

# The Influence of Reconciliation of Work and Family on the Lithuanian Population's Childbearing Intentions

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**Abstract.** *Using a wide array of theoretical and empirical studies and a national public opinion survey of Lithuanians (N=1031) of the reproductive age (18–45 y. o.) conducted in 2010–2011, within the framework of the project “Gender Inequality, Public Policy and the Future of Fertility in Lithuania,” the article examines the issue of work-life reconciliation in relation to women and men's intentions to have children. The hypothesis was raised that the stronger conflict the respondents experience between work, family life and leisure, the less they intend to have children or more children in the future.*

*However, the assumption that the childbearing intentions of individuals able to reconcile their work and family will be stronger than the childbearing intentions of those who do not manage to resolve the issue of work-family reconciliation was confirmed only partially in this analysis. One of the statistically significant relationships was opposite to the raised hypothesis: the more work interfered with family and leisure, the more probable that respondents (both men and women) ever intended to have more children. In explaining this statistically significant relationship, it is necessary to keep in mind the economic situation in Lithuania. As some research demonstrates, individuals that encounter economic insecurity and uncertain socioeconomic conditions and are unable to balance their work and family, often decide to center their lives on the private sphere and invest into children (it is particularly characteristic of women).*

*Although the conducted analysis does not allow us to make broader and more definite conclusions about the relationship between the work and family reconciliation, gender equality and fertility, it prompts us to suggest that perhaps the developed and comprehensive family policy may mitigate the negative impact of economic insecurity on fertility in a transitional economy.*

**Keywords:** *reconciliation of work and family, fertility, childbearing intentions, gender, gender equality.*

**Raktažodžiai:** *darbo ir šeimos derinimas, gimstamumas, prokreaciniai ketinimai, lytis, lyčių lygybė.*

## Introduction

During the last three decades in Europe the family model of a two-earner family replaced the model in which man was a breadwinner and women, a homemaker. The change in familial models and gender relations along with the increasing involvement of women in the labor market prompted policy makers to formulate policies helping parents to reconcile their family and work responsibilities (Sümer 2009, 75). The EU increasingly supports measures enabling this reconciliation such as childcare leave, the development of childcare institutions and flexible work schedule. The important issues of the proportion of time spent at work and the time used for the care of children and the elderly and of the effective division of this care among men and women have also been raised (Hantrais 2000).

The EU confirmed its commitment to gender equality in its 2005-2010 agenda that supplemented the renewed Lisbon strategy. In this agenda, 4 priorities were distinguished: attention to gender roles, the encouragement of women to participate in decision making, support for work-life (or work-family) reconciliation and the analysis of gender inequality in earnings (European Commission 2005). According to Maria Stratigaki, without an authority in family policy and attempting to facilitate women's equal possibilities in the labor market, the EU has introduced the concept of work-family reconciliation (Stratigaki 2004). The reconciliation of work and family is increasingly conceptualized as a crucial ingredient of the program of gender equality. In other words, an equal and equivalent division of paid and unpaid labor among men and women is one of the most important premises of gender equality (Sümer 2009; MacInnes 2006). On the other hand, the reconciliation of work and family is currently regarded as an inevitable precondition of economic success emphasized in the global capitalist world (Duncan 2002, 313).

Although the work-family reconciliation remains one of the most significant objectives of the EU policies oriented towards the issues of social inclusion and gender equality, the gender division of paid and unpaid labor did not change significantly during the last few decades. The research studies demonstrate that it is women who are mostly affected by the conflict between their work and family responsibilities. The work-family reconciliation remains a bigger problem not for men but for women because of an unbalanced distribution of housework among women and men and the lack of available childcare means (MacInnes 2006). The traditional gender perceptions that assign them with different tasks and rights still constrict men and women. Therefore, in the course of their lives, both men and women encounter not only new challenges but also the restrictions of traditional gender roles (Valian 1998).

