



**Gender Equality
and Quality of Life**
A Norwegian Perspective

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and Cathrine Egeland

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Introduction

Norway was recently ranked as number one in an international gender gap index (World Economic Forum). Developments in Norway are relevant for understanding how gender equality can be achieved. In order to find out more about men, women and gender equality, a representative survey was made in Norway in 2007, which was more detailed and comprehensive than earlier survey research.

In this report we describe the results of the survey – the changing, uneven and partially conflicting gender equality developments among men and women today.

The survey “Gender Equality and Quality of Life” (referred to as GEQL07 in this report) has a sample of 2,805 women and men, who answered a questionnaire with 350 questions and statements on gender equality in spring 2007. The response rate was 41 percent.¹ The study was financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality.

The work was carried out by a project team composed in co-operation between the Nordic Gender Institute (NIKK) and the Work Research Institute (WRI). The team was led by Øystein Gullvåg Holter, NIKK, and included Helge Svare and Cathrine Egeland, WRI. The project commenced in the autumn of 2006, with data collection conducted by TNS Gallup during April-May 2007.² The project team was supervised by a broad-based reference group.

The task of the team was to design a study of men and women on men’s attitudes to and understanding of gender equality in relationships, the family, working life and society. The study should also augment the knowledge base for a future

¹ Despite a rather moderate response rate, now quite usual in this kind of survey (and a common problem), the sample seems to be fairly representative in the main matters discussed in this report (see Method appendix).

² Data was collected both by post and using a questionnaire answered on the internet.

parliamentary report on men, and it should update knowledge in relation to prior research, especially the survey “Men in Norway 1988” (MN88).³

The questionnaire for the data collection was structured around eight basic areas/phases of life:

1. Childhood
2. Education
3. Work
4. Life in the household
5. Partner, choice of partner
6. Children and parents
7. Gender equality – experiences and attitudes
8. Health and quality of life

Within all these areas, questions were especially focused on gender equality issues. They were designed to highlight five different dimensions of gender equality, described below, as well as quality of life.

This design made it possible not only to survey attitudes to equality, but also to study how these attitudes are connected to practices, and how attitudes and practices vary in relation to other circumstances, such as distribution of resources in married or co-habiting two-sex couples, social-psychological gender formation and gender equality in childhood and youth, in addition to ordinary background variables such as sex, age, socio-economical status and housing.

Gender research has, for a long time, focused on how men’s and women’s identities, situations in life, attitudes, etc. are constituted in mutual, dynamic interaction characterised by voiced and unvoiced negotiations and expectations, within a context of material and cultural structures which also ascribe men and women different social positions. Although, strictly speaking, starting as a follow-up of the 1988 survey of men, the new project was designed on the basis that women should be included. Therefore the study includes answers by women as well as by men, although the detail level regarding men is a bit higher, since two

³ The 1988 survey (with a sample of 614 men) was initiated by the Male Role Committee, with data collection by MMI.

thirds of the sample are men, one third women. The questions were designed to be equally relevant for both genders. We point out the importance of including both genders and a perspective on gender as a product of interaction frequently in this report.

The report is divided into two parts:

- Part 1 presents the results of the study, following the sections of the questionnaire (written mainly by Svare, with Egeland and Holter)
- Part 2 presents a more comprehensive analysis of the main gender equality dimensions (written mainly by Holter, with Svare and Egeland).

The report was originally published in a larger Norwegian version, revised and shortened here. Some details that were not strictly essential for a comprehensive presentation have been omitted, and the same applies to some extended methodological reflections on the project.⁴

We wish to thank everybody who has contributed to the project. Any mistakes or shortcomings are, naturally, our responsibility.

Background and main dimensions

Norway and the Nordic countries are in many respects a kind of “experimental zone” regarding gender equality. Thus, the development of knowledge in this region is of special relevance for the global community.

In this report we describe the various forces and dimensions characterising the gender equality situation today, particularly in relation to men. In Norway, the 1988 survey left its mark by focusing on one particular dimension in relation to equality; that is, men’s potential for caring. The new knowledge generated by the survey contributed to the establishment, in 1993, of a system with a separate quota

⁴ Readers wishing for a more detailed description of our project and findings are referred to the Norwegian report, which can be downloaded at http://www.afi.no/modules/module_123/proxy.asp?D=2&C=1&I=3752.

of the parental leave reserved for fathers. Similarly, the new survey was partly designed to look for possibilities and potentials.

At the same time, a main task of the present study was to create a more comprehensive and objective picture of the gender equality situation. The study should help map the various forces and dimensions influencing gender equality. It should broaden the perspective of the 1988 survey, by, for example, offering a clearer focus on gender equality in daily life practices, the action level beneath the level of words and attitudes.

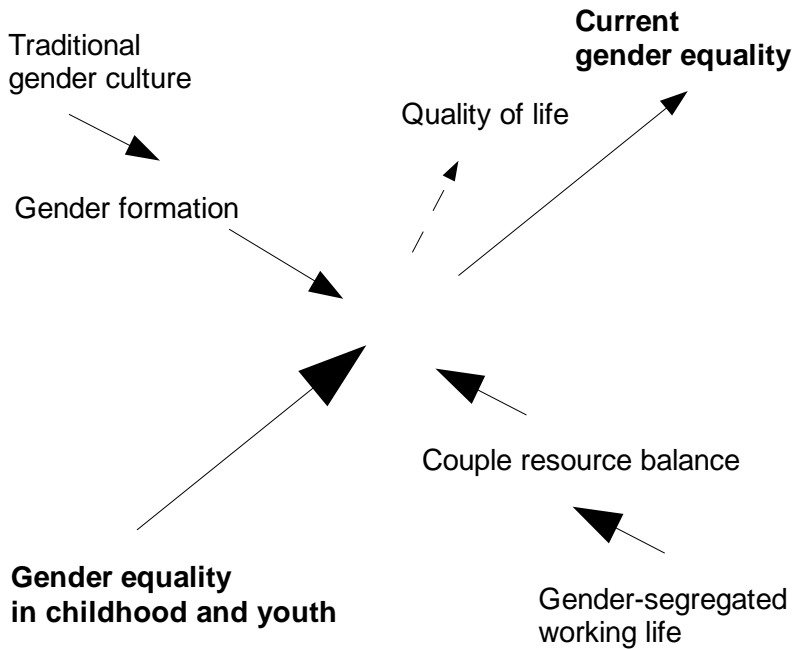
In order to achieve these goals, we compiled a list of the most important dimensions that the questionnaire was to cover. After thorough discussions, these were defined as: gender equality in childhood, current gender equality attitudes, current gender equality practices (actions), the distribution of resources in the couple (two-sex relationship), gender formation, and quality of life. These six main dimensions constitute the analysis framework described in Part 2.

The analytical framework of the survey is a matrix with life phases and areas on the one hand, and gender equality-related dimensions on the other hand. Comparable to a tool box, it can be used to test various models.

The figure below illustrates *one* possible model based on it, discussed early in the project. The starting point is that socialization has an effect on gender equality. A gender-equal family of origin increases the chance of adult-life gender equality. But this effect is lower than might be expected, due to other factors, like the intervention of other institutions. For example, a gender-traditional school can reduce the impact of a gender-equal childhood home. Likewise, the distribution of resources in the current couple and the social-psychological gender formation of the individual can weaken the connection between childhood and adult-life gender equality.

This is illustrated in the figure below.

Gender equality and quality of life 2007
Initial model



The diagram presents a diagonal effect from childhood (lower left) to adult life (upper right). The effect is reduced due to two intervening structural factors (the diagonal changing from a thick to a thin arrow). It is assumed that the positive effect on quality of life is further varied or diffused (thin and dotted arrow). Of the two intervening factors, one more material and one more cultural, the material factor is assumed to be the strongest (larger arrows).

As we shall see, the results often support this model, but also create surprises and new questions. The developments of gender equality over time are outlined in part 1 and further analysed in part 2, where we present the main patterns emerging from multivariate analyses of gender equality dimensions and background variables, and their effects on current gender equality and quality of life.

Part 1

Main questionnaire results

Introduction

The first part of this report presents the results from the most important detail questions in the survey questionnaire, section by section. Only answers to the questions that we regard as most relevant are included here. Gender equality developments are traced especially in terms of age variation.⁵

Change over time

One of the aspects that we explore in this part of the study is whether the circumstances illuminated by the answers have changed over time. We have used two methods for studying this. In the first one, we compare the present answers with answers given to the same or similar questions in earlier studies. Here, we have primarily used the two surveys “Men in Norway 1988”, below referred to as MN88, and the Norwegian section of “The International Social Survey Programme” of 2002, below referred to as ISSP02. In addition, we have consulted the Norwegian Citizens Survey of 2001.

Making statements on development over time based on surveys is often problematic. One problem is that the concepts used in the questions might have changed in meaning since they were last asked. It is, for example, not given that people associate the same things with the concept of *gender equality* today as they did 20 years ago. A similar problem is that people’s thoughts and attitudes – even perhaps their attention – is influenced both by the topical news during the time prior to the conducting of a survey, by the current public debates and by larger cultural discourses. For instance, the current increased attention to violence in the family has probably lead to increased attention to the phenomenon in individuals, which, for its part, might result in more people reporting such violence today than earlier, when asked about it in a questionnaire study.

An analogous problem arises when we attempt to say something on development over time by means of a comparison of the answers of various age groups to the same questions; for example, when we ask the respondents to describe aspects of

⁵ Note that in part 1, percentages are mainly calculated from those who have taken a stand on the issue, excluding the don’t knows and not answered. The percentage of answers completed is mainly calculated separately for each sex. When relevant, we have also explored the variations in the percentage of answers completed for various age groups, or in relation to other relevant categories.

their childhoods. Even if the oldest and the youngest systematically give different answers, we do not know to what extent this is explained by changes in society, or by the older and the younger interpreting the questions differently from each other.

Besides, the problem of different understandings of concepts is also relevant among the respondents in the same study. It is, for instance, plausible to imagine that men and women give different meanings to the concept of gender equality, based on their different experiences of the circumstances that the concept refers to.

At first, using survey material with aggregated data can in fact increase the risk of stereotypical thinking, where we, for example, consider all men or all women as one homogenous group. It is only when analysing the variables together that different variants of a variable or concept can appear, leading to more nuanced and concrete interpretations. In this first part of the report, we use age and other variables for this purpose. The development of gender equality over time is a main theme.

Section 1. Childhood

Some of the main points of the section

- The feeling of missing one's father is less common among the younger men than among the older, which indicates that fathers to a larger extent have been present in the lives of growing boys during the more recent decades of the period covered by the study, that is, up to about 1990. Of the men, a total of 57 per cent answered "yes" or "partly" to the question as to whether they think their father should have spent more time with them. Among those between 17 and 24 years of age, the proportion has decreased to 38 per cent.
- In the same period, a development is discernible in that the father is seen as a less stern figure in the lives of the children than earlier. Only about 4 per cent of the youngest age group report having experienced physical punishment or violence by their father, compared to around 18 per cent in the group between 35 and 49 years of age. This applies to both men and women. The lower punishment and violence level is associated with gender-equal decision-making among the parents (see part 2).
- At the same time, the numbers suggest that the environment outside of the home has become tougher during the period described by our data, with increased teasing and bullying. In the 1988 survey (MN88), a total of 45

per cent of the men answered “yes” or “partly” to the question as to whether they had experienced being teased or bullied in their childhood environment outside of their home. In our study, the proportion increased to 54 per cent.

Paternal and maternal attachment during childhood

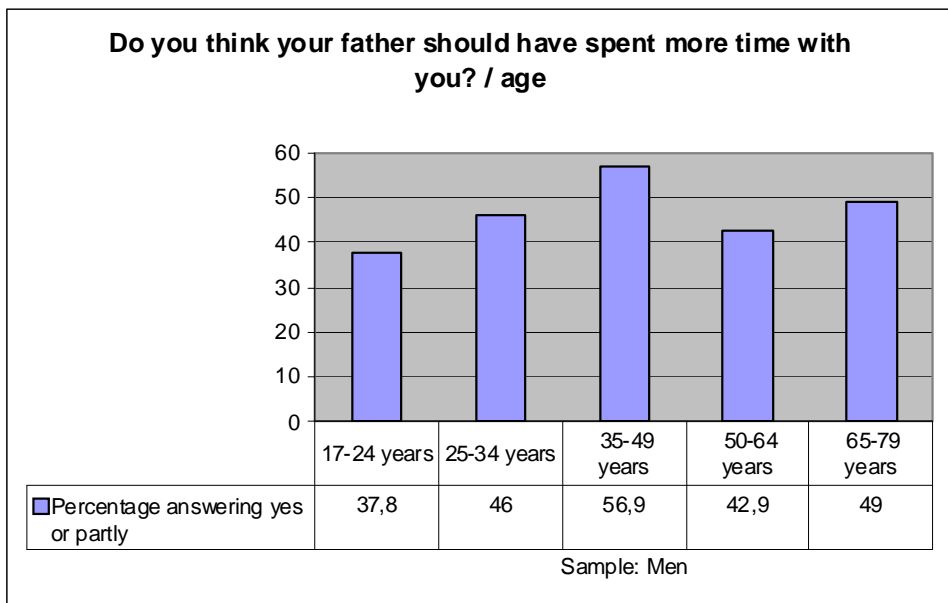
The first theme we will explore in the section on childhood pertains to the extent to which the subjects were attached to their mother and father when growing up. This issue was also studied in the 1988 survey (MN88). Then, 10 per cent of the men answered “yes” and 11 per cent “partly” to the question “Did you have a stronger attachment to your father than to your mother?” In the new survey we did not put the question in that way. Instead, we asked: “To whom were you most strongly attached as a child?” (Q6). We held the prior assumption that paternal attachment is stronger today than before, since fathers have a stronger presence in the homes.

Just under half of the respondents answered that they were equally attached to their father and their mother. Of the rest, the majority says they were more strongly attached to their mother. Somewhat more men say they were most strongly attached to their mother, while somewhat more women say they were more strongly attached to their father. But a stronger maternal attachment is typical for both sexes taken together (a total of 44.8 per cent, compared to a stronger paternal attachment of a total of 8.7 per cent). The result can be interpreted as a confirmation of, among others, Margot Bengtsson’s studies of the central position of the mother in the home (Bengtsson 2001).

Has there been any change over time? We divided the respondents of GEQL07 into age groups and explored whether there are differences between the answers of the younger and the older respondents. This division according to age of the GEQL07 numbers does not give any significant results here, neither for men nor women. That is, there is no difference between the answers of the younger and the older respondents pertaining to their maternal and paternal attachment. This indicates that there has not been any particular change in this field.

However, there were two additional questions in the section dealing with the attachment to father and mother. These are: “Do you think your mother should have spent more time with you?” and, following that, a corresponding question

about the father (Q7). The clearest age variation in the answers is seen among men in relation to the latter question, as the diagram below illustrates (“yes” and “partly” have been merged here):



We can see that the wish for more time together with their father is considerably lower among the youngest men than among those somewhat older.⁶ Thus, it seems that the men in this age group, when looking back at their childhoods, are more satisfied with the presence of their father than the older men are. This is not unreasonable, considering that these men were born in the latter half of the 1980s and grew up during the period when Norwegian fathers seriously started to share more of the childcare with the mothers.

The percentage of young men – and women – who would have wanted to spend more time with their fathers during childhood is, nevertheless, far larger than the corresponding percentage who wanted more time with their mother. In the group of 17–24-year-olds, only about 14 per cent of the men answered “yes” and “partly” (in total) to the question whether they would have wanted to spend more time with

⁶ The general pattern for women is similar.

their mother during childhood, compared to almost 38 per cent pertaining to their father. The corresponding numbers for women are 19 and 47 per cent.

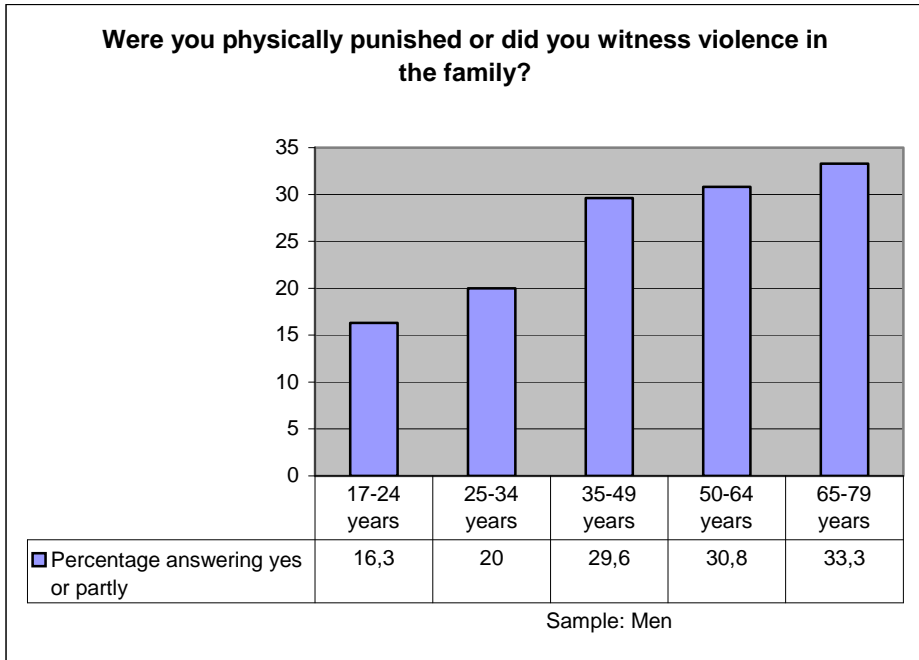
The conclusion for describing the presence of the father in the childhoods of today's young adults, has to be somewhat ambiguous: compared to the mother, the father was a more absent figure. At the same time, he was more present in the lives of these young adults, than in the childhoods of those who grew up earlier.

Physical punishment and violence in the home

Question Q7 asked: "Were you physically punished or did you witness violence in the family?" The difference between the sexes in the experiences of punishment and/or violence in the home is not statistically significant here. 15 per cent answered "yes" and 12 per cent "partly".

As to the answers of the male respondents, they can be compared to MN88, which contained an identical question and identical options for answers. Then, 22 per cent answered "yes" and 9 per cent "partly". So there is a slight decrease in the reporting of experienced punishment and/or violence in the home among men, but the decrease is smaller than might have been expected.

We can also try to detect changes in this area by dividing the men in GEQL07 into groups according to age, and looking at the answers to this question in the various age groups. The result is shown in the diagram below. The answers "yes" and "partly" have been combined here, too.



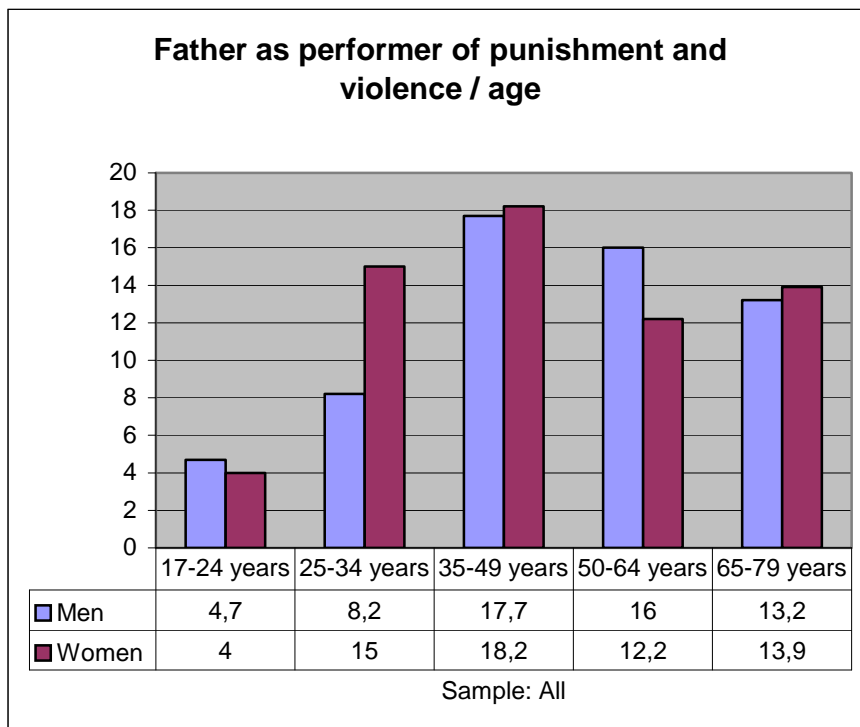
When studying these numbers, we see that the percentage reporting physical punishment/violence is much lower among the younger than the older men. If these numbers are true, the proportion of men who have experienced physical punishment/violence during childhood has decreased strongly from the 1970s onwards.⁷

The questionnaire also asked those who did experience physical punishment/violence who it was who performed the punishment or violence. The father is more frequently named as the performer of physical punishment/violence than the mother. However, more women than men name the mother as the perpetrator.

Has there been any change/development over time in this area? Dividing the respondents in GEQL07 into age groups and looking at how the various age groups report physical punishment/violence performed by the father and/or the mother, we

⁷ The numbers show a corresponding trend among women, but the numbers here are not statistically significant.

find a clear pattern similar to that presented above. The table below shows the reporting of punishment/violence by the father:



The proportion naming the father as performer of physical punishment/violence decreases strongly in the two youngest age groups, and this applies to both women and men.⁸ The numbers pertaining to punishment/violence by the mother reveal the same trend, but at a lower level.⁹ Taken together, the numbers indicate that the two youngest age groups – and particularly the youngest one – have experienced considerably less physical punishment/violence by both their father and mother during childhood than those between 35 and 49 years of age. The same, however,

⁸ This development trend seems to continue. A recent NOVA Report (Mossige and Stefansen 2007), which is based on answers by pupils graduating from senior high school, shows that a larger part has experienced physical harassment (punishment/violence) by their mother than by their father. Here, it also emerges that girls more often than boys experience this by their mother. The survey did not include gender equality questions.

⁹ Here, the proportion of both men and women among the youngest respondents is 2 per cent.

also applies to a somewhat lesser degree to those older than this. It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions from the numbers alone as to whether this is due to under-reporting, or whether there actually was also less physical punishment/violence in the childhoods of the men and women in these age groups; in the oldest group it is probably a case of under-reporting.

On the whole, the numbers indicate that the proportion of children who experience physical punishment and violence at home during childhood has decreased considerably from the 1970s onwards. And although the father was named as the performer by a larger portion of these persons than the mother, the percentage who named the father as the performer has also gone down greatly. The punishment/violence level is associated especially with two other childhood variables - unequal parental decision-making, and bullying (see part two).

Parents separating

The question whether their parents moved apart before the respondents were 16 years old (Q9), was answered “yes” by 13 per cent, and the proportion is the same among men and women.¹⁰ In MN88, 9 per cent of the men answered “yes” to this question.¹¹ So, there are more people today who have experienced their parents separating during their childhood than there were twenty years ago. The question whether they experienced their parents’ divorce as difficult (Q10), was answered “yes” by 36 per cent and “partly” by 27 per cent. There is no statistically significant difference between the sexes here, either. The differences between the age groups are small – we see no tendency that the younger ones would have experienced “easier” divorces than the older respondents. We also put the question “Did you take the side of one of your parents after they had moved apart, and in that case, whose?” (Q11). There are no significant differences between the answers of either men and women, or the various age groups. The majority says they took the side of “both and neither” (45 per cent). Of the rest, most took the side of the mother (36 per cent). 10 per cent took the side of the father.

¹⁰ In the cases of those who reported that their parents separated, there is a tendency that the parents have a somewhat higher level of education than the rest.

¹¹ In MN88, the number is based on those who answered “yes” and “partly” to the question “Did your father and mother divorce?” In LL07, the number is based on those who in Q9 have ticked the alternative that, before they were 16 years old, their parents moved apart.

The fact that a larger proportion took the side of their mother rather than that of their father, might indicate that they either blamed the father for the break up, or that they were more closely attached to their mother before the separation, or both. A closer analysis shows that at least the latter explanation is valid. Of the men who say they were more closely attached to their father, almost 60 per cent took the side of their father after their parents divorced. The corresponding number among women is 44 per cent.

The answers to the question as to whom they lived with after their parents separated (Q12) were similar among men and women; 81.1 per cent said that they lived with their mother, 17.3 per cent with their father, 7.6 with their mother's new partner, and 1.6 per cent with their father's new partner. 9.5 per cent answered that they lived together with their brothers and sisters, and 8.1 per cent have chosen the alternative "others".¹² A division into age groups does not provide any statistically significant variation. The numbers are a clear signal of how much more important the mother was than the father as a caring person during the period the respondents describe here.¹³

Who made most of the decisions at home?

This question (Q15) asked who made the most decisions at home during the childhoods of the respondents. About half of both the men and the women report that both parents decided to an equal degree. Most of the remaining men and women answered that their mother made most of the decisions. In MN88, 60 per cent of the men answered that during their childhood, their father made most of the decisions at home. A comparison of GEQL07 and MN88 thus indicated that the proportion of men who answered that their father made most of the decisions has decreased considerably. However, the contexts in which the question is put in the two studies are not identical. In GEQL07 more alternative answers are given and the list begins with mother, which might have influenced the result. Even given this reservation, there is, nevertheless, a clear decrease.

¹² The percentages are of those who answered positively to Q9. In this question, it was possible to tick several alternatives.

¹³ Even if we assume that some of the separations were due to violence by the father, and that he therefore was not allowed to have the children living with him, it does not explain a difference of this extent.

When interpreting these numbers, it is important to bear in mind that the expression “made most of the decisions at home” can mean several things. When used about the father, it might be interpreted in such a way that the father was the one who made the important decisions in the family. Used about the mother, it might be understood so that the mother was the one who decided on matters connected to the home and the household. As will be seen below, it emerges clearly from the answers of men and women in a relationship reporting on their own household, that there are some traditional female tasks in the home where the woman is the one who mostly makes the decisions (for example the norm for what is “clean enough”). If the respondent has had these tasks in mind when answering question Q15, it is also expected that he chose the alternative that his mother made most of the decisions at home. All in all, it is therefore difficult to draw any definite conclusions here. It is, nonetheless, possible to interpret the results as an indication that the father’s position of power in the family has weakened during the period illuminated by this data.

Another question that pertains to the level of hierarchy between the mother and the father during childhood is Q16: “Would you say you grew up in a home with a traditional division of labour between your mother and father?”

To this question, 60.8 per cent answered “yes”, 24.2 per cent “partly”, and 15 per cent “no”. Men report to a somewhat larger degree than women that they estimate the division of labour between their mother and father as traditional. If we separate those who clearly answered “yes” to the question on traditional division of labour between mother and father during childhood, and divide these answers by men and women into various age groups, we see that the younger age groups, not surprisingly, to a lesser extent than the older ones experienced that there was a traditional division of tasks between their mother and father during their childhoods.

Section 2. Education

Some of the main points of the section

- A somewhat larger proportion of men answered “yes” and “partly” (in total) to the statement that “in my circle of friends, school and homework were not very important”. 68 per cent of the men answered this, compared to 55 per cent of the women. In the age group 17 to 34 years, the proportion of men agreeing with this is even bigger, that is, 75 per cent. There is no significant age variation among the women.
- There are considerable gender differences in the attitudes to education and work. More women than men say it is important to have a job where they can help others, or one that can be combined with having children and a family. More men are interested in a job that gives a good income and provides opportunities to solve technical and practical tasks.
- Around 60 per cent of the men say that it is important to have a job that can be combined with having children and a family.
- A larger proportion of the younger men also agree with the statement “I would like to have a job where I can help others”. 29 per cent of those between 35 and 49 years of age say "yes" or "partly" (in total) to this. Among the 17–24-year-old men the proportion increases to 42 per cent.
- Men’s occupational choices are associated with higher pay regardless of education level (compared to women), and their choices have paid off especially in technical jobs and the private sector.

School motivation

A growing concern is expressed in the media today about boys doing worse than girls at school and about boys’ dwindling motivation for education in general. This was partly the background to why we included some statements pertaining to attitudes to school and schoolwork (Q21) for the respondents to comment in our study. The statements were as follows:

1. My parents expected me to do well in school.
2. In my circle of friends, school and homework were not very important.
3. I spent much time doing schoolwork since I was interested in the subjects.

The answers to the first statement do not display any significant difference between men and women. Most respondents answered “yes” or “partly” as to whether their parents expected them to do well in school. Only 7 per cent answered “no”.

In answer to the second statement, 13 per cent more men than women say “yes” or “partly” to school and homework not being very important in their circle of friends (men 68 per cent, women 55 per cent). This is obviously a somewhat more common phenomenon among boys than among girls.

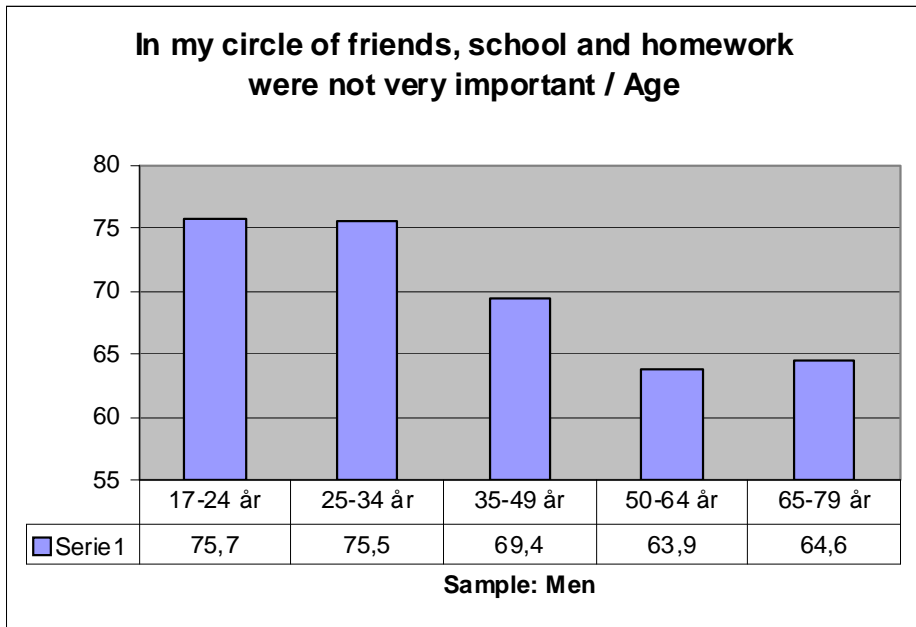
In answer to the third statement, 12 per cent more women than men answer “yes” or “partly” to spending much time doing schoolwork because they were interested in the subjects (men 67 per cent, women 79 per cent). If the answers are to be taken literally, more women than men are interested in schoolwork.

A clear pattern is discernible in the male answers. Concerning the first statement (parental expectations), the proportion giving a positive answer increases with the parents’ educational level. The higher the level of education of the parents, the greater the proportion that seem to have expectations pertaining to their children’s schoolwork. There is also a connection between the answers to the first and the third statement; the proportion giving a positive answer to the first increases with the proportion answering positively to the third. Thus, the positive answers here take us to the pupils with great resources; their parents have a higher level of education and they will probably get a similar education themselves.

Are there any changes over time in this respect? Can we see any signs of a decreasing school motivation among the youngest men? Let us begin by looking at the statement “In my circle of friends, school and homework were not very important”.¹⁴

Here, there is no significant variation between the different age groups of women. Among the men, however, there are clear differences between the age groups, as the figure below shows (the answers “yes” and “partly” have been merged here):

¹⁴ There are no significant age variations concerning parental expectations among neither men nor women.



When interpreting these and other questions on attitudes to education, we must bear in mind that selective and tendentious recollection among the older respondents might distort their answers, and that the answers of the youngest might be connected to circumstances pertaining particularly to this age group, *as* an age group, but they do not necessarily reveal anything of development over time. There is, however, nothing to indicate that these two circumstances can explain away the great increase in the number of positive answers when moving from the older to the younger respondents. Rather, it seems as if there is a growing "ideology" among young men, during the period we are now examining, that school and homework "are not very important".

We can, to a certain extent, check this by looking at the answers to the last statement (own interest in school subjects). Here, the proportion of positive answers decreases with decreasing age among both men and women. This might indicate that a reduction of the proportion interested in schoolwork really has happened, among both men and women, during the period that we are exploring.

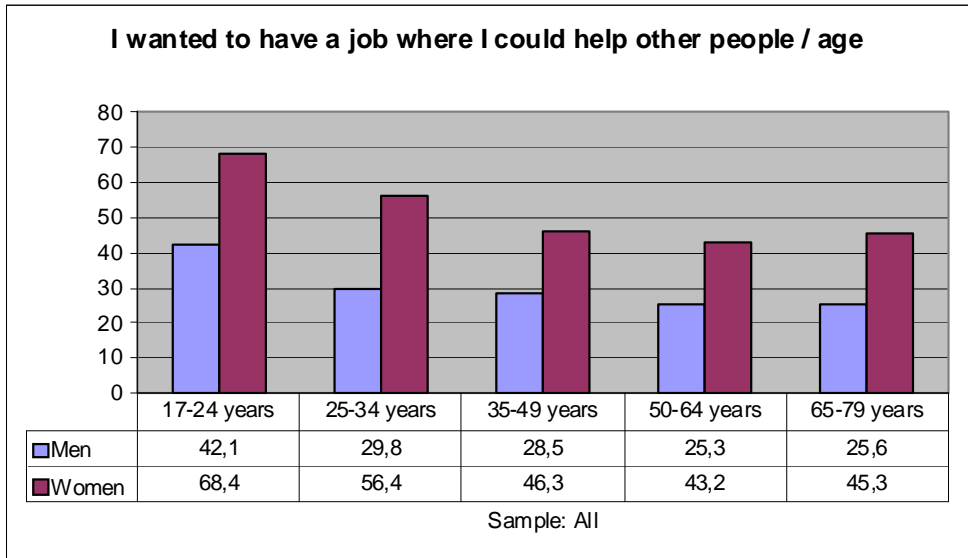
What was the aim of education?

Question Q22 also contains a series of statements that the respondents were asked to respond to. This time the survey pertained to what the respondents wished to achieve with their education and/or choice of employment, that is, *what kind of values* were these choices to realise? The figure below shows the statements and the proportion of men and women who answered “yes” or “partly” (in total) to each statement:

	Men	Women
I wished to have a job with a good income	63.7	50.3
I wished to have a permanent and secure job	87.7	87.7
I wished to have a job where I could help others	28.6	49.4
I wished to have a job where I could solve practical tasks	63.9	34.4
I wished to have a job with high risks and excitement	23.2	8.5
I wished to have a job that can be combined with children and family	59.7	75.1

We can see that men more often than women answered that they wished to have a good income, that they wished to solve practical tasks, and that they wished for risks and excitement. Women answered more often than men that they wished to have a job where they can help others, or a job that can be combined with having children and a family. It should be noted, however, that many men also answered the same pertaining to children and family, and that a high income is a value also behind many women’s choice of education and occupation.

When exploring how the answers above vary with age, we find significant variations in many respects. Concerning the statement of wishing *to help other people*, the proportion of positive answers increases among both men and women when moving from the older to the younger respondents. The increase is greatest among women. The figure below provides a graphic illustration of the increase:



It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions as to whether this is a pure age effect, or whether it also reveals something of a development over time. The expression “to help others” can also be interpreted in various ways. It can mean that one wants to work within the health and caring sector, but it can also mean that one wishes to work with humanitarian projects in the third world or find a cure for Aids. Regardless of interpretation, it seems, nevertheless, that there is a trend that the younger respondents are more inclined towards this kind of work – in one sense or another – than the older ones, and this applies particularly to younger women.

As to the wish for *risks and excitement*, there is also a tendency, among both men and women, that the younger age groups more often than the older ones answer that they would like to have a job that involves risks and excitement. In addition, the proportion of men is consistently higher than that of women. Here, the most plausible explanation of the age variation seems to be a pure age effect. We find the same pattern in the answers to all questions pertaining to risks: the youngest respondents score higher than the older ones. This does not, however, necessarily mean that we are moving towards a more risk-inclined society.

Concerning significant age variations in general, it is among women that we find the most frequent and greatest variations pertaining to the other values explored. When moving from the older women to the younger ones, the proportion wishing to have a permanent and secure job increases. The proportion wishing to solve technical and practical tasks increases, too. This is in line with the gender equality ideals that have gained more ground during the period studied here, according to which women should have the same opportunities for professional careers as men, and within the same fields.

An opposite trend is also discernible in that the proportion of women wishing to have a job that can be combined with children and family increases among the younger age groups. This is probably the result of another ideology, which elsewhere in this report is called the increasing family orientation in Norway. It is, however, remarkable that we do not find significant age variations for any of these three last values among the male respondents, apart from a weak correlation indicating that the proportion of men interested in solving practical and technical problem is somewhat lower among the younger than the older respondents.

The conclusion is, once again, slightly ambiguous. All in all our numbers show that men and women embark on their educational and professional careers with emphasis on different values that they aim at realizing in the future. It is not hard to see that these differences originate in traditional stereotypes or notions of what it means to be a man and a woman. At the same time, we also see an increasing tendency away from traditional values among the younger respondents. This applies particularly to the younger women. But here, too, the image is divided, in that some traditional family values seem to be gaining ground among women in a way that is not discernable to the same extent among men.

Section 3. Work

Some of the main points of the section

- Norwegian working life is strongly gender-segregated. While around 30 per cent of the men report working within the industrial, craft, building and construction sectors, only just under 10 per cent of the women do so. At

the other end of the scale there are the health and caring sectors, where we find about one quarter of the women, but only about five per cent of the men.

- A comparison with MN88 does not indicate that any improvement would have occurred in this area over the last 20 years.
- The average wage-working day of the average man is just over an hour longer than that of the average woman.
- Among those who say that the amount of work they do is “just right” the average man has an average weekly working time which is about five hours longer than that of the average woman. It would seem that the average man and the average woman have different understandings of what it means to have “just the right amount” of work.
- More men than women say that they work more than a normal working week (35 to 40 hours on an average) since their workplace requires it, or because “it is necessary for their careers”. Most women who work less than a normal working week do so in order to take care of their home and family. The second most common reason for this among the women is that their workplace does not offer full-time employment.
- A group of men (15 per cent) also answered that they work less than a normal working week in order to have more time for their home and family.
- Male- and female-dominated workplaces systematically offer different working conditions, and in such a way that the female-dominated places of work mainly have the poorest conditions.
- Most respondents are pleased with their job when there is a good gender balance at the workplace.
- Both sexes report less negative discrimination because of their gender when the gender balance of the workplace is good.
- Most employees in gender-segregated jobs would like better gender balance at work. This is true of three of four women in female-dominated occupations, and two of three men in male-dominated occupations.

Gender-segregated working life

One of things that is most striking when looking at Norwegian working life, is the great extent to which it is gender-segregated. This does not only apply to the difference between the public and the private sectors, where men are over-represented in the private sector, while it is women who are over-represented in the

public sector.¹⁵ It is also obvious when focussing on various areas of employment, and how percentages of men and women are distributed on the various areas. The table below shows the figures:

	Men	Women
Industry/crafts/building/construction	31.3	8.9
Trade/shops/service	11.2	11.3
Communications/transport/post	9.2	2.2
Culture/media/teaching/research	9.8	17.6
Health/caring	4.8	26.2
Banking/insurance/finance/IT	10.8	5.1
Administration	6.0	13.9
Defence/police/judicature/security	5.0	1.7
Other	12.0	13.1
Sample: All		

The figures reflect the gender-segregated Norwegian labour market. While around 30 per cent of the men report working within the industrial, craft, building and construction sectors, only a little fewer than 10 per cent of the women do so. On the other end of the scale, there are the health and caring sectors, where we find about a quarter of the women, but only about five per cent of the men. It should be noted that this kind of division into areas of labour only covers part of the actual gender segregation, since the segregation at the middle and micro level (within each area) is not included. We will discuss this further below.

Before doing so, we will just briefly mention that there is little evidence to indicate that the gender segregation would have decreased over the last twenty years. In MN88, the following question was asked: “Do you co-operate with women at the same level as yourself?”. Then, a total of 52 per cent of the men answered “yes” and “partly”. In GEQL07, we asked: “Whom do you mostly co-operate with at the same level as yourself?”. The alternative answers were “mostly with men”, “mostly with women” and “equally much with women and men”. Here, 46 per cent of the respondents ticked one of the two last alternatives (in total).¹⁶ Even if the different

¹⁵ Of the men in our sample (those who have an income-earning job as their main livelihood), 32 per cent work within the public sector, while 68 per cent work within the private sector. Among the women the corresponding figures are 54 and 46 per cent.

¹⁶ Sample: Respondents with an income-earning job

design of the questions and answers make a direct comparison difficult, there is not much to indicate that there would have been any improvement of the gender balance as to whom men co-operate with at the same level as themselves.

Weekly working time and view of own working time

As do other studies, GEQL07 also shows that the gross annual income of the average man is considerably higher than that of the average woman, even when put in proportion to working time. The same imbalance emerges when one studies weekly working times.¹⁷ The average man works significantly more than the average woman. The average weekly working time of men is 41.44 hours, while that of women is 35.42 hours.¹⁸ In other words, the average man active in working life spends *over an hour more time* at work every day, given that he has a five-day working week, than the average woman active in working life.¹⁹ Generally, more men than women are found among those who work 40 hours and more weekly. Among those who say they work 50 hours or more weekly, we find almost only men. On the other hand, women are over-represented among those who work less than a normal working week.

What do men and women give as the reason for working more than a normal working week?²⁰ The table below shows what alternatives there were to choose between, and how the answers of men and women are distributed in percentage among these alternatives.²¹

¹⁷ The numbers are based on Q28 "How many hours do you normally work per week, including overtime and paid work outside of your workplace?".

¹⁸ The numbers pertain to the group of those who say they have an income-earning job as their main livelihood, and those who have their own company.

¹⁹ The sample here is the same as above.

²⁰ In Q29 where this is asked, a normal working week is given as about 37 hours/week.

²¹ The sample here is all who answered the question. The question was to be answered only by those who worked more than 37 hours per week on an average. Only one alternative could be ticked, that is, the one that was thought to be the most important.

	Men	Women
I do so in order to maintain my and/or my family's living standard	12.1	12.4
It is necessary for my career	5.4	2.9
My workplace requires it	41.8	36.7
Because work plays an important role in my life	27.6	29.8
Other	13.1	18.2

We can see that the same proportion of men and women say they work more than normal working hours in order to maintain their family's living standard. The percentages motivating this with work playing an important role in their lives, are also more or less the same. A somewhat larger proportion of men work a lot because it is required by their workplace, or because "it is necessary for their careers". Thus, it might seem that working life is a bit more "greedy" in relation to men than to women when it comes to the requirement of doing more than normal working hours. As the numbers show, however, this is something that many women, too, experience.

If we focus on parents with small children (youngest child 0–6 years), the answers of both fathers and mothers prove to have their own distinctive trends. Among mothers with small children, even fewer than women in general say they work a lot because it is necessary for their careers (2 per cent answered this), while an even larger proportion (9 per cent) of fathers with small children than men in general say this. While the percentage saying that work plays an important role in their lives is the same in this group of men, that is, 28 per cent also among fathers with small children, it is lower among mothers with small children than among women in general: 21 per cent (compared to 30 per cent among all women).

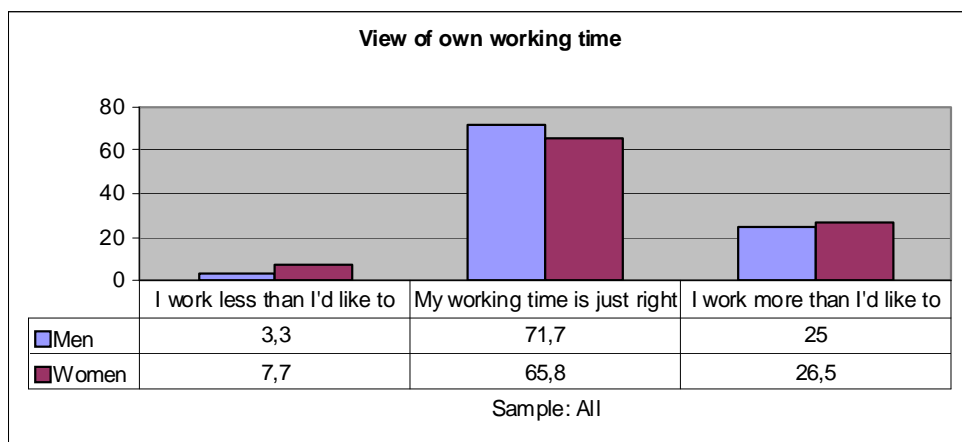
These figures probably indicate an interactive effect between work and family life, which manifests differently for men and for women. A disparity emerges in relation to work, which is not, however, a result of conditions in working life only, but also of the gendered preferences and values of individuals.

What, then, are the reasons for working less than a normal working week? The distribution of the answers of the male and female respondents among the various alternatives was as follows:

	Men	Women
My partner works full-time, and together we earn enough	2.6	4.7
I want to have time for my home and family	16.9	30.4
My workplace does not offer full-time employment	4.8	18.2
In order to have time for other things I want to do	21.7	9.5
Because of my health	15.3	15.4
Other	38.6	21.7

Health reasons are roughly as common among women as among men. Somewhat more women than men say that they work less since the income of their partner makes this possible, but the difference is not big. Most women who work less than normal working hours do so in order to take care of their home and family. The second most common reason for this among the women is that their workplace does not offer full-time employment. Of the women in this last group, around 40 per cent work within the health and caring sectors, while about 20 per cent work in the trade or service sectors. It is worth noting that also around 15 per cent of the men say they work less in order to take care of their home and family.

The respondents' views of their own working time fell into the various categories according to the diagram below:

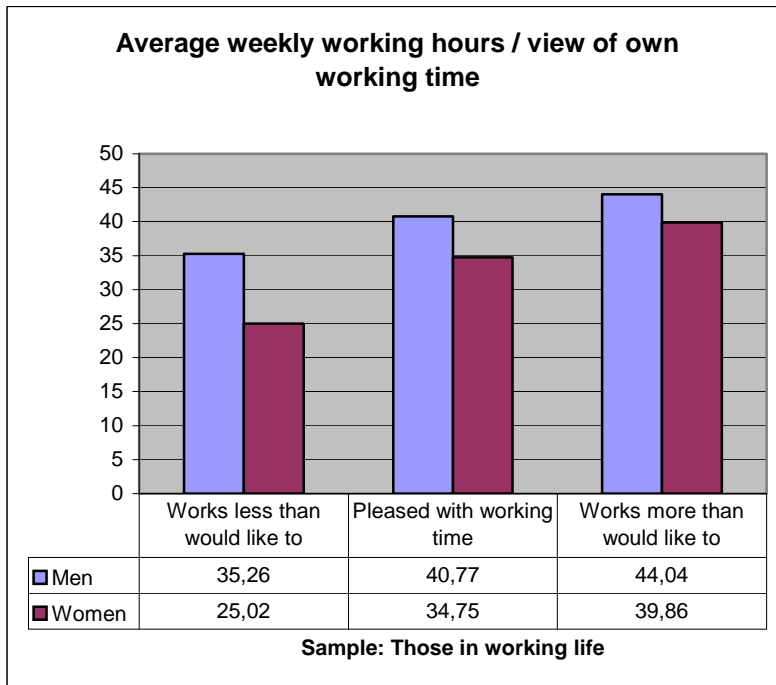


We can see that more women than men work *less than they would like to*. A closer examination shows that about half of these women work within the health and caring sectors. Among men, too short a weekly working time (in relation to own wishes) is a problem particularly within industry/crafts/construction. Around 30 per cent of the men who say they work less than they would like to are employed within these sectors.

The proportion of respondents who answer that they work *more than they would like to* is roughly the same among both men and women: one quarter of both groups. The sectors in which this problem is most prevalent among men are here, too, industry/crafts/construction. Around 30 per cent of the men who say they work more than they would like to, are employed within these sectors. The health and caring sectors are again at the top of the women's list: around 25 per cent of the women saying they work more than they would like to, are employed within these sectors. The fact that these areas of employment offer both too much and too little work (for different people, and in relation to their own wishes), is probably an indication of poor organisation of human resources and of insufficient use of the potential and interest of the employees within all these sectors.

Is there a connection between those who say they work more than they would like to, and actual working time? Yes, the connection is obvious: when the weekly working time exceeds what is considered normal, the proportion of both men and women saying that they work more than they would like to also increases. However, the proportion of women is larger than that of men in both groups.

It seems as if the expression "more than I would like to" has different meanings for men and for women. This is also confirmed by another analysis. The men and women were divided into three groups: those who say they work *less* than they wish, those who say their working time is "just right" and those who say they work *more* than they wish. We then looked at the average weekly working time for women and men in each group separately. The results are shown in the diagram below:



We can see that in the group which “works less than (they) would like to”, the weekly working time of the average man is ten hours longer than that of the average woman. In the two other groups, the weekly working time of the average man is about five hours longer.

What does this say about men’s and women’s views of their own work, and of what they regard as reasonable working hours for themselves? Again, it seems as if the average man and the average woman give different meanings to the expressions, both as to what is a “suitably long working week” or as to what is “more” or “less” than they prefer. The average man appears to be prepared to work more, and more is needed for him to think that he works “too much”.

The overall picture emerging is relatively gender-conservative. Perhaps this should not be that surprising. Despite many years of gender equality work, it is only fifty years since the hegemonic family model meant that the father was the main breadwinner, while the home and the children were the main responsibility of the mother. And if the mother worked “on the side”, it was literally what she did – she worked “on the side”, just as the father, when doing household work, “helped out”

at home, or “helped mother”. Even if this family model is not as prevalent today, it still probably has a big enough influence to affect the figures we see. In addition, there is the strong trend of family orientation, which we will discuss elsewhere in this report, and which has asymmetrical effects in relation to men and women.

