calls attention to one of the dangerous elements of such moral concerns. Thus, children in single families can be seen as not only economically deprived, but would also – by so-called "father absence" – as suffering from insufficient parenting and lack of social ties. This state of affairs is the result of the assumption that care is by nature a gender divided activity, while it would be better to employ a normative notion of gender equality instead, including, among others, the idea that care is not gender specific work (Sevenhuijsen, 2003, 137).

As far as the definition of the family is concerned it should also overcome the view in which the family is seen as a neo-nuclear unit without any outside kinship and other relations. When considered from the ethic of care perspective, it becomes clear that caring family relations go much beyond the nuclear family. "Instead of linking benefits, taxes and pensions to marriage, they might be linked to practices of care". (Silva, Smart, 1999, 11)

Another conceptual rethinking would include an explicit acknowledgement of the role of care in everyday life – not only within the family but also in other spheres of life. Care in family policy should be defined according to the principles of the ethic of care, therefore acknowledging not only care for children but also care for other dependent and seemingly independent family members. Care for the self is also something that the current vocabulary of family policy does not include although it is very clear that overburdening – especially of women – is a common problem in their endeavours to reconcile family and work.

From the ethic of care perspective the policy of the reconciliation of work and family cannot only support the model of the independent employed individual, nor can it favour work or "access to paid work as the primary dimension of social inclusion" (Sevenhuijsen, 2002a, 136). It should rather connect itself with the policy of equal opportunities and with a broadened understanding of care. Only by successfully integrating different policy fields, it becomes possible to promote changes in the reality of everyday life and in the social meanings of care and to relocate care at different social levels, especially in the spheres of work and family. This does not mean that we should neglect the importance of economic independence. An ethic of care would rather propose to "rethink autonomy in a manner that retains the value of economic independence, while simultaneously embedding it in a relational account of human nature that deals with actual practices of care and responsibility" (Sevenhuijsen, 2002b, 29).

Probably the most important first step to be made in Slovenia in order to promote the ethic of care (not only in family policy) is to make care into a political relevant issue. The provision of daily care has not entered public debates as a politically relevant theme yet, for example through debates on the policy of equal opportunities, or on the ageing of the population. On the other hand, the relocation of the meanings and evaluation of care goes on with different intensities at different social levels – for example while family policy attempts to change the meanings of care and to relocate its practices, at the level of everyday life these shifts are not yet being practiced to any considerable extent.

NOTES

[1] The share of women on the labour market has been increasing in Slovenia since the beginning of the 20th century. In 1910 27% of women were employed in industry and craft (Jogan, 2000), while the process of feminisation of occupations began between the two World Wars. The process of mass employment began after the Second World War mainly due to the ideological promotion of female employment and the lack of workers. The process was accompanied by the pro-

motion of gender equality and later also a well-developed system of public child care. In the period of transition from socialist to capitalist system the female employment rates only slightly decreased. There were 47.2% of women in the labour force in 1991 while the share decreased to 44.9% in 2002. The decrease is not a consequence of re-traditionalisation or voluntary withdrawal to the private sphere, but a consequence of the increasing share of women among the unemployed (Rener et al., 2005b).

[2] The share of the elderly in Slovenia is constantly and rapidly increasing. While there were 7.5% of people older than 65 in 1948, this share represents 15.6% in 2005. The share of people over 60 was 16.5% in 1991 and 20.6% at the end of 2005. Only 4.1% of people over 65 were in elderly care centres (Statistical Office of RS).

[3] Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act (*Official Gazette RS*, No. 97/2001).

[4] Child care leave in Slovenia comprises 260 days immediately following maternity leave (105 days).

[5] Fathers should use the first part of the paternal leave (15 days of full-time absence from work) until the child is 6 months old, and the remaining 75 days in the form of full absence from work until the child is 3. Fathers are entitled to full compensation of the salary for the first part of the leave, while for the remaining 75 days of paternity leave the state provides the payment of social security contribution from the minimum salary.

[6] The majority of daycare centres close at half past four or at five in the afternoon.

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COMBINING WORK...

Kombiniranje poslovnog i obiteljskog života u Sloveniji: perspektiva etike brige/njege u analizi normativne politike

Alenka ŠVAB
Fakultet društvenih znanosti, Ljubljana

Ovaj rad se, iz perspektive etike brige/njege, bavi načinom na koji slovenska obiteljska politika konceptualizira odnos između obaveza u obitelji i na radnom mjestu. Dok je, s jedne strane, slovenska obiteljska politika naizgled moderna kada je riječ o prepoznavanju heterogenosti obiteljskoga života i promicanju politike jednakopravnosti, pristup iz perspektive etike brige/njege otkriva nekoliko problema, kao što su naglasak na modelu ekonomski nezavisne individue; reduciranje njege na brigu o djeci u okviru obitelji i izostanak drugih oblika brige (briga o starim osobama, briga o sebi itd.). Analiza normativnog okvira pokazuje da je na relaciji posao – obitelj posebna prednost dana poslu, uz pretpostavku da su sve odrasle osobe radno aktivne i sposobne da se brinu o sebi te da je njega jedino potrebna zaista ovisnim osobama (npr. invalidima, starijim osobama djeci). Na kraju rada izneseno je nekoliko prijedloga za unapređenje politike usklađivanja obiteljskoga i poslovnoga života.

Ključne riječi: etika brige/njege, obitelj, obiteljska politika, podjela rada prema rodu, usklađivanje obiteljskoga i poslovnoga života, rad, politike jednakih mogućnosti

Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie in Slowenien: Die Perspektive der Fürsorge- und Pflegeethik vor dem analytischen Hintergrund normativer Politik

Alenka ŠVAB
Fakultät für Gesellschaftswissenschaften, Ljubljana

Dieser Artikel beschäftigt sich aus der Perspektive der Fürsorge- und Pflegeethik mit der Art und Weise, wie die Familienpolitik in Slowenien das Verhältnis zwischen familiären und beruflichen Pflichten konzeptualisiert. Während einerseits Slowenien eine moderne Familienpolitik zu haben scheint, was die Anerkennung der Heterogenität des Familienlebens und die Durchsetzung einer Gleichberechtigungspolitik anbelangt, so sind doch aus der

Perspektive der Fürsorge- und Pflegeethik einige Problembereiche zu erkennen. Dazu gehören: das bevorzugte Modell des wirtschaftlich unabhängigen Individuums und die Reduzierung von Fürsorge auf Kinder im Rahmen der eigenen Familie, während andere Formen der Fürsorge (für alte Menschen, für sich selbst usw.) verkannt werden. Eine Analyse des normativen Rahmens zeigt, dass im Verhältnis Beruf/Familie der Beruf Vorrang hat – unter der Voraussetzung, dass es sich bei Erwachsenen um Erwerbstätige handelt, die sich um sich selbst kümmern können, sodass Fürsorge also nur von wirklich unselbstständigen Personen beansprucht wird (z.B. Invaliden, älteren Menschen, Kindern). Abschließend gibt die Verfasserin einige Vorschläge, wie der politische Rahmen bezüglich der Verbindung von Beruf und Familie verbessert werden könnte.

Schlüsselwörter: Ethik der Fürsorge/Pflege, Familie, Familienpolitik, geschlechterbedingte Arbeitsteilung, Verbinden von Beruf und Familie, Arbeit, Chancengleichheit