Female employment, gender roles, and attitudes

The Baltic countries in a broader context

Akvilė Motiejūnaitė
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Gendered patterns of work have changed radically over recent decades in Europe. Two different directions have been observed. In Western Europe, employment rates for women with small children have increased rapidly. In contrast, in Eastern Europe the collapse of socialism ushered in an opposing trend, towards the decreasing employment of women. However, while the trend in Western Europe has been accompanied by an increasing public acceptance of non-traditional roles for females in Eastern Europe, the economic changes seem to have evoked a renaissance of traditional gender roles. Consequently, normative beliefs regarding a gendered division of work have often been considered as being among the forces underpinning female inclusion in/exclusion from the labour market. While analysing the interrelationships between female employment, gender roles, and societal ideals regarding the gendered division of work, the studies collected in this book call into question these assumptions.

In this introduction to the four constituent studies of my thesis, I highlight my main conclusions and insights, placing them within the context of broader debates in the social sciences. I also take the pleasant liberty of expanding on some of the central themes examined in the studies without restricting myself to the concise article format. Thus, some of the issues discussed here are directly related to the findings of the studies while others aim to provide a broader conceptual framework. I start by discussing the typologies of gendered work patterns and propose a conceptualization involving three dimensions: female employment, care services outside the family, and care work in the family. Next, I emphasize the necessity of looking into the interrelationships between policies, practices, and attitudes. In discussing family models, I present some of the major challenges that research into Eastern Europe has brought to gender studies. I criticize the notion of a return to the male-breadwinner family model and explore the manifestations of more equal work patterns. When discussing the theoretical context, I interweave the major results of my studies.
Work patterns: typology of family models

To tackle the essence of debates on female employment, one has to start with the concept of work and gendered (work) roles. Gender theorists have argued that work has been conflated with the sphere of paid employment (or ‘breadwinning’). Caring work, which is yet another necessary part of most daily lives, is often unpaid and conflated with love or affection. Passing over the disputes concerning the reconceptualization of ‘work’, I would like to start with Glucksmann’s (2005, 1995) notion of the ‘total social organization of labour’. It is an inclusive concept that highlights interconnected work activities and acknowledges as work the many unpaid activities that originate in relationships. The concept retains the aspect of economic activity, but includes wider institutional spheres, where the ‘total social organization of labour’ is ‘the manner in which all the labour in a particular society is divided up between and allocated to different structures, institutions and activities ... the social division of all of the labour undertaken in a given society between institutional spheres’ (Glucksmann, 1995: 67). The concept tries to overcome the duality of production and reproduction in emphasizing interconnectedness and relational analysis. Considering the totality of labour is especially important when studying the position of women in relation to paid work.

Several society-level typologies of work patterns have emerged with which to examine the ways in which institutions shape gendered work roles. Lewis (1992) was one of the first who highlighted the variation in how social security systems treat women. Her continuum from strong to weak male-breadwinner family models was widely praised for drawing attention to gender effects on welfare, but drew some criticism as well. Concentrating on male-breadwinning, the typology renders women invisible and lacks attention to caring work (Lewis, 1997; Sainsbury, 1996; Warren, 2000).

Crompton (1999, 2006) has suggested that one should begin any analysis with a gendered coding of both caring and employment and examine how they are incorporated into the labour market and social policies. In addition to the economic aspects of labour division, her typology includes the cultural phenomenon of gender-role coding. Staying within the framework of an ideal/typical model, she proposed five alternative work patterns along a supposed continuum ranging from traditional to less traditional gender relations (see Table 1). The ‘male breadwinner/female carer’ family model represents an extreme division of the ‘total social organization of labour’, accompanied by the most traditional gender relations and the most gender inequality. It is still incorporated in major institutions through the gendered coding of work (Crompton, 1999: 202). Its normative heritage is reflected in current labour markets, where women are less present than men and concentrated at lower levels of organizational hierarchy and in sex-typed and poorly paid occupations. At the opposite pole of the least traditional gender relations, Crompton
places a utopian ‘dual earner/dual carer’ family model, where both employment and caring are shared equally between women and men. However, in present-day societies, models situated between the two extremes are the most common. The ‘male breadwinner/female part-time earner’ (or dual earner/female part-time carer, as referred to in an earlier version) is a modification of the male-breadwinner family model. As Crompton argues, part-time employment is not accompanied by substantive changes in family care arrangements or in gender-role attitudes. Women in such family arrangements are both part-time earners and part-time carers.

The dual earner family models already represent a substantial move towards less traditional gender relations, accompanied by greater gender equality. Drawing attention to the differentiated effects of the organization of substitute care, Crompton distinguishes between marketized and state carers. As well, there are two versions of the ‘dual earner/state carer’ model, namely, (ex)socialist and Scandinavian. In former socialist countries, gender roles and gender-role attitudes were largely traditional and women continued to be responsible for family and care. Scandinavian countries are less traditional because of the second wave of feminism. A sign of gender culture transformation is structural change towards a more ‘woman-friendly’ state. As I will discuss later, a focus on traditionalism when discussing gender equality in Eastern Europe yields some problems. First, however, I would like to highlight some theoretical issues.

I would like to emphasize that the variation in the ‘total social organization of labour’ across countries and over time is much greater than any typology could possibly capture. Moreover, countries are never uniform and the range of actual labour division practices is vast. Class is often mentioned as an important indicator of heterogeneity in female work patterns within societies (Henz, 2006; Warren, 2000), but it is possible to derive other differentiating factors. Though the typologies can only reveal the most prevalent model, they nonetheless constitute a widely accepted and useful tool for understanding cross-national complexities. Lewis (1992) provided a good

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starting point for highlighting how welfare systems shape gendered work patterns. Crompton (1999, 2006) explicitly locates caring work at the centre of the analysis and captures more subtle variations; however, her conceptualization of caring work emphasizes arrangements either inside or outside the family. Only in the ‘male breadwinner/female carer’ model (in its pure form) are females alone responsible for all care work. The modified male-breadwinner models with part-time female employment already presuppose the necessity of care outside the family. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that all caring work can be commodified (Fraser, 1994). As some studies suggest, along with the increasing marketization, decentralization, and fragmentation of welfare services, more rather than less informal care is needed (Lewis, 1998, 2006), and the significance of care in social policies is increasing (Daly and Lewis, 2000: 282).

The concept of ‘care’ has been used in a range of ways. Daly (2002: 252) articulated a common definition of ‘care’, as looking after those who cannot take care of themselves, comprising the activities and relationships involved in caring for the ill, elderly, and dependent young. In relation to female employment, however, it is important to include in the concept other unpaid domestic and personal services that originate in family relationships. Reverting to Glucksmann’s (1995) ‘total social organization of labour’ with its emphasis on the interconnectedness of different spheres, institutions, and activities, I define caring work as comprising both the economic and non-economic activities needed to meet the needs of dependent children and adults. This definition includes caring for the sick, childminding, and doing household work. Drawing on the conceptual framework of Daly and Lewis (2000), I am interested in the division of caring work at the macro and micro levels. At the institutional framework level, I find it necessary to conceptualize a variety of gendered work patterns across the three dimensions (see Figure 1):

1. Female employment (female labour supply) as a continuum from none to full time.
2. Macro level – the availability of care from other than family members: such care services can be provided by state, market, and voluntary (community) organizations in varying proportions.
3. Micro level – the distribution of caring work among individuals within the family: this represents a continuum from solely female to equally shared obligations (solely male could be a theoretical option as a ‘role reversal’ model, but would be rather speculative since no policy measures have encouraged such work division so far; see Haas, 2005: 497).

There is one more hidden dimension in this conceptualization of gendered work patterns, namely, male employment. So far, there have been no explicit policy efforts to provide an alternative role for men than wage earning. Since
the typology is primarily based on institutional arrangements, full-time male employment is an inherent component of all the models.

The first two dimensions are bound to each other. The availability of care outside the family is a necessary precondition for ‘freng’ women from full-time care work and enabling them to engage in paid labour. Borrowing Hobson’s (1990) phrasing, Anttonen and Sipilä (1996) state that the availability of child-care and elderly care services reduce female dependency on the male breadwinner, enabling the ‘exit from the family’ (the original wording referred to social citizenship rights). Such services are principally unavailable in ‘male breadwinner/female carer’ societies, where employment is based on a family wage and married women are supposed to provide all caring work. Whatever drives married women from the family to employment – economic necessity, striving for equality and independence, or state policies – the development of care services outside the family is a necessary precondition.

Socialist countries were among the first to use the potential of female labour. The universal welfare state enabled full female employment through the provision of state-subsidized child-care facilities available to everybody almost round the clock. Currently, Scandinavian countries have the highest rates of female employment in Europe (Eurostat, 2007) and more extensive child-care facilities than most other European countries (Rønsen and Sundström, 2002). Cross-national comparisons confirm the relationship between the availability and affordability of child-care services and levels of female employment (Apps and Rees, 2004; Dingeldey, 2001; Uunk et al., 2005; Vlasbom and Schippers, 2006). Similar effects are observed with elderly care (Ettner, 1995). Variation in levels of female employment at the country level tend to reflect a combined availability of service provision for the elderly and children (Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996).

In contrast to the division of care work at the macro level, the division of care among individuals within the family is not directly linked to female labour supply. A woman who works full time might be expected to take the

![Figure 1. Theoretical dimensions of gendered work patterns](image-url)
entire parental leave herself and do the largest share of household work. Policies might guarantee her reinstatement after parental leave, in this way supporting female employment. Of course, long career breaks often contribute to lower female positions in organizational hierarchies and a concentration in less demanding, and thus more poorly remunerated, sectors. Sharing care duties (for example, sharing parental leave between partners) may contribute to gender equality in employment, but is not a necessary precondition for increasing the numbers of women in paid work. States might exercise their power to increase gender equality by imposing shared parental leave regulations, but household work division remains a strictly private sphere largely guided by normative assumptions. Most women, but rather few men, face problems reconciling paid employment with household work (Lewis, 2006). In socialist contexts, women entering paid employment while remaining responsible for the household were considered to have a ‘double burden’ or ‘dual shift’. With increasing numbers of dual earner couples in Western European countries, similar problems are addressed under the rubric of ‘work–life balance’.

Since the first two dimensions, namely, female employment and availability of care outside the family, are interdependent, for simplification they can be integrated into a single dimension. Again, we can start with the ‘male-breadwinner’ model in which no substitute care is available and married women are outside the labour force. Part-time female employment with part-time substitute care resembles the ‘modified male-breadwinner’ model, while full-time female employment combined with available substitute care can be labelled the ‘adult worker’ model – in line with the terminology of Lewis (1992, 2002). However, these three family models can vary according to the third dimension, namely, care in the family. The ‘male-breadwinner’ and ‘modified male-breadwinner’ models both involve a ‘female carer’, but the ‘adult worker’ model has two possibilities: ‘adult worker/female carer’ and ‘adult worker/dual carer’. To summarize, four categories of gendered work patterns were derived (see Table 1 for comparison with Crompton’s typology), as follows:

- Male breadwinner/female carer
- Modified male breadwinner/female carer
- Adult worker/female carer
- Adult worker/dual carer

The typology only accounts for the institutional setup or policies enabling certain gendered work patterns. Even though deeper analysis of policies often reveals internal contradictions (Leitner, 2003), countries can usually be classified into one prevailing model at the policy level (Haas, 2005). However, policies and state-level typologies of gendered division of labour are just the starting point for understanding female employment. In the next
section, I will discuss the importance of analysing the interrelationships between policy context, actual household practices, and gender-role attitudes.

Policies, attitudes, and practices

Typologies of gendered work patterns that emphasize institutional arrangements tend to conflate policies and behaviour (Haas, 2005). Even when the distinction is sustained, welfare state analyses often overrate the influence of political regulations on social life (Daly, 2000). Similarly, the alternative ‘culturalist’ approach (Pfau-Effinger, 2004a; Sainsbury, 1994, 1996), which emphasizes social attitudes and values concerning the gendered division of labour, often overrates the importance and uniformity of ‘gender cultures’. This section draws attention to the necessity of examining policies, attitudes, and practices if we are to understand the gendered division of work. These interdependent analytical dimensions can develop in different directions, contributing to the emergence of contradictions. They are by no means exhaustive and can easily be complemented by other dimensions, such as economic situation, demographic conditions, or organizational background.

The proposed typology along the dimensions of female employment, care services outside the family, and care work in the family aims at defining the institutional framework. Focusing on policies allows us to reduce the complexity of the phenomenon and highlight some of its important features. Even so, individual gendered work practices cannot be directly derived from policies or prevailing cultural values concerning the ideal division of work between the sexes (Pfau-Effinger, 2004b). Economic situation, in terms of both the necessity of dual incomes and lack of employment opportunities in periods of high unemployment, constrains actual practices (Haas et al., 2006). Policies also might not be implemented properly or might contradict each other or the attitudes of the population.

The studies collected here provide some insights into the interrelationship between policies, attitudes, and practices regarding the gendered division of work. Study one (Motiejunaite and Kravchenko, 2008) analyses all three dimensions and their change over time in Russia and Sweden. Studies two and three analyse the relationship between attitudes and practices. Study two calls into question the assumption of a return to the male-breadwinner family model by comparing gender-role attitudes and female employment in East/West Germany and the Baltic countries. Study three presents an in-depth study of Lithuania, examining three popular explanations of changes in female employment in transition economies. It provides insights into the relationships between attitudes and practices, contrasting some gender-role attitude statements with changes in the labour market and with the life stories of several women. Study four (Motiejunaite, 2005) explores only one
dimension, the labour markets in the Baltic countries. It provides detailed background information for understanding the theoretical issues discussed in the other three studies.

Some clarification is needed regarding the meaning and measurement of policies, attitudes, and practices as applied in the studies assembled here. Policies are explored through the notion of promoted family models as described in public policy documents and manifested in indicators of public social services and assistance for families. The gender-role attitudes are discussed along the continuum from ‘traditional’ to ‘non-traditional’. I avoid labelling the opposite pole as ‘liberal’ (cf. Crompton et al., 2005) or ‘egalitarian’ (cf. Haller and Hoellinger, 1994). The statements that were used from the international survey data referred mainly to the attitudes towards the ‘male breadwinner/female carer’ family model. Disagreement with the statements does not directly imply support for the ‘adult worker/dual carer’ family model. Finally, I refer to practices as an individual’s routine behaviour manifested at two levels. At the individual level, practices are explored through household employment patterns and household work division. At the aggregated level, practices are manifested in male and female employment levels and actual division of care outside the family (for example, proportion of children in day care). Some issues are only briefly touched on as illustrations, while other are analysed in greater detail. The policies, attitudes, and practices ‘triangle’ helps to highlight the main findings of the studies exploring the gendered division of work.

**Study one** explicitly aims to explore ‘how family policy attempts to facilitate female participation in paid employment … are related to gender-role attitudes … and behaviour in a family’ in Russia and Sweden (Motiejunaite and Kravchenko, 2008: 40). Comparing family policies in Russia and Sweden, we found it necessary to discuss employment and care work inside and outside the family. The analysed countries were ‘weak male-breadwinner’ or ‘dual earner/state carer’ societies. Introducing the dimension of care in the family, we defined the variations of the model as the ‘dual earner/state–female carer’ and ‘dual earner/state–dual carer’ variations. Both countries facilitate female employment through separate taxation, public day care, and maternity and parental leave schemes. Female employment is high in both Russia and Sweden, and similar proportions of children are enrolled in childcare institutions in both countries. The main difference (despite the actual differences in wealth and much lower actual benefit levels in Russia) regarded parental leave regulation. Swedish men are ‘forced’ to take some weeks of the parental leave and are encouraged to share the rest. In Russia, all the state-supported parental leave is reserved for women. Such policies thrive in very different cultural environments. The social values in Russia were found to be much more traditional than in Sweden. Most people in Russia supported a strong gender division of work and thought that family
life and children suffer if a woman works. In both countries, people have become less supportive of traditional gender roles over time, although in Russia the social support for working mothers was not expanding. Analysis of actual family employment patterns (practices) revealed that in both countries the most common family model was the ‘dual earner’ model, in which both the man and woman are employed full-time. In Sweden, there were many more ‘one-and-a-half-income’ families, with a full-time employed man and a part-time employed woman, than in Russia where part-time work is rare. Consequently, there were many more one-income households in Russia. Females were the only breadwinners in approximately 9 percent of Russian families in 1994, at a time when most of the population uniformly supported the male-breadwinner family norm.

Such results indicate that there is no straightforward or simple interrelationship between state policies, public attitudes, and practices. The only connection seems to be between family policies and employment patterns, in that policies promoting the ‘adult worker’ family model are reflected in ‘dual earner’ household arrangements. Public attitudes somewhat match policies and practices in Sweden, but largely contradict them in Russia. Is there a general pattern for policies to relate to practices, while cultural norms are not necessarily reflected in either? Or is the discrepancy between attitudes and policies/practices some special feature of (post)socialist societies?

Study two systematically analysed gender-role attitudes and their relationship to female employment levels in the Baltic countries and East/West Germany. We compared several Eastern European countries with one Western European country, attempting to highlight the variation among post-socialist countries. We deliberately used West Germany as a reference point, because it is considered to have been somewhat conservative regarding the employment of mothers, especially compared to Nordic countries, though less traditional than Southern European countries (Alwin et al., 1992; Haller and Hoellinger, 1994; Nordenmark, 2004; Treas and Widmer, 2000). The results indicated that there is no common ex-socialist heritage in terms of gender-role attitudes. Lithuanians were the most ‘traditional’, East Germans the least, while proportions of traditionally minded people were similar in West Germany, Estonia, and Latvia. This study assessed female employment practices by examining differences between male and female employment rates. The broadest gender gap was observed in West Germany, the narrowest in East Germany, while intermediate gender gaps were evident in the Baltic countries. The relationship between the level of traditionalism and female employment rates thus proved to be doubtful.

An increasing number of studies (Crompton et al., 2005; Crompton and Lyonette, 2006; Haas, 2005; Haller and Hoellinger, 1994) indicates that the relationship between traditionalism, or traditional gender-role attitudes, and female employment is not straightforward. When post-socialist countries
were included in cross-national comparisons, they were often treated as exceptions, as they had high levels of full-time female employment accompanied by traditionalist beliefs and unequal division of household work. This pattern contradicted the usual assumptions/findings that increased women’s labour force participation is accompanied by a shift towards less traditional gender-role attitudes (Alwin et al., 1992; Cherlin and Walters, 1981; Mason and Lu, 1988; Thornton, 1989; Thornton et al., 1983). Some researchers explained the discrepancy by citing the failure of socialist policies to solve the ‘women’s question’ (Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997). However, it is not just post-socialist countries that do not adhere to the theoretical pattern. Portugal, which never experienced enforced gender equality, presents an even more extreme example. Its full-time female employment rate is comparable to that of the Scandinavian countries, while its child-care is not generous and most Portuguese women think that families suffer because of their employment (Crompton and Lyonette, 2006: 410). The situation in the Netherlands is quite the opposite: relatively low levels of female employment coexist with very non-traditional attitudes (Haller and Hoellinger, 1994). Discrepancies between preferred and actual household arrangements can be even more specific. For example, in Austria mothers either work full time or are housewives, while much of the population views part-time work as the most favourable option (Haas, 2005).

**Study three** presents a thorough study of female employment in Lithuania. The analysis of structural changes revealed that females were the first to lose their jobs after 1990, but when large state enterprises were restructured, male employment fell as well. A large proportion of women withdrew from the labour force entirely, while the unemployed men actively looked for jobs. Gender-role attitudes in 1990 were highly traditional, with most of the population agreeing that men have more right to a job than women do when jobs are scarce. Such attitudes have rapidly diminished over time, but overwhelmingly high support for the housewife role has remained constant. The study explored the relationship between gender ideology and female employment through the question of agency. Have traditional attitudes ‘forced’ certain groups of women out of employment when their labour was no longer needed? What were the driving forces? Was it that females turned to the housewife role when the collapse of the socialist system brought about a ‘right not to work’? Or was it that employers treated women as secondary workers? Results suggest that all these explanations might complement each other. Since employers’ attitudes did not differ from those of the rest of the population, traditional attitudes in the early 1990s might have guided some hiring or dismissal decisions. Interestingly, housewives differed from other women only in a few respects. They came from average households with average incomes, average family savings, and typical subjective social class perceptions. Housewives, however, placed a greater value on the housewife
role than did other women, but they nevertheless did not think that men have more right to a job than do women. Reciprocal causality might explain the support for the housewife role. However, the ‘working housewife’ life pattern revealed how women adapt to economic constraints when they prioritize family over work.

I hope this discussion has provided some evidence for the statement that gender-role attitudes do not necessarily relate to female employment. Moreover, as highlighted in the previous section (see Figure 1), work patterns are not limited to employment. Even if there is a connection between gender-role attitudes and household employment patterns in some countries, it does not necessarily imply a similar connection between attitudes and sharing of care within the family. In Sweden, for example, an average high support for gender equality does not seem to translate into equal sharing of household and caring responsibilities within families (Kravchenko, forthcoming). Analysing the changes in welfare, employment, and unpaid household work in Europe, Lewis (1997) concluded that there was no substantial increase in men’s share of unpaid work. In general, ‘there is a disjuncture between general gender equity norms in society and the inequity in the family’ (Haas, 2005: 497).

Work patterns in Eastern Europe

There is one more important theme in the studies assembled here. All the studies deal with one specific geographical area, namely Eastern Europe. I use this geopolitical term to denote those European countries that were a part of the socialist bloc for approximately half of the 20th century. Recently, these countries have experienced a period of profound change, encompassing economic transition from a centrally planned to a free market economy and the democratization of political systems. Periods of change, when established interrelationships are disrupted and dislocated, are especially fruitful study periods for building an understanding of social processes and advancing social theories. Here I will present some of the main challenges and insights that the Eastern European transition introduced into our understanding of the gendered division of work.

The socialist countries were among the first to introduce the ‘adult worker’ family model, in which both males and females work full time. When Western European countries were moving from the ‘male breadwinner/female carer’ towards some modified models, women in socialist countries were already entering the workforce in large numbers. Socialist countries introduced legal equality between men and women, promoted equal access to education, liberalized laws on family and marriage, and created maternity and child protection institutions. Full male and female employ-
ment was tied to a universal social security system in which every woman was entitled to paid maternity leave and every child to widely available and affordable child-care. Even so, supporting the dual role of women as ‘workers’ and ‘mothers’ while keeping the single role of ‘worker’ for men created many difficulties. Women were loaded with the notorious ‘double burden’: full-time paid employment plus sole responsibility for the household chores. Working mothers were integrated into the labour force as ‘second-class workers’ (Filtzer, 1992), which was manifested in a persistent occupational segregation and gender pay gap. Men, on the other hand, were (as before) estranged from domestic and caring work and thus only weakly integrated into the family. Their main self-realization was seen in the public sphere, where they could serve as leaders, managers, soldiers, and workers (Ashwin and Lytkina, 2004). The gendered work patterns promoted in the socialist societies can be clearly described along the three dimensions depicted in Figure 1. Full-time female employment was supported by the availability of care services outside the family, but care work within the family was regarded as solely a female responsibility. In these respects, the socialist family policy model can be described as ‘adult worker/female carer’.

Returning to the theoretical discussions of the previous section, we will examine several changes in gendered work division that could have occurred during the Eastern European transition: one change is backwards to the ‘male breadwinner/female carer’ family model, the second is to preserve the ‘adult worker/female carer’ model, and the third is to move towards the ‘adult worker/dual carer’ model. Though there are several possible outcomes, fears of a comeback of the ‘male breadwinner/female carer’ family model have dominated debate on the Eastern European transition. Here I will try to present some criticism regarding the reinstitution of a traditional family model and argue for some signs of more equal work arrangements.

Back to male breadwinner/female carer …

Let us first discuss the reasoning of those gender theorists who feared the worsening of women’s social and economic position. In the introduction to a widely cited collection of essays on gender in the Eastern European transition, Funk (1993: 2) claims that ‘returning women to the “private sphere” is a central mechanism for transformation from a “full employment” to a quasi-capitalist system’. Einhorn, the author of another influential monograph, *Cinderella Goes to Market*, argues that ‘it is understandable that the double burden of the past, and the difficulties of the present combine to make women favour staying at home or working part-time or from home’ (Einhorn, 1993: 136). These quotations reflect the idea of what was called ‘re-traditionalism’ and highlight the various forces underlying the process. Funk sees the ideological efforts to reject what is socialism together with national-
ist discourses elevating motherhood as the major drivers of ‘re-traditionalism’. Although noting the existence of these discourses, Einhorn formulates the central question as that of female choice. She asks whether female employment in the socialist period was women’s ‘right or duty’, and the answer she gives obviously lies on the ‘duty’ side.