More about gender-segregated working life

As seen above, men and women are over- and under-represented in various professions, trades and/or sectors in today’s working life. In spite of many years of gender equality work, Norwegian working life is still largely divided between the genders. The male dominance is largest among those working within industry and communications, and the building and construction sectors, where about 80 per cent of the employees are men. On the opposite side of the scale we find the health and caring sectors, where we find a more or less corresponding proportion of female employees.

The gender segregation also applies to individual workplaces. When looking at individual workplaces, regardless of sector, about 60 per cent of the women say that they work in a place where the majority of the employees are women.²² A corresponding proportion of men work in a place where male employees are in the majority. And a little more than 35 per cent of both the male and the female respondents in their everyday work meet almost *only* colleagues of their own sex.

The gender division further influences behaviour in individual companies or workplaces. When looking at, for example, those working in female-dominated workplaces, we find that there are more men than women in these workplaces who say they mostly co-operate with men (15 per cent, compared to 5 per cent of the women). A corresponding tendency is seen among those working in male-dominated workplaces. Here, the proportion of women saying they mostly co-operate with women is 18 per cent, while only 2 per cent of the men say this. The numbers suggest that female “pockets” are created at male-dominated workplaces, where the women gather together, and the same happens among men at female-dominated places of work. The main reason for the creation of these pockets is probably that the men and women at these workplaces have other positions/tasks

²² When, here and in the rest of the section, talking about workplaces dominated by men or women, or where men or women are in the majority, we base the division on a simplified version of Q33, where the categories “almost only” and “more” have been combined.

than the majority of the employees. For example, women at a male-dominated workplace – for instance a construction company – work with administrative tasks, while the men are out on the building sites, or men at a female-dominated company hold managerial positions higher in the organisation. However, we have not analysed this in further detail.

Segregation is status/class-dependent

The gender segregation of working life is highly education-dependent. The better-educated are far more likely to report integrated occupations, as measured by equal-level cooperation with the opposite sex, while the less educated are more likely to report segregated occupations. The same goes for income, but the picture in that respect is more mixed. More clearly than earlier research, the survey shows how gender segregation is status/class-related. Yet the effects of education and income (often placed together in traditional status/class analysis) are different (these issues are further discussed in part 2).

Working life reproduces traditional gender roles

The gender-segregated working life constitutes a problem for equality in many ways. If gender equality is understood to mean that men and women should be able to go out into life with equal opportunities to choose their education and occupation without being negatively influenced by cultural prejudices and stereotypes, then gender-segregated working life contributes to upholding and strengthening exactly these kinds of stereotypes, which in many cases in *practice* can be as impeding as more formal obstacles and barriers. This basically applies to men to the same extent as to women.

In our data, we already detected this gender stereotypical attitude to working life in the answers to Q22, where the respondents were asked what “was important for them” when choosing education or work. Here, more women than men say they wanted to “help others” or a job “that can be combined with having children and a family”, while the alternative to “solve technical or practical tasks” attracted most male respondents. These kinds of educational decisions gave men a payoff in terms of income, regardless of years of education (see part 2).

Different conditions in male- and female-dominated workplaces

Another gender equality problem pertains to the fact that male- and female-dominated workplaces systematically offer different working conditions, and in

such a way that the female-dominated places of work mainly have the poorest conditions. This applies not least to financial aspects. Even given the shortcomings of our collected data, our analyses clearly show that both men and women who work at a female-dominated workplace have a weaker financial position. This pertains both to their gross annual income before taxes and deductions, and to their hourly salary.

Our analyses here are based on the respondents who report having an income-earning job as their main livelihood. This applies also to the other analyses presented below, unless something else is explicitly mentioned.

Involuntary part-time

One problem that almost exclusively pertains to employees at female-dominated workplaces – and mostly to the women at these workplaces – is involuntary part-time work; employees are forced to work less than full working hours since the workplace does not offer full-time employment. These constitute 12 per cent of all women who give an “income-earning job” as their main livelihood, and 4 per cent of the corresponding group of men. Thus, involuntary part-time work is a problem for women to a far larger extent than it is for men.

Quality of working life and well-being at work

We have also found systematic differences between male and female-dominated workplaces by analysing the answers to Q37, where we asked the respondents to respond to the following statements:

1. I decide how the work is to be done
2. My working hours are predictable
3. It is important to look well-groomed
4. There are a lot of conflicts and backbiting
5. Women are negatively discriminated against
6. Men are negatively discriminated against
7. I have good relations with my nearest superior
8. My job offers good opportunities for personal development

Here, we can also include Q38: “How pleased are you, overall, with your job?”.

In addition, we have constructed a general index for quality of working life using points 1 and 4–8 above, which we will return to later in the report. It provides an overall measure for the reported quality of working life at a workplace as experienced by the individual.

To begin with, we used a correlation analysis²³ in order to find out how male or female dominance in a workplace influences the individual circumstances mentioned above. Significant findings were mainly made pertaining to female dominance.²⁴ Only in a few areas did we find anything significant when we explored male-dominated workplaces. We will return to this shortly.

The correlation analysis shows that the proportion of both men and women who report conflicts and backbiting increases when we move from gender-balanced workplaces towards more female-dominated ones²⁵, and that the increase is slightly bigger for men than for women. We also find that the reported well-being decreased for both men and women,²⁶ and that the overall quality of working life (measured with the general index for quality of working life) is also reduced for both sexes, but somewhat more for women.²⁷

Furthermore, we find a decreasing proportion of *men* saying they have good opportunities for personal development in their job, and of women saying that they “decide how the work is to be done” with a growing female dominance.

When interpreting these correlations, we must take into consideration that some of the effect might be explained by increasing female dominance being connected to lower financial return, and that the effect in relation to general well-being at work and quality of working life (the index) can partly be explained by this. This is confirmed by a closer analysis. But even when considering the financial aspects, we find that the correlations presented above are still valid.

²³ Spearman’s rho.

²⁴ The degree of female dominance is measured by a constructed variable based on Q33 where gender balance is given the value 1, “more women” value 2, and “almost only women” value 3. We have also constructed a male equivalent to this variable based on the same logic.

²⁵ The correlation coefficient for men is here .209, for women .163.

²⁶ The correlation coefficient for men is here -.103, for women -.117.

²⁷ The correlation coefficient for men is here -.166, for women -.187.

Workplaces with a majority of female employees are thus characterised by negative circumstances for both its female and its male employees, and pertaining both to financial return, involuntary part-time work, opportunities for personal development²⁸ and the possibility to "decide how the work is to be done".²⁹

As to reported conflicts and backbiting, this differs from the other circumstances we have studied, in that it increases also when moving towards male-dominated workplaces from gender-balanced ones, at least among women.³⁰ We find the same pattern – now for both men and women – concerning the circumstance of "women/men being negatively discriminated against". Here, the negative discrimination of men increases with an increased degree of female dominance in the workplace, and the same applies to women when the male dominance increases. The effect is somewhat larger for women than for men.³¹ The two variables "conflicts and backbiting" and "negative discrimination" also correlate positively, and both change little when checked for correlation with income. It thus appears that we have here found a negative effect of gender imbalance, which applies regardless of the direction of the imbalance and of financial aspects.

More about conflicts

As to the level of reported conflicts and backbiting, we find, in line with other research (Einarsen 2007; Normann and Rønning 2007), that it increases both with increased stress and with a problematic relation to the closest superior. It is, however, not quite clear to what extent – or whether – these variables are connected to gender (im)balance at the workplace. Another factor that correlates significantly with conflict and backbiting, but the effect of which also seems to be independent of gender (im)balance, is age. A higher proportion among the youngest respondents report conflicts and backbiting than among the older ones. This applies to both men and women and to all workplaces, but results gain significance only in the case of gender balance, or when the respondents are of the same sex as the majority of the employees in the workplace. If we, for example, explore the men in a male-dominated workplace, and compare the oldest (50–64 years) with the youngest (17–24 years) respondents, the proportion of men

²⁸ Here the results are significant only for men.

²⁹ Here the results are significant only for women.

³⁰ The correlation coefficient is here .121.

³¹ The correlation coefficient for men is here .171, for women .230.

reporting conflicts triple from 23 to 61 per cent.³² The reports of conflicts among the female respondents in a female-dominated workplace increase even more, from 23 to 71 per cent, when comparing the oldest and the youngest age groups.

Socio-economic status³³ is also significant, but it is then even clearer how the effect emerges only among the gender that dominates the workplace. This also means that it only emerges in workplaces with a form of gender imbalance. If we explore the men in a male-dominated workplace, and move from those on the highest level of our socio-economic scale to those on the lowest level, the proportion of men reporting conflicts doubles from 21 to 42 per cent. The answers of women in a female-dominated workplace increase in the corresponding groups from 26 to 44 per cent.

Both these last findings are interesting since they show that the level of reported conflict and backbiting increases when we move downwards in a given status hierarchy (age and socio-economic status). This indicates that the risk for experiencing conflicts and backbiting is not (only) triggered by possible innate characteristics of the involved parties, but can also be regarded as something constituted in certain kinds of asymmetrical relations, where it “emerges” with the most resourceless party. This might also shed some light on why the proportion of women reporting conflicts and backbiting is consistently higher than that of men, since women’s work is often characterised by larger lack of resources than men’s work, and women are in many cases on a lower level in the company’s status hierarchy.

Relevance in relation to gender equality

In relation to equality, the circumstances we have revealed are problematic in many senses. On one hand, we can say that the systematically different conditions that male- and female-dominated workplaces offer are in disagreement with the ideal that men and women should, in general, be offered the same basic conditions. On the other hand, it can also be argued that these different conditions counteract a

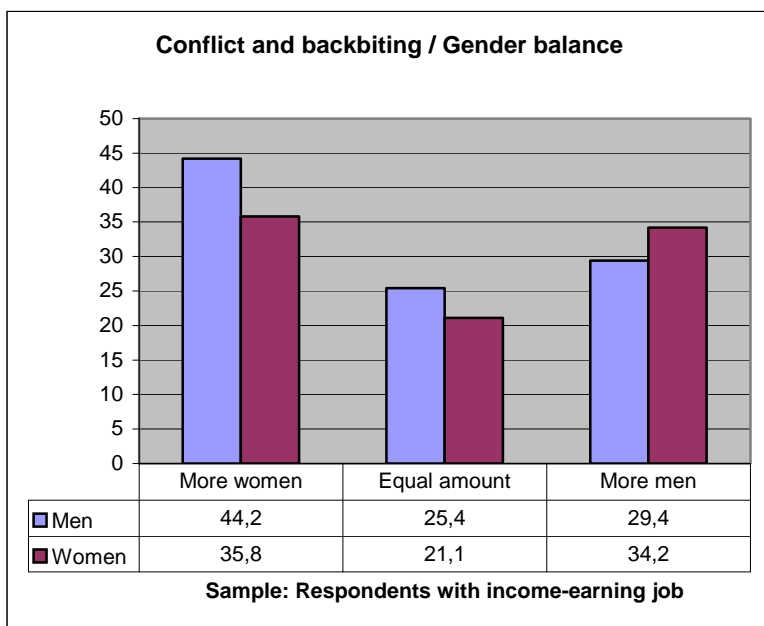
³² Both here and elsewhere below when referring to percentages, the answers have been simplified, for example in that “little” and “fairly” have been combined, or “agree totally” and “agree somewhat”.

³³ Our analyses of socio-economic status are connected to a constructed index based on the respondents’ own education and income, as well as their father’s education (these three aspects are all weighted equally in the index).

better gender balance, by making it less attractive for men to choose female-dominated occupations.³⁴ Why would they do that, if they thus would have to both go against traditional expectations and, in addition, get poorer working conditions? If we, furthermore, consider the increase in negative discrimination experienced among those who are of the minority gender at a workplace, we see a mechanism which might easily hamper an increased gender balance.

Gender balance has a positive effect

Several of the analyses presented above indicate that circumstances are best at workplaces with a good gender balance. This is particularly obvious with three of the variables discussed in this section. The diagram below shows the proportion of men and women who report conflicts and backbiting, in relation to the gender balance of the workplace:³⁵



³⁴ Also more women might in future find these professions less attractive. We can already see tendencies towards this, in that some traditional female tasks are being taken over by people even lower in the "status hierarchy", that is, immigrants who cannot get any other employment.

³⁵ The scale of answers was simplified by combining "yes" and "partly". The other scales used in this section have also been simplified correspondingly.

As we can see, the level of conflict is lowest in workplaces with a good gender balance. Also at workplaces with a gender balance, there are still some who report conflicts and backbiting, but the level is nevertheless lower than at the “outer ends”.³⁶

A similar trend pertains to the experience of negative discrimination because of gender. Both sexes report least negative discrimination when the gender balance of the workplace is good.

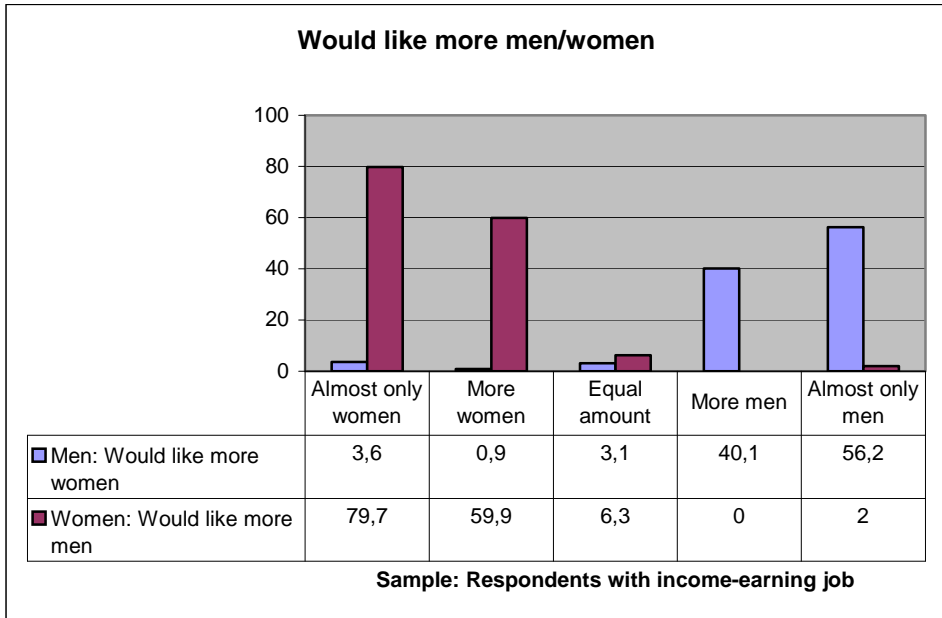
As to the proportion saying that they are pleased with their job, the amount is again highest when the gender balance is good. The same pattern emerges if we, instead of reported well-being at work, use the general index for quality of working life.

It is possible to use the results we have presented here as a basis for work towards a better gender balance in working life. At the same time, we must emphasize that these results do not show that it is necessarily the gender balance *as such* that is crucial in creating better and more equal working conditions for women and men. The picture is most probably more complex than that.

A majority expresses a wish for improved gender balance

What we did notice, however, is that most of the respondents express a wish for an improved gender balance at their workplace. The diagram below shows this:

³⁶ The increase in the proportion of men reporting conflict and backbiting when shifting focus from workplaces with gender balance to such with more men, is not significant here.



We can see that the more gender imbalanced the workplace is, the more the employees of the dominating gender would like to have more colleagues of the opposite gender. This trend is strongest at female-dominated workplaces.

Balance in the amount of work

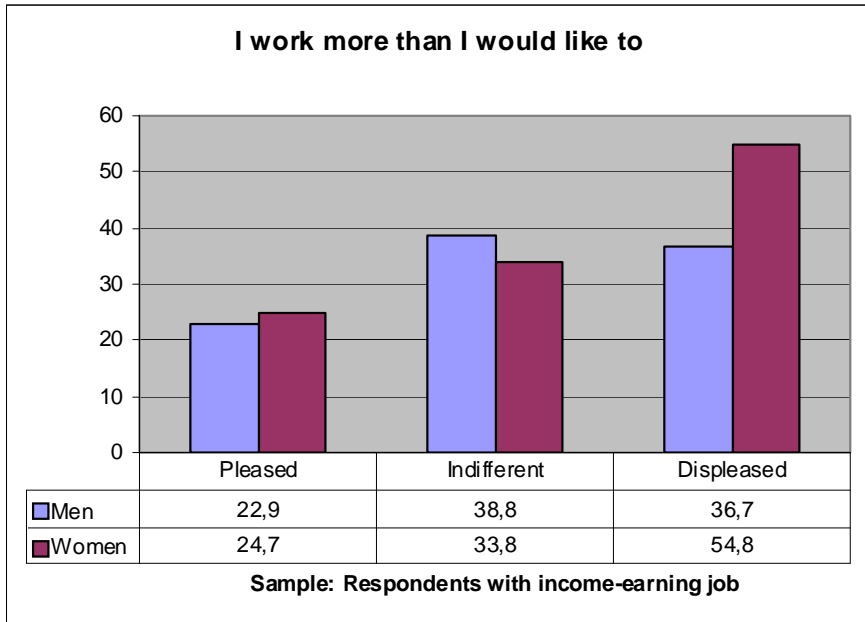
One assumption underlying the analysis of the data of our survey, is that gender-related imbalance in one area will transmit into other areas. We have particularly focussed on (in)equality in working life on one hand, and on (in)equality in the home on the other.

We have, elsewhere in this report, pointed out that even if fathers do more at home now than before, that is, there is more equality at home, there is still a basic imbalance in the homes in that the mothers both *do more* and *make more decisions* on issues related to household work and childcare. The fathers, for their part, spend more time at the workplace, and contribute more to the finances of the household. In order to achieve increased equality, it is necessary both that the fathers increase their contribution at home and that the mothers increase their contribution outside of the home. There is, however, reason to argue that the gender imbalance in

working life that we have described above – with all that it implies – impedes such a development.

One aspect is the inequality in financial return for women and men in working life, where women consistently score lower. This difference is important, particularly in relation to the division of childcare at home, since families with small children are often pressed for both time and money. In order to get as positive a result as possible from the equation, and if the father's income is higher than the mother's, it will easily seem more profitable that the mother reduces her working time outside the home, while the father increases his. This way, the family "in total" gets both more financial means and more time with the children. The fact that this "solution" also reproduces an out-dated gender role is perhaps more of an unintentional side effect than something those involved would actually wish for. The resulting increased inequality is, nevertheless, not to be ignored.

Another circumstance revealed by our data is that the lower quality of women's working conditions seems to make it less attractive for women to work more than they do. There are several questions in our survey which in various ways deal with wishes in relation to working time – whether the respondents would like to work more or less than they do – or whether they think they work too much or too little. The answers to these questions vary systematically in relation to well-being at work. The less the experience of well-being at work, the larger is the proportion who says they *work more than they would like to*, as the diagram below illustrates.



The tendency is the same for men and women, but it is stronger among women. From an equality perspective, the last circumstance is serious, since it is expressly women who should work more in order to create a better gender balance.

Section 4. Life in the household

Some of the main points of the section

- In our survey, we study the division of labour pertaining to seven typical tasks in the household (washing, tidying up, cooking, etc.). We have compared the present answers to corresponding answers from 2002³⁷, and find that the proportion of men and women who answer that they either share these tasks or do them together, is somewhat larger today. We interpret the numbers as an indication that the development towards increased equality in the homes is a continually ongoing process.

³⁷ ISSP

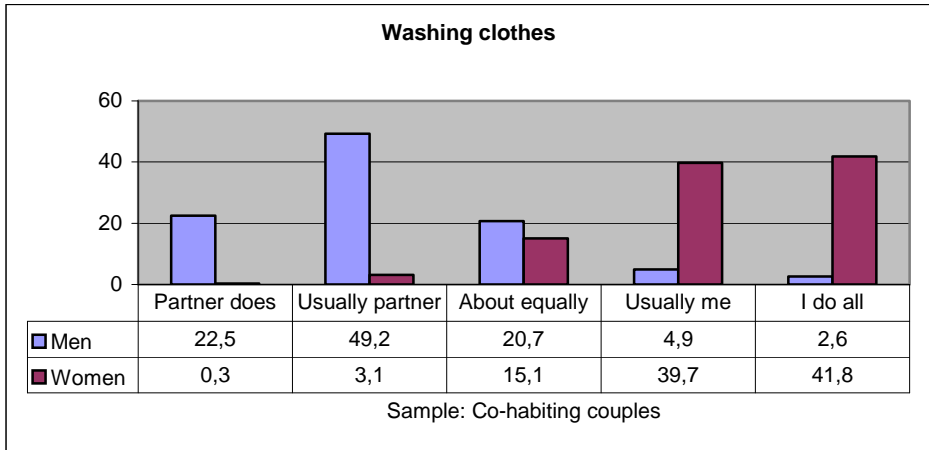
- Shopping for daily goods is the task that couple most commonly share, followed by (in decreasing order) tidying up, cleaning the house, paying common bills, cooking, maintenance/renovation, and washing, which is the least equal household activity.
- Both men and women agree that women make somewhat more of the decisions within the areas of household work which have traditionally been female responsibilities. Redistribution of responsibility and influence seems to be a “slower” process than redistribution of work. The male responsibility/influence is smallest in areas that have historically been most female-dominated. 63 per cent of the women say that it is “usually I” who decide what is “clean and tidy enough”. Buying a car is at the opposite end of the scale, in which case the man mostly makes the decisions. Here, 40 per cent of the men answer that it is “usually I” who decide.
- About 80 per cent of the men and 70 per cent of the women say equality in their homes is “very” or “rather” good.

Division of tasks at home

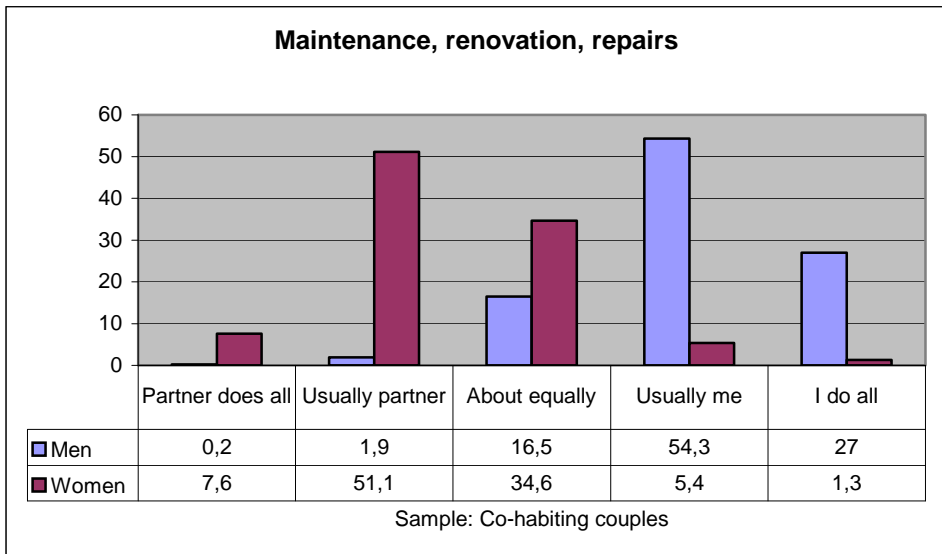
With Q45 we explore how Norwegian couples divide household work and other tasks at home between themselves. Below are a number of diagrams that illustrate the division of specific tasks. The sample of respondents consists of couples living together both with and without children.

The question was: “Disregarding the help you might get from others, how do you and your partner divide the following tasks?”. It was followed by a list of seven household tasks, of which five are, in a traditional sense, female (washing clothes, shopping for daily goods, cleaning, cooking, tidying up) and two are traditionally male (maintenance and renovating, and paying shared bills). For each of these tasks, there were five alternative answers: “I do everything”, “usually me”, “about the same extent or together”, “usually my partner” or “my partner does everything”.

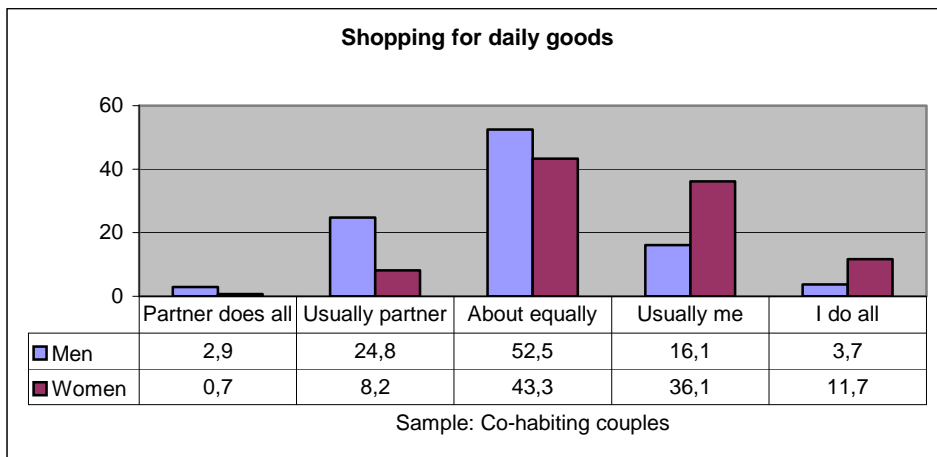
We will first present the divisions and then describe change over time.



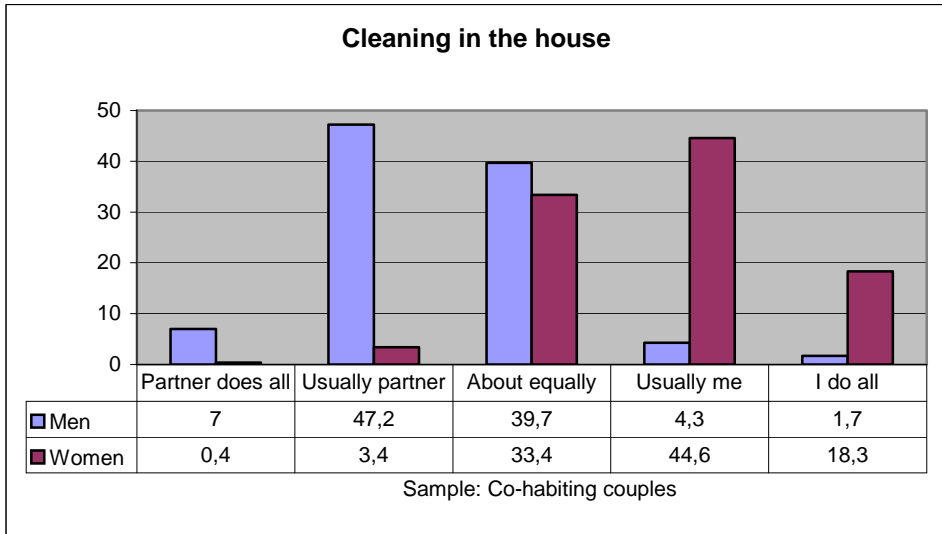
We can see that men and women agree that washing clothes is something that the woman usually takes care of. The distribution of answers displays a strong and clear gender difference, actually one of the strongest in the whole study; while men, however, do not obviously totally agree with the women on the statement that “the woman does all”.



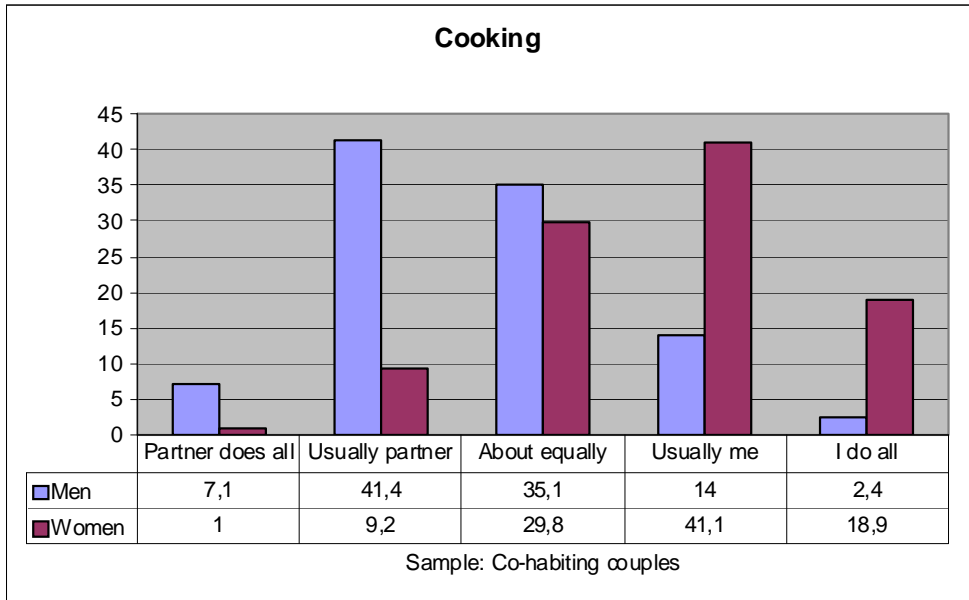
We can see that men and women agree that maintenance is something that the man usually takes care of. Maintenance thus appears, similarly to washing clothes, to be a traditionally gendered area.



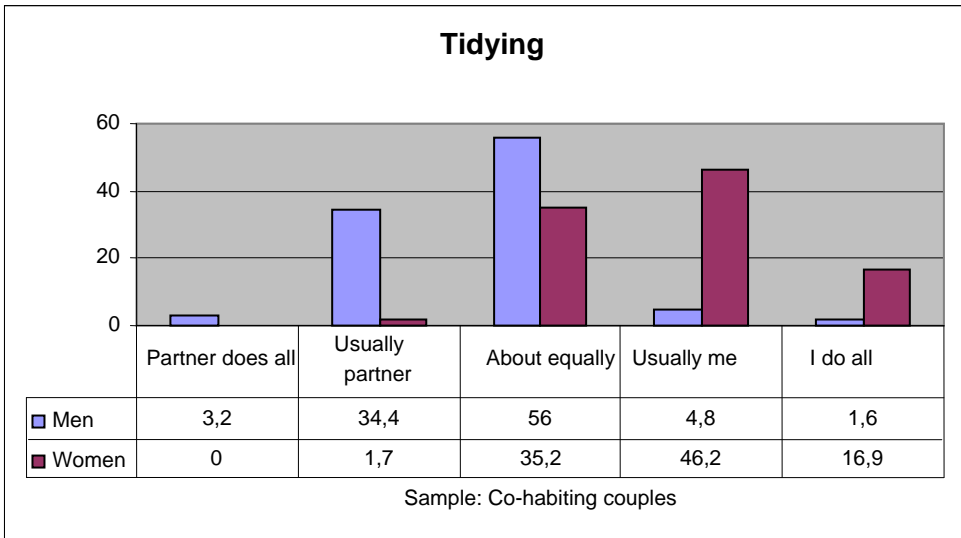
We can see that men and women agree that shopping for daily goods to a larger extent is a task that the man and the woman do together or share, but also that a somewhat larger proportion of women choose the alternative “I do all”. Shopping for daily goods has obviously become a more “androgynous” or double-gendered activity, in comparison to washing clothes and maintenance.



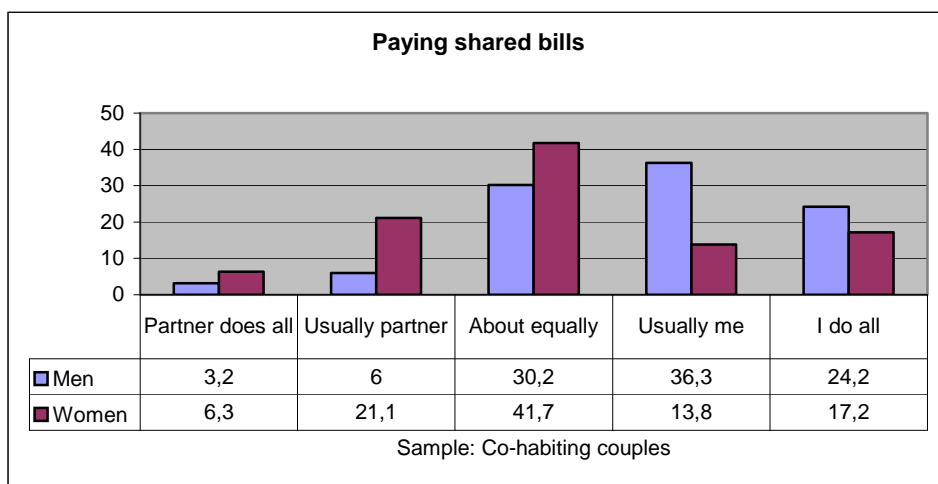
We can see that men and women agree that cleaning the house to a certain extent is a task that the man and the woman do together or share, but also that a larger proportion of the women do this than the men. Cleaning the house belongs to the middle zone, in relation to still strongly gendered tasks on one hand, and to scarcely gendered tasks on the other.



Cooking, like cleaning, lies in the middle zone.



We can see that about 35 per cent of the men and women agree that tidying up is a task that the man and the woman do together or share, but also that this is something women do to a larger extent than the men. Thus, tidying up also falls into the middle zone, together with cooking and cleaning. It is typical for these three tasks, as we will see later, that men partake in them more than before.



We can see that men and women agree that paying common bills to a certain extent is a task that the man and the woman do together or share, but also that a larger proportion of the men do this than the women. We do not have directly comparable numbers, but there is little doubt that the proportion of “the man does it” would have been larger here 20 or 30 years ago.

Comments

If we are to trust the reports of the partners themselves and look at how many have answered “about equally or together” (the middle field in the diagrams above), shopping for daily goods is the task in the home where the couples are most equal, followed by (in decreasing order) tidying up, cleaning the house, paying common bills, cooking, maintenance/renovation, and washing clothes, which is the least equally shared household activity. As to the last three tasks, almost 82 per cent of the women claim that they always or usually take care of washing the clothes, 60 per cent of the women say they always or usually do the cooking, while 81 per cent of the men claim that they always or usually take care of the maintenance and repairs in the house.

Otherwise, the partners typically disagree as to exactly how large a proportion of the tasks they do compared to their partner. The dominant pattern among both men and women is that one of the partners claims s/he does more within one area than the other partner says s/he does.³⁸ This disagreement seems to be in line with the results from Statistics Norway's time use study (Rønning 2002), where the journal data contains values between what the respondents themselves claim they do (reported for specified household tasks), and what they do according to the reports of the opposite sex.

Looking at socio-economic status, there is, particularly in the answers of women, a strong correlation between low socio-economic status and traditional division of labour. This applies to the areas of cleaning, washing clothes, cooking and tidying.³⁹ It is noteworthy that this same strong pattern does not emerge among the men.⁴⁰ Low socio-economic status is obviously more strongly connected to a traditional pattern of labour division for women than for men. This also means that women have more to gain in moving up on the socio-economic scale than men, pertaining to reaching a more equal division of labour at home.

Change over time

Has there been any change in the division of household tasks between men and women in recent years? In MN88, there are figures only for who does the cooking in the home.⁴¹ But in this area the numbers indicate a dramatic change. In MN88, 95 per cent of the men answered that their partner did the cooking. In GEQL07, the proportion had decreased to 48 per cent.

The questions on the division of tasks at home, the answers of which we presented above, are identical with a set of questions included in ISSP 2002, an extensive

³⁸ Note however, that we do not have data for relationships *per se*; the numbers are based on the average of what men and women themselves say about their partners.

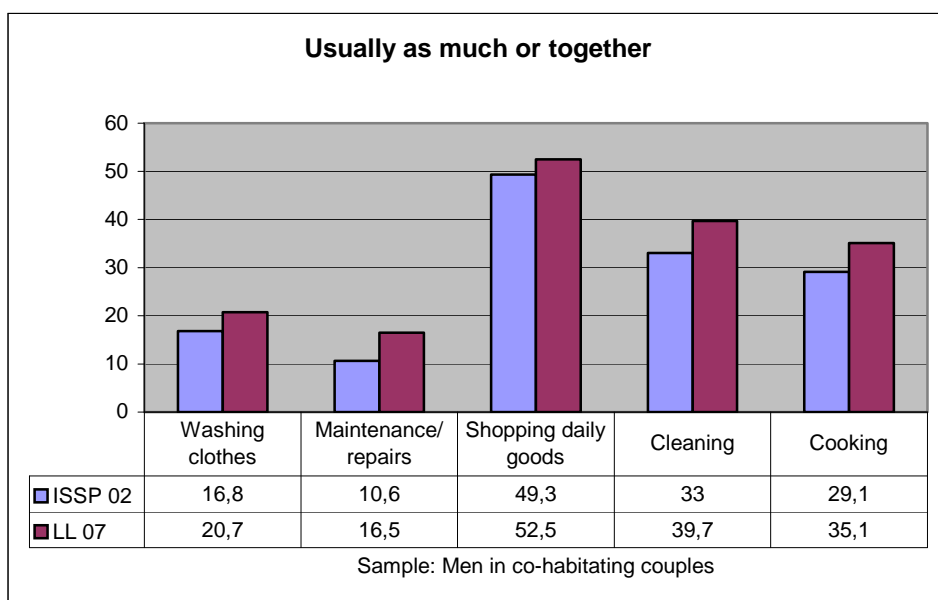
³⁹ The correlations (Spearman's rho) are between .130 and .190. They also remain the same when taking age into consideration.

⁴⁰ Here we find significant correlations only pertaining to washing clothes and tidying, but much weaker ones than among women.

⁴¹ In MN88 the number is based on those who answered "yes" and "partly" to the question: "Does your partner do the cooking at home" In LL07 the number is based on those who in Q45 on cooking answered "usually partner" or "partner does all".

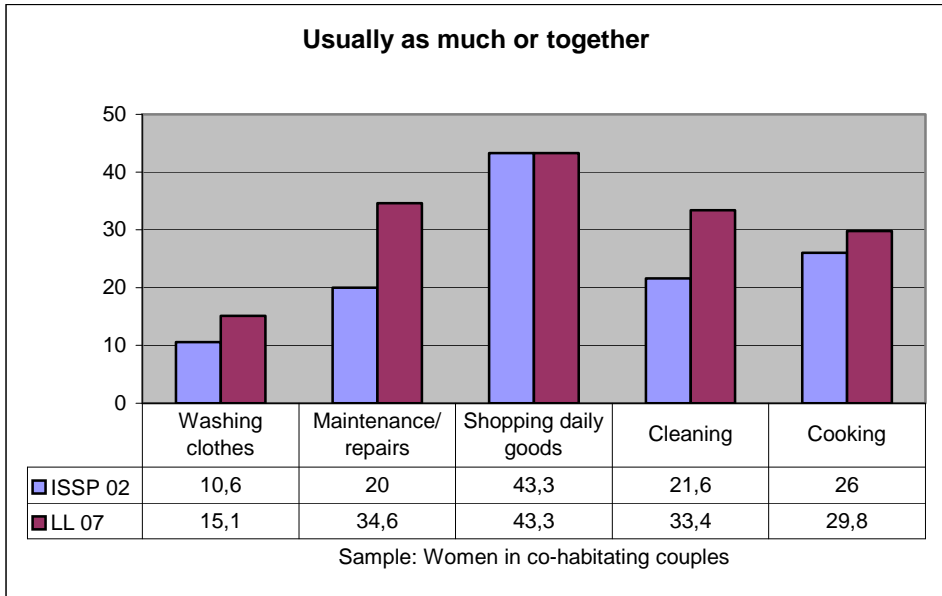
European survey in which Norway also participated.⁴² This survey was carried out only a little more than five years ago, but when comparing the answers to the present ones, it seems that there has been a development towards a more gender-equal division of tasks in the home during the intervening period.

The diagram below shows the proportion of men in the two studies who say they do various household tasks *to the same extent as their partner* or *together with their partner*. The left column in each category represents the answers of the men in 2002, while the right one represents the 2007 answers.



There is a clear increase for all the tasks as to the proportion of couples where the men report that the tasks are shared. As seen in the diagram below, there is a corresponding change in the answers of women.

⁴² The only difference is that in the ISSP questionnaire there was also the alternative "others", while we chose to ask about help from others in a separate question. ISSP did not, either, have a question on tidying or paying of common bills.



At the same time, we can note that the proportion of women who say that it is “always me” who do these tasks, has decreased from 47.1 per cent to 41.8 per cent for washing clothes, from 15.2 to 11.7 per cent for shopping for daily goods, from 26.9 to 18.3 per cent for cleaning, and from 23 to 18.9 per cent for cooking. The proportion of men who answer that it is “always me” who do maintenance/small repairs is more or less unchanged.

If we are to trust these numbers, Norway has become more gender-equal since 2002 when it comes to the division of tasks in the home. It can, of course, be questioned whether these numbers actually correspond to reality. In some areas the increase indicated by the figures is larger than what would seem to be realistic. It is perhaps best to read the numbers with the reservation that the different overall design of the two surveys might have influenced the answers.⁴³ It might also be the case that changes in the public discourse on gender equality during the last five years have made it more “natural” for people to describe the division of labour at

⁴³ As we have seen before, the proportion with a higher education is slightly larger in our sample than in the normal population. Some of the trends in our answers might be influenced by this, since we know that those with a higher education often live a more equal life than others. However, the increase in equal share of tasks that we see when comparing the two studies, is valid also when taking the variable of education into account.

home as more equal now than before. Nevertheless, we choose to interpret the numbers as an indication that the development towards increased equality in the homes is a continually ongoing process.

Attitudes/standards pertaining to “orderliness” in the home

Question Q46 contains several statements that the respondents are asked to respond to and which aim at exploring some basic attitudes/standards pertaining to “orderliness” in the home. They are, for example, asked to respond to the statement: “When we have visitors, I usually want to serve homemade food”. Here, men and women are in agreement; 84 per cent of the couples want to serve homemade food to their guests.⁴⁴ Men and women also respond in a similar way to the statement: “I often think the requirement of cleanliness and tidiness at home goes too far”; 32 per cent of the couples think that the demand of tidiness goes too far.

As to the next two statements, there is a gender difference. 50 per cent of the women answer “yes” to the statement “I often think it is too untidy at home”, while only half as many men do so. The female dominance is even stronger in the positive response to the statement “I’d rather wash the clothes myself, since I then know it’s done properly”; 58 per cent of the women agree with this, compared to only 8 per cent of the men.

With these two last statements we might have detected a system of norms which is particularly upheld by women. This pertains to the norms for what level of “orderliness” there should be in the home. This is also confirmed, as will be seen later, by the answers to question Q48, where around 60 per cent of both men and women agree that it is the female partner who decides what is “clean and tidy enough” in the house.

It is possible that this system of norms is a *contributing* factor as to why women in couples often report that the man does less housework than what the man himself claims he does. It would then be the case that each partner assesses the male contribution based on different standards. Since the woman’s standards are higher, the man’s work, seen from those standards, appears as less valuable than the man himself thinks it is, as measured by his own standards. This is here only intended as

⁴⁴ The sample here and in the next three questions is co-habiting couples.

a hypothesis, a possible explanation. In order to say whether it holds true or not, more research is needed.

Who has the final word?

From the system of norms in the home, we now move on to the next theme: who has the final word when the partners are to reach a decision? Q48 contains a number of questions on who decides on various matters in the home. The alternative answers included in the analysis are the following:

- Usually me
- Usually my partner
- We make the decisions together

The answers for each area asked about are presented below. Choice of apartment/house is the most equal area when it comes to decision-making. About 90 per cent of the respondents say that they make the decision together. In the remaining group both men and women agree that the men decide to a somewhat larger extent.

As to areas where one of the partners makes the decision alone, it is the male partner who most often decides on the buying of a car. Men more often than women claim that they themselves decide in this matter, while women more often than men say that decisions are taken together. Decisions connected to interior decoration and furniture seem to be the “opposite” of buying a car. As to the extent one of the partners makes the decisions alone, it is the female partner who most often decides in these matters; and if we are to believe the men, she decides even more than she herself reports.

In matters pertaining to the upbringing of children, as many as 86.7 per cent report that the decisions are taken together. In the remaining group, both men and women agree that the women decide to a somewhat larger extent.

What is to be served for dinner? Here, the proportion of those who make the decisions together is lower than in any of the areas looked at so far. And women to a larger extent than men seem to think this is their area of decision. If we compare the answers here to the data on how the task of cooking is divided between the partners, we see that 16 per cent of the men reported that they did the cooking often

or always, and that 35 per cent chose the alternative “usually together”. Yet, only 11.6 per cent of the men here report that they usually decide what is to be served for dinner. The impression gained here is that this is still mainly a female area of responsibility, even if the division of labour has become more equal.

Several of the figures above can be interpreted as a confirmation of the hypothesis that the redistribution of responsibility might be a “slower” process than the corresponding redistribution of work. Thus, the *areas of responsibility* of each gender have changed slightly less than their *areas of work*. We did not include the alternative “the man helps out” as an answer, which is, so to say, a classic within research on housework, and which would, most probably, have reflected some of the discussion above. We do, however, see a tendency that *he* does somewhat more, while *she* still has the responsibility and overall control of things.

When it comes to who decides on what is clean and tidy enough in the house, the female dominance is even greater; 63 per cent of the women say that they alone usually decide on this. If we compare this with the low proportion that report that decisions are taken together, this is not an area where the male influence is lower according to the men’s own answers. Even if both cooking and cleaning continue to appear as the most female areas, there are interesting differences between them; cooking seems less “deeply gendered” than tidiness and cleaning.

Looking at the issue of who the couple spend time with during their leisure, we are again back in the field where the majority make decisions together; about 90 per cent of both men and women give this as their answer.

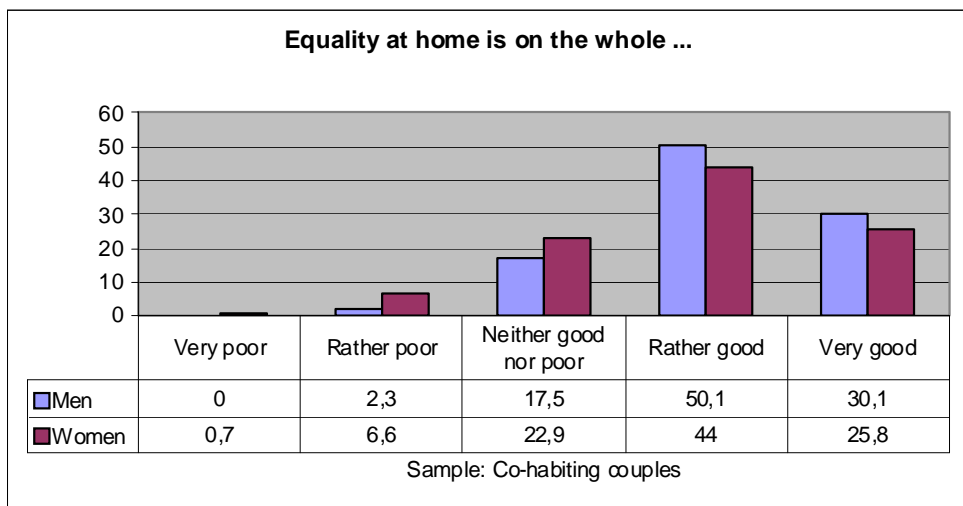
If we combine the proportion of men who answer “together” or “usually me”, and use the result to put up a list of the areas where men are influential, we get the following, beginning with the area of least male influence:

1. What is clean and tidy enough
2. What is to be served for dinner
3. Choice of interior decoration/furniture
4. Raising of children
5. Who the couple sees in their free time
6. Choice of housing
7. Choice of car

As we can see, the male influence is still smallest in areas that have historically been most female-dominated. The list seems to confirm further the hypothesis that the redistribution of responsibility is a “slower” process than the corresponding redistribution of work.

How would you evaluate the overall equality in your home?

Let us finish by looking at how men and women evaluate the gender equality in their home. The diagram below illustrates the answers.



We can see that men tend to evaluate equality at home somewhat more favourably than women do.

Section 5. Partner, choice of partner

Some of the main points of the section

- While 75 per cent of the women who think gender equality in the home is very good, are very pleased with life together with their partner, only 34 per cent of those who think equality in the home is “neither good nor poor” are very pleased. The answers of men more or less follow the same pattern.

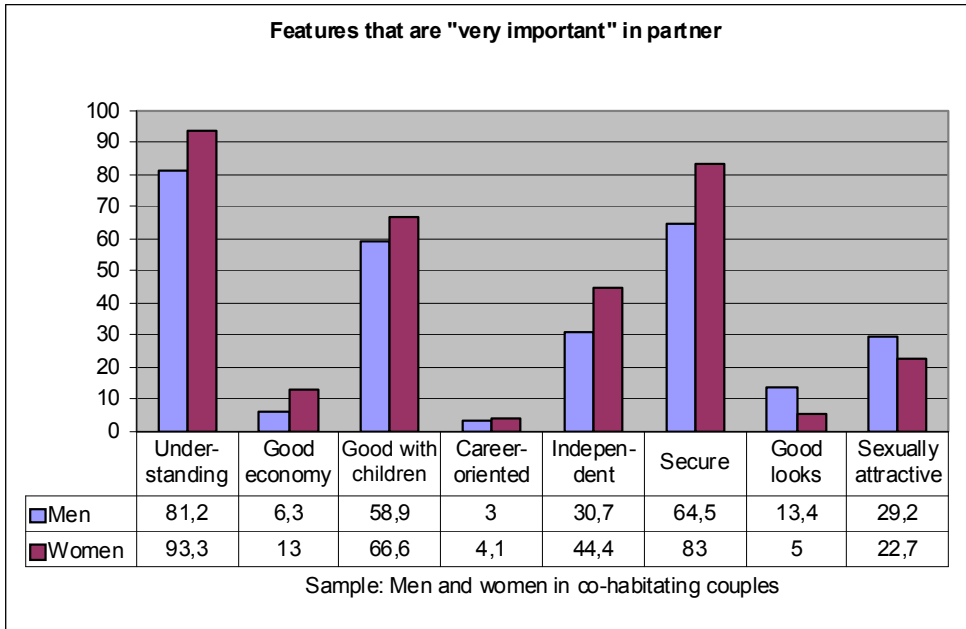
Among women who evaluate equality at home as “rather poor”, the proportion of those who are very pleased goes down radically to 11 per cent.