On the other hand, the reconciliation of paid labor and family is related to fertility. The decreasing fertility rates raise concerns for many European governments. Low fertility has become a problem not only for the old EU member

states but also for the new EU countries in which family regimes and policies differ from the former because of the changes in the policies of support, work-family reconciliation and childcare that took place after the fall of the Iron Curtain (Szelewa, Polakowski 2008; Billingsley, Ferrarini 2011). According to scholars focusing on the relation between childbearing intentions and reconciliation of work and family, difficulties that women encounter in their reconciliation efforts induce women who actively participate in the labor market to choose between work and intentions to have children (or to have more children). However, currently fertility rates are the highest in the countries with the highest percentage of women involved in the labor market. On the contrary, countries with the lowest involvement of women in the labor market show the lowest fertility rates. It should also be emphasized that the high involvement of women in the labor market is related to high fertility only in those countries that attempt to facilitate, through policy measures, women's efforts to reconcile their work and motherhood (Bernhard 1993; Brewster, Rindfuss 2000).

Currently, researchers widely accept the idea that political measures that enable people to better reconcile work and family also affect fertility. In a recent study of 16 European countries, Adriaan Kalwij argues that the increased expenditure for the political measures of work-family reconciliation foster fertility (Kalwij 2010). Thus, social policy oriented towards the reconciliation of work and family, has become one of the most important issues of the EU agenda.

This article focuses on the challenges of work-family reconciliation in relation to the Lithuanian population's childbearing intentions and the future of fertility in the country. In other words, we analyze the issue of work-life reconciliation that, as it has been mentioned before, cannot be separated from gender equality and women and men's intentions to have children. The article uses a wide array of theoretical and empirical studies and a national public opinion survey of Lithuanians (N=1031) of the reproductive age (18–45 y. o.) conducted in 2010–2011, within the framework of the project "Gender Inequality, Public Policy and the Future of Fertility in Lithuania" (No. SIN-03/2010) supported by the Research Council of Lithuania under the National Programme "Social Challenges to the National Security."

In the first part of the article, a brief summary and analysis of works on gender equality and work-family reconciliation are presented. The second part of the article focuses on the Lithuanian men and women's childbearing intentions with the view that fertility is often planned and controlled, therefore, it is possible to regard the childbearing intentions as indicators of behavior and fertility in the future (Schoen et al. 1999). Factors that affect respondents' intentions may determine the reproductive behavior as well. However, it is necessary to emphasize at the outset that the relation between social policy and the indicators of fertility is rather complex; therefore, the analyzed research focuses only on childbearing intentions and not on the Lithuanian population's actual

behavior. According to Billingsley and Ferrarini, childbearing intentions are related more to men and women's desires than to their behavior that may be both predictable and unpredictable (Billingsley, Ferrarini 2011, 3).

## Fertility and Work-Family Reconciliation: Between Familialism and Gender Equality

The concept of work-family reconciliation has helped to include, into the EU political agenda, issues related to the care and private familial life. It is necessary to emphasize that a support for work-family reconciliation does not only mean the provision of childcare services by both public and private institutions. It does also entail the public discussion on the issues of gender division of childcare (Sümer 2009, 120). It is difficult to achieve the objectives of gender equality and social inclusion until the issues of the division of care between men and women and work-life reconciliation are not raised and discussed as fundamental political questions.

In debating the issues of work-family reconciliation, gender equality and fertility, it is important to understand that the state is the main institution that establishes a certain "gender regime" which, in Raewyn Connell's words, is related to a wider "gender order" and the gender division of power (Connell 1987, 1990, 2002). In its own turn, the gender regime is an elaborate collection of norms and rules forming gender relations and ascribing men and women with different tasks in both public and private sphere (Connell 1990, 2009). The welfare state encompassing a variety of the areas related to gender such as family, employment, the control of sexual behavior, fertility, housing and the provision of universal education mobilizes interests crucial in gender policies (Connell 2009, 2005). Regulating family policy, the welfare state significantly interferes in gender relations.

The issue of work-family reconciliation is an important part of both family policy and the regulation of gender relations. As it was mentioned before, the questions of work-family reconciliation have turned into widely discussed issues because, first of all, a great number of women joined the European work force during the last decades. A few decades ago, a turning point took place in the social policies of European countries that moved from the family based on the man-as-breadwinner model to the model based on an adult earner. The objective of these policies was to integrate all citizens, among them mothers, into the labor market (Hobson, Lewis, Siim 2002, 11). The model of a family with two earners or a single mother/father family has become dominant. Women and men increasingly share responsibilities for the reproductive work and childcare (Hilderbrandt, Littig 2006, 216).