Both positions acknowledge that gender relations and ideologies in the socialist countries were very traditional on the part of both men and women. Despite this agreement, they treat the transition process differently. The emphasis on nationalistic discourses presupposes an increase in traditionalism in all three important dimensions: namely, attitudes, practices, and policies. Study two dealt precisely with the first two dimensions. Contrary to expectations, results revealed that the proportion of traditionally minded people decreased in the first period of the transition. This observation holds true in such varied cultural contexts as East Germany and the Baltic countries, suggesting that the relationship between level of traditionalism and gender gap in employment rates was unsteady. Since study two does not explicitly deal with the policy context, I will refer to other research. Pascall and Kwak (2005) described the social legislation in eight Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 as imparting real strength to women. The authors claim that ‘despite the widespread feeling from every publication that the ideological climate is pushing women into traditional relationships, there is little evidence, beyond Poland’s abortion legislation, of social policies designed to do this’ (Pascall and Kwak, 2005: 29).

The ‘choice’ part of the re-traditionalism idea explains the process from a different point of view. The reasoning goes as follows. Since female employment was ‘forced’ by authoritarian socialist governments on societies that saw the ‘male breadwinner/female carer’ family model as the ideal, women would choose to leave employment once the situation allowed. This, again, presupposes a strong link between attitudes and practices, but here the level of traditional gender-role attitudes is seen as already high enough to validate women’s choosing family over work. Einhorn acknowledges that, during the transition, the economic necessity of dual incomes replaced the authoritarian pressure (under which dual incomes were an economic necessity as well) to work. Furthermore, she seems to admit that for many women in socialist societies work was not only a duty, but also a source of satisfaction and self-realization. Einhorn leaves her discussion open: women will either return to the domestic sphere or fight for the right to work. Hakim’s (2000) preference theory might provide a necessary framework for uniting these different approaches. She argues that there are ‘work centred’, ‘family centred’, and ‘adaptive’ women. ‘Family centred’ women would choose the family given the opportunity, while ‘work centred’ women would fight for the right to work. As mentioned earlier, study three found that those women who left the labour force were more traditional only regarding the housewife
role, but had attitudes similar to those of other women regarding women’s and men’s right to work.

The re-traditionalism emphasis on strong conservative gender ideology has largely dominated the debate on gender inequalities in Eastern Europe. Yet, as van der Lippe and Fodor (1998: 132) noted, ‘the empirical evidence for these statements is scarce, mostly anecdotal and impressionistic’. The common feature of these studies was a focus on women and their losses, neglecting the importance of comparisons (a) with the situation of men, (b) with conditions in the socialist period, and (c) with conditions in other countries. The arguments frequently used selected data referring to separate spheres.

Such argumentation can partly be explained by the fact that the techniques for gathering and classifying aggregated statistical data were changing, making it difficult (or sometimes impossible) to find comparable indicators. Study four reflects on the struggle to find comparable data for the Baltic countries in this turbulent period. I had to analyse the changes by separate periods, and comparable data for occupational segregation were available only from 1992. Although purely descriptive, the study revealed one interesting paradox. In Lithuania women absorbed almost all the employment cuts in the first five years of transition. In Estonia and Latvia, however, both men and women lost their jobs in approximately equal proportions. The employment of Lithuanian men was hit the hardest by the 1998 Russian financial crisis, but the effects were still just half of the initial blow for female employment. The obvious conclusion would be that women suffered much greater discrimination in Lithuania than in Estonia or Latvia, and such a statement might be partly true. However, the difference between female and male employment rates at the end of the analysed period was considerably smaller in Lithuania than in Estonia or Latvia or indeed than in the European Union on average. This example indicates that it is important to recognize the complexity of the phenomenon. According to official statistics, exceptionally high numbers of women were employed in Lithuania in the socialist period; it must be kept in mind, however, that such data ‘most probably encompassed high levels of hidden unemployment and absenteeism’ (Motiejunaite, 2005: 245).

One of the first surveys that deliberately aimed at evaluating the changes in Eastern Europe was ‘Social Stratification in Eastern Europe after 1989’, designed by Szelényi and Treiman and conducted in 1993 in six countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Slovakia. Contrasting the 1993 information from this survey with retrospective accounts of 1988 in those countries, van der Lippe and Fodor (1998) found no evidence that women suffered major setbacks in their economic position compared to that of men. Instead, gender inequality continued developing along patterns already established in the socialist period. The gender gap in employment
levels did not grow and women managed to retain similar levels of authority. Surrounded by the impression of the deteriorating position of women in the Eastern European labour force, the authors admitted they were surprised at the results.

The main book that resulted from the project, *Making Capitalism without Capitalists* (Eyal, Szelényi, and Townsley, 1998), analyses how individual men and women adjust their life trajectories to make a successful transition from socialism to capitalism. Using categories borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu, the authors argue that those with ‘cultural capital’ have done better than those with only ‘economic’ or ‘social’ capital (which they call ‘political’ to denote networks of communist party members). Within the same framework, Fodor (1997) formulated a ‘re-valued resources’ explanation of gender differences in employment. She argues that the socialist-period mechanisms of occupational segregation that steered women into less prestigious occupations and positions, now form valuable assets for women in a market economy. Women were on average more educated than were men, who received higher salaries in manual jobs. Higher education and better knowledge of foreign languages became important re-valued resources after the transition. In the state socialist economy, service sector positions were less prestigious than those in production and were thus dominated by women. In the market economy, work experience in the expanding service sector became an advantage for many women, while many men had to struggle for jobs in the declining industrial or agricultural sectors. Although Fodor expressed some fears that these re-valued resources might prove to be only temporary assets before men start pushing women out of prestigious occupations, Ghodsee’s (2005) recent book on women working in Bulgaria’s tourism sector provides a vivid example of the lasting success of this shift. Tourism is one of the few successful and expanding sectors, but still remains dominated by women even in higher positions.

*Study three*, among other issues, touched on the application of the ‘re-valued resources’ explanation to Lithuania. Life stories indicated that some of the women who could easily find/change jobs received much lower than average pay. Aggregate-level data revealed that the very processes of occupational segregation protected male employment during the early years of transition. The first round of privatization in Lithuania mainly hit the female-dominated sectors, but during the second round, large enterprises in the male-dominated heavy industry were restructured. In this sense, women’s jobs were more protected during the Russian economic crisis of 1998, which affected Lithuanian exports. *Study four* gives a detailed summary of the major statistical indicators regarding gender in the labour force in the Baltic countries. Analysis of the 1992–2002 data suggests somewhat increasing horizontal occupational segregation by gender. The few sectors in which the participation of men and women became more equal were trade, hotels and
restaurants, financial intermediation, and manufacturing – sectors that were dominated by women and expanding during the transition.

... or towards varied adult worker models?

Let us explore the future of gendered work patterns in Eastern European countries. I will offer a brief summary of the current situation regarding the three dimensions outlined in Figure 1: female employment, care outside the family, and care inside it. I will try to distinguish the policies, practices, and attitudes as they impinge on one or more of those three dimensions. While presenting the main issues, I would like to note that there are many differences between the Eastern European countries, some diversity persisting along the lines already evident in the socialist period. Some new variety emerged through the different routes taken in politics and policies, and most of the differences can be attributed to a combination of both. In this brief summary, I will try to present issues common to most of the studied countries. However, it is almost always possible to find one or more countries that depart from the general pattern.

Policies

✓ Equal right to work reaffirmed. Equal pay, equal opportunities, and grievance procedures to deal with gender discrimination at work were reaffirmed or redeveloped in women’s favour (Pascall and Manning, 2000).

✓ Social policies supporting mothers’ employment remain legally in force, but financial support for them has been reduced. Family benefits, parental leave regulations, child-care provisions, and reproductive rights are still quite extensive (Fodor et al., 2002). The legal frameworks guarantee maternity and parental leave, with entitlements for approximately three years (Pascall and Kwak, 2005). The relative level of financial support for families with children varies across countries, but benefits to compensate for income lost during leaves have tended to decline and are rather small compared to the cost of raising children (Aidukaite, 2006; Fodor et al., 2002; Pascall and Manning, 2000). In addition, fear of losing one’s position at work when employment is insecure makes it difficult to use the legal parental leave entitlements.

✓ Child-care. Several Eastern European countries have retained the strong state support for child-care (Pascall and Lewis, 2004).

✓ Signs of dual care: paternity leave has been introduced in several countries. Formally, fathers are allowed to take parental leave, but they rarely do so unless ‘forced’. Untranslatable paternity leave is one of the measures encouraging dual caring. In this respect, Slovenia is the most advanced of the Eastern European countries, being comparable to Sweden.
and Denmark; it gives 2 weeks of non-transferable paternity leave and 4 months of transferable paid paternity leave (both 100 percent compensation) (Wall, 2007). Latvia gives 10 days of paid paternity leave at childbirth, Estonia 14 days, and Hungary 5 unpaid days (Pascall and Kwak, 2005). Except for Slovenia, the paternity leave is not really instrumental in fostering equal care, but such policies are the sign of first steps towards the promotion of gender equality in informal care.

Practices

✓ **Employment: women retain their role as earners.** In analysing female employment in eight Eastern European member states, Pascall and Kwak (2005) concluded that the gender gap in employment rates was narrower than in countries with a long-standing male breadwinner tradition. Compared to the EU-15 countries, the labour markets are less segregated and the gender pay gap is slightly narrower, while women’s education compares favourably with men’s. The researchers concluded that ‘the need for women’s employment is strong, with low incomes compared with the West, widespread insecurity of work, and increased insecurity of marriage’ (Pascall and Kwak, 2005: 44).

✓ **Part-time employment is rare and not a form of women’s work.** It is rarely a strategy to balance paid work and caring responsibilities. Since part-time work is one of the ways in which women are disadvantaged by caring responsibilities (Rubery, Smith, and Fagan, 1999), its unavailability should not pose serious problems for gender equality.

✓ **Child-care available.** The percentages of children (aged 3–6) in pre-school education are similar to or higher than in 1989 in most Eastern European countries (TransMONEE, 2007). 80 percent or more of children aged 3–6 were enrolled in pre-school education in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, and Latvia in 2004–2005. The data on nurseries caring for children aged 0–3 is rather scarce. Discussing nurseries in Hungary, Poland, and Romania, Fodor et al. (2002) did not notice any substantial reduction in service or marked state withdrawal from funding over the transition period. More important, child-care in Eastern European countries is available full-time, enabling full-time employment of parents.

✓ **Dual burden.** Contrary to common assumptions, difficulties combining paid work with unpaid household work (sharing care work within the family) do not seem to be a specifically Eastern European problem. Informal care work is far from equally shared, but the survey data indicated that the dual workload was more balanced between the sexes in 2001 in 12 candidate countries than in the EU-15 countries (Paoli, Persson, and Parent-Thirion, 2002). Males were more involved in caring for children, cooking, and caring for elderly or disabled relatives in Eastern
European countries than in the EU-15. Such observations hold on average. Comparing individual countries – for example, Sweden (which is quite advanced in notions of gender equality) with Russia (where men are largely alienated from the family) – the opposite holds true. Nevertheless, a significant move towards more equally shared domestic work between the sexes should be noted in both Sweden and Russia over time (Kravchenko and Motiejunaite, forthcoming).

Attitudes

✓ **Attitudes still quite traditional, although changing somewhat.** Gender-role attitudes vary considerably across Eastern European countries. The most valid generalization would be that there is trend towards less traditional attitudes over time. Such a trend might be especially related to a greater acceptance of women’s working roles. As study three revealed, support for the idea that work is more a right for men than for women has decreased rapidly, while support for the housewife role has remained at the same high level over the fifteen years following the collapse of Eastern European socialism. A vivid quotation from one recent study highlights the pattern: ‘Eastern European women do not so much reject their role as pivotal breadwinners as put their family first’ (Haas et al., 2006: 758–9).

Summarizing, it seems that fears of the return of the ‘male breadwinner/female carer’ family model in Eastern Europe do not have a solid basis. Since full-time employment remains the norm for both men and women, even a shift towards modified male-breadwinner family models does not seem plausible. Today, policies to a greater or lesser degree support working mothers. Child-care was not dismantled after the socialist period, and men are more involved in household duties (i.e., care work within the family) than are average Western European men. Highlighting just a few of the main aspects of gendered work patterns in Eastern Europe, it seems that the common misconceptions were usually based on assumption that traditional attitudes would prevail. Again, I would like to emphasize that gender-role attitudes have proven to be neither uniform in Eastern European nor directly related to work patterns.

**Data and methods**

The four studies assembled here describe and analyse changes in female employment, gender roles, and attitudes over time. Starting in 1990, which marks the breakdown of Eastern European socialism, the studies aim to reveal some of the mechanisms affecting gendered work patterns. Three stud-
ies focus on both time and space, providing cross-national comparisons; in contrast, study three is an in-depth analysis of one country. Such a research framework is intended to provide a sound balance between breadth and depth of discussion.

The data used in the studies were:

- Available national descriptive statistics including official employment estimates, census data, labour force surveys, government, and other reports. The most often used sources were national statistics offices’ publications and online databases, the International Labour Organization database on labour statistics, and the Eurostat ‘New Cronos’ database. The aggregate statistics was used to describe major trends and provide background information.

- The survey data used include data from the European Values Surveys (EVS; the 1990, 1996/1997, and 1999 waves and an additional survey conducted in 2005 in Lithuania using EVS methodology) and from International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) modules on ‘Family and Changing Gender Roles’ (the 1994 and 2002 Rounds). Such individual-level data enabled us to explore normative assumptions regarding gender roles and gendered behaviour.

- Nineteen ‘problem-centred’ interviews (Witzel, 2000) with women who experienced hardships in the Lithuanian labour market. The interviews focused on labour market entries/exits and family changes.

The coverage and quality of the statistical data varied substantially in the 1990s in transition economies (Filer and Hanousek, 2002), so it is rather problematic to make either intra- or inter-country comparisons. I have tried to solve these problems in several ways. For example, in study four, I have split the analysed period into smaller ones to make the data comparable. Instead of using changes in numbers of employed people, I calculated an employment growth indicator. The development of the European Union structural indicators made it possible to compare Eastern European countries with each other as well as with Western Europe. The Labour Force Survey data are available from 1998, but when using them to compare different countries it is important to consider two issues. (1) The main employment ratio indicator conflates part-time and full-time employment. This is especially important when comparing female employment rates between Eastern and Western Europe. In Eastern Europe, most women work full time, while in Western Europe many women work part-time. (2) The working life is considered to be 15–64 years for both men and women in all countries, though in many countries females are entitled to retire earlier than males are. In the Soviet Union, for example, the age of retirement was 55 years for women and 60 for men. The Baltic countries have adopted plans to gradually
increase the retirement age for both men and women. For example, at the end of 1999, the retirement age in Estonia for women was 57.5 years, while for men it was 62.5. An obvious conclusion is that some of the difference between male and female employment rates can be attributed to different retirement ages. In addition, the earlier retirement ages can partly explain the lower employment indicators in the Baltic countries than in the EU-15 countries.

The survey data provide a great deal of information on individuals and make it easy to explore more precise research questions. I used data from the EVS and ISSP surveys because these surveys allowed the examination of changes over time. The EVS data were especially useful as the EVS survey was conducted in 1990, a year that can be considered the very start of the transition in Eastern European countries (the Baltic countries were still a part of the Soviet Union in 1990). I would like to emphasize that the gender-role attitude measurements used were only approximations, and results could vary considerably depending on how the variables are constructed. For example, study one created a male-breadwinner scale using five questions on gender-role attitudes. It was the best estimator for two countries in two waves, but when analysing one country in a single year, other measurements might have been better (for example, a factor analysis revealed that using two scales would have been better in the case of Russia). An individual analysis of each question might have yielded more insight into the phenomenon, but would have overwhelmed us with details. We tried to find the best measurement in each study regarding the number of data, countries, and waves. When comparing East/West Germany and Baltic countries over three waves, however, no reliable single scale could be constructed. Instead, cluster analysis was used to classify respondents as ‘traditional’ or ‘non-traditional’ regarding their gender-role attitudes. In study three, which presents a case study of Lithuania, there was no need to reduce the complexity of the data, so the two gender-role attitude questions are discussed separately.

The interview material reveals the life experiences and turning points of women in Kaunas, the second largest city in Lithuania. Interviewees were contacted through the Kaunas Labour Market Training Centre. All women were registered at the Labour Exchange Office and were actively seeking employment at the time they were contacted or shortly before. All participated in a minimum of three days of psychological training workshops to enhance their self-esteem. Half of the interviewees were unemployed; the others had recently found employment. Three pilot interviews were conducted in August–September 2006, the rest in February–March 2007. All the interviews were conducted in Lithuanian and fully transcribed. The interviews focused on the interviewees’ individual experiences over the course of their lives, providing information impossible to detect from the descriptive
statistics and survey data. Unfortunately, the interview material is not fully utilized here. Some of the interviews with women who were in the labour force in socialist times are drawn on in *study three*.

**The structure of the thesis**

The four studies of female employment, gender roles, and attitudes start with the most complex elaboration of important theoretical issues and finish with the most detailed background information. *Study one* explicitly discusses the typologies of gendered work division and compares policies, attitudes, and practices. *Study two* deals with attitudes towards the male-breadwinner family model and explores whether there is a relationship between the level of ‘traditionalism’ and the gender gap in employment rates. *Study three* evaluates three popular explanations of changes in female employment in transition; employer attitudes, women’s choices, and structural changes in employment are considered as possible factors. *Study four* is devoted to an analysis of descriptive statistics, in an attempt to capture what was happening in labour markets after the collapse of the socialist systems in the studied countries.

The four studies cover a range of countries, namely, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, and Sweden. As the title of the thesis emphasizes, the Baltic countries can be considered the centre of attention, while analysis of processes in Germany, Russia, and Sweden provides a broader context. By examining variation between the countries, the thesis aimed to highlight some common issues regarding the gendered division of work, issues that bridge the East/West divide.

**References**


STUDY ONE
Family policy, employment and gender-role attitudes: a comparative analysis of Russia and Sweden

Akvile Motiejunaite and Zhanna Kravchenko*,
University College of South Stockholm, Sweden

Summary In this article, we explore the interaction between female and male employment, parenting responsibilities and family policy in Russia and Sweden. The study is based first on indicators of public social services, assistance for families and labour force data; and second, on the ISSP modules on Family and Changing Gender Roles (years 1994, 2002). The results show that both Sweden and Russia facilitate the ‘dual-earner’ family model, but that Sweden places a greater emphasis on dual-caring and flexible work arrangements for women. The support for traditional gender roles was much higher and more uniform in Russia than in Sweden. The proportion of ‘dual-earner’ and female-led families was nevertheless higher in Russia than in Sweden, especially in 1994 when major restructuring in the social and economic sphere was occurring. The findings suggest that family policy is instrumental in facilitating female employment, but does not necessarily bring changes in gender-role attitudes.

Key words family policy, gender-roles, female employment, Russia, Sweden.


* Author to whom correspondence should be sent: Zhanna Kravchenko, University College of South Stockholm, 14189 Huddinge, Sweden. [zhanna.kravchenko@sh.se]
Introduction – the gender effects of family policy

Studies of welfare and gender policy are linked by a central concern with (in)equality. They analyse the role of social policy in the development of gender policy institutions and the effects of gender policies on differentiation processes. Discussions of women’s participation either in paid work outside the household, or in unpaid work at home, are centred around the institutions that shape gender roles and promote one or another aspect of the redistribution of work/care duties in both society and family.

This article analyses the correspondence between the patterns of gender relations promoted by family policy arrangements, individuals’ attitudes towards combining parenting and work responsibilities, and their actual family practices. Our analysis focuses on Russia and Sweden, the first countries to see a ‘break of patriarchal rule in the modern world’ (Therborn, 2004: 73). Political and economic development in both countries was underpinned by the idea of gender equality in relation to the provision of work opportunities and social welfare. It was also accompanied by the use of public measures aimed at ensuring opportunities for reconciling work and parenting responsibilities, as well as providing financial security for the care of dependent family members. However, neither of the systems recognises the equal value of care in comparison to waged work. Both countries base the social security provision for the carer on her/his position as a worker, which limits the individual’s opportunity to choose whether or not to care.

When comparing Sweden and Russia, it is necessary to recognise some crucial differences in socio-economic development which have resulted from the historical differences in political and economic organisation. The roots of the gender equality regulations in Russia lie in the Bolshevik programme of the early 20th century, which emphasized the need to transform economic relationships, end the exploitation of proletarian women, and assure their economic wellbeing (Aivazova, 2001). The entrance of Russian women into the labour force was centrally organized and occurred during the period of rapid industrialization in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Swedish government also actively stimulated each individual to provide for his/her needs through gainful employment, by widening the public-sector employment and investing in social services within a capitalist mode of socio-economic relations (Axelsson, 1992). As we intend to demonstrate in this article, similar types of family policy appeared in the two countries as a result of these efforts. It is particularly interesting to compare the effects of such policies on attitudes towards women’s work and family responsibilities in such different national contexts.

It is generally acknowledged that public social policy is the crucial factor in structuring women’s employment patterns (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 1993). By using International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) data on the ‘Family and Changing Gender Roles’, Rounds II and III (years 1994 and 2002), we will examine whether it is also significant
in regulating individuals’ normative settings and practices. The findings suggest that family policy is instrumental in facilitating female employment, but does not bring accompanying changes in gender-role attitudes.

Gender contracts in the ‘Worlds of Welfare’

The variation in family policies between societies is largely based on whether they recognize and cater for women as wives, mothers and/or as workers (Lewis, 1992; Sainsbury, 1996). We have chosen an approach which classifies a variety of gender practices in welfare, which correspond best with the two-dimensional perspective of male/female roles as workers/carers. Lewis (1992) was the first to distinguish between three ‘gender-sensitive’ ideal types of welfare arrangement, namely, strong, modified and weak male-breadwinner models.

Historically, the ‘strong male-breadwinner model’ treated women as a secondary wage earner, with low levels of accompanying female labour market participation. Joint taxation, low benefits and a lack of child-care services were based on the assumption that family care would be provided by women. Among the most important characteristics of the ‘modified male-breadwinner model’ is an acceptance of full-time female employment and the provision of a high level of compensation for the cost of children (through the use of employers’ financial contributions). The strong pro-natalist concern behind this kind of family policy explained the prevalence of the horizontal direction of income redistribution between families with and without children, rather than a vertical direction between rich and poor. Benefits are still means-tested while there is a joint taxation system. Social entitlements in the ‘weak male-breadwinner’ model are directed to the woman as a worker, not wife, facilitating high employment rates and the development of public day care. Benefits are provided on grounds of universalism, while being interpreted as the replacement of temporarily lost income; taxation is separate and progressive. Since this model does not refer to the care arrangements within the family, for our analysis we need more subtle distinctions. We further refer to subtypes of this model as ‘dual earner/state-female carer’ and ‘dual earner/state-dual carer.’

We will explore the continuum of traditional–less traditional gender relations embedded in the welfare practices of two countries and, with the help of the concept ‘gender contract’, analyse variation in work–care practices. As defined by Gottfried (2000: 253), a gender contract is a ‘compromise made about the gender division of labour, at work, and by implication, at home.’ It prescribes specific roles and statuses for men and women in different social spheres. Temkina and Rotkirch (2003) distinguished between ‘official’ and ‘everyday’ contracts. The ‘official’ contract is created by public policies, ideology and legislation, while the ‘everyday’ contract is sustained
through individuals’ routine behaviour, relationships, attitudes and unarticu-
lated knowledge. This division highlights the fact that public policies do not
alone determine individuals’ socio-economic practices. However, such defi-
nition of ‘everyday’ contract conflates behaviour and attitudes. Socio-
economic relations around everyday family life are subject to the joint influ-
ence of social institutions and cultural norms (Pfau-Effinger, 2003). There-
fore, we found it necessary to include the idea of ‘normative’ contract, which
allows normative orientations and gender-role attitudes to be examined.
Thus, our analysis of family arrangements is divided into ‘official’, ‘norma-
tive’, and ‘everyday’ gender contracts. In relation to this we intend to ex-
plain how family policy attempts to facilitate female participation in paid
employment (the ‘official’ contract) are reflected in gender-role attitudes
(the ‘normative’ contract) and behaviour in a family (the ‘everyday’ con-
tract). ³

The analysis is structured according to the data sources. The ‘official’
gender contract is examined by looking at documents and statistical indica-
tors related to public policy as regards the creation of conditions for women
engaging in waged labour (and less thoroughly, for encouraging men to par-
ticipate in care). The analysis of the ‘everyday’ and ‘normative’ contracts is
based on survey data, obtained from the International Social Survey Pro-
gramme (ISSP) module ‘Family and Changing Gender Roles’, Rounds II and
III, which were carried out in 1994 and 2002. Our underlying assumption is
that family policy (the ‘official’ contract) influences gender-role attitudes
(the ‘normative’ contract) and behaviour (the ‘everyday’ contract). Thus, we
first present the developments in Sweden and Russia regarding welfare and
family policies, and from these go on to formulate hypotheses about individ-
ual attitudes and everyday practices.