- In the choice of partner, appearance and sexual attraction are somewhat more important for men than for women.
- About half of all men and women have a partner with the same level of education as themselves.
- More women than men say that the job of their partner is/was an obstacle for their own work or career. Among those describing life together with their present partner, about 5 per cent of the men and 17 per cent of the women say that the job of their partner is/was an obstacle for their own work or career.
- Violence and threats of violence seem to be a problem that affects a relatively small proportion of co-habiting couples. 96 per cent of those living together with their partner say that there has never been any violence in their relationship.
- The proportion reporting violence in earlier (now finished) partner relationships is, however, considerably higher than those reporting their present relationship.

Choice of partner

The section on choice of partner began with a question which aimed at an analysis of what people find important when choosing their life partner.⁴⁵ Part of the reason why we included this question was that we wanted to see whether by such an introduction we could find indications of an exchange relation where, for example, a woman’s caring is “exchanged” to a man’s ability to financially support others. The question contained a list of possible features, which were also graded so that the respondent could say how important these features are. The table below shows the proportion of men and women who answered that the listed features are “very important”.

⁴⁵ Q50.



“Good looks” and “sexually attractive” are more important for men than for women. As for the other features, the proportion of women who say they are “very important”, is larger than that of men. If we are to trust the answers, and if we choose to regard couple formation as an exchange relation, we can thus draw the conclusion that good looks and being sexually attractive are a slightly more valuable capital for women, while security, independence and understanding constitute a somewhat more valuable capital for men. The question is, however, whether we can trust the answers, or whether men and women have embellished reality a bit. It is, for example, remarkable that the score for “a good economy” is so low among both men and women. When we compare this with, for instance, what we found above, which is, that higher socio-economic status increases the probability for the average man to live with a partner, it seems as if in the answers analysed presently, there is an under-communication of the importance of economical aspects.

We can also note that socio-economic status influences the way some of the features discussed above are valued. For those with a higher socio-economic status, it is more important that their partner should be career-oriented, and this applied

particularly to women. It is also slightly more important for them that their partner should be economically sound. For the men in this category – but not for the women – it is somewhat more important that their partner should be good with children. Interestingly enough, both men and women to a larger extent also expect their partner to be good looking and sexually attractive. Those with a high socio-economic status simply expect *more* of a partner than those lower down in the socio-economic index.

Educational differences between the partners

Is there any pattern in the kind of educational constellations typical for co-habiting partners? The educational level of the respondents and/or their partner was studied based on four given levels of education:

- Compulsory school
- Post-compulsory education
- Up to 4 years of university or college education
- Over 4 years of university or college education

About half of Norwegian couples consist of partners with the same educational level. About 20 per cent of *both* women and men have a partner with an education one level above themselves, while another 20 per cent have a partner with an education one step below themselves.

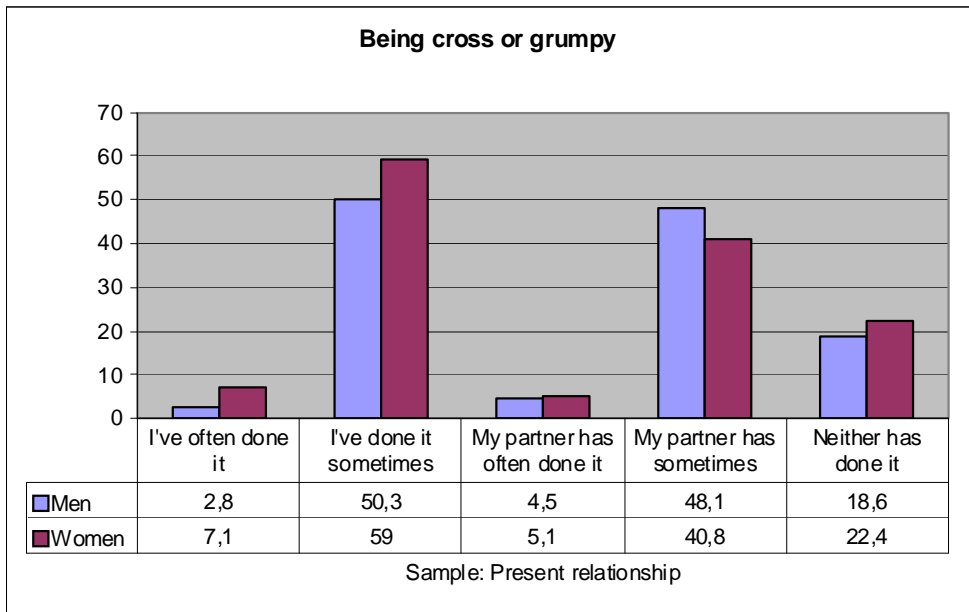
Taken together, these numbers show that as far as educational level is concerned, Norwegian couples are relatively equal, and it is also possible to interpret the numbers in a direction that most people prefer to live together with a person with roughly the same educational level as themselves. Co-habiting couples where one partner has had an extensive university education while the other only has compulsory schooling are virtually non-existent.

Violence and pressure in relationships

Question Q66 deals with the various forms of pressure and power that partners might use against each other in a relationship. The question was introduced as follows: “In a partner relationship or a relationship between two lovers, it is not unusual that one of the partners exert pressure on the other in order to assert themselves or have their will. Have you or your partner done any of the following in

order to exercise such pressure?” After that, a number of separate questions focus on grumbling, anger, threats and violence. The respondents are asked to report both their own and their partner’s activity.

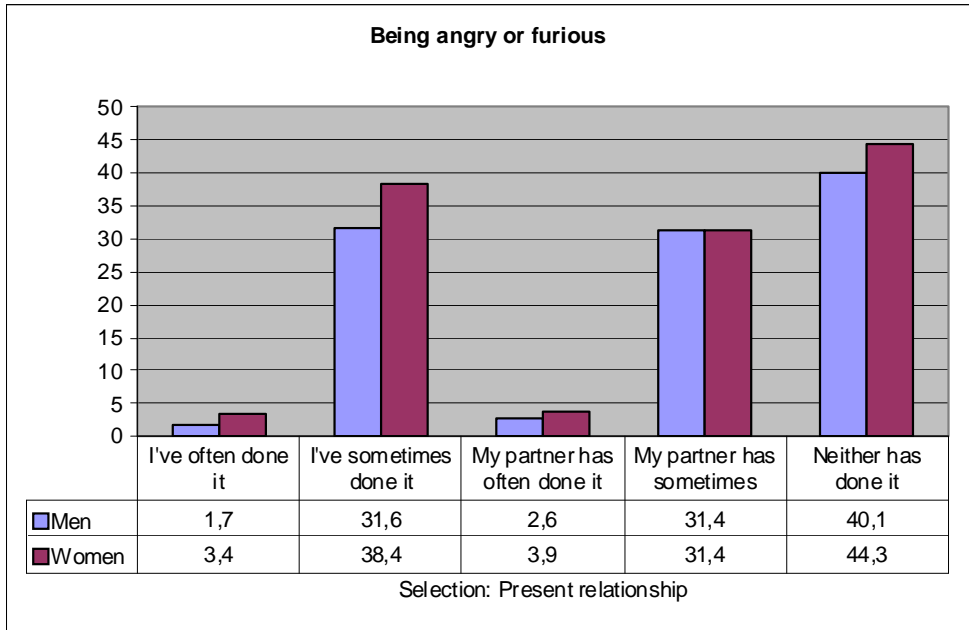
The first question pertains to “being cross or grumpy”. The diagram below shows the answers divided between the sexes (percentages) for present relationship.



The numbers indicate that “being cross or grumpy” is a strategy used by both men and women, but somewhat more often by women, as reported by both men and women. Women and men thus seem to also agree that it is women who more often use this strategy.

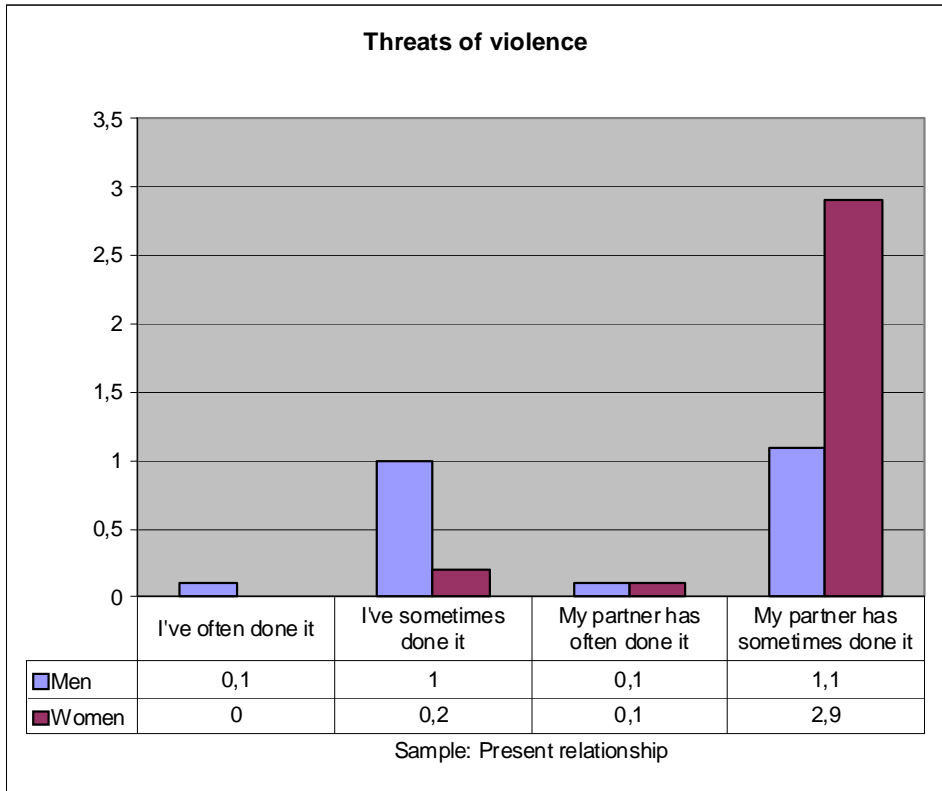
Earlier relationships. As to women reporting on earlier relationships, just over ten per cent more say that their partner was often cross and grumpy, than women describing their present relationship.

In the next question, the respondents were asked to what extent they and/or their partner have been angry or furious in order to exert pressure. The diagram below shows the distribution of answers between the sexes.



The numbers indicate that “being angry or furious” is a strategy used by both men and women, but that women report having done it themselves slightly more often than men.

In the next question, the respondents were asked to what extent they and/or their partner have used threats of violence in order to exert pressure. The diagram below shows the distribution of answers between the sexes. For men, there is hardly any significant difference between those describing their present and those describing their earlier relationships. For women, there are some significant differences.



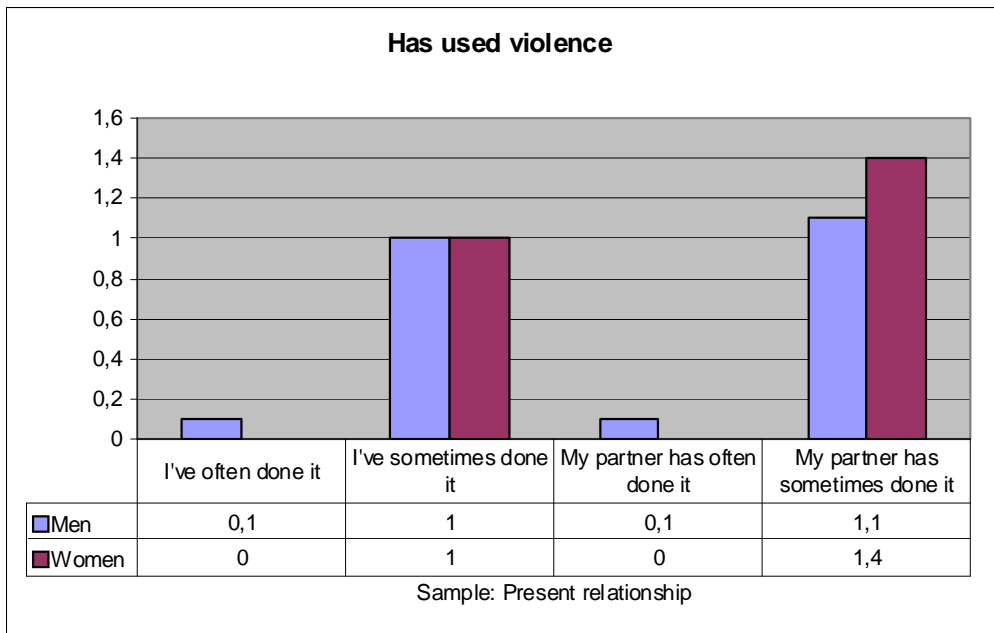
Around 96 per cent of both men and women have chosen the alternative “neither has done it”.

The numbers indicate that “using threats of violence” is a strategy that both men and women use to a very small extent, but that men use it somewhat more often than women, and that this is something both men and women agree on. We can also see that a larger proportion of women report that their (mainly) male partners have used threats of violence, than the extent to which the partners report their own behaviour. Otherwise, the most striking thing about these numbers is that they are so low. If we are to believe the men’s reports of their own behaviour, only about one per cent of them have sometimes used threats of violence in order to pressure their partner. Here, we probably have a case of under-reporting. Nevertheless, not more than 3 per cent of the men’s partners report that their male partners have threatened them with violence. In addition, it should be noted that also more men claim that their female partner has sometimes used threats of violence, than the

proportion of women reporting that they themselves have done so. To report one's own experience of using threats of violence is obviously stigmatizing for both men and women.

Earlier relationships. While relatively few women report that their present partner has used threats of violence, the proportion who report instances of this from their earlier relationship is larger: the proportion saying that their partner *often* did it, increases from 0.1 to 1.6 per cent, and the proportion saying that their partner *sometimes* did it increases from 2.9 to 10.4 per cent. The proportion of women saying "Neither has done it" goes down from 96 to 78 per cent.

In the last question of this set, the respondents were asked to what extent they and/or their partner have used violence in order to exert pressure. The diagram below shows the distribution of answers between the sexes.



Here, too, the numbers are low. We see, however, that their own reported use of violence is more or less the same among women and men. There is also a relatively good correlation between the pictures the partners provide of each other's violence.

Around 96 per cent of both men and women have, here too, chosen the alternative “neither has done it”.

Earlier relationships. While relatively few women report that their present partner has used violence, the proportion who report that it was used in earlier relationships is larger: the proportion saying that their partner *often* did it, increases from 0 to 1 per cent, while the proportion saying that their partner *sometimes* did it increases from 1.4 to 13 per cent. The proportion of women saying “Neither has done it” goes down from 96 to 79 per cent. Thus, a total of 14 per cent of the women describing their earlier relationships report having been the victim of violence by their partner. Among the men describing their earlier relationships, the proportion reporting that their partner sometimes used violence increases from 1.1 to 2.9 per cent.

Violence in relationships. Discussion

As was seen above, relatively few men and women say that they have experienced violence in their relationships. Around 96 per cent of both men and women have chosen the alternative “neither has done it”, when asked to describe their present partner relationship. The proportion increases among those reporting on their earlier relationships: the proportion saying that their partner *often* used violence increases from 0 to 1 per cent, while the proportion saying that their partner *sometimes* did it increases from 1.4 to 13 per cent. The proportion of women saying “Neither has done it” goes down from 96 to 79 per cent. Thus, a total of 14 per cent of the women describing their earlier relationships report violence by their partner. Among the men describing their earlier relationships, the proportion reporting that their partner sometimes used violence increases from 1.1 to 2.9 per cent.

It is not easy to evaluate whether this is a larger or smaller extent than what we could expect based on other research, but the result is not that much below the figures found in other extensive studies. A study based on the British Crime Survey of 2001, shows, for example, that 4 per cent of the women and 2 per cent of the men had been the victim of violence in the home during the last year (Walby and Allen 2004). In an extensive Norwegian study (Pape and Stefansen 2004), about the same amount of men as of women said that they had been exposed to serious or frequent violence by their partner during the last year (2–3 per cent). Both these results are close to our findings. At the same time, it is worth noting that the questions to be answered in our and the above studies are not identical. We asked

about the experience of violence “often” or “sometimes” without any further time limits, while they asked about experiences of violence “during the last year” or within some other given time.

When including earlier events experienced by the respondents after the age of 16, Pape and Stefansen found that the proportion who had experienced violence by their partner was clearly higher among women than it was among men; 12 per cent as compared to 3 per cent. The female victims were also more seriously victimised than the male ones. For both sexes, the exposure to violence by their partner was closely related to a low educational level, poor financial assets, weak connection to the labour market and dependence on social security.

Some corresponding aspects are also reflected in our findings. The proportion reporting violence is much higher among those describing their earlier relationships as compared to those answering about their present relationship. We see a very strong difference particularly among the women in these two categories. This might be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, there might be under-reporting pertaining to present relationships. On the other, the group reporting more violence might also be characterised by other attributes that make them different from the normal population, so that the higher frequency of violence can be regarded as a feature specific to *this group*.

Separation is strongly associated with violence in our study. Among the women who have experienced violence by their partners,⁴⁶ 73 per cent have seriously considered separating, while of the women who have not experienced violence, 29 per cent have considered breaking up their relationship. Among men, the corresponding numbers are 67 and 24 per cent.

It is fairly clear that quiet suffering and acceptance of violence are not the dominant pattern here. The numbers indicate that the probability for the relationship to end increases very strongly with violence or threats of violence. Our figures are too small for us to be able to say anything on, for example, what characterises those who consider separating, in relation to those who do not, among those reporting violence. It also seems that an experience of violence rather strongly diminishes the probability of a new relationship.

⁴⁶ “Sometimes”. Sample: Persons co-habiting with partner.

An analysis of the women in the material, who describe violence by their partner in the relationship, shows that they have experienced more anger and conflicts in the relationship. They have often threatened to end the relationship. They are more often single today, and therefore more often carry the main responsibility for supporting their family. Their contentment with their sexual life is slightly negative. These women also score slightly higher as to depression and problems with drugs and alcohol.

A dominating feature in our results in general is that violence is systematically associated with a number of negative living conditions. This is in line with a lot of earlier research. Several studies have, for example, found that a low income and educational level of the parents increase the risk for children to be exposed to physical punishment/violence (Giles-Sims, Straus et al. 1995; Pape and Stefansen 2004).

As to negative consequences of physical punishment/violence during childhood, we have found an increased risk for depression and other mental problems. We also found that those who have experienced this during their childhood, are often found in groups with a low level of education and a low income. This, too, corresponds to other studies. For example, American studies have shown that physical punishment during childhood is positively associated with an increased risk of a number of problems in adulthood, such as depression, violent behaviour towards partner, alcohol problems, and reduced achievements in education and occupational careers (Straus and Mathur 1995). Figures from England have shown that an increased frequency of violence by partner leads to reduced participation in the labour market (Walby and Allen 2004).

The fact that violence is connected to low social status has also appeared in Norwegian studies (cf. e.g. Haaland, Clausen et al. 2005). They have also found results in line with ours: experience of violence in one situation increased the risk of violent experiences in another. Those exposed to violence by others than their own partner also run a much higher risk for exposure to violence by their partner.

One noteworthy feature in our study is the consistency of this last phenomenon. Not only does physical punishment/violence in the home increase the probability for being teased and bullied outside of the home. We also found a positive correlation to reports of conflicts in the workplace, violence and conflicts in

relationships, and exposure to violence in outside environments as an adult. There is a remarkable doubleness in the picture that emerges. Not only do those concerned here display an increased probability for getting into new situations as victims to violence. And not only do they describe an increased probability for experiencing negative discrimination (Q99) or a feeling of inferiority in relation to friends of their own sex. They also describe an increased probability for getting into situations of conflict, for example at work. To a certain extent the difference between victim and perpetrator is also erased, in that they are the victim in one situation, and in other situations they say that they often “become angrier and more aggressive than they would like to”, or they report using violence themselves. This applies particularly to men, but also – somewhat less – to women. To use a slightly worn metaphor, we can say that the persons discussed here appear as a kind of unlucky creatures who move from one conflict situation to another, and in environments where both they and others more easily resort to violent or near-violent strategies for handling these conflicts.

There is also a strong connection between these violent or near-violent situations and reduced well-being and quality of life, for example in the area of mental health. However, we must emphasize here, that the analyses made do not provide a basis for claiming that it is the violence which is the reason for, for example, the reduced mental health found among those who experience situations of violence. The inverse causal connection might as probable, or there is an interaction that works both ways, or both features might, to a larger or smaller extent, be results of some underlying causes. In order to say anything definite on this phenomenon, more detailed analyses are needed, which we do not have the resources to do within the framework of the present project.

In Norwegian and international research on violence, there is an ongoing discussion as to whether men are more violent than women, whether male violence has another form and meaning than female violence, and how big the differences might be (cf. e.g. Pape and Stefansen 2006). The results of some extensive surveys show that the answers of men and women are rather similar, when, for example, asked if they have been exposed to violence by their partner during the last year. Based on this, some claim that men and women in relationships are equally violent (Straus 1999). If we, however, also look at the frequency of the reported episodes, we see that women are more frequently exposed to violence, and also that the violence is more serious. And if we look at those exposed to the *most* serious

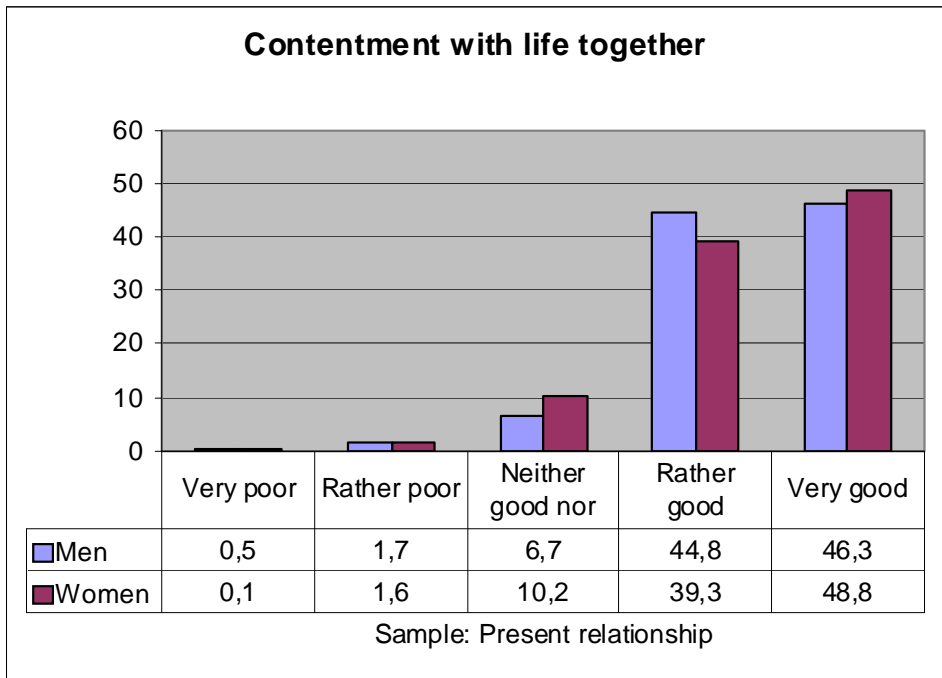
violence, the victims are mainly women (cf. e.g. Pape and Stefansen 2004; Walby and Allen 2004).

There is also a gender dimension to the exposure to violence in childhood. We see, for example, that of those reporting physical punishment/violence at home, a larger proportion names their father as the perpetrator than their mother. At the same time, there is a dramatic difference between the youngest respondents and the somewhat older ones. On the basis of these figures, it might seem that the father's role as the performer of physical punishment/violence is disappearing from the average Norwegian home.⁴⁷

As to violence outside of the home as an adult, our figures indicate that men are more involved both as victims and perpetrators. However, we find – as do a number of other Norwegian studies (cf. e.g. Stene 2003; Haaland, Clausen et al. 2005) – that age is also a strongly influencing aspect. We find the highest proportions mainly among the youngest men. After 50 years of age, the proportion involved in violence outside the home decreases dramatically, and the proportion of men and women begin to converge.

⁴⁷ Cf. also the Nova report on violence (Mossige and Stefansen 2007).

How would you generally characterise your life together with your present or previous partner?



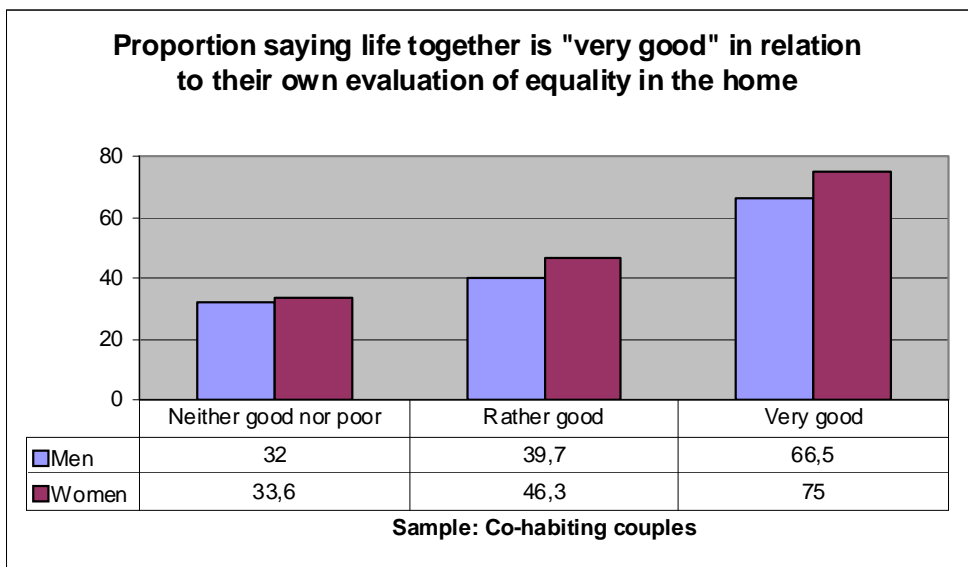
Somewhat more women than men think that their relationship is “very good”, while slightly more men than women evaluate it as “rather good”. Among those describing their previous relationship, the tone is much darker, especially among women. While about 3 per cent of both men and women choose the alternative “very poor”, 9 per cent of the men and 22 per cent of the women say it was “rather poor”. Around 25 per cent of both sexes say it was “neither good nor poor”. The rest, about 60 per cent of the men and 50 per cent of the women, are at the positive end of the answer scale.

In MN88, a total of 96 per cent of the men were satisfied with their life together with their partner, compared to 91 per cent in GEQL07.⁴⁸ It might seem that men

⁴⁸ In MN88, the number is based on those answering “yes” and “partly” to the question “Are you on the whole very content with your mutual relationship?”. In LL07, the number is based on those who in Q71 (“How would you generally evaluate life together with your present partner?”) have answered “rather” or “very good”. In LL07, the numbers pertain to “present relationship”.

today are a little less content with their relationships, than men 20 years ago. However, the questions in MN88 and GEQL07 are not totally identical.

Contentment with life together with partner also varies rather strongly with some of the other questions on relationship. This applies, for example, to personal evaluations of gender equality in the home.⁴⁹ In the diagram below, we have divided men and women into groups according to how they evaluate equality in the home (the horizontal axis). We have then looked at how big a proportion in each group say that their life together is “very good” (vertical axis).



While 75 per cent of the women who think equality in the home is very good, are very content with life together with their partner, only 34 per cent of those who think equality in the home is “neither good nor poor” are very pleased. The answers of men more or less follow the same pattern. For women (but not for men) we also get significant results for those who evaluate equality at home as “rather poor”. Here the proportion of women who are very content with life together decreases to 11 per cent.

⁴⁹ Q49

The contentment with life together is also, as expected, strongly associated with whether one thinks one will live together with the same partner to the end of one's life (Q70a). We will further discuss contentment with life together in the section of quality of life in the second part of the report.

Section 6. Parents and children

Some of the main points of the section

- Both mothers and fathers express a wish to work less and be together more with their children. The proportion who want this, increases with increased working time, and the proportion also increases with a lower age of the youngest child.
- Among men who, on an average, work more than 40 hours per week, 15 per cent of those whose youngest child is 15–18 years old would like to work less out of consideration for the children. When moving to those with children aged 1–3 years, the proportion increases to around 80 per cent. There are too few women in this category to gain any significant results.
- Among those with a normal working time (35–40 hours), we can compare those whose youngest child is 15–18 years old and those whose youngest child is 1–3 years old. Here, the proportion that would like to work less because of their children increases among both men and women, from 23 per cent for the oldest children to about 65 per cent for those with the youngest children.
- Both men and women wish that there was a law on longer parental leave for fathers.
- Among the fathers who had been home alone with their child during their parental leave, there is an increasing proportion who think this has resulted in better contact with the child later.
- A larger proportion of men than of women think that children should live equally with both parents after a separation. The proportion of men saying this is also larger now than 20 years ago. In 1988,⁵⁰ the question as to where the children should live after a separation, was by 83 per cent of the men answered with “with both or with me”. In our study, the proportion has increased to 88 per cent.

⁵⁰ MN88

- In actual fact, children today live with their mother to a far greater extent than with their father after a separation. The proportion of the respondents who have children, but do not live together with them, is considerably larger among the men than the women.
- A smaller proportion of men than of women think that mothers and fathers are today considered to be equally valuable parents.
- Better parental leave systems for men since 2000 has lead to increased proportions of men taking longer parental leave, but the fathers' share of the leave is still considerably smaller than that of the mothers.
- When comparing men's parental leaves before and after 2000, we nevertheless find that the father's share of the total parental leave (own + partner's share) has increased between 25 and 30 per cent.

Who lives with children?

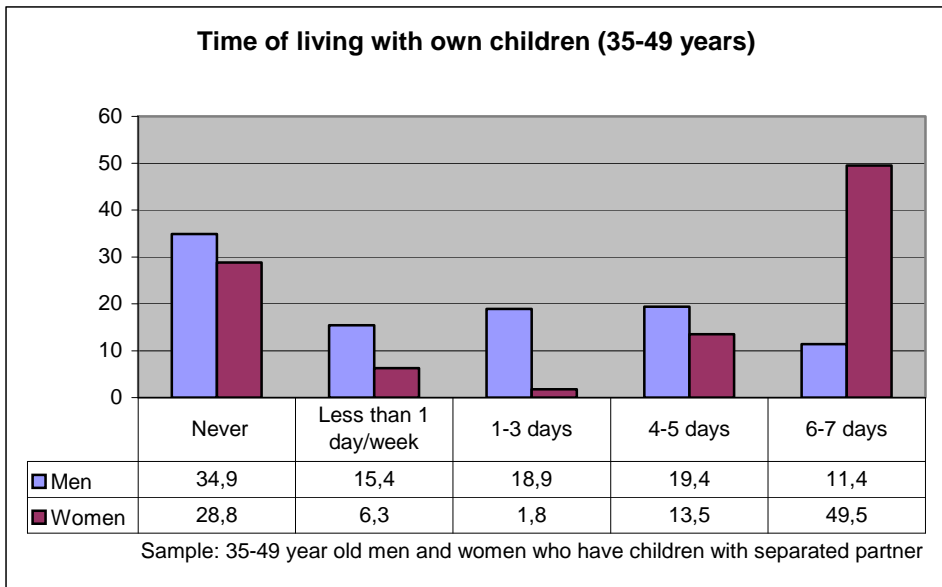
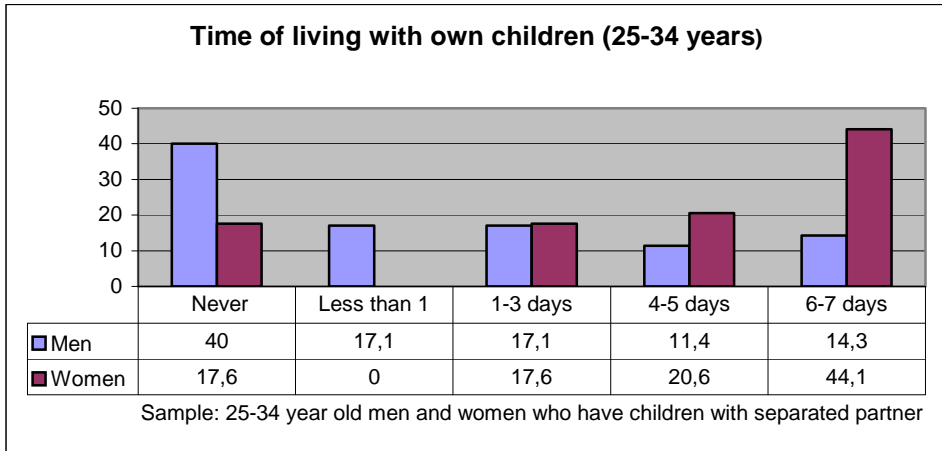
73 per cent of the respondents of between 17 and 79 years of age have children of their own. The proportion of those with their own children increases with age. In the age group of 17–24-year-olds, 4.8 per cent have children, in the group of 25–34-year-olds, about half have children, while between 80 and 90 per cent of those over 35 years of age say they have children of their own. Men are somewhat older than women when they become parents.

Very many of those with children of their own do not live with them, either because the children are grown up and have moved away from home, or because the children live with a partner who the respondent no longer lives with. *More men than women under 50 years of age live without children even if they do have children, since the children live with their separated partner.*⁵¹

Let us look at how the time of living with children is distributed between men and women after a separation.⁵² Below, the answers are illustrated in two diagrams; one for those between 25 and 34 years of age, and one for those between 35 and 49 years.

⁵¹ We will take a closer look at separation and quality of life in the section on quality of life.

⁵² Q76



We can see that the proportion of men who say they never live with their children is largest in the younger age group (40 per cent), and that the proportion of men is more than double the proportion of women saying this. Otherwise we note that of the somewhat older men, several live with their children 1–5 days per week.

Nevertheless, the consistent pattern is that women spend more time with their children than the men do.⁵³

Childcare cash benefit

Among those with children under 7 years of age, 15.1 per cent of the men, compared to 71.6 per cent of the women, have received childcare cash benefit. Thus, the receipt of the cash benefit is, to a very great extent, gender associated.

Time together and activities with children

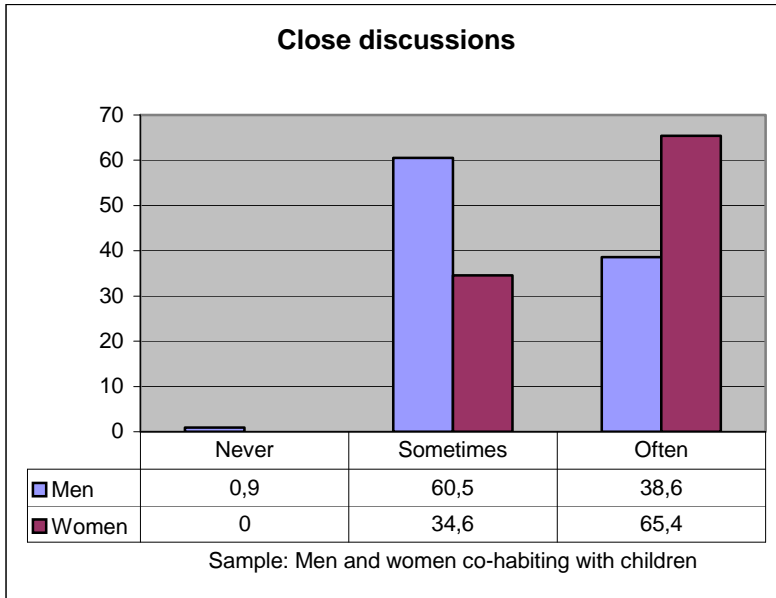
In the study, we ask to which extent fathers and mothers are actively involved in the lives of their children through various activities.⁵⁴

As to the activity of *playing together at home* there is no statistically significant gender difference. About half (50.1 per cent) of both men and women say that they often play with their children at home, and 47.5 per cent say they “sometimes” do so. However, fathers of 25–34 years of age stand out positively. In this age group, 82 per cent of the men say they *often* play together with their children at home, compared to 68 per cent of the women in the same age group, who, by the way, are also above the average for all women.

The diagram below shows the numbers for “close discussions”.

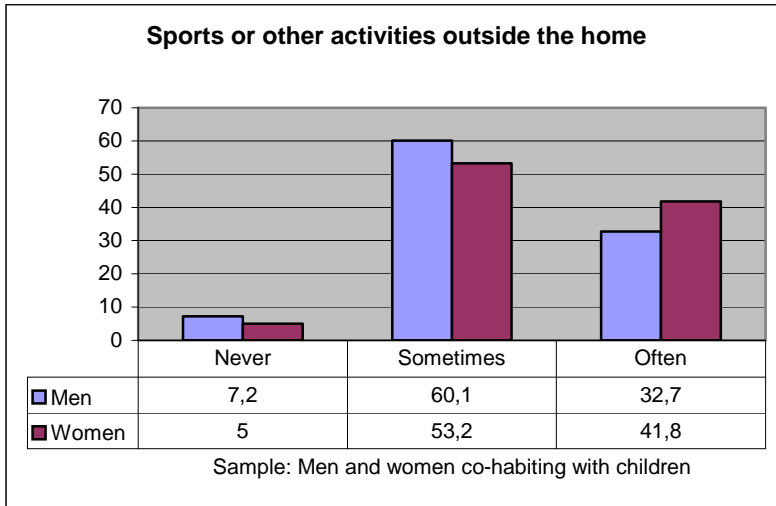
⁵³ We are surprised at the high proportion of men saying they never live together with their children. Some of the men who have chosen the alternative “never” might have a system where the children regularly stay the night, but they do not think of this as the children living with them.

⁵⁴ Q87 and Q88. Sample: Men and women co-habiting with children.



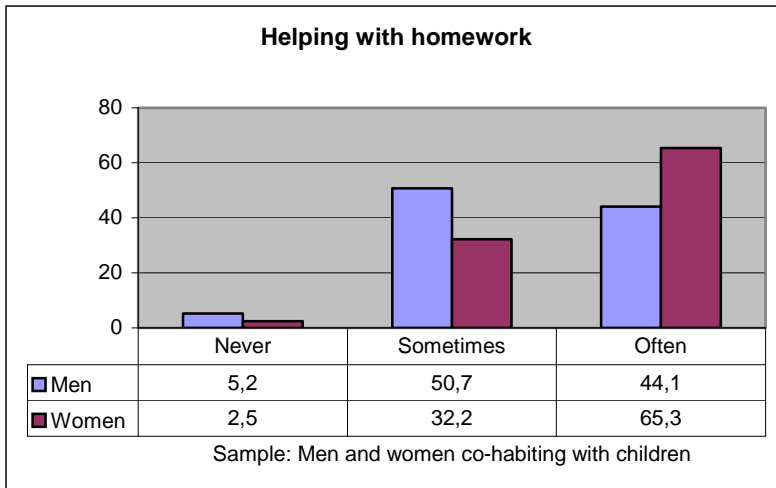
We can see that a larger proportion of women than of men report that they often have close discussions with their children. Particularly women with high socio-economic status answer positively here.

The diagram below shows the distribution of answers concerning sports and other activities outside of the home.



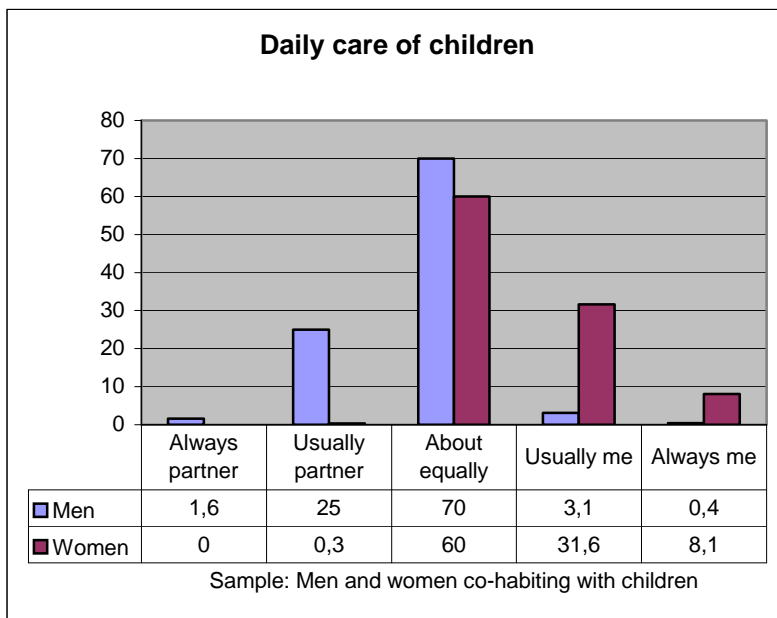
A larger proportion of women than of men report that they often participate in sports or other activities with their children. A larger proportion of men have chosen the alternative “never”.

The diagram below shows the distribution of answers pertaining to helping children with homework.



A larger proportion of women than of men report that they often help their children with homework. A larger proportion of men have chosen the alternative “never”. For men, socio-economic status is a strongly influencing factor here. Among those with the highest socio-economic status, 48 per cent say that they often help their children with homework, while 14 per cent of those with the lowest socio-economic status say that they never do it.

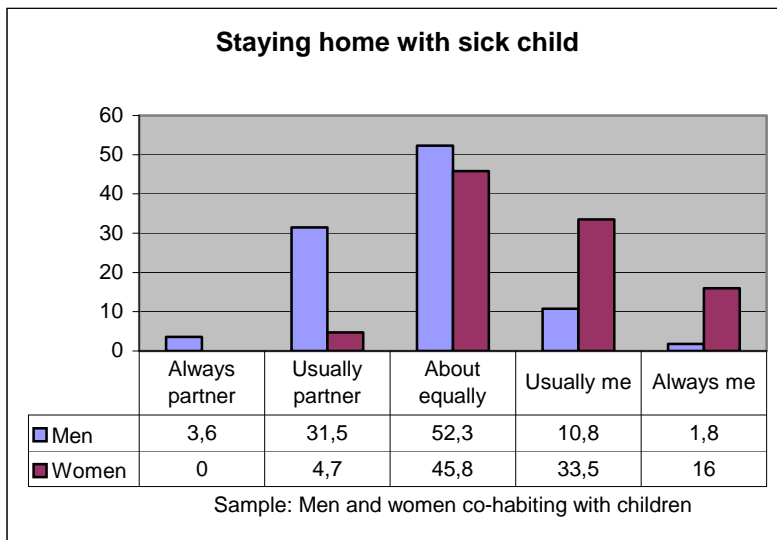
The distribution of answers to the general question as to who handles the daily care of the children⁵⁵ is illustrated in the diagram below:



We can see that about two thirds of both men and women say they participate equally as, or together with, their partner in the daily care of the children. Among the rest, men and women agree that women to a larger extent than men handle the daily childcare. The proportion of women answering “always” or “usually me” increases with lower socio-economic status.

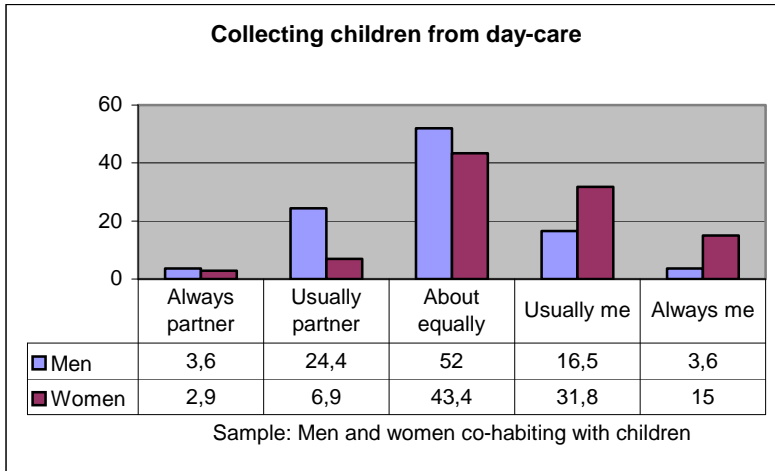
⁵⁵ Q88. The question was: “Disregarding the help you might get from other sources, how do you and your (prior) partner divide the following tasks between yourselves?”

The distribution of answers concerning staying at home with sick children is shown in the diagram below.



Women, to a larger extent than men, stay at home when their children are ill. However, the majority shares this task rather equally. Here, too, the proportion of women answering “always” or “usually me” increases with lower socio-economic status.

The diagram below shows the distribution of answers pertaining to collecting the children from day-care.



Women, to a larger extent than men, collect the children from day-care.

The difference between men and women when it comes to driving their children to their after school activities is not statistically significant. Just over half of both men and women say that they do this about equally much, 6.4 per cent say “always me”, while 27.4 per cent answer “usually me”.

The overall first impression of the answers above is rather gender conservative. A larger proportion of women than of men take care of the general childcare, and are also more actively involved in a number of the specified activities discussed above, particularly those connected to a certain degree of “necessity”, such as staying at home with a sick child. If, however, we explore the answers in greater detail, we see that the differences between men and women are not always that big. This applies especially to the more “voluntary” or “social” activities, such as close discussions, or helping with homework. Often the differences between men and women pertain to the degrees of activity – women more commonly say “often”, while men say “sometimes”. The main group says that they share the tasks about equally. We also note that the youngest fathers play more with their children than the older ones do. Can we perhaps discern the traces of a new father role here?

Some individual questions

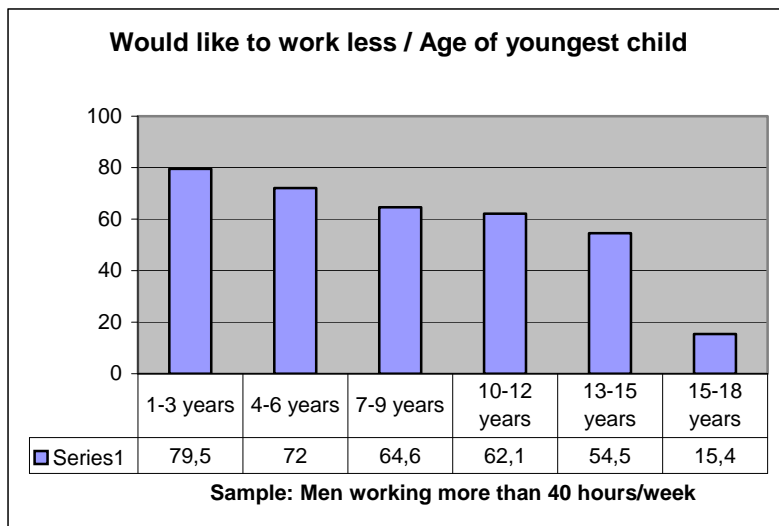
Here, we present the answers to some of the questions in the section on children individually.⁵⁶

Q89A Because of my job, I can spend too little time with my children

The difference between men and women is not statistically significant here. 26 per cent of both men and women say that because of their job, they can spend too little time with their children. The proportion is largest among men and women between 25 and 34 years of age; the male proportion is here 39 per cent, while the female proportion is 36 per cent.

Q89B If it were possible, I would like to work less, if I could then spend more time with my children

The difference between men and women is not statistically significant here. 51.2 per cent of both men and women say that, if it were possible, they would like to work less, if they could then spend more time with their children. We do, however, get clear and significant results when looking at how the answers vary according to actual working time and/or age of youngest child. In the diagram below, we focus on men who work more than 40 hours per week. The wish to work less increases strongly among those with the youngest children.



⁵⁶ Sample: Men and women co-habiting with children.

Among those whose youngest child is 15–18 years, only 15 per cent wish to work less because of their children, compared to as many as about 80 per cent of those whose youngest child is between 1 and 3 years old. There are too few women in this category to gain any significant results. However, if we look at those with normal working hours (35–40 hours/week), there is a corresponding pattern among both men and women. Here, the proportion that would like to work less because of their children increases among *both* men and women from 23 per cent for those with the oldest children to about 65 per cent for those with the youngest children.

Q89C All in all, it is I who carry the main responsibility for supporting the family

46.1 per cent of the men answer in the affirmative to this question, while only 7.7 per cent of the women do so.

This is a question where the answers, naturally, are affected by the division of income between the partners in a couple. Among couples where the man earns the most (that is, more than his partner), 66 per cent of the men see themselves as the main provider. In cases where the partners earn more or less equally, 22.6 per cent of the men see themselves as the main provider, as compared to 8.5 per cent of the women. Where the woman earns the most, 34.6 per cent of the women feel that they are the main provider.⁵⁷ It is remarkable how the answers of men seem to be more in correspondence with financial realities than those of women. Even if the woman has a higher income, and thus contributes more to the family's finances than the man, she feels, to a lesser extent, that she is the main breadwinner, "all in all".

Q89D It often happens that I worry about the children when I'm not with them

The difference between men and women here is not statistically significant. 45.5 per cent of both men and women say that "it often happens that I worry about the children when I'm not with them". Thus, we do not find the traditional female "worry pattern" concerning the children; rather, this is something both parents can experience. The proportion that worries is, nevertheless, slightly larger among women with low socio-economic status, and among the oldest fathers.

⁵⁷ Sample: Co-habiting with partner.

Q89E I'm afraid of losing contact with my children in the case of a separation

Here, 38.5 per cent of the men answer in the affirmative, while 12.5 per cent of the women do so. The higher proportion of men can here be said to be based on actual circumstances, when looking at it in the light of the numbers showing that men to a smaller extent than women live together with their children after separating.

Q89F I know where to find the children's trousers, socks, pullovers and other clothes

91 per cent of the men answer that they know where to find their children's trousers, socks, pullovers and other clothes, compared to 98.5 per cent of the women.

