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### **Continuity and Change: Women, Mothers and Gender Equality in Ireland**

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### **The 1936 Constitution, the family and a patriarchal state**

The 1937 Constitution incorporated Catholic social teaching into many of its key articles. In relation to this topic three Articles, in particular, formed the base of legislation on the role of women in Irish society. They also influenced the social and political treatment of both married and unmarried mothers. In an indirect way they also framed men's roles as they led to the legal construction of a 'traditional family'. Within this family, women's reproductive roles as mothers, and men's roles as breadwinner fathers were complementary rather than equal to each other. This paper reviews their impact on the women's movement and the pathways taken by women in their campaign for gender equality. The following are the three relevant Articles.

#### **Constitutional Articles on the Family**

Articles 41.1.1 *The State recognizes the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law.*

Article 41.2.1 *In particular, the State recognizes that by her life within the home, woman gives to the state a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.*

Article 41.2.2 *The State shall, therefore endeavor to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home"*

On a first reading, these article indicate a very positive respect for women and mothers. But history reveals that they were used in a negative way to impose restrictions on women's lives, to confine them to a separate role in the private sphere of the family. For instance, the introduction of a '*marriage bar*' forced women in the Civil Service, in local authorities, health boards and in teaching to resign on marriage from their permanent posts. This made the father the sole breadwinner, responsible to provide for his wife and children. (On leaving women got a '*marriage gratuity*',

which in many cases provided a deposit for a home.) Once married, the economic status of a wife was categorized as “home duties”. Even now, it is still a main statistical indicator used to exemplify the changing role of women. The proportion of women on ‘home duties’ has declines as the proportion of women who enter paid work in the labour force increases.

The marriage bar applied mainly to public sector employment, so women could continue to work in retail, domestic service, or as typists in private companies. Many also worked on farms, kept lodgers, were dressmakers, ran small shops etc. The Conditions of Employment Act (1936) also allowed the Minister to prohibit or restrict the employment of women in a particular industry. As a result, preference was given to foreign direct investment companies who created male rather than female employment (Mahon 1994).

Women’s personal and private intimate lives were also restricted. There was a constitutional ban on divorce and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, (1935) prohibited the sale and importation of contraception. As a result, married women were confined to the privacy of their family totally dependent on their husbands for financial support. Fertility rates within marriage remained high so women had lives of prolonged childbearing and rearing.

### **The influence of the Catholic Church**

The Catholic Church as a major non-government organization had considerable power and influence over Irish society. Parish priests controlled the recruitment of teachers to primary schools. Nuns and brothers from religious orders provided single sex primary and secondary education in towns and cities. Their voluntary labour subsidized the economic costs of primary and secondary education for boys and girls. Education for girls was highly valued in Ireland, as future mothers and educators of their children, or as future workers in female dominated sectors: teaching, nursing, clerical and service work. Simultaneously its religious education imposed a strict sexual morality, forbidding sex outside marriage. Young women who became pregnant were considered as deviant and made to keep their pregnancies secret. Many were removed from society, confined to Mother and Baby Home, had their babies adopted or emigrated. The Church was also empowered by the State to remove children to orphanages or industrial schools when their poor and disadvantaged mothers were no longer able to care and provide for them. (Mahon 1987; 1994).

For others, the Catholic focus on women’s education and their ownership of schools provided a basis of empowerment. When the State introduced free second level education in 1967, more pupils remained on at school and a higher proportion of girls sat both Intermediate and Leaving Certificate examinations. School leavers who completed their second level education could do matriculation (an entrance exam) or on the basis of their Leaving Certificate results attend University. Many women also

gained entry to Teacher Training Colleges - which was competitive but state funded, or trained as nurses in Ireland or UK.

Irish students encouraged by their parents, were very keen to enter third level and over time demand exceeded the number of places available – especially in vocationally specific degrees like medicine, law, physiotherapy, and veterinary science. A Central Applications Office was established in 1976 to oversee all undergraduate applications to college, which led to a competitive points admissions system, which was merit based, anonymised and transparent.

The abolition of third level fees in 1996 by Minister Niamh Breathnach helped to reduce both class and gender inequalities. The points systems and an individual's success in "getting into college" began to erode gender stereotyping in relation to professional degrees. In time a high achieving daughter was just as likely to do medicine or law as a son.