Family policy in Russia and Sweden: the ‘official’
contract

Both the Swedish and the Soviet social security systems were explicitly
modelled on Bismarckian social legislation (Manning and Shaw, 1998; Ols-
son, 1993), which placed a strong emphasis on state regulation of the econ-
omy and social policy. In both countries the extensive use of income redis-
tribution mechanisms through heavy taxation and public funds was tied to a
policy of full employment that emphasized women’s place in industry and
the economy. Russian women entered the labour market in traditionally male
workplaces, while Swedish women entered the public sphere, but in both
countries rather similar patterns of occupational segregation were observed
(Barsukova, 2001; Gornick et al. 1997; Lewis and Åström, 1992).

In Russia, the reforms of the 1990s had negative results for the economic
activity of the population. The employment rates of both women and men

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declined, reaching their lowest point in 1998, and despite a slow subsequent recovery were still nearly ten percent lower in 2002 than in 1992. The official statistics on registered unemployment show rather low rates, but nevertheless illuminate the more difficult conditions for women, who have experienced higher levels of unemployment. In the mid-1990s the Swedish labour market also experienced some turbulent conditions but remained more auspicious than the Russian (see Table 1).

In both countries the woman’s role as a working mother was supported through a system of special privileges, including pre- and postnatal parental leave. Gradually the development of social and employment policy resulted in the provision of separate taxation, public day care and benefits to compensate for temporary withdrawal from the labour force and/or for the additional costs of raising children. Such characteristics correspond to the ‘weak male-breadwinner’ family model. However, it is important to investigate in more detail how work and care responsibilities were reconciled and what has changed during the last decade.

Parental leave regulations and child-care provision are two components of social policy that directly influence woman’s ability to undertake waged work. In Russia, the job-protection and maternity-leave regulations have remained relatively unchanged since Soviet times, despite a transformation of the social sphere. Pregnant Russian women are entitled to paid leave of absence 10 weeks prior to giving birth and for 8 weeks thereafter. Payment during this leave equals the woman’s average wage during the 12 previous months. For those who have worked less than the required period, the calculation of allowance is based on the size of the minimum wage (Federal Law, 2005). Thereafter all women are entitled to take up to 70 weeks of partially paid leave, which is available for women with a job record of at least one full year prior to the birth, with a flat-rate social insurance allowance. They are also entitled to leave of absence for an additional 78 weeks without any financial support. Employed men with the same minimum work record have

| Table 1. Male and female employment rates (working age)\(^b\) |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| **Employment**  |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Sweden          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| men             | 78.3     | 72.3     | 73.2     | 73.5     | 76.1     | 76.3     |
| women           | 76.3     | 70.7     | 69.9     | 69.4     | 72.2     | 73.4     |
| Russia          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| men             | 82.2     | 74.6     | 73.3     | 68.2     | 72.6     | 72.6     |
| women           | 77.5     | 70.2     | 69.0     | 63.5     | 68.8     | 68.8     |
| **Unemployment**|          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Sweden          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| men             | 6.3      | 8.5      | 8.5      | 6.9      | 5.0      | 4.4      |
| women           | 4.2      | 6.9      | 7.5      | 6.0      | 4.3      | 3.6      |
| Russia          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| men             | 0.4      | 2.3      | 2.5      | 1.9      | 0.9      | 1.1      |
| women           | 1.2      | 4.3      | 4.8      | 3.9      | 2.1      | 2.6      |

Notes:
\(^a\) For Russia data on 1995 is provided.

a right to share this additional leave.

The Swedish system of parental leave has existed since 1937. Introduced as a form of maternity leave, it was gradually expanded to embrace both parents, aiming to provide both men and women with the opportunity to work and care for their children. Parental leave of 68 weeks is divided between the parents, with 8 weeks being reserved for each of them individually, while the remaining 52 weeks can be distributed between them. A mother can take the parental leave 8 weeks prior to the birth of the child. The allowance can be used at any point until the child turns 8 years. In order to receive the benefit, a parent must be employed (and thus insured) and have been a Swedish resident for no less than 12 months. The amount of the allowance is determined in accordance with the social insurance legislation (Socialförsäkringslagen, 1999: 799): for 390 days parents (together) are entitled to earnings-related benefit (80 percent of their average wage during the previous 12 months) and an additional 90 days in relation to an established minimum. For those not insured, or with an interrupted job record for more than six months prior to the birth, only a minimum level of benefit is awarded (Försäkringskassan, 2002).

The organisation of child-care and public schooling is another part of social policy which we have included in our examination. Apart from availability, the cost and duration of services are the most important components. In both countries public child-care is part of the education system (in Russia since 1918, in Sweden since 1996), with a national curriculum, long opening hours which coincide with the general working hours of the parents, the provision of meals and it is provided at affordable prices. It embraces children aged 0–7 and extends to school-age children in the form of after-school care. In both countries child-care is mainly organized by the municipal authorities, with the cooperation of some private agencies. Child-care provision is quite high and has increased, with some fluctuations over the last decade in both countries: around 60 percent of children (age 0–7) are enrolled in pre-school institutions (see Table 2). In Sweden the parental share of the cost varies between the different municipalities and by the type of care being provided, but averages around 20 percent or less (OECD, 2001). There are no aggregate statistics on the cost of child-care in Russia. Until recently, means-tested pre-school subsidies were the only way in which these costs were publicly redistributed. In 2006 the Federal government initiated a system of

Table 2. Child-care coverage, enrolled children as % of general population aged 0–7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Here we refer to all forms of child-care institutions, assuming that the arrangements do not overlap, and no double counting occurs. For the calculation on Sweden, data on average population in the age 0–7 were used and data on preschool enrolment is dated 15 October each year.

compensation for part of the cost of child-care for all parents (from 20 percent to 70 percent, depending on the number of children), through the use of local budgets. This change is being undertaken by the regions individually and as yet little has been achieved in real terms.

In the 1990s, Sweden experienced some economic problems which resulted in budget deficits and inevitable adjustments being made to the traditionally high social expenditures. However, the original aspiration in favour of a high level of public support for women’s employment remained intact (Lindbom and Rothstein, 2004). No drastic retrenchments took place; instead, the opportunities for the private providers of social services were enlarged. Cuts in social programmes, as a result of budget deficits, affected income distribution and stimulated various patterns of work/care distribution (Hiilamo, 2004). For example, certain tax reforms (such as the abolition of spouse deductions, and the deduction of maintenance liability for non-custodial parents) had a significant negative impact in terms of gender equality, since most of the recipients were women. However, cash benefits were raised at the beginning of the 1990s, only to be cut in 1994–1996, before being increased once again at the end of the decade. These changes had controversial effects. Providing benefits to women independent of their employment status meant that policy promoted income gender equality. At the same time, a generous level of compensation encouraged women to forgo waged work, which endangered their position in the labour market and social security in the long run (Duvander, 2000).

As regards Russia, privatization, in conjunction with the economic troubles accompanying the transition, worked to dismantle the welfare mechanisms of the command economy (Ericsson, 1995). In these conditions Russian family policy was subjected to a considerably more distinctive reformulation of the ‘official’ gender contract. As a consequence of the economic collapse, the state could not provide the quite generous level of universal benefits it had done previously. Although the provisions remained de jure, they became virtually non-existent de facto. Spending on family allowances in relation to other social transfers was gradually decreasing (from 77.3 percent in 1991 to 54.4 percent in 1995 and 33.8 percent in 2002) (Goskomstat, 2003: 198). However, too simplistic an interpretation of such changes in aggregate-level statistics and their effect on families should be avoided as the structure of social expenditure itself was changing, including a new group of support recipients – the unemployed. In addition, after the virtual disappearance of public monetary support for raising children and increasing social insecurity, fertility rates declined dramatically (the number of live births per 1,000 females in the age range 15–49 dropped from 55.2 in 1990 to 35.2 in 2002) (Goskomstat, 2005a: 193). This in turn reduced the numbers of potential benefit recipients: the spending on lump-sum benefits for pregnant women decreased from 77.3 percent of total social spending in 1991 to 33.8 percent in 2002. At the same time, the lump-sum assistance at birth increased from 4.1 percent of total social spending in 1991 to 6.7 percent in
2002; and most importantly, maternity benefit increased from 0.2 percent in 1991 to 4.0 percent in 2002 (Goskomstat, 2003: 198).

Today, despite their many differences, both systems recognize women’s employment rights as being equal to those of men and provide them with opportunities to obtain an individual income and social security. Job opportunities for mothers are specifically protected; the loss of income during parental leave is offset. However, they differ largely regarding incentives for males to engage in care. In Russia dual-earner employment is accompanied by public day care, but child-care during paternal leave remains solely a female duty. Thus the family model can be conceptualized as ‘dual-earner/state-female carer’. In Sweden family policy is orientated towards the sharing of child-care duties between spouses and can therefore be regarded as ‘dual-earner/state-dual carer’.

Attitudes and reality: ‘normative’ and ‘everyday’ contracts

We were also interested in whether political and economic choices were supported by the normative orientations of the population and reflected in their family practices; that is, whether the ‘official’ contract is consistent with the ‘normative’ and the ‘everyday’ ones. We formulated two hypotheses about the influence of family policy on everyday gender practices in both countries and the consequences for women’s employment. The trends observed in the development of the alternative (public and market-oriented) measures in Swedish family policy in no way questioned the general adherence to the dual-earner gender contract: it was the distribution of care which was instead being reconsidered. In such conditions we expected the ‘official’ and the ‘everyday’ contracts to be consistent with each other and to be directed towards achieving greater equity between the genders. In Russia, the dominant dual-earner ‘everyday’ contract was expected to change, once obligatory employment was no longer fixed in the ‘official’ contract. The period of economic transformation has coincided with the emergence of traditional norms in gender relations and allowed them to become established in practice once again (Klimenkova, 1994). In these conditions we expect to find an orientation towards a more unequal work distribution in 2002 compared to the early period of the transformation in Russia.

This section is devoted to examining these hypotheses concerning the influence of family policy on gender-role attitudes and everyday behaviour. Analysis of the ISSP data is carried out in three stages for both modules separately. First, a factor and scale reliability analysis is conducted in order to determine which indicators of gender-role attitudes form self-standing scales and should be used as the dependent variable. Then a multivariate regression was performed on sets of independent variables for Russia and
Sweden separately to ascertain how the social parameters of individuals determine variations in gender-role attitudes. The last part of the analysis focuses on actual family arrangements. We explore family models through the respondent’s and their spouse/partner’s employment status. For the analysis, we restricted the sample to individuals who had no missing information on any of the variables. A weighting factor has been used to correct for possible deviations caused by the non-responses.6

The male-breadwinner scale: the ‘normative’ contract

The ISSP modules on family and gender roles include several items which measure subjective attitudes towards female roles in the family and female employment. The factor analysis revealed the presence of one strong scale, which we named the ‘male-breadwinner model’ (MBM). The scale was computed from the following statements:7

1. All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.
2. A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
3. A man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family.
4. A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children.
5. Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.8

The dependent variable ‘male-breadwinner model’ is constructed as a five-item scale ranging from –10 (strong MBM) to +10 (weak MBM). Table 3 lists the main scale statistics. The scale exhibited a rather high level of internal consistency – the coefficient Cronbach’s alpha varies from 0.64 to 0.81.9 The corrected item-total correlations were high. The statement ‘All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job’ was the best correlated with the other items on the scale and can be employed as the main description of the MBM. Factor analysis revealed that one factor accounted for 41–57 percent of variance in the observed variables.

Table 3. ‘Male-breadwinner model’ scale (5 items)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1994</th>
<th></th>
<th>2002</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>−4.39</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>−2.36</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std deviation</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of variance accounted by 1 factor</td>
<td>41.09</td>
<td>52.71</td>
<td>45.03</td>
<td>57.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,442</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>1,504</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43
There are statistically significant country differences in the mean of the MBM scores, both in 1994 (t = 41.048; df = 1,988; p < .001) and in 2002 (t = 29.378; df = 1,500; p < .001). Table 3 shows that the attitudes towards gender roles and the family model are more ‘traditional’ in Russia than in Sweden and people in Russia are more uniform in their attitudes. At both time points the Russian population on average expressed a higher level of support for the male-breadwinner model, although this was less strong in 2002. In contrast, the Swedish population on average expressed much less support for the male-breadwinner model. The lower standard deviation in Russia compared with Sweden is rather surprising, considering that Russia is much bigger in terms of its size and population and that the regions differ greatly in their culture, religion, economy, ethnicity etc. Russian people who live thousands of kilometres apart share similar traditional attitudes towards family roles and female employment. As female employment levels are rather high throughout Russia, this traditionalism might be explained as a form of resistance to Soviet state feminism which has persisted into the contemporary period (Temkina and Rotkirch, 2003; Therborn 2004) and/or economic necessity that leaves no possibilities for choice (Antonov, 1995; Antonov and Borisov, 1990; Darmodekhin 2001; Plotnikov 2001).

Both countries became less supportive of traditional gender roles during the eight-year period between the surveys. The differences between the 1994 and 2002 mean MBM values are statistically significant both in Sweden (t = –4.740; df = 1,924; p < .001) and Russia (t = –5.515; df = 2,922; p < .001). Although the Russian population remains strongly supportive of traditional family arrangements, the change towards a less traditional attitude was bigger than in Sweden. Taking into consideration that this was not accompanied by an extension of the social infrastructure, one can speculate that this change in attitudes was connected with the ideological transformation undergone in Russia during recent years, where the changes have been faster and of a much more crucial nature than those in Sweden.

**Determinants of gender-role attitudes**

The next step was to determine what individual characteristics might have been influential in the formation of gender-role attitudes. We used the following set of independent variables:

- Sex (reference category – male).
- Age (coded by years as a continuous variable).
- Education (defined as the highest completed education level and collapsed into five categories: (a) primary and lower (in Sweden this includes residents with and without primary education or a comprehensive school); (b) incomplete secondary (vocational school or lower secondary school); (c) complete secondary (gymnasium or higher secondary school);
(d) incomplete university (university without a degree); and (e) complete university (degree).

- Marital status has been collapsed into a dichotomous variable where 1 equals married or living as married (in 2002 – only married) and 0 is used for all other respondents: widowed, divorced, separated, and never married, single.

- Religion is a dichotomous variable, where the coding 1 was used if the respondent reported belonging to any religion and attends religious services at least several times a year. Such an indicator is related to behavioural habits, because active religious participation is more likely to influence a person’s attitudes and behaviour (Gross and Niman, 1975; McBroom and Reed, 1992). As Russia has a large Muslim population, religions other than Christianity have been included in the analysis.

- A variable relating to the work experience of the respondent’s mother was included, based on the question ‘Did your mother ever work for pay for as long as one year after you were born and before you were 14 years old’, where the value 1 indicates an affirmative answer.

A multivariate regression analysis was performed on both ISSP waves, using the same set of independent variables for Sweden and Russia (Table 4). The structure of the models in these two countries differed substantially in 1994 but became somewhat more similar in 2002. In 1994, the only significant coefficient in the Russian model was having experience of a mother either working or not (10 percent of respondents whose mothers were not working had an MBM score on average 1.2 points lower). All the other variables which are usually considered important determinants of gender-role attitudes – sex, age, marital status, religion and education – were not significant. This can be explained by examining the national context. In 1994 Russia was undergoing a process of deep economic and political restructuring, where welfare policies, including those related to family ideology, were incoherent and in a constant state of flux. The emerging labour market, with its rising unemployment, coincided with support for the strong male-breadwinner family model among all social groups. Men and women, the educated and uneducated, the old and young – almost everybody – uniformly agreed that family life suffers when a woman has a full-time job. Surprisingly, such attitudes were prevalent in a country where women had outnumbered men in the labour force since the 1980s (Einhorn, 1993: 266).
In 2002, Russian attitudes acquired some expected dimensions: older, married and religious people expressed greater support for the male-breadwinner family model, while people holding a university degree were significantly less likely to support this model. Gender and the other educational attainment categories still did not have any significant influence, while having experience of a mother staying at home was no longer a significant predictor. Compared to 1994, Russian people on average became slightly less traditional in their gender-role attitudes and to some extent more predictable. The institutional framework, including family policy and the economy, became more stable as well.

The Swedish models correspond to our hypothetical expectations to a much greater degree. All the independent variables, except for marital status, proved to be statistically significant. All the variable coefficients had signs in an expected direction: women were less traditional than men; age has a significantly negative effect; respondents with a mother who has worked support the male-breadwinner model less than respondents whose mother stayed at home; the level of educational attainment has an almost linear effect, whereas the effect of being actively religious is negative, which might be seen as confirmation that religious thinking is, at least partly, underpinned by a more traditional conception of family life. Sweden did not produce any surprising results – active ideological and welfare support for sharing paid work and care between genders is consistent with gender-role attitudes.

Table 4. Determinants of support for ‘male-breadwinner model’ (standard errors in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.05 (0.19)</td>
<td>0.69 (0.23)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>–0.01 (0.01)</td>
<td>–0.03 (0.01)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>–0.12 (0.19)</td>
<td>–0.40 (0.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>–0.10 (0.20)</td>
<td>–1.61 (0.30)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother working</td>
<td>1.20 (0.28)**</td>
<td>1.22 (0.26)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary and lower</td>
<td>–0.29 (0.33)</td>
<td>–1.72 (0.37)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete secondary</td>
<td>0.38 (0.26)</td>
<td>–0.93 (0.34)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete university</td>
<td>0.18 (0.23)</td>
<td>0.64 (0.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete university</td>
<td>0.31 (0.27)</td>
<td>1.04 (0.40)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>–5.24 (0.42)**</td>
<td>3.18 (0.53)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (df)</td>
<td>3.05 (9)**</td>
<td>23.85 (9)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,442</td>
<td>1,091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *= significant at 0.05 level, **= significant at 0.01 level. Reference category for education – complete secondary. The positive coefficients indicate higher support for weak ‘male-breadwinner model’, while the negative coefficients stand for strong ‘male-breadwinner model’.
Actual family models: the ‘everyday’ contract

We analysed the ‘everyday’ contract by examining employment patterns in the families. The respondent’s and their spouse/partner’s employment status were merged into three categories: (a) full-time employed (more than 35 hours per week), (b) part-time employed (less than 35 hours per week), and (c) not working. The combination of these categories with the respondent’s gender resulted in six possible family models (see Table 5). The ‘both full-time’ category contains those respondents who were working full-time during the survey and whose spouses/partners were also employed full-time. The ‘male full-time, female part-time’ category includes male respondents who worked full-time and whose wives/partners worked part-time, together with female respondents who were employed part-time and whose husbands/partners were employed full-time. Other categories were derived in a similar manner.

The ‘both full-time’ category might be treated as a ‘dual-earner’ or ‘weak male-breadwinner’ family model. Our earlier discussion revealed that the ‘official’ contract in both countries promotes this type of family model. In accordance with our expectations, this type of family arrangement was the most common in both countries, in Russia reaching almost 40 percent, in Sweden around 30 percent of all families (see Table 5). In both countries this type of family arrangement became more prevalent over time, mirroring changes in gender-role attitudes.

During Soviet times part-time jobs were almost non-existent (Brainerd, 2000), which is still reflected in the much lower proportion of people with part-time jobs in Russia compared to Sweden. Consequently, family models with either the male or female working part-time amounted to only about 10 percent in Russia. In Sweden, every fourth family has ‘one-and-a-half-incomes.’ Males are usually working full-time in this type of family model, while their wives/partners work part-time.12

There were many more one-income families in Russia than Sweden. In 1994 every third Russian family had only one ‘breadwinner’; in 2002, it was one in every fourth family. In Sweden, such families constituted 17–18 per-

Table 5. The employment patterns of families

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>1994</th>
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<th>2002</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both full-time</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male full-time, female part-time</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male full-time, female not working</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female full-time, male part-time</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female full-time, male not working</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (part-time, not working)</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cent. Similarly, there were more ‘female breadwinners’ in Russia in 1994, where in 9 percent of families the female was employed full-time while the man was not working. In 2002, the proportion was almost halved and nearly fell to the Swedish level. This pattern might reflect the turbulent changes in Russian society at the beginning of the 1990s, where the employment rates of men and women fell dramatically. Families did not manage to adjust to the unstable employment situation; thus, it is paradoxical that when people express a much greater degree of support for the ‘strong male-breadwinner’ family model there was nevertheless a much higher proportion of female-led families. However, the much higher percentage of one-income families in Russia may reflect a different societal structure, where most of the not-working spouses/partners were retired.

Conclusions

This article has examined the debate surrounding family policy measures which facilitate female employment along three dimensions: (a) by using official measures, as reflected in family policy and public social assistance; (b) by examining gender-role attitudes, or support for the male-breadwinner family model; and finally, (c) by focusing on actual family arrangements. In both Sweden and Russia income-redistribution mechanisms are tied to employment policy and to a greater or lesser degree facilitate gender equality in employment. Although social policy effects are reflected in the exceptionally high female labour force participation rates in both countries, a deeper analysis of the ‘official’ gender contract revealed important differences. Swedish policies recognise the importance of sharing care responsibilities and make some effort to stimulate male involvement in the child-care process. Thus, the Swedish ‘official’ contract can be summarized as a weak male-breadwinner (with flexible work opportunities for women) model with shared care (state and dual-care), which we called the ‘dual-earner/state-dual carer’ family model. Russian policies in the Soviet period explicitly promoted a similar weak male-breadwinner family model, leaving the entire burden of household work for women. We refer to this model as the ‘dual-earner/state-female carer’. During the 1990s the Russian economic and social system underwent a dramatic restructuring. Large budget deficits led to considerable reductions in most of the guaranteed benefits and stimulated new patterns of work–care distribution.

Despite the high female labour force participation in both countries and substantial similarities in family policy, gender-role attitudes nevertheless differ enormously between Sweden and Russia. In Sweden the already high level of support for less traditional family roles and for female employment increased during the period 1994–2002. In this way the ‘normative’ gender contract comes close to the ‘official’ contract. State support for female
equality in the labour market and the continuous proliferation of the dual-carer family model seems to have had an impact on the attitudes of individuals. In contrast, the Russian population in 1994 expressed an almost uniform level of support concerning the strong male-breadwinner family model. By 2002 some groups (the young, unmarried, non-religious and people holding a university degree) had moved towards having less traditional gender-role attitudes. These results suggest that a country’s cultural, political and historical context can slow down the effects of family policy or even contradict them.

The influence of family policy and the economic necessity of a dual income were reflected in actual family arrangements. In both countries the ‘dual-earner’ family model dominated and had increased proportionally over time. One of the biggest differences related to the ‘one-and-a-half-income’ (male full-time, female part-time) family model, which was much more prevalent in Sweden. This observation highlights the inflexibility of the Russian labour market, where part-time jobs are very rare. Consequently, there were much more one and dual-earner families in Russia than in Sweden. The most interesting finding was that in 9 percent of families in Russia in 1994, the woman was the main breadwinner. Dramatic restructuring of society and economy corresponded to vast discrepancies between traditional attitudes and actual economic behaviour in the families. In 2002, gender-role attitudes and family employment patterns correspond more. In general, ‘normative’ and ‘everyday’ contracts became more alike in Sweden and Russia over time – in Russia people were changing attitudes faster, while in Sweden the proportion of ‘dual earner’ families grew more quickly.

