

CONFERENCE on 18 April 2024, 13:00-20:00

**SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE AND CARE WORK: CHANGES IN GENDER
ROLE ATTITUDES, IN GOOD AND IN CHALLENGING TIMES?**



Reflections on the category of gender as main and secondary contradiction in reconciling income gain and un/paid care work.

VENUE, GENERAL INFORMATION:

WHEN: Thursday, 18 April 2024, 13:00-20:00 (break with refreshments 15:00 – 15:30)

WHERE: 13:00-17:00 Alte Kapelle, Campus of the University of Vienna, Spitalgasse 2-4 / Hof (court) 2,1090 Vienna (no accessible entry).

18:00-20:00: Verein Frauenhetz, Untere Weißgerberstrasse 41, 1030 Vienna (accessible).

Olena Strelnyk's talk will be hosted in cooperation with the association Frauenhetz in a hybrid format via ZOOM. To receive the link send an e-mail to pr@frauenhetz.at until Wednesday, 17 April 2024, 12:00.

REGISTRATION: free of charge at genfam24@univie.ac.at (limited number of participants: 60)

When registering, please indicate whether you plan to attend the event in the afternoon (Alte Kapelle) and/or in the evening (Verein Frauenhetz).

PROGRAMME:

13:00 Opening and Welcome - Gerlinde Mauerer

13:30 Parental Labour in Austria and Sweden: (De-)Genderisation in Care and Leave Policies between 1990 and 2023 - Sonja Dörfler-Bolt

14:15 Couple Arrangements and Fathers' First Caring Steps in the Early Transition to Parenthood - Gerlinde Mauerer

15:00 Break with refreshments

15:30 The Mother-Based Intervention: Social Work, Fatherhood and the Persistence of the Unequal Distribution of Labour in Israeli Families - Nadav Perez-Vaisvidovsky

16:15 Mental Load and Shared Parenting: Empirical Results from Women's and Family Counselling - Barbara Schrammel

18:00 Arrival at the association Frauenhetz, Untere Weissgerberstrasse 41

18:15 Welcome to the association Frauenhetz – feminist education, culture and politics

18:30 Care Economy in the War-Torn Society: The Ukrainian Perspective - Olena Strelnyk

20:00 Closing, informal exchange

OUR CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE:

The event serves as an opportunity for experts in gender and family research to exchange ideas and discuss them with an interested audience. It focusses on results from (inter-)national parental leave research. The conference is aimed at researchers, political decision-makers, persons involved in the policy design of parental leave and interested individuals. The conference presentations will be held in English or German.

In the first part of the conference, Sonja Dörfler-Bolt from the Austrian Institute for Family Studies will provide insights into research on the uptake of parental leave in Austria in an international comparison, with a focus on Austria and Sweden. Gerlinde Mauerer from the Department of Sociology at the University of Vienna will then present qualitative results from the research project Gender and Family in Motion. Parental Arrangements.

In the second part of the conference, Nadav Perez-Vaisvidovsky from Ashkelon Academic College will discuss potentials for and obstacles to more participation of men in parental care work. In the following contribution, Barbara Schrammel from the association Frauen* beraten Frauen* focuses on the unequal gender-specific distribution of mental load and reports on experiences from counselling work and workshops with couples in Austria.

In the third, hybrid part of the programme, Olena Strelnyk from the Technical University of Munich (habilitation at Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University in 2018) will speak about unpaid/paid care work in Ukraine. By recapping all presentations, we will conclude by discussing the uptake of parental leave and gender-specific role models in good and challenging times, with a focus on employment and family care in transition.

Abstracts and Speakers' Biographies

Parental Labour in Austria and Sweden: (De-)Genderisation in Care and Leave Policies between 1990 and 2023 – Sonja Dörfler-Bolt

The presentation focuses on the differences and similarities in the development of gender division of parents' labour in Austria and Sweden since the 1990s. More specifically, I will analyse the actual behaviour and developments of the relevant institutional and cultural frameworks in both countries over the past 30 years, based on Saxonberg's (2013) typology. I will focus on parental leave regulations and the childcare policies within the institutional framework in both countries since the 1990s. By using survey data from the European Values Study (EVS) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), the changes in attitudes and values concerning the gender division of parental labour will be brought into focus. Results reveal that in both countries, a progressive change has been taking place on three levels since the 1990s: in the sphere of cultural norms, at the level of the institutional framework and on the level of parents' actual behaviour. However, while Austria remains apparently less advanced than Sweden on these levels, one has to take into account that these changes began much earlier in Sweden.