### **The Commission on the Status of Women, 1970-1972**

While female participation in education increased the status of women, they still had to campaign for equal rights to employment. In 1968, the Irish Housewives Association and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs lobbied the government to respond to a UN initiative to examine the status of women in Ireland. The Commission was established in late 1969 under the leadership of Dr Thekla Beere. It conducted research on barriers to women's participation in the labour force. They produced a very progressive report. It presented a series of key recommendations on equal pay and equality for women in employment. They also proposed changes in family law – recommending a joint obligation to support the family, co-ownership of family home, and greater security for widows, divorcées, and deserted wives. They recommended equality in tax allowances for single and married women. In relation to education, they recommended co-education, access to apprenticeships, and an increase in the number of girls taking science and maths. It is somewhat depressing that the same recommendations are still pertinent today.

### **1970s -80s Women's liberation movement**

The recommendations of the Commission reflected some of the demands of an international women's movement that dominated the seventies. However in Europe and the USA there was a great focus on reproductive rights (access to legal contraception and the legalization of abortion), in addition to equality in the labour market. Irish newspapers disseminated reports on the international women's movement. The Irish women's movement began in the late sixties, its founding group included two journalists Mary Maher (Irish Times) and Mary Kenny (Irish Press) who in their newspaper articles drew attention to the concerns of Irish women, such as the plight of deserted wives, the marriage bar and the effects of taxation policy on women. In 1971, they published their manifesto: *Chains or Change*. The first five demands were for equal pay, equality before the law, equal education, contraception,

and justice for deserted wives, unmarried mothers, and widows. The sixth for 'one house, one family', emanated from a socialist feminist. In March 1971 they discussed their manifesto on the *Late Show* with Gay Byrne. A former Taoiseach, Garret FitzGerald (then a TD) joined them in the studio and claimed there had been no demand from women for any legislation. In response to the show 1500 women attended a public meeting in the Mansion House and a movement was formed (Mahon 1995; 1996).

Irish women were starting from a very traditional base. The campaign to legalize contraception began in 1973 but was strongly opposed by the Catholic Church and its organizations. While the right to control fertility and to plan a family was seen as a basic one, the campaign became divisive as Church opposition to it increased. The Contraception Action Campaign (CAP) group continued until the contraceptive pill was eventually legalized for *bona fide* family planning purposes in 1979. Women's Right to Choose Group (WRCG) continued to pursue Irish women's rights to abortion and evolved over a very long campaign (Mahon 2001). Their campaign culminated in the Repeal Referendum in 2018.

A second campaign group under the leadership of Nuala Fennell sought legal reforms through a combination of research reports and the formation of support groups. They included a *Women's Aid Committee* (who set up the first hostel for battered wives) and a *Free Legal Aid Committee* (FLAC), which provided legal advice to victims.

### **The impact of EEC Membership on the development of women's rights 1973**

There was considerable reluctance by the State to introduce legislation on women's rights to employment. In the meantime, the European Economic Community had agreed a Common Agricultural Policy to provide affordable food for the EU community while guaranteeing a fair standard of living for its farmers. This offered an attractive prospect for Irish farmers so Ireland voted to join the Community. As members they would benefit from a series of support payments to farmers.

However, Ireland as a member of the EEC would have to comply with the legal imperatives of Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome which stated that there should be equal pay for men and women. This EEC leverage facilitated the implementation of some progressive legal changes, which led to the elimination of the marriage bar in 1973. In due course, further equality legislation was enacted to protect working mothers, such as the *Employment Equality Act* in 1977 and *The Maternity Protection of Employment Act* in 1981. This legislation began to erode the restrictions on women's employment, and the female share of the labour force increased from 26% in 1961, to 32% in 1981, and 40% in 1987, reflecting the participation and retention of women in general and married women in particular.

### **Promoting women into politics**

The women's movement also generated a focus on getting more women into politics, on the assumption that it would lead to the implementation of women's rights. In the Seventies, the *Women's Political Association* (headed by Gemma Hussey) was created, to encourage the involvement of women in politics, and in 1975 *Women Elect* was founded (by Monica Barnes) to offer some financial support to aspiring candidates. This had positive results, and by the early eighties the number of TD's rose to 14 (9% of total). They included Nuala Fennell. Recognizing the political importance of women, the newly elected Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Garret FitzGerald established the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs (MSWA) and named Fennell as Minister.