We included this question as a test in relation to the earlier questions on the level of involvement in the lives of the children. We assumed that a positive answer here proves an actual participation in the daily, practical care of the children, even if it does not necessarily say anything about the extent of the involvement. In that case, the answers show that a large majority of both mothers and fathers do participate, even if we again see that a slightly larger proportion of the mothers than of the fathers answer positively.

Q89G I often have a bad conscience when my partner and my children are at home without me

30.1 per cent of the men often have a bad conscience, compared to 19.9 per cent of the women. The proportion of affirmative answers is, as expected, somewhat larger among those with a long weekly working time, but the increase is not as large as could be anticipated, and also among these the proportion of affirmative answers is largest among the men.

Q89H I spend more time than my partner on organising practical tasks in the family and household

84.3 of the women claim they spend more time than their partner on organising practical tasks in the family and household, compared to 14.3 per cent of the men. This is one of the questions in the survey which displays the largest gender difference.

Note that the question does not ask how much time the respondent actually spends on work or activities related to children, family and household, but how much time (and assumedly also energy) one uses on *organising* these. In that case, the answers reflect a picture we recognise from the section on the household, where we saw that even if men participate more in housework than before, the women have a relatively larger *influence*, by having “the last word”, or setting the standards for the home.

Circumstances pertaining to children after a separation

Here, we deal with circumstances pertaining to children after a separation.⁵⁸

Q90A S/he does not trust me to be able to take care of the children well enough

23.7 per cent of the men answered in the affirmative here, compared to 10.3 per cent of the women.⁵⁹

Q90B S/he moved far away with the children without taking me into consideration

11.5 per cent of the men answered in the affirmative here, compared to 4.1 per cent of the women.

Q90C S/he was critical of me to the children and tried to get them to dislike me

Here, 23.8 per cent of both men and women answer positively.

Q90D S/he basically did not bother at all about the children, and did not turn up as agreed when it was her/his turn to spend time with them

6.4 per cent of the men answered in the affirmative here, compared to 25.7 per cent of the women.

Taken together, these figures outline a picture which is not that different from what we often hear: men, to a larger extent than women, have the experience that they

⁵⁸ Q90. The set of questions was introduced thus: “After a separation that involves children, it sometimes happens that the children are drawn into the conflict in various ways. Have you yourself experienced any of the following situations?”

⁵⁹ As to the sample, there was a filter here, so that we only got answers from those who have experienced a separation involving children.

are distrusted as parents, and that their ex-partner moves far away with the children. The women (and children), to a larger extent than the men, experience that their ex-partner does not turn up for planned meetings with the children. Criticism seems to affect men and women to the same extent. But we must also note that the proportions reporting this are relatively small; around 75 per cent of the respondents have not experienced any such problems.

Questions on attitudes to children and bringing up children

In GEQL07, we have chosen to include some statements on the bringing up of children and the involvement in childcare, which might give us an impression of how men and women think girls and boys should be brought up, and how parents should engage in childcare. Considering that one of the aims of GEQL07 is to illuminate men's attitudes to and understanding of gender equality, it is interesting and important to gain knowledge of men's (and women's) views on issues pertaining to childcare and systems affecting men's and women's opportunities to combine family and working life, and on the norms and values associated with bringing up children that, so to say, "create" gender, gender differences and similarities.

Bringing up children should be based on the assumption that boys and girls are different and like doing different things⁶⁰

75.5 per cent of the men agree with this, compared to 62.3 per cent of the women. Looking at the age distribution of the answers, it is clear that mainly the very youngest and the very oldest of the men think so. The youngest (87 per cent) and the oldest (83 per cent) men are the greatest advocates of gender separated upbringing. It is difficult, based only on GEQL07, to say definitely what this is an expression of; we do find, however, a positive correlation between agreement with this and the statements in Q102A and B, that is "Gender equality has developed far enough" and "Gender equality is more or less implemented already". Seen in this light, there are indications that there prevails a certain gender conservatism and a relatively low degree of progressiveness in association with upbringing and gender among our very youngest and very oldest male respondents.

⁶⁰ Q91A

*I would find it difficult, if I had a child who came out as homosexual*⁶¹

54.4 per cent of the men agree with this, compared to 32 per cent of the women. Why do a little more than half of the men find this difficult? We can not say anything clear-cut on this, based on GEQL07. It might be possible that the harassment of homosexuals in today's society plays a decisive role for those who think it would be difficult if their child came out as a homosexual. On the other hand, this seems unreasonable when considering the great difference between what men and women seem to think in this matter. We can hardly assume that men are more worried about their children being harassed than the women are. The very oldest men (75 per cent) find this most problematic, and are followed by the oldest women (59 per cent). Among men, those between 25 and 36 years of age score lowest here (44 per cent), while the most tolerant respondents are women between 17 and 24 years of age (17 per cent).

Socio-economic status does not show any significant correlations for men. We see, however, that 38 per cent of the women with lower socio-economic status would find this issue difficult, compared to 27 per cent of the women with higher socio-economic status. This is rather noteworthy; why does socio-economic status affect the answers of women here, while it does not seem to play any essential part in what men think? Is homosexuality experienced as more threatening by men than women?⁶²

*Boys and girls should be brought up in an equal way (gender-neutrally)*⁶³

50 per cent of the men agree with this, compared to 72 per cent of the women. The youngest men are the most sceptical. It is possible that the formulations "equal" and "gender-neutrally" trigger negative associations of politically correct toys, boring children's games and unattractive unisex clothes and haircuts, and that this is the reason why only 36 per cent of the youngest men agree that boys and girls should be brought up in an equal way or gender-neutrally. At the same time, it seems that the youngest women do not, to the same extent, see anything negative or

⁶¹ Q91B

⁶² The fact that gender and sexual borderlines are somewhat "stricter" among men is a well-known find in research, and this does not seem to have changed very much, if we look at the answers here in relation to answers to questions on friendship and the question on masculinity/femininity. See Part 2, the section on gender formation.

⁶³ Q91C

problematic in boys and girls being brought up in an equal way. Among the oldest respondents, a majority of both men and women think that a gender-neutral upbringing for girls and boys is a positive thing.

*An important goal for the upbringing of children is that they will be equal when they grow up*⁶⁴

92.7 per cent of the men agree with this, compared to 97.6 per cent of the women. Men and women seem to more or less agree that equality is an important goal for the upbringing. Thus, the gender differences we saw above, does not mean lack of equality. There is little variation between the age groups here. Such attitudinal patterns will be further discussed in the section on attitudes to gender equality.

Parental leave

Here we asked: “The present Norwegian legislation gives the father the right to 6 weeks of paid parental leave (the father quota), while the mother has the right to 38 weeks of parental leave with full salary. Which of the following statements best corresponds to your view?”

Here, the numbers for the various alternatives should be interpreted with caution, since the question gives the impression that parental leave is first and foremost the mother’s right.⁶⁵ The table below summarizes the percentages of men and women agreeing with the four given alternatives:

	Men	Women
The statutory father quota is big enough	31.9	19.5
The paid leave of fathers should be lengthened, but the mothers’ leave should be kept at its present length	42.2	54.0
A law should be passed for the fathers to have about 1/3 of the parental leave	9.8	10.8
A law should be passed for the fathers and mothers to have about the same share of the parental leave	16.2	15.7

⁶⁴ Q91D

⁶⁵ This was a mistake which unfortunately passed unnoticed by those who commented on the questionnaire (and by the research group).

The main impression is that a majority wishes for the fathers' paid leave to be lengthened. Seven out of ten men support this idea, and eight out of ten women do so. The fact that the proportion wanting to keep the mothers' leave at its present length is this large in relation to those supporting the two suggestions on a more equal sharing, can be explained by the majority actually thinking so, or by the question's wording producing many affirmative answers here. We can, nevertheless, confidently say that there is massive support for an extension of the fathers' leave in one form or another.

Childcare cash benefit

To what extent is an arrangement with childcare cash benefit good for *the family*?⁶⁶ 59.4 per cent of the men and 61.6 per cent of the women think that the arrangement with a childcare cash benefit is good for the family. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, it is the youngest groups of both sexes who are most positive (76.6 per cent of the men and 79.4 per cent of the women). The support is, also, biggest among those with the lowest socio-economic status, and smallest among those with a high level of income and education.

To what extent is an arrangement with childcare cash benefit good for the *equality* between women and men?⁶⁷ 33.5 per cent of the men think the arrangement is good for equality, compared to 24.4 per cent of the women. The most critical group are women with a high income and level of education. This might be explained by the fact that women with a high income and extensive education are those who have most to lose with such an arrangement. Based on GEQL07, it is difficult to say anything on why more men than women think an arrangement with childcare cash benefit is good for the equality between women and men. Considering that it is mostly women who make use of this system, gender equality does not seem to benefit particularly from this arrangement. Nevertheless, as we see, every third male respondent thinks the system with childcare cash benefit is favourable for gender equality.

⁶⁶ Q93A

⁶⁷ Q93B

Day-care⁶⁸

Is day-care good for *1–2-year-old* children? 56.6 per cent of the men answered “no” to this question, as compared to 55.6 per cent of the women. The oldest groups of both sexes are most sceptical here.

Is day-care good for *4–6-year-old* children? 3.2 per cent of the men answered “no” to this question, as compared to 1.3 per cent of the women. There is little age variation. Thus, the scepticism towards day-care is radically lower concerning older children.

Six hours’ working day⁶⁹

The question here was: “There has been a suggestion to introduce 6-hour working days for parents with small children, so that they would have more time to take care of their children. Do you agree with this suggestion?”

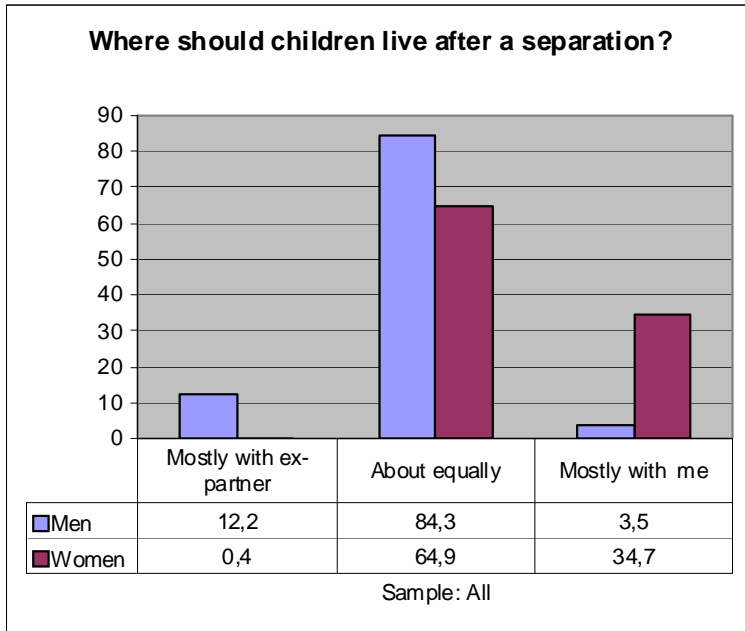
61.1 per cent of the men and 85.9 per cent of the women support such a suggestion. Among the men, especially the very youngest are positive: 73.8 per cent.

Where do the children live after a separation?

Here the question was: “Imagine being married or co-habiting with children, and then separating – where should the children then live?” The answers are distributed as follows:

⁶⁸ Q94

⁶⁹ Q95



A larger proportion of men than of women think children should live about equally much with both parents. Women, to a larger extent than men, want the children to live mostly with them. Only 0.4 per cent of the women think that the children should live mostly with the ex-partner, as compared to 12.2 per cent of the men.

In MN88, 83 per cent of the men answered “with both” or “with me”.⁷⁰ In GEQL07, the corresponding number is 88 per cent. Thus, more men today than 20 years ago wish the children to live with both parents or with them after a separation. Note, however, that in GEQL07, only 3.5 per cent of the men would like to have the children living with them. Thus, very few men would want to carry this responsibility alone.

The survey “Likeverd 1994” (“Equity 1994”), included a question as to where the children should live in the case of a separation. Then, 65 per cent of the men and

⁷⁰ In MN88, the number is based on those who answered “yes” and “partly” to the question “If you were to separate, would you like to live with your child(ren)?” In LL07, the number is based on those who in Q96 (“Imagine being married or co-habiting with children, and then separating – where should the children then live?” have chosen the alternative “about equally” (i.e. as much with them and ex-partner) or “mostly with me”.

37 per cent of the women answered that the children should live about equally much with both parents. So we see a clear increase in the proportion of those who think the children should live equally with both parents. The proportion has increased from 37 to 65 per cent among women, and from 65 to 84 per cent among men. This is one of the points in the study which displays the clearest change of attitude.

In GEQL07, we asked the respondents to give their opinion on three more general statements on parenthood and separations.⁷¹

Children should live permanently with one of the parents after a separation
50 per cent of the men and 60.7 per cent of the women agreed with this.

The parental responsibility should be shared equally between the parents after a separation

87 per cent of the men and 80.6 per cent of the women agreed with this. Men thus want shared parental responsibility to a slightly larger extent than women.

In Norway today, mothers and fathers are regarded as equally valuable parents

47.3 per cent of the men and 62.7 per cent of the women agreed with this. A smaller proportion of men than of women think that mothers and fathers are considered to be equally valuable parents.

Men's and women's use of parental leave

The salary of women in Norway is 15 per cent lower than that of men. A new report states that *longer absence* from work has a negative effect on salary development (Hardoy and Schøne 2007). One reason for long absence from working life is childcare. The Norwegian political system aims at adapting working life and welfare systems so that parents would be able to combine work and childcare. The right to take leave for pregnancy and childbirth is statutory, and Norwegian employees are protected against discrimination in this respect by a number of laws – among them, the Gender Equality Law. There is agreement that this has resulted in Norway, as opposed to many other European countries, having a high proportion of women in working life, in parallel with a high nativity. At the

⁷¹ Q97 A-C

same time, it could be asked whether it is precisely such generous welfare systems as parental leave which contribute to creating and consolidating systematic salary and income differences between women and men. Women use almost all of the parental leave; most mothers are absent from work for one year with their child, but must “pay” for this in the long run by a systematically weaker salary development than men. According to Hardoy and Schøne (2007), 40 per cent of the salary gap in the private sector and 20 per cent of the salary gap in the public sector can be explained by childcare.

In Norway, parental leave is a welfare right which is not gendered as such – both fathers and mothers have the opportunity to gain a right to take parental leave. The opportunity to combine childcare and work is thus formally available for both women and men. Against this background, it is important in a study on men’s attitudes to and understanding of gender equality to explore men’s and women’s *practices* pertaining to childcare and parental leave.

Of our respondents, 72 per cent of the men and 74 per cent of the women report having children of their own. As to the practices of fathers and mothers in using the parental leave, we must take into consideration that only from April 1993, have four weeks of the parental leave been reserved for the father. Among the parents who today are between 25 and 49 years of age, 66 per cent of the fathers and 77 per cent of the mothers have been on parental leave. However, this does not say very much about the practices of mothers and fathers, if we want to know something about how much time men and women use on the care of small children.

Development from the 1990s to the 2000s

We will begin by looking briefly at the development from the 1990s to the 2000s among all of the parents.⁷² After that, we will explore how the division of the parental leave has been affected by changes in the right to be on leave.

In the questionnaire we asked whether the respondents have children; the age of the youngest child; the respondents’ use of paid and unpaid leave when they last had a

⁷² When looking at all parents, the group we study includes both men and women with and without right to paid parental leave. If we had only included those with the right to paid leave, the numbers would have been somewhat different. Our present figures do, however, say something of the overall trends in the field during the period studied.

child, and their partner's use of leave.⁷³ For the respondents themselves, we have separate figures for both paid and unpaid leave, while we only have figures for the total time of leave (paid and unpaid) for the respondents' partners. The length of leave is given in numbers of weeks.

We will first compare parents who had their youngest child in the 1990s with parents whose youngest child was born in the 2000s. Fathers, whose youngest child was born in the 1990s, say that they, on an average, took 5.1 weeks of leave, while their partner took 39.1 weeks. These numbers pertain to total amount of leave, that is, both paid and unpaid. So the fathers report that the parents together had 44.2 weeks of leave, of which they themselves took 11.5 per cent. Mothers whose youngest child was born in the 1990s say that they had 52.4 weeks of leave, while the father had 3.2 weeks (again, both paid and unpaid leave). Thus, the mothers report that the parents together had an average of 55.6 weeks of leave, of which the fathers' share was 5.8 per cent.

The corresponding figures among fathers, whose youngest child was born in the 2000s, show that the fathers took 7.8 weeks of leave, while their partner took 39.5 weeks; that is, the parents together took 47.3 weeks, of which the father took 16.5 per cent. Mothers, whose youngest child was born in the 2000s, say that they, on an average, took 55.3 weeks of leave, while their partner took 5.5 weeks; that is, the parents together took 60.8 weeks, of which the father took 9.1 per cent.

As we can see, there is a considerable gap between the figures reported by the mothers and those reported by the fathers. The mothers report of leaves (paid and unpaid) about 30 per cent longer than those the fathers report for their partners. And the fathers claim they had about 30 per cent longer leaves than the mothers ascribe them to have had. This probably says *something* about the leave not being taken very recently; it might be difficult to remember its exact length in hindsight. But the difference is so systematic (and not, after all, very much affected by how long ago the leave took place) that we get a clear signal that parental leave is something "morally good". It is *good* to have been at home with the baby, and, if in doubt, the respondents rather add a little when it comes to their own contribution,

⁷³ We asked for the age of the youngest child in the household, and not directly whether this is the respondent's own child (while the information on parental leave pertains to the respondent's youngest child). This might result in a small margin of error, but does hardly affect the results presented in these sections to any greater extent.

while being more sceptical about the length of their partner's leave. Such a discrepancy is well-known from other areas concerning the division of labour at home, and mentioned above in the report, but it is interesting that the difference in this area is so large.

Assuming that the truth lies somewhere in the middle (i.e. using the reports of both men and women), we get the result that, pertaining to children born in the 1990s, the fathers used 8.4 per cent of the total parental leave (again, both paid and unpaid periods). As to children born in the 2000s, the fathers' share has increased to 12.3 per cent.

The fathers' share of the total leave period, including unpaid leave, has thus *increased by about 50 per cent*, based on the reports of the mothers and the fathers, from the 1990s to the 2000s. Even if the fathers' share of the total possible leave period is still small, the increase is very clear. In a longer historical perspective, this can be interpreted as a rather dramatic change.

If only looking at what the parents say about their own paid and unpaid leaves (as mentioned above, for the partners, we only have the total length of their leave), the following picture emerges:

Fathers whose youngest child was born in the 1990s took an average of 4.2 weeks paid and 1.3 weeks unpaid leave. Fathers whose youngest child was born in the 2000s took an average of 6.1 weeks paid and 1.6 weeks unpaid leave. *The fathers' paid leave has increased by 45 per cent, whilst their unpaid has increased by 23 per cent* from the 1990s to the 2000s.

Mothers whose youngest child was born in the 1990s took an average of 41.0 weeks paid and 12.5 weeks unpaid leave. Mothers whose youngest child was born in the 2000s took an average of 42.4 weeks paid and 13.0 weeks unpaid leave. *The mothers' paid leave has increased by 3 per cent, their unpaid leave by 4 per cent* from the 1990s to the 2000s.

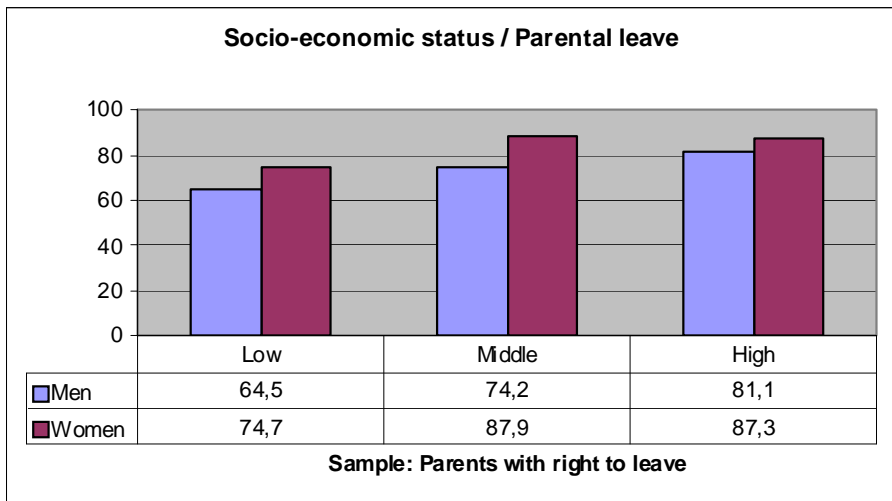
The fathers' share of the paid leave, among those whose youngest child was born in the 1990s, was 9.3 per cent. The corresponding share among fathers, whose youngest child was born in the 2000s, was 12.6 per cent. Again, we see a

considerable increase, even if the fathers' share is still small. *The fathers' share of the paid leave has increased by 36 per cent from the 1990s to the 2000s.*⁷⁴

The figures presented above represent an average for both sexes during the two periods. Taken together, they show progress towards the aim that both fathers and mothers should contribute actively in the care for and the upbringing of children.⁷⁵ There are, however, big differences, which do not appear in these average numbers, and which we will therefore look at in the following.

Socio-economic status and sectorial differences

The use of parental leave varies according to socio-economic group. Looking at practices in relation to socio-economic status, we find considerable differences between men and between women pertaining to parental leave.

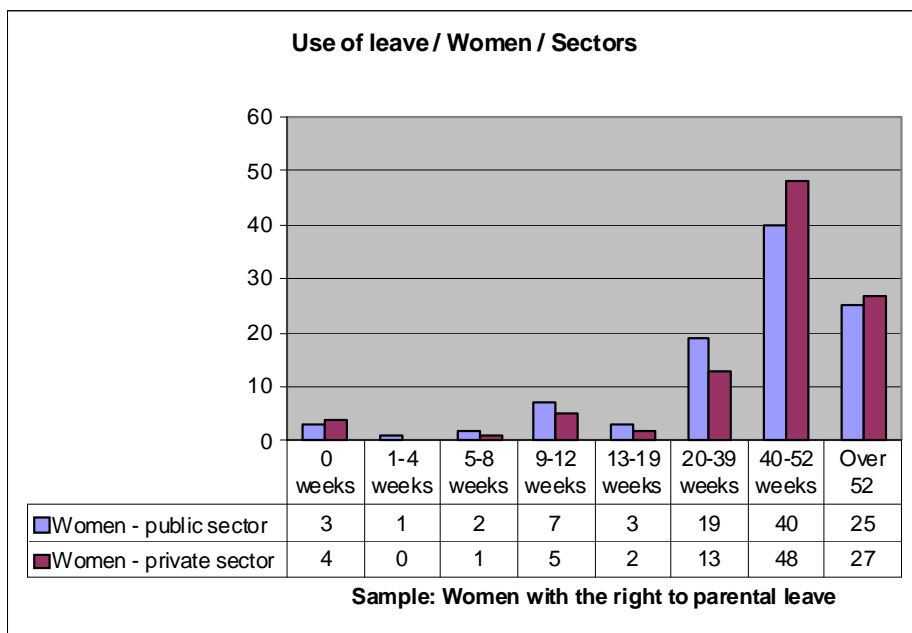


⁷⁴ And if we base the calculation only on the group that has the right to paid parental leave, and on the personal reports of the length of their leave for men and women (paid and unpaid together), we find that the fathers' share of the mothers' and fathers' total leave increases, now with about 25 per cent. We then compare the periods 1993–1999 (the father quota was introduced in 1993) and 2000–2007.

⁷⁵ If we imagine that the development will continue at the same pace as during the period 1990–2007, it will take around 45 years before fathers and mothers share the parental leave equally. This is, obviously, a very dubious way of calculating, but it does say something on historical changes in the area.

The diagram provides an overview of men and women with the right to paid parental leave. They have been divided into three groups based on our index for socio-economic status. We have then looked at how big a proportion in each group has taken parental leave (regardless of type or length). We can see that there is, particularly among men, a considerable variation; the further down we move in the index, the smaller is the proportion who have taken parental leave. Among the women, particularly those on the lowest step of the index, stand out in a negative comparison to the rest. So, the significance of socio-economic circumstances such as income and education is obvious when it comes to the use of parental leave.

What difference does employment in the private or the public sector make for the total use of parental leave? The diagrams below illustrate how the use of parental leave is distributed among women and men employed by the private and by the public sector.





The interesting thing here is how *small* a difference it makes for men and women whether they are employed in the public or the private sector. It might be assumed that men in the public sector to a certain extent took more parental leave than men in the private sector, or that women in the private sector took less parental leave than women in the public sector, but there is nothing to indicate that this would be the case – on the contrary. Again there is much – also in our study – to indicate that even if a generous welfare system such as parental leave basically is not gendered, *different* expectations are associated with fatherhood than with motherhood in Norway; expectations that result in different practices both in family and working life, and which lead, among other things, to a salary and income gap between women and men.

Generally, it seems that the “gender difference” – here understood as the difference in historically specific meanings of and expectations associated with motherhood and fatherhood – is, so to say, the difference that makes a difference when it comes to the practices of mothers and fathers pertaining to parental leave.

Parental leave and rights

We start with the general numbers for fathers and mothers from the 1990s up to the present. Distributed in numbers of weeks we see (below) that there is a big difference in how long a leave the fathers and mothers have taken. The diagrams illustrate paid leaves among those who have the right to such a leave. We have taken the fact into account, that four weeks of the parental leave were reserved for the father starting from 1993 only.

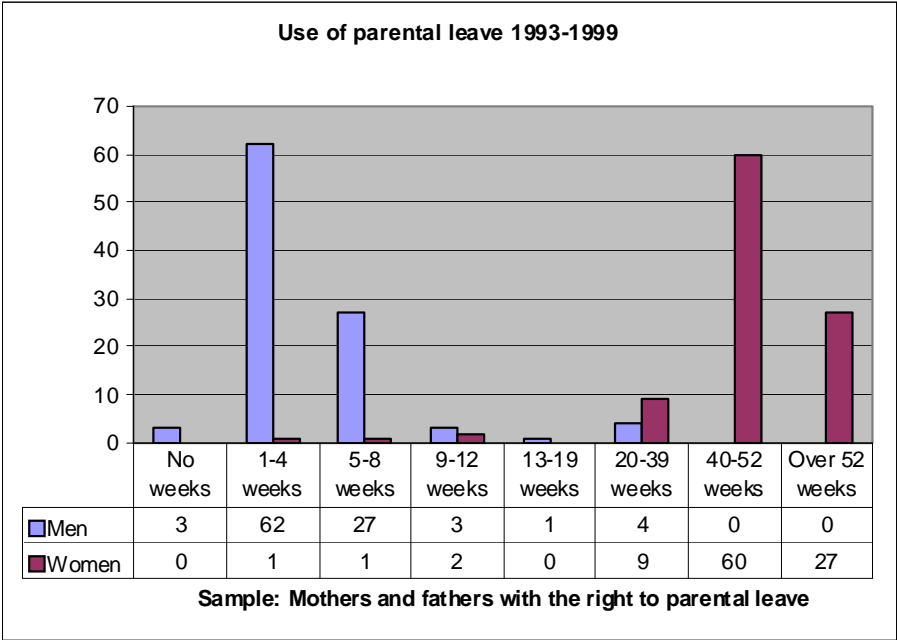
After 1993, 47 per cent of the fathers report that they have taken up to 4 weeks of leave, and 36 per cent report that they have taken up to 8 weeks of leave. Of the mothers, 53 per cent have taken 40–52 weeks of leave, and 31 per cent have had a leave of more than 52 weeks. This shows a significant difference between the mothers' and the fathers' uses of parental leave.

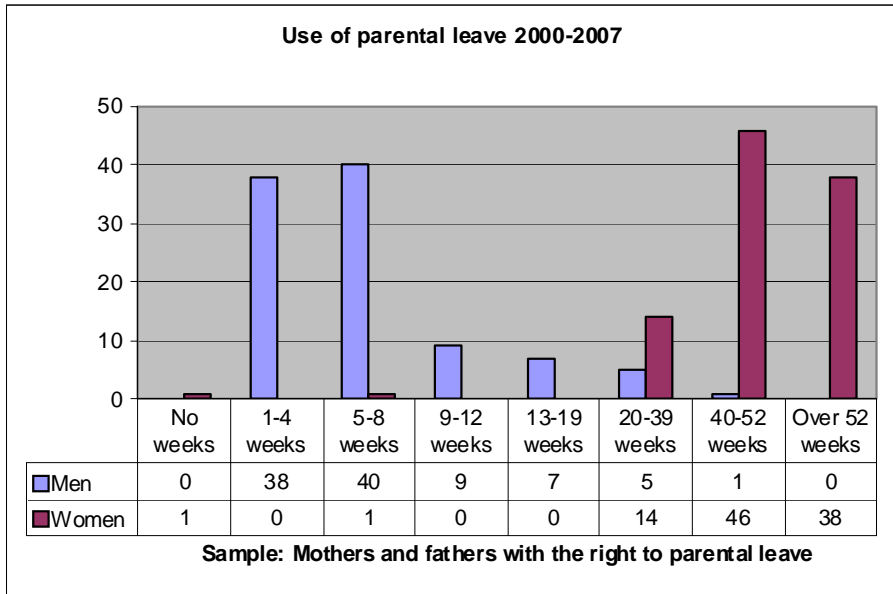
An important change that was to encourage fathers to use a larger share than the four earmarked weeks of the parental leave, was the introduction of an independent allowance basis for men in 2000. This means that since 2000, men's allowance during a parental leave exceeding the father quota is based on their *own* salary and position independent of the mother's participation in working life before the birth of the child. The father's right is, however, still dependent of what the mother does; the crucial question from 2000 is what the mother does *after* childbirth. The father receives a parental allowance based on his own income in the case that the mother after the birth works at least 75 per cent of full working time, or studies full-time at a publicly acknowledged institution, or combines work and acknowledged studies to an extent which altogether makes up a full-time occupation. Thus, there must be a caring need in order for the father to have this right; the father does not have the right to get a parental allowance if the mother, at the same time, is at home caring for the child.⁷⁶ From 2000 on, the financial argument that the father must work instead of taking parental leave should thus be weakened.

We have taken this change into consideration by presenting the figures for the fathers' and mothers' uses of parental leave after 1993 in two different diagrams:

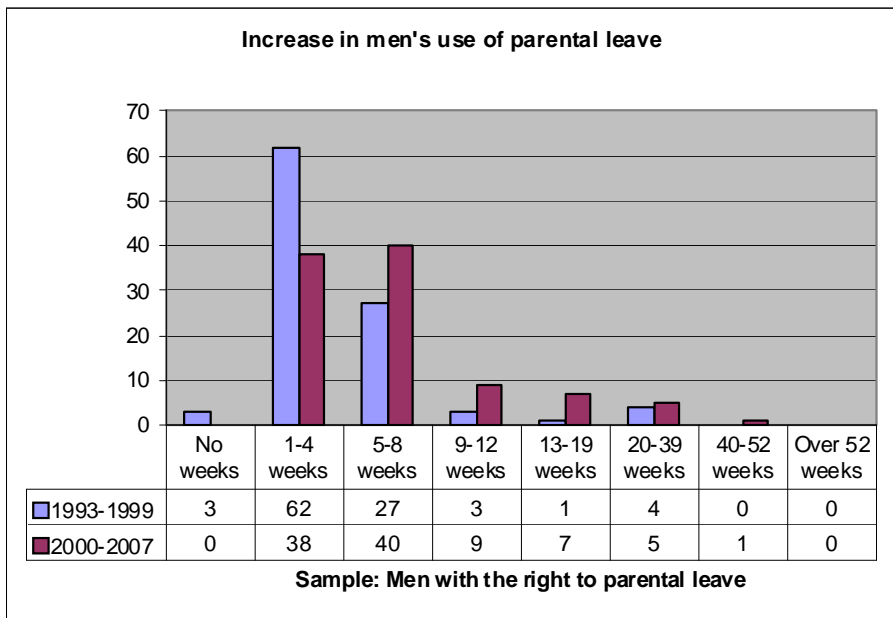
⁷⁶ The mother presumption was weakened but not removed by this change. It now depends on the mother if there is a caring need or not, and not – simply – on the child's need for contact with its father. This stands in contrast to, for example, the Icelandic system, where the father's right is secured regardless of what the mother does.

one for the period 1993–1999 and one for the period 2000–2007. Both pertain to parents with the right to parental allowance. Moreover, in 2006, the father quota was increased to six weeks.





In the diagram below, we focus on the numbers for men alone, in order to better see the difference between the two time periods.



We can see that the proportion of fathers who take 4 weeks of leave at the most has decreased dramatically from 62 per cent before 2000 to 38 per cent after 2000, and that the proportion of fathers who take up to 8 weeks of leave has increased strongly: from 27 to 40 per cent. 9 per cent of the fathers report that they took up to 12 weeks of leave and 5 per cent that they took up to 39 weeks.

So, the proportion of fathers who take more than 4 weeks of parental leave has increased since the introduction of an independent allowance basis for men in 2000. These changes, among parents with the right to parental leave, reflect those we saw for all parents.

Nevertheless, it is still the case that a clear minority of the fathers take parental leave for more than 8 weeks. In case the introduction of an independent allowance basis for men in 2000 was meant to encourage fathers to take out a larger share of the parental leave than the earmarked weeks – six weeks from 2006 – or, to put it another way, if the introduction of this system was intended to result in an equalization between the sexes pertaining to the use of parental leave, then it must be said that the system so far has had a limited effect only. The increase is perhaps large from a historical perspective, but from the perspective of 2007/2008, its effect is quite modest.

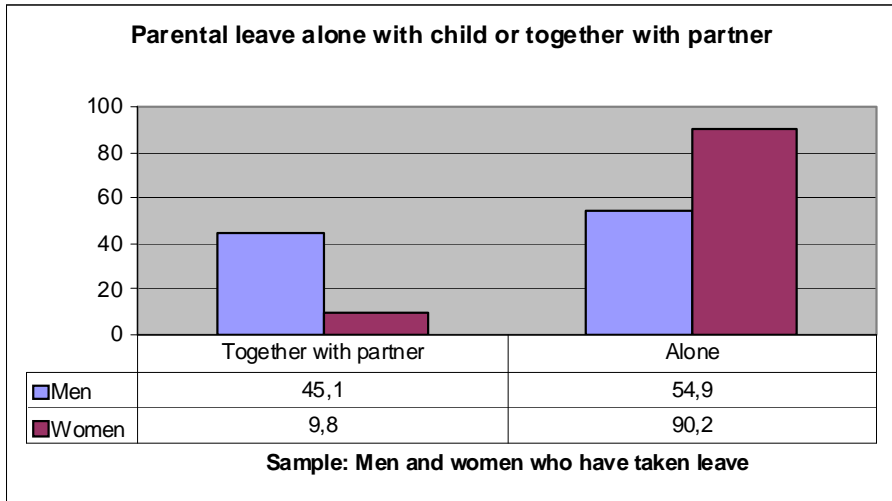
This is all the more obvious when looking at the numbers for mothers who have taken parental leave before and after 2000. The proportion of mothers who take between 40 and 52 weeks of leave has decreased from 60 per cent before 2000 to 46 per cent after 2000. Simultaneously, the proportion of mothers who take *more* than 52 weeks of leave has *increased* from 27 to 38 per cent. This is noteworthy: fathers take a maximum of 8 weeks of leave, while there is an increase in the proportion of mothers who take a leave of over 52 weeks. We saw earlier that the numbers for all mothers display rather a modest increase from the 1990s up to the present, while the numbers for mothers with the right to parental allowance show a clearer increase.

Parental leave alone with the child

As seen above, both mothers and fathers take parental leave in Norway, while it is also obvious that the women take the largest share of the leave.⁷⁷ Bearing this in

⁷⁷ Q84

mind, it might be interesting to study whether the fathers and the mothers take their leaves alone or together with their partner.



The diagram shows how large a proportion of men and women say they were mostly at home together with their partner during their leave, or mostly alone with the child. The proportion of women who answer the latter is larger than that of men, but also a little over half of the men who took parental leave say they were “mostly alone” with the child during their leave. The question as to whether spending time with the child during their parental leave resulted in better contact with the child later⁷⁸, is answered in the affirmative by more men among those who say they were “mostly alone” with the child, than among those who were at home together with their partner (the proportion increases from 80 to 93 per cent). There is no difference between the women in these two groups. Nevertheless, women do not only take out most of the parental leave, they also to a larger extent than the men spend time alone with the child during their leave. This means that men both take less parental leave than women and to a lesser degree than women spend time alone with the children during their leave.

What is the background to this gender-segregated picture? There are many possible explanations.

⁷⁸ Q85

Six possible explanations

We will discuss six possible explanations as to why the gender segregation continues to be so great pertaining to parental leave, despite many good attempts and official aims to get the fathers more involved, and a system that formally makes this possible.

Lack of day-care

The amount of day-care facilities in Norway is still not sufficient, and parents find themselves forced to stay at home with their children until they get a place in day-care. This might explain why so many mothers take leave for over 52 weeks, but it does *not* explain why most fathers take a maximum of only 8 weeks. Based on our study, we can not give a definite answer as to why this is the case, but we can see that the gendered *pattern* emerging in the fathers' and mothers' uses of parental leave is also present in the fathers' and mothers' uses of *childcare cash benefit*.

The childcare cash benefit was introduced in 1998, and is paid for children between 1 and 3 years of age living in Norway. Full childcare cash benefit is paid if the child does not attend day-care supported by public means. Parents who wish to place their child in part-time day-care are granted a reduced childcare cash benefit. The childcare cash benefit is non-taxable and is granted per child without any income limits or means test. Among the mothers and fathers between 25 and 49 years of age in our material, 10 per cent of the fathers and 44 per cent of the mothers have received childcare cash benefit.⁷⁹ The use of childcare cash benefit can be explained by the insufficient day-care services. But as in the case of the practices of men and women pertaining to use of parental leave, insufficient day-care does not explain the differences between the mothers' and fathers' uses of childcare cash benefit, either. It is the mothers who receive most childcare cash benefit and who take out the longest parental leaves.⁸⁰ The lack of day-care

⁷⁹ The proportion of fathers among those who say they have received childcare cash benefit is larger than in earlier research, but we have not had the opportunity to look at this in closer detail within this report. Especially younger fathers report receiving childcare cash benefit.

⁸⁰ In the section on attitudes to equality we saw a sub-group of "enough-is-enough" men (enough of equality, enough of immigration, enough of government interference) with a family political profile strongly positive to childcare cash benefit and sceptical towards day-care. It could have been expected that these men, according to a traditional patriarchal

services can explain why parents choose to receive childcare cash benefit or take a long parental leave, but it does not explain the short parental leaves of the *fathers* or the general *gendered* patterns in the use of parental economic rights.

“For the child’s benefit”

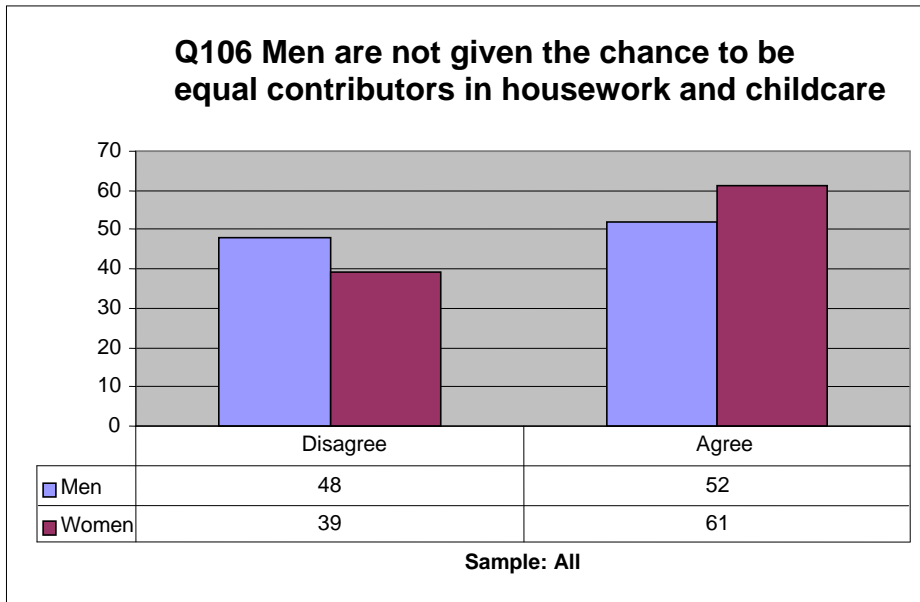
In the debate prior to and also after the introduction of the childcare cash benefit, considerations of the child’s interest was a central theme. It was argued that not choosing day-care was a child- and family-friendly choice. Is there such a “for-the-child’s-benefit” discourse *also* behind the long parental leaves of mothers? In the study, we asked the respondents about their attitudes towards day-care. Looking at a sample consisting of mothers and fathers between 25 and 49 years of age, we see that while almost all – both mothers and fathers – seem to think that day-care is good for children aged 4–5 years, only half – again, both mothers and fathers – think so pertaining to 1–2-year-old children. The age of 1–2 years coincides with the period of parental leave, when it is, as we have seen, mostly the mother who stays at home. In case it is their concern for the best interests of the child that lies behind the fact that half of both the mothers and the fathers are sceptical about the value of day-care for 1–2-year-olds, it might perhaps be said that it is the consideration of the best interests of the child which also explains the relatively long parental leaves of the mothers. However, the concern for the best interests of the child cannot as such explain why it is the *mothers*, and not the fathers, who choose this. Rather, it could be said that the seemingly neutral benefit-for-child discourse conceals the fact that pertaining to the care of small children, it is more or less always the *mother* and the mother’s choice that is in focus, while the *father* and the father’s choices are seldom referred to (Eidem Olsen 2003).

Men are not acknowledged as carers

Men are not acknowledged as carers. The short parental leaves of fathers might be explained by their being, or their feeling of being, brushed aside, nagged at, ignored and/or not taken seriously at home, and they react by withdrawing and, for example, spending as much time as possible at work – also after having children. In our study, we asked the respondents to say whether they agree or disagree with the

pattern, would have answered positively pertaining to childcare cash benefit for their wife or partner, but not for themselves. It is therefore remarkable that the numbers show that these men receive childcare cash benefit more or less in line with other men – and not much less. This says something on the equality climate in contemporary Norway.

statement “Men are not given the chance to be equal contributors in housework and childcare” (Q106e).



It is remarkable that more women than men say that they agree with this. When exploring possible differences between the age groups and between those who agree “totally” or “somewhat”, we see that particularly women between 25 and 34 years of age say they agree “totally” with this, and the oldest women (65 years and over) say they agree “somewhat”. Among the men, the very youngest ones are those who agree mostly with the statement that men are not given a chance. This view regularly appears in public debates and the media, and has gradually gained ground as an explanation as to why men do not participate more in housework and the daily care of children. It is interesting that this very standpoint has gained ground. The view that men (apparently) want to participate, but are not given the chance, is not only something that more than half of the men in our study seem to agree with; a majority of the women also think so. It is not, either, only a comment from, so to say, the sideline, from those who do not have children, concerning the situation among parents. On the contrary, among the mothers under 40 years of age, 65 per cent agree (totally or somewhat), as compared to 60 per cent in agreement among the fathers under 40 years.

On the basis of our material only, we are unable to say whether this is an expression of women actually being content with men only taking out eight weeks of parental leave, or whether it is a comment from women that women and men encounter different expectations as to what they should do as parents. Neither can we say anything on to which extent men actually *try* to be let in on issues pertaining to home and family. It must also be asked whether this explanation does not ascribe men with an unreasonable degree of *passivity* as a reason for why most fathers also after 2000 take out a maximum of only eight weeks of parental leave.

Men do not want more parental leave

Most fathers do not want to have more than about eight weeks of parental leave. The fact that most fathers do not take more than eight weeks of parental leave might indicate that they do not want to be absent from their work for more than eight weeks, or that they do not want to be at home with their children for more than eight weeks. We can, however, based on our study, exclude this explanation. We can do this by looking at the answers of parents whose children were born between 2000 and 2007, and who have the right to paid parental leave, to the question (Q83): “Would you have liked to have a longer parental leave?”. As many as 75 per cent of the fathers say they would have liked to have a longer leave. This does not, however, say anything on how much more leave the fathers would have wanted. Looking at what the same fathers and mothers – that is, with right to paid parental leave and children born between 2000 and 2007 – answer to the question on their views of today’s gender division of the parental leave, we see that 58 per cent of the fathers and 74 per cent of the mothers think that the father quota should be increased, but that the mother should be able to keep as long a leave as today (Q92b). Because of the inadequate formulation of this question, we can not give a satisfactory answer as to how many would wish a system where the father gets a third or half of the parental leave, but the impression is that most would like the fathers to have a larger share, without that affecting the present share of the mother.⁸¹ It might seem that many men want a certain, but limited, increase. Thus,

⁸¹ The question is formulated so that one gets the impression that the period that the parents can share is the mother’s period. This might have influenced the distribution of answers essentially. New numbers from an opinion survey in November 2006 indicate a much larger support for a model of sharing the leave in thirds (one third for the mother, one third for the father, one third to be divided as the parents wish), but we have not had the opportunity to compare the numbers satisfactorily. It is interesting that the “mother presumption” in the

it can be asked what exactly men mean when they express a wish for more parental leave.

Compensation for the other partner

The mothers *compensate* for the absence of the fathers with their presence in the form of parental leave. The mothers' long parental leaves can be explained by the fathers taking short leaves, but the opposite can also be the case: fathers take short leave because mothers take long leaves. *Why* mothers and fathers choose to do as they do is something we cannot say based on our study.

Working life hampers longer leave

Men do not take more than eight weeks of parental leave since it is less acceptable for men than for women to be absent from working life because of children. Does this mean that there are other expectations associated with fatherhood than motherhood in Norway, and that these differences in the expectations result in different attitudes towards female and male employees? It could, for example, be imagined that fathers with small children are encountered with various forms of sanctions, direct or indirect exclusion and harassment by their superiors or colleagues if they express a wish to share the parental leave with their partner. The gender segregation of the labour market might also be a factor; more men than women work within competitive industries where absence from work for a longer period – regardless of the reason – becomes a financial burden for the individual company. As we showed in the first section of the report, there is a tendency that men to a far lesser extent than women choose an education and job that can be combined with children and family.

Conclusion

The question posed in this section is why the use of parental leave is still strongly gender-segregated, despite a system which formally enables a more equal division.

formulation of the question passed unnoticed (despite much discussion and revision of the questionnaire while compiling it, both in the research team, the reference group, at the Ministry of Children and Equality and among contact persons) until the Swedish Information Adviser at NIKK, Bosse Parbring, pointed it out. (The wording of the question was: "The present Norwegian legislation gives the father the right to 6 weeks of paid parental leave (the father quota), while the mother has the right to 38 weeks of parental leave with full salary. Which of the following statements best corresponds to your view?").

We first looked at average numbers for all fathers and mothers (regardless of rights) who had children in the 1990s and the 2000s, respectively. The numbers show that the fathers' share of the parents' total time for parental leave, including unpaid leave, increased from 8 per cent in the 1990s to 12 per cent in the 2000s. The fathers' paid leave increased by 45 per cent during that time, while that of the mothers increased by 3 per cent. Even if the share of the fathers is still small, there is a clear increase. We also see a considerable gap between the reports of the fathers and the mothers, which probably can only be explained by failing recollection. Both partners report of about 30 per cent longer time of leave than what the other partner claim they took. The numbers indicate that parental leave is something morally good, something one "should" have taken much of.

We further looked at socio-economic differences and sectorial differences among parents with the right to allowances during parental leaves. The proportion of fathers who have used their leave decreased with lower social status, and is also smaller among the mothers on the lowest step of the index. Whether one works in the private or public sector is, on the other hand, of surprisingly small significance.

In the last part of the section, we discussed six possible explanations as to why the share of parental leave continues to display such strong gender differences. These were: insufficient day-care, concern about what is best for the child, men not being acknowledged as carers, men not wanting more leave, compensation for the other partner, and working life hampering longer leaves. We did not draw any conclusions from this discussion, but we saw that some of the explanations (insufficient day-care, what is best for the child, men not wanting more leave) are not very plausible ways of explaining the gender difference.

Our numbers show, however, that gender-segregated working life and different career choices very probably have strong effects (for example, through imbalanced distribution of income in couples), and fit well into the picture (as discussed in the second part of the report) of ways in which imbalanced couple resource distribution hinders equality in practice.

However, the explanation which is perhaps most clearly backed up in the material, can be interpreted as a form of cultural self-criticism in the shape of a discourse where gender inequality is explained by the assumption that fathers are not "given the chance" as equal carers. This criticism is supported by a majority of both men

and women, and it is remarkable that women agree with this even a little more often than men do. The younger respondents also tend to agree more with this than the older ones. Even among women and men under 40 years of age, who generally think that equality has come far enough, there is a clear majority (65 per cent of the women, 61 per cent of the men) who think that men are not given the chances to be equal contributors in housework and caring. Based upon GEQL07 we cannot settle whether fathers are actually acknowledged or given the chance as child carers or not. It is evident, however, that this explanation has become one of the most socially and culturally accepted and legitimate explanation of the significant differences in mothers' and fathers' practices when it comes to parental leave.

Section 7. Equality – experiences and attitudes

Some of the main points of the section

- Women to a larger extent than men report that they experience being negatively discriminated against because of their gender. Four per cent of the men say that they have “been hindered from reaching a goal” “because they are men”. 14 per cent of the women say that they have “been hindered from reaching a goal” “because they are women”.
- The concept of equality is presently up for negotiation. There is no agreement as to what equality is or should be.
- Practically all men and women support core elements of gender equality policy such as “Women and men should take equal amounts of responsibility for supporting the family financially” and “Women and men should share work in the home equally”.
- A larger proportion of men than women think that gender equality has come far enough and that equality is more or less implemented already.
- A majority of both women and men think that *equity* is more important than equality.
- Two out of three think that today's equality work mostly benefits the successful ones in society.
- The support for quota systems is not particularly large, but they are supported by more women than men.
- About 80 per cent of both men and women think that men are responsible for rape.

