

Description for the general public

The aim of the project is to answer the question how Polish parents organise their time and what strategies they adopt to combine paid work in the labour market with parental obligations. In the contemporary times both men and women actively participate in the labour market and at the same time they decide to have children. As a result of changes that were taking place through the 20th century, women do not resign from paid work in connection to motherhood, but continue it. Simultaneously, the models of fatherhood are changing. In the traditional model the father was mainly responsible for the economic provisions for his family, and he did not engage in domestic and care work. Today it is expected that fathers are more engaged in this kind of work and that they overtake the *traditionally female* obligations from their partners and wives. The research shows that Poles would like to build relationships that are based on partnership, so relationships in which men and women devote the same amount of time for paid work and equally share care and domestic work. In this context, the problem of work-life balance is very important. It is one of the reasons for most of the family conflicts and it is a source of frustration. The project tries to identify the strategies of achieving work-life balance that are adopted in the Polish households and to answer the question how care and domestic work is organised there.

To answer these questions the research will be conducted, in which, on the one hand, the experiences of Polish parents will be studied and, on the other hand, the Polish family policy will be analysed taking into consideration the mechanisms that help (or make it harder) to combine family life with paid work (such mechanisms as: parental leaves, access to childcare institutions, housing situation, stability in employment and so on). This second aspect is important, because the social and institutional context have an impact on people's everyday experiences and on their decisions about having children. The research will consist of three parts. The parental experiences will be collected through conducting in-depth interviews with different parents and through the analysis of survey data coming from the international social survey programme. During the interviews, the researched will share their experiences, describe their own ways of organising their paid work and family life, as well as they will have an opportunity to talk about the problems they are facing. The survey data will help to show the background of these experiences and broader trends in the organisation of everyday life. The third part of the research will be based on the analysis of the Polish family policy in terms of its aims, means of achieving them and their results.

The problem taken into consideration in this project is important for at least few reasons. I name here only two of them. Firstly, the ways of functioning of families and of the organisation of family life are crucial in the context of demographic crisis and ageing society. It is often underlined that young Poles postpone starting a family, although at the same time they underline that a family is one of the most important value in their lives. What is more, Polish migrants who live in the United Kingdom or the Scandinavian countries have more children than their peers in Poland. It may suggest that the conditions in Poland are not addressing the needs of parents. Thus this project can help to identify the biggest problems of Polish parents and help to formulate the recommendations for policy makers. Secondly, the domestic and family sphere is highly gendered. It means that there is a strong division on male and female obligations. This division does not fit to contemporary times, in which men and women equally participate in the labour market. The project will help to answer the question why the traditional division are still existing in the domestic sphere and why it is so hard to reconstruct the traditional gender roles.