The growing number of employed women affecting gender relations in both the public and private spheres has been an undeniable trend in Europe

in the last few decades. However, part time work remains one of the significant patterns of women's participation in the labor market (Sümer 2009, 14). It demonstrates that motherhood still has a powerful impact on women's working hours and their participation in the labor market in general. It also indicates that women's involvement in a family life is directly related to inequality in the labor market. Therefore, according to some researchers focusing on the intersections of gender and welfare state, it is necessary to acknowledge, to a greater degree, the importance of unpaid work performed by women at home and to conceptualize families as significant providers of welfare (Orloff 1993, 314). Moreover, to achieve more effective gender policies in the area of paid work and social welfare, it is also necessary to ascertain that these policies must take into account the elements of different gender regimes. i. e., gender equality in both the labor market and the sphere of informal care. It suggests the development of an environment that encourages an equal division of paid work, earnings and care work on both individual and public level (Pascall, Lewis 2004, 380).

In the literature of social sciences, according to Eckart Hildebrandt, three sources from which the formula of work-life balance were derived are distinguished: 1) the increasing importance of the reconciliation of family and professional life, particularly for women; 2) the change in value orientations and a shift towards the synthesis of obligations and self-realization; the development of "the culture of choice;" 3) the emergence of corporate strategies of freely chosen schedules of working time related to the extended working time and bigger work loads, the flexible application of competencies and the management of human resources (Hildebrandt 2006, 254). Three principles of the work-life balance has been developed from the perspective of the management of personnel in order to strengthen the personnel's productivity and loyalty: 1) a clear definition of corporate goals and personal priorities of employees; 2) an acknowledgment of employees as "versatile people" which means their corporate support beyond the confines of a company; 3) and a consistent organization of work in order to improve corporate processes and achieve individual objectives (Hildebrandt 2006, 254).

The length and benefits of childcare leave, the scale of childcare choices and a possibility to work part time or to have a flexible work schedule are considered the main political measures that enable people to solve the issues of work-life balance and influence their work-family reconciliation. The development of family-friendly work environment actively maintaining the values related to the balance of work and life and encouraging employees to use existing practices is of the utmost importance. Family friendly work environment encompasses a variety of measures including: a) a system of work hours (flexible work schedule, a possibility to work part time, work sharing, working at home, etc.); b) care for children and elderly people (childcare facilities at work and/or financed by companies, spaces for breastfeeding, support of workers involved in caring for

their family members, work telephones used for family needs, etc.); c) vacations (un)regulated by law (in case of critical events, maternity, illness or care for a family member); d) consultation services and training (newsletters, information on professional policies, contacts with an employee on leave, seminars and courses, etc.) (Ponzellini 2006, 283). However, in some scholars' view, these political measures often are not effective because of the increasing competitiveness of the labor market, the intensification of work and people's concern for the possibilities of future employment (Lewis, Smithson 2006, 81).

On the other hand, the issues of work-family reconciliation are inseparable from fertility in different European countries marked by the general trend of below replacement fertility rates with some regional variations (Castels 2003; Maslauskaitė, Stankūnienė 2009). The Nordic countries together with Ireland and France display the highest fertility rates in Europe (around 1.9) while the fertility rates in Mediterranean, Eastern European and former Soviet countries are lower than 1.5. In 2009, the fertility rate in Ireland was 2.07, in France, 2.00, in Sweden and UK, 1.94, in Finland, 1.86, in Belgium and Denmark, 1.84. Latvia (1.31), Hungary (1.32), Portugal (1.32), Germany (1.36), Romania (1.38) and Austria (1.39) display the lowest fertility rates (Eurostat quoted from Sümer 2009, 14–15). In Lithuania, according to Stankūnienė and Maslauskaitė, “in 2002–2005, the total fertility rate was below 1.3 (1.24–1.27), i. e. it was *the lowest low fertility*. Later, in 2006–2008, the total fertility rate did increase gradually and reached the level of 1.3. However, it is still below 1.5 (in 2008, 1.47)” (Stankūnienė, Maslauskaitė 2009, 114). In 2010, the total fertility rate in Lithuania was 1.55.<sup>1</sup>