Discrimination experienced by various groups

The survey included three questions aimed at analysing discrimination experienced by various groups and various grounds for discrimination.⁸² The word “discrimination” is not used in the actual wordings of the questions. We were concerned that this might be experienced as too academic. Instead, we used the expression “badly treated (negatively singled out)”. In addition, we specified three forms of being negatively singled out that the respondents are asked to respond to:

- “I have experienced that somebody as looked down on me ...”,
- “I have been bullied and harassed ...”, and
- “I have experienced being hindered from reaching a goal ...”.

The grounds for discrimination that are filled in are:

- “... because I am a man/woman”
- “... because I am disabled”
- “... because of the colour of my skin”
- “... because of my age”
- “... because of my religion”
- “... because of my sexual orientation”

The respondents could also choose the alternative 7) “I have not experienced this”.

Those choosing one of the alternatives 1–6 were also asked to say how frequently (rarely, sometimes, often) they had experienced any of the given forms of being negatively singled out and where the incidents had taken place: 1) In school/at university, 2) At work, 3) In connection with applying for a job, 4) In connection with a promotion, 5) When visiting a doctor/nurse/psychologist/hospital or the like, 6) Among friends, 7) In a bar/restaurant , 8) Other.

We compiled this set of questions as a part of our attempts to add to the variation of perspectives included in the study. As is well-known, discrimination does not happen only on the grounds of gender. People are also discriminated against because of disability, skin colour, age, religion and sexual orientation. As far as we know, there are no studies where personal reports of these grounds for

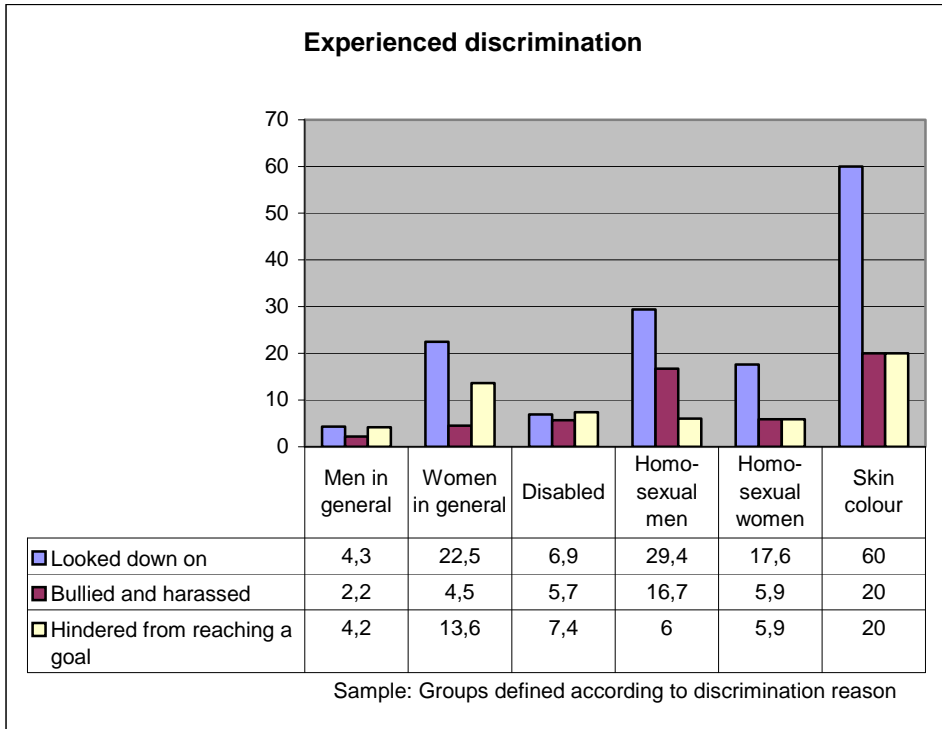
⁸² Q98-100

discrimination are combined in the same set of questions. Also, as far as we are aware, men have not previously been asked whether they have experiences of being negatively singled out “because they are men”.

The percentage given for the discrimination reason “because I am a man” is calculated on the basis of all men among the respondents. The percentage given for the discrimination reason “because I am a woman” is calculated on the basis of all women among the respondents. The percentage given for the discrimination reason “because I am disabled” is calculated on the basis of those who answered in the affirmative to question Q118 on permanent disability. The percentage given for the discrimination reason “because of my skin colour” is calculated on the basis of those who, in question 4, answered that their mother or father was born in Asia or Africa. The percentage given for the discrimination reason “because of my sexual orientation” is calculated on the basis of those who, in question 51, answered that they are sexually attracted to persons of their own sex. Negative discrimination because of age and religion will be discussed later under separate headings.

The diagram below shows the percentages of answers among those who have experienced one or several of the given forms of negative discrimination. Note that the numbers that the diagram is based on include all the groups who say they have experienced negative discrimination, regardless of frequency. In other words, they include all who have answered either “often”, “sometimes” or “rarely”. Also note that the way in which the question is put, does not ask the respondents to report all negative discrimination they might have experienced, but only the incidents of discrimination that can be associated with the grounds for discrimination explicitly mentioned: gender, sexual orientation, disability etc.

As to discrimination because of sexual orientation among women and because of skin colour, the quoted numbers are based on very small samples. Only 17 homosexual women have answered these questions. And only 18 of those who have answered the questions on discrimination have parents from Africa or Asia.



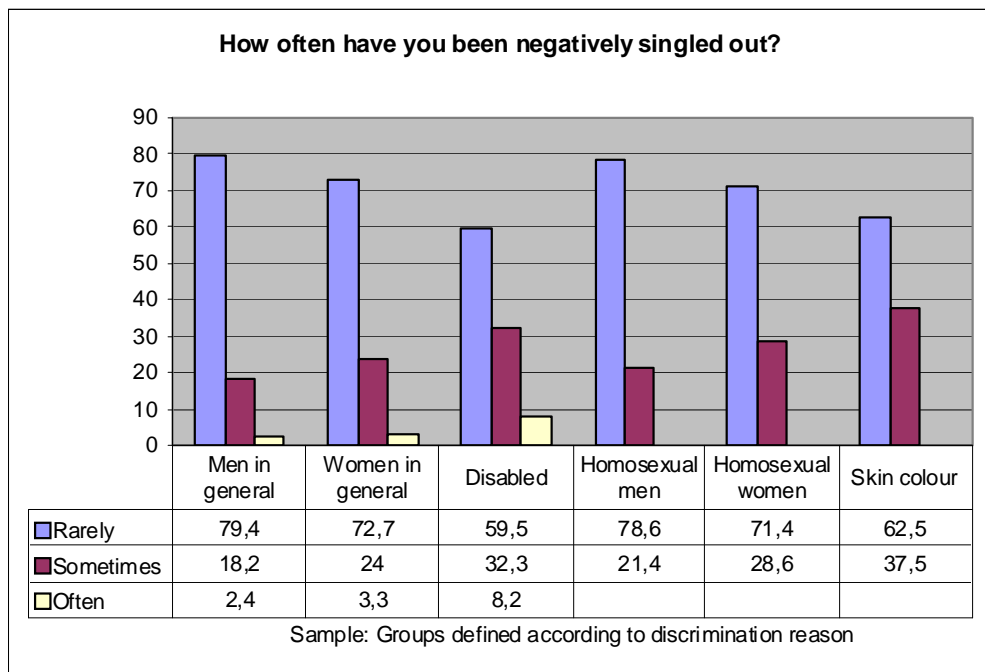
Particularly *skin colour* and *male homosexuality* seem to be reasons for people experiencing being looked down on (with women in general in third place), and for experiencing being bullied and harassed (here, homosexual women are in third place, followed by disabled).⁸³

As to the percentages who report having experienced being hindered from reaching a goal, skin colour again is the most common reason, with women in general in a clear second place. The percentage of men is small, and is the lowest of these three given forms of negative discrimination.

Question Q99 in the survey asked how frequently the respondents have experienced any of the negative forms of discrimination mentioned in the previous question. That is, those who answered this question is only the proportion of all men, women, homosexuals, etc., who in Q98 said that they have experienced

⁸³ A separate analysis of bisexual men (19 persons in total) and women (23 persons in total) gave numbers lower than those for homosexual women.

negative discrimination. As we have seen, these initial proportions are small for most groups. The diagram below should be read bearing this in mind. The collected percentages of answers are these:



The numbers for homosexual men and women and for discrimination because of skin colour that are quoted here, are not statistically significant. As to the other groups, disabled persons are the only group where the alternative “often” is chosen by a relatively large number, that is, 8.2 per cent. Note that this percentage is calculated based on the about 7 per cent who answered positively to Q98. The same applies to that 20–30 per cent who answered “sometimes” among men, women and disabled. The numbers should not be interpreted so that about 20 per cent of all men sometimes experience negative discrimination; the number refers to the proportion of the 4 per cent of men who answered positively to Q98, in other words, a very small group. The group of women answering “sometimes” is slightly larger (24 per cent of about 20 per cent). If the numbers are representative for the Norwegian population as a whole, and if we estimate that to be about 4.5 million and that half of these are men, this means that about 216,000 women and 18,000

men sometimes experience one of the three forms of negative discrimination mentioned in Q98.

In Q100, the respondents were asked to specify *where* they have experienced negative discrimination. In the groups with statistically significant results, we note that roughly the same percentage of women and disabled say that they have experienced negative discrimination at work, and that this percentage is higher than for other situations. Other situations that stand out negatively for both groups are “school/university” and “in connection with applying for a job”. The group of disabled is larger than the group of women in both these categories, as in the alternatives “at a doctor or nurse”, “among friends”, “in bars or restaurants”, and “other”.

Summarising comments

As mentioned above, we compiled the set of questions 98–100 as a part of our attempts to add to the variation of perspectives included in the study. People are not only discriminated against because of gender, but also because of disability, skin colour, age, religion and sexual orientation.

We did not have any strong hypotheses as to what kinds of results we would get when asking the respondents to simultaneously report experiences of negative discrimination connected to various grounds for discrimination. We thought, however, that it was important to let them do so, and we eagerly awaited the results. We were particularly keen to see what kinds of results we would get when we gave men the opportunity to report on negative discrimination on the grounds of masculinity (“because I am a man”).

When comparing men and women, we see that men score much lower than women for the question whether they have experienced being looked down on, or whether they have been hindered from reaching a goal because they are men. On the basis of these numbers, it is plausible to claim that *men to a small extent experience being negatively discriminated against on the grounds of their gender (because they are men)*.

But, nevertheless, between 2 and 4 per cent of the men state that they have experienced negative discrimination “because they are men”. If we, again, estimate the Norwegian population to number 4.5 million and that half of these are men,

then between 45,000 and 90,000 men say that they have experienced this kind of negative discrimination. On the whole, disabled persons stand out as the group that consistently report more negative discrimination than both men and women in general.

Discrimination because of age

Questions 98–100 also gave the respondents the opportunity to report their own experiences of having been discriminated against because of their age. In our analysis of the answers, we have divided the respondents into age groups, and then looked at the male and female answers separately. The reason for the latter is a hypothesis that age does not have the same “effects” for men and for women.

The proportion who report having *been looked down on* “because of their age” is largest in the two youngest age groups, among both men and women. It is lowest in the group of 35–49-year-olds. After that, it again goes up slightly for those between 50 and 79 years of age, more strongly so for women than for men. The number of persons, who answered that they have been *bullied and harassed* because of their age, is too small for extracting any statistically significant results.

The proportion who report having been *hindered from reaching a goal* because of their age is also largest in the two youngest age groups, among both men and women. It is lowest in the group of 35–49-year-olds. After that, it again goes up slightly for those between 50 and 79 years of age, and the proportion of men is larger than that of women.

When women and men were asked to state how *frequently* they have experienced age discrimination, somewhat more women than men choose the alternatives “often” and “sometimes”. The variation between the different age groups is small.

Comments

When including age discrimination in the set of questions on experiences of discrimination, we held a hypothesis that age discrimination would be most frequent in the older age groups. It is interesting to see that the answers reveal the opposite tendency, and that it applies to both women and men, at least when we keep to the personally reported occurrences of experienced age discrimination. The percentage reporting experiences of age discrimination is clearly highest in the youngest age group among both sexes, and very much higher than among the older

ones. The age group reporting least age discrimination is, not unexpectedly, that of 35–49-year-olds among both sexes, while the older ones again report a somewhat higher proportion.

The question is how we should interpret this finding. Should we conclude that age discrimination is a greater problem for younger than for older people? This is not necessarily the case. We should consider what kind of incidents lie behind the high level of reporting among the youngest respondents. Let us, for example, take the case of “being hindered from reaching a goal”. When this many 17–24-year-olds report experiences of this, it might be explained by ordinary and statutory regulations (age limits in the cinema, restaurants, etc.) or by the fact that they are placed last when applying for a job or promotion because of lacking competence directly connected to their young age.

When designing the set of questions, we also had a hypothesis that age “affects” men and women differently. Our hypothesis was that age is a negative factor particularly for older women. Is there a gender dimension when it comes to age discrimination?

Let us first look at the general picture, that is, the sum of all who answered positively to Q98 on being looked down on, bullied and harassed or hindered from reaching a goal because of their age. The proportion reporting one of these cases is 7 per cent among the men and 12.1 per cent among the women. If we further consider the fact that 20.6 per cent of the men and 27.3 per cent of the women say that they have experienced these forms of age discrimination often or sometimes, and if we assume that the same applies to the total population, we get the result that about *1.4 per cent of Norwegian men and 3.2 per cent of Norwegian women experience these forms of age discrimination often or sometimes*. Seen in the light of this, age discrimination is a problem that affects more women than men.

Gender equality attitudes

The study contains a number of questions on attitudes to equality, including use of measures, discrimination, views on child rearing, financial support, division of work, violence and rape. Here, we will present the distribution of answers to the most important question, divided by gender, age and socio-economic status, when such differences are significant. Attitudes to gender equality will be more comprehensively described in Part 2 of this report.

Some of the attitude statements are very general. That is, they can be interpreted in various ways, and it can therefore be difficult to know exactly what the individual respondents have put into it, and thus also what he or she is giving an answer to. One example is the statement “Gender equality has come far enough”. The concept of equality is not unambiguous, but can be given various meanings, and both the statement and the answers might therefore hold different meanings for different respondents. It is also the case, that pertaining to some of the attitude statements it might be difficult to decide whether the respondents describe reality such as they experience it, as they wish it would be, or thinks it should be. In addition, sometimes the patterns of answers might seem inconsistent. Some, for example, agree that equality has come far enough (as a general statement), but they also agree with the suggestion for more concrete demands for increased equality. Such features will be further discussed in the section on attitudes to gender equality in Part 2.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that we in Norway should work towards the following goals?

Q101 was introduced with the question in the above heading, and consists of a number of goal statements, and the respondents are to say whether they agree or disagree (on a graded scale) that it is important to work towards these.

The first one was: *More freedom and options for women*. 84 per cent of the men and 93 per cent of the women agreed with this.

Here we see that men to a somewhat smaller extent than women support this goal, and it is the oldest (65 years and older) who mostly agree with this. One quarter of the youngest men do not seem to think that more freedom and options for women is a goal that we should work to achieve in Norway. There is no significant variation between the different age groups of women.

More freedom and options for men. 75 per cent of the men and 75 per cent of the women agreed with this. There are no significant age variations among men or women here. The average numbers among men and women show that a larger proportion of both sexes support “more freedom and options for women” than the corresponding set for men. One of the reasons might be that it is important to interpret what “more freedom and options for men” actually would entail. “More

freedom and options for women” is, politically and socio-historically seen, a more recognisable demand.

Women should hand over more of their privileges. 41 per cent of the men and 34 per cent of the women agreed with this. Of the age groups, particularly men between 35 and 49 years of age support this goal. For some men in this age group, this can perhaps be seen in relation to experiences connected to their family situation.

Men should hand over more of their privileges. 51 per cent of the men agree with this, compared to 59 per cent of the women. Dividing the answers according to age group, we see that the very youngest – of both men and women – are those who to a least extent agree with this statement, and that the oldest women agree with it to the largest extent. This, too, is a politically and socio-historically recognisable claim, which nonetheless might be difficult to interpret for the very youngest respondents. Perhaps young men and women do not experience men as having more privileges than women? We see, however, that – not surprisingly – a larger overall proportion supports the suggestion that men give up privileges than that women do so.

More men should enter typically female professions. 68 per cent of the men agree with this, compared to 87 per cent of the women. As to distribution in age groups, we find no significant age differences among the women here. It is, however, the youngest men who to the *least* extent support this statement. Women’s extensive support of this goal might be due to the fact that “typically female professions” are often underpaid, strenuous and little appreciated, and that status often “follows with” the men.

More women should enter typically male professions. 72 per cent of the men and 86 per cent of the women agree with this. As to distribution on age groups, we find no significance age differences among the women here. It is, however, the youngest men who to the least extent support this statement. Again, the proportion of women supporting a better gender balance is larger than that of men.

Women and men should take equal responsibility for financially supporting the family. 88 per cent of the men and 94 per cent of the women agree with this. This is an attitude statement that can be called a core element in gender equality politics,

and both women and men support this. When looking at the age groups and differentiation between the answers “agree totally” and “somewhat” we find small differences. The only ones that do not agree to such a large extent that women and men should take equal responsibility for financially supporting the family, are the oldest men in the material; only 51 per cent of men over 65 years “totally agree” with women and men equally sharing the financial responsibility for the family.

Women and men should share work in the home equally. 88 per cent of the men and 94 per cent of the women agree with this. There are no significant age variations among men or women here. This, too, is a core element in equality politics, which it might seem almost impossible to be an opponent of.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Q102 was introduced with the question in the above heading, and consists of a number of general attitude statements on equality, and the respondents are to say whether they agree or disagree (on a graded scale) with these.

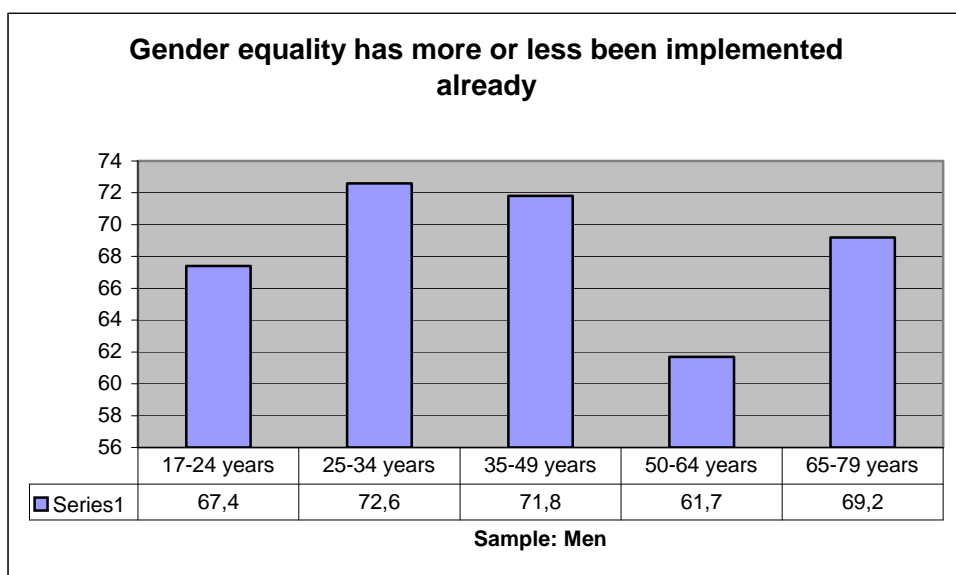
Gender equality has now come far enough. 64 per cent of the men and 41 per cent of the women agree with this. We find no significant age differences among the women here. Among the men, however, we do find differences between the attitudes of younger and of older men.



Here we see that it is the youngest men who to the least extent agree with this statement. Note, however, that more than half of all men, regardless of age, agree with it. The proportion of men agreeing with the statement is somewhat lower than it was in surveys in the 1980s and 1990s.⁸⁴

Considering socio-economic status, it is noteworthy that there are no significant differences between men here, while among the women those on lower social levels most often agree with the statement (49 per cent). Women in higher social groups perhaps have more to lose with less equality, since they are often in situations where they compete with men. Among these women, only 29 per cent think that gender equality has come far enough.

Gender equality has more or less been implemented already. 67 per cent of the men and 46 per cent of the women agree with this. The proportions of men in agreement in the various age groups are shown in the diagram below.



⁸⁴ That is, Menn i Norge 1988, Likeverd 1994, with a little over 60 per cent agreeing. For some of the questions on attitudes to equality – like this one – the age curve shows something that can be interpreted as a "generation-68-effect", meaning that today's 50–60-year-olds are stronger supporters of equality than the rest. This pattern is not, however, consistent.

Here, it is men between 50 and 65 years of age who to the least extent support this statement. Among 25–34-year-old men as many as 72 per cent agree with this. There are no significant age variations among women here. But when taking socio-economic status into account, there are, however, differences in the attitudes of women; somewhat more women in lower social groups (55 per cent) say they agree that equality has been more or less implemented already.

Equity is more important than equality. 91 per cent of the men and 83 per cent of the women agree with this. There are no significant age variations among men or women here. Class differences do, however, appear among women here, too; as many as 89 per cent of women with lower socio-economic status agree with this. Men, on the other hand, display no significant class differences here.

Today's equality work mostly benefits the successful ones in society. 71 per cent of the men and 66 per cent of the women agree with this statement. There are no significant age variations among men or women here. Socio-economic status does, however, give clear differences among men; as many as 81 per cent of men with lower socio-economic status think that today's equality work mostly benefits the successful ones in society. But even disregarding socio-economic status, the numbers here are high for both men and women. It is obviously a common view that today's equality work does *not* benefit people in general.

Men and women are basically different, and equality is therefore unnecessary. 32 per cent of the men and 20 per cent of the women agreed with this. There are no significant age differences among women here. Among men, on the other hand, it is again the youngest and the oldest ones who express scepticism about equality by agreeing with this statement.

Quota systems for women and men

We have two questions dealing with quota systems, one for men and one for women.⁸⁵ We first asked: "In order to correct the gender imbalances in education and working life, it has been suggested that a certain number of study places and vacancies should be reserved for women in areas where women are in the minority. Are you for or against such a quota system or do you not have a clear standpoint?"

⁸⁵ Q103 and Q104

GEQL07 reveals that far more men (63 per cent) than women (38 per cent) are against such a quota system. Far more women than men seem to be unsure of what they think about this matter. There are no significant age variations among men or women here.

We also asked: “What do you think of introducing a corresponding quota system for men in education and professions where they are in the minority today?” Here, both men and women are consequent in their answers in comparison to those to the question of quota systems for women: 62 per cent of the men are against this, as compared to 36 per cent of the women.

There are no significant age differences among men or women here.

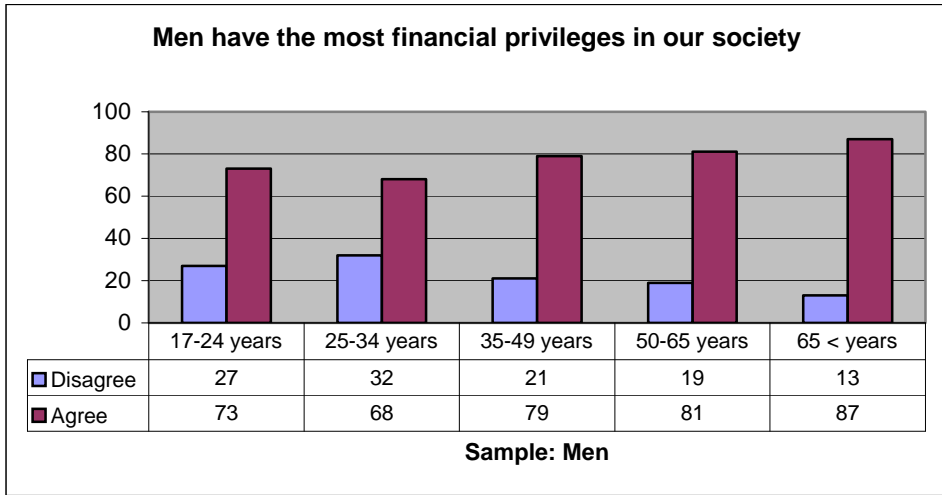
As for other measures for increased equality, 34 per cent of the men and 44 per cent of the women support the use of financial measures such as increased salary, compensation to employers, and the like. Here, there are no significant age variations among women, but there are so among men. The youngest men are those who least, and the oldest men who most support this. About 75 per cent of both men and women support the use of information campaigns. This might indicate certain individualization (anti-collectivism) in men’s and women’s attitudes to equality, and can be seen in relation to the scepticism against quota systems for securing/improving equality (see above).

These questions were followed by a number of statements with the following introduction: “Below you will find some possible explanations as to why there is not greater equality between women and men in Norway. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements?”

Reasons for deficient gender equality

Q106 consists of a set of statements that give various descriptions of circumstances pertaining to equality, and the respondents are asked to say whether they agree totally or somewhat, or disagree with these.

Men have the most financial privileges in our society. 78 per cent of the men and 91 per cent of the women agreed with this. Here, we find rather large age differences among the men:



As we can see, the older men agree with this somewhat more often. We further find that men with lower social status most often (82 per cent) agree that men have the most financial privileges in Norway. Among men from higher social classes, 73 per cent agree with this. We find no significant age differences among women pertaining to this statement.

Women still have the main responsibility for home and family. 82 per cent of the men and 96 per cent of the women agree with this. Here, there are no significant age differences among the women, while among men, there is a higher proportion among those between 50 and 65 years of age who say they agree with this. The fact that younger men agree to a somewhat lesser degree, might be explained by them more seldom having experienced or noticed what patterns pertain to the division of tasks at home.

Women do not want greater equality. 33 per cent of the men and 29 per cent of the women agreed with this.

Men do not want greater equality. 61 per cent of the men and 69 per cent of the women agreed with this. It is interesting that men and women seem to agree that men to a lesser extent than women want greater equality.

The answers to these two questions show that men and women *are ascribed* a greater variance of interest pertaining to equality than that which each party themselves attests. The study shows that they are also ascribed more variance than what they actually stand for in practice (see the section on equality practices). A possible interpretation of this is that the image of men and women in the media and in the public is characterised by simplified and stereotypical notions.

Men are not given the chance to be equal contributors in housework and childcare. 52 per cent of the men and 61 per cent of the women agreed with this statement. Among the men, it is the younger ones (under 35 years) who mostly agree here; their proportion is, like that of women, on an average about 60 per cent.

It is remarkable that more women than men say that they agree with this. When looking at the various age groups and differentiating between those who agree “totally” or “somewhat”, we see that particularly women between 25 and 34 years of age say they agree “totally” with this, and the oldest women (65 years and over) say they agree “somewhat”. Among the men, the very youngest ones are those who agree mostly with the statement that men are not given a chance.

This view has frequently appeared in public debates and the media, and has gradually gained ground as an explanation as to why men do not participate more in housework and the daily care of children. The agreement among the respondents, particularly the younger ones, can be interpreted as criticism of traditional Norwegian gender culture – but perhaps also as a somewhat “convenient” explanation as to why men do not participate more and, for example, take out more parental leave. Unfortunately, our study cannot say that much about the extent to which men actually *make efforts* to be let in on issues pertaining to home and family.

Women do not want to take on positions with financial and political responsibility. 50 per cent of the men and 52 per cent of the women agree with this. It is remarkable that every other woman – and somewhat more women than men – seem to think that women do not want to take on financially and politically responsible positions. Looking at the age groups, we find that the older women in particular think so.

Many men find it problematic to co-operate with female managers. 57 per cent of the men and 78 per cent of the women agree with this. Women obviously experience more co-operation problems than the men themselves describe.

Female applicants are overlooked when positions are filled. 46 per cent of the men and 72 per cent of the women agree with this. So, there is a considerable difference between the ways men and women experience reality in this case. It might be tempting to say that men and women in a certain sense do not live in the same reality: what is interpreted as being overlooked by women, is not understood as such by men. It is, however, the case here that we cannot know whether the respondents describe reality such as they experience it, as they wish it would be, or think it should be. This might be an explanation why there is a difference between the male and female answers here; men do know that women are overlooked, but they wish this were not the case.

Men do not want to take responsibility for home and family. 36 per cent of the men and 52 per cent of the women agreed with this statement. Again, it is not quite clear whether the respondents describe reality such as they experience it, as they wish it would be, or think it should be. The fact that as many as 36 per cent of the men think that men do not want to take responsibility for home and family, does not necessarily mean that men want this to be the case.

Attitudes to gender equality – comments

Men are obviously opponents to quota systems for both women and men. They are more positive about other systems and particularly with respect to information and attitudinal campaigns. There are, however, no clear indications of a gender polarisation in attitudes to equality (Teigen 2006). Many attitudes are rather equally divided between the sexes, and there are other, more important features. We see, for example, strong connections between negative attitudes to quota systems and the agreement with the statements “We have enough immigrants and asylum seekers in this country” and “The public authorities interfere too much with people’s private life”. We will look in more detail at this “enough-is-enough” group in the section on equality in Part 2.

It seems unreasonable to conclude that men as a group would have special interests in thinking so. We also note that under half of the women (in all age groups) are for quota systems, and that a remarkably large proportion of the women answer that

they are *unsure* (“don’t know”) as to the use of systems/measures for securing/improving gender equality. In the case where the women make their evaluations from a gender based interest position, this is astonishing. It makes little sense. It is, however, equally possible that negative attitudes to quota systems are not expressions of gender based interest positions, but should be interpreted as expressions of *ideology based* interest positions, that is, what might be called consistent anti-collectivism.

The correlations between negative attitudes to quota systems for improving equality, and the agreement with the statements “We have enough immigrants and asylum seekers in this country”(Q107E) and “The public authorities interfere too much with people’s private life”, might be an indication of this.

More attitude statements

Some of these attitude questions are included in what we regard as background variables. Here, we will only present two of them: rape and buying sexual services.⁸⁶

Men are responsible for rape

In April 2007, Amnesty International Norway and the Reform Resource Centre for Men published the report “Hvem bryr seg? En rapport om menns holdninger til vold mot kvinner” (“Who Cares? A Report on Men’s Attitudes to Violence against Women”), based on a nationwide study among a representative sample of men in Norway. The study was conducted by TNS Gallup. In this survey, the men were, for example, asked about their attitudes to violence and assault against women. The depressing results, which reached the headlines in spring 2007, was that every second man thinks that a woman is “totally or partly” responsible for having been subjected to sexual assault, in case she has flirted openly. Here, the formulation “totally or partly” should be noted; the information how many men think a woman is *totally* responsible for having been subjected to sexual assault is hidden in the combination of “totally” and “partly”. Nevertheless, it seemed that men held women responsible for the assaults they were exposed to.

In GEQL07, the proportion of men who hold women responsible does not seem to be as large pertaining to sexual assaults. Here, we asked whether the respondents

⁸⁶ From Q107

agree with the statement “Men are responsible for rape”. With the use of the word “rape”, little room is left for interpretations. This is not the same as asking whether a woman is totally or “partly” responsible for having been subjected to sexual assault in case she has flirted openly. We do, however, think that it is possible to compare the extent to which men hold women responsible against the background of the results in the report by Amnesty/Reform and the level of agreement with the statement “Men are responsible for rape” in GEQL07. In line with the answers in the above study, we have combined the answers “disagree totally” and “disagree somewhat” on the one hand, and “agree totally” and “agree somewhat” on the other. We then get the result that 78 per cent of the men and 83 per cent of the women in GEQL07 agree totally or agree somewhat with men being responsible for rape.

This gives a slightly different picture of men’s attitudes to assault on women than the Amnesty/Reform report does; in GEQL07 three out of four men think that men are responsible for rape. It is also worth noting that there is not any pronounced difference between the attitudes of women and of men on this issue. 83 per cent of the women agree totally or somewhat that men are responsible for rape. Comparing the answers of the different age groups, we find small differences in what the younger and the older women and men think of this. At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that as many as 22 per cent of the men do not agree with men being responsible for rape.

Buying of sexual services should be illegal

Here, too, we have combined the answers agree “totally” and “somewhat”, and disagree “totally” and “somewhat”.

46.6 per cent of the men agree that buying of sexual services should be illegal. More women, 72.2 per cent, think so. Looking at the answers of the various age groups, there is significant variation only among the men. In particular the oldest and the youngest of the male respondents agree most with a prohibition.⁸⁷ There is no significant variation as to socio-economic status.

⁸⁷ If we only look at the answers of “agree totally”, we find significant age variation also among the women. The oldest are most in agreement with prohibition (64.7 per cent “agree totally”), while there are somewhat fewer among the youngest women (44 per cent) who “agree totally” with a prohibition.

Section 8. Health and quality of life

Some of the main points of the section

- A larger proportion of men than women feel content about their bodies.
- A larger proportion of women than men say they suffer from various mental and physical disorders, such as depression, anxiety, stress, back problems and lack of sex drive.
- On the whole, women suffer from things such as discomfort and poor self-image more than men.
- More men than women experience violence outside of the home, both as perpetrators and victims.
- It seems as if friendship is strengthening its position as a relationship, particularly among young men.
- Friendships among the youngest respondents are also characterized by an increased diversity pertaining to persons of other sexual orientations and other ethnic backgrounds.
- Men, especially those in the phase of establishment into adult life and married men, have to make efforts to find time for friends.
- A lack of close friends is connected to a clearly poorer quality of life, both generally and when looking at individual experiential aspects such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and so on.
- The only instance where we do not find this connection, is in friendships with persons of another sexual orientation or another ethnic background.
- One's childhood environment has a certain significance for later friendships. Those who experience physical punishment or violence at home, or are teased or bullied outside the home, to a larger extent than others lack close friends. Children of parents with a higher education have, to a certain degree, more close friends.
- Friendship seems to be a field for integration between ethnic groups, particularly among young men. The proportion of the population who say they have close friends of another ethnic background is, on the whole, small, at around 15 per cent, but among the youngest men (17-24-year-olds) as many as 40 per cent say they have close friends of an ethnically diverse background. The youngest women are not far behind: among them, the proportion is 29 per cent.

- Those who have friends of another ethnic background are somewhat more liberal than others as to their opinions on Norwegian immigration and asylum policies.

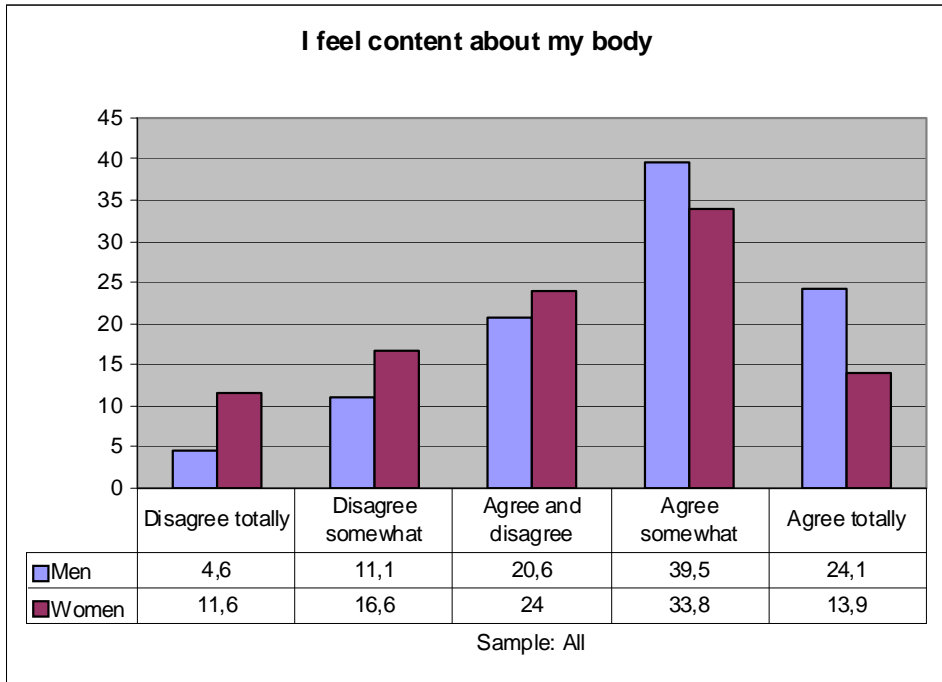
Introduction

In section 8 of the survey questionnaire, we asked questions about a large number of circumstances pertaining to health and quality of life. These questions play an important part in a number of analyses elsewhere in the report, both individually and in combinations where they are included in various indices for quality of life, when we try to measure how health and quality of life are associated with other phenomena, such as equality, friendship and co-habitation.

In this part of the report, we will mainly look at the answers to the various questions individually, with some short comments. We will only include the most important or most interesting of the individual results. We will describe this dimension more comprehensively in the section on quality of life in Part 2 of the report.

I feel content about my body

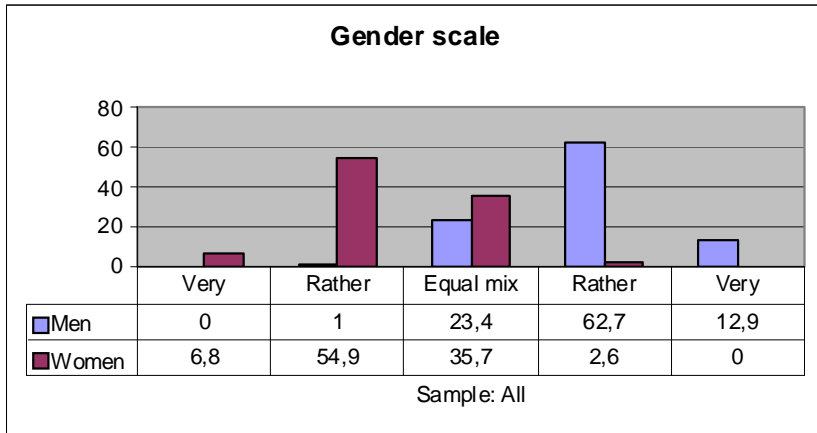
The distribution of answers is shown in the diagram below.



We can see that a larger proportion of men than of women feel content about their bodies. We find a corresponding pattern among the answers to the statement “I look good”.

Gender scale

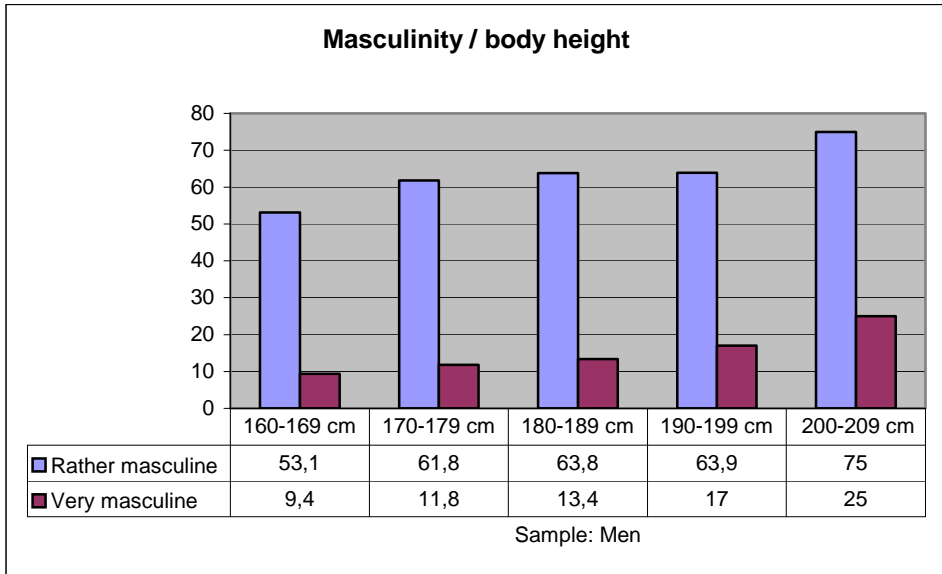
In question Q113 the respondents were asked to place themselves on a scale from masculine to feminine. The diagram below illustrates the answers of both men and women.



More women than men say they think they have a rather equal mix of masculine and feminine features. The proportion of women saying that they have “rather” a lot of the opposite gender in them is also larger than the proportion of men saying so. The numbers indicate that women place themselves more evenly along the gender scale than men. None of the respondents place themselves at the far end of the opposite gender on the scale. This scale and the rather traditional distribution on it will be discussed further in the section on gender formation in Part 2 of the report. Here we will look at some features that the distribution correlates with.

Men report a somewhat increasing masculinity with increasing age. The youngest and the oldest of the women regard themselves as most feminine, while those in the middle group are somewhat more moderate.

The diagram below shows the connection between placement on the gender scale and height for men.



The taller a man is, the more masculine he regards himself to be. The opposite applies to women; the taller a woman is, the less feminine she regards herself to be.

Attitude to one's own over-/underweight

The BMI is a variable calculated using the formula kg/m^2 , where kg stands for body weight and m for body height. We have the respondents' own information on both these variables,⁸⁸ and can on the basis of these calculate their BMI, which gives an indication as to what degree their body weight is normal in relation to their height, or whether they are over- or underweight. Note that the BMI only gives an approximate indication. For example, a high BMI for men can mean that they have a large body weight because of fatness *or* because of body-building, or that they are muscular above the average.

The BMI scale is divided into the following categories:

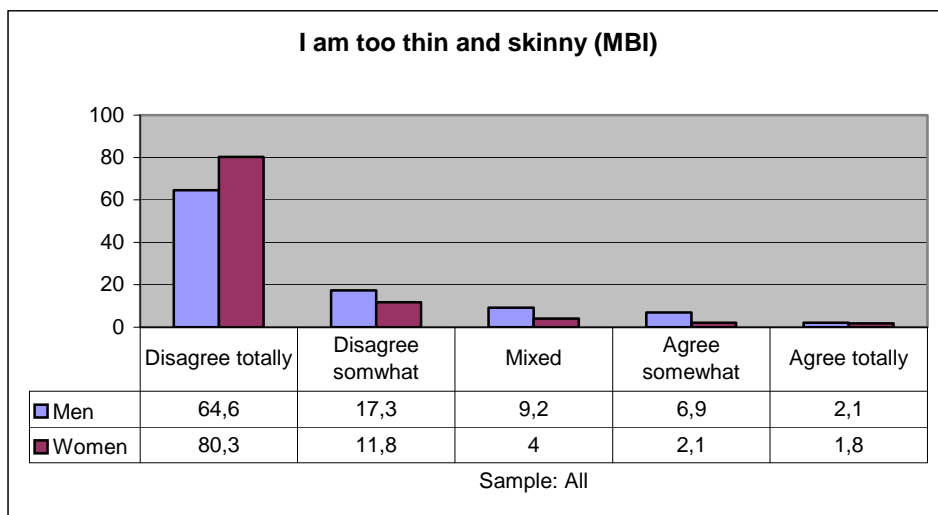
The BMI scale	
Below 15	Undernourished
15-18.5	Underweight

⁸⁸ Q114-115

18.5-25	Normal
25-30	Slightly overweight
30-40	Medium overweight
Over 40	Very overweight

Among our respondents, somewhat more women than men are underweight, but there are also far more women than men in the category “normal”. This is due to there being a larger proportion of men than women who are overweight, except for the highest category of overweightness, where there are more women.

Below we explore how some statements pertaining to the evaluation of one’s own body vary according to the placement on the BMI scale.



Among the men and women who answer that they “agree totally” that they are too thin and skinny, most are in the BMI category “normal”. However, the average BMI of the men is slightly higher here than that of the women (22.3 vs. 21), which indicates that less is needed for men to feel thin and skinny than for women. The same pattern – somewhat stronger – emerges among those who “agree somewhat”

(here, the average BMI of the men is 22.4, while that of the women is 19.5). This perhaps says something about a dominant male ideal where the man is expected to be big and strong, something many men feel they do not achieve.



Among the men and women who answer that they “agree totally” that they weigh too much, most are in the BMI category “slightly overweight”. However, the average BMI of the women is lower here than that of the men (29 vs. 31), which indicates that less is needed for women to feel overweight than for men. We find the same pattern among those who say they “agree somewhat”. This perhaps says something about a dominant female ideal where women are expected to be thin, something many women feel they do not achieve.

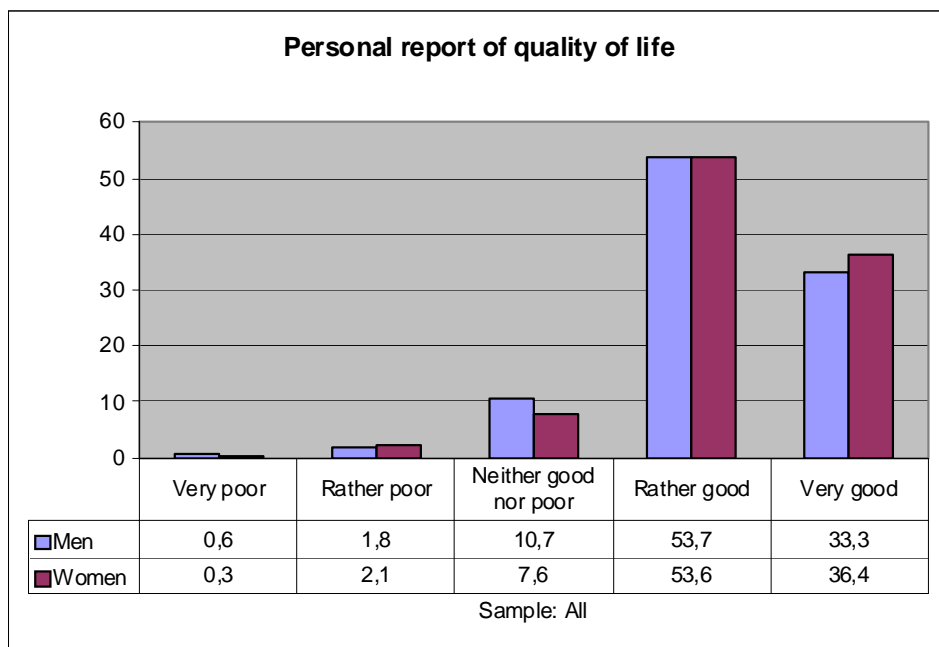
Physical and mental health

In question Q116, the respondents report on the frequency of a number of problems related to physical and mental health (“How often do you experience the following...?”). Women give more negative answers to most of the questions. Assuming that the answers of men and women reflect actual circumstances, and that they interpret the answer scale in the same way, we can draw the conclusion that women to a larger extent suffer from unwanted overweight, headaches, tense muscles, lack of sexual desire, stress, depression, digestive problems, and “other

physical ailments”.⁸⁹ The only problems more common among men than women are alcohol and drugs problems. Compared to MN88, we see that the proportion of men reporting stress increases from 50 per cent in MN88 to 65 per cent in GEQL07.⁹⁰ On the other hand, the proportion who report depression decreases from 60 to 20 per cent.

As to suicidal thoughts, there are no significant differences between men and women; 0.8 per cent answer “often”, 2.6 per cent “sometimes”, 9.4 per cent “rarely” and 87.2 per cent “never”.

How would you describe your overall quality of life?



Somewhat more women than men say they have a very good quality of life.⁹¹ This is interesting considering the fact that they score so much lower on many of the

⁸⁹ The list here is based on a simple correlation analysis of gender and individual problems.

⁹⁰ In MN88, the number is based on those who answered “yes” and “partly” to the question “Do you often suffer from stress?”

In LL07, the number is based on those who in Q116 (“How often do you experience ...?”) answered that they experience stress “often” and “sometimes”.

⁹¹ Q123

individual questions about health and quality of life, for example those pertaining to stress, depression and the like. A possible explanation is that men and women do not describe their disorders in the same way, that is, they interpret or use the alternative answers differently; for example, more is needed for an average man to say that he is “often” depressed, than for an average woman. Perhaps this can also be seen in the light of men traditionally having lived in a culture where it is less acceptable for men to express their problems or put them into words. The question as to whether quality of life is “gendered” will be further discussed in the section on quality of life in Part 2 below.

Friendship

Friendships are among the relationships that have changed greatly throughout history, both pertaining to what norms and ideals apply to friendships and the relative significance of friendship compared to other social relations. While in the 18th century and earlier, close friendships with persons of the same sex comprised features that we today associate more with romantic involvement, and marriage was more of a practical arrangement (Svare 2004), new limits for marriage and friendship were set during the 19th century. Marriage was then looked upon as the relationship that both men and women were obliged to prioritize above all else, and, at the same time, it was idealised as the place where one was to achieve the ultimate fulfilment of oneself as a human being. For men, more than for women, increasing homophobia also contributed to a situation where close relationships with the same sex began to be regarded as something continually more problematic, and something preferably to be held at an arm's length (Rotundo 1993). In the 1970s Stein Rønnow conducted an interview study among Norwegian men, which showed that not only were men afraid of openness and closeness – even the word “friend” had been discredited (Rønnow 1976). When Rønnow asked his interviewees for a discussion about friendship, several misunderstood the aim of the study and thought it would be dealing with homosexual relationships. A consistent tendency in both that and similar studies is that friendship between men had become something problematic, something many withdrew from, but also something they missed.

During the last decade there have, however, been clear signs that the trend is now on the turn. In 1980, 31 per cent of the men questioned said that they did not have a close friend apart from their wife, girlfriend or partner. In 2002, only 20 per cent

said so, according to Statistics Norway (SN). At the same time, SN's time use study showed that the population used less time on socializing in their free time during an average day in 2000 than ten years earlier, and also spent more time alone. That is, as many were together with others and spent time on social activities during an average day in 2000 as in 1990, but the total time spent on this was, nevertheless, shorter. The decrease from 1990 to 2000 was greatest among men. The difference between the genders as to time spent on social activities increased during the intervening decade. Above all, women spend more time than men in conversations (Barstad 2005).