The United Nations had recommended the establishment of national *policy machinery* for the advancement of women. While the MSWA's brief was broad, Fennell concentrated on family law and obtained legal changes on a number of key issues. They included family law that forbade the sale of the family home without spousal consent and legislation that obliged the father to pay income support to spouses and children. She also introduced the Status of Children Act, which eliminated discrimination between marital and nonmarital (then called illegitimate) children. The MSWA prepared a base line report (1985) on the position of Irish women entitled: *Irish Women: Agenda for Practical Action* which was Ireland's both report for the UN Decade for Women, and a political agenda (Mahon 1999).

### **An all-party approach to women's equality**

Fine Gael under Garret FitzGerald, as Taoiseach had demonstrated active support for a liberal women's movement. In 1987, a Fianna Fáil led government was elected which favored and integrationist approach to women's rights. They eliminated the Ministry and set up the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights (JOCWR). Máire Geoghegan Quinn was appointed Minister of State for European Community Affairs with special responsibility for women's affairs. The title reflected the significant role of the EEC in promoting women's rights and funding several actions plans in Ireland. The JOCWR was an all-party committee composed of members of the Dáil and Seanad. As an all party Committee they focused on women's rights and avoided topics that might have divided members on party lines such as divorce and abortion (Mahon 1995). They funded independent evidence based research. They reviewed research findings and made recommendations for changes in policy as appropriate to the government.

### **Joint Oireachtas Committee on Women's Rights: Series of policy reports (1984- 1997)**

The Committee functioned as a form of state feminism – a state structure designed to address women's inferior position in society and to recommend policies that would reduce gender based inequities (Mahon 1995). Their first report was on Education

(1984), and the second was on Sexual Violence (1987). For example, the recommendations from the latter together with a report from the Law Reform Commission's on rape in 1987 formed the basis of the Criminal Law (Rape Amendment) Act of 1990, which abolished marital exemption to rape.

The Second Joint Oireachtas Committee chaired by Monica Barnes published a report on Changing Attitudes to the role and status of Women. The third Joint Oireachtas Committee published the report on Motherhood Work and Equal Opportunities in the Civil Service (1991) and on Gender Equality in Education (1992). In 1996, a fourth Oireachtas Committee on the Family examined family taxation and published a report on support for female carers.

### **Equal opportunity policies for women in the Civil Service**

In 1983, the Civil Service introduced three major friendly policies: flexitime; career breaks for childcare purposes and job-sharing. This author applied to the JOWR for research funds to do an interview-based study of mothers employed in the Civil Service and to assess the benefits of the equality policies. The Civil Service was a hierarchical organization, which revealed a perfect case of vertical segregation. The lowest grades were almost entirely female, a quarter of those in middle level administrative grades were female while women were absent from the top grades (Mahon 1991). An analysis of competitions in 1987 revealed that for Administrative Officers, the success rate for male applicants was 12% as contrasted with 3% for women. In interview-based competitions from clerical assistant to clerical officers, men were far more likely to be successful. Women in the lowest grades had almost no chance of promotion, had fewer days leave and were predominantly located in regional offices. Their low pay had an effect on their plans to remain at work, as they could not afford to pay for childcare. So they were more likely to take a career break, which at the time could be from three to five years. Clerical staff, who had to check in, greatly appreciated flexitime as it enabled them to drop off children to childcare without being noted as late. Satisfaction with childcare arrangements was a key factor in differentiating between full time working mothers and mothers on career breaks. Job-sharers were pleased -they felt that they enjoyed the best of both worlds.

A minority of mothers who had been promoted to higher grades benefited from a liberal equal opportunity policy: promotion on the basis of merit. The research showed that mothers who were successful had deferred marriage and having children until their careers were advanced. They worked long hours, were available for late or weekend work and travel if required, adopting to what they called competitive "male norms" of the time. They used their salaries to delegate childcare to paid help. Mothers in the most senior demanding posts also had very supportive husbands who took on childcare (Mahon 1991).