Coming back to our main question – concerning the relationship between the family policy, gender-role attitudes and actual behaviour in the families – our findings suggest that family policy has a relation to female employment, but does not influence normative orientations. Family employment patterns reflect family policy and the structure of the labour market, but do not relate to people’s perceptions of proper female and male behaviour. Nevertheless, a change towards less traditional attitudes reflects the increasing numbers of ‘dual-earner’ families in both countries. Policymakers need to work further to encourage dual care.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Sven E. O. Hort, Paavo Bergman, Apostolis Papa-kostas, Andrew Stickley, Heike Trappe, Aleksei Semenenko and the anonymous reviewers.
Notes

1 The distinction is partly based on Crompton (1999).
2 Our translation from Russian. In the original (Temkina and Rotkirch, 2003), ‘official contract’ corresponds to ‘официальный контракт’, and ‘everyday contract’ to ‘повседневный контракт’. They also distinguished an ‘illegitimate’ (‘нелигитимный’) contract embracing gender practices counter to the ‘official’ contract, such as promiscuous, deviant, criminalized sexual behavior, which we do not consider in this article.
3 Lewis at al. (2008) in this issue of JESP uses a similar approach comparing 13 EU countries.
4 The share of children in private day care rose between 1990 and 1999 from 5 percent to 15 percent (Blomqvist, 2004: 149).
5 Russian data consist of a three-stage regionalized stratified sample of Russia’s population age 18 or over. In 1994, drop-off, self-completion questionnaires with interviewer’s presence were conducted at respondents’ homes. The 2002 data were gathered by face-to-face interviews, visiting each address up to four times. Swedish data consist of a representative sample of the Swedish population 18–74 years (1994) or 18–79 years (2002). Data were gathered by a separate postal survey, with two reminders in 1994 and four in 2002. The sample sizes for each country and year are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>2002</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1,998</td>
<td>1,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1,272</td>
<td>1,080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1,472 weighted)

For more details see ISSP (2006).
6 See ISSP (2006) for a description of how the weighting factor was calculated for both countries and years. For year 2002 only the expansion weight was given in the dataset. The relative weight was calculated as the expansion weight for the case divided by the mean of all the expansion weights.
7 All of these questions were answered via a five-point Likert-type scale (‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘neither agree nor disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘strongly disagree’) and were coded so that the negative values indicate a more traditional stance on gender-role issues, while positive give a less traditional viewpoint.
8 Some have argued that there are theoretical and empirical reasons to distinguish between different sub-dimensions in this scale (Alwin et al. 1992; Scott et al. 1996; Scott and Duncombe, 1992). Sjöberg (2002) subdivided the scale into ‘Consequences of women working’ (Items 1 and 2) and ‘Norms on gender-roles’ (Items 3, 4 and 5) and found that none of the effects was altered on the micro level in multilevel analysis of 13 countries. In our study the factor analysis revealed the presence of only one factor for Sweden and two factors for Russia (using eigenvalues over 1 criterion), which were the same as in Sjöberg (2002) in 2002 and slightly different in 1994.
9 For the Russian sample, all of the five items contributed to the scale consistency positively. For Sweden, the deletion of item ‘Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay’ would increase the scale’s consistency, but not considerably – Cronbach’s alpha would rise to 0.777 year 1994 and to 0.818 year 2002.
10 In 2002 in Russia the question about how often a respondent attends religious services (as distinct from membership of a religion) was not asked, and so this behavioural requirement applies only to Sweden.
11 The model fit estimation showed that F meets the standard levels of significance. Multicollinearity indicators (VIF) were low, except for education dummies in the 1994 Swedish model. Residuals were normally distributed. However, R-squared was rather low in Russian models.
12 This observation clearly reflects the Swedish employment structure, where part-time jobs are widely available and overwhelmingly filled by women. In Sweden in 1994 women constituted 83 percent of part-time employed, in 2002, 80 percent. Authors’ calculations, based on Statistics Sweden (2006).
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Russian Statistical Office (2006) Охват детей дошкольными учреждениями (на конец года, в процентах от численности детей соответствующего
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STUDY TWO
Gender-role attitudes and female employment in East/West Germany and the Baltic countries

Akvilė Motiejūnaitė*
University College of South Stockholm, Sweden

Anke Höhne
Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

Summary The article systematically analyzes gender-role attitudes and how they changed during the 1990s in the Baltic countries and East/West Germany. It tests the retraditionalization thesis, which claims that, during their transformation, post-socialist countries have been shifting back towards a male-breadwinner family model, implying traditional gender-role attitudes and falling female employment rates. Using three waves of the European Values Survey (1990, 1996/1997 and 1999), no common patterns of gender-role attitudes in post-socialist countries were found. Moreover, the relationship between the level of traditionalism and gender inequality in employment is rather weak, or is evident only in some countries.

Key words gender-role attitudes, female employment, cross-national comparisons, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany.

* Author to whom correspondence should be sent: Akvile Motiejunaite, University College of South Stockholm, 14189 Huddinge, Sweden. [akvile.motiejunaite@sh.se]

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Introduction

Research on gender-role attitudes usually starts with the assumption that an increase in women’s paid employment should be accompanied by an equalization of gender roles (Alwin, Braun, and Scott, 1992; Haller and Hoellinger, 1994; Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997). However, evidence from socialist countries shows that full female employment can coexist with traditional gender-role attitudes and unequal division of household work (Einhorn, 1993; Heitlinger, 1979; Scott, 1976). This was explained as an outcome of the specific socialist gender regime, which enforced gender equality in the public sphere but left traditional family roles (i.e., the private sphere) unchallenged. With the collapse of full employment during the post-socialist transformation process, some theorists (Einhorn, 1993; Jaquette and Wolchik, 1998) predicted that women would leave full-time employment and return to traditional family roles as a result of their experiences under socialism. This shift towards the traditional family model was named “retraditionalization.”

Gender-role attitudes in post-socialist countries have rarely been systematically analyzed. A few studies have included one post-socialist country in cross-national comparisons (Crompton and Harris, 1999; Crompton and Lyonette, 2005; Haller and Hoellinger, 1994) or a few in a pooled analysis (Fortin, 2005; Haas et al., 2006; Treas and Widmer, 2000). Moreover, studies comparing East and West Germany claim that the socialist regime brought about more liberal gender-role attitudes in East Germany (Adler and Brayfield, 1996, 1997; Banaszak, 2006), while studies that include Hungary, the Czech Republic or Russia claim the opposite (Crompton and Harris, 1999; Crompton and Lyonette, 2005; Motiejunaite and Kravchenko, 2008; Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997). The change of gender-roles in post-socialist societies during the 1990s and their relationship to gender inequality in employment has not been the main focus of studies undertaken so far.

This study reverses the previously more common research design and compares several post-socialist countries with one Western capitalist democracy. Since gender-role attitude research is usually limited to OECD nations participating in the International Social Science Programme (e.g., Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic), we examine three “under-researched” post-socialist countries, namely, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. We compare them with East and West Germany, which have been extensively researched with respect to political and economic transformation outcomes. Using three waves of the European Values Survey (years 1990, 1996/1997 and 1999), we analyze the change in gender-role attitudes and their relationship to gender inequality in employment. We begin exploring these issues by describing the retraditionalization thesis and its implications. Then, we discuss the main determinants of gender-role attitudes, after which we formulate several applicable hypotheses. The first part of the analysis presents general trends in the level of traditionalism over time, after which several logistic regression
models predicting traditionalism based on different sets of variables are discussed.

Theoretical background

Retraditionalization in Eastern Europe?

Various state traditions informing gender ideology and variations in state welfare policies result in different family models; these range from the traditional “male breadwinner/female carer” arrangement, through current partial modifications, to an idealized “dual earner/dual carer” society that blends caring time with gender equality (Crompton, 1999; 2006). Gender regimes of Central and East European (CEE) countries under socialism were some of the first to seriously challenge the male-breadwinner family model by encouraging women to work outside the home. Female labor was crucial to the economy; it was facilitated by the education of females and an extensive system of family and child-care supports, including parental leave and allowances, widely available child-care services, and a legal framework that treated women as equal citizens (MONEE Project, 1999). Nevertheless, women retained primary responsibility for the household, resulting in a “dual burden” of responsibilities (Buckley, 1997; Corrin, 1992; Einhorn, 1993; Grapard, 1997; Heitlinger, 1979). According to Crompton’s (1999; 2006) typology, the socialist family model is classified as a “dual-earner/state-carer” model, but regarding unpaid work at home, “female carer” should be added to this. Einhorn (1993), in her famous book *Cinderella Goes to Market*, labeled this the “worker-mother” phenomenon, and characterized socialist egalitarianism as “false” and “traditional” (Einhorn, 1993: 45). Describing transformations since 1989, she noted the reversion to the male breadwinner/female carer family model, which was echoed as a retraditionalization of post-socialist societies in extensive literature (Buckley, 1997; Gal and Kligman, 2000; Grapard, 1997; Jaquette and Wolchik, 1998; Jähnert, 2000; Watson, 1993).

The concept of retraditionalization² refers to the fact that socialist policies encouraged gender equality in the public sphere, but left traditional gender roles in the private sphere, in family and domestic-partner relations, largely untouched. Since such gender equality was brought about by authoritarian governments rather than by social movements, men and women alike tended to reject it; specifically, they rejected the anti-democratic nature of the state-socialist emancipation of women (Vesinova-Kalivodova, 2005: 422). Some commentators even claimed that women perceived post-socialist liberation “as a right not to work” (Lisyutkina, 1993: 274). By this argument, women
are seen as actors who reject public life and full-time employment as a reaction to the gender equality policies of the previous regime. As Watson (1993: 472–3) pointed out, the “‘regaining’ of a traditionally prescribed gender identity is an important aspect of the nostalgia for ‘normality’.”

Women returning to traditional family-oriented roles were not the only agents of retributionalization. As post-socialist economies were restructured, unemployment and social insecurity rose. Reinvention of the doctrine of “separate spheres” aimed to “kill two birds with one stone” (LaFont, 2001: 214). If women stayed at home and had children, not only would more jobs be available to men, but birth rates (which were falling rapidly) would also increase. Public discourse idealized motherhood, attempting to recreate national identity based on pre-socialist pasts (Gal and Kligman, 2000; Kaskla, 2003; LaFont, 2001; Stukuls, 1999). In Lithuania, slogans such as “we are a perishing nation” emerged (Gineitienė, 1998). In Latvia and Estonia, the rhetoric was even stronger; 50 years of Soviet rule had dramatically changed the demographic composition of these countries, and public debate expressed fears that Latvians and Estonians were becoming “a minority in their own countries” (Kaskla, 2003; Stukuls, 1999: 540). The male breadwinner/female carer family model was even portrayed as a solution to broader societal problems, such as juvenile delinquency (Gineitienė, 1998; LaFont, 2001).

Combining a strong public/private dichotomy, women’s internationalization of traditional roles and the strong “motherhood-oriented” public discourse, the decrease in women’s labor force participation after 1990 seemed inevitable. Some researchers (Čermáková et al., 2000) even argued that a high degree of conservatism regarding gender roles is the major source of material inequality between men and women in transitional societies. Similarly, Kanopienė, the leading researcher on gender in the labor market in Lithuania, stated that the general acceptance of men as the breadwinners and women as the primary caretakers for the family may be decisive in determining women’s disadvantage in employment (Kanopienė, 1999; 2000).

The economic decline together with a substantial drop in real wages made dual-earner households, and, thus, high female labor market participation, necessary in post-socialist countries (MONEE Project, 1999: 21). In addition, although the evidence is scarce, some studies indicate that women did not want to choose the housewife role as predicted. More data have been gathered in East Germany, where several studies (Berger, 1995; Böckmann-Schewe and Röhrig, 1996; Dölling, 2003; Ellermann and Klett, 1995; Joost, 2000; Keiser, 1996) show that the vast majority of women prefer to maintain independent careers rather than be housewives. Such evidence suggests that women remained more attached to professional activity than the retributionalization hypothesis postulates.
In the context of such conflicting evidence, we will thoroughly test the re-traditionalization hypothesis, comparing gender-role attitudes and labor force participation in several CEE countries. More precisely, we will examine whether it is possible to identify common patterns in gender-role attitudes in our analyzed CEE countries and whether the level of traditionalism has any relationship to female labor force participation. First, however, let us present the major determinants of gender-role attitudes based on previous research examining industrialized societies.

Explanations of cross-national patterns in gender-role attitudes

Comparative research has proposed several explanations of cross-national differences in gender-role attitudes. Figure 1 summarizes the commonly used variables at the individual and country levels. It is important to note that some variables are interrelated. Consider, for example, female labor force participation, which is the main focus of our article. Longitudinal research in the United States indicated that the rise in women’s labor force participation caused a shift in values and beliefs concerning prescribed gender roles, with a greater acceptance of non-traditional roles for women (Cherlin and Walters, 1981; Mason and Lu, 1988; Thornton, 1989; Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn, 1983). Cross-sectional analysis of 25 OECD countries confirms that anti-egalitarian views were the strongest in countries with lower female employment rates (Fortin, 2005). At the individual level, women who work outside the home are more likely to believe that women’s employment is acceptable (Alwin, Braun, and Scott, 1992; Banaszak, 2006; Baxter and Kane, 1995; Scott, 1999). The direction of the causality is reciprocal: female employment might reflect individual life choices, but employment itself could cause women to adopt more egalitarian ideas since it provides them positive experiences and interests outside the home and more influence within the family (Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn, 1983). However, as our previous discussion on re-traditionalization in post-socialist coun-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual level</th>
<th>Country level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>Level of female employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious mindedness</td>
<td>Historical context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td>Dominant religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (cohort)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. The commonly used variables of gender-role attitudes
tries shows, such reciprocal causality seems to work only in democratic countries.

The historical context is often considered in studies that include post-socialist countries in cross-national comparisons (Braun, Scott, and Alwin, 1994; Crompton, Brockmann, and Lyonette, 2005; Crompton and Harris, 1999; Haller and Hoellinger, 1994; Motiejunaite and Kravchenko, 2008; Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997; Treas and Widmer, 2000). Citizens’ values are seen as shaped by socialization under a certain political and welfare regime, within a particular historical and cultural context. A distinct socialist influence on gender-role attitudes is usually found in comparisons between one post-socialist country and one or more Western countries. Such conclusions usually do not take into account the variations among post-socialist countries. Moreover, studies comparing Hungary with the U.S. (Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997), the Czech Republic with Britain and Norway (Crompton, Brockmann, and Lyonette, 2005; Crompton and Harris, 1999) or Russia with Sweden (Motiejunaite and Kravchenko, 2008) see the socialist influence as resulting in more traditional attitudes, while studies comparing East and West Germany see it as the cause of more liberal attitudes (Adler and Brayfield, 1996; 1997; Banaszak, 2006). Very few studies included more than one post-socialist country in cross-national comparisons. Treas and Widmer (2000: 1428), in a comparison of 23 countries, found that five of seven countries with a socialist legacy fell into a “motherhood-centered” cluster regarding attitudes towards married women’s employment. While not all post-socialist countries studied were captured in the cluster (which also included Spain and Ireland), the researchers concluded that “a socialist legacy is not the defining characteristic” of the cluster.

Dominant state religion and religious mindedness is another pair of variables related to gender-role attitudes. Here research suggests a unidirectional causality: church attendance influences gender-role attitudes, but does not seem to be influenced by them (Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn, 1983). Institutionalized religion has historically upheld the ideal role of women as active and supportive “proper wives.” Roman Catholic doctrine is more influential in promoting the male-breadwinner family model in social policies; individualistic Protestant-dominated nations gradually shifted to equalization of gender roles and embraced secularism earlier (Haller and Hoellinger, 1994; Sjöberg, 2004; Treas and Widmer, 2000). In the post-Soviet transformation process religion, especially Roman Catholicism, played an important role in recreating national identities (LaFont, 2001). Religious and nationalistic discourses praised motherhood and idealized the family and women’s traditional role (Gal and Kligman, 2000; Gineitienė, 1998; LaFont, 2001).

Looking at the countries of interest in the present study, Roman Catholicism is predominant in Lithuania, Evangelical Lutheranism in Latvia and Estonia; both religions coexist in Germany. In West Germany, Catholicism
prevails in the south and Protestantism in the north. In East Germany, religion does not play an important role (Meulemann, 2006; Pickel, 2000), possibly because atheism in the regions that became East Germany was already rather widespread before the advent of the socialist regime (Karstein et al., 2006; Pollack, 1994). Among the Baltic countries, Lithuania was the least secularized, and the place of Roman Catholicism in its nationalist discourse was especially strong, while in Estonia and Latvia the connection between the Lutheran Church and nationalist sentiments was less developed (Johnston, 1992). If religion is an important determinant of gender-role attitudes, then Lithuanians should express the most traditional attitudes, followed, in descending order, by the West Germans, Latvians, Estonians and East Germans.

Sex, age (cohort), education level and marital status are the usual control variables cited to explain cross-national differences in gender-role attitudes. The overwhelming majority of studies indicate that women on average are more egalitarian than are men, and that these differences are persistent across national contexts. Crompton, Brockmann, and Lyonette (2005) specified that in the Czech Republic women became more liberal over time due to exposure to Western (capitalist) values, while the attitudes of Czech men did not change. However, Adler and Brayfield (1996) found a similar gender gap in attitudes in East and West Germany. An interest-based approach (Baxter and Kane, 1995; Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997) explains the gender gap through the framework of unequal opportunities. All men directly or indirectly benefit from gender inequality, getting better access to power, prestige and material resources, and thus they are more likely to favor maintaining traditional family roles that increase women’s dependence. Women are more likely to support egalitarian gender roles and women’s employment because it is in their interest to increase their own economic resources and reduce the “double burden” of responsibilities.

Marital status is often a significant determinant of gender-role attitudes, with unmarried women being the most egalitarian (Alwin, Braun, and Scott, 1992; Baxter and Kane, 1995). Apart from this tendency, it is hard to compare the results of various studies, because the conceptualization of marital status differs. Some studies distinguish between never-married and ever-married respondents (Adler and Brayfield, 1992), others between those who are married or widowed and single or divorced (Kane and Sanchez, 1994; Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997), and some between currently married and those who have residual family obligations (i.e., are divorced or widowed) (Alwin, Braun, and Scott, 1992). Most studies agree that marital status affects women’s attitudes more than men’s. Women who are married or cohabiting experience more pressure than do men, as they combine work and family responsibilities, and thus may be more critical of the negative consequences of women’s employment for family life. If such reasoning is correct,
women who have children should be even more critical, as some studies confirm (Baxter and Kane, 1995).

Combining these commonly cited determinants of gender-role attitudes seems to give rise to somewhat conflicting expectations of the empirical data. Moreover, a few cross-national studies examining the change over time report that gender-role attitudes are shifting in favor of greater egalitarianism (Crompton, Brockmann, and Lyonette, 2005; Motiejunaite and Kravchenko, 2008; Scott, Alwin, and Braun, 1996). With these trends in mind, we would like to highlight some major hypotheses:

1. **Historical context**: If the socialist regime has a distinct impact, attitudes in East Germany should be similar to those in the Baltic countries, and should differ significantly from those in West Germany. Such an effect should be especially strong in 1990 and could diminish in later years.

2. **Cultural context**: If religion is an important determinant of gender-role attitudes, then Catholic countries should be more traditional than Protestant ones, and non-religious countries should be the least traditional.

3. **Female employment**: If the level of female employment relates to gender-role attitudes, countries with a wider gender gap should have a higher proportion of traditionally minded people. In the post-socialist countries, such a tendency should appear after 1990, when the labor markets emerged.

**Data and method**

The analysis is based on the European Values Survey. We analyze the subset of four countries in three waves: 1990, 1996/1997 and 1999. Germany is analyzed making a distinction between East and West Germany in order to grasp the differences between a former socialist country and an established capitalist country. The European Values Survey is exceptionally useful for our purposes, since it is one of the few surveys conducted with comparable from year to year methodology and sampling procedures as early as 1990, which can be regarded as a pre-transition period in the Baltic countries and the very start of the changes in Germany. The surveys were carried out through face-to-face interviews, with a sampling universe consisting of all adult citizens, 18 years and older. Multi-stage random sampling was used, with the samples being selected in two stages (Inglehart et al., 2000).

A weighting factor was used to correct for obvious deviations from national sample parameters caused by non-responses. To compensate for the fact that the weighted data produced country counts much larger for West Germany than East Germany and could misbalance pooled analysis, we used the weight variable that produces a weighted N of approximately 1,500 for each country. For the 1990 and 1996/1997 waves, such a variable was pro-
vided in the integrated dataset; for the 1999 wave, we computed the weight variable by multiplying the original weight variable by a constant for each country.9

The analysis will be carried out as follows. First we describe the dependent variable, which is derived by means of cluster analysis and divides contrasting opinions on gender-role attitudes into the categories “traditional” and “non-traditional.” The major trends in “traditionalism” levels are discussed in relation to the retraditionalization, historical context and cultural context hypotheses. The relationship between traditionalism and female labor market participation is examined using several logistic regression models. In the analyses that follow we use the following set of independent variables:

- Sex (male as reference category).
- Age as a continuous variable.
- Marital status has been collapsed into a dichotomous variable, where 1 equals married and living as married and 0 the rest of the categories (i.e., divorced, separated, widowed and never married), in order to capture the influence of family responsibilities.
- Presence of children is coded as a dichotomous variable, where 1 indicates that the respondent has at least one child. Unfortunately, children’s ages were not reported.
- Employment is coded 1 if the respondent worked for at least an hour per day, as an employer, an employee or a self-employed worker at the time of the survey.
- Education is defined as the highest level of education completed and has been collapsed into three categories: elementary and lower than elementary (this includes respondents with and without primary education), secondary (including respondents with general and special secondary and/or vocational education acquired after leaving secondary school) and tertiary (including respondents with a bachelor’s or higher degree). Education was not reported in Germany in 1990.

**Table 1.** Male and female labor force activity rate (aged 15–64 years) and gender gap (GAP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Germany</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Germany and Lithuania, 1997.

• Religious mindedness is coded as “religious,” “non-religious” and “atheist” based on answers to the question, “Independently of whether you go to church or not, would you say you are a religious person, not a religious person or a convinced atheist?”
• Gender inequality in employment is measured as the gap between male and female labor force participation levels. This variable captures the level of female withdrawal from the labor force, which should occur if traditional attitudes are pushing women towards the housewife role. The year 1990 is not taken into account, because in the Baltic countries the socialist model was still in place at that time; hence, the full series of employment and aggregated statistical data are not completely comparable with those of later years. Table 1 lists male and female labor force activity rates and the gender gap, which is included in a logistic regression model as a continuous variable.

Results and discussion

The dependent variable: “traditional” vs. “non-traditional”

The European Values Survey includes several items that measure subjective attitudes towards women’s roles in the family and towards female employment. The factor extraction and scale reliability analysis revealed that the statements could not be added together to form one consistent scale. Even three or four statements often resulted in two-factor solutions (according to the eigenvalue over 1 criterion) and low scale reliability as indicated by small Cronbach’s alpha coefficients. To avoid these problems, K-means cluster analysis was performed on three gender-role attitude statements, which were the closest in their measurements:
1. When jobs are scarce, men (should) have more right to a job than women (response categories recoded as: −1 “agree,” 0 “neither agree nor disagree” and 1 “disagree”).
2. Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay (−2 “strongly agree,” −1 “agree,” 1 “disagree” and 2 “strongly disagree”).
3. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work (2 “strongly agree,” 1 “agree,” −1 “disagree” and −2 “strongly disagree”).

K-means clustering attempts to identify relatively homogeneous groups of cases based on selected characteristics, which in our case are defined by the responses to the three above-mentioned gender-role statements. To categor-
ize respondents’ gender-role attitudes as “traditional” or “non-traditional,” two clusters with maximum negative and positive initial cluster center values were specified; final cluster centers retained the requirement of distinction between negative and positive values. Convergence was achieved after two iterations, indicating strong polarization of the clusters.

Table 2 shows the cluster composition for gender-role attitudes in greater detail. People in the first cluster, which we labeled “traditional,” more often give job priority to men over women (47%), think that a working mother cannot establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as can a mother who does not work (56%) and consider being a housewife to be as fulfilling as working for pay is (85%). People belonging to this group usually expressed more traditional gender-role attitudes, with women caring for the family at home, leaving gainful employment to men. People in the second cluster, those with “non-traditional” gender-role attitudes, typically expressed the opposite views. They disagreed that men have more right to a job than do women (53%) and that being a housewife is as fulfilling as working for pay is (69%). In their view, a working mother can provide the same warmth and security as can a mother who stays at home (91%). “Non-traditional” people were more consistent in their views, generally expressing similar opinions towards the three statements. The views of “traditional” people were most uniform regarding the housewife role, and were more moderate and varied regarding the other two statements. Nevertheless, the compositions of the responses in these two groups vary enough to allow us to analyze the determinants of gender-role attitudes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Answer categories</th>
<th>Cluster 1 “traditional”</th>
<th>Cluster 2 “non-traditional”</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When jobs are scarce, men (should) have more right to a job than women</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neither agree</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nor disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with her children as a mother who does not work</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>9,084</td>
<td>10,475</td>
<td>19,559</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Major trends: no retraditionalization

We start our analysis by describing the major trends. Figure 2 shows the proportion of people holding traditional gender-role attitudes in the studied countries during the three EVS waves (1990, 1996/1997 and 1999). Due to considerable variation across countries and years, it is difficult to distinguish a pattern; some issues can be highlighted, nevertheless. First, the Baltic countries and East Germany are not distinct from West Germany, which suggests that there is no specific socialist influence on gender-role attitudes. Second, the proportion of “traditionally” minded people dropped between 1990 and 1996/1997 in all analyzed countries, including post-socialist countries. Instead of turning to more traditional gender roles, as retraditionalization predicted, democratization made space for new ideas, including gender equality. However, such trends did not continue. After initial surges of less traditional mindedness, in 1999 “traditionalism” rose in Estonia, Lithuania12 and West Germany. The proportion of traditionally minded people remained the same in 1996/1997 and 1999 in East Germany and Latvia.

The cultural context, or a country’s dominant religion, seems to provide a better explanation than does the historical context. Since the influence of the cultural context is unlikely to change dramatically within a ten-year period, we present the results of all three waves together. Table 3 shows the proportion of “traditional,” “religious,” “atheist,” “Roman Catholic” and “Protestant.”13 The best approximation of the country sequence along a “traditionalism scale” was provided by the proportion of people identifying themselves as “convinced atheists”: East Germany had the highest percentage of atheists (22.9), followed, in descending order, by West Germany (5.0), Estonia (4.7), Latvia (2.7) and Lithuania (1.8). The proportion of “religious” people was the same in East Germany and Estonia, but Estonians expressed much more traditional views than East Germans did. Roman Catholicism and Protestant-
ism do not seem to be consistently related to “traditionalism,” either. A considerably higher proportion of Roman Catholics in Lithuania than in the other countries reflect the most traditional gender-role attitudes, but the three countries that had similar proportions of traditionally minded people (i.e., West Germany, Estonia and Latvia) differed considerably in terms of proportion of Roman Catholics. Such results might indicate that it is not religious mindedness per se that forms traditional ideals, but rather that higher levels of secularization lead to lesser degree of traditionalism.