Scholars including Esping-Andersen relate low fertility rates with the high level of familialism in countries with the lowest fertility level. On the contrary, countries with the developed measures of defamilialization, i. e. political measures that lessen individuals' dependence on family, display higher fertility (Hobson, Lewis, Siim 2002, 19; Sümer 2009, 33). In the public policies of familialistic systems, an attitude that the household is responsible for the welfare of their members predominates; thus, defamilialization expressed a degree to which social policies (or perhaps the market) makes women independent and enables them to “commodify or establish an independent household.” It is important to stress that defamilialization does not imply „anti-family“. On the contrary, defamilialization describes a gender regime that attempts to facilitate family life and reduce an individual's dependence on kinship (Esping-Andersen 1999, 51).

Esping-Andersen distinguishes four types of indicators to analyze defamilialization: overall servicing commitment to families, subsidies to child families, public child care for children below the age of three and supply of care to the elderly (Esping-Andersen 1999, 61). His analysis demonstrates that the

<sup>1</sup> For more, see: <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=2422&PHPSESSID=9af618530f9b6f06fea5a3bed55bd81f>.

correlation between fertility and women's participation in the labor market is the opposite of what one might expect, i. e. the stronger familialism of a society, the lower fertility rates. According to this researcher,

Contemporary welfare states can no longer count on the availability of housewives and full-time mothers. The more they do so, either by actively encouraging familialism or by passively refraining from providing an alternative, the more they diminish welfare at both the micro- and macro-level. At the micro-level, familialism is now counter productive to family formation and labor supply. This means low fertility, lower household incomes, and higher risks of poverty... At the macro-level, it implies a waste of human capital (in so far as educated women's labor supply is suppressed) (Esping-Andersen 1999, 70).

Historically familialistic countries of southern Europe continually display both low fertility and the low level of women participation in the labor market. The defamilialistic measures, first of all, accessible and high-quality childcare institutions, facilitate working parents' burden in reconciling work and family responsibilities. Relatively high rates of fertility and women's involvement in the labor market are often presented as a result of defamilialization in the Nordic gender regime. The non-interference attitude when the functions of defamilialization are left to the market entails high level of social inequality and increasing social polarization. The intensification of social inequality is in fact directed against "women-friendly" policies oriented towards both gender and social equality. It is possible to argue that the high level of familialism is also related to a low level of gender equality in families that, in its turn, is associated with low fertility. According to McDonald (2000), recent low fertility rates in the Western world are an outcome of underdeveloped gender equality in sharing familial responsibilities. On the contrary, research conducted in the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Norway and Denmark) demonstrates that egalitarian gender relations in family and the equal sharing of familial responsibilities and childcare between men and women may increase fertility as well. It was noticed that when fathers took longer paternity leave, it was more likely that the couple would have a second and third child (Oláh 2003; Duvander et al. 2008; Brodmann et al. 2007).

According to the researchers, Lithuania is a highly familialistic society (Maslauskaitė 2010; Stankūnienė, Maslauskaitė 2009). This means that the work-family reconciliation is left for families themselves to resolve. Research on the Lithuanian men and women's strategies of reconciling familial and work roles (Reingardė 2009) demonstrates that the increasing participation of women in the labor market and their more active involvement in the public life has not as yet brought substantial changes in the gendered division of unpaid work. Women still carry the burden of most unpaid labor in families and society in general. This influences unequal career opportunities for

them, the difference in the salaries of men and women and women's economic dependence on their partners. The decreasing social benefits of motherhood and a shift towards familialization of social services (cuts in healthcare, education, housing, and public childcare benefits) have increased the amount of unpaid labor for women. Because of small salaries and the decreasing social benefits, women's dependence on their families (first of all, on their male partners) has also increased (Reingardė, Tereškinas 2006, 51).

According to researchers focusing on the family models in Lithuania, the patriarchal familial model with the strictly gendered roles (women are associated with childcare and other familial responsibilities and men are expected to fulfill their breadwinner's role) predominates in the country (Reingardė 2009; Stankūnienė, Maslauskaitė 2009). Familialism prevailing in Lithuania and inconsistent and fragmentary family policy determined the fact that "family policy has not had so far any positive impact on the changes in reproductive behavior" (Stankūnienė, Maslauskaitė 2009, 117).