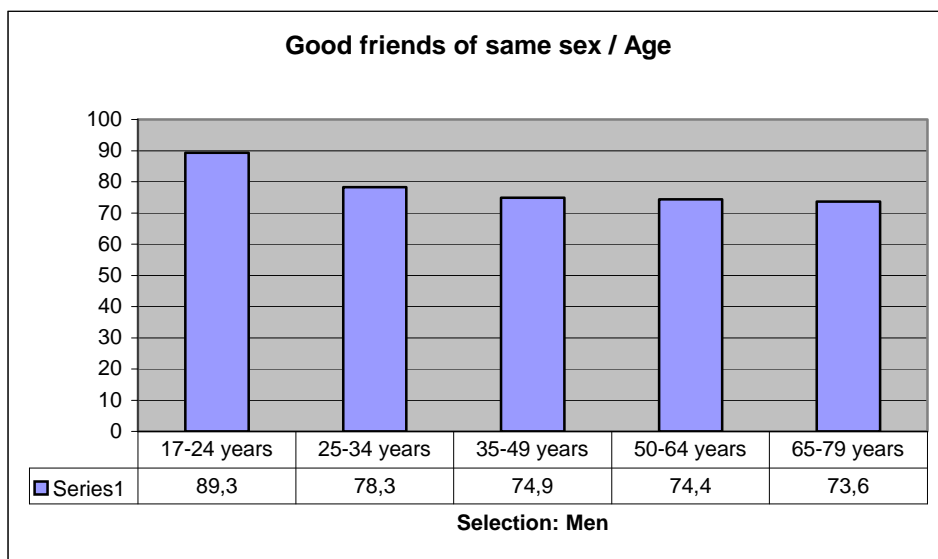
There are several reasons as to why the study of friendship between men is interesting. One is the gender differences between men's and women's organising of friendships, and whether these can be connected to other differences between men and women. Another is that friendship – or the lack of friendship – is a social marker that says something on the placement within a larger social landscape. Finally, friendship is an important factor when it comes to quality of life. There is solid documentation that persons with good friendship relations have better mental health and higher quality of life than those who lack such relationships (Duck 2007). Friendship also has a positive influence on physical health. In some cases, the effect might even be stronger than the corresponding effect of family relationships (Giles 2005).

In our study, friendship has a somewhat weaker, but still a clearly positive correlation with quality of life as measured with the index for quality of life presented earlier in the report. The correlation between quality of life and friendship, when also taking love and socio-economic status into account, is .151 for men and .167 for women. The correlation between quality of life and love, when also taking friendship and socio-economic status into account, is .472 for men and .402 for women.⁹² The correlation of friendship with quality of life is weaker than that of living in a couple relationship, but it is, however, clear, and stronger than most other correlations in relation to quality of life.

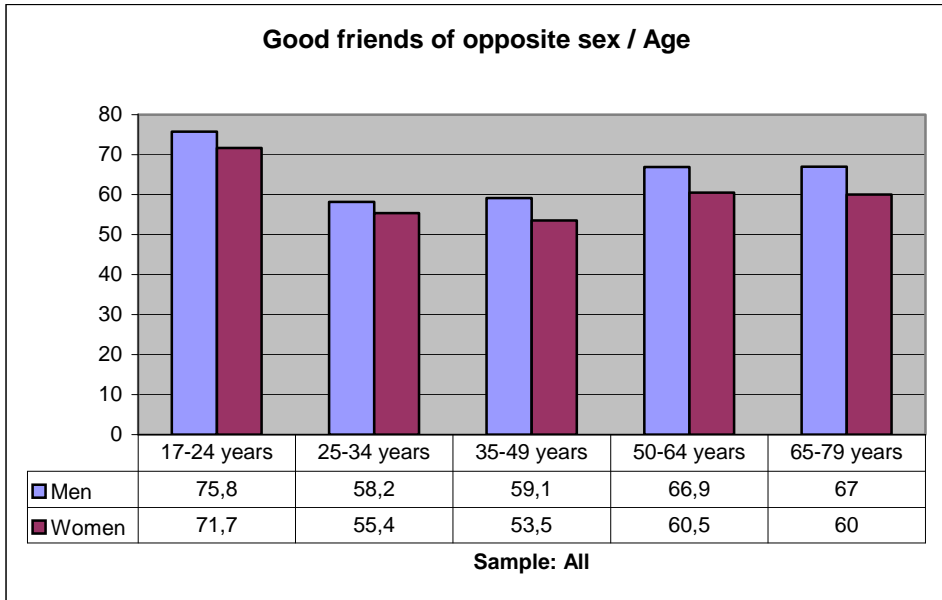
⁹² Friendship is here measured with an index where we have combined friendship with persons of their own and the opposite sex in childhood and as adult. We have here chosen not to include the other questions on friendship. Love is measured by an index where we have combined co-habitation with a partner and assumption of living with the same partner all one's life.

When comparing older and younger men, our data confirms the development also found by SN, that is, that a larger proportion of men have closer friends now than previously.

The diagram below shows the proportion of men saying that they have close friends of the same sex, distributed according to age group.



The proportion saying they have good friends of their own sex increases with lower age. This corresponds to other research showing that men today to a larger extent have more close friends than previously (Barstad 2005). There is no significant age variation among women. On the other hand, there is significant variation for both sexes when it comes to the correlation between having friends of the opposite sex and age:

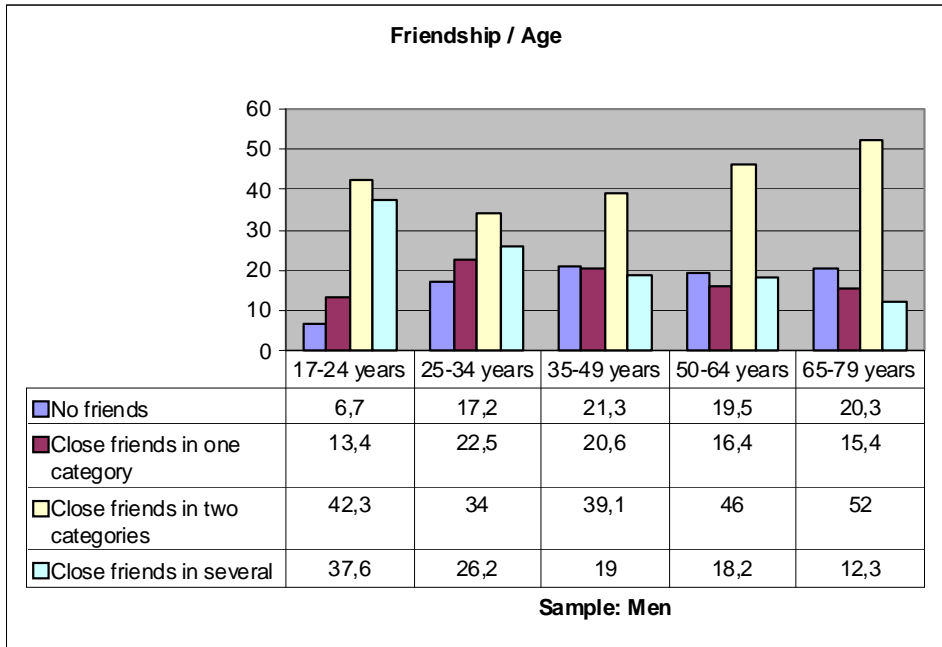


The proportion who have friends of the opposite sex is largest among the youngest respondents.

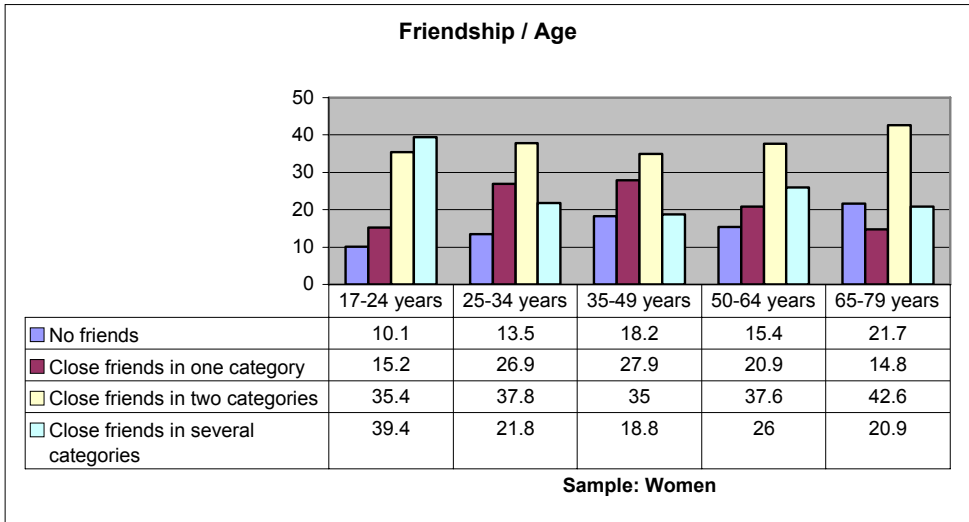
Here, we introduce an index for friendship in adulthood. It is based on the agreement with the below four statements in Q112:

1. I have good friends of the same sex as myself
2. I have good friends of the opposite sex
3. I have good friends from another ethnic background
4. I have good friends who are of another sexual orientation

Those who do not report any close friends get 0 points here. The others get points according to how many of the categories above they say they have friends from. We differentiate between those who mention one of these categories, those who mention two and those who mention several. There is significant variation here in relation to age among both men and women. The numbers for men are as follows:



Among those over 35 years of age, about 20 per cent have no close friends, which is the same as the average number in SN's study from 2002. Among the younger men, however, the number is far smaller, which again indicates that the trend amongst men towards having an increasing number of close friendships is an ongoing process. We can also see that the younger the age group, the larger is the proportion of those who have friends in more than two categories, that is, in addition to friends of their own and the opposite sex, they have friends *either* of another sexual orientation or another ethnic background than themselves. To what extent the youngest respondents are going to keep this friendship pattern throughout life we do not know, but perhaps we can here see traces of a friendship pattern that will lead to improved integration and more space for diversity. The diagram below shows the corresponding numbers for women.



The pattern is not all that different from the one found among the men.

Another interesting find is that friendship seems to be a field for integration between ethnic groups, particularly among young men. The proportion of the population who say they have close friends of another ethnic background is, on the whole, small, at around 15 per cent, but among the youngest men (17-24-year-olds) as many as 40 per cent say they have close friends of an ethnically diverse background. The youngest women are not far behind: among them, the proportion is 29 per cent. There is also a tendency that those who have friends of another ethnic background, are somewhat more liberal in their views on immigrants and asylum seekers. In question Q107E, the respondents were asked to express their opinion on the statement: “We have enough asylum seekers and immigrants in the country”. The proportion of all men who agree totally or somewhat is (in total) 71 per cent. This number goes down to 59 per cent among those who have friends from another ethnic background. The corresponding proportion among women decreases from 66 to 42 per cent.

I find it difficult to fit in enough time for friends in my life

Among the men, those between 25 and 34 years of age in particular have problems with fitting in friends, and the proportion is clearly higher than that among women.

And when looking at the men’s time use in this age period, this is perhaps not so surprising; it is the same age group where men work the most, at the same time as they set up a family and have children. Perhaps we have here found just one of the costs connected to the working time pattern of men.

I would like to have more good friends

More men than women answer in the affirmative to this statement (men 48.7 per cent, women 38.6 per cent). The proportions distributed according to age are as follows:

	17-24 years	25-34 years	35-49 years	50-64 years	65-79 years
Men	56,4	44,3	51,7	46,7	45,8
Women	53,5	39,9	35,6	37,3	35,7

Sample: All

The youngest men and women in particular would like to have more good friends. If we look at marital status instead, the proportion of men wishing to have more friends is more than twice as large among married men (56 per cent) as among single men (23 per cent). This again indicates that there is something connected to the time use of adult men which constitutes a challenge in relation to friendship.

Summary

The figures indicate that friendship is strengthening its position as a relationship, particularly among young men. Friendships among the youngest respondents are also characterized by larger diversity pertaining to persons of another sexual orientation and from other ethnic backgrounds. But especially men in the phase of establishing themselves into adult life and married men have to make efforts to find time for friends. We have also seen that a lack of close friends is connected to a clearly poorer quality of life, both generally and when looking at individual aspects such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and so on. The only instance where friendship does not have this effect, but actually a slightly negative effect, is in friendships with persons of another sexual orientation or another ethnic background. One’s childhood environment has a certain significance for later friendships. Those who experience physical punishment or violence at home, or are teased or bullied outside the home, to a larger extent than others lack close friends.

Children of parents with a higher education have, to a certain degree, more close friends.

It should be noted that the main part of the results in this section are based only on tables where the respondents were asked to tick the suitable alternatives. These do say something about simple correlations, but in the interpretation of the results we cannot say anything on causal connections, nor whether other circumstances than those we explore in a given case, might have influenced the results.

Part 2

Gender equality analysis

Introduction

Some of the main points of the chapter

- The second part of the report presents main results regarding gender equality. This is based on a new analytical framework with six different dimensions mapped in the questionnaire.
- The framework distinguishes between gender equality orientation (attitudes), and gender equality practices (actions). It also includes gender equality in childhood, resource distribution in hetero couples, gender formation (masculinity and femininity), and quality of life / health. These six dimensions are mapped and indexed for further analysis.
- The framework can be compared to a toolbox that allows different models to be tested. It makes it possible to compare, for example, how different circumstances influence gender equality attitudes or practices. It is possible to explore how circumstances during childhood and youth have affected gender equality, compared, for instance, to resource distribution or gender formation
- This chapter, and the other chapters of part two, present the framework, focusing on the main, most robust results concerning gender equality as a social and cultural process.
- According to the survey, couple resource distribution (and especially income distribution) is the factor with the greatest impact on gender equality in the home. However, economic variables interact with cultural, social and psychological traits. We will also discuss the role of gender formation and gender-equal orientation as central elements.
- The survey shows the importance of material factors for gender equality. The strong role of resource distribution and the relative inertia of working life, compared to developments in the home sphere, are two central findings. These may help explain why even in Norway, gender equality is still “partial”.
- Some results are surprising. For example, they do not support the notion that men are more split than women regarding gender equality, saying one thing and doing another. Instead, men show somewhat greater consistency between gender equality related attitudes and practices, compared to women.
- The framework results support central feminist hypotheses regarding gender equality, showing, for example, that gender equality has indeed reduced the risk of violence against children. In other cases, the results nuance earlier propositions, or offer new angles that are not yet well accounted for by gender equality research or feminist theory development.

The above chapters in Part 1 have presented individual results within each section of the questionnaire, and described the distribution of answers question by question.

In this part of the report, we apply a wider feminist perspective on the results. The aim of the study was to gain better knowledge of men, gender equality and quality of life. This involved many challenges, in particular, achieving a better analysis of what equality is.

In order to solve this, we developed an analysis instrument consisting of six different dimensions related to gender equality, presented below. This analytical framework offers opportunities for better answers to questions that are today often left unanswered. What makes people more or less 'gender-equal'? Is there a large gap between orientation (attitudes) and practices (actions) when it comes to equality? Is there a great difference between women and men?

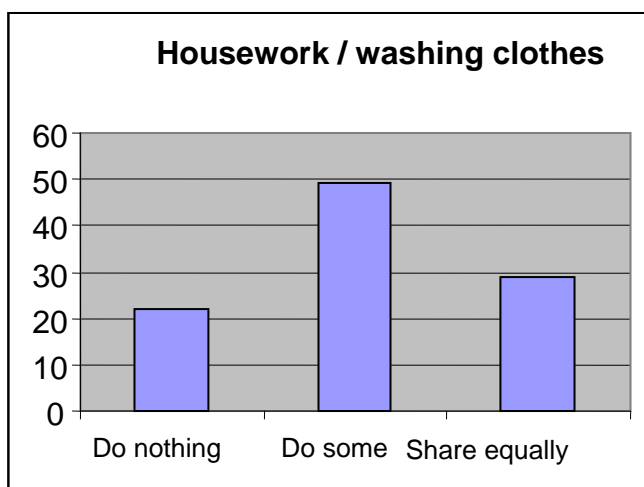
In this chapter, we discuss the dimensions of the new framework, and show how it can be used. We ask two main questions: Which of the dimensions and variables of the study mainly create practical gender equality in the home? And, how do the gender equality dimensions influence quality of life? We also discuss how the framework holds up in terms of background variables like age, education and income.

A comprehensive view of the results

The results from the survey conducted in 1988 were summarised by dividing men into three groups: those who were little, somewhat and much equality oriented. This categorizing was mainly based on attitudes, while there was less information about the practices of men.

A corresponding division into three categories often emerges in the new study, too. For example, in the household, men can be divided into those who are much, somewhat or little involved in sharing tasks equally with their partner/spouse.

For example:



The diagram shows the proportion of men who participate little, somewhat and much in housework, here, in washing clothes.⁹³ A similar tendency towards a division into three main categories can be found in other tasks. The proportions of the three roles – “equals, helpers, do-nothings” – among men vary between the different household tasks. We can associate this pattern with varying or “partial gender equality”.⁹⁴ The support varies from task to task, and also, from attitude to attitude.

⁹³ Based on married/cohabiting men’s reports (“share equally” includes men who do more than half of the work).

⁹⁴ Cf. Skjeie and Teigen 2003.

Of course, the household work and gender equality attitudes also vary according to gender, but the variation is often less than imagined in popular debate. In the survey, women are consistently somewhat more positive towards equality (and critical of the present situation) than men. Yet even if the gender difference is great in some questions, on the whole it is rather moderate, at about 10–20 per cent.

Why are some areas, tasks and attitudes characterised by more gender equality than others? What influences the distribution in one direction or the other? This is obviously a central question in any analysis of gender equality. The situation is mixed and uneven. What characterizes progress and lack of progress?.

The 1988 study had already shown a tendency that when gender equality is connected to caring, the proportion of men who want to be involved, increases. When gender equality is raised in association with caring, more men say yes. This tendency appears in the present study, too. Also, caring is evaluated as a more gender-balanced zone than housework. 70 per cent of the fathers report that the daily care of children is shared equally, and 52 per cent of the mothers report the same. The overall distribution has shifted in the direction of more equality as compared to, for example, washing clothes.

Even among the men who agree that “gender equality has come far enough”, 69 per cent think that the fathers’ share of the parental leave should be increased, only 31 per cent think that the leave is long enough as it is.

Such figures make it obvious that some forms of equality have much more support than others. A framework with different gender equality dimensions was needed in order to help explain this variation and unevenness – the halfway postmodern imprint of “increasing but partial” gender equality. One of the main aims of the present study was to investigate men’s different positions in terms of gender equality. Therefore a central question concerned different forms of equality and what it is that influences men (and women) in the direction of greater or lesser involvement.

The 1988 study mapped attitudes, but it was soon criticized for not including men’s actions. We wanted to correct this in the new survey. Actions and practices are of major importance. We therefore distinguished between *gender equality orientation*

(*attitudes*) and *practices (actions)*, and formulated questions in order to explore these dimensions independently.

In addition, we wanted to further develop the dimension of gender equality in childhood and youth, which was also, to some extent, included in the 1988 study.

Two other dimensions were particularly important, considering gender research over the last 20 years. One of these we call *gender formation*, or how people create themselves as masculine or feminine, in psychological and cultural terms especially. We wanted to define gender formation independently of gender equality issues.

The other important dimension is *couple resource distribution*, that is, how income and other resources are distributed between the man and the woman in marriage or a co-habiting hetero relationship. This dimension has been a main feminist issue for a long time. As we shall see, the results support this concern.

A final important topic was *quality of life*. How does gender equality affect people's quality of life? Is there also a contrary trend from quality of life to gender equality? Quality of life is important for many reasons, and we included this dimension both in order to study present-day association, and in order to open for analyses of cause and effect.

The 1988 survey had only a limited set of questions. In the new survey, we wanted to illuminate the equality dimensions more fully.

In order to achieve this, we compiled overall measures or indices for the six dimensions, that is:

1. Gender-equal attitudes
2. Gender-equal practices
3. Resource distribution in co-habiting/couple (hetero) relationships
4. Gender formation
5. Gender equality in childhood and youth
6. Quality of life and health

The questionnaire was designed in order to investigate each dimension from different angles, through different questions. Next, we constructed a main index for each dimension, for example, a scale from low to high quality of life.

The indices were constructed so that they gave the total score for a number of questions within a dimension. For example, our main dependent variable, the index for equality practices, was constructed so that couples who share seven household tasks equally get a higher score than couples where the woman does most of the work. Sharing caring tasks and decisions equally also get a higher score. In other words, high scores for the individual variables give a high placement in the index, a mixed score gives a placement in the middle, and low scores a low placement.

The indices were constructed as follows:

The index for gender-equal orientation (equality in attitudes) was designed so that those answering “yes” to some central equality questions get high scores, while those who answer “no” get a low score. The index comprises questions on, for example, sharing of the responsibility for financial support and household work.

The gender- equal practices index – the main dependent variable in this report – is the actual degree of gender equality measured by actions or practices. The index mainly used in this report is based on home practices among married and co-habiting couples regarding equal decision-making, equal sharing of housework, and equal sharing of caring work. We also have an index for equality at work.

The index for male-dominated couple resource distribution is constructed so that couples where the man is the main provider (earns most of the income) get a high score, while couples where the man and the woman have an equal income get a low score. The index places “male breadwinner” couples towards the top, “dual career/job” couples towards the bottom.. Education and house ownership are also included in the index. In cases where the man has a larger income than the woman, a higher level of education, and owns more of the house, the score is high; if the opposite is the case, the score is low.

The index for traditional gender formation is based on questions of masculinity and femininity. It gives high scores to men who regard themselves as being very masculine and to women who regard themselves as very feminine, to those who do

not want a desegregation in working life, and to those who think it would be problematic if their child came out as a homosexual. The most traditional are those who score highest on these three variables.

The index for equality in childhood and youth is based on the question on decision-making and division of work in the respondent's childhood home, and on one question about friends of the opposite sex. In cases where their parents made decisions to an equal degree at home and the respondents had friends of the opposite sex, they score highly on the index of equality in childhood and youth.

The index for quality of life is based on questions about personal evaluations of quality of life, health, and problems related to quality of life.

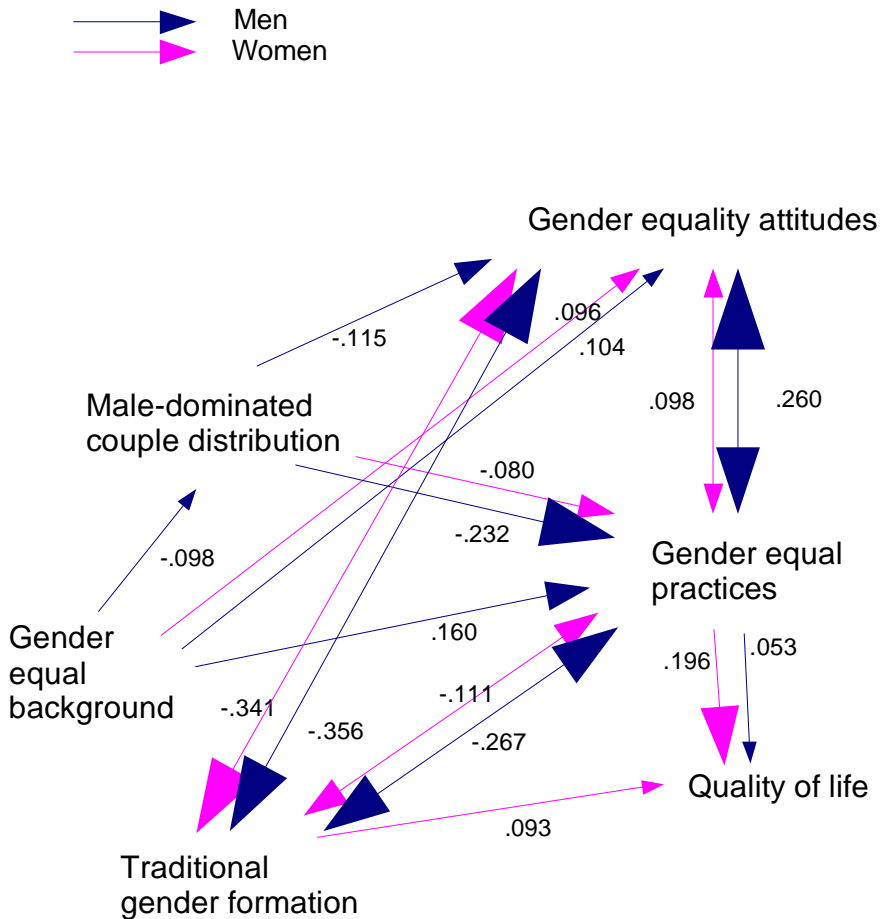
These six main dimensions can be measured in different ways. In addition to the six main indices, we also constructed a number of smaller and more precise indices, described later. Sometimes these (or single variables) highlight the issues further. The indicators can be regarded as a toolbox for gender equality analysis. Our questions concern whether the framework can give new insight pertaining to gender equality practices, and how quality of life is associated to it.

A first question is whether the instrument works, whether it provides a meaningful and comprehensive picture when we test the dimensions in relation to each other. Is it reasonable to differentiate between six dimensions, as we have done? What do the analyses show regarding the picture as a whole?

The figure below gives an overview of the dimensions and the way they interact. We will begin by looking at the interaction of two dimensions at a time. Later, we will explore whether the picture changes when controlling for age and income – and whether it remains intact in multivariate analysis where background variables are included.

The figure shows how the indices for the six dimensions interact in a bivariate analysis (the numbers give the correlation coefficients).

Correlations between main indices
(bivariate analysis)
Gender equality and quality of life 2007



In this figure, the six dimensions (indices) are loosely positioned on the basis of the model in the introduction. The figure has a certain life course perspective (horizontal time axis). Gender equality in childhood and youth is placed to the left, current equality and quality of life to the right. In between these, we have placed the intermediate dimensions: couple resource distribution and gender formation. Couple resource distribution can be connected to working life, and gender formation to gender culture, although this is not included in the figure.

The analysis was first conducted among the men in the material (blue arrows) and then among the women (purple arrows). The numbers by each arrow, and the relative size of the arrow, show the strength of the correlation.⁹⁵ Only significant correlations are included. If there is no arrow, there is no significant correlation to be observed. Minus signs symbolise a negative relation (for example, that traditional gender formation is associated with a lower level of gender-equal practices).

The figure reveals that the patterns for the sexes (blue and purple arrows) are similar, but there are also differences. We will describe this in more detail, and begin with the strongest correlations (the largest arrows).⁹⁶

The seemingly strongest connection is that between gender-equal orientation and gender formation. Traditional gender formation correlates with a minimal gender-equal orientation. The correlation is about $-.350$, but this is somewhat exaggerated (for technical reasons, which will be described later). The actual correlation is probably around $.200$ – $.250$. This is still strong, even if it is no longer the strongest correlation in the figure. The result can be interpreted to reveal the tendency that traditional gender formation is an important obstacle to the development of equality. We assume this is a mutual interaction (therefore the arrow has heads at both ends).

Gender-equal orientation and gender-equal practices correlate strongly, particularly among men ($.260$). The result indicates that the connection between attitudes and actions among men is stronger than what is often assumed in the debate. This is potentially an important find, which places the male role in a new light. At the same time, the correlation is surprisingly low among women, but here the figure probably gives too weak an impression (as will be described later).

Further, we see a rather strong correlation between gender formation and gender-equal practices (again, mostly among men). Traditional gender formation has a negative impact on gender-equal practices. The strength here, too, is probably

⁹⁵ That is, strength on a scale from $.000$ (no correlation) to 1.000 (full correlation). The correlation measure used in Part 2 of the report is Pearson's r .

⁹⁶ We use the expressions "strong", "moderate" and "weak" about the strength of the correlations – strong is about $.210$ and over, moderate is $.120$ to $.210$, and weak is about $.080$ to $.120$ (but still significant).

somewhat exaggerated in the figure. But even when taking this into account, we see that traditional gender formation influences gender-equal practices negatively. This is not a very new result, but it is interesting that we can here see it in relation to the impact of the other dimensions. It seems to have a rather strong negative influence, especially among men.

The figure also shows a strong correlation between couple resource distribution and gender-equal practices (again particularly among men). This is in line with much gender research and feminist theory. The more male-dominated the couple resource distribution or the gender contract is, the less equal are practices.

The analysis makes it possible to measure the impact of couple resource distribution in relation to the effect of the other dimensions on gender-equal practices. As we will see, the impact of couple resource distribution is consistently large (about .300).

This can be interpreted on the basis of research on the significance of the gender contract and economic household theory, as will be described later. We get – regardless of further interpretations – a clear signal that a realistic approach to structure and context is important in order to understand gender equality. If the resource distribution in the couple relationship is imbalanced or male-dominated, especially if the man contributes most of the income, this has a negative impact on gender-equal practices. The proportion of men who practice equality is almost twice as large among those with an equal couple resource distribution as among those with a male-dominated resource distribution.

As the figure above shows, male-dominated couple resource distribution has a certain negative impact also on gender equality attitudes, but it is much weaker. It could be assumed that a positive attitude to equality sometimes “compensates” for an imbalanced couple resource distribution, which will make the correlation weaker.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ The survey ISSP 2002 shows, for example, that married /co-habiting men who do little of the housework, have a bad conscience about this, and signal in attitudes that they would like to do more. Cf. the chapter on equality attitudes.

Overall, we see that the study gives new findings when we use the new six-dimensional analytical framework. It also gives partly unexpected results. The instrument might be compared to a telescope with improved resolution.

What about resistance to gender equality, which was a theme in the preparation of the survey? The analyses indicate that an active resistance to equality plays a role for some of the men with non-equal practices, but the couple resource distribution (or gender contract) also has its own independent impact. Gender formation is also influential. These are potentially important findings, which are in line with the model presented in the introduction. They illustrate the fact that there is potential for action even where the conditions of equality are poor.

Gender formation and gender equality overlap less than many have assumed in the current debate. Traditional gender formation and minimal equality do coincide in some environments, but we also find a good deal of gender-equal practices among the traditional, and other variations which, taken together, make the correlation rather weak. We also see a tendency that the correlation is stronger among men than among women. The gender formation of men thus seems to be more “bound” to the other dimensions.

Can we interpret this as saying that gender equality is developing into a more independent dimension? From a historical perspective, it is possible that the correlation between gender and equality will be weakened when equality becomes a more dominant norm in society and culture (Holter, Ø. 2007). The material points in this direction; the connection to gender has been partially broken. The correlation between gender formation and equality is weaker among the younger than the older respondents, among both men and women.

In international research, it is still often common to treat gender formation and gender equality as one dimension. Our results show that this is too imprecise. We do not find one type of “new” or “traditional” man; and the kind of gender formation a man has, differs from the gender equality position that he holds.

Perhaps it is still the case within certain environments that traditional male gender formation is a major factor for explaining resistance to equality – but when looking at the results as a whole, it is clear that other circumstances have a great impact too.

As will be described later, couple resource distribution often has a stronger influence on equality.

What is the impact of gender equality in childhood and youth, placed to the left in the figure? According to socialization theory, childhood should be very important. The analysis implies that it is significant, but that it has rather a limited impact. Equality during childhood influences gender-equal practices somewhat (.160 among men) and has a weak influence on equality attitudes. The fact that the effect is so weak, can be explained by the influence of intermediate variables such as gender formation, by equal homes not necessarily giving a positive effect, and by other circumstances that we will discuss later.

The results so far can be summarised as follows:

- There is quite a strong correlation between the equality dimensions, but they have varying individual effects. For example, couple resource distribution seems to have a strong impact on gender-equal practices, while equality during childhood has a weaker impact.
- The dimensions are parts of a complex whole. They do, more or less, correlate where it could be expected, and other times behave more diversely.
- Some correlations are weak; for example, the correlation between equality during childhood and current gender equality practices. It might be assumed that they are influenced (artificially reduced) by other dimensions, for example, gender formation.
- The correlations between equality dimensions emerge – surprisingly – somewhat more clearly among men than among women.
- However, gender equality and quality of life correlate most clearly among women. The positive effect of equality on quality of life is not as clear among men.

The picture can be interpreted as indicating that so-called “partial gender equality” has advanced further, in that the gains in terms of quality of life are clearer, especially among women. Contrary to some assumptions, gender equality does not appear as a burden for men either, but the gains are not as clear as among women.

So, we see a positive impact of gender-equal practices on women’s quality of life. Balanced couple resource distribution, on the other hand, does not emerge as

clearly. Later, we will, however, see that especially income distribution actually *does* have a clear effect on women's quality of life.

So far, we have based our results on the correlation of two dimensions (bivariate analysis). Let us now move on to see whether the bivariate picture changes when we divide the respondents into main groups, based on income and age.

Correlations in the light of income and age

Let us take a closer look at how the dimensions correlate with two categories of men, those with a low/medium income (up to NOK 300,000, ca. USD 50.000) and those with a high income (NOK 300,000 and over).

The analysis (figure not included here) mainly results in the same picture that we found for men in general (in the figure above). For example, equality in childhood and youth correlates similarly with gender-equal practices among those with a low/medium income and those with a high income.

The only dimension displaying clear variations according to income level is the index for male-dominated couple resource distribution. Among men with a low income, this dimension has a weaker impact on gender equality practices than among men in general. Among men with a high income, it has a stronger impact on practices. This seems reasonable. Where the resources are larger, an unequal resource distribution becomes more influential. The significance of couple resource distribution increases strongly with level of income. Otherwise, the correlations between the dimensions are rather similar among men with low/medium and high income.

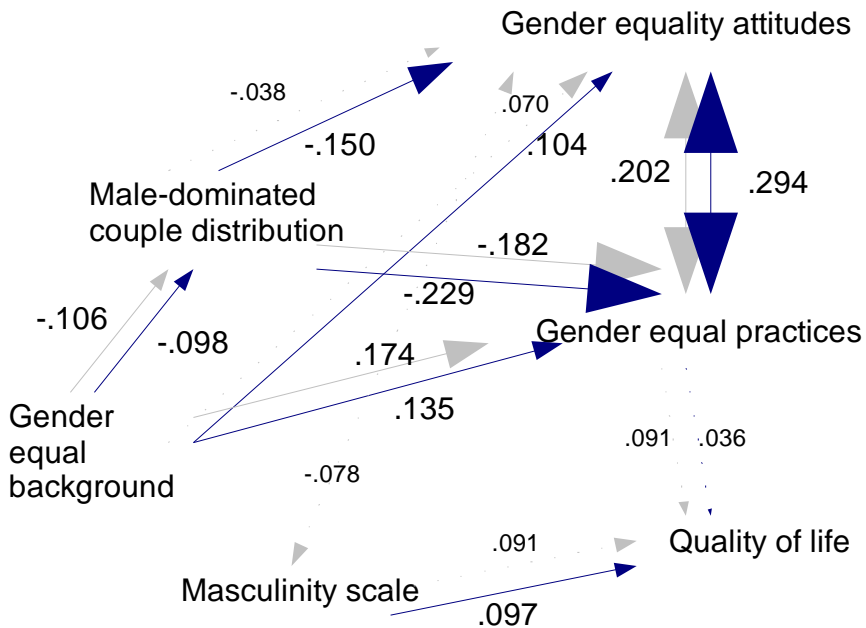
We would be surprised if the correlation between gender-equal orientation and gender-equal practices were greatest in the highest income categories. Is this the case?

Looking at the material as a whole, we see that the correlation does actually increase with increased income, even if it is somewhat uneven towards the top. This is unexpected. It can be interpreted in several ways. One is that the consensus on gender equality attitudes among the elite is now spreading into practices. The elite are the forerunners. Another interpretation is that structural inequality is greater at the top. "It all depends on the man", it is his attitudes that set the

conditions for practices in couples. We will return to this discussion later. A third possibility is that it is simply easier for those with a high income to adjust practices in order to reflect attitudes. They are less limited by, for example, financial considerations (e.g. mortgages) which tend to weaken the impact of attitudes on practices. This might explain why the correlation between attitudes and practices is not stronger than it is, particularly at the lower income levels.

Further analyses indicate that the relationship between gender equality attitudes and gender-equal practices in working life is also influenced by income. The association is considerably larger among those with a medium or high income, than among those with a low income. This result, too, points towards structural differences. In the “free professions” high in the income pyramid, the opportunity to work with the opposite gender at the same level is greatest.

Associations between main variables among men
 Light grey arrows - men 25-39 years (N=427)
 Dark blue arrows – men 40+ years (N=1136)
 Gender equality and quality of life 2007



Older and younger

As might be expected, the correlation between gender-equal practices and attitudes are somewhat stronger among the older than among the younger men, possibly because attitudes mean more for practices in the older group. Perhaps this also reflects a societal development, as was discussed above. We also see that imbalanced couple resource distribution is somewhat more significant among the older than the younger men, but here the difference is smaller than might have been expected. Thus, it is not the case that the couple resource distribution begins to “work” only after some time. We also see that gender formation is of less

importance than in the first figure; this is due to the fact that we now only use part of the index (the masculinity/femininity scale).

Equality in childhood and youth correlates somewhat more strongly with gender equality practices among the younger than the older men, but the difference is not very big. This result may indicate a gradual advance for equality. In other respects, the main picture is the same as in the previous figure.

It might be expected that equality practices gain a more positive impact on quality of life, as society has become more equal. This should take the form of a greater positive effect on the quality of life among the younger than the older men. However, we find only weak tendencies in that direction. There are, indeed, somewhat more positive effects among the younger, but these are very weak.

On the whole, it can be said that women have passed a watershed where gender equality has a positive impact on quality of life, while men have not passed this phase yet. However, within some areas, particularly in relation to children and cohabitation, equal practices have a clearly positive impact on men's quality of life, too.

What causes gender-equal practices?

So far we have discussed bilateral correlations between the indices and tested these by using gender, income and age as control variables. The results roughly yield the same main picture, with some variations. The five equality dimensions are mutually connected and influence quality of life.

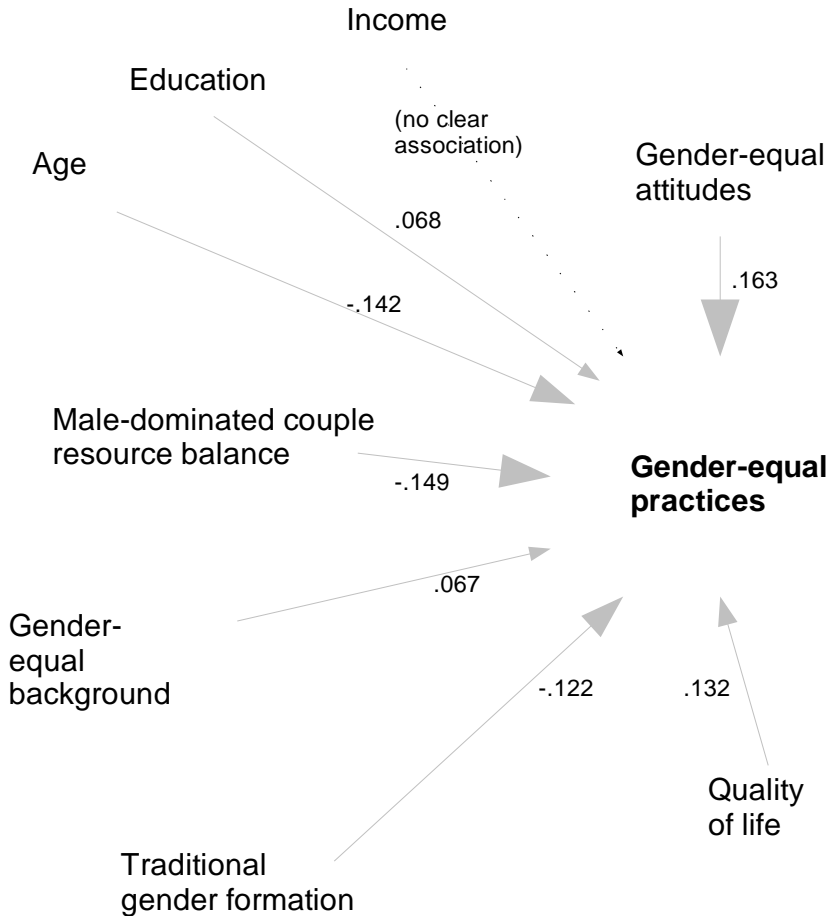
Does this picture remain intact also in multivariate analyses? We will begin by looking at a multivariate regression analysis. We place gender equality practices as the dependent variable (effect), with the equality dimensions, quality of life and important background variables as independent variables (causes). Such multivariate testing should remove possible spurious results in the analyses presented above.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ We have used Midtbø (2007), Tabachnik et al (2007) and Skog (2007) as references for the regression analyses.

Gender equality and quality of life 2007

Predictors of gender-equal practices
(regression with main dimensions and
background variables)

Total sample (N=2805)



The figure shows the results from the regression analysis with gender equality practices as a dependent variable. We first present the sample as a whole (grey arrows).

If the analytical framework was unreliable, the dimensions should disappear from the picture when we include control variables such as age, education and income. This does not happen, however. They still have an explanatory effect. Attitudes to equality are clearly connected to practices; couple resource distribution has an impact, etc. – regardless of age, education and income.

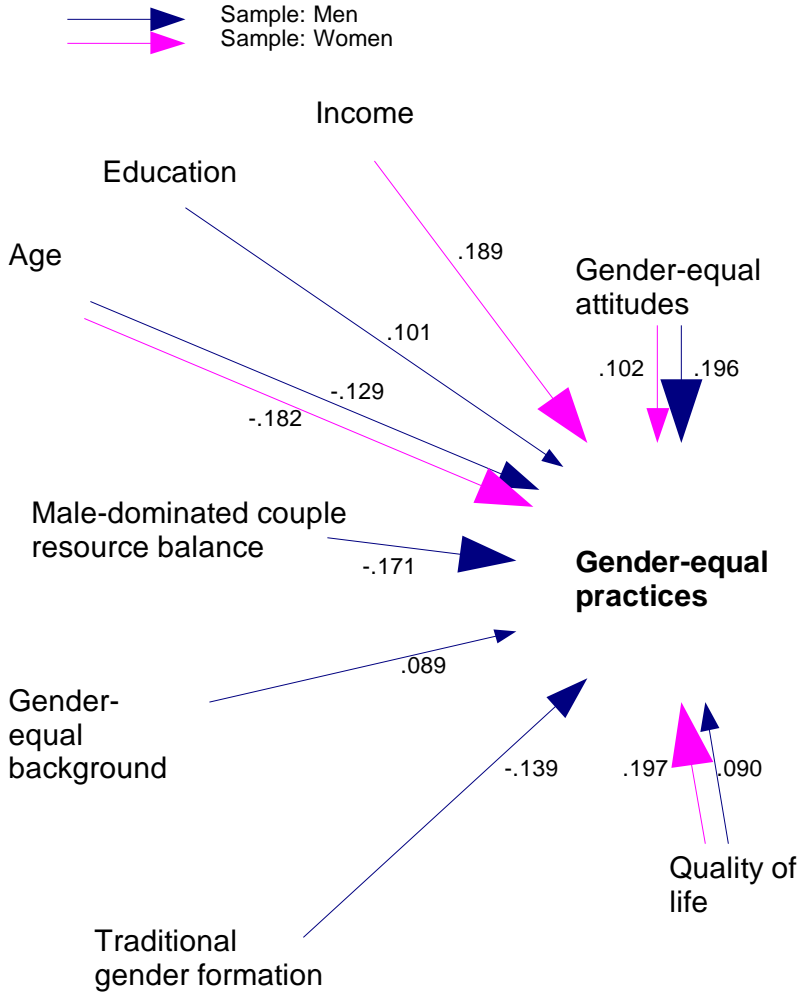
The values are somewhat lower than in the bivariate analyses, yet this is as expected. However, the total explanatory effect is rather moderate. Many circumstances not included in the survey or in the indices, obviously also have an impact.

The main point here is, nevertheless, that the framework is coherent and that the correlations are robust. Their actual strength will be discussed in later chapters.⁹⁹ The figure below shows the same regression analysis, now separately for each gender.

⁹⁹ Generally, the multivariate regression analyses give a "backburner effect" so that both the dimensions and the background variables are somewhat weakly outlined. More detailed analyses often display stronger correlations. In this type of analysis it is not necessarily correct that regression overrules the finds of bi- and tri-variable analyses (Tabachnik et al 2007:143-6).

Gender equality and quality of life 2007

Predictors of gender-equal practices
(regression with main dimensions and background variables)



The figure shows how background circumstances and main dimensions influence gender-equal practices among men (blue arrows) and among women (purple arrows).

The results of the study are, in many respects, summarised in this diagram. We see both co-variation and the absence of co-variation, in a pattern that has not previously been available to research.

So, gender equality attitudes, couple resource distribution and traditional gender formation have an impact on equality practices, particularly among men. A gender-equal background (equality among parents in childhood) plays a more moderate role.

The analysis confirms that income and age have a rather strong effect on the equality practices of women. The impact of income is not as clear among men, and also age has a weaker impact than among women. Education has some positive effect on men's equality practices, but couple resource distribution is of greater significance. We see – again – that quality of life and gender equality practices are associated, especially among women.

All in all, we see that the picture described earlier is also maintained by a multivariate analysis. This is an important result. If the analytical framework had been unreliable, the new index variables would have been pushed aside by well-known explanatory variables like age, income and education. This does not happen.

The framework seemingly “fits” men somewhat better than women. The correlations between the dimensions are consistently stronger among men than among women (except for quality of life). The weaker results among women are possibly spurious, as will be discussed later. The connections between the dimensions are important among women also (here, they are partly “picked up” by the background variables). We see that the connections to income and age are stronger among women than among men. The correlation between couple resource distribution and gender equality practices among women is underestimated in this analysis.

Why are gender equality orientation and equality practices (and other dimensions in relation to practices) more weakly associated among women than among men? Are the attitudes of women less binding, or are their practices more incidental? As far as we can see, this is not the case. Rather, the answer lies elsewhere.

If we look in more detail at the equality attitudes and the equality practices, we find that the women who score low in the attitude index, are those who “lower” the total correlation among women, so that it becomes weaker than among men. We get two important results:

- Among women and men with gender-equal attitudes, the picture is more or less the same pertaining to correlation with gender-equal practices.
- Among those with less explicit gender-equal attitudes, on the other hand, the proportion with equal practices is considerably larger among women than among men.

In other words, orientation and practices follow each other among men, while we see more of a break among the women. This does not, however, mean that women with gender-equal attitudes have less equal practices – rather, it works the other way around, so that there are more gender-equal practices than we would have expected among women with less gender-equal attitudes.

The results can be interpreted as indicating *higher standards of gender-equal practices* among women. In other words, even among women with rather traditional attitudes, many emphasize equal practices.

In order to see whether this pattern emerges also elsewhere, we have explored the degree of gender-equal practices in working life, and how this correlates with equality attitudes.

The same pattern emerges. There are small differences between women and men among those with a gender-equal orientation, while the pattern is more varied among those with traditional attitudes. Again, women in this group more often report gender-equal practices (at work), and again it is this difference that lowers the total correlation among women.

The result is confirmed by two independent tests, and thus seems rather robust. This provides an important modification of the surprising image we got initially, indicating less consistency between attitudes and practices among women than among men.

As mentioned above, the significance of couple resource distribution among women is downgraded more than there are grounds for in the figure above.¹⁰⁰ This probably also, to some extent, applies to traditional gender formation, which also has a somewhat stronger actual impact among women (for example, negative on equality practices) than what the analysis reveals, as well as to equality during childhood. Nevertheless, the analysis indicates something about where these aspects have the strongest impact.

The analyses show the same robust main correlations. Their relative strength or ranking is, however, less clear and more dependent on which control variables are included.¹⁰¹ An important result is that the equality dimensions correlate at about the same level as the control variables. They do not disappear into the periphery as they would have done if the framework had been faulty.

Quality of life

How do the equality dimensions affect quality of life? The figure below illustrates this, together with background variables.

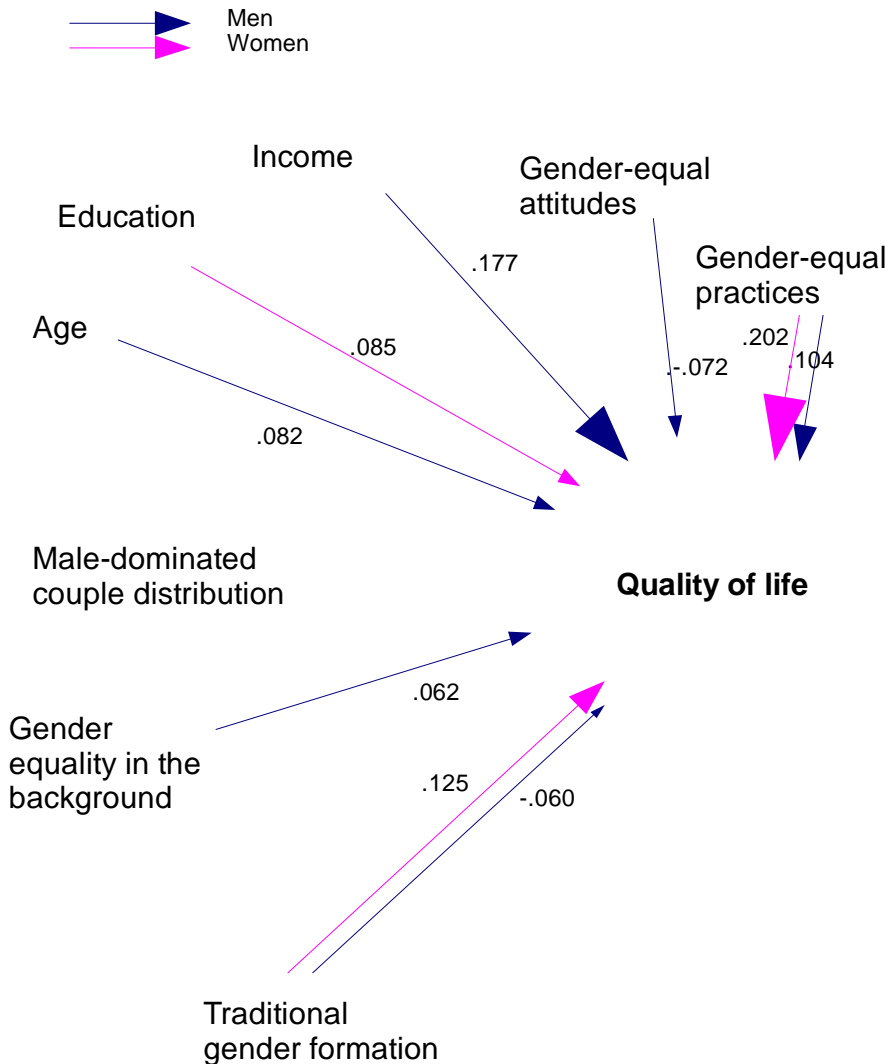
¹⁰⁰ It seems as if particularly male income dominance has a negative impact on quality of life among women, while other forms of couple resource distribution do not have so clear an effect (as will be described in later chapters).