Sonja Dörfler-Bolt

Senior researcher at the Austrian Institute for Family Studies whose research focus is on international family policy, gender roles, family and migration, reconciliation of family and employment, behavioural economics and family. Participating expert in the COST project Sustainability@Leave, focusing on the collection and international comparability of quantitative data on parental leave in Europe.

Publications: Familien in Österreich: Partnerschaft, Kinderwunsch und ökonomische Situation in herausfordernden Zeiten (2023); Housing status and financial situation (2023); Elterliche

Arbeitsteilung in Österreich und Schweden: Die Entwicklung institutioneller und kultureller Rahmenbedingungen von 1990 bis heute (2019).

Couple Arrangements and Fathers' First Caring Steps in the Early Transition to Parenthood - Gerlinde Mauerer

The lecture presents results from research on the uptake of parental leave and childcare allowance in Austria by both parents. These results are based on 42 couple interviews with parents who took childcare allowance or parental leave for at least five months each. One and a half to two years later, 41 follow-up interviews were conducted with parents from the earlier sample. The data was analysed in a content-oriented manner using grounded theory. The analyses focus on individual and joint ways of reconciling employment and childcare, as well as on similarities and differences in the parental assumption of planning and organisational agendas. The results show that paternal involvement in family work is still partly a hybrid construction that has not yet been formative in the concept or construction of masculinities. This makes it difficult for the women surveyed to give up traditionally female-connote tasks in the family. This is discussed regarding a tendentially higher workload of cognitive and emotional labour among mothers.

Gerlinde Mauerer

Senior researcher at the Department of Sociology at the University of Vienna and head of research in the project Gender and Family in Motion. Parental Arrangements (funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), V 843-G), associate member of the International Network on Leave Policies and Research, management committee member of the COST Action Parental Leave Policies and Social Sustainability of the Parental Leave Network. Main research interests: gender and family research, empirical research on parental leave and childcare allowance in Austria; masculinity research, sociology of health and illness, feminist theories.

Publications: Paid Parental Leave in Correlation with Changing Gender Role Attitudes (2023); Work-Life-Balance und geschlechterspezifische Vorannahmen am Arbeitsplatz. Ergebnisse aus der empirischen Forschung zu Elternkarenzen in Österreich (2021); Parents' Strategies in Dealing with Constructions of Gendered Responsibilities at Their Workplaces (together with Eva-Maria Schmidt, 2019); Both Parents Working: Challenges and Strains in Managing the Reconciliation of Career and Family Life in Dual-Career Families. Empirical Evidence from Austria (2018).

The Mother-Based Intervention: Social Work, Fatherhood and the Persistence of the Unequal Distribution of Labour in Israeli Families – Nadav Perez-Vaisvidovsky

While discourse on 'the involved father' and the egalitarian distribution of household and childcare has become prevalent in recent decades, research paints a much less optimistic image. In Israel, as in many other countries, despite a rise in the number of hours dedicated by fathers to childcare, a significant gap still exists between mothers and fathers. In the presented research, the authors analyse the persistence of this gap in one specific area – that of family- and child-oriented social work. The presentation is based on a research project analysing organisational and structural aspects of father exclusion in the Israeli welfare system. The authors conducted an institutional ethnography of six municipal social services departments in Israel, conducting interviews and an observation and collecting textual data.

The findings show that alongside reasons related to fathers and biases of individual social workers – described in earlier studies – a prominent role in the process of father exclusion is reserved for factors associated with the organisational structure of the departments. Specifically, we identify

organisational barriers and workplace culture as central elements in creating what we define as the Primary Contact Person Assumption (PCP) – social workers seeking to work primarily with a PCP in each family while maintaining lower levels of connection to other family members. While the PCP assumption, by itself, is gender-neutral, together with cultural beliefs, it creates a situation in which the PCP is almost exclusively the mother.

Thus, our findings show how, despite expressed commitment to gender equality, the social welfare system maintains the unequal distribution of labour – and of responsibility – in the household.

Nadav Perez-Vaisvidovsky

Senior lecturer at Ashkelon Academic College, Israel.