## Reconciliation of Work and Family and the Lithuanian Population's Childbearing Intentions

In attempting to improve low birth rates, many countries raise the issue of the reconciliation of work and family life (Takayama, Werding 2011; McDonald 2000). This part of the article based on a national public opinion survey of Lithuanians (N=1031) of the reproductive age (18–45 y. o.) conducted in 2010–2011<sup>2</sup>, attempts to evaluate to what extent tensions encountered by women and men in reconciling work and family life affect their reproductive choices and intentions. For this evaluation the correlations of the question block containing 26 questions on work-family-leisure conflict<sup>3</sup> with intentions to have children is being analyzed.

The hypothesis was raised that the stronger conflict the respondents experience between work, family life and leisure, the less they intend to have children or more children in the future.

Only respondents involved in paid work responded to the question block on the work-family-leisure conflict. In analyzing the data, single and unmarried respondents and childless respondents were excluded. The selected group of respondents included only those who said that their health permitted them to have more children and those not expecting a new child at the moment of

<sup>2</sup> The survey was conducted within the framework of the project "Gender Inequality, Public Policy and the Future of Fertility in Lithuania" (No. SIN-03/2010) supported by the Research Council of Lithuania under the National Programme "Social Challenges to the National Security."

<sup>3</sup> The work-family-leisure conflict question block was designed adapting the Intergoal Relations Questionnaire which is used for the inter-related variables of work, family and leisure. See Riediger, Freund, Baltes 2005.



the survey. This group consisted of 211 males and 161 females, not too many for multivariate regression. A logistic regression analysis and additionally chi-square, Spearman correlation coefficients and Student t-test were mainly used for verification of the hypothesis.

The intentions to have children were measured by two questions: 1) Do you intend to have a child (more children) in the nearest three years (Definitely no; Probably no; Probably yes; Definitely yes; Expecting a baby now)? and 2) Do you ever intend to have children (more children) (Definitely no; Probably no; Probably yes; Definitely yes)? For the purpose of using it in a binary logistic regression, a new variable was created that divided respondents into two groups: 1) those who do not intend to have (more) children; 2) those who intend to have (more) children. It is notable that intentions to have (more) children particularly depended on sex. Significantly more men (51.7%) than women (29.8%) of all respondents able to have children but at the moment not having them intended to have them in the future. The difference is statistically significant ( $p < 0,001$ ).

The exploratory factor analysis was performed for the questions of work-family-leisure conflict in order to decrease a number of variables and to obtain more reliable measures of the conflict. Four questions were removed from the factor analysis because of their exceedingly strong correlations with other four similar questions. During the factor analysis, five factors were discovered (Table 1). After comparing these factors in the samples of male and female respondents according to the Student t-test, only one statistically significant factor – F4 factor – was found, i. e. women more often than men noted that they did not earn enough money for either family life or leisure ( $p = 0.001$ ).

TABLE 1. FACTORS OF WORK-FAMILY-LEISURE CONFLICT

Factor	Number of questions	Eigenvalue	Spearman correlation with the quality of life factor	p-value of the correlation
F1. Work interferes with family and leisure	6	5.163	-0.16	0.001
F2. Leisure and family interfere with work and they are incompatible	6	4.904	0.00	N.S.
F3. Work, family and leisure facilitate each other	6	3.847	0.25	<0.001
F4. Work does not provide with enough money for family and leisure	2	2.005	-0.37	<0.001
F5. Family interferes with leisure	2	4.658	-0.07	N.S.

Spearman correlations coefficients between the work-family-leisure conflict factors and the general quality of life factor (which was derived by the factor analysis of four questions about the respondents' quality of life) are also presented in the Table 1. These coefficients confirm (to some extent) validity of the factors.

Separately and without adjustment for other relevant variables (age, gender and a number of children), none of the role conflict factors demonstrates statistically significant relationship with the dichotomous fertility intentions variable.