### **Women, class and access to childcare**

The study showed that working mothers were not equal to each other, as only mothers who could afford childcare (which at the time were mostly child-minders, and nannies) could work full time and advance their careers. Those in the lowest grades were more likely to take a career break option. Their income barely covered the costs of childcare so it was “not worth their while to work”. It highlighted the impact of income (class) inequality between mothers who worked in the same organization. The study helped to focus on a proportionate success rate as a measure of equality in promotion. It also led to the abolition of the clerical assistant grade. It clearly demonstrated that reliable affordable childcare was essential to help employed mothers reconcile their work and families lives. Yet the provision of state sponsored childcare remained a contested and neglected issue, even as comparative EU reports repeatedly showed that Ireland (and the UK) were laggards in relation to childcare policy.

### **European Commission and childcare policy**

European Union labour directives that were applicable to the member states were restricted to equality in working conditions, so their remit excluded childcare provision. Instead, the European Commission set up an Equal Opportunities Unit, which devised a series of Action Programmes to raise the profile of equal opportunities policies in the member states. They also provided funding for ‘Positive actions’, which extended to supplementary measures such as job training combined with some childcare provision for disadvantaged women or for women who wished to return to work. Ireland benefited financially from these and many were enacted here as ‘pilot projects’ only. Childcare provision was never rolled out as national policy here despite the fact that many other member states– with the exception of the UK - had state sponsored childcare.

### **Childcare policy and Second Commission on the Status of Women 1992**

The first national plan for childcare emanated from the report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women (1992), which also emanated from the United Nations. Its report recommended the setting up of a Childcare Policy Unit in a government department. The latter would set national guidelines for day care service provision, minimum standards for educational content and staffing requirements. It proposed a new form of state sponsored childcare along social democratic lines, which would enable women to fully participate in the labour market. This was called a universal breadwinner model in which the state promoted women’s full employment with state provision for childcare.

However, a minority report proposed the inclusion of ‘child minders’ in a home-based model of care. It also proposed that women who were on ‘home duties’ got some form of tax credits for it. It opposed the setting up of an Office for Women’s Affairs and argued that childcare should be of concern to fathers as well as mothers. This

view reflected the findings of a European Values study taken at the time which found that the Irish were more likely than any other Europeans to claim that being a housewife was just as fulfilling as working for pay. A group called *Mothers in the Home* opposed the commodification of care, which they described as a plan to create jobs for others, while not recognizing (financially) the unpaid work of mothers in the home. They proposed that mothers should get financial recognition for the childcare work they did in their own homes. This was a caregiver parity model, in which the state supports informal care work through the provision of allowances. So childcare provision became a divisive issue, which obstructed formal policy formation. All government reports and proposals had to include cost analysis (but not benefits) of childcare. The projected costs acted as a major deterrent to consecutive governments to enact policies.

### **Commission on the Family 1998**

The Commission on the Family (1998) in their report on *Strengthening Families for Life* proposed that women have a right to choose between a housewife role and a worker role. Some proposed that women in the home be offered cash benefits for their work. In the end the Commission recommended a child benefit payment be paid to all mothers, as 'a cash for care' benefit. They proposed a child centred approach to meeting the needs of all children. Recognizing that the choice was only an option for married couples, the Commission agreed that state supported affordable childcare was required for lone parent families and for mothers and fathers on low incomes. This led to the provision of some state supported community based childcare, assisted by the European Social Fund.

The Commission also drew attention to the neglect of fathers as parents. *Changing Fathers* (McKeown et al 1998) a book based on research funded by the Commission revealed that fathers were ignored by state social services and outlined the needs of fathers in the context of changing masculinities.

### **National Childcare Strategy and the European Social Fund**

The childcare issue was referred to the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare, who outlined a National Childcare Strategy from which an Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000-2006 emerged. The Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform administered the EOCP, which got significant funding from the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This developed an infrastructure for childcare. Capital and staffing grants were provided to community and private providers. The Community and Voluntary sector provided childcare for disadvantages groups while the private sector provided private childcare. Private fees were high. In 2005, the government introduced an Early Childcare Supplement of 1000 per annum for each child under the age of 6 – to give mothers 'a choice'. The campaign for childcare was continued as labour shortages emerged.