COST & Leave Network. Research Fields: Social policy, fatherhood, men and masculinities. Publications: Single Moms, absent Dads: neglecting fathers and burdening mothers in social work practice with separated families (2023); “Fathers Are Very Important, but They Aren’t Our Contact Persons”: The Primary Contact Person Assumption and the Absence of Fathers in Social Work Interventions (2023); Involving fathers in family social services in Israel: in the shadow of a conflicted policy (2021).

Mental Load and Shared Parenting: Empirical Results from Women's and Family Counselling - Barbara Schrammel

The association Frauen* beraten Frauen* has been working intensively on the topic of mental load since 2021. In two consecutive, funded projects, numerous lectures, workshops for multipliers and workshops for couples were held and a group for couples has been organised.

The presentation will introduce the concept of mental load and equal parenting. Based on experiences from our counselling work and our workshops for couples, we will show which dynamics and structural conditions prevent couples from living equal parenthood and how the knowledge of mental load can lead to a fair distribution.

Barbara Schrammel

Psychotherapist (psychodrama), family counsellor, social education worker, long-time employee in the inpatient area of child and adolescent welfare (MA11), employee at Frauen*beraten Frauen* since 2010, and work in her own practice. Main focus: mental load and truly equal parenting, right to maintain direct contact with the child and custody conflicts, empowerment of women*, couples counselling/couples therapy, lectures, workshops, and seminars.

Care Economy in the War-Torn Society: the Ukrainian Perspective – Olena Strelnyk

Since the start of the Russian war in Ukraine, women and their social, civil, political, cultural and ecological perspectives have dramatically been affected. Women play a key role in humanitarian response; the burden on women has increased both in the professional sphere and care work, those who fled the country are mostly women with children; and women are at high risk of domestic violence, which grows during and after the war.

The war affects the relations between the state and individuals in a gendered way. It is not only about the fact that the state entrusts men with the duty to protect the state and that mostly men provide the state defence but also about the fact that this situation also affects women. If the state primarily assigns men the function of protecting the state, then women are assigned care work.

Based on an overview of the situation in the pre-war period and during the war, Olena Strelnyk will shed light on the impact of the war on the care economy in Ukraine: on access to childcare infrastructure, on care jobs that are traditionally highly feminised, as well as on the situation of unpaid care work and everyday child-care practices. She will also reflect on the prospects of taking into account the care economy in post-war reconstruction projects and plans.

Olena Strelnyk

Olena Strelnyk obtained her Dr. Habilit. degree in Sociology at Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, Ukraine in 2018. She was a visiting scholar at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, University of Michigan (in the framework of the Carnegie Research Fellowship Program, 2016), and at the Prague Civil Society Centre (2019). As a gender expert and researcher, Olena Strelnyk cooperated with UN Women, OSCE, The World Bank, USAID, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and many think tanks and NGOs in Ukraine. She is a public sociologist as well, systematically writing for Ukrainian and international media resources on gender topics. She was also a co-organiser of the Women's March in Poltava city (Ukraine) in 2020 and 2021. Since April 2022, Olena Strelnyk has been a Visiting Scholar at the Technical University of Munich, Germany. Currently, she studies various aspects of the impact of the war on gender roles, and on the situation and rights of women in Ukraine. She was also a sociologist on the project 24.02.22. Testimonies of the War and Displacement, which is implemented by the Bavarian State Library (Munich) in cooperation with the Ludwig Maximilian University (Munich) and the Center for Urban History (Lviv, Ukraine).

Publications: Childcare as work. A sociological perspective on mothering (2017); Rebellious Families: Parents' Rights Activism in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia (co-author, 2017); Gendering Post-Socialism. Gender norms and expectations: Between old legacies and new hierarchies (2018); and more than 100 academic and popular articles on gender issues, family and parenthood, family and demographic policy in Ukraine.

Conference organisation:

Gerlinde Mauerer, Department of Sociology at the University of Vienna

Paula Schwentner, Department of Sociology at the University of Vienna

Funding, cooperation:

Department of Sociology at the University of Vienna

Research Platform GAIN - Gender: Ambivalent In_Visibilities

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Association Frauenhetz – Verein für feministische Bildung, Kultur, Politik

Gender Research Office (RGF) of the University of Vienna

Association Frauen* beraten Frauen*