To determine the correlation between the intentions to have children and the work-family-leisure conflict, the binary logistic regression analysis was conducted. The dependent variable was dichotomous intentions variable. Independent variables were 5 factors of the work-family-leisure conflict. Control variables were age, number of children and respondents' sex because these variables influence the intentions to have children. The variables were entered into analysis using a hierarchical method with the first block consisting of age, number of children and sex, and the second block of the 5 work-family-leisure conflict factors. The first block is statistically significant,  $p < 0,001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.55$  which means that these three variables influence fertility intentions rather strongly. The second block increases in a statistically significant way ( $p = 0.043$ ) the strength of the correlation as measured by Nagelkerke  $R^2$  to 0.58 which means that the five role conflict factors considered as a whole exhibit some additional influence on fertility intentions, albeit a relatively small influence (Nagelkerke  $R^2$  increases only by 0.03).

Only respondents' age, a number of their current children, sex and the first factor (Work interferes with family and leisure) statistically significantly predicts the intentions to have children:

- With the increase of respondents' age by 1 year, odds of intentions to have children decrease by 1.33 times;
- Every additional child decreases odds of intentions to have children by 3.05 times;
- If a respondent is male, odds of intentions to have children increase by 2.42 times;
- When F1 factor increases by its 1 standard deviation, odds of intentions to have children increase by 1.79 times. It means that the more work interferes with family and leisure, the bigger probability that respondents will intend to have (more) children (or vice versa). It is difficult to explain this finding. However, it can be interpreted differently: perhaps respondents planning to have children are more inclined to think that their work interferes with family and leisure. There is also a possibility that some respondents intend to have (more) children as a way to appease the work-family-leisure conflict. Therefore, the stronger conflict, the stronger the respondents' intentions to have (more) children.

**TABLE 2. LOGISTIC REGRESSION ON RESPONDENTS' INTENTIONS TO HAVE MORE CHILDREN: PREDICTORS ARE DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND WORK-FAMILY-LEISURE ROLE CONFLICT FACTORS**

Variable	Regression coefficient (B)	P	Odds ratio (exp(B))
Age	-.28	<.001	.76
Number of children	-1.12	<.001	.33
Sex	.88	.004	2.42
<b>F1. Work interferes with family and leisure</b>	.58	.006	1.79
F2. Leisure and family interfere with work and they are incompatible	-.36	.105	.70
F3. Work, family and leisure facilitate each other	.24	.146	1.27
F4. Work does not provide with enough money for family and leisure	-.27	.158	.77
F5. Family interferes with leisure	-.026	.891	.97

To determine the reasons for this correlation, the logistic regression analysis was used separately for men and women. A statistically significant relationship was established only for men:  $p = 0.01$ , odds ratio = 1.75.

To further determine the nature of this correlation, the logistic regression analysis was repeated only for men instead of the F1 factor using the questions that comprise this factor:

Do you often pay not as much time for your family as you would want because of your work?

Do you often pay not as much energy for your family as you would want?

Do you often pay not as much time for your leisure as you would want?

Do you often pay not as much energy for your leisure as you would want?

Is your work incompatible with the needs of your family?

Is your work incompatible with the needs of your leisure?

None of these questions was statistically significantly correlated with the intentions to have children. This can be explained by an exceedingly big number of variables for the sample used. Therefore, questions were eliminated one by one from the regression equation by using the backward selection method. Finally, two questions remained until the question block became statistically significant. From these two questions, only one question (Do you often pay not as much time for your leisure as you would want?  $p = 0.034$ , odds ratio = 1.52) is statistically significantly correlated with the intentions to have children. I. e., the more often respondents do not pay as much time

for their leisure as they would want because of their work, the probability that male respondents will intend to have more children controlling for age and number of children increases. Here it is possible to say that the respondents who intend to have children are more inclined to think that their work interferes with their leisure.

In analyzing the correlation of the factor of the work-family-leisure conflict with separate questions about respondents' intentions to have children, more statistically significant relationships were found. For instance, when separately examining respondents' intentions to have children during the next three years, besides the already mentioned correlations three more statistically significant relationships were found:

- For men/women (F1): the more work interferes with family and leisure, the more probable that respondents ever intend to have more children.

- For men and women joined together (F4): the more work does not provide with enough money for family and leisure, the less probable that respondents ever intend to have children during the next three years or intend to have more children.

- For men and women joined together (F3): the more work, family and leisure facilitate each other, the more respondents ever intend to have more children.