¹⁰¹ Here, it might be useful to consider that a correlation of about .200 usually means a difference of 20 to 40 per cent in cross tables in our material.

How gender equality affects quality of life

Multivariate regression including background variables

Gender equality and quality of life 2007



One main finding is that gender-equal practices have a positive impact on quality of life, especially among women (.202), but also among men (.104), when we control for other important variables. The effect among men is less strong, but is

still clearly significant, and it is interesting that multivariate analysis makes it emerge more clearly in the picture.

The individual's income has a clear effect on gender-equal practices among women, but not among men. Regarding quality of life, however, the gender pattern is the opposite – individual income does not necessarily lead to higher quality of life among women, while it has this effect among men. Otherwise, the background variables only have a weak impact.

The results throw light on various gender patterns in relation to quality of life. Quality of life is affected by different forces. The equality-related variables consistently have a positive effect pertaining to quality of life, apart from gender formation, where adherence to tradition still seems to give a slight positive effect (among women, not among men). Couple resource distribution does not seem to have any direct significance for quality of life. This is surprising, but perhaps spurious – we know that the distribution has an indirect impact, through equality practices. Obviously couples and families still experience gains and losses in terms of quality of life. Both traditional and equal couple resource distribution can give good or bad results.

It is surprising that income is significant for men, but not for women.¹⁰² The fact that gender-equal practices are important for women's quality of life, is in line with other studies (Kitterød, R 2000). As mentioned above, we see that education is of some importance for women's quality of life, but not for that of men, while age has a weakly positive effect for men. Equality in childhood and youth has a weak positive effect for men, but no clear effect for women.

Probably the impact of income, gender equality practices, equality during childhood and gender formation is more similar for men and women than this analysis reveals. The negative impact of male-dominated couple resource distribution is also under-communicated.¹⁰³ We will discuss this in later chapters.

¹⁰² This is perhaps partly spurious, since other variables (such as gender-equal practices) are associated with income, and perhaps artificially picks up some of the income effect.

¹⁰³ For example, since male-dominated couple resource distribution is (negatively) associated with quality of life through gender-equal practices, particularly among women.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have presented the main results gained by the use of a new analytical framework for gender equality. This is based on questions within six dimensions: childhood, gender formation, couple resource distribution, attitudes and practices, and quality of life. The indices for the six dimensions reveal the impacts of various sides of equality in relation to each other, and how these vary in various groups according to gender, age, etc.

The dimensions correlate significantly and provide a new picture of the state of gender equality. Couple resource distribution and other dimensions have an impact on gender equality practices also when we include background variables, and often have a stronger effect, although there is also much variation that the framework does not explain.

In the following chapters, we will explore the dimensions in more detail, and see how they can help clarify connections between gender equality and quality of life.

Gender equality attitudes

Some of the main points of the chapter

- Support for equality in Norway is broad, but at the same time uneven. It is greatest regarding equal sharing of economic responsibility for the family, decision-making and division of work at home – what we call “core values”. Attitudes are more divided when it comes to active equality work and governmental equality policies.
- Attitudes to equality are related to life experiences. This is most clearly evidenced in data concerning respondents’ observations and critical attitudes, particularly in relation to working life and in association with traditional values.
- Attitudes to equality influence practices. Some types of attitudes have greater significance than others. Attitudes to equal sharing of housework, and attitudes to equality policies, have clear effects on practices, while experience-based attitudes have a less clear effect. .
- Negative attitudes to further promotion of equality often correlate with the opinion that gender equality has been implemented already, and with an “equity orientation” where equity is more important than equality (“different but equal”). It is also associated with emphasis on gender “distinction” (that men and women are basically different).
- Among some respondents, the view that equality has come far enough is associated with two other attitudes: that there is too much immigration and public “interference” with private life. This “enough-is-enough” tendency is most visible among men. It is associated with a lower level of education, and with an attitude that equality is most beneficial for the successful and well resourced sections of society.
- The attitudinal gender differences are relatively small. Although women are somewhat more equality-oriented than men, the gap is small. However, some detail questions, for example, about the sharing of family and provider responsibilities, reveal considerably more gender-differentiated attitudes.

Introduction

Norwegian society in the year 2007 is characterised by broad support for gender equality – but also by ambivalence and resistance to it. The study shows a mixture which is, in many respects, puzzling. Some of the attitudes are very consistent, especially those we call “the core values” of equality. About 90 per cent of the

respondents think that the responsibility for family income, caring and work in the home should be shared equally between women and men.

On the other hand, we find an opposition – perhaps not to gender equality as such, but to the further promotion of equality or political activism in the field. Does this resistance apply to all the related issues? Many agree that “equality has come far enough”, and that “equity is more important than equality”.

Why is this the case? It might be assumed that the gap between the ideal and the real plays a role here. The equality ideal has become its own problem – people do not manage to live up to it, and therefore they choose the less demanding ideal of equity. They want to believe that equality has already been achieved. Things are as they should be. They react negatively to statements that problematise the situation, and are sceptical about quota systems.

Some of the resistance correlates with traditional values, but this is no longer so clear. Perhaps it is more a feeling of not living up to the ideals, or a wish not to be reminded of the problems, that is at work here. It is, nevertheless, puzzling when many of those who think that gender equality has come far enough, at the same time are positive towards concrete equality initiatives, such as increased paternity leave and equal sharing of tasks and support in the home.

In this chapter, we will take a closer look at how the index for gender equality attitudes was constructed, the challenges in this area, and the patterns that emerged in the results.

The design of the index

Attitudes to gender equality are covered by a number of questions in the survey, both standard questions that enable comparisons with other studies, and new, more detailed questions.

The questions deal with the same issue, in various areas, and the compilation of an index should, logically speaking, have been fairly straightforward. We did, however, encounter challenges. Some questions clearly relate to the respondents’ own opinions, while others are more tuned to their views of the existing situation. The difference between attitude and situation descriptions is not always clear.

It might also be the case that the various questions, although they, generally speaking, deal with the same issue, in actual fact cluster into some main patterns or sub-dimensions. We will discuss this later in the chapter.

The first index we created was based on attitudes towards children and equality, parental leave and parental responsibility, equality work in various areas, general equality attitudes, views on barriers, and the attitude to men's responsibility for rape.

The analyses indicated that this first index was somewhat broad and diffuse. Therefore, we created a more limited and precise index. This included attitudes to equality in child rearing, attitudes to equal sharing of parental leave and parental responsibility, the questions as to whether the responsibility for support and work in the home should be shared equally, whether equality has come far enough, and whether the genders are so different that equality is inappropriate. All these variables correlate significantly with each other. This index – which gave the clearest overall results – was chosen as the main index regarding gender-equal attitudes.

Since attitudes to immigration and attitudes to governmental policies pertaining to people's private lives display considerable co-variation with attitudes to gender equality, we also compiled an index which included these three aspects. This provided interesting results, as will be described later.

Different types of gender equality attitudes

The questions about attitudes to gender equality create a fairly coherent dimension of associated variables. However, the study also displays some distinctive patterns. These emerged by means of, among other things, factor analyses. We found three main patterns in men's attitudes pertaining to equality:

- Attitudes to desegregation in working life and equally shared responsibility for financial support for the family
- Answers to the questions as to whether women want higher positions or more equality.
- Answers to the questions as to whether female job applicants encounter discrimination, and whether men have financial privileges in our society.

These results can be interpreted in terms of a “motive” factor, a “tradition” factor and an “observation” factor. In other words, the attitudes cluster around motive, tradition and observation. Motive includes a political evaluation of equality, but is more extensive than that, and also covers core values, such as equal supporting responsibility and desegregation of working life.

We found similar patterns among the women. First, a motive factor with views on desegregation and supporting responsibility. Secondly, a tradition factor with questions as to whether women want equality, whether equality has come far enough or has already been achieved, etc. The third, observation factor, concerns whether women encounter discrimination in working life recruitment.

An attempt at further specifying the patterns give some more information.¹⁰⁴ The following are the six most important factors among men:

- “Gender politics” might be a suitable title for the first and strongest factor. It is topped by the attitude as to whether equality has come far enough, closely followed by whether equality has been implemented already, whether equity is more important, and whether men and women are basically different.
- The next factor pertains to what we have called the core values of equality, which are topped by attitudes to equal supporting responsibility, followed by equal sharing of housework, and the desegregation of working life.
- The third factor is the working life and observation factor roughly as described above – whether women encounter discrimination, whether men have problems in co-operating with women, whether men have privileges.
- The fourth is a factor pertaining to equality measures, which is somewhat isolated from the rest.
- The fifth is a tradition factor: whether women should give up their privileges, whether men should do so, whether men are given a chance to participate in caring, whether women want to take on responsible positions.
- The sixth deals with more freedom for women and men.

¹⁰⁴ A three-factor solution “explains” about one third of the variation, while a six-factor solution “explains” about half of it.

The analyses indicated that motives are related to gender politics and to core values in the home.

On the basis of such analyses, we will concentrate on four sub-dimensions: gender politics, core values, traditionalism and observation/criticism. We designed four new indices using the factor analyses as guidelines, and used these to look at how various types of gender equality attitudes are connected to the other main dimensions of the study.

We first looked at the men among the respondents. Here, it emerged that attitudes to equality are connected to gender formation, particularly through one of the sub-dimensions; the one we call gender politics. Traditional gender formation has some correlation with the other three attitudinal patterns, too, but less strongly. Generally, the attitudes pertaining to observation are the most independent part of the attitude pattern, perhaps because individual experiences are significant here. For example, the sub-dimension of observation only has a weak negative impact on equality practices, not clearly significant, while gender politics has a rather strong correlation here.

The strongest impact on gender-equal practices is displayed by the sub-dimension of equal sharing, but some of the effect is explained by this being the component closest to the measure of practices we use (equal sharing of work and decisions in the home). Also attitudes pertaining to gender politics are associated with equality practices, and the same applies to attitudes pertaining to traditionalism. The man's share of the resources in a couple relationship has a certain impact on attitudes towards equal sharing and gender politics, but less so on attitudes pertaining to observation and tradition. This is more or less as might have been expected. The analysis indicates that the resource balance has some significance for equality attitudes, especially in the fields of equal sharing (of supporting responsibility and housework) and gender politics, but this is not, after all, a very strong connection. The index for quality of life is only weakly and unclearly influenced by the various aspects of equality attitudes among men.

Looking at the women, we see that attitudes pertaining to observation correlate with a lower quality of life. Experiences of discrimination might have an impact here. Traditional attitudes are, on the other hand, weakly positively associated with quality of life. Attitudes towards gender politics and equality display no clear correlations with quality of life. Also among the women, it is especially the group

of equality attitudes which we called gender politics, that are associated with gender formation. This is interesting, but perhaps not that surprising, since gender politics here include the statements on the difference between the sexes and preference of equity above equality, in addition to whether equality has come far enough and whether it has already been implemented.

The analyses indicate that particularly the attitudes related to the pattern we called gender politics have a social-psychological connection with personal gender formation. This applies even more strongly to men than to women, according to the figures. The idea that men's gender formation is more individual and less associated with gender politics than women's gender formation, is not supported in these analyses. Instead, we can ask whether the "gender role" in reality is greater – or at least as extensive – for men.

The various aspects of gender equality attitudes consistently display a weaker association with equality practices among women than among men. Attitudes towards equal sharing show – here, as among men – a significant connection, but it is weaker. We find a stronger association between orientation and practices, among women, when it comes to attitudes associated with the tradition factor (whether women and men want equality, whether women want challenging jobs, whether men have problems with female managers). This is, however, still very moderate. As mentioned in the previous chapter, part of the background may be that even women with less gender-equal attitudes often report gender-equal practices.

All in all, the results show that the attitudinal patterns among men and women are slightly different, and have somewhat different connections with equality practices and other main dimensions of the study, while the associations are consistently stronger among men than among women.

How do attitudes influence practices?

The study shows that some of the attitudes correlate more strongly with equality practices than others. If we look at the men's attitudes in the factor analyses, only three factors prove to have any significant association with practices. Those influencing (associated with) practices, are, in a prioritized order:

- gender politics

- observation/criticism
- core values/equal sharing

Other attitudinal patterns, including attitudes towards quota measures, privileges, desegregation and freedom, are less significant when it comes to practices.

The fact that attitudes towards the equal sharing of work in the home are rather closely associated with practices, is as expected. What is more surprising, is that gender politics have such a great significance. The analyses indicate, again, that social-psychological aspects enter the picture here.

Equality attitudes and gender politics

Some of the attitudes cluster in a pattern which we call “gender politics”, but which might also be called “gender ideology”. This cluster occurs among both men and women; the picture is similar on both sides.

Gender politics are particularly strongly associated with two variables: whether equality has come far enough, and whether it has been implemented already, and quite strongly with two other variables: whether equity is more important than equality, and whether men and women are basically different. The attitudes linked to gender politics create more or less the same pattern whether we either compile an index manually based on the four strongest variables, or save the factor calculation and test the relevant saved factor. Different types of analysis with approximately the same outcome (also separately for each sex) indicate that the pattern is robust.

It appears that the attitudes pertaining to gender politics can be divided into two sub-components. One is clearly political and characterised by resistance against further equality policies. The other component is linked to gender ideology, or ideas of difference, according to the questions about equity and gender difference. At the same time, the analyses show that these two components are very closely connected, more so than perhaps might be expected. The statement that equality has been implemented already is also strongly connected to the factor of gender politics, which thus holds an important “cognitive condition”.

What about those who do not fit into this pattern? In particular, those who think that equality has come far enough, *and* who, at the same time, think that equality has not been implemented already? Do we find a more open resistance to gender equality here?

The answer is no. The analyses show that the association is so strong that the groups that fall outside of it are small. Actually, only 4 per cent of the respondents answered that equality has come far enough and, at the same time, that it has not been implemented already. Neither do we see particular tendencies of a more open resistance, for example, pertaining to gender-equal practices, in this group. The distribution of answers here seems to be more of a result of coincidences.

What clearly emerges through such analyses, is that the idea of equality having been implemented already, is a strong component in the resistance against further equality. This was also an important result in the 1988 survey. This can be connected to the above discussion about whether resistance of equality is “*gender based*” or “*ideology based*” (see Part 1, chapter 7). The ideological undercurrent emerges quite clearly in the analyses, while the gender difference is not so obvious. This is more a question of a gender ideology that exists among both sexes. Probably this is also often a case of prioritizing *equal opportunities* (rather than equal rights), but the questionnaire did not include any questions on this issue.

Disparity between general and concrete equality attitudes

Many of those who, on a general level, think that equality has come far enough, are, on the other hand, positive towards equality and initiatives on a more concrete level. This was one of the main finds of the 1988 survey, and the same picture emerges in the current study. There thus seems to be a gap in the attitude dimension, according to whether the question about equality is put on a purely general or abstract level, or more concretely. The gap is particularly large when the concrete question pertains to positive elements, such as caring.

So, it is possible to be “against” further equality – and, at the same time, “for” more concrete measures. Many of those who think that equality has come far enough, nonetheless want fathers to have a larger share of the parental leave. As many as 74 per cent of the men who think that equality has come far enough, agree with the statement that men have more financial privileges in our society. 54 per cent agree with the claim that men are not given the chance to be equal contributors

in housework and childcare. 35 per cent agree with the suggestion that women are overlooked when positions are being filled. This might be interpreted as inconsistency (or acceptance of discrimination), but it probably first and foremost means that there is greater scepticism in regard to “general equality” than in regard to concrete and popular issues. As we will see later, three key issues contribute to the lower agreement on a general level – gender equality is perceived of as a project for the successful, a project for women, and a project that means that the state interferes with people’s private lives. A lower level of education is also significant, as will be described below.

In a Swedish pioneering study conducted in 1984, Lars Jalmert formulated a rule that the more personally an equality issue relates to a man, the more sceptical he becomes. This view was criticised in the 1988 study, since the results there revealed something of an opposite situation; that is, the more concrete an issue is, the greater is the support it attracts (Holter, Ø 1989 a). But it might well be that both aspects are true; this is not a case of either-or. Jalmert’s rule is of a social-psychological nature, while the rule in the 1988 study is more sociological. We have mentioned social-psychological aspects and correlations between gender politics and gender formation, particularly among men, which can be interpreted in the direction of Jalmert’s perspective. On the other hand, it is obvious that equality politics can be concretized in ways that result in increased support.

In general, the analyses with various indices show that attitudes to equality constitute one coherent dimension, even if there is variation within it. The broad attitude index which we mentioned at the beginning, is the one that most clearly displays a (positive) correlation with education, even if it is not particularly strong. It also shows a rather strong negative correlation with the man’s share of the resources within a couple relationship. The connection with equality practices is, however, approximately the same regardless of which index for equality attitudes we use.

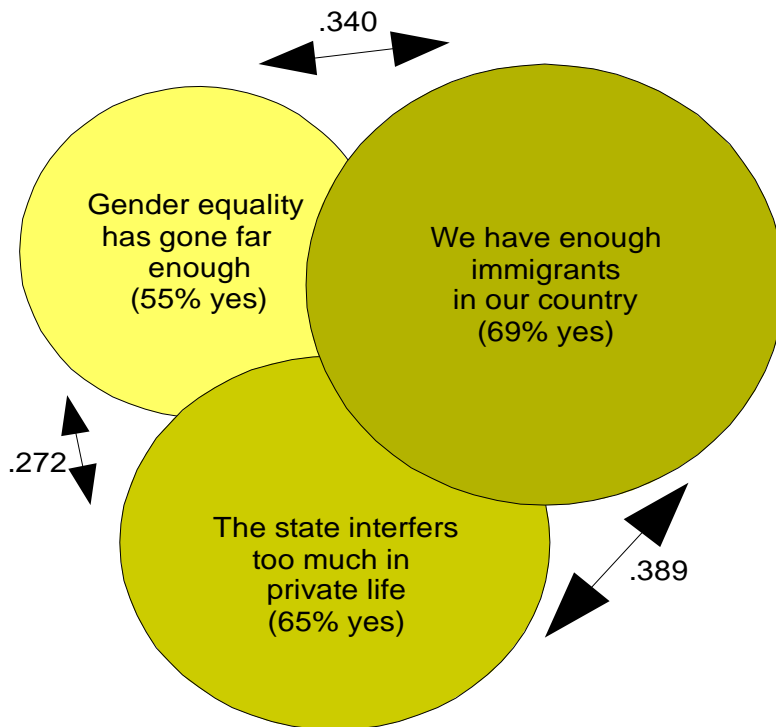
“Enough is enough” – negative attitudes to equality, immigration, authorities

Let us take a closer look at an index which consists of only three variables, that is, whether equality has come far enough, whether Norway has enough immigrants and asylum seekers, and whether the public authorities interfere too much in

people's private lives. In other words, views on gender equality, immigration and governmental interaction with private life.

The figure below shows how the three components are related. The size of the circles approximately corresponds to the support for the statement in the survey. The size of the arrows and the overlaps between the circles illustrate the connections (bivariate correlations).

Attitudes to gender equality, immigration, state
Gender equality and quality of life 2007 (Total sample, N=2805)



This attitude index turns out to be very strongly associated with traditional gender formation (as much as .412 among men). This is particularly interesting since we have already seen a strong correlation between traditional gender formation and the sub-factor we called gender politics. Can it be the case that gender politics, so to

say, “leak” into the enough-is-enough position? Do we find here, to put it somewhat crudely, men who feel that they have been pushed into a corner by the increasing equality, and are compensating for it in terms of attitudes?

The new index has a considerable negative correlation with education (-.295). This index has a very clear connection to lower education levels (which the main attitude index lacks). Otherwise, it does not yield much new information; the correlations with gender equality practices and couple resource distribution are similar to those in the main index, only somewhat weaker.

It might have been expected that, by investigating views on gender equality, immigration and authorities, we would venture into a more “purely political” area. This is partly true. The enough-is-enough index has a much clearer party political profile than the other indices for equality attitudes. The agreement that enough-is-enough is largest on the right-wing side of the political field, and smallest on the left-wing side. But it is the two other questions, not the gender equality question, that mainly give this connection to party politics. The index also displays a correlation with the statement that today’s equality work benefits the successful in society, which is interesting, since the main index otherwise shows little correlation with this variable.

The enough-is-enough pattern is thus not only more clearly associated with party politics, but also with certain types of lower socio-economic status. This emerges particularly in relation to level of education, while there is almost no association with level of income. By looking at how negative equality attitudes correlate with two other important attitudinal patterns, we thus move not only towards the political, but also downwards in terms of the educational level.

We further see that the social-psychological dimension continues to have a great influence. The enough-is-enough pattern is, as mentioned above, strongly connected to traditional gender formation. This can be interpreted as a confirmation of the theoretical point of departure for the study: gender can be an intermediate dimension. Here, gender formation can be regarded as a variable with a “side effect”, together with equality attitude, on gender equality practices.

The association between gender politics and personal gender formation can be connected to, for example, qualitative research on how gender formation can be

actively involved in political movements. Some of this research deals with authoritarian movements. Does the enough-is-enough pattern have any particular relation to authoritarian patterns in present day Norway?

First of all, it is important to note that the level of resistance to more equality in Norway today is somewhat lower than the resistance to more immigration and to what is called government interference. We also see that the resistance to gender equality decreases when moving from the general to the concrete. The figures say something about the prevailing social climate, where equality between the sexes has a stronger position than ethnic equality.

The enough-is-enough group is not only characterised by the respondents' lower level of education. Also, their parents' education level was somewhat lower. Growing up in a home with less educational resources seems to be a common feature, and it is interesting that both the mother's and the father's education has an impact. This confirms that the negative association between educational level and the enough-is-enough attitude is robust. Otherwise, there are only small differences in relation to childhood home, divorce between parents, violence/punishment, whether father was the decision-maker at home, etc. We find no clear tendencies of "the authoritarian personality". This might be due to the insensitivity in our variables, but we should at least have discerned a signal or two.

The 1988 study showed that men who had experienced the divorce of their parents, were strongly over-represented among those with political sympathies on the far right (*Fremskrittspartiet*, The Progress Party). Parental divorce, and/or growing up with a single mother, seemed to have rather a great impact on political preference. In the 2007 material, we still find this effect, but it is more moderate. The proportion who, before the age of 16, have experienced a parental divorce/separation, is almost twice as large among men who vote for the Progress Party (20 percent) as among the rest of the men (11 percent). We also find, somewhat surprisingly, the same tendency among women. Against this background, it is slightly surprising that the equality attitudes do *not* display any co-variation with childhood experience of parental divorce, either among men or women.

Can we interpret the enough-is-enough pattern as a kind of entrenchment? Can it be the case that certain types of experience create a certain type of positioning?

Although we find few signs that concrete childhood experiences are decisive in this issue, parental education does play a role. We see an educational inferiority, which is reflected in the current educational situation. Does this entail an experienced *inferiority* which, in its turn, has caused a negative attitude towards more equality, immigration and state interference? This is one possible interpretation. It can be connected to Connell's (1995) masculinity theory – the enough-is-enough view represents a challenge to the hegemonic and rhetoric equality-correct masculinity in Norway. The respondents in this group do not want more equality, more immigration, or a state that “says what you should do”. This interpretation is strengthened by the overlap among the three variables especially among those who are negative, and especially among men.

In addition to a lower education level, the enough-is-enough group is also characterised by certain experiences pertaining to education and working life. The group was less interested than the average population in working with the subjects offered at school, and more interested in getting a job with a good income. Particularly among the men we see a certain educational and occupational profile: they wanted to have a job with a technical content, were less interested than the average in gaining a job which would enable them to help others and were more geared towards risks. We also see that the men who score highly in the index, have a position in working life that deviates somewhat from the normal situation. Three of the survey's working life variables are clearly associated with this group: male-dominated workplaces with few women, a view that it is easier to co-operate with men than women, and that the respondents mostly co-operate with men at the same level. These results are fairly similar whether we look at the sample as a whole, or just the men.

To summarise, we see not only a possible point of departure for the attitude index that we study, associated with inferiority in education, but also a certain profile throughout childhood and education, which is consistent and meaningful, even if it is not very strong. It is possible that further research will show that our sensitive attitude indices are associated with other types of experience in working life, in addition to certain types of educational choices and positions.

The enough-is-enough men thus tend to originate from backgrounds with a low level of education. At the same time, they choose more traditional or conformist masculine educational and professional careers, and end up in more male-

dominated workplaces. They have put less effort into education, but have done quite well in terms of income – here, the numbers show no losing tendency. It might be claimed that they have made use of an actual privilege system, while, on the other hand, their ambitions as to a job with a good income have not pushed them above the middle of the income hierarchy.

Is it correct to interpret this pattern as an entrenchment position? The material supports this to a certain extent. The men who score highly on the enough-is-enough index, have a slightly lower quality of life, they feel a bit more often that their life is of no use to anyone, and do to a somewhat lesser extent discuss personal problems with others. All this is rather weak, but still significant. A pattern pertaining to friends and social life also emerges – they seldom have friends of the opposite sex, friends of another sexual orientation, or friends among immigrants (moderate to weak correlations).

We also see a rather clear family political profile among the enough-is-enough men, in particular, a more positive view of the childcare cash benefit, which is also connected to their partners having a lower education than normal. Day-care being good for the smallest children is a view that they agree with – as expected – to a considerably lesser extent. These men often experience responsibility as the main provider and agree somewhat less often that their partner should be independent. They do somewhat less of the clothes washing at home, but like to take care of the payment of bills themselves. Although some of the correlations are only moderate, they do, taken together, provide a rather consistent image.

We do not get clear signs that it is disappointments or negative experiences with women that motivate the enough-is-enough men. No special profile emerges pertaining to, for example, divorce. Work experiences probably have a greater impact than family experiences. As we have seen, these men are most commonly located at male-dominated workplaces, and, furthermore, they hold attitudes that make the chance that they would change their views through equal co-operation with women, smaller. One possible interpretation is that work experiences “maintain” a pattern partly created during childhood, and which is particularly connected to a lower educational level. So, we see tendencies of inferiority and compensation, which we interpret as “enough is enough”, with a strengthening of the link between three attitudes. This is one of several potential interpretations, and it is up to further research to find new ones.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have described attitudes to gender equality in the study, and specific patterns in this area. We first presented a broad index (based on twenty questions), and then a somewhat narrower index that we chose as the main index for the attitudes dimension. The analyses confirm that this is mainly one coherent dimension, with gradual shifts rather than clear breaks within it.

Attitudes to gender equality are not very different between men and women. They are not “gender based” in that sense. In actual fact, the difference in the main index is only about five per cent – women are *slightly* more positive about equality than men. Some of the attitudes are, however, connected to gender formation among both women and men, and, so to say, “gendered across gender”. Certain types of equality attitudes tend to correlate with certain types of gender formation.

Analyses of the attitudes revealed four patterns, associated with gender and equality politics, observation/criticism, traditionalism in the respondents’ social environment, and equal sharing in the home (“core values”). Since we primarily measure gender equality practices in the home in this study, it is this last attitude pattern of equal sharing which is most strongly associated with our main index for equality practices. The gender politics pattern is also associated with practices. This pattern is often characterised by ideas of gender distinction. It is a good thing that women and men are equal, while equality is interpreted as homogenisation and therefore evaluated as something negative. This pattern is – more clearly than others – associated with personal gender formation. The borderline between public and personal life is thus smaller – paradoxically enough, since the opposition to “state interference in private life” is a tendency in this context.

In order to look at this more closely, we merged three partly overlapping attitudes – enough equality, enough immigration, enough state interference – in one index. Although this, as was expected, has a strong party political association, it is the two other variables, not the actual equality attitude, that mostly pull in a political direction. It might have been expected that we would find a kind of political core of gender equality resistance, but the tendencies are very moderate or weak. We looked for this core resistance in different ways without finding very much. What the analyses did show, was a rather strong association with a *lower educational level*, which reoccurred in several places – the respondents, their parents, their partners; thus, this is a noteworthy continuous feature. Furthermore, we found an

association with single-gendered male workplaces and lack of co-operation with women at the same level. In our interpretation, we mention inferiority, entrenchment and low chance of learning gender-equal cooperation as possible elements of explanation. It seems that this “enough-is-enough” tendency has an element of entrenchment and a feeling of inferiority attached to it, particularly pertaining to education. In addition, the numbers show a strong correlation with traditional gender formation, especially among men. The core of the enough-is-enough pattern seems more gendered than political.

Finally, we want to point out that the attitudes in the study can be explored in other and perhaps better ways than the ones we have applied here. One approach is to pick out the most “revealing” attitudes and look at these in more detail. Even if we hardly have that much under-reporting in the attitudinal area, we probably have a portion of “correctness” which weakens the image. The alternative approach is therefore to use statements that are less influenced by this. One example is the statement about preferring to wash the clothes oneself, in order to make sure it is probably done. Here, we suddenly get a massive gender difference; the correlation with gender is almost .600, while the average is approximately .200. This is not just due to the fact that washing clothes is still a gender-segregated task, but also by the wording of the statement – it is, so to say, sharp enough to cut through the usual layer of correctness. The gender pattern appears more clearly. Something similar applies to the statement on experienced provider responsibility. We might get the impression that the attitudes to equality are characterised by a certain correctness or *neutralised surface* and an *underlying, more gendered reality*, which emerges through some apt formulations (cf. Holter, Ø 1990a). This can contribute to the explanation why the indices for gender equality attitudes do not co-vary even more strongly with equality practices. On the other hand, this explanation should not be exaggerated, since we also see that attitudes in many places do correlate well with data on action or practices.

Gender equality practices

Some of the main points of the chapter

- While previous studies of gender equality have mainly focussed on orientations or attitudes, the current survey also puts the searchlight on actions.
- The main dimensions of the study are important for explaining variation in gender equality practices. They often have more explanatory power than traditional background variables such as gender, education, income and age.
- Particularly, couple resource distribution, attitudes to equality, and gender formation have an impact.
- The attitudes of men and women towards equality must be seen in the context of material circumstances, such as couple resource distribution and responsibility for the family income, in order to understand variations in equality practices.

Introduction

Can “practices” in relation to gender equality be measured? Is it possible to distinguish action from attitude? In this chapter, we will discuss how equality practices can be mapped and what they are associated with. We will also explore some themes in the public debate, including whether men who practice equality are “punished” by a higher risk of divorce.

Mapping gender equality practices

One of the important aims of the study was to make a useful survey of practices pertaining to gender equality. Since the 1988 study was criticised for not including enough material on men’s actions, it was important to include that aspect in the present study. Therefore the study contains a number of questions on how men and women share decisions and work. The questions primarily deal with circumstances in the family, but also include gender-equal co-operation in working life.

There is a widespread view that attitudes and actions are two very different things when it comes to gender equality. The gap between them is often a topic for debate, not least in relation to men. Men say one thing, but do another. As we have

seen (in the chapter on the main dimensions), this line of thought is not so clearly supported by the new results. Perhaps this *was* the state of things in the 1980s, but the situation among men in general has changed.

But what are “gender equality practices” actually? What kinds of action should be included, which should not? As with the other dimensions, we have worked on this by looking at how the potentially relevant variables co-vary, and how they vary in relation to other dimensions and variables in the study. We chose the questions that give the clearest profile and reveal patterns as clearly as possible. We tried several different indices or co-variables, before we finally chose the one which, all in all, worked best.

This main index for equality practices consists of three parts: sharing of decisions, sharing of housework, and sharing of caring tasks, among heterosexual co-habiting couples. So, this is a “home-centred” index, strongly influenced by the sharing of caring and work.

Most will agree that sharing of decisions in the home between the woman and the man is connected to equality practices. But what about sharing of work? This can be regarded as a dimension on its own, but here we treat it as a component of equality practices. The division of work and caring in the home appears, as mentioned above, in the category of “core values” of gender equality. Over 90 per cent of the respondents agree that “women and men should share work in the home equally”. By including this in a measure of equality practices, we are at least on a par with popular attitudes.

The results we get by using this main index can be compared with the results of using other indices and individual variables within the dimension. This opens up many research opportunities, and our presentation here is a first outline, including some suggestions for further studies.

It may seem natural to include practices at work in the main index for equality practices, but here we encountered a problem due to the continued great gender segregation in Norwegian working life. If we had included work practices, measured by working with the opposite sex at the same level, those who work at single-gendered or almost single-gendered workplaces would have had to be either omitted from the index or placed as practicing minimal equality. This would have

lead to misleading results. Therefore we instead use working-life practices as an independent index, where we only include those who have the “chance” to show their equal practices, by both sexes being represented at the workplace.

Gender-equal practices lead one’s thoughts towards activity. We would like to measure the individual person’s active contribution here. But the world is not always that simple. The actions of an individual are related to the actions of others. It can sometimes be difficult to judge who actually is playing the active role, and who is the one who more passively adjusts to the situation. This applies, not least, to questions of sharing, and in our case, particularly to sharing of decisions, housework and caring work in the home.

We might imagine a couple where partner A is active in terms of gender equality, while partner B is passive. It would be natural to give them individual scores, and in qualitative research this would have been done. But we have no question as to who was the one to actively initiate a given situation of sharing. The only thing we have, are the actual sharing practices. Consequently, the persons A and B in the example will both get the same scores. This, most probably, leads to our main index for equality practices becoming less “sharp” and more diffuse than it ought to be. To what extent is this the case? Available research suggests that there is *some* inexactness, but not very much. Couple relationships are characterised by a certain disagreement as to who does (or should do) what, but there is also much consensus; this is the case both according to our results, and other research in the field. So, we are hardly totally off the track.

Another challenge was how “the untraditionals” were to be placed; that is, those couples where the man does a traditionally female task, or the woman a male task. It seemed reasonable to interpret these as equal, or give them approximately as high a value on the index as those who reported an equal sharing of the task. However, this method entails several problems, especially that some of the untraditionals are probably in this category for reasons that are not related to any active wish for gender-equal practices. For example, a man might take care of traditional female tasks at home not because he usually practices gender equality, but because he is unemployed. Indices that included the untraditionals, coded as equal, also got some other similar “distracting” elements, including a certain overload of social problems or exceptional co-habitation relationships in parts of the group. We therefore also designed “purer” versions, where we only included

the most gender traditional, the somewhat gender traditional, and those sharing equally, while the untraditionals were left out. We further compiled a more “active” edition of the index, which counts the number of top values for the questions (that is, how many tasks are shared equally).

The main result is that the various versions of these indices work in the same way. There is some variation, but on the whole, we get a consistent and meaningful picture. This provides a basis for describing one consistent dimension, as was the case with the gender equality attitudes.

We will here give a presentation of the dimension as it appears in the analyses so far, again, with focus on the results that remain unchanged throughout various types of analysis. Important tasks for further research include, firstly, design and further development of the instruments and analyses presented here, and secondly, an improvement of the compilation of the questions within the dimension. Ideally, we would have liked to have a measure for equality practices which is both more independent of context (not influenced by co-habitation or work situation), more diverse (including more aspects, such as social environment and friendship), more sensitive (sharper questions on power, influence, responsibility, etc.), and focuses on the active party in the shared activity or division of work. But in order to reach such an ideal, one must begin by reasonable and rational initial definitions. It is those that we present here.

Gender equality practices and experienced equality in the home

The study includes a question about how respondents experience gender equality in the home. This is not part of the main index for equality practices, since we wanted to make that index as concrete as possible, and exclude experiences (which might be more influenced by attitudes). The results show that equality practices and experienced equality co-vary very strongly. The correlation is even stronger among women (.452) than among men (.340). These are good results when it comes to the assessment of the analytical framework. The respondents’ own evaluation and the index for equality practices co-vary to approximately the same degree as could be expected. That is, our way of measuring does not provide results very different from people’s own assessment, while, on the other hand there is not total agreement either, since other aspects influence the personal evaluations.

The analyses show a link between how satisfied the respondent is with the couple relationship, and the assessment of the degree of gender equality in the home. These results illustrate how equality in the home has become a dominant norm. While the impact of gender-equal practices on the satisfaction with the relationship is rather moderate (strongest among women), the correlation between satisfaction and *experienced* equality is very strong (.276 among men, and as much as .423 among women). Saying that things are equal at home, seems to have become quite similar to answering “Very well, thanks”, to the question “How are you?”. This effect we wanted to avoid in the index for equality practices.

The conviction that the relationship will last until the end of life, and worries about one’s partner ending the relationship, show little correlation with experienced equality in the home. But the respondents themselves think more seldom of breaking up if equality is experienced as good. This result also applies when we control for quality of life. The gain of equality in the form of reduced risk for a break-up emerges here.

Experienced equality in the home thus correlates more with quality of life than the main index for equality practices does. On the other hand, the associations with the other main dimensions are weaker. It might appear that quite a lot of “compensating” is going on here. For example, the analysis of men show that male-dominated couple resource distribution has a strong negative impact on equality practices, while *experienced* equality is only weakly affected by this. Similarly, the correlation with gender formation and equality attitudes are weaker. The same pattern emerges among women.

So, the results show that experienced equality and the index for equality practices co-vary very strongly, as they ought to do. At the same time, experienced equality is very much influenced by other home-related experiences, particularly satisfaction with the couple relationship. It appears clearly, that equality in the home is something one “should” have, and something that can compensate for other imbalances. While couple resource distribution is very important for concrete equality practices, it is of less significance for the experience of equality in the home.

Connections with attitudes

We had expected some problems with distinguishing between equality practices and equality attitudes, but these, did not materialise. The distinction works rather unproblematically. This is interesting, bearing in mind that gender and equality have often been analysed as one, rather diffuse, whole, where it is difficult to discern the various ingredients. In part of the debate after the 1988 study, equality practices were described as a hidden agenda – not only had the study failed here, but it was, so to say, principally impossible to detect these practices, especially regarding men.

This debate climate might have contributed to there being, rather surprisingly, *no* broad tradition in Norwegian research for measuring practices in the area of gender equality. There are indeed time use studies, and some research on power and decisions, but this is not quite the same thing. The present survey therefore represents a certain pioneering work in this field, and even given the reservations we have mentioned, it is satisfying to be able to report that it is entirely possible to design reasonable measures for practices – and not that difficult, either.

We had expected equality attitudes and equality practices to be partially overlapping, but also rather independent dimensions. They would be partially different, not only based on equality rhetorics and “correctness”, but also more principally, since *attitude is something else and more than a pure reflection of action*. Attitude is also a guide, a corrective, and much more. The results correspond to these lines of thought. We see a moderate to strong co-variation between equality attitudes and equality practices. The dimension of gender formation is more independent. This was also something we expected to be the case.

A surprising element is that the co-variation between equality attitudes and equality practices is clearer among men than among women. This we have discussed above, and it has been an important problem in the work with the data, since it – perhaps – indicates problems with the indices and the analytical framework. We *should* have found approximately the same connection among women as among men. The fact that we did not, remained something of a mystery.

We first thought this was a case of one-sided measuring methods, but testing indicated that this was not the case. Therefore we started thinking in lines of structural explanations.

Perhaps the man in Norwegian couples is still the one who mostly sets the conditions? In that case, it is reasonable that equality practices, that is, the actual division of tasks and decisions, are more aligned with *his* than with *her* attitudes. This slightly “radical feminist” interpretation might be correct. But it is somewhat weakened by the fact that we get the same results for practices at work. That is, when it comes to equality practices in working life, the correlation between attitudes and actions is also stronger among men than among women. Since the work index ought to work neutrally, we were perplexed. The radical interpretation is certainly possible here, too: “it all depends on the man” – in both work relationships and couple relationships.

One fact at least emerges clearly: consistency between attitudes and actions is greater among men than many have believed it to be. Since the thought that “it all depends on the man” is based on structural inequality, it is possible to test the argument. The study has a good structural index for this, namely, the index for couple resource distribution. The connection between attitudes and actions ought to be strongest on the male side where couple resource distribution is most male-dominated. If this is not the case, then arguments of the type “it all depends on the man” (or: it is the man who decides, since he has the advantage in terms of resources etc.) can be questioned. We will conduct some tests later in the chapter.

We have above (in the overview chapter in part two) described how the weaker association among women is explained by what we call the higher “standards of practices” – namely, even among women with traditional attitudes, many report gender-equal practices (which gives a weaker total correlation among the women). This perhaps weakens the structure hypothesis somewhat, but it does not exclude it; it is possible that both have an impact.

Predictors of gender-equal practices among men

The study can, to a certain extent, “explain” equality practices. We can see how background variables and the other main indices, correlate with equality practices, when exploring them together in multivariate analyses. This is something new in relation to earlier research. The data matrix is, admittedly, not fully optimal for

this, and the ranking of the explanatory variables can be somewhat incidental. The results should primarily be interpreted as an account of significant features.

We will first look at the variables that influence equality practices among men by regression analysis. The dependent variable is the main index, that is, equal sharing of decisions, housework and caring work in the home.

The analysis shows that the index of gender-equal practices among men is particularly associated with – in this order – education, gender-equal attitudes, young age, the degree of educational balance in the couple (that is, also the woman’s education), untraditional gender formation, and that the man has some say regarding the couple’s circle of friends and social environment. Other variables that are included in the analysis, but that do not seem to play any particular independent role, include income, whether the couple got together through a short infatuation, respondents’ assessment of how they look, the man’s share of the house, who is regarded as the most intelligent in the couple, and the height difference between the partners. The man’s income share has a weakly negative impact, while equality during childhood and some other aspects have a weakly positive impact. The total explanatory value of the model is rather moderate. The picture is approximately the same if we use slightly different versions of the index for equality practices.

How much can a more “comprehensive” model explain? In the next analysis we included the variables with explanatory value, described above, plus some other relevant variables, including the wish for a job that can be combined with children and a family, gender composition at work, independence at work, age of youngest child, and which partner in the couple wanted to have children.

If we include these five variables in the regression analysis (the sample again being men), the explanatory power of the model increases somewhat.¹⁰⁵ The man’s equality practices are here particularly influenced by – in this order – young age, balanced income distribution, gender-equal orientation, mixed-gender workplace, woman relatively well educated, his own income, his own education, non-traditional gender formation, and that the man (also) has an influence on the

¹⁰⁵ Adjusted R Square .225.

couple's circle of friends. Two other features that seem to have some significance, are the couple's total income and the couple's total education.

The order of the explanation variables might, as mentioned above, be somewhat incidental in this type of regression analysis.¹⁰⁶ A general effect of including more variables in the analysis is that the importance of gender formation decreases a little, while equal couple resource distribution becomes more important.

How important is the man's own education? In the first analysis, education level had a large impact, while in the next one, it had a more moderate impact. This is probably due to co-variation with other independent variables in the model. It might be assumed that education is artificially downgraded when more variables are included, but it is also possible that the effect of education is actually rather modest when the model is expanded.

Here, we want to add that income and education are very strongly mutually associated: .362 in the study as a whole. This can be interpreted as rather good, but not very good, for Norway as a meritocratic, or education-friendly society. A gendered analysis shows that the correlation is .362 among men as compared to .461 among women. The numbers show that men still get a good deal more income privileges regardless of education, in comparison with women. Men get proximately 25 per cent more income regardless of education, as compared to women. This says something about persistent gender discrimination.

A consistent result is that the positive impact on men's equality practices increases if a larger part of their context or situation is gender-equal. Men's gender-equal practices emerge most clearly if they are not so dominant as to income, have a partner with resources, etc. Equality seems to have more impact when the right circumstances exist.

Does couple duration have a negative impact on equality practices?

In some research and debates, the duration of marriage or co-habitation is depicted as an important force that "reverts" equality. People get, so to say, tired over time,

¹⁰⁶ If many variables are included, we can certainly "explain" a larger part of the variance (adjusted R square), but the risk of confusion and obscurity, as a result of co-variation between explanatory variables, also increases.

and fall back into their old roles. Does this apply to the present situation in Norway?

If we look at couple duration in isolation, it does indeed appear to have a considerable “conserving” effect; that is, gender-equal practices decrease rather strongly with longer duration. However, if we explore this in the light of age (partial correlation), the connection goes down to a weak level. It might therefore seem that couple duration can have a certain conserving effect of its own, but only a weak one.

We tested the significance of duration by regression analyses with equality in childhood and youth, couple resource balance, equality attitudes, gender formation, quality of life, co-habitation/marriage, age, income, education, and duration of the relationship as independent variables, and gender-equal practices as the dependent variable. Duration did emerge, although rather weakly, as a variable with explanatory significance.

It thus seems that the duration of the couple relationship does have a certain, but limited, conserving effect of its own. However, the other main dimensions of the study consistently have a stronger impact. Duration must thus be included in the picture, but it is hardly true that the “internal dynamics” of the relationship force the partners back into traditional gender roles. The results imply that equality attitudes, gender formation, age and other circumstance have a greater effect. They suggest that the negative impact of duration of marriage or co-habitation on gender-equal practices is approximately as weak as the positive impact of education.

Are gender-equal men “punished” by increased divorce risk?

In the debate it is sometimes claimed that men who contribute a lot at home still experience that their spouses or partners leave them – they might even be “punished” for being too soft and caring. Is this true?

According to our results, it is not true. We find no significant correlations between gender-equal practices and attitudes on the one hand, and frequency of divorce or worry that the partner will leave, on the other hand. This is the case among both men and women. The partner’s own wish to break up from the relationship decreases somewhat. Men who practice equality have approximately the same

average number of earlier couple relationships, as men with minimal equality practices.

These numbers do not exclude the possibility that the punishment hypothesis might apply in some social environments. The man might perhaps lose his attractiveness if he deviates from traditional breadwinner masculinity. But this is not a consistent feature in present-day Norway.

It is, however, interesting that men and women do not, either, *win* anything in particular on gender-equal practices (or attitudes), in an overall perspective. It might have been assumed that there would, after several decades of equality progress, be a general tendency that equal couples do better and are less exposed to separation and divorce. This we do not, so far, see any proof of, even if – again – this might be the case in some contexts.

The fact that equality does not hinder couple dissolution can be compared to its general impact on quality of life being rather unclear, particularly among men. We interpret these results as supporting the hypothesis of partial equality – with a long way still to go.

Another plausible interpretation, which does not necessarily exclude the first one, is that the choice of partner is still characterised by a high “error rate” and much superficiality. People are, so to say, poorly trained to tackle serial monogamy, and often make the wrong choices. Some questions about the choice of partner were included in the survey (was the choice based on infatuation, friendship, etc). However, these do not give any clear indication that the type of entry into the relationship has any particular impact on the risk of a later break-up, among neither men nor women.

Does it depend on the man?

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, we might interpret the greater overlap between gender-equal attitudes and practices among men than among women, as a spurious effect explained by the fact that “it all depends on the man”. It is still the case in family life and working life, that men, to a larger extent than women, are the ones who set the conditions. The consistency between attitudes and actions will therefore *appear* to be greater among men than among women, yet this is spurious, due to unequal background conditions.

Is this line of thought correct? Is the structural position of the man stronger and more decisive? By including couple resource distribution, as a structurally defined index, we can test the hypothesis. We now divide the respondents into two groups: those with male-dominated couple resource distribution, and those with a more equal distribution. We then look at the correlation between equality attitudes and equality practices in the two groups. If the “it all depends on the man” argument is true, the consistency between attitudes and practices should be considerably larger among men and (particularly) among women, when controlling for the resource index. Those with a more equal distribution should display more consistency between attitudes and practices.

The analyses do not, however, confirm this hypothesis. A first test, using the sample as a whole, shows that practices are, to a certain extent associated with attitudes among those with an equal couple resource distribution, yet the association is somewhat stronger among those with a male-dominated couple resource distribution. Slightly different analyses at this point give similar results. The analyses suggest that there is some interaction, but in the opposite direction of what we would expect if the hypothesis was true. Surprisingly, the association between attitudes and practices is somewhat stronger among those with an imbalanced couple resource distribution.

If we look at the men separately, it emerges that the difference between the correlation of attitudes and practices among those with low and those with high male couple resource distribution, is rather small. This remains the case when we use other versions of the index for gender-equal practices. We do not get the impression that male-dominated couple resource distribution has that great a significance for how much attitudes and actions overlap. Differences in couple resource distribution, which should have a strong impact, display only a marginal effect.

The most important issue in this context is the picture among the women. Here, a more equal couple resource distribution should have given more consistency between attitudes and practices. But we do not find any clear effects in that direction.

This is repeated when instead of the male-dominated couple resource distribution, we use the man’s weekly working hours as the control variable. This variable

should work in a similar way. The man's long working hours should weaken the association between attitudes and actions particularly among women. But again, we do not find any particular difference between women who live with a man with long working hours and women whose partner has short/medium working hours. The women in the latter group should have shown more overlap in attitudes and practices, but this is not the case.

The conclusion must therefore be that although the "it all depends on the man" argument cannot be discarded totally, we do not see any clear effect where we would have expected to. The argument does not hold true.