**Table 3.** Proportion (%) of “traditional,” “religious,” “atheist,” “Roman Catholic” and “Protestant” people in the studied countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Atheist</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Germany</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Determinants of traditionalism**

First, we present logistic regression models predicting traditionalism in each EVS wave, doing so separately for men and women, in order to differentiate the effects of individual variables on genders. Country dummies are included, using West Germany as a reference category to find out whether there are systematic differences between an established capitalist democratic country and post-socialist countries.

Women on average expressed more egalitarian views than did men, when the countries were pooled together. Table 4 lists the percentage of traditionally minded men and women in each wave. The differences in means ranged from 5.85 in 1990 to 13.80 in 1996/1997 and were statistically significant \( p < 0.01 \). The results comply with the vast research on gender-role attitudes and may further indicate that such gender differences are persistent in different historical and cultural contexts. However, when looking more deeply at each country and wave, no statistically significant differences between men and women were found in 1990 in East Germany, Latvia and Lithuania and

**Table 4.** Proportion (%) of traditionally minded people by sex and wave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/1997</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in 1999 in Lithuania. Since the values and attitudes of the socialist period may still have been exerting an influence in 1990, we can speculate that they may have impelled men and women to express similar gender-role attitudes at the time of the survey.

Looking at Table 7 in appendix, the most striking difference between regression models for men and women appears to be the influence of employment status and education. Employed women expressed egalitarian gender-role attitudes during the three EVS waves (employment decreased the odds of a woman expressing “traditional” views by a factor of 0.63–0.68, or by about 32–37%),\(^{14}\) while both employed and unemployed men held similar views. These findings comply with previous research. They suggest that women with egalitarian views are more inclined to choose employment, or that employment experience contributes to an understanding that caring for the family is not the only appropriate role for women. Since employed and unemployed men both held similar gender-role attitudes, employment might not in itself be the source of egalitarian ideas, as some researchers have suggested (Baxter and Kane, 1995). Similarly, education differentiated women’s gender-role attitudes better. Less-educated women expressed more traditional views than did women with secondary or tertiary education, and women with secondary education expressed more traditional views than did women with tertiary education. For men, having only lower education increased the odds of “traditionalism,” by 57% and 28% in 1996/1997 and 1999, respectively, compared to having secondary or tertiary education, both of which resulted in similar views. Such results comply with most research and further confirm that responsibilities outside the household and school/university experience have a greater influence on women’s than men’s gender-role attitudes.

Surprisingly, variables relating to family issues were not very important for either men or women. Marital status did not correspond to gender-role attitudes, except that in 1996/1997 married/cohabiting women had about 20% higher odds of expressing “traditional” views. Using different conceptualizations of marital status, i.e., distinguishing single, never-married or divorced respondents did not produce better results. Also, having children did not contribute to traditionalism (except in the 1999 model for men), but this variable was rather weak, since it was not indicated whether the children were living in the household at the time of the surveys.

According to our expectations, age was a significant predictor of gender-role attitudes, although the coefficients were rather small (with each year the odds increased by 1% for men and about 2% for women). The variables expressing religious mindedness were significant in most estimated models. Specifically, people who claimed to be religious were more likely to express traditional views, and those who said they were convinced atheists were more likely to express egalitarian views. However, the importance of reli-
igious mindedness seems to have lessened over time. In 1996/1997, the coefficients in both the models of men and of women are lower than in 1990. In the last EVS wave, only women who were “convinced atheists” had 44% lower odds of “traditionalism.”

Differences between countries accounted for most of the explanatory power of the models, as indicated by notably considerably higher odds ratios. Omitting country dummies, the Nagelkerke R square drops to 0.039–0.073 in the models for men and to 0.069–0.107 in those for women. The most obvious country differences were already evident in our previous discussion of the major trends. Men and women in East Germany expressed much less traditional views than men and women in West Germany did. In 1999, the odds of being in the “traditional” category were 75% lower for East German than for West German women. Lithuanian men and women, on the other hand, were far more traditionally minded than were West Germans. In 1990, the differences were huge: for Lithuanian men the odds of being “traditional” were about 450% higher than for West German men, and for women, about 800% higher. Not surprisingly, the 1990 models had the greatest explanatory power. It is harder to distinguish a systematic difference between West German and Estonian or Latvian attitudes: in some models they did not differ at all, while in years other than 1990 they were either significantly more or significantly less traditional. Such results support our previous conclusion that the socialist past did not have a distinct effect on gender-role attitudes. We could not find evidence of an East–West divide in gender-role attitudes.

Table 5 lists the logistic regression models that aimed to clarify the relationship between traditionalism and the gap between male and female labor force participation. These models included the same set of individual variables as previously discussed, but instead of country dummies the models use gender gap (see Table 1). Only the last two waves of EVS are considered, since in 1990 the Baltic countries still largely functioned as socialist economies. In the full model, the gender gap variable was positive and significant, indicating that a larger gap between male and female labor force participation rates is related to a higher level of traditionalism. The association, however, is rather small – a one-point increase in a gender gap brings about 1.4% increase in traditionalism odds. Moreover, the model was rather weak, as indicated by a low Nagelkerke R square (0.087). Interesting results appear when the same model is run separately for Germany and the Baltic countries. The model seems to work best for East and West Germany, which make opposite cases, East Germany having the smallest gender gap and the least traditionalism and West Germany having a much larger gender gap compared to the other analyzed countries. Considering the model only for East and West Germany, a one-point increase in the gender gap brings about a 7.5% increase in traditionalism odds. The model’s Nagelkerke R square is
quite high (0.197). Running the model only for the Baltic countries, the relationship between the gender gap and traditionalism is reversed. A one-point increase in the gender gap decreases the traditionalism odds by 17.5%, but the model’s explanatory power falls again (Nagelkerke R square = 0.087). Such conflicting results suggest that the gender gap in labor force participation has either a very weak relationship to the level of traditionalism, or that such a relationship can be found only in certain countries. In the Baltic countries, which were part of the Soviet Union and had rapidly transformed from a pure socialist model, the expected relationship between gender inequality in employment and traditionalism was not found. Regarding other variables, little difference was observed between East and West Germany and the Baltic countries. Having at least one child increased the traditionalism odds only in East and West Germany, and atheism contributed positively to traditionalism in the Baltic countries (this finding could be random, because the percentage of “convinced atheists” was barely 2.8).

Table 5. The odds ratios, exp(B), of binary logistic regression models predicting “traditionalism” in two EVS waves by gender gap in labor force activity rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full model</th>
<th>East and West Germany</th>
<th>Baltic countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>0.528**</td>
<td>0.467**</td>
<td>0.572**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.004**</td>
<td>1.007**</td>
<td>1.005**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/cohabiting</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>0.939</td>
<td>1.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>1.308**</td>
<td>1.535**</td>
<td>1.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>0.774**</td>
<td>0.635**</td>
<td>0.831**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower education</td>
<td>1.357**</td>
<td>1.593**</td>
<td>1.435**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary education</td>
<td>0.736**</td>
<td>0.711**</td>
<td>0.767**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>1.474**</td>
<td>1.422**</td>
<td>1.245**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>0.451**</td>
<td>0.442**</td>
<td>1.351*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>1.014**</td>
<td>1.075**</td>
<td>0.825**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.542**</td>
<td>0.129**</td>
<td>7.816**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nagelkerke R square 0.087 0.197 0.087
Chi square (df) 866.854 (10)** 787.915 (10)** 526.027 (10)**
N 13,076 5,265 7,811

Notes: *= significant at 0.05 level, **= significant at 0.01 level. Omitted categories: secondary education and non-religious.
Conclusion

Comparing gender-role attitudes in several CEE countries and West Germany over the first decade of transformation from socialism we did not find a common pattern among the post-socialist countries. East Germans expressed the most egalitarian attitudes and Lithuanians expressed the most traditional ones, while West Germans, Latvians and Estonians stood in the middle. These findings suggest that common historical background, in this case, a socialist legacy, is not the defining factor shaping gender-role attitudes. Even though the socialist system contained a strong private/public dichotomy, where women entered paid employment without official support for the equalization of family roles and of household division of work, the gender-role attitudes differed greatly across our analyzed post-socialist countries. The cultural context or level of secularization provided a better approximation of traditionalism. Such findings call into question the common assumption (Adler and Brayfield, 1996; Banaszak, 2006) that differences between gender-role attitudes in East and West Germany should be attributed to historical experience of different political regimes.

Contrary to the retraditionalization thesis, which predicted a shift towards a male-breadwinner family model in post-socialist countries, traditionalism considerably decreased during the first years of transformation from socialism. Western influence, with attendant democratization and debates about gender equality, might have made space for greater egalitarianism. Or it might have coincided with a general shift towards egalitarianism, as decreasing traditionalism in West Germany during the same period suggests. Although the trend did not continue, public opinion towards female employment did not become more conservative throughout the first decade of the transformation.

As expected, women generally expressed more egalitarian views than did men. Experiences outside the household, in employment or education, shaped women’s gender-role attitudes much more than men’s attitudes. Family responsibilities had little influence on the attitudes of either men or women. Moreover, the findings suggest a rather unsteady relationship between gender-role attitudes and gender inequality in labor force participation. The expected relationship held mostly for East and West Germany, which were the two extreme cases, displaying the lowest levels of traditionalism and the greatest gender inequality in employment. In the Baltic countries a higher level of expressed traditionalism coincided with a smaller gender gap in labor force participation rates. Such observations suggest that rising female labor force participation and equalization of gender roles could be partly independent processes.
Notes

1 It is important to emphasize that we do not consider West Germany as representative of the Western European countries. It is widely acknowledged that European gender-role attitudes are split along a North–South divide, and that West Germans are quite conservative regarding the employment of mothers.

2 Some researchers (Stukuls, 1999; Watson, 1993) use the term “neotraditionalism.”

3 Similar arguments are used in current debates about the expansion of publicly financed childcare in Germany. Some conservative politicians and Catholic clerics argue that a systematic extension of public childcare will hamper children’s development.

4 Paukert (1991: 621) quoted ILO survey results indicating that, in 1989 in Czechoslovakia, 40% of women would refuse to become housewives even if their husbands’ or partners’ salaries increased considerably, while only 28% would give up their jobs to stay at home. Petrova (1993: 26) reported that 70% of surveyed Bulgarian women said they would prefer to work even if they were fully secure financially.

5 This mechanism regarding political values is described in Rohrschneider's institutional learning hypothesis (Rohrschneider, 1994; 1999).

6 For a detailed description of the survey, see Inglehart et al. (2000) and the European Values Study (2007).

7 The EVS was conducted in Estonia and Latvia in 1996, and in Germany and Lithuania in 1997.

8 See the original number of cases in Appendix Table 6. A weighting factor was provided for West Germany 1990 and 1999, East Germany 1999, Estonia 1999, Lithuania 1997 and 1999. Data for East and West Germany were weighted according their population sizes. Furthermore, data were weighted according to probabilities of getting households of different sizes. In Lithuania data were weighted according to gender, age, size of settlement, and education. In Estonia data were weighted according sex, age, and education. Weighted total N=22,495.

9 The constants were as follows: West Germany 0.908, East Germany 3.912, Estonia 1.493, Latvia 1.481, and Lithuania 1.474.

10 Variables other than “Roman Catholic” or “Protestant” are used based on the following discussion indicating that the type of religion was less important than the degree of religiousness in predicting traditionalism in our analyzed countries.

11 Final cluster centers: “When jobs are scarce, men (should) have more right to a job than women,” −0.4 and 0.4; “Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay” −1.0 and 0.5; “A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work,” −0.1 and 1.2.

12 Nevertheless, in Lithuania in 1999, the proportion of “traditional” people is significantly lower than in 1990.

13 “Religious” and “atheist” describe those respondents who answered “a religious person” or “a convinced atheist” when asked “Independently of whether you go to church or not, would you say you are…?” “Roman Catholic” and “Protestant” are religious denominations as reported by respondents.

14 The differences in odds are calculated using the formula %Δ = (exp(B)−1)*100.
References


### Appendix

#### Table 6. Description of original data: number of cases in waves and countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1996/1997</th>
<th>1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>2,101</td>
<td>1,017</td>
<td>1,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Germany</td>
<td>1,336</td>
<td>1,009</td>
<td>999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>1,021</td>
<td>1,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,009</td>
<td>1,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.010**</td>
<td>1.017*</td>
<td>1.017*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married-cohabiting</td>
<td>1.005</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>1.255</td>
<td>1.168</td>
<td>1.356*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>1.037</td>
<td>0.991</td>
<td>0.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>1.255</td>
<td>1.168</td>
<td>1.356*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>2.103**</td>
<td>1.353**</td>
<td>1.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>0.672*</td>
<td>0.641**</td>
<td>0.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Germany</td>
<td>0.490**</td>
<td>0.435**</td>
<td>0.331**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>2.877**</td>
<td>1.502**</td>
<td>0.708**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>5.494**</td>
<td>2.225**</td>
<td>1.833**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.525**</td>
<td>0.432**</td>
<td>0.634*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke R square</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.139</td>
<td>0.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi square(df)</td>
<td>480.253(10)**</td>
<td>325.859(12)**</td>
<td>286.303(12)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2,634</td>
<td>2,994</td>
<td>2,615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *= significant at 0.05 level, **= significant at 0.01 level. Omitted categories: secondary education and non-religious.
STUDY THREE
Female employment in Lithuania: testing three popular explanations

Akvilė Motiejūnaitė*
University College of South Stockholm, Sweden

Summary The paper presents an in-depth study of female employment in Lithuania during a transition period of profound economic and political change. A wide range of empirical material is used: (a) aggregate labor statistics highlighting the main changes since 1990, (b) the European Values Survey (EVS; years 1990, 1997) and an additional survey conducted in 2005 using EVS methodology data, both of which reveal variation in gender-role attitudes, and (c) biographical interviews with Lithuanian women, used to illustrate the study with life stories. These data are subject to a complex analysis that aims to compare three popular explanations of changes in female employment in the transition period: the retraditionalization, reserve army of labor, and revalued resources explanations. Although these explanations are complementary in many ways, the retraditionalization thesis seems the most accurate. At the beginning of the transition period, gender-role attitudes were highly traditional, and this might have contributed to the huge decrease in female labor force participation. Not all women, however, took advantage of the new opportunity, presented by the transition, to choose between paid employment and homemaking. Complicated financial conditions forced some women into the “full-time caregiver” role. “Working housewives,” in contrast, were used to taking unofficial home-based jobs to earn some income while still taking care of their children. Despite the changes, the comeback of the male-breadwinner family model is unlikely, since the gender gap in employment rates remains rather small and acceptance of women’s right to work is rapidly increasing.

Key words gender-role attitudes, female employment, cross-national comparisons, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany.

* Akvile Motiejunaite, University College of South Stockholm, 14189 Huddinge, Sweden. [akvile.motiejunaite@sh.se]
Introduction

Emerging labor markets in Eastern Europe brought about a huge decrease in the employment rate. Women were considered one of the most disadvantaged groups, since, as some researchers argued, the transition to capitalism failed to build on the gender equality advantage that was a socialist legacy.\(^1\) Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain changes in the female employment pattern during the transition. Some have emphasized that women were voluntarily withdrawing from paid employment once the opportunity to choose the housewife role reappeared. “Retraditionalization,” as this explanation was called, noted the prevalence of traditional gender-role attitudes and assumed a return to the male-breadwinner family model. The other widespread explanation centered on employer attitudes and behavior. Maintaining the focus on traditional gender ideology, supporters of the “reserve army of labor” thesis claimed that employers discriminate against women, citing their family responsibilities. However, a few researchers argued that some groups of women in post-socialist societies have certain advantages over men. Their positions and work experience in the service sector, which was formerly the least respected and thus female-dominated sector of socialist economies, became important “revalued resources.” Likewise, more women than men had higher education and experience in administrative positions, while men dominated manual jobs in heavy industry, which were rapidly losing their prestige.

This study tests these three competing explanations, which are often used but rarely compared. To provide a deep understanding of social processes, a comprehensive study of a single country is favored over cross-national comparisons. Lithuania, an important and interesting example of a rapidly changing labor market, is chosen as the subject of a case study. Together with the two other Baltic countries, Lithuania was an integral part of the Soviet planned economy in 1990 but joined the European Union just fourteen years later. Although the socio–economic conditions in the Baltic republics were among the best in the USSR,\(^2\) the disintegrating economic ties between them and the USSR during the transition period resulted in severe economic recession.\(^3\) Their employment nevertheless remained higher than in Poland, Hungary, or Slovakia. Currently, Lithuania’s total employment rate is just

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\(^3\) After 1990, the GDP of the Baltic countries fell to the lowest level of all the post-socialist countries that joined the EU in 2004. In Lithuania, the lowest level was in 1994, when GDP amounted to 53.3% of the 1989 level. In comparison, Slovakia’s lowest level amounted to 73.7%, and in all other accession countries, GDP fell only to 82–87% of the 1989 level. TransMONEE 2007 database (Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2007).
slightly below that of the EU-27, the difference between male and female employment rates being amongst the lowest in the EU. This high female employment rate is in contrast to the rate in Poland, the country to which it has the closest cultural ties.

This paper compares three theoretical frameworks to build an understanding of how Lithuania managed to sustain such a relatively high female employment level (compared to that of males) despite the profound economic crisis. The study aims to deepen our understanding of the transition processes in Lithuania, which are usually analyzed descriptively. The article begins by presenting three explanations of female employment in the transition period, deriving the main predictions of changes in the labor force. The analysis proceeds by describing the general changes in Lithuania using aggregated statistics. Then the relationship between gender-role attitudes and female employment is explored using data from two waves of the European Values Survey (EVS; years 1990, 1997) and from an additional survey conducted in 2005 in Lithuania using EVS methodology. The analysis of the survey data is two pronged: first, the gender ideology in the study population is discussed, and then the attitudes and conditions of housewives, a special group of women that emerged together with the labor market, are analyzed. In addition, the realities of everyday life are discussed using fourteen retrospective biographical interviews with women who experienced hardships in the Lithuanian labor market.

Three explanations of female employment in transition

Several competing and complementary theoretical frameworks are used to explain the changes in female employment in Eastern Europe since 1989. This section will highlight the underlying rationale of the three most common explanations, usually labeled retraditionalization, reserve army of labor, and revalued resources.

Retraditionalization: women exercise their “right not to work”

An assumed revival of traditional gender ideologies involving a “return to conservative ideas about women and the family” has largely dominated

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4 In 2005, the total employment rate in Lithuania was 62.2%, while in EU-27 it was 63.4% (preliminary data). Lithuania’s rate was much higher than those of Poland, Bulgaria, or Hungary (53–57%), but lower than those of Slovenia or the Czech Republic (66–65%). Eurostat New Cronos database.

5 In 2005, the difference between male and female employment rates in Lithuania was 6.7%, lower only in Finland (3.8%), Sweden (4.0%), and Estonia (4.9%) (author’s calculations based on Eurostat data).

explanations of changes in female employment in transition economies. The explanation assumes that women’s conditions in the emerging labor markets were deteriorating faster than men’s. Originating in widely cited books by Einhorn, and Funk and Mueller, advocates of this explanation almost uniformly agreed that women were the losers in the Eastern European transition.

The retraditionalization thesis emphasizes that, in socialist countries, the dual-earner family model was promoted by authoritarian governments rather than by social movements. This argument stresses that the socialist policies left traditional gender roles uncontested. Instead of emancipation, women were burdened with both full-time paid employment and unpaid household responsibilities. According to this line of reasoning, women should have perceived their jobs as an obligation to be endured, not as a benefit worth defending. Rejecting the top–down nature of the state-socialist emancipation of women, the regaining of traditional gender identity is seen as “an important aspect of the nostalgia for ‘normality’.” Since women in socialist, as in capitalist, economies were concentrated in lower levels of organizational hierarchies, poorer remunerated positions, and less valued sectors of the economy, they would be happy to retreat to the family once full employment was no longer imposed.

The retraditionalization thesis also notes that the emerging nationalist discourses tended to idealize a pre-socialist past associated with the male-breadwinner family model, in which the husband earned money and the wife stayed at home with the children. Women were encouraged to return to the family, emphasizing their primary duty as wife and mother. The “cult of domesticity” ideologies, which coincided with increasing levels of economi-


8 Einhorn, *Cinderella*.


11 Einhorn, *Cinderella*, 114.

12 Watson, “Silent Revolution.”


ic insecurity, had two rationales: first, if women stayed at home with the children, more jobs would be available to men, and second, if women had more children, birth rates (which were falling rapidly) would also increase. The idealization of motherhood went hand in hand with slogans such as “Lithuania needs more Lithuanians.” The Catholic Church, which became quite strong and influential during the transition period, played an important role in praising motherhood and urging women to return home to devote their lives to raising children.

The explanation in terms of voluntary female withdrawal from the labor force was criticized pointing to the increasing necessity of dual incomes. The economic hardships of the transition made women’s earnings even more essential for households than before. However, some empirical studies in Lithuania revealed that many housewives chose this role even under economic duress. Only approximately half of Lithuanian housewives actually lived with a male breadwinner; the rest survived on social assistance and restrained themselves from taking low-paying, menial, and uninteresting jobs.

Reserve army of labor: employers regard women as less reliable employees

Another popular explanation of changes in the female employment pattern focused on discriminatory employer behavior and attitudes. This is vividly summarized by Kanopienė, a leading researcher of conditions for women in the Lithuanian labor market:

The general attitude of men as breadwinners and the assignment of the rest of family roles to women might become, with the expansion of the private sector of the economy, a decisive factor, a priori determining the position of females in gainful employment. Recent studies vividly demonstrate that women are viewed as much less valuable in the labour market, especially at the entry stage.

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Such an explanation echoes the retraditionalization thesis regarding traditional attitudes as presenting an obstacle to female integration into the labor market. However, it centers on the “patriarchal” demands of employers, who view women “as more expensive and less desirable workers.” Without using the very term “reserve army,” the researchers propagating this explanation worry that women in post-socialist economies might have become the “reserve army of labor.” The phrase is common in Marxist analysis of the labor reserves that capitalist economies create. Economic booms and recessions, which are intrinsic to capitalism, result in variations in the demand for labor and generate a group of workers who are periodically employed and then laid off. Women, especially married women, are particularly suitable for this role because of their household responsibilities, lower level of unionization, lower levels of human capital, and gender ideology that women primarily belong in the home.

In socialist countries, all available labor, including women, was used and the right to work was guaranteed. Female labor was facilitated by education and an extensive system of family and child-care support (including parental leave and allowances), widely available child-care services, and a legal framework that treated women as equal citizens. However, women still retained the main responsibility for the household, resulting in a “dual burden” of responsibilities. During the economic restructuring, labor markets emerged together with rising levels of joblessness, economic uncertainty, and poverty. When private owners opted to cut labor costs, the first to lose their jobs were those belonging to the reserve army of labor.

22 van der Lippe and Fodor, “Changes,” 133.
Revalued resources: women’s experience and education matter

Despite the dominant view of the “deterioration in women’s economic position,” some researchers warned against making generalizations about women as a homogeneous group. However, the analysis of common axes of inequality (such as class) in rapidly changing societies is rather problematic. The most productive approach centers on the conversion of symbolic capital. Each individual has a portfolio of different forms of capital (i.e., economic, cultural, and social/political), some forms of which proved to be more useful than others during the transition. An application of this theoretical framework to explain changes in female employment is called the “revalued resources” thesis.

According to the revalued resources explanation, there are state-socialism-specific assets that some groups of women are more likely to possess than men are and that they can use to counterbalance other disadvantages and forms of discrimination. Such forms of symbolic capital are high levels of academic education, specific job experience, and established positions in the service sector. In socialist economies, men were largely concentrated in manual jobs in industry and agriculture, while women predominated in white-collar, light manufacturing, and service-oriented professions. The rapid expansion of the service sector and the shrinking of industry and agriculture accompanied the transition to capitalism. The occupational segregation that led to female dominance in the service sector may have become a valuable resource for women in maintaining employment during times of radical economic restructuring.

Kristen Ghodsee’s success story of women employed in the Bulgarian tourism industry provides a clear example that “not all women have been negatively affected by the transition to capitalism.” Tourism is one of Bulgaria’s few successful and expanding sectors. It continues to be dominated by women even at the highest levels of management, because people usually regard tourism as feminine work and women make the hiring decisions. Degrees from prestigious universities, command of several Western languages, and years of experience with foreign tourists have proven to be important assets.

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Putting the three explanations to the test

To compare the retraditionalization, reserve army of labor, and revalued resources explanations, let us try to derive their main predictions regarding macro-level changes in the labor force.\(^{29}\)

In its pure form, the retraditionalization thesis would predict that when the post-socialist economy grants the “right not to work,”\(^{30}\) many women would withdraw voluntarily from the labor force and take on the housewife role. The falling employment rates would not be accompanied by rising unemployment, because women who become housewives do not actively seek employment; consequently, the female labor force will decrease considerably.