The conducted analysis only partially confirmed the hypothesis that the stronger work-family-leisure conflict, the less the respondents intend to have (more) children. The statistically significant relationships between the work-family-leisure conflict factors and intentions to have more children were found for three factors. Direction of one of these relationships opposes the hypothesis: the more work interferes with family and leisure, the more probable that men/women will ever intend to have (more) children.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The issue of work-family reconciliation is one of the priorities in the recent EU gender policies. However, in Lithuania its importance and consequences have not been fully acknowledged. In Lithuania as elsewhere women carry the heaviest burden of familial responsibilities, therefore, it is they who most acutely encounter the problem of work-family balance.

Although the perception of gender roles and gender practices have been changing in Europe for several decades, first of all because of the accelerated involvement of women in the labor market, the traditional understanding of gender differences and gender roles remained rather stable. Often men's contribution to his family is defined as his participating in the labor market, and women's role as that of homemaker despite the fact that frequently she is also involved in paid work. Thus, the problem of work-family reconciliation is

related not only to the state family policy and the employers and trade unions' attitude towards women and men but also to the dominant views of gender roles, gender norms and the established gender order.

In analyzing research on the relation between the reconciliation of work and family and fertility, the conclusion was reached that countries with the developed political measures facilitating women and men to balance their family and work display the highest fertility rates. Fertility rates in Northern European countries attest to this fact. On the contrary, countries with underdeveloped family policy oriented towards work-family reconciliation often show low fertility rates. Thus, it is possible to make the assumption that the childbearing intentions of individuals able to reconcile their work and family will be stronger than the childbearing intentions of those who do not manage to resolve the issue of work-family reconciliation. This hypothesis became crucial in analyzing a representative survey of the Lithuanian population carried out within the framework of the project "Gender Inequality, Public Policy and the Future of Fertility in Lithuania."

We can raise the question of why our hypothesis is confirmed only to some degree. It is possible to make some assumptions about limitations of this research. It may be that after eliminating non-working respondents and respondents without partners and children and some other respondents we were left with too small a number of respondents, particularly women. On the other hand, it is possible to doubt whether the correlation between the work-family-leisure conflict and the intentions to have children is strong enough in the low birth rate countries such as Lithuania (in 2010, TFR=1.55, Statistics Lithuania 2011, 28)? If a woman gives birth to 1.5 children on average during her lifetime, it is safe to talk only of her intentions to have the first child. In this case, it is doubtful where the work-family-leisure conflict is crucial in her intentions to reproduce. This assumption is confirmed by the respondents' answers to an open question of why they had their previous child. The respondents most often stated that they "wanted it" (37%), "[they wanted] their child not to grow up alone in the family" (16%), "we became family and a child had to appear; we did not have children" (12%), "it was planned" (10%), "some circumstances emerged" (8%), "[it was] unplanned, accidental" (7%), etc. However, all these reasons are related to the work-family-leisure conflict only marginally.

How to explain the finding that one of the statistically significant relationships is opposite to the raised hypothesis: the more work interferes with family and leisure, the more probable that respondents (both men and women) ever intend to have more children. In explaining this statistically significant relationship, it is necessary to keep in mind the economic situation in Lithuania. As already conducted research demonstrates, individuals that encounter economic insecurity and uncertain socioeconomic conditions and are unable to balance their work and family, often decide to center their lives on the private

sphere and invest into children (it is particularly characteristic of women). Parenthood may produce biographical certainty (Friedman et al. 1994). In this case, difficulties on the labor market, unemployment and low salaries may increase fertility although not to a very significant degree.

Economic motives underlie another statistically significant relationship: the more work does not provide with enough money for family and leisure, the less probable that respondents ever intend to have children during the next three years or intend to have more children. Difficult economic conditions are thought to influence the opportunities for having children that individuals and couples perceive, and also the expected costs and benefits of having children. In particular, the more uncertain one's socioeconomic conditions, the higher one may perceive the cost of having children. Thus, people give up their intentions to have children. Scholars find the definite relation between the decrease of fertility and economic insecurity (Blossfeld, Drobní 2001; Mills, Blossfeld 2005) particularly noticeable in transition economies. Although the conducted analysis does not allow us to make broader and more definite conclusions about the relationship between the work and family reconciliation and fertility, it prompts us to suggest that perhaps the developed and comprehensive family policy may mitigate the negative impact of economic insecurity on fertility in a transitional economy such as Lithuania.