The National Children's Strategy introduced a new focus on childcare provision, the educational development of all children. Expenditure on childcare was seen in a new light as a form of social investment in Europe. Accordingly, every family should be able to access childcare services appropriate to their circumstances and the needs of their children, (Mahon and Bailey 2015).

### **2010's Children's Rights, ECCE Childcare and Education**

In 2010, the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) was introduced. The EU had set a target of pre-school places for 90% of children aged 3 and older; and a lower target of childcare facilities for up to 30% of children under age 3. Since 2010, the take up of the ECCE has been up to 95%. ECCE provides approximately 15 hours free pre-school for 38 weeks. Currently, parents pay privately for additional hours of childcare to cover their hours of work. But the scheme reduces their weekly childcare costs for 38 weeks of the year. Many working parents are reliant on grandparents and other relatives to provide additional childcare during the week and for the remaining 14 weeks of the year. There is now also a growing demand for after-school care for older children and for childcare provision during summer holidays.

This increased outsourcing of childcare enables mothers to participate in the labour force while creating work opportunities for others, albeit mostly women. Childcare provision and costs remain an issue especially for lone mothers and for many married mothers as well.

### **Lone Mothers and social welfare reform**

Historically unmarried mothers were often excluded from society. The women's movement campaign and the formation of Cherish, led to the introduction in 1973, of an 'unmarried mother's' social welfare allowance. The title of the payment changed over time and by 1997 it was appropriately called a 'One Parent Family' Payment. Those in receipt of this payment also qualified for a dependent allowance for each child, a rent supplement and a medical card. This reduced their risk of poverty. By the 1990s however welfare dependency among lone mother became a social issue. Many argued that welfare benefits deterred mothers from entering or returning to the labour force and increased their long-term risk of poverty.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports were critical of the lack of an activation policy, which would encourage lone mothers back to work. At the time there was little emphasis on an activation policy for long term unemployed men. The Economic Adjustment Programme for Ireland – a financial bailout - in 2010 mandated that an activation policy be introduced. This was done in 2012. Lone parent mothers were encouraged to transfer to a Jobseekers Transitional Payment, to incentivize their return to the labour market, as their children got older. By 2015, the OPFP payment was limited to parents whose children were aged 7 or younger, so there assumed to be available for work. Lone mothers no longer got

special treatment. A recent policy review argues that some aspects of being classified as 'job seeker' pose problems for lone parents (Regan et al 2019).

### **Childcare costs and family taxation policy**

An OECD Report (2012) noted that Ireland had the highest childcare costs in the EU. The childcare costs of one child were 24% of a couple's family income in Dublin, rising to almost 40% of a lone parent's income, which helped to explain the lower participation of mothers in the labour force.

The couple/family based taxation system as administered is joint assessment, in which all of the tax credits are allocated to one spouse has been criticized as it places the second earner on the marginal higher tax rate. So one earner (usually the husband) gets a much higher net take home pay than the second earner (working mother), who pays proportionately more tax. This increases net income for married men, while reducing it for their spouses.

This has one further negative effect. When mothers are making a decision on whether or not to return to work they deduct the childcare costs from their own net income. Many conclude that it is "not worth their while to work" especially when *her* childcare costs are deducted. The married tax allowance was traditionally based on the breadwinner housewife role. It is a tax relief that can be availed of by all married couples, irrespective of whether they have children or not. There are no tax reliefs for children or for childcare. However, parents are entitled to claim a monthly universal child benefit per child of €140 per month up to the age of 16 and to 18 if in education or training.

### **Men's responses to women's earner roles and sharing the care**

For women and feminists, the liberating potential of a more equal model of parenting is clear in that if men become more like women with regard to parenting they could provide the other half of the transformation in gender roles, and provide a balance to women's growing participation in paid work. There has been a steady increase in the number of dual income and dual earner couples with children. Has this changed attitudes to women's traditional roles in the home? Fine-Davis (2016) found that traditional attitudes towards gender roles have declined. While there were some variations between groups, she found strong support for female financial independence and positive attitudes towards maternal employment. Both men and women recognized the importance of paid work to women's own fulfillment, the welfare of their children and the economic well being of the family unit. Mothers too, have adopted a provider as well as a carer role for both financial and personal reasons. She found increasing support for male caring, but there was still an underlying ambivalence and a persistence of traditional views on doing housework. Women with children were more likely to perceive a male reluctance to share housework.