Similarly, the reserve army of labor explanation predicts a greater decrease in female than male employment rates. Such a trend should have been

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>Retraditionalization</th>
<th>Reserve army of labor</th>
<th>Revalued resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female employment</td>
<td>Decreases more than male, increasingly over the years</td>
<td>Decreases much more than male, especially during the years of economic recession</td>
<td>Female employment does not drop much at the beginning, but does later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female unemployment</td>
<td>Does not rise much due to voluntary withdrawal from the labor force</td>
<td>Rises to a similar extent as female employment decreases</td>
<td>Male unemployment higher than female during the major restructuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female labor force participation</td>
<td>Decreases considerably</td>
<td>Decreases somewhat, but may be counterbalanced by increasing female unemployment</td>
<td>Does not discuss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{29}\) According to ILO definitions, labor force refers to residents, who are employed or unemployed, while the rest of the working-age population is considered “inactive.” These inactive members of the population comprise non-working students, housewives, non-working pensioners, the disabled, persons in prisons and other inactive members of the population.

\(^{30}\) Larissa Lissyutkina, “Soviet Women at the Crossroads of Perestroika,” In Funk and Mueller, Gender Politics, 274.
especially obvious at the beginning of the economic transition, when the major economic recession took place. Despite women and men having similar levels of skills and education, employers are supposed to regard women/mothers as reserve labor due to their family responsibilities. The notion that men have a greater right to a job than do women when jobs are scarce would legitimate employer decisions and result in falling female employment rates. Contrary to the retraditionalization thesis, women would not leave the workforce voluntarily, but be forced out by employers; female unemployment should thus rise dramatically while labor force levels do not change much.

The revalued resources thesis stresses that the consequences for female employment differ depending on education level, skill, and type of work. This explanation would predict higher male unemployment and decreasing employment rates at the beginning of the transition. With the restructuring of the economy, women’s initial advantages might weaken, as men tend to respond more quickly to market incentives and enter growing industries faster.31

The next section discusses the major changes in the Lithuanian labor market relating to the predictions of the three theoretical explanations, for clarity summarized in Table 1.

General changes: women lose jobs first, later men

In 1989, in Lithuania, as in other socialist countries, most of the working-age population, including women, was full-time employed. The policy of full employment, as it was called, operated so that there was no labor market and no free labor supply and demand mechanisms. Profession orientation officers directed pupils to their future education institutions, which after graduation provided direct work placements. Housing, health care, and other welfare services were usually directly related to the workplace.32 The industrial sector, in particular, heavy industry, was the most developed and valued.33

With the collapse of the socialist system, labor market mechanisms started to operate, the first and main outcome of which was gradually increasing unemployment, a phenomenon, previously almost unknown in the socialist countries. Employment had been decreasing over the first ten years of the transition, most of the change occurring in the first five years (see Table 2). In 1995, one out of ten employed in 1990 was out of work. However, men and women were losing their jobs at different rates. While female employment decreased 17%, male employment dropped only 4%. Moreover,

31 Fodor, “Gender in Transition;” van der Lippe and Fodor, “Changes.”
33 See Einhorn, Cinderella or Funk and Mueller, Gender Politics.
the cuts in the labor force were entirely absorbed by women withdrawing from employment. From 1990 to 1995, the female labor force decreased 11%, while the male labor force even slightly increased due to growing male unemployment. Only one third of those women who lost employment became unemployed. The drop-off in female labor force participation cannot be attributed to changing population structure, because the female working-age population actually increased over the same period.34

At first glance, such changes would seem consistent with the retraditionalization explanation that once employment was not obligatory, women would choose family duties over paid work. On the other hand, the proportion of working women in Soviet Lithuania was exceptionally high. The share of women in total employment in 1990 was 53.8%,35 which is high even compared to their share in neighboring countries.36 Exaggerated statistical data may account for women’s high share of total employment, and many of those women might have been “employed” only in official records.

### Table 2. Numbers and change of labor force, employed, and unemployed in Lithuania, 1990–2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Official estimates</th>
<th>LFS data</th>
<th>Change, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>1,852.7 1,752.6 1,790.9</td>
<td>1,671.5 1,606.8</td>
<td>−5.4 2.2 −3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>996.8 884.7 884.7</td>
<td>826 788.8</td>
<td>−11.2 0.0 −4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>1,852 1,643.6 1,586</td>
<td>1,397.8 1,473.9</td>
<td>−11.3 −3.5 5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>855.9 818.5 794.6</td>
<td>686.5 750.9</td>
<td>−4.4 −2.9 9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>996.8 825.1 791.4</td>
<td>711.3 723</td>
<td>−17.2 −4.1 1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>109 204.9</td>
<td>273.7 132.9</td>
<td>−88.0 −51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>49.4 111.6</td>
<td>158.5 67.1</td>
<td>−125.9 −57.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Source: Author’s calculations based on ILO database (laborsta.ilo.org) and Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania, 1999 (Vilnius: Statistics Lithuania, 1999), 94.

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Deeper examination (see Figure 1) of the employment changes occurring in Lithuania since the beginning of the transition reveals that female employment growth was lower than male employment growth almost throughout the entire period (except in 1995, 1999, and 2000). Women lost their jobs during the major economic crisis, when GDP fell by 21% in 1992, and when small and medium-sized enterprises were privatized. The heavy industrial sectors, in which men were concentrated, were stagnating, but were not reducing their workforce up to 1996, when the privatization of the key areas of the economy and large enterprises started.\(^\text{37}\) Male employment was mainly affected after the financial crisis in Russia in 1998, when industrial enterprises lost their remaining markets and had to close down or restructure. This corresponds to the period of the second major economic crisis, in 1999, when GDP growth rates dropped again. Considering that full employment in the socialist period included latent possibilities of rationalization through work intensification and the application of new technologies, I would describe the situation as the “progressive adjustment” of the labor market: different areas of the economy were progressively restructured at the same time, getting rid of extra labor. Due to gendered occupational segregation,

\(^{37}\) In 1992, the highest number of enterprises was privatized, while in 1998, the largest amount of capital poured in. For more details on privatization, see Jolanta Solnyškinienė, “Privatizacija Lietuvoje: principai, politika, rezultatai,” In *Ekonomika ir vadyba – 2001* (Kaunas: Technologija, 2001), 169–180.
women were the first to be affected, but later equilibrating labor market mechanisms affected men as well.

Not only were the numbers of employed decreasing, but the composition of employment by sector was also changing (see Table 3). As in other Eastern European countries, the proportion of people employed in agriculture and industry declined, while the service sector expanded. In 1989, industry and services each employed approximately 40% of the workforce, leaving approximately 20% in agriculture. By 1995, the situation had changed dramatically: approximately half of the employed worked in the service sector, 28% in industry, and 24% in agriculture. A huge drop in labor productivity can explain the temporary growth of employment in agriculture, as productivity decreased considerably after large publicly-owned farms were dismantled and land fragmentation increased. In addition, some people displaced from other sectors and unable to find employment in the cities were moving to rural areas to engage in farming. Currently, services are by far the most important provider of jobs (57%), with industry (29%) and agriculture (14%) lagging behind.

The proportions of men and women in different sectors of the economy changed only marginally. In 1989, women constituted 62% of service, 40% of industrial, and 35% of agricultural personnel. By 1995, the proportion of women in services was even higher, which might indicate that men were not entering expanding sectors as rapidly as the revalued resources theorists would expect. Men might have caught up with the trend much later. In 2005, the service sector was slightly less female dominated than in 1989, with 58% of its workforce being women. Other changes in employment by sector involve the proportional increase of female employment in agriculture and decrease in industry. Overall, horizontal occupational segregation by gender slightly decreased (i.e., the proportions of men and women employed in the agricultural and service sectors became more equal) when analyzing distributions by the three large sectors.

Interpreting the macro changes in activity of the population according to the three theoretical frameworks, the retraditionalization and reserve army of labor predictions were more accurate than the revalued resources one. The first two explanations predicted a huge decrease in female employment in the form of a return to the male-breadwinner family model. As the data indicated, female employment indeed fell immensely. In contrast, while the re-
valued resources framework predicted that the first to lose jobs would be the less-educated and less-skilled men working in industrial sectors, the statistical data revealed the opposite. Male employment was more protected at the beginning of the transition by the very mechanisms of gendered occupational segregation. The huge enterprises in heavy industry having a majority of male workers were privatized and restructured later than the female-dominated, smaller, light-industrial ventures were. Still, to evaluate whether the reserve army of labor or retraditionalization explanations are more useful in explaining the decline in female employment and labor force participation, we should examine the question of agency. Did employers dismiss women and prefer to hire men (in line with the reserve army of labor explanation)? Or was it women themselves who were turning to the housewife role when full employment was dismantled (in line with retraditionalization)?

Table 3. Employment by sector in Lithuania, 1989–2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total, thousands</td>
<td>1,891.5</td>
<td>1,643.6</td>
<td>1,314.1</td>
<td>1,341.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women, %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1989 data are from population census, 1995 data are official estimates, 2000 and 2005 data are annual averages according to LFS.
Sources: Author’s calculations based on ILO database and Statistics Lithuania database (www.stat.gov.lt).

Gender ideology and employment

Data and method

The analysis of gender-role attitudes and employment is based on two sources: survey data and qualitative interviews. The survey data come from the 1990 and 1997 waves of the European Values Study (EVS) and an additional survey conducted in 2005 in Lithuania using the EVS methodology.41

41 The year 2005 survey was commissioned by the Civil Society Institute and implemented by Baltic Surveys Ltd. I am grateful to the Civil Society Institute for their kind permission to use the data. The earlier data were obtained from the GESIS-ZA Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung.
providing comprehensive data capturing a range of people’s attitudes, including views of female employment and gender roles. The EVS was exceptionally useful for the purposes of this study, since it is one of the few surveys conducted using comparable methodology and sampling procedures as early as 1990; it thus covers what can be regarded as a pre-transitional period in Lithuania. Data from 1997 reflect the transitional period, and 2005 data mirror recent changes occurring when Lithuania was already a member of the EU. The data were gathered through face-to-face interviews, with a sampling universe consisting of all adult citizens 18 years of age and older (15 years of age and older in 2005). Multi-stage random sampling was used, the samples being selected in two stages. A weighting factor, when provided, has been used to correct for possible deviations caused by the non-responses. The analysis of the EVS data is done in two steps. First, I discuss the general changes in attitudes using the entire EVS sample. Then, I discuss the changes in the employment status of the working-age population and look deeper into the differences and similarities between the attitudes of housewives and the other women respondents.

For deeper insight into the actual experiences of women, I use some material derived from “problem-centered” interviews with women who have experienced hardships in the Lithuanian labor market. The interviews focused on labor market entries/exits and on family changes. The interview material reveals life experiences and turning points of women in Kaunas, the second largest city in Lithuania. The interviewees were contacted through the Kaunas Labor Market Training Centre. All women were registered at the Labor Exchange Office and were actively seeking employment. They participated in a three-day psychological training workshop on enhancing their self-esteem. Half of the interviewees were unemployed; the others had recently found employment. Three pilot interviews were conducted in August–September 2006, the rest in February–March 2007. All the interviews were conducted in Lithuanian and fully transcribed (the quotations were translated by the author). For the analyses, I have used the interviews with the fourteen women who were of working age in 1990. The youngest interviewed woman was 34 while the oldest was 52 years old at the time of the interview. Seven interviewees were married, three divorced, three single, and one cohabiting; all except the three single women had children. The interviews all started with exactly the same statement, “Please tell about your life after you fi-


43 The weighting factor was used for 1997 and 2005. Data were weighted according to sex, age, settlement size, and education in 1997 and according to sex, age, and settlement size in 2005. N (weighted): 1,000 (1990); 1,012 (1997); and 1,010 (2005).

nished school,” allowing for an initial narrative passage. Follow-up questions covered topics regarding school, workplaces, unemployment, family, and future expectations. Questions regarding macro changes in society were interwoven into the interview. All respondents have been given pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity.

Increasing acceptance of working women

Let us start with an analysis of gender ideology based on the EVS survey data. The statement “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women”\(^\text{45}\) was used to test the reserve army of labor explanation. It will be also considered as a proxy for employer attitudes, because the responses of the employers did not differ significantly from those of the rest of the sample.\(^\text{46}\)

| Table 4. Percentage of people who agree with the statement “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women” |
|---|---|---|
|   | 1990 | 1997 | 2005 |
| Total | 66.3 | 32.3 | 15.4 |
| Men | 70.5 | 41.1 | 23.8 |
| Women | 62.6 | 23.7 | 8.3 |
| N | 976 | 968 | 947 |

As Table 4 shows, support for the statement “Men should have the priority for jobs” fell immensely over the analyzed period: while 66% agreed in 1990, only 15% agreed with the statement in 2005 (differences were statistically significant among the three waves).\(^\text{47}\) Predictably, women agreed to the statement less than men did, but in 1990, the difference was the smallest.\(^\text{48}\) Such a rapid change in attitudes might have been related to actual unemployment experiences. In 1990, Lithuania was still a part of the Soviet Union and had no open unemployment. Jobs became scarce only later,\(^\text{49}\) which is reflected in the very small percentage of unemployed (2.3%) in the 1990 sample. The development of civil society,\(^\text{50}\) free public debate, and the influence of western gender equality notions through the efforts of international

\(^{45}\) “Agree” coded 1; “neither” and “disagree” coded 0.

\(^{46}\) People identifying themselves as the “employer/manager of an establishment” are considered as employers. Only a few employers were surveyed, i.e., 22 in 1990, 19 in 1997, and 33 in 2005, and their responses did not differ statistically from those of the rest of the sample (1990: \(t = -1.178, df = 974, p = 0.239\); 1997: \(t = 0.263, df = 966, p = 0.793\); 2005: \(t = -0.528, df = 945, p = 0.597\)).

\(^{47}\) ANOVA Scheffe post hoc test results can be obtained from the author on request.

\(^{48}\) 1990: \(t = -2.649, df = 968, p < 0.005\); 1997: \(t = -5.886, df = 944, p < 0.000\); 2005: \(t = -6.189, df = 813, p < 0.000\).

\(^{49}\) The Lithuanian Labor Exchange began its activities only on 1 March 1991.

\(^{50}\) Pascall and Kwak, Gender Regimes, 50.
organizations\textsuperscript{51} might have been other important factors influencing this change in attitudes.

During socialist times (i.e., 1990), strong negative attitudes towards women’s right to work might have reflected the opposition to imposed equality and the strong public vs. private dichotomy discussed above. The extent to which these attitudes were still guiding people’s decisions after the breakdown of the socialist system is rather difficult to assess. Female employment during the first years of the transition fell much more than male employment did. As discussed above, such a decline was largely related to the stages of privatization. However, widespread discriminatory attitudes that were prevalent among the general population (and most likely among employers) might have guided some dismissal and hiring decisions.

There was no statement in the EVS corresponding exactly to the retraditionalization idea. Women were not directly asked whether they would give up their jobs to stay at home if their husband/partner could support them.\textsuperscript{52} The EVS included several gender-role items that might capture the level of traditionalism in society, but only a few were included in all three analyzed waves. Only the statement “Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay”\textsuperscript{53} explicitly dealt with women’s choice between paid work and family.

Support for traditional gender roles in the family did not change as much as did attitudes towards the right to a job. There was only a small move to-

\textsuperscript{51} The NATO and European Union enlargement processes were particularly important in spreading the concept of liberal human rights (i.e., individual freedoms, civil liberties, and political rights) in the states and societies of Central and Eastern Europe. For more information on the spread of values and norms through the work of international organizations, see Ronald Haly Linden, \textit{Norms and Nannies: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States, The New International Relations of Europe} (Lanham, MD; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002).

\textsuperscript{52} Paukert quoted ILO survey results indicating that, in 1989 in Czechoslovakia, 40% of women would refuse to become housewives even if their husbands’ or partners’ salaries increased considerably, while only 28% would give up their jobs to stay at home. Petrova reports that 70% of surveyed Bulgarian women said they would prefer to work even if they were completely secure financially. See Liba Paukert, “The Economic Status of Women in the Transition to a Market System: The Case of Czechoslovakia,” \textit{International Labour Review} 130:5/6 (1991): 613. Dimitrina Petrova, “The Winding Road to Emancipation in Bulgaria,” In Funk and Mueller, \textit{Gender Politics}, 26.

\textsuperscript{53} “Strongly agree” and “agree” coded 1; “disagree” and “strongly disagree” coded 0.
wards less traditional attitudes. Approximately 85 percent of respondents agreed with the statement “Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay” in 1990, but support for this statement decreased to 78 percent in 2005. Yet the retraditionalization explanation is mostly based on women’s choices. Surprisingly, women’s attitudes towards the housewife role did not change over the analyzed period (the differences in means were not significant). Approximately 80 percent of women thought that staying at home and taking care of the family was as fulfilling as paid work outside home.

The results can be interpreted in a two-pronged way. First, high support for the statement might mean that people place a great value on household work. Second, since most women view household work as just as fulfilling as paid work, they might be willing to devote themselves to their families. It is impossible to deduce solely from the statement how many of them would actually be willing to give up their jobs to stay at home. However, it is possible to use other information from the surveys. In 2005, an additional item regarding the meaning of paid work was included. It revealed that a large majority of men and women thought that “One needs a job to fully express one’s abilities,” 84 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. There were no significant differences between women’s and men’s responses to this statement, which indicates that both women and men viewed paid work as necessary for personal fulfillment. The high acceptance of the housewife role thus might indicate a positive attitude towards household duties, not a personal priority as such.

Who are the housewives?

A look at the situation of housewives might provide some better answers. This section tries to discover whether there are any substantial differences in attitudes and demographic data that might explain withdrawal from the labor force. First, let us explore the composition of the inactive, non-working population (Table 6). The EVS figures on the employment status of the working-age population reflect the general changes discussed in the previous section. The proportion of those not working increased dramatically from approximately 20 percent in 1990 to as high as 42 percent of the population in 1997, after which it decreased somewhat to 34 percent in 2005. The survey data provide detailed information on those having no paid employment, dividing them into several categories: retired/pensioned, students, unemployed, housewives, and other. The proportional composition of these groups has changed. In 1990, most of those who had no paid employment

54 The difference between 1990 and 2005 was statistically significant according to ANOVA Scheffe post hoc testing; there were no statistically significant differences between 1990 and 1997 or 1997 and 2005.
55 ANOVA Scheffe post hoc test results can be obtained from the author on request.
56 I use the Labor Force Survey definition of working age, with the upper limit set to 64.
were retired. The effects of economic restructuring were especially felt in 1997, when the unemployed constituted most of the inactive population. In 2005, students were the largest group among those not employed, since their numbers had doubled since 1990.

More women than men were already not engaged in paid employment during the socialist period. The gender differences were especially profound in 1997, when only less than half of the surveyed women had paid employment. However, as was already clear in the aggregated statistical data, this does not mean that women were hit harder by unemployment than men were. On the contrary, male unemployment was higher than female unemployment in 1997. Women dominated other groups, however. Throughout the entire analyzed period, more women than men were retired and homemakers (i.e., housewives). The lower female than male retirement age obviously explains the first fact, while gender ideology that holds that homemaking is a female activity explains the second. The reappearing possibility of “choice” between paid employment and homemaking (in line with retraditionalization) could further explain the more than doubling in the number of the housewives since the socialist period. Let us try to explore who the housewives are, to see how many of them could have had the opportunity freely to choose homemaking over employment.

Table 6. Employment status of respondents (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has paid employment</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>83.1*</td>
<td>77.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/pensioned</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.0*</td>
<td>11.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife not otherwise employed</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.2*</td>
<td>2.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N)</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates statistically significant (p < 0.05) differences (t-test criteria) between sexes.

57 Although the numbers of unemployed men were still higher than unemployed women in 2005, the difference was not statistically significant.
58 In 1997, there was one more group that considerably increased in number and was dominated by women, namely, those classified as “other” regarding their employment status.
59 During the socialist period, the retirement age was 55 for women and 60 for men; it is being gradually increased for both genders.
Table 7. Some characteristics of housewives and the rest of working-age women (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married/cohabiting</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have children</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Housewife fulfilling”</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All differences are significant ($p < 0.05$) according to Chi-square tests.

The most obvious differences between the housewives and the rest of the working-age women (Table 7) were that almost all the housewives were married (or cohabiting), had at least one child, and expressed higher agreement with the statement “Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.” The household income, family savings, or subjective social class perceptions of the housewives did not differ significantly from those of the rest of the women.60 There were no differences in education, age, residence area, or ethnicity. Catholicism also does not seem to encourage women’s choices to leave the labor force. The proportions of active Catholics (those who reported Catholic religious affiliation and church attendance at least once a month) were similar between housewives and the rest of women. Moreover, the opinions of housewives did not differ regarding the question “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.”

Housewives seem to be average women from average households with average levels of education, household income, savings, social class, etc. They did not prioritize jobs for men more than other women did and were not more active Catholics. The only differences were that housewives were married, had children, and better appreciated the housewife role. From these results it is difficult to conclude that gender ideology (i.e., greater support for the traditional gender role division) guided the decisions of housewives. The only attitudinal statement that housewives supported more than other women did concerned the housewife role itself, though this might be due to reciprocal causality. Those women who place greater value on housework tend to become housewives, and women who are housewives tend to come to value housework more. Similar effects related to the choice of paid employment by women are widely documented. At the individual level, women who work outside the home are more likely to believe that women’s employment is acceptable.61 The direction of the causality is reciprocal: female employ-

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60 Here and later, I refer to the results of independent samples $t$-tests for continuous variables and of Chi-square tests for categorical variables.

ment might reflect individual life choices, but employment itself could bring women to adopt more egalitarian ideas, since it provides positive experiences and interests outside the home and more influence in the family.62

The lived realities of everyday life

Let us take a deeper look into the interview material in an attempt to explore what pushed certain women out of the labor force. Of the fourteen interviews, I will discuss in greater detail a few life stories that are relevant to the analysis of the reserve army of labor, retraditionalization, and revalued resources theses. I use qualitative interview material to illustrate of some of the life trajectories of women who were working during the turbulent post-socialist transition.

None of the interviewed women mentioned any case of employer preferential treatment of men, which would have supported the reserve army of labor thesis. None of them stated that employment was more a male than a female right. Nevertheless, many of their decisions that led to unemployment were made because these women prioritized family over employment. I will discuss the influence of these decisions by highlighting the experiences of several women, whom I label “full-time housewife,” “full-time caregiver,” and “working housewife.”

A “full-time housewife” is what I call a typical housewife, or a woman who is solely devoted to caring for family and is entirely distanced from gainful employment. The life story of Liucija (aged 50) illustrates such a life pattern. Liucija has three sons (aged 23, 19, and 15) and has spent approximately 15 years raising her children and taking care of the household. After finishing higher education in chemistry in Kaunas, she had an arranged work placement in another city, but after a year she returned to Kaunas because of her future husband. As Liucija explains, she “sacrificed her profession” and took a job as an engineer in a construction firm to make it easier to get an apartment—as was common in socialist times. Liucija went back to work after the first son was one and a half years old, taking the maximum allowed parental leave at the time. After her second son was born she stayed at home, because her husband was making a career in politics and was rarely at home. Then the third son was born and she did not go back to construction because she needed to take care of the family. The firm even sought her out after


some years, but she declined the offer. A quotation that clearly summarizes
her story is “family comes first, so no [career] ambitions were left.” When
the kids grew older (approximately 10 years ago) Liucija started a florist
shop, because the flexible schedule allowed her to accommodate family
needs. The business went bankrupt, and after a spell of unemployment, she
found a part-time job in a post office, because the early working hours allow
her to cook for the family in the afternoon. As Liucija explains, money is not
a problem, but as retirement age approaches she would like to qualify for
some minimal social insurance. Liucija’s life story with its choice of family
over employment is clearly in line with the retraditionalization thesis. The
three-year paternity leave for the birth of her second son expired in 1990–
1991, when she was pregnant with her third son, and Liucija saw a favorable
opportunity to stay at home with her children. Even though there was a poss-
ibility of hiring domestic help, her husband firmly opposed having strangers
around, and Liucija herself “never strove” to work.

Liucija’s story is partly typical and partly atypical. With increasing in-
come inequalities, there were certainly more families that could afford to
have a wife staying at home. Some women might well have deliberately
chosen to take care of home and children instead of taking paid employment.
The next life story I would like to present stands in sharp contrast to Liuci-
ja’s choice of family over gainful employment. Ugnė’s (aged 42) expe-
riences exemplify what I call the “full-time caregiver” life pattern. Far from
choosing not to work, she was forced to stay at home for 10 years because of
caregiving responsibilities. Ugnė was the closest relative of an elderly aunt
who broke her hip approximately 12 years ago and needed constant care.
Before the accident, Ugnė used to work as a shop assistant and even used to
travel with her husband and pre-school daughter to Poland to buy goods for
trading. When she became responsible for her sick, bedridden aunt, Ugnė
became tied to the home and entirely dependent on her supportive husband,
who was making a living trading used cars. Today, two years after her aunt’s
death, Ugnė is trying to return to society and find a job: “I need to reclaim
those ten years, but after those illnesses, you know how my mind is affected
… This self-pity, those nights without sleep are still torturing. And I do not
know how to stand up for myself anymore—I have become so weak. So
there, those ten years changed me.” Ugnė’s story contrasts sharply with the
previous one. Liucija’s husband’s earnings allowed her to express “intensive
feelings of maternity” by staying at home with her children, where she “felt
really good.” On the other hand, family responsibilities were forced on
Ugnė, since there was no financial possibility of arranging any other form of
care for her aunt. Despite her wishes, Ugnė could not work because she was
too busy with household chores and literally could not leave the home.