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## Darbo ir šeimos derinimas bei prokreaciniai Lietuvos gyventojų ketinimai

### Santrauka

Bandydamos išspręsti gimstamumo problemas, daugelis šalių iškelia darbo ir šeimos, darbo ir asmeninio gyvenimo suderinimo klausimus. Iš pagrindinių priemonių, galinčių teigiamai paveikti gimstamumą, daugelis mokslininkų išskiria finansinį skatinimą (išmokas, mokesčių nuolaidas ir pan.), paramą tėvams, siekiantiems derinti darbą, šeimos ir laisvalaikį bei įvairias socialines struktūras, remiančias vaikus ir tėvystę (užimtumo skatinimą, vaikui palankią aplinką ir pan.). Pastaruoju metu, kaip rodo tarptautiniai tyrimai ir viešosios politikos dokumentai, prioritetine tapo darbo, šeimos ir laisvalaikio derinimo kryptis, integruojanti užimtumo, šeimos ir lyčių lygybės politiką.

Šio straipsnio tikslas – išsiaiškinti Lietuvos gyventojų darbo, šeimos ir laisvalaikio derinimo ryšius su ketinimais turėti vaikų. Straipsnis remiasi reprezentatyvia reproduktyvaus amžiaus Lietuvos gyventojų (N=1031) apklausa, atlikta 2010–2011 m. Analizei buvo panaudotas 26 klausimų blokas apie darbo–šeimos–laisvalaikio konflikto santykį su gyventojų prokreaciniais ketinimais. Atlikta gautų duomenų analizė tik iš dalies patvirtino hipotezę: kuo didesnis darbo–šeimos–laisvalaikio konfliktas, tuo mažesni respondentų ketinimai turėti (daugiau) vaikų; ir šis ryšys moterims turėtų būti stipresnis. Buvo nustatyti tik du hipotezę visiškai atitinkantys statistiškai reikšmingi ryšiai tarp darbo–šeimos–konflikto ir vaikų turėjimo ketinimų. Vienas iš ryšių – priešingos krypties nei hipotezėje: kuo labiau darbas trukdo šeimai ir laisvalaikiui, tuo labiau didėja tikimybė, kad vyras (o per artimiausius trejus metus – ir moteris) ketins turėti (daugiau) vaikų.

Kodėl ši hipotezė pasitvirtino tik iš dalies? Galima daryti keletą prielaidų apie tyrimo ribotumą. Galbūt, atmetus nedarbingus ir neturinčius šeimos asmenis, liko per mažas respondentų, ypač moterų, skaičius. Kita vertus, kyla abejonės, ar darbo–šeimos–laisvalaikio konflikto ryšys su ketinimais turėti vaikų yra ganėtinai stiprus tokio žemo gimstamumo šalyse kaip Lietuva. Jei moteris per gyvenimą pagimdo vidutiniškai 1,5 vaiko, patikimiausiai galima kalbėti apie ketinimus turėti pirmą vaiką. Be to, aiškinant tyrimo rezultatus, reikia turėti galvoje ir ekonominę Lietuvos padėtį. Kaip rodo užsienyje atlikti tyrimai, nestabilioje ekonominėje situacijoje individai, susiduriantys su problemomis darbo rinkoje arba nesugebantys suderinti darbo–šeimos–laisvalaikio, dažnai nutaria sukcentruoti savo gyvenimą į privačią sferą (ypač tai būdinga moterims) ir investuoti į vaikus. Motinystė ir tėvystė suteikia biografinį tikrumą. Šiuo atveju prasta darbo rinkos padėtis, nedarbas ar mažas atlyginimas gali skatinti gimstamumą, tačiau tik nedideliu mastu.

Nors atlikta analizė ir neleidžia daryti griežtų apibendrinimų apie darbo–šeimos–laisvalaikio derinimo ir gimstamumo sąsajas, bet leidžia svarstyti: išplėta šeimai palanki politika, padedanti derinti darbą ir šeimą, galbūt, galėtų sušvelninti negatyvią ekonominio nesaugumo tranzitinėje ekonomikoje įtaką gimstamumui.