### **Sharing the care men childcare and gender roles**

A qualitative interview based study (conducted in 2012 as part of the FLOWS project) provided some insights into decision-making among mothers in high-income earning families who give up employment to become full time mothers. Their own childhoods, their working lives and childcare experiences were all contributing factors. They had grown up in families with breadwinning fathers and mothers on home duties. Prior to becoming full time mothers they had worked in high paid jobs where their requests for reduced working hours were denied. Competing demands of motherhood and work generated huge role conflicts among them. Their decision on whether or not to become a full time mother was seen as optional as they quoted their husbands as saying: *“you will always be able to find another job - you have the opportunity to do it now if you want to”*. Their decision had positive benefits for the fathers *“I’d be much happier knowing that you were minding them than they’re in a crèche”*. This recognition had a positive effect on the mothers to quote them *“then suddenly you’re like a god... this is an important factor as well”*. But the interviews also revealed that fathers’ high incomes enabled them to be excused from childcare and domestic roles and demands of family lives. As full time mothers they were able to compensate for the absence of fathers. Meantime fathers own working lives benefited from their having a traditional wife. The loss of independent status and future career risks of the mother were ignored. As a result the male-breadwinner/female – carer model of family was reproduced (Tappert and Mahon (2015).

Similar views were expressed in a number of focus groups with working mothers from higher educational levels (FLOWS, D6.3, 2014). Many referred to their husbands long working hours; husbands were seen as main wage earner, and many mothers described themselves as being like ‘single mothers’. However the focus group with lower educated mothers gave a more positive account of fathers’ roles. Many said that fathers were ‘more hands on’, cared for children while wives were working, as it would have been impossible for mothers to work otherwise. This reflects the greater importance of the mothers’ jobs in these families. It suggests that lower income families are more likely to have to share care. They can’t afford private childcare but need to work for financial reasons.

### **Fathers and family policies**

Women’s campaign for equal rights took place within a backdrop of patriarchal structures and within patriarchal familism. The expression *One Parent family* was introduced as a gender-neutral term but they are mostly mothers. Fatherhood has been somewhat neglected in family policy analysis. Becoming a father has no outward signs for a man – like it has for a woman. So the mother becomes the primary parent and the father a secondary one. Biological fathers are not given the same recognition as birth mothers in Ireland. Only married fathers are legally recognized. This arrangement fitted in with the traditional responsibility of the father as breadwinner. It also explains why the state had to assume financial responsibility for lone mothers.

A new focus on children’s rights to family life and a greater recognition of the importance of fathers’ roles in the upbringing of children has generated a policy focus

on fathers' rights. Since 2004, fathers have a once-off right to attend two antenatal classes immediately prior to birth. However research shows that there is still a reluctance to promote a greater involvement of fathers. A longitudinal study of new fathers, carried out in a Dublin maternity hospital found that fathers still felt socially excluded. They claimed that they were ignored at classes and told it was not necessary for them to attend. While the hospital staff made efforts to include them in the labour and birth processes, once the baby arrived, the hospital rules limited their access to their partners and babies even though fathers wanted to remain close to both. As no paid paternity leave was available at the time, most of the men were given only 2 to 5 days of paternity leave. They took holiday leave so they could help to look after and bond with the baby and assist their wives (Bailey 2014).

The recent introduction of paid paternity gives a positive signal to fathers: they matter. The introduction of divorce has highlighted the rights and responsibilities of fathers towards their children. The reconciliation of work and family lives post-divorce has become an issue for them too. Lone fathers face similar challenges to women when they try to reconcile their work and family lives. Their ability to do so will interact with their working times, occupations and class background. In the past fathers experienced a patriarchal deficit when it came to caring for their children, while gaining a patriarchal dividend in the workplace. In the new era of dual earners, equality for women as workers, shared parental responsibilities for childcare is necessary. Even when affordable childcare is available, children are 24/7 hours in terms of their care needs. Gender equality for women depends on new gender equality for men too.

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