The necessity of dual incomes is reflected in the experiences of “working
housewives” or those who were working informally while taking care of
children. Neringa (aged 43) was never officially employed, but for her entire married life was engaged in a family business. She got married immediately after finishing secondary school, because she badly wanted family life and children. Together with her husband, who worked as a doctor, she made extra money building private houses for sale. As members of the communist party, they could acquire land on favorable terms. They started by building houses for their own personal use, but their construction activities gradually expanded to include building industrial facilities such as gas stations. When private business emerged around 1991, they established several companies, construction and international logistics being among the most successful. The companies used illegal workers, so Neringa has extensive work experience without any official employment record:

I hired the workers, supervised the quality of work, and organized the supply of materials. After coming home from work, my husband would take over, but in the evening with a cup of tea we used to write down what we needed for tomorrow, what the plan was. And again, how should I define those responsibilities? And I was working from early morning till late at night, with two kids on the backseat of the car. When I was with the workers the kids were on a heap of gravel. Again, I say, they practically grew up on a construction site on a heap of gravel.

Neringa got divorced six years ago, and her ex-husband and two sons now live abroad. She takes care of her retired parents and gets financial support from her children, which she explains as a sort of “family contract.” Even though she probably could get employment in construction through her connections, Neringa dreams of a feminine job, which would be “easy and nice where I could feel like a woman,” namely, aromatherapy or another similar occupation.

Neringa was gradually absorbed by the family business, while another clearly discernable pattern among “working housewives” was a desire to spend more time with the children while taking up a small-scale home-based job. Dalia (aged 49), who worked 12 years as a shop assistant, explains her choice to stay at home when her daughter started school:

Dalia: … and I was thinking, there is a possibility, why not stay at home …
Interviewer: What do you mean, there was a possibility?
Dalia: To stay at home
Interviewer: Financially, or what?
Dalia: There were cooperatives, there was knitting. I bought a knitting machine and was knitting when she was at school. Husband supported—that’s how we used to survive.

Choice versus necessity is the main difference between the three life patterns of the interviewed women who dropped out of the labor force during the transition period. The “full-time housewife” freely chose family and care of
children over paid employment. The transition brought better job opportuni-
ties for her husband and more money for her household. Once employment
was not obligatory, it was comfortable to become a housewife. The “full-
time caregiver” life pattern represents the opposite extreme. Round-the-clock
care for the close relative was forced on the respondent by a lack of money
with which to engage professional help. The “working housewife” pattern
represents a compromise solution. She prioritizes family over paid employ-
ment, and stays at home taking care of the children. However, due to finan-
cial constraints, the “working housewife” takes on informal work based at
home. Such a solution becomes quite problematic, however, if the housewife
becomes divorced and in need of social insurance.

I would like to end by mentioning one observation regarding the revalued
resources thesis. Jurga (aged 34), who is used to working in the service sec-
tor in low-level positions, has no difficulties finding jobs and has worked for
15 years as a shop assistant in various workplaces.

Jurga: Why I was changing workplaces? I don’t know, it just happened that
way. One was closed down, the other I did not like. Then after the parental
leave I didn’t return, because I was not planning to work. Then I found a job
again. That’s how I flounced around.

Interviewer: But when you were searching for a job you used to find it easy?
Jurga: Quickly, yes. Really, there were no problems. Sometimes through ac-
quaintances, sometimes accidentally. Really, there were no problems.

Jurga registered with the Labor Exchange because she wanted to change her
profession. She finished a manicure-training course and found a job in a
beauty salon just three days after posting an advertisement on the Internet.
Monika (aged 52) is another “easy changer of jobs.” She has advanced edu-
cation in leather technologies and for her entire life has worked in light in-
dustry, where she has changed workplaces several times because of bank-
ruptcies or delays getting paid. Monika explains why she was recently un-
employed:

I just took advantage of receiving half a year of unemployment benefits. In
fact, the very first week after I quit, I saw an advertisement for a job in the
warehouse of a sewing factory. I called and they said to come [for an inter-
view] and invited me to start working the next day. But then I thought, salary
800, why should I rush? Because in the previous factory I worked six years
with only two weeks holidays during the summer I used to have very few
holidays. Work was intensive, but without overtime. So I thought, why
should I hurry? … They even offered to wait for one month, but I thought,
ever mind.

Monika started working in a similar company for a salary of 900 litas per
month when her unemployment benefits were coming to an end. It is impor-
tant to note that even though Jurga’s and Monika’s experiences seem to
represent success stories, the jobs they can find easily are rather poorly paid. The abovementioned salaries of 800 or 900 litas are much lower than the average gross salary in Lithuania, which at the corresponding times were 1,500 (2006, quarter II) and 1,700 litas per month (2007, quarter I).63

Conclusions

None of the three studied explanations could fully account for the changes in female employment patterns in Lithuania, though each of them highlighted different important observations. Explanations that emphasized gender ideology explained the huge decline in female employment in the early stages of the transition better than did the revalued resources approach. However, the retraditionalization and reserve army of labor theses do not account for the processes operative during the second economic downturn in 1998, when much of the male workforce lost work. The revalued resources explanation was right in pointing out the differentiated outcomes for women and men across different sectors of the economy, but was inaccurate in predicting the timing of the effects. More women than men lost their jobs in the early stage of the transition period, because they were concentrated in those sectors of the economy that were most rapidly privatized and restructured. Large heavy industrial enterprises, which were dominated by men, were hit only later. Explaining these processes, I propose a “progressive adjustment” of labor market thesis, which draws on the observation that socialist employment encompassed latent unemployment and absenteeism. Private investors saw the potential for rationalization and profit making in getting rid of surplus labor. Since female-dominated sectors were the first to be privatized, women were the first to lose their jobs. Later, equilibrating labor market mechanisms affected men as well.

As the survey data indicated, Lithuanian gender-role attitudes were very traditional in 1990. At this time, both employers and women themselves supported the notion that men have a greater right to a job. This time coincided with a major decline in female employment levels, when the restructuring of female-dominated sectors reduced the number of women’s jobs. In addition, some groups of women might have voluntarily left the workforce to take care of children and family, which they perceived as their main desire and duty. Interestingly, the women who became housewives did not differ from other women in most respects. Housewives came from ordinary households with average levels of income and savings; their subjective class perception, education level, age, residence area, and ethnicity did not differ from those of the other women. The main distinction concerned the ascribed value of a housewife role, which can be explained by reciprocal causality.

The interviews highlighted three types of life trajectories for women who became housewives. The subjects’ stories differ greatly regarding freedom of choice. The “full-time housewife” is the only one with the desire and means to devote herself to her family. This is a woman who prioritizes family and whose husband earns enough money to provide a decent living. The “full-time caregiver,” in contrast, exemplifies the financial constraints that can force women to care for their families. She would have preferred to work, but was tied to caring for a sick family member. The “working housewife” represents a compromise between choice and necessity; she tries to combine the desire to stay at home with the need for additional income by engaging in the shadow economy. Knitting at home or taking kids along while supervising construction work were the two options mentioned by the quoted respondents.

The comeback of the male-breadwinner family model is unlikely, since the gender gap in employment rates remains rather small and the acceptance of women’s right to work is rapidly increasing. Nevertheless, the strong labor market involvement of women is still accompanied by a high degree of support for the housewife role. Such results complement the conclusions of other studies, which indicate that in Eastern European countries, traditional gender-role attitudes tend to coexist with support for and practice of the dual-earner family model.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Paavo Bergman, Sven E O Hort, Deimantė Unikaitė and her colleagues from the Kaunas Labour Market Training Center, Christina Axelsson, Kerstin Jacobsson, Andreas Witzel, Matthias Wingens, Jūratė Imbrasaitė, colleagues who have read and commented on previous versions of the paper, and the Civil Society Institute for their permission to use the survey data.

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Labour markets in the Baltic States during economic transformation: a gender perspective

Akvilė Motiejūnaitė*

University College of South Stockholm, Sweden

Summary The objective of this study is to review changes regarding the male and female participation in the labour markets in the Baltic States, beginning with the economic transition until today. This is a contribution to the discussion on transition economies, dividing the analysed period into two stages in accordance with major changes in employment: from 1991 until 1995 and from 1996 until the present.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have undergone an abrupt transformation from a soviet-style planned economy to a market economy. During the first years of transition, the problems on the labour market were severe in all the Baltic States due to the special role they had played in the general economic plan of the Soviet Union. Employment figures in Estonia and Latvia decreased considerably more than in Lithuania, where male employment remained almost unaffected. The decline in male unemployment in Lithuania during the second half of the 1990s was very low. Thus, the impact of economic restructuring in Lithuania on men and women went into distinct directions whereby the resulting hardships were mostly absorbed by women.

This paper explores what specific features of labour markets were related to the different conditions for females and males in the Baltic States. The following research questions are of interest: What are the general patterns of the labour market in Lithuania and what were the trajectories of its development during transition? Are the Baltic States indeed very similar? Are there any specific differences in distribution of employment by sectors in Lithuania that protected employment of males, but were not present in Latvia and Estonia?


* Akvile Motiejunaite, University College of South Stockholm, 14189 Huddinge, Sweden. [akvile.motiejunaite@sh.se]
Introduction

In May 2004 the Baltic States were the first countries of the former Soviet Union that joined the European Union (EU). Among other principles, membership in this family of democratic European countries means integration into a single market and free movement of labour.\(^1\) Within the context of Soviet disintegration and European integration it is important to examine changes in the organisation of labour and to consider the affects of transition on different groups of people. Numerous studies show that for women as a group, the economic transformation in former Soviet countries did not result in significant gains. Is this statement true for the Baltic States?

During Soviet times, gender equality in employment was supported by the state both politically and economically and legitimised by the ideology of the ruling Communist party. In the Soviet block, women entered the labour force in high numbers, and during the last decades of the Soviet system their share in the total employment even exceeded that of men in some countries. According to state policies, women were encouraged to enter traditionally male-dominated fields, e.g., technical schools and mathematical disciplines at universities. Even though gendered occupational segregation did exist (lower wages, concentration of women in certain occupations), the striking features of the Soviet labour market were high employment rates of women and the large number of women with tertiary and vocational education.

During the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy, the whole system of labour organisation changed. Full employment was no longer granted; labour markets with open unemployment emerged instead. Due to the restructuring of the economy, production outputs dropped dramatically and resulted in vast closures of enterprises and a fall in labour demand. With the opening of markets, competition between companies became a new reality and the need for cost reductions, including the cost of labour, appeared. Both men and women faced massive layoffs and lost employment security.

The objective of this study is to review changes regarding male and female participation in the labour market in the Baltic States, beginning with the economic transition until today. This is a contribution to the discussion on transition economies, dividing the analysed period into two stages in accordance with major changes in employment: from 1991 until 1995 and from 1996 until the present. During the first years of transition, the problems on the labour market were severe in all the Baltic States due to the special role they played in the general economic plan of the Soviet Union. Employment figures in Estonia and Latvia decreased considerably more than in Lithuania, where male employment remained almost unaffected. The decline in male

\(^1\) However, a majority of the old EU member States have imposed a two-year restriction on free movement, trying to avoid the flow of cheap labour.
unemployment in Lithuania during the second half of 1990s was too minor to make the difference disappear. Thus, the impact of economic restructuring in Lithuania on men and women went into distinct directions whereby the resulting hardships were mostly absorbed by women.

In order to get a proper balance between the depth and the scope of the discussion, Lithuania is taken as the main case study since the most comprehensive data is available for this country. Developments in the labour markets in Lithuania are compared to Latvia and Estonia; some references to EU member States are also made. Here I would like to highlight at least a few questions that I will focus on: What are the general patterns of the labour market in Lithuania and what were the trajectories of its development during the transition? Are the Baltic States indeed very similar? Are there any specific differences in distribution of employment by sectors in Lithuania that protected male employment, which were not present in Latvia and Estonia?

Trying to find answers to these questions, labour statistics are analysed as the main source of empirical data. The sources used in this article are: the International Labour Office Database on Labour Statistics operated by the ILO Bureau of Statistics (LABORSTA), the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE) statistics for Europe and North America, reports on the situation of women, statistical manuals and online statistic databases of the selected countries.

The transitional period raises some problems regarding statistical data. The number of indicators for the market economy varied considerably during the Soviet period. Many key statistical areas did not exist at all, e.g., national accounts, price or labour market statistics. Methodological tools for data gathering in some areas were quite different from those used in the EU. Currently all the new EU member States, including the Baltic States, have been adjusting the data gathering methodologies to the standards of the EU, but this process has been launched repeatedly and has not occurred at the same pace. For this reason I have been trying to find comparable statistical indicators during the entire period analysed, but in some cases the data are incomparable. Due to this inconsistency or unavailability of certain data, some parts of the analysis do not cover the entire period.

This paper begins with a general overview of changes in the economy and employment in the Baltic States. Remaining chapters are structured according to the two periods: the major decline in employment (1990–1995), and

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3 For example, international labour statistics provided by Eurostat and ILO are based on Labour Force Surveys (later – LFS), but in Eastern European countries it was implemented only between the years of 1992 and 1995. See Labour Force Survey in Central and East European Countries: Methods and Definitions. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 2000.
stabilisation (1996–present). In the following the situation in Lithuania is presented first, followed by a comparison between the Baltic States.

General employment changes in the Baltic States

In the Baltic States, the progress towards a market economy was accompanied by a significant decline in employment, the emergence of open unemployment and changes in the sectoral employment composition. The fall in the number of employed workers brought a considerable reduction in participation and employment rates. Most transition economies experienced similar trends on the labour markets.

In the Baltic States the initial years of economic transformation brought about the collapse of economic activity which occurred due to the breakdown of the trade relationships with countries of the former Soviet Union, the destruction of the old centrally planned system and the extensive price and trade liberalisation. Real GDP between 1993 and 1994 fell almost twice compared to the level in 1989. Economic transformation led to a dramatic decrease in economic activity in the 1991–92 and in the 1995–96 time periods (see Fig. 1). Latvia and Estonia experienced severe cumulative decline in employment (31.2% and 29.4% respectively, over the period between 1990 and 1996), where almost every third employee lost their job. In Lithuania the major employment decline did not last as long (1992 to 1995) and resulted in a cumulative decline of about 14%.

The decline of output in the Baltic States was halted between 1994 and 1996 and with the exception of 1999, the real GDP grew since 1996. The

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4 For example, the total employment rate in Estonia in 1989 was 76.4% and in 2003 – 62.9%. See Estonian Labour Force Surveys 1995 and 1997: Estonian Labour Force 1989–1997. Tallinn: Statistikaamet 1998, p. 43; http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/ [11 Jun. 2004] (later EUROSTAT). The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of employed persons aged 15 to 64 by the total population of the same age group. The indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey. The survey covers the entire population in private households and excludes those in collective households such as boarding houses, halls of residence and hospitals. The employed population consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour or were not working, but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent. EUROSTAT.

5 In Estonia and Lithuania real GDP fell the least in the year 1994, 64.3 and 54.3% respectively compared to the 1989 level, in Latvia in 1993 it fell by 54.1%. See Economic Survey of Europe 2003 No. 2. New York: United Nations 2003, p. 112.


7 In Estonia and Lithuania real GDP growth assumed positive tendencies in 1995 (4.3% and 9.6% respectively), in Latvia they were positive in 1994 (0.6%) fell in 1995 and have been growing since 1996. See EUROSTAT.

8 In 1999 in Estonia the real GDP growth was 0.6%, in Lithuania 1.7% and in Latvia 2.8%. Ibid.
recovery in 1999 was interrupted by the Russian crisis of mid-1998, which affected some of the export sectors due to the fall in demand in Russia. Employment (see Fig. 1) in Estonia was affected most by the crisis (in 1999 it fell by 4.5%), in Lithuania it had a one-year delay (in 2000 it fell by 3.7% and in 2001, 4.0%), and in Latvia only the pace of growth both in employment and GDP was reduced.

![Figure 1. Total employment growth in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania between 1990 and 2002](image)


The other factor, which together with the slowdown in the economy had a decisive influence on employment, was the privatisation of formerly state-owned enterprises. A private sector practically did not exist in the Soviet system and thus, all the former Soviet countries, including the Baltic States, enacted various plans for its development. The privatisation in Lithuania was carried out in two stages. The first stage of the privatisation (the “voucher” programme), which started in 1991 and was successful relatively rapidly, aimed to privatise a substantial part of the agricultural sector and all the small- and medium-sized enterprises. Here the firms were sold at a nominal price. The privatisation of large industrial enterprises in key areas of the economy (e.g., electricity, railways, telecommunications, oil refinement)

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started only in 1996 and included the possibility for large payments. Estonia and Latvia already in 1993 started the “direct sale” or “full privatisation” of companies, where all potential buyers competed on equal terms and the government aimed to sell these for the best price. Privatisation has been completed for the most part in all the Baltic States.

The shift from state to private ownership immediately affected the organisation of work and resulted in many dismissals, largely reflecting the over-staffed nature of Soviet enterprises. Although many enterprises were sold with employment guarantees, these guarantees were usually for a lower number of jobs compared to the pre-privatisation period. Consequently significant improvements in productivity and competitiveness were achieved.\textsuperscript{11}

In trying to summarise the changes in employment during the entire transition period, it can be concluded that employment in Estonia and Latvia decreased by 30%, and in Lithuania by 20%.\textsuperscript{12} Even with such severe cuts in employment the overall employment rate in 2003 in all three Baltic States was only slightly below the EU average (64.3%): in Lithuania 3.2 percentage points, in Latvia 2.5 and in Estonia 1.4.\textsuperscript{13} The lowest employment rate in Lithuania, despite higher employment cuts in Latvia and Estonia, might be explained by population changes. From 1992 to 2003 the population in Estonia and Latvia decreased by about 12%, but in Lithuania less than 7%.\textsuperscript{14} Both natural population changes\textsuperscript{15} and net migration\textsuperscript{16} in Estonia and Latvia were more negative throughout the transition period than in Lithuania.\textsuperscript{17} Consequently, labour supply has fallen since 1991, reflecting demographic trends and a decline in participation of the labour force.

\textsuperscript{11} From 1994 until 2001 the GDP in purchasing power standards (PPS) per person employed relative to EU 15 (EU-15 = 100) in Estonia increased from 27.9 to 40.8, in Latvia from 26.1 to 36.4 and in Lithuania from 25.4 to 38.8. EUROSTAT.
\textsuperscript{12} Total change in employment from 1989 until 2002: 30.1% in Estonia, 28.5% in Latvia and 20% in Lithuania (1989–2001). The calculations by the author are based on LABORSTA.
\textsuperscript{13} Total employment rates in 2003 were: 61.1% in Lithuania, 61.8% in Latvia and 62.9% in Estonia. EUROSTAT.
\textsuperscript{14} From 1992 until 2003, the change in population was: 12.8% in Estonia, 11.8% in Latvia and 6.6% in Lithuania. The calculations by the author are based on EUROSTAT.
\textsuperscript{15} The difference between the number of live births and the number of deaths during the year. The natural increase (or natural decrease) is negative when the number of deaths exceeds the number of births. EUROSTAT.
\textsuperscript{16} The difference between immigration and emigration in the area during the year (net migration is therefore negative when the number of emigrants exceeds the number of immigrants). EUROSTAT.
\textsuperscript{17} The natural population change in Estonia was negative between 1991 and 2002, reaching 5.5 in 1994. In Latvia it was negative between 1992 and 2002, reaching 7 in 1995. In Lithuania the natural population change was positive during between 1991 and 1993 and did not exceed more than 1.5% between 1994 and 2000. The highest negative net migration in 1992 was 27.1% in Estonia, 20.5% in Latvia and 6.6% in Lithuania. EUROSTAT.
The major employment decline (1990–1995)

To begin the analysis on how the first wave of unemployment influenced the situation of women and men in the Baltic countries, the initial conditions will be described briefly. Changes in the participation of females and males in the labour markets during the early stages of transition were related to different structural factors. The adaptation of women to the new demands of the labour market was facilitated by their high employment rates and the overall higher level of education compared to their male counterparts. Since a majority of the women were economically active during Soviet times, they were able to gain the necessary work experience. Moreover, a higher level of education, including general education, also meant that they were more flexible in changing their work profiles. During Soviet times, the majority of women worked in the service sector which at that time was less developed, less prestigious and salaries were lower compared to the industrial sector, which was dominated by men. After the demise of the Soviet system however, the service sector expanded instead of the agricultural and industrial sectors. Due to the growth of the service sector, many women ended up with better starting positions than men in the declining industrial sectors. Men nevertheless profited from male-oriented labour values and labour market institutions (trade unions, professional networks, chambers of commerce) which supported male employment and helped men keep their workplaces or positions. A higher number of men than women prevailed in top management positions in organisations that gave them access to relevant information and networks. Thus, men were the first who were able to take advantage of the privatisation, launching private businesses.

Females forced out of the labour force in Lithuania

During Soviet times a great number of women in Lithuania, as was the case in the entire Soviet Union and the Soviet block, were economically active. Since 1975 more than half of the employees were women (in 1990 women

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18 For more see Barbara Einhorn: Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender and Women’s Movements in East and Central Europe. London: Verso 1993, pp. 113–147.

19 As Diane Nelson explains, labour markets are gendered institutions that operate on the division between a "productive" and a "reproductive" economy and are structured by practices, perceptions, norms and networks which are “bearers of gender”. The labour force in a “productive” economy is “masculinised” in a way that employment has characteristics that had previously been attributed only to men’s work. Thus, risk-reducing mechanisms and labour market institutions (trade unions, job security rights, business and professional associations) have “typically been constructed on the assumption that women employees were secondary earners who could draw upon the assets and salaries of men.” See Diane Nelson: “Labour Markets as Gendered Institutions: Equality, Efficiency and Empowerment Issues.” In: World Development 3 (1999: 27), pp. 611–627, here: p. 616.
still made up 53.8% of the employed population). After the breakdown of the Soviet system, the impact of women on the economy has weakened. As can be seen in Figure 2, in the beginning stages of economic reorganisation women suffered most from the losses in employment. From 1990 until 1995 the total number of employed women decreased by almost 20% while the number of employed men decreased by less than 5%. The entire decline in the labour force and the consequent rise in the inactive population reflected the great number of women who had lost their jobs. Although men were also affected, the increasing numbers of men that were searching for work and were registered as unemployed caused only minor changes in the male labour force. The majority of women that lost or resigned from their jobs withdrew from the labour force altogether – only one third of those who had lost their jobs registered as an unemployed person. As a consequence the number of inactive females rose by as much as 25%.

Taking into account that the population of working age (and over) women has increased by 18,500 between 1990 and 1995, this turn in employment cannot be attributed to changes in the structure of the population. So where have these 100,000 of previously employed women gone? Most of them probably became statistically labelled as “inactive population,” which covers such groups as daytime pupils and students, housewives, the retired non-working population, the disabled, persons in prisons and other inactive members of society. Yet not all of these groups increased between 1990 and 1995. The number of female daytime students in 1995 has remained at about the same level as in 1990 and the number of female prisoners in 1995 did not reach even 0.4% of the total number of inactive females. Thus, the ma-

21 Employed – all persons working in enterprises, institutions and organisations and military service – men. The employed group consists also of people who were not breaking official ties with the work place by not working during the reported period because of disease, trauma, care of ill persons, annual and non-paid vacation and idle time. Statistical Yearbook Lithuania 1999. Vilnius: Statistics Lithuania 1999, p. 92.
22 Labour force refers to the total amount of employed and unemployed in the population. Ibid.
23 Inactive population – population of working age and over, who do not belong either to the employed or unemployed. This group covers pupils and students, housewives, retired non-working population, the disabled, persons in prisons and other inactive members of the population. Ibid.
24 An unemployed person (registered with the Labour Exchange) is considered to be a non-working person that is able to work, a person of working age not studying at a daytime educational institution and registered with the State Labour Exchange at the place of his/her residence as a job seeker ready for vocational training. Ibid.
26 In 1990–91 the number of female fulltime students was 38,600: male 42,300 in 1995–96 and 37,600 and 27,000 respectively. Ibid., p. 57.
The majority of women that lost their employment between 1990 and 1995 have become either housewives (non-paid family workers) or have retired. Part of them might have been involved in illegal activities and thus were not recorded in the statistics as employed. According to experts, the “shadow” economy in 1996 employed between 15 and 20% of all employed persons.27 The “shadow” economy which is based on part-time and short-term work emerged as a response to high social security contributions in the formal labour market many enterprises were not able to afford. In the absence of other work, men took these informal jobs usually as a secondary occupation. Women were taking those jobs as the main activity due to more flexible work schedules that made it easier to combine work with family duties. However, most of these jobs were low-pay and low-skill.28 A percentage of the women might have gone abroad to work or study and were thus not registered as emigrants.

![Figure 2](image_url)

**Figure 2.** Change (in the thousands, average annual number) in the labour force, numbers of the employed, unemployed and inactive population by sex in Lithuania 1990–1995

*Notes:* Official estimates. Unemployed registered with the Labour Exchange.

The majority of women who withdrew from the labour force between 1990 and 1995 most probably became housewives. This trend was related to several issues. Some women saw the opportunity to devote themselves to their family as a new desirable role that was hardly possible during Soviet times. For the majority of the women however, the withdrawal from the labour force was unfortunately not by choice. During the first years of transformation, women were faced with the problem of deteriorating child-care facili-

ties. The state could not provide a universal social support system at the same level it had in the Soviet system and even though legally the benefits remained, they decreased considerably. The number of kindergartens and other child-care facilities were cut in half between 1990 and 1995, whereby the rural areas were hit especially hard.29 Children were packed into the remaining kindergartens and their number in 1995 exceeded available places by 20%.30 Consequently, the level of services decreased considerably. Working mothers with small children were confronted with the problem of how to find an open kindergarten nearby. As the kindergartens were closed down or the level of services was not appropriate anymore, parents were forced to find other child-care solutions.31 As a result of this deterioration in child-care facilities and the general economic instability, the total fertility rate and with it the number of small children decreased.32 After 1995 kindergartens continued to close down, but with less children born, the situation in 2002 became less severe: the number of children exceeded the available seats by only 10%. However, the percentage of children attending preschool establishments had grown by 20% since 1995.33 Similar trends in child-care were registered in Latvia and Estonia, where fertility rates in 1995 dropped to the lowest in Latvia.34

Male employment in Lithuania remains almost unaffected

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have undergone a very abrupt transformation from a centrally planned to a market economy. All three countries experienced severe cuts in employment (see Fig. 3), but employment figures in Estonia and Latvia decreased considerably more than in Lithuania, where male employment remained almost unaffected. People in Estonia encountered the most severe losses in jobs – in 1995 25% less than in 1990. Both female and male employment was equally affected. In Latvia from 1992 to

29 In 1990 the number of preschool establishments was 1,681 (813 of them in urban and 868 in rural areas) and in 1995 it dropped to 741 (502 and 239 respectively). After 1996 the number remained at about 700. Statistical Yearbook of Lithuania 1999, p. 505.
30 Ibid.
31 The number of children attending preschool establishments (as compared to the total number of children aged between one and six) decreased from 49.9% to 41.7% in urban areas and from 20.8% to 8.6% in rural areas. In 1985 the percentage was considerably higher – 74% in urban areas and 33.6% in rural areas. Statistical Yearbook Lithuania 1999, p. 524.
33 In 1995 41.7% of children attended pre-school establishments in urban areas (8.6% in rural), in 2002 numbers rose accordingly to 61.5% (14.1%). See Statistical Yearbook Lithuania 1999, p. 524; Statistical Yearbook Lithuania 2003, p. 239.
1995 employment dropped by 20% and men represented a slightly larger percentage.

Lithuania presents a different picture. The numbers of people that lost their jobs were two times lower than in Estonia and a considerably greater part of men was able to keep their job. Male employment in Lithuania dropped even five times than in Latvia and Estonia. Female employment in Lithuania fell at the same rate as it did in Latvia and slightly less than in Estonia. Thus, the impact of economic restructuring on men and women in Lithuania went into distinct directions whereby women had to absorb almost all of the negative aspects. These differences in female and male employment in Lithuania indicate some specific features of the Lithuanian labour market. One of the possible explanations might be the overall high female employment rates in Lithuania – even with such severe cuts women still constituted about half of the employed in 1995 in Lithuania (50.2%), while in Latvia and Estonia the share of women in the total employment population was lower (48.9% and 48.3% respectively).35 In order to determine whether changes in employment situation regarding Lithuanian women, or to be more precise, Lithuanian men were indeed exceptional, we should take a look at other labour market indicators and employment distribution by sectors.

![Figure 3. Percentage change in employment (total, male, female) in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia 1990–1995](image)


Severe declines in employment were one of the major shocks at the start of the reform process, but it had some accompanying effects. Together with employment cuts other fearsome attributes of the free labour markets – i.e., open unemployment – emerged. This phenomenon was generally unknown during Soviet times, where the state assumed an obligation to provide every

35 LABORSTA. Calculations by the author.
citizen with a fulltime job and made it a goal to eradicate joblessness. The early period of the transition was characterised by more or less rapidly rising unemployment rates. In Estonia the total employment rate in 1995 reached 9.7%, in Lithuania and Latvia numbers of people who were registered as unemployed were less, 7.3% and 6.6% respectively (see Table 1). Throughout the entire period between 1991 and 1995, female unemployment rates were higher than those of males in Latvia. In Lithuania male unemployment rates were higher than female rates in 1992 and 1993, in Estonia the unemployment situation with regard to gender changed from year to year. The earlier described situation in Lithuania demonstrated that a considerable part of women that had lost their jobs left the labour force, changing their role in society from that of a second breadwinner to that of a fulltime wife and mother. Thus, we should take into consideration that a percentage of women stopped looking for a job and registering as unemployed. Therefore, actual numbers of women that suffered unemployment might have been higher than statistical data shows.

### Table 1. Unemployment rates (total, women, men) in the Baltic States in 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
<th>Latvia</th>
<th>Estonia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rates, total</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates, women</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates, men</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: LABORSTA. Estonia: LFS, Lithuania and Latvia: Employment office records.*

### Increasing horizontal segregation

This analysis will be carried out for a slightly different time period – from 1992 until 1997 – due to the lack and inconsistency of data from the previous year, which however does not mean that the formula of Lithuanian men and how they managed to keep their jobs cannot be revealed. The year of severest differences in male and female employment in Lithuania (1994) falls into this analysis.36

During the first years of the transition (1992) men occupied little more than a half of the workplaces in Estonia and Latvia (52.8 and 52.2% respectively), but in Lithuania the female share in total employment constituted 52.9% (see Table 1 in the appendix). Horizontal labour distribution by sex continued from Soviet times. Women were mostly employed in the service sector and constituted an overwhelming majority (more than three out of four employees) in financial intermediation, health care and social work.

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36 1991 had an equal positive growth of 2.4% for both genders, in 1996 and 1997 the employment growth was similar to the previous pattern – cumulative growth for men was 3.5%, for women –0.5%. LABORSTA. Calculations by the author.
Women constituted about 60 to 70% of the employees in education, trade and hotel subsectors.

Male labour predominated in agriculture, hunting and forestry – here men constituted about 60%. When taking the whole industrial sector into account, gender distribution was not very vivid: in Latvia and Estonia men constituted about 55% of the employees, in Lithuania even slightly less than women – 48.3%, but male labour concentrated in the mining and quarrying, electricity, gas, water supply and construction sectors. In construction every 10th person was a woman. Nevertheless female representation in industry and especially heavy industry sectors was relatively higher than in Western countries. It should be noted that women in these sectors “worked in the over-staffed clerical and low-level administrative areas.”

The transition process resulted not only in a high decline in male and female employment, but also involved structural changes in the industrial distribution of employment. Employment from the sectors that produce goods (i.e., agriculture, industry and construction) has shifted towards services. A fall in employment in the industrial sector was especially reflected in Latvia and in Lithuania, where the labour market shrank by half. Although in the goods-producing sectors the majority of employed were men, women had to absorb the larger costs of this shift. Women who generally worked in administrative positions that were not directly related to production were the first to lose their jobs. Compared to the male-dominated heavy industry still supported by the state, the restructuring of the light industrial sectors that were highly feminised (such as the textile sector) took place during the early phases of the transition. Thus, the female share among those employed in industry has decreased in almost all sectors. In the industrial sector in Lithuania, where women constituted a slight majority, the female share among those employed dropped the most – about 10%.

In the agricultural sector in both Latvia and Estonia, male and female employment dropped faster than total employment in the early phase of the transition. An especially high decline was observed in Estonia. In Lithuania the numbers of those employed in the agricultural production sector rose as those displaced from the other sectors were unable to find alternative employment in the cities and moved to rural areas. Other possible causes might be the rapid privatisation of the state-owned collective farms that together with the restitution of property rights on land led to the fragmentation of the ownership structure and dispersion of production. Thus, despite a rapid decline in agricultural output, employment in this sector grew due to low productivity. Female and male employment in agriculture was affected differ-

37 Einhorn: Cinderella Goes to Market, p. 121.
40 See “Joint Assessment of Employment Policy Priorities in Lithuania.”
ently in the Baltic States. In Latvia and Estonia the share of male employment decreased considerably in agriculture (3.1% and 0.9% respectively). In Lithuania the share of women employed in agriculture decreased (4%).

Employment in the service sector grew due to the declining industrial and agricultural sectors. The concentration of males in this formerly feminised sphere increased slightly. Even though the changes in the gender composition were minor compared to the whole service sector, structural differences are more visible when taking the public and private branches of the service sector into account. The concentration of women in public services increased while men benefited more from the expansion of market-oriented services. At the beginning of the 1990s the concentration of the female labour force was already very high in the education sector, but it increased even more, reaching almost 80%. Simultaneously the number of men considerably increased in financial intermediation, real estate and business activities. In Latvia the number of women employed in financial intermediation decreased by almost 25%. Men also took advantage of expanding trade services; in Lithuania their share increased considerably (15.8%). At first glance these changes might appear as a positive trend that reduces horizontal occupational segregation. However, unfortunately in this situation males entering previously feminised branches of services can hardly stand as a sign of increasing equality between genders. Men moved into larger parts of the newly expanding branches whose prestige and level of salaries was (and still is) rising. The market economy expanded enormously in size and prestige of the banking, insurance and finance sectors. Trade was also one of the sectors that most rapidly regained its value. Men were leaving public services that were undergoing sharp structural reorganisation and severe cuts in funding.

It can be concluded that during the early stages of transition horizontal occupational distribution by gender has increased and the concentration of the female labour force in masculine sectors has decreased. Thus, the industrial sector was dominated even more by men and the share of women in the already highly feminised sectors (i.e., education) increased. Women are more active in the public sector while men are more involved in the private sector. This division is also facilitated by difficulties or the reluctance of women to start their own private businesses. In 1995 women constituted about one third of employers and own-account workers, their share ranging from about 25 to 38%.

41 Changes in gender distribution in Latvia and Estonia constituted only 0.8% and 1.7%, in Lithuania women’s share decreased by 4.8%.
42 In 1997 the share of women in education constituted 79% in Estonia, 80.1% in Latvia and 76.6% in Lithuania.
Referring back to the exceptional situation of Lithuanian men, who were almost unaffected by employment losses, some explanations might be provided at this point. At the beginning of the transformation a considerably larger share of women were employed in Lithuania than in Latvia and Estonia. Women in Lithuania constituted a majority in more sectors than in the other countries. In those branches where the share of women decreased the most during the transition period, women constituted an overwhelming majority – in hotels and restaurants 85.5%, trade 81.7% and financial intermediation 86.1%. Only in health care and social work did an already very high female concentration (82.4%) increase (84.2%). In Lithuania the sectoral distribution in 1997 became more like that in Latvia and Estonia, where women are employed in female sectors, and men – in male sectors. It might be said that before the transition women in Lithuania entered male sectors more than women in other countries and also concentrated in the sectors that became highly profitable and valuable during the transition. However, the explanation that women in Lithuania suffered more from the restructuring than men because they had acquired better positions during Soviet times cannot be sufficient. A deeper understanding of the situation can be provided analysing later changes in the employment patterns, which is the aim of the next chapter.

The stabilisation of employment (1996–present)

Men absorb the greater part of employment cuts in Lithuania

Before starting a discussion on later stages in the transition period and its impact on employment patterns, let us briefly return to the general economic situation in Lithuania. The year 1996 was the first year of economic recovery, which was marked by a growing GDP and employment rates. The privatisation of the agricultural sector and the small and medium businesses had more or less finished; new private businesses have reorganised enough in order to create profit and economic growth. The economy still was very much related to former Soviet block countries, the main parts of exports (45%) were going to CIS countries.44

44 *Statistical Yearbook Lithuania 1999*, p. 444.
Changes in employment during the second half of the 1990s (see Fig. 4) were smaller than during the early stages of transition. In the period between 1996 and 1999 the number of jobs in the Lithuanian economy stabilised - employment growth ranged from −1 to +1%. Yet this positive tendency was just a summation of male and female employment growth rates, which split into different directions. Between 1996 and 1998 unemployed males were finding new jobs, while employed women continued to lose their positions. This situation was reversed in 1999, where female employment for the first time after 1990 experienced some positive growth (not taking into account the year 1996 when it grew by only 0.3%), but men were dismissed from their jobs at higher rates.

The second wave of decline in employment came in 2000 and 2001 and reached growth rates of 4%. This time men had the highest share in job losses – the growth of male employment was more negative than that of females between 1999 and 2001. The year 2000 was mostly negative regarding male labour (employment growth −5.1%) for the entire transition period (for female employment it was 1994 where the decline was twice as high (−10.1%) than the male decline in 2000).

The second wave of employment decline (1999–2001) can be seen as a direct effect of the Russian crisis in 1998, which severely influenced the Lithuanian economy. For most of the huge enterprises remaining from the Soviet period, the loss of markets in the CIS countries was the last straw that caused many bankruptcies. Another factor was the beginning of the second stage of privatisation that included key sectors of the economy and much
wider possibilities of payment. The first stage of privatisation ("voucher" privatisation) aimed to rebuild a sense of ownership and thus citizens received some vouchers that they could use to acquire private property. Employees were usually buying shares of the companies they worked at. In such formally privatised enterprises deep reorganisations were not taking place, whereby work methods and organisation remained more or less the same as before. Real privatisation with substantial restructuring of the industry sector thus started mainly after 1996.45 This time restructuring affected mostly those who were spared by the first reforms – men. Now privatisation together with the reorganisation of companies is largely completed. Recent trends in the economy and employment show positive trends. As Figure 4 shows, in 2002 and 2003 both female and male employment was growing. In 2002 male employment rose twice as high as that of females, but in 2003 male and female employment rates experienced parallel trends.

Continuing differences in the Baltic States

As it has been demonstrated above, the second wave of the employment decline in Lithuania occurred between 1999 and 2001. For better comparisons of the Lithuanian situation with Latvia and Estonia we will separately analyse the trends before and after the year 1998. Our discussion will split into two periods: from 1995 until 1998 and from 1998 until 2002.

In the three Baltic States employment changes between 1995 and 1998 were relatively smaller than during the first period of transformation. Even though all thee countries were severely affected during the first wave of employment decline, only Estonia experienced continuous cuts in employment (about 4%) in the period between 1995 and 1998 (see Fig. 5). In Latvia and Lithuania the numbers of workplaces between 1995 and 1998 remained at about the same level, changes not reaching more than 1%. Female employment dropped in the entire Baltic region: in Estonia and Lithuania about 3% and in Latvia less – only about 1%. Male employment went into different directions: in Estonia it decreased more that of females (more than 5%), and in Latvia it remained at about the same level as in 1995 and in Lithuania it increased by 4%. Compared with Latvia and Estonia, the situation of Lithuanian male employment in the period between 1995 and 1998 was much better. This corresponds to previously discussed trends in the first stage of the transition, where male employment in Lithuania was affected only slightly compared to other Baltic countries.

45 Inflows of foreign direct capital to Lithuania until 1995 did not reach 100 million dollars, but from 1996 until 1998 it was grown more than twice per year, reaching 926 million dollars in 1998. From 1999 to 2001 it stabilised around 450 million dollars and in 2002 the FDI grew again to 732. Economic Survey of Europe, 2003, No. 2., p. 127.
This exceptional situation becomes more obvious when summarising the changes in employment from the beginning of transition until 1998. Between 1990 and 1998 every fourth employee lost his or her workplace in Estonia, in Latvia – every fifth. In both of these countries male employment decreased even slightly more than that of females (a difference of about 2%). In Lithuania during this period total employment decreased about 10%, but this was the result of only women loosing their jobs. The numbers of employed men in Lithuania was at the same level as in 1990, but every fifth woman meanwhile lost her job.46

Let us take a look at whether the second wave of employment decline equalised the situation. As Figure 6 shows, effects of the Russian crisis on the Lithuanian labour market were the most severe. In Estonia employment dropped slightly less than during the previous years and at about the same rate as for men and women. In Latvia employment remained at about the same level, but due to differences in male and female employment – men lost their jobs and women found new positions. In Lithuania employment dropped much more than in Estonia, this time especially negatively for men: about 11% of men lost their workplaces between 1998 and 2001. Women employment in Lithuania also decreased during that period, but not that significantly.

In order to have a clearer understanding of what happened during the second wave of employment decline, we shall look at employment and unemployment rates between 1998 and 2003. The analysis of employment rates presents a rather coherent picture – rates of women were considerably lower during 1998 and 2003 in the three Baltic States (Fig. 7), the highest average difference between male and female employment rates was in Latvia and Estonia, the lowest – in Lithuania. From 1998 until 2003 differences between male and female involvement in the economy shrank.

The differences in employment rates might provide some explanations of such a high discrepancy between female and male employment developments in Lithuania. While differences in employment rates for men and women is the lowest in Lithuania (after vast dismissals of men in 2001 it constituted less than 3%), the situation can be described as the most equal in terms of involvement in paid employment. The high decrease in numbers of employed women might be due to the overall high rate of female employment during Soviet times which most probably encompassed high levels of hidden unemployment and absenteeism.

Comparing the present situation of employment in the Baltic States with that in EU countries, significant differences regarding male and female participation are revealed. Female employment rates were higher than the EU average in 2003 (56,0%): in Estonia 3.0 percentage points, in Lithuania 2.4 and in Latvia – 1.9.\textsuperscript{47} Male activity rates – on the contrary – were lower than the EU average (72,5%) in all the countries: in Lithuania 8.5 percentage points, in Latvia 6.4 and in Estonia – 5.3.\textsuperscript{48} It might be concluded that even

\textsuperscript{47} Calculations by the author are based on EUROSTAT.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
with such severe employment cuts, women in the Baltic States are economically more active than in EU countries while the numbers of employed men do not reach the EU level. Both male and female unemployment rates were higher than the EU average in 2003.49

![Figure 7. Differences between male and female employment rates in the Baltic States 1998–2003](image)

*Source:* EUROSTAT. Calculations by the author.

**Changes in different employment sectors 1998–2002**

Division into masculine and feminine sectors of economy continued along patterns observed in the early stage of the transition. The numbers of women working in the industrial sector continued to decline (see Table 2 in the appendix), especially in electricity and the gas and water supply subsectors (about 9 to 10%). In agriculture the highest changes were in Estonia (−7.3%), followed by Latvia (−5%). In Lithuania the female share in agriculture dropped only slightly (−1.2%) and thus the percentage of women in this sector remained the highest among the Baltic States (39.6%).

The service sector changes in the public sphere (education, health and social work) were minor (only in Latvia the share of women increased by 6% in the health and social work sectors), but the proportion of females in financial intermediation continued to decrease. In the wholesale and trade sector women were regaining their positions.

In summarising the changes in employment by sectors throughout the entire transition period, it can be concluded that the female concentration in

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49 In 2003 male unemployment rates in the EU were 7.3, in Estonia 10.2, in Latvia 10.3, in Lithuania 12.1; the female unemployment rates in the EU were 8.9, in Estonia 10, in Latvia 10.7, in Lithuania 13.3. EUROSTAT.
declining sectors that were already dominated by men – agriculture and industry - has lessened, but women became exceptionally predominant in public services, mainly in education. Table 3 in the appendix shows that in Estonia horizontal segregation from 1992 until 2002 increased in nine subsectors: six subsectors (agriculture, mining and quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water supply, construction, real estate and business activities) were dominated more by men, in three subsectors (hotels and restaurants, education, other community, social and personal service activities) the already high female share increased more. In the majority of private services horizontal segregation decreased due to men entering previously feminised occupations (trade, financial intermediation) or women entering masculine spheres (transport, public administration and defence). In Latvia the situation was similar: the horizontal segregation only decreased in the agricultural sector, but concentration of women in health care and social work was even higher. In Lithuania the horizontal segregation increased in fewer subsectors than in Latvia and Estonia: five masculine subsectors (agriculture, mining and quarrying, electricity, gas and water supply, construction, transport, storage, and communication) and two feminine subsectors. The concentration of women increased in earlier highly feminised sectors like education, health care and social work, but also in formerly mixed, but more male dominated subsectors like real estate, renting and business activities. On the other hand, horizontal segregation in Lithuania decreased in six subsectors: manufacturing, trade, hotels and restaurants, financial intermediation, public administration and other community services. In all of these subsectors, except public administration, gender distribution harmonized because men entered previously feminised spheres of work.

Conclusions

The changes in employment during the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy in Lithuania can be summarised as two waves of decline with a short period of stabilisation in between. During the first wave (1992–95) about 15% of people lost their jobs, the great majority of which were women. Mostly due to the lack of adequate child-care facilities, most of the women that lost their employment during this initial transition phase withdrew from the labour force altogether. The second wave (1998–2001) of employment decline affected about 10% of the employed, and the majority of those who lost jobs were men.

Lithuanian women suffered an exceptionally high proportion of the employment losses compared to the other Baltic countries. Employment figures in Estonia and Latvia decreased considerably more than in Lithuania, where male employment remained almost unaffected. One of the possible explana-
tions why only women lost their jobs in Lithuania during the major part of reorganisation might be the high percentage of female employment during the Soviet period. Women in Lithuania in the beginning of the transition even constituted a majority in some of the traditionally “masculine” sectors, such as manufacturing.

The transition also brought structural changes in employment. A large part of people working in goods-producing sectors (agriculture, industry) moved towards services. During this shift the horizontal labour force segregation increased by gender: in industry and agriculture the first that were dismissed were women and thus the concentration of men in highly masculine sectors increased. The share of women in the feminine sectors – education and health care – has risen even more. The female labour force is concentrated in the public services, while men benefited from increasing market-oriented services.

An analysis of various labour market indicators in the Baltic States during the transition period shows a complexity of changes. The straightforward conclusion, that such a transition in Estonia and Latvia did not increase gender inequality but in Lithuania it did, cannot be fully sufficient. Although women and men in Latvia and Estonia suffered from similarly high employment cuts, the differences between female and male employment rates during the last few years were nevertheless higher than in Lithuania. Taking into account the participation of women in the labour force, the situation in Lithuania and the Baltic States still can be characterised as equal with regard to gender than in the European Union.
### Appendix

**Table 1. Share of women in total employment by industry in the Baltic States, 1992–1997 (%)**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture, hunting and forestry</strong></td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry</strong></td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas and water supply</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Construction</strong></td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total services</strong></td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade, repair, hotels</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage and communication</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial intermediation</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>79.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate, renting and business activities</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and defence; compulsory social security</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>37.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>79.0</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>76.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health care and social work</td>
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<td>82.1</td>
<td>81.7</td>
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<td>84.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other community, social and personal service activities</td>
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<td>42.5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Share of women in total employment by industry in the Baltic States, 1998–2002 (%)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estonia</th>
<th>Latvia</th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, hunting and forestry</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas and water supply</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and restaurants</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>74.9</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage and communication</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
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<td>Financial intermediation</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>70.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Real estate, renting and business activities</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>47.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public administration and defence; compulsory social security</td>
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<td>41.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>76.0</td>
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<td>Health care and social work</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other community, social and personal service activities</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LABORSTA. Calculations by the author.
### Table 3. Horizontal segregation in employment by industry in the Baltic States, 1992–2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry, Sector</th>
<th>Estonia</th>
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<th>Lithuania</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>men</td>
<td>men</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>men/mixed</td>
<td>men/mixed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>men/mixed</td>
<td>men/mixed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>men</td>
<td>men</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>men</td>
<td>men</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>women</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** LABORSTA. Calculations by the author. Based on Tables 1 and 2. A field is labelled “men” if women constitute less than 40%, “men/mixed” if women constitute 40–50%, “women/mixed” if women constitute 50–60%, “women” if women constitute more than 60%. 1: Horizontal segregation increased if percentage of dominant gender increased, 0: horizontal segregation decreased if percentage of dominant gender decreased.


5. ILKKA HENRIK MÄKINEN On Suicide in European Countries. Some Theoretical, Legal and Historical Views on Suicide Mortality and Its Concomitants. Stockholm 1997, 218 pages.


27. OSMAN AYTAR Mångfaldens organisering: Om integration, organisationer och interetniska relationer i Sverige (Organizing Diversity: On Integration, Organizations and Inter-ethnic Relations in Sweden). Stockholm 2007, 253 sidor.


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