The tests increase the probability that we are dealing with an actual finding, that is, that there *is* a larger consistency between gender-equal attitudes and practices among men than among women in Norway today. This is contrary to what many have believed and claimed.

At first sight, it seems difficult to combine these results with the well-known notion that it is primarily women who are the "norm-setters" when it comes to gender equality. But we must bear in mind that women still, on the whole, are somewhat more positive towards equality than men are. And, as mentioned above, we see signs of gender-equal practices also among women with minimal equality attitudes; this is what mainly decreases the overall consistency among women.

It is possible to illuminate this problem in several ways in the study. Some of the questions dealt with the relationship to children. Some statements compare the present situation to what the respondent would want to be the case. These were: "Because of my job, I can spend too little time with my children"; "If it were possible, I would like to work less, if I could then spend more time with my children"; "It often happens that I worry about the children when I'm not with them" and "I often have a bad conscience when my partner and my children are at home without me".

If our results so far are misleading, that is, if attitudes and actions in reality overlap more among women, we ought to find a higher "worry rate" among women than among men, when keeping the present situation (working time) constant. This is a slightly indirect test method, but it is relevant.

If we look at the whole sample of parents, we see, first, that the distribution of answers between the sexes is almost even for the statement that because of their job, they can spend too little time with their children; 28 per cent of the men and 27 per cent of the women agree with this. The same applies to the statement on wanting to work less: 54 per cent of the men and 52 per cent of the women agree with this. Worrying about children is somewhat more gendered, but relatively little so – 48 per cent of the men answer in the affirmative, 56 per cent of the women do so. Bad conscience when partner and children are home alone is also somewhat more gendered: 30 per cent of the men agree, 20 per cent of the women.

The numbers primarily show a fairly similar picture among men and women – both would like to spend more time with their children, and answer more or less similarly as to their work situation. Pertaining to bad conscience and worrying, the pattern is somewhat gendered, but the gender difference is not very dramatic..

When looking at those with long weekly working hours, we again get approximately the same picture. The experience of the impact of work on the family is here, as could be expected, more negative, but we see no gender differences. As many men as women think that because of their job, they can spend too little time with their children, and as many would like to work less if it were possible. As to worrying about the children, women score somewhat higher, while there actually are more bad consciences among the men in this group of “hard workers”.

Taken together, these results point in the direction that the relation between gender-equal attitudes and practices is rather similar across the genders. If the consistency was considerably stronger among women, it should have shown in clearer gender differences. Instead, we find a more or less identical evaluation of work and time with children. This applies also to many other statements on job and family also, where men and women give approximately similar answers.

The statement that gives the largest gender imbalance among the answers, is: “I spend more time than my partner on organising practical tasks in the family and household”. Here, only 16 per cent of the men answer in the affirmative, while 84 per cent of the women do so. The fact that the woman is still expected to carry the main responsibility for the family, clearly emerges here, even among couples that share work in the home fairly equally. Perhaps it is this family responsibility

which, in some studies, is mistaken for the women being the norm-setters. The woman appears as the most consistent. It is she who organises, not to say nags about, household tasks and family events. She is the “reproducer” in this field. It might seem reasonable to conclude that the woman is the norm-setter and the most consistent in relation to equality. But, according to our results, the idea of greater consistency among women is not correct. The woman, and especially woman as mother, is indeed the number one family organiser, and probably the most important norm-setter pertaining to these tasks. The woman is also generally somewhat “ahead of” the man in equality attitudes, but the difference is – as many new surveys point out – not as large as is often assumed (see e.g. Inglehart, R et al. 2004). And regardless of this – it does not necessarily mean that she is more consistent as pertaining to equality practices and equality attitudes in general.

We have further seen that the “it all depends on the man” type of structural hypothesis does not account for the lower consistency among women (that is, interpreting the find as spurious). If all depended on the man, couple resource distribution and working time should have displayed impacts that we do not find.

Conclusion: What determines gender-equal practices?

The analyses indicate that the main dimensions of the study are very relevant for explaining equality-related practices. In some of the multivariate analyses that we have carried out, standard explanatory variables, such as income and age, are excluded from the analysis, while the indices for the main dimensions are included. In a typical example, covering all respondents, gender, education, income and equality in childhood and youth are rejected as explanatory variables for gender-equal practices, while the following explanatory variables are accepted, in this ranking order:

- Equal couple resource distribution
- Gender-equal attitudes
- Good quality of life
- Untraditional gender formation
- Young age¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Adjusted R square is .218 in this model, so it is quite clear that much else also enters the picture to explain gender-equal practices.

These results support the new analytical framework that we presented at the beginning of this part of the study. What becomes particularly clear, pertaining to gender-equal practices, is that the whole social context around equality is very significant, with couple resource distribution as the top factor. The widespread idea that attitudes are decisive is not supported.

When it comes to the somewhat surprisingly robust association with quality of life, we know that this is partly explained by gender-equal practices increasing quality of life, particularly among women. But it might also be the case that the association works both ways – increased quality of life increases the chances for equality and innovation. Qualitative studies point in this direction (Holter, Ø 2007a). If innovation and departure from traditionally unequal gender roles are socially and culturally accepted, then gender-equal practices will gain a clearer association with quality of life, not only among women, but generally.

Here also lies a central challenge for policy development. A consistent message from the analyses in this chapter is that equality is a question of organisation, basic conditions, distribution of resources in all areas of society – not only of attitudes to equality as an isolated aspect. If attitudes are criticised, without giving people opportunities to change their living conditions, there is a risk of a backlash (cf. the “enough-is-enough” tendency described in the previous chapter).

Balanced couple resource distribution is the primary aspect that emerges in order to create more gender-equal practices. This is connected to equal salary and other circumstances in working life. The study shows that the proportion of women and men who cooperate on an equal level in working life has not increased – in twenty years. Bearing this in mind, it is all the more noteworthy that women and men have actively *created* a greater degree of gender equality in areas like the home where they have more freedom to determine their life conditions.

Couple resource distribution

Some of the main points of the chapter

- A more equal distribution of resources in marriage and co-habitation considerably increases the chances for more gender-equal practices. The effect is clearest among men, but also emerges among women.
- Equal couple resource distribution also increases the probability for more positive attitudes to equality.
- Couple resource distribution has a stronger impact on gender equality on the level of practices than on the level of attitudes.
- Income distribution is the element in couple resource distribution that has the strongest impact on gender equality. Even this strong link, however, is influenced by intermediate variables like the subjective experience of family income (breadwinner) responsibility.
- Income distribution is not only a purely economic factor. Its effect varies with cultural, social and psychological circumstances.

Introduction

In this chapter we will look more closely at the distribution of income and other resources between women and men in couples. We will explore what this dimension consists of, and how it can be measured. The study illuminates a number of distribution patterns between the sexes. Which pattern is the most significant, in terms of gender equality? We also ask whether men and women give different pictures of the distribution, and whether an imbalanced income distribution is simply a question of what is most profitable for the family.

What is couple resource distribution?

We use the term “couple resource distribution” to refer to the distribution of resources between women and men in couple relationships (marriage or co-habitation). This distribution has been an important subject in gender research, associated with terms like “gender contract”.¹⁰⁸ What kind of gender contract characterises the couple? The contract described by research is not only a question of resources, but also of exchange and interaction over time, as well as of equality-related norms and attitudes.

¹⁰⁸ For the historical development of gender contracts, see e. g. Hagemann & Åmark 1999.

The present study can say something about this, but it is particularly designed to reveal resource distribution, and this is what we will mainly focus on here. The study enables the mapping of the distribution of approximately ten types of resources. These include income, education, ownership of housing, time in working life, age, height, proximity to family/relatives, and influence on choice of friends. It also includes the questions as to which of the parents wanted to have children, and who is regarded as the most intelligent of the partners.

Couple resource distribution is a social dimension in relation to the individual couples. It is, so to say, an intermediate station between “structure” and “actor”, between society and family life. Couple resource distribution influences the actors, but is also influenced by the actors. When we write that couple resource distribution has an impact on equality practices, it is slightly simplified; the association goes both ways.

Research has been particularly interested in one side of couple resource distribution, that is, variation on a scale from *the man as main supporter or “male breadwinner families”* to more *equal support or “dual career families”*. Historically, the male breadwinner family has been connected to authoritarian forms of marriage, where the man is the head of the family, while equal support has been associated with more democratic forms, “companionate marriage” as Scanzoni (1972) called it. This division is not only of historical interest. In today’s Europe there are great differences in the supporting patterns and couple resource distribution between various countries and regions. These differences are very significant for both family patterns and gender equality (Therborn, G 2004).

Challenges

We wanted to design an index for couple resource distribution that would be able to answer questions about the degree of imbalance in the couple relationship. It was to be as simple, exact and neutral as possible; for example, so that various theories regarding the significance of couple resource distribution could be tested. For example, is the distribution of paid work and income within the couple mainly a result of families seeking the most profitable outcome in monetary terms? Or do other elements also have an impact, for example, gender-related culture and traditional gender roles? The study was to enable a certain testing of such hypotheses, even if it could not be a detailed survey of the field.

Couple resource distribution can be measured in more precise terms than some of the other dimensions in the study, yet it is not simply a market exchange relation. It entails long-term social and psychological elements that are not so easily measured, like trust. In research, a distinction is made between exchanges that are carried out here and now, and exchanges that are postponed, also called “delayed” or “generalized” reciprocity (Gouldner A 1960; Holter, Ø 1997). The idea of long-term reciprocity is that it is not so important to immediately get something in exchange for an input; instead the reciprocity is realised over time and gradually. The results of the study indicate that such mechanisms are important in couple interaction. We find, for example, that the respondents who have answered in the affirmative to the statement: “I assume that I and my partner will live together to the end of our lives”, not only have a better quality of life, but also a somewhat higher degree of gender-equal practices.¹⁰⁹ This is one of several warning signals that we should avoid a purely technical or isolated economic interpretation of resource distribution. However, there is no doubt that economic matters play an independent role. As we shall see, results indicate that the resource distribution has an impact on gender equality both directly and indirectly, that is, through a “filter” of social, cultural and psychological patterns.

What resources are relevant in an index for couple resource distribution? The variables within the dimension range from areas of consensus to more unsure or controversial areas. Most researchers will agree that the income distribution between the partners is important, and perhaps also family resources like whether the couple is living close to his or her relatives. But what about the partners’ height and weight, or who is seen as the most intelligent of the two? The dimension goes from “hard” to “soft” variables, and the softer the variable, the greater are the controversial or speculative elements. We think the soft variables are also significant, but, here, we will begin with the hard ones.

The main index for the dimension is therefore based on only three of the resource types – the distribution of income, education and ownership of housing, as described below.

As mentioned above, mapping couple resource distribution by quantitative measures at a given point in time has certain important limitations. Family research

¹⁰⁹ This applies particularly to younger men.

emphasises relationships over time. Imbalances here and now may change over time. Also, different types of resources may substitute for each other. And ideally, the negotiations about these (im)balances should be mapped, not just their results. For example, what may seem like an exchange here and now may be better interpreted as part of a common “family project” in the longer run (see e.g. Aarseth, H 2008; Olsen & Aarseth 2006). Yet, even if qualitative research is important in this area (like the other main dimensions of the study), it does not invalidate quantitative findings. The two should be seen as a whole.

Although the method involves some limitations, the couple resource distribution at a given point in time is also a fact which is significant in itself. A better understanding of couple resource distribution can add more realism to research and debate regarding gender equality. Couple resource distribution makes it more understandable why couples, and women and men as individuals in couples, make choices and act as they do. The study can also say something on the “negotiation climate” in the relationships, and how imbalance within one type of resource can be compensated for by the balance of distribution in other types.

Who is actually the “actor” in couple resource distribution? The partners themselves? Working life? Is couple resource distribution mostly a question of structural economic mechanisms that the individual has little influence on, or do culture, environment and psychology have a strong impact (see e.g. Gullestad, M 1984; Ekenstam, C et al. 1998)? It has been claimed that spouses or partners have a certain common interest in relation to society. They would rather themselves decide as much as possible on the couple resource distribution, and have as great an autonomy as possible. Historically, the family has always had “subversive” features, and has seldom totally fitted into state plans or religious commandments (Mount, F 1982). Uncontracted marriage, which has spread without any authority having ordained it, is a modern example. On the other hand, the family has been characterised by male advantage in relation to power and resources.

Women’s studies in the 1970s and 1980s focused on male-dominated couple resource distribution as a major problem. The covering up of the problem was described as a female task; it was the woman’s job to “make the unequal appear equal” (Haavind, H 1982). Couple resource distribution was connected to the relationship between the spheres of production and reproduction (Holter, H 1984). What women’s studies called negotiations about the gender contract, could also be

described as “the shadow account of the reproduction” (Holter, Ø 1989a). It was a part of the economy that appeared, so to say, outside of the official economy.

The present study shows that couple resource distribution continues to be an important dimension. Although the sharing of work in the households has changed in favour of more equality, the sharing of responsibility is more inert and traditionally gendered. It is still often the woman who is the “family organiser” and the man who feels he carries the main responsibility for supporting the family. They are, in a manner of speaking, responsible operators at their respective ends. The continued imbalance in couple resource distribution might be a partial explanation as to why this pattern remains unchanged.

At the same time, the level of gender-equal expectations has grown higher. There are greater expectations today than twenty or thirty years ago that the distribution of resources should be balanced. This can be connected to, for example, a tendency of homogamy, that is, “peer marriage”, “birds of a feather”. People attempt to achieve a balance, all in all (Moxnes, K 1989). The increased education resources of women (both absolutely and in relation to men) are an important element in this context. Individuation and equality norms have a stronger position than before. Probably, a given imbalance is seen as more problematic today than it was twenty years ago. Our study does not provide any definite answers as to whether this line of thought is correct, but many results point in that direction. We see, for example, large proportions who have thought of breaking their present relationship, or are worried that their partner has considered a break-up.

The design of the index

The main index for couple resource distribution is based on calculating the shares of the man and the women of three resources, among those married to or co-habiting with a partner of the opposite sex. The three are: income, education and ownership of housing. The index is coded so that male-dominated distribution is given the highest score. The index turned out to be somewhat less precise than we would have liked (for example, since income is not given in absolute numbers, but through a scale with seven levels); but it should give a good enough overall picture. The results suggest that respondents in couple relationships are rather well aware of their partner’s income and education, while the information as to house ownership is more unclear. Such aspects might result in the index giving a slightly “subdued” picture of the actual significance of couple resource distribution.

How do women and men report couple resource distribution?

Time use studies show that women and men in marriages and co-habiting relationships give somewhat different reports on the division of work in the household. Both partners tend to overvalue their own contribution somewhat, compared to the view of the partner. The discrepancy is largest where the traditional gendered division of labour has been broken, and where the task is diffuse and difficult to estimate exactly.

Therefore it should probably not be expected that the genders will give exactly the same picture of the resource distribution, either. Yet these reported differences are very small for most of the resource variables. For example, the difference between women's and men's reports regarding the men's income is only 6 per cent (the woman's estimate of the man's income is 106 per cent of the man's own estimate). The respondents assess their partners' income to be slightly bigger than the partners themselves say it is, but otherwise the picture emerges as quite unanimous. We must also consider the fact that the partners in the sample are not actually co-habiting with or married to each other. We do not have "dyadic data" (data from couples) that directly show the resource distribution. A difference in what each gender reports regarding their own and their partners' income and other resources, might thus be explained by the samples of men and women being slightly different, and a variation of about five per cent is within the limits of such incidental variation.

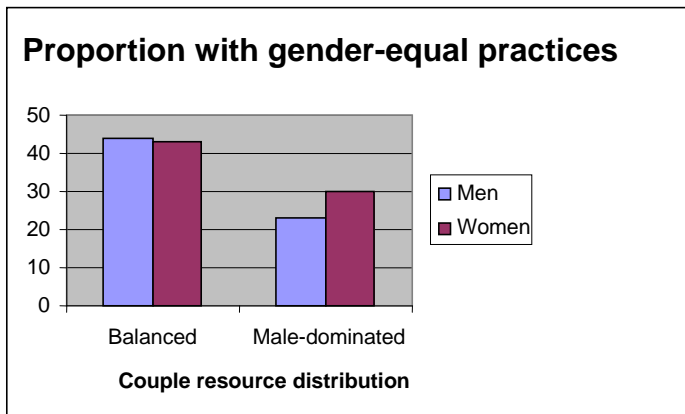
As mentioned above, the distribution of house ownership is slightly more unclear or debated. At this point, the men report a somewhat higher male ownership share than women do. As to education, the partners' assessments are in accordance with each other. The level of education is, on an average, rather similar among co-habiting and married men and women. There is a very weak tendency for men to report less educated partners, and for women to report more educated partners, than what each gender report of themselves. The two genders' reports are also very similar regarding the man's height in relation to the woman's, the man's wish to have children in relation to the woman's, and whether they live close to the man's or the woman's family or relatives. Only one of the variables diverge from this consistent pattern; that is, the question as to who is the most intelligent of the partners. Men ascribe themselves more intelligence than the women ascribe the men. The answers here are undoubtedly more ideologically inclined. Otherwise,

the ten questions on resources reveal roughly the same overall picture, with consistent reporting from men and women. This indicates that the study measures couple resource distribution in a fairly exact and realistic way.

Couple resource distribution and the other main dimensions

We have seen that couple resource distribution is described quite similarly by men and women. Further, analyses with somewhat different measuring methods and indices show that this is a robust dimension regardless of measurement details.

What is the impact of couple resource distribution in relation to the other main dimensions of the study? A first, important result is that couple resource distribution clearly correlates with gender equality, particularly with gender-equal practices. This is especially clear among men, as illustrated by the diagram below.



The proportion with gender-equal practices is approximately twice as large among men who report a balanced couple resource distribution, as compared to men who report a male-dominated distribution, while it is about 1.5 times as large among the corresponding groups of women.¹¹⁰ Similarly, the proportion of men with positive attitudes to gender equality is almost twice as high in the balanced group as in the imbalanced group. The picture among women is similar, although the differences are somewhat smaller.

¹¹⁰ The diagram is based on a trisection of the index for gender equality practices, so that the highest third with most gender-equal practices is included here.

Let us first take a look at why the connection with equality appears more strongly among men than among women. If we analyse this more closely, first in terms of attitudes, we find that among the women who report an equal couple resource distribution, there is also a rather large proportion with traditional attitudes (to a greater extent than among the men). This weakens the overall association with gender-equal attitudes. As regards gender-equal practices, we find that somewhat more of the women who report balanced couple distribution yet also score low on practices, while somewhat more of those with a male-dominated distribution score high, which, again, weakens the total correlation.

These results can be interpreted in the context of what we called higher “standard of practices” among women (see ch.1). If a couple is characterised by resource balance, this correlates more clearly with equality among men than among women. Resource balance does not necessarily mean that the woman is more equality-oriented in her attitudes. And there are some women in couples with a balanced distribution who report minimal equality practices.

What is the impact of couple resource distribution on the other main dimensions of the study? Regression analyses (of the whole sample) reveal that the correlation is strongest with gender-equal practices. This is followed by a moderate correlation with gender-equal attitudes, and a weaker correlation with equality in childhood and youth. The results confirm that couple resource distribution is very significant for gender-equal practices, and somewhat associated with attitudes. Couple resource distribution is also somewhat influenced by gender equality in childhood.

Gender formation does not display any clear association with any of the indices for couple resource distribution. This is surprising. One possible interpretation is that the mechanism which Robert Merton called functional equivalence is at play here. Traditional gender formation and male-dominated couple resource distribution are, to a certain extent, substitutable; what you do not have of the one, you can compensate with the other. We will discuss this further in the chapter on gender formation.

The empirical picture confirms the model in the introduction of the report, with two “intervening” variables: gender formation and couple resource distribution. The relative strengths of these vary according to context and social setting.

We get quite similar results when looking at the men separately, compared to the entire sample. Among the men, couple resource distribution is associated even more strongly with equality practices, while the associations with equality in childhood and youth, and attitudes are similar to those for the whole sample. Analyses of the women provide a weaker picture, but with the same trends. Here, once more, the strongest correlation is that between couple resource distribution and gender-equal practices. We believe that the analyses at this point tend to underestimate the impact among women. If we use only the most “effective” ingredient of couple resource distribution, that is, income distribution (corrected for the women’s individual income level), we get higher correlations with practices also among the women. The higher reporting of gender-equal practices among the women also where we would not expect it, may reflect higher standards, but also a tendency to make “unequal appear equal”.

The effect of couple resource distribution is greater on the practical division of labour in the home than on the experienced degree of equality in the home. Experiences are probably more influenced by norms and attitudes. At this point, however, the pattern is quite similar among men and women. It seems that some of the “equalizing” is a job for both partners.

Couple resource distribution and household finances

Economic theories on the family and household have claimed that the partners choose the alternatives that are most profitable for them, according to the existing resource distribution. If the woman is the “specialist” on traditional female tasks, the man on the male tasks, and both get most rewards in their respective fields, then they will maintain this difference. This arrangement is simply most profitable for the couple.¹¹¹ The distribution of income can thus be interpreted as a reason for women and men appreciating income-giving work differently. The family gains more by the man’s paid work, than by the woman’s.

The study supports this line of thought to some extent. Given the gender-segregation in working life (despite many employees wanting a better gender-balance) and the male income advantage per unit of work (partly regardless of

¹¹¹ One main line in economic theory is based on Gary Becker’s (and Talcott Parson’s) interpretation of gender differentiation – often criticised by feminists for overlooking stratification and power.

education) – it is not so surprising that this actually does influence the choices of couples to quite a large extent. The results show a rather strong co-variation between couple resource distribution and women’s weekly working time. Here, the correlation is stronger than among men. This is – again – an important signal that couple resource distribution is also a reality for women.

But are the economic aspects the sole determinant of the work distribution? What about other explanatory variables? Attitudes and subjectively experienced responsibilities also enter the picture here. If we use experienced male breadwinner responsibility as control variable, we see that the connection between couple resource distribution and paid working time is strong among women with men who feel themselves to be the main providers, while it is only moderate or weak among women whose men do not feel themselves to be the main breadwinners. In the latter case, the correlation is only weak and not clearly significant. This suggests that the most profitable arrangement for the couple, the purely economic explanatory model, is not the only factor behind the actual distribution of paid work. The subjective experience of provider responsibility and other social-psychological and sociological circumstances also play a role.

In addition, other dimensions of the equality model have an impact. In fact, the effect of the conventional economic model can be rather weak and unclear, when we include other variables in the analysis. Among couples where the man feels that he has the main responsibility for supporting the family, the woman’s working time varies very strongly according to the man’s share of the income, while the co-variation is only weak and unclear among couples where the man does not experience this responsibility. The significance of the income difference for the woman’s working time does not disappear, but it is strongly modified by “sociological” variables such as this one. The results here indicate, once again, a certain “structuring”, particularly on the male side of the study, and a certain “individuation” tendency (higher practice standards regardless of attitudes, etc.) among the women.¹¹²

The wider sociological actor perspective is also strengthened by other results of the study. We looked especially at women who report independence (in a question about choice of partner), to test the hypothesis that these women ought to display

¹¹² On “individuation” in the family, cf. Holter, H et al. 1976.

less correlation between couple resource distribution and gender-equal practices, but *more* correlation between gender-equal attitudes and practices. Among the independent women, couple resource distribution ought to have less of an impact on gender-equal practices, while, on the other hand, their own equality attitudes should be more associated with practices.

The results confirm the first point. The negative correlation between male-dominated couple resource distribution and gender-equal practices is very weak among the women who put emphasis on independence, but strong among the rest of the women. We get a clear signal that couple resource distribution has an impact among women through a “filter” associated with independence. The woman’s working time outside the home seems to be less affected. The woman’s weekly working hours have a negative correlation to male-dominated couple resource distribution regardless of her position pertaining to independence.

As a whole, these results might indicate that there is an “independence tendency” or individuation tendency particularly among the women, which contributes to couple resource distribution not having such a strong impact on gender equality as could otherwise have been expected.

Is it also the case that the distance between attitudes and actions in the area of equality is shorter among these independently oriented women? Here the results are vague; we do not discern any clear effect. This might, perhaps, be due to shortcomings of the test methods.

Based on the results so far, it might have been expected that young age has a similar impact as independence. Couple resource distribution should have a lesser significance for gender-equal practices among younger than among older women. And the association between attitudes and practices should also be greater among the younger ones.

The results show that couple resource distribution has a smaller effect on gender-equal practices among the younger than among the older respondents. The difference is largest among women. The distribution has a very strong impact among men who are 40 years and older, and a somewhat weaker effect among men under 40 years of age. And while the impact among older women is very strong, it is only very weak among younger women.

The results show that women's independence and younger age play an important role regarding the effects of couple resource distribution. This may also help explain why the overall correlation between distribution and gender-equal practices is weaker among women than among men. Couple resource distribution does have a stronger impact among women when the context is more traditional – when the woman is less independent and when she is older. We do not, however, see any clear tendency that gender-equal attitudes and practices co-vary to a greater extent among the younger than the older women.

Internal and external resources

Above we have described how subjective responsibilities, preferences and age have a modifying effect on the impact of couple resource distribution. The younger respondents are less bound by couple resource distribution than the older ones; the situation regarding gender equality in the couple is less influenced by this factor. This tendency is particularly clear among the women. Does this also apply when we look at the “softer” internal resources of the couple? In order to explore this, we compiled a broad index with the man's share of nine resource types (income, education, housing, age, height, intelligence, wish to have children, friends, proximity to family/relatives) and an index for soft resources (age, height, intelligence, wish to have children, friends and family/relatives).

The results indicate that the distribution of “soft” resources has a more diffuse and varied impact on gender equality in the home than “hard” resources such as income. This appears among men as well as women. Perhaps the weaker impact of internal resources is explained by tendencies discussed above – these resources interact in more complex ways and are more associated with other factors (like social-psychological gender formation). This makes the total impact weaker and less clear.

Male dominance in internal resources has a certain connection with quality of life among men, but this correlation is rather weak. Women's quality of life does not seem to be much affected. However, the women reporting male internal resource dominance, also more often score low on gender-equal attitudes. The correlation between the man's share of internal resources and traditional gender formation is, nonetheless, not particularly clear (slightly positive especially among men). We did not test this in further detail, but the impression is that the “soft” internal resources

have a more varied and complex impact than the external resources. All in all, the income distribution is the distribution variable with the strongest impact.

Further analyses of distribution patterns pertaining to education, housing, age, etc., confirmed this impression. Income distribution makes a big difference, while the rest are less clear. We also found a tendency that men's gender-equal practices increase somewhat with a greater share of social resources.

The results can be interpreted to suggest that couple relationships have actually become quite gender-equal in social terms. Social and cultural trends towards gender equality have an impact regardless of the distribution of resources. On the economic level, however, things are different. Here we consistently get a clear and distinct main message: an imbalanced distribution decreases the chance of gender-equal practices.

Had Norway been a patriarchal society, it might have been expected that the other resource patterns would display the same tendency. Male advantage should work in the same direction, regardless of resource type. For example, advantage in terms of education, or who is perceived as most intelligent, who decides on the circle of friends, etc., should have had the same strong impact as we see in the case of income. The man would, so to say, have had a clearer status as head of the family in all areas. Instead, the results indicate that this traditional male position has in many ways "eroded", if not totally disappeared. The picture that emerges is more in line with the hypothesis of "partial equality" in a country like Norway.¹¹³ The significance of advantage in income has not, however, disappeared.

Conclusion

The main result is that couple resource distribution has a great impact on the probability for gender-equal practices. The tendency emerges clearly in various analyses. The correlation is most clear among men, but it is probably as important among women. Balanced couple resource distribution also increases – somewhat more weakly – the probability for more positive attitudes towards gender equality.

In particular, income distribution is the variable with this kind of impact on equality. The fact that other types of resource distribution do not have a greater

¹¹³ Skjeie and Teigen 2003.

impact, might be interpreted as suggesting an “erosion” of the man’s traditional position as head of the family. He has, so to put it, still the income to his advantage, but not that much else. At least he does not make a show of it.¹¹⁴ Perhaps he, instead, plays it down somewhat – the man also participates in the “equalizing” that women’s studies have earlier described as a female task.

Even if the association between couple resource distribution and gender equality works both ways, there is reason to believe that the impact of couple resource distribution on equality is, as a rule, the main causal direction in this relation. As mentioned above, gender equality in childhood and youth has a certain hindering effect on male-dominated couple resource distribution later in life. We will look at this in more detail in the chapter on equality in childhood and youth.

The impact of couple resource distribution on gender-equal practices is similar according to men’s and women’s reports, especially regarding the strongest variable in the index, income distribution. There is little doubt that the aspect of what is the most profitable solution for the family does have an impact – but the study shows that economic and social circumstances are interdependent and should be seen as a whole. We discern a tendency towards “individuation”, which means that the couple resource distribution – even if it is important – does not “automatically” have any impact on equality or life together. Individual choices and actions often counteract this; the resource distribution does not “dictate” the relationship. This is clearest among women, among the younger respondents and among those who emphasise individual independence in the couple relationship.

¹¹⁴ With certain exceptions, cf. the question on who is most intelligent.

Gender formation

Some of the main points of the chapter

- Traditional gender formation, or social-psychological gender role, tends to reduce the chance for gender-equal practices. If the gender roles in the couple are traditional, with a clear border between “his” and “her” domains, it is more difficult to cross the border, for example, when it comes to caring and household work.
- The results regarding experienced masculinity and femininity suggest that crossing boundaries – resembling the other gender – is still quite difficult and carries a burden of potential stigmatisation.
- Gender formation does not predict the degree of equality, as is sometimes assumed. The association is rather weak. It is somewhat stronger among men than among women. This is mainly due to gender-traditional respondents, particularly among the women, who nevertheless report equal practices.
- Younger age is connected to less traditional gender formation, especially among women.
- Among men, traditional gender formation is somewhat more common at higher income levels, while women at higher income levels have a somewhat less traditional gender formation.
- As to education, the pattern is the same across the genders: those at a lower or medium level of education have a somewhat more traditional gender formation than those at the highest level.
- The impact of gender formation and couple resource distribution on gender-equal practices vary according to social status. While couple resource distribution is most significant for practices at higher levels (“the upper middle-class factor”), gender formation is most significant at the medium level (“the lower middle-class factor”).

Introduction

We have chosen the term gender formation for the notion that, in literature, is called femininity and masculinity, gender role identity, social gender, gender or

other similar things. Gender formation is a relatively permanent¹¹⁵ pattern in the individual, which is also modified and shaped during one's lifetime.

Gender formation is not to be confused with "gender role" in the way this term is often used today. "Gender role" in this usage refers to the role one plays in relation to gender equality. *Gender equality role* would be a more precise term, but gender role has become part of the ordinary vocabulary. Our definition of gender formation is, instead, developed independently of gender equality. It pertains to the individual's formation of femininity and masculinity. The category is analytically distinct from the person's attitudes and practices regarding gender equality.

This distinction is important, in view of the confusion still often found in international research. When gender formation and gender equality issues are mixed, the analysis suffers and the potentials for change remain diffuse. In Norway, the 1988 survey of men already showed that the men's gender formation and their position in terms of gender equality were two different things. The one did not automatically predict the other.

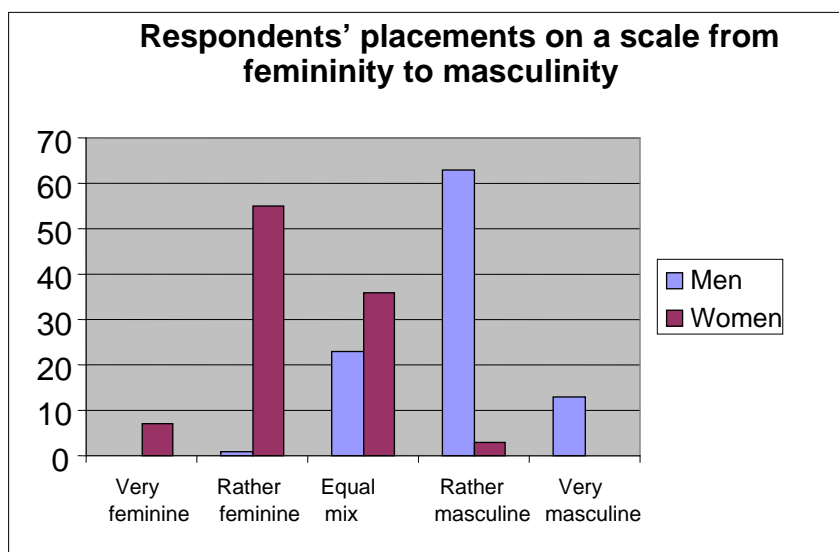
Gender formation can be seen as part of the gender system, that is, social and cultural contexts where gender is attributed social significance. The gender equality position, on the other hand, can be seen as part of the structure of society. Equality positions and gender formation can overlap, but this is not necessarily the case. The two dimensions have different dynamics, meanings and impacts (Holter, Ø 2004).

In the model we presented in the introduction of the study, couple resource distribution and gender formation are seen as "intermediate" dimensions. They influence the connection between gender equality in childhood and youth, and gender equality later in life. In this chapter, we will present more material on this.

Gender formation is a more personal and psychological dimension, compared to couple resource distribution. The fact that it is more personal does not, however, mean that it is more individually chosen or open to change. This appears quite strongly in the survey results.

¹¹⁵ How permanent or shifting this is, has been the subject of much debate within gender research – a subject we will not deal with here.

Only one per cent of the men in our study defined themselves as “quite feminine” on a five-part scale from femininity to masculinity (the alternatives being very feminine, quite feminine, an equal mix, quite masculine, very masculine). *None* of the 1,719 men who answered the question dared to define themselves as “very feminine”. The imbalanced distribution is almost the same among the women, only three per cent defined themselves as quite masculine, and again, nobody positioned themselves as very masculine. The scale correlates as much as .763 with the respondents’ biological sex. Here, it can safely be said that the situation is quite uniform. The distribution is shown in the diagram below.



It should be noted that the *social* aspect of gender is not mentioned in the question; neither is any wording used that would directly point to social construction (like *role*). It only says: “Below you will find a scale from masculine to feminine. Where do you think you belong on this scale?” The respondents could check their position on the five-point scale. It might be assumed that some have simply thought in terms of biological sex. But the question does not seem to have been experienced as particularly difficult; even if there are some “don’t know” answers, the fall-off rate is not especially large.

The diagram shows an A-shaped distribution for each gender, with “rather like” one’s own gender at the top. The gender distribution seems, according to this, very

traditional. But we also see a considerable proportion who say they are an “equal mix”, especially among women (which is in line with the discussion on individuation in the previous chapter).

These answers, compared to other results, seem to indicate that equality-related structures have changed more than the gender system. It has been easier to break away from a traditionally unequal position than from the habitual gender formation, which has been associated with this position. The acceptance of equality has grown considerably over recent decades, but the freedom to cross the gender boundary has not increased to a corresponding extent.

Ideas of social stigmatisation and taboos easily come to mind when we see that none of the respondents report being “very” like the opposite gender. Is this still a kind of taboo in today’s society? Even considering possible misinterpretations of the question, this seems probable. The distribution of answers might reveal a type of *discipline in the gender area* which is rather different from the variation characterising the gender equality dimension. Instead of variation, it seems that the important thing is to keep in step with the rest. On the other hand, there is also a considerable liberal tendency, including large proportions describing themselves as an “equal mix”. This “androgynous” proportion is somewhat larger than the traditional proportion, that is, those who place themselves at the “safest” end of the scale: very much like their own gender. This applies not only to women, but also to men. A possible interpretation is that it is acceptable to mix to a certain extent – but not to cross the borderline.

Is it dangerous to be regarded as being reminiscent of the other gender? It is probably still often perceived as something negative. Yet we do not find much negative impact on the quality of life of placing oneself on the “wrong” side of the gender scale. A masculine position has a weak positive impact among men, and a weak negative impact among women. Correspondingly, a feminine position has a weak positive impact among women and a negative one among men. The correlation might have emerged more clearly with better questions and methods. Negative sanctions are primarily a question of other people’s positioning of the individual, not his or her self-assessment. It may be assumed that those with better quality of life, more equality, and so on, are somewhat more “courageous” on the

gender scale, so that the negative impact of crossing the gender line is artificially weakened.¹¹⁶

In earlier chapters we have seen that traditional gender formation reduces the chances for gender-equal practices, and also has some negative effect on gender-equal attitudes. Here, we will discuss how gender formation is measured and how it is connected to the other dimensions of the study. Is it correct, as we assumed, that gender formation is primarily an independent dimension in relation to gender equality?

Some limitations should be noted. The study was designed to give a useful indicator of gender formation, but not an in-depth analysis of this dimension. The coverage is weaker than for the gender equality and quality of life dimensions.¹¹⁷ We do not have much material on gender changes through the life course, even if some variables may shed some light on this issue (relationship with parents, friends, educational choices, etc.).

We will first describe how the index for gender formation was created, and its connection with some “soft” variables and social-psychological patterns. Next, we will discuss the main connections between gender formation and other features in the study.

How gender formation is measured

Our study includes only one question that directly addresses gender formation, that is, the scale described above, where the respondents place themselves as more or less masculine or feminine. We also have some related questions, including whether the respondent feels inferior in relation to friends of the same gender. Further, the study included quite a few questions on views of gender, segregation/integration, views of gender-related tasks, etc., that may be used to explore gender formation.

¹¹⁶ Of course, this scale is very simple. Measuring gender formation is relatively culture-dependent, and perhaps best suited for qualitative methods. If the question had been more related to action, experience and staging, then more border-crossings would probably have emerged (we are grateful to Wenche Muhleisen for commenting on this).

¹¹⁷ There is a Norwegian survey on men that includes several features pertaining to gender formation: ”Den norske mann 1998” (The Norwegian man), but it contains few variables regarding gender equality.

Here, as elsewhere, the construction of an index proved to be an art of compromise. If we include, for example, cultural question that seem to fit well, such as “I’d rather wash the clothes myself, so I know it’s done properly”, we also get additional effects that we might not want. A narrow index may therefore be preferable.

In a first approach we therefore designed an index that consisted of only two variables: conformity on the gender scale, and the question about inferiority among others of the same sex. These were merged in an additive index (with high scores to those who positioned themselves as very like their own gender, and did not feel inferior).

This somewhat Connell-inspired¹¹⁸ solution gave some interesting results, but it soon proved to have weaknesses, too. These emerged in relation to quality of life. Here, the correlation was unrealistically high, since those who felt inferior to others of their own sex also often reported lower quality of life. In our index, a non-traditional gender formation was thereby per definition linked to a lower quality of life, which was not our intention. Further, the two variables used in the index did not correlate – not a good sign. We found few signs of any link between the internal gender ranking (inferiority), and gender conformity (possibly, a result that says something of egalitarian Norwegian culture; results, for instance, in Australia or the US might have been different). Finally, we probably pick up irrelevant information by including the inferiority question since this may say more about the individual’s social environment than the individual her- or himself.

In a next attempt, we therefore defined gender formation according to the same “core value” method that we used for mapping gender-equal practices.¹¹⁹ This included the gender scale, as a measure of gender conformity, and two types of conformity that were closely related – sexual conformity and resistance against desegregation or gender-mixing in working life. Those who score highly for gender conformity and for the two other variables are placed high in the index. Sexual conformity is based on the question as to whether the respondent would find it problematic to have a child who came out as a homosexual, and working life

¹¹⁸ R W Connell’s gender theory puts main emphasis on the person’s positioning in the same-gender or homo-social hierarchy, especially regarding men and masculinities..

¹¹⁹ Based on a suggestion by Hanne Haavind.

conformity on two questions on desegregation in working life. The inferiority item was dropped. Although this index is no longer fully separate from gender equality issues, it worked reasonably well, and was used as the main index for the dimension.

Correlations with other dimensions

In the chapter introducing the gender equality analysis, we saw that gender formation seemingly had a very great impact on equality, particularly gender-equal attitudes, and we mentioned that the effect is somewhat exaggerated. Although the gender formation index (including the two attitudes mentioned) creates a more visible pattern in the material, compared to the gender scale on its own, it is a bit “tainted” by being too close to gender equality issues (through the attitudes). There is some “leaking” from gender equality to the gender formation index.

In order to exclude this effect, we analysed the gender scale on its own, in terms of other dimensions and background variables. It turned out that the scale is mainly independent, and not attached to other dimensions. There is a weak tendency that feminine (or mixed) men, and masculine (or mixed) women, are slightly more positive towards equality in attitudes and actions, but this is not very clear. These findings strengthen the assumption in the analysis model, where gender formation and gender equality are treated as separate dimensions.

The connection between gender formation and the other dimensions is rather weak throughout the study, regardless of what we include in the index for gender formation. For example, the main index shows a positive correlation between traditional gender formation and male-dominated couple resource distribution (imbalanced couples often have more gender-traditional men) – yet the association becomes very weak if we use the gender scale alone.

We do, however, see some areas where the gender formation has a greater impact. This applies to the “enough-is-enough” men that we described in the chapter on attitudes. This group scores highly for traditional gender formation; the correlation is very strong (as high as .417) when we use the main index, moderate when we use the gender scale only.

Gender formation is somewhat more clearly connected to background variables, such as age and education, among women than among men. Age increases the

probability of traditional gender formation, while education and income have a weaker negative correlation.

“Soft” variables and social-psychological patterns

Many results in the study indicate that subjective and social-psychological patterns have a considerable impact on the situation regarding gender equality, not just structural determinants like couple resource distribution. If the man has the higher income in the family, this *might* correlate with a more personally shaped main breadwinner position and a traditional gender formation, but it *need* not do so. The association between subjective main breadwinner responsibility and traditional gender formation among men is considerable, but not very strong (.183). Breadwinner responsibility emerges as a partially independent pattern, which is situated “between” the objective distribution pattern and family life as a subjective reality.

We also find such social-psychological patterns at other points. For example, many men are worried about losing contact with their children after a possible separation (20 per cent, as compared to 6 per cent among women). The worry is not reduced among men with a high income or education. Nor is it reduced among men with traditional gender formation. Gender conformity is no longer a protective factor – on the contrary – the men in this group are slightly more often worried than the rest.

Some patterns are positive. The conviction that life together with one’s partner will last to the end of one’s life, correlates with increased quality of life. This pattern does not have a particularly clear impact on equality practices or correlation with gender formation – it runs across various groups. The significance of trust can be seen in the light of many having considered a break-up, about three times as many as in the 1988 survey – separations and divorces are common, as is the childhood experience of parents divorcing.

Approximately 15 per cent of the respondents report on their previous (rather than their current) couple relationship. Among these, neither men nor women display any distinct tendencies regarding their gender formation. Here, as elsewhere in the study, we see that circumstances associated with divorce usually run across the dimensions in the study (except for quality of life). Traditional gender formation no

longer functions as a protection against separation, but we do not discern any particular positive impact of non-traditional gender formation, either.

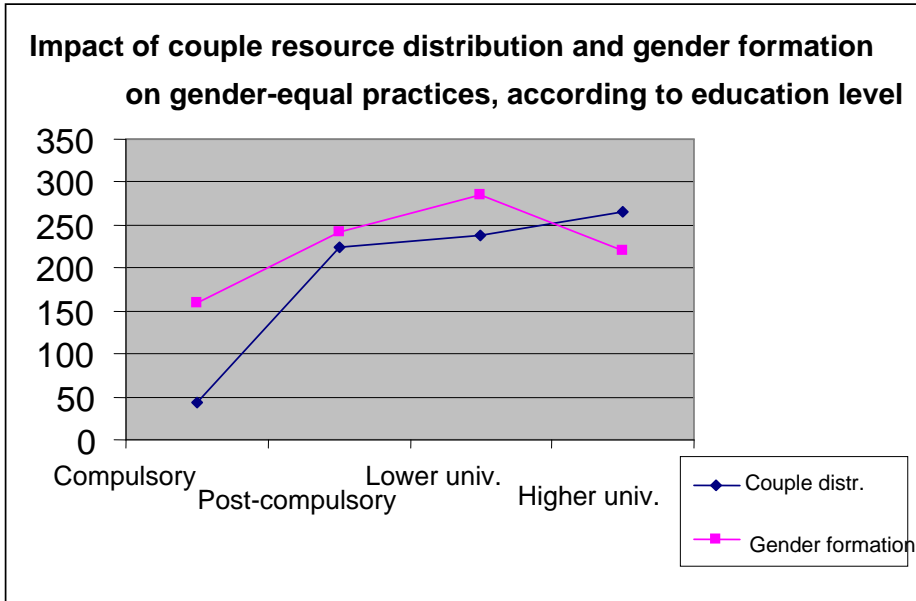
It might have been assumed that those who answered “yes” to the culturally most “apt” statements of the survey, or at least those displaying strong gender divisions, would also be more gender conformist than the rest. We do not, however, see any such tendencies. Instead the results show, somewhat surprisingly, that those who spend more time than their partner on organising the family, or prefer doing the washing themselves, do not stand out in any way according to our index for gender formation. We find no significant connections here – neither among men nor women.

This might be interpreted in a similar fashion to the results above. As argued above, gender formation is rather conformist, even if it also has individual elements. But it is no longer so influential in other areas, even closely related areas like the division of household and caring work. The gender system has become less characterised by gender stratification, even if gender differentiation remains strong. These traits can be interpreted in terms of increasing equality and individuation.

Gender formation and class

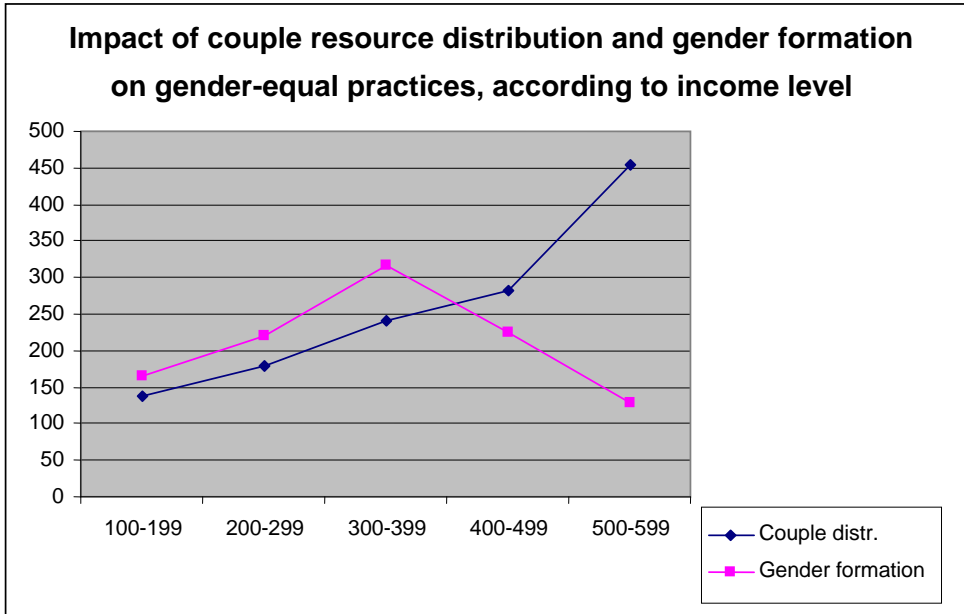
We argued above that gender formation and couple resource distribution can, to some extent, function as alternatives to each other. A man who does not have a strong position in terms of resource distribution, can “compensate” this through a more dominant or traditional gender formation. If one substitutes for the other, it is not so strange that the total correlation between the two is weak.

However, we do not know if this argument is correct. Let us take a look at what kind of impact couple resource distribution and gender formation have on gender-equal practices. The diagram below shows how strong an impact the two factors have at various educational levels (correlation coefficients, total sample).



We see that the impact of couple resource distribution on gender-equal practices increases with a higher level of education, while the impact of gender formation makes more of an A-formed curve. Both correlations are negative (the minus sign is not shown in the diagram). The higher the curve, the greater is the chance that the factor leads to unequal practices.

A similar pattern emerges when looking at levels of income (the horizontal axis shows income levels (in NOK); the vertical axis shows correlation coefficients).



These diagrams do not say anything directly about whether the two explanatory factors can substitute for each other, but they show that their impact varies with social status. While the resource distribution mainly has an economic aspect, so that the impact on gender-equal practices increases (particularly) with increased income and (somewhat) with increased levels of education, gender formation has more of a “lower middle-class profile”. This is particularly clear when it comes to income. Traditional gender formation has the greatest “slow-down” effect on equality at the middle income level.

In other words, male-dominated resource distribution appears as a barrier especially on the higher levels of the social hierarchy, while traditional gender formation appears as the strongest barrier at the lower middle levels. This is interesting in relation to how gender and class are connected. The results also offer some support for the substitution hypothesis, although they are not decisive in this regard..

Conclusion

Traditional gender formation reduces the chances for gender-equal practices, although the effect is often only weak. If the gender borderlines in a marriage or

co-habiting relationship are traditionally drawn, it is more difficult to cross them, for example, in terms of sharing household work and caring.

Even if the study's scale for masculinity and femininity is very simply designed, the results give a signal that it is difficult to cross borderlines and that such crossings might lead to stigmatisation. Gender formation emerges as a more "standardised" dimension than gender equality.

We developed indices for the dimension, first by combining the scale for masculinity and femininity, and a question as to whether the respondent feels inferior in relation to friends of the same sex. However, this proved to fall into two very distinct patterns. Therefore we created a new index based on the gender scale and questions on sexual conformity and attitudes to gender segregation in working life, which we then used as the main index for the dimension in this report.

Gender formation has a greater correlation with gender-equal practices among men than among women. This is connected to the fact that gender-traditional women also have a tendency to report equal practices (more often than traditional men). Older age is connected to more traditional gender formation somewhat more clearly among women than among men. Gender formation is also associated with social-psychological traits in the material. Trust and belief that the relationship will last might mean better chances for a more individual, less stereotyped gender formation.

Among men, traditional gender formation is somewhat more common at higher income levels, while the pattern for women is different: women at higher income levels have a less traditional gender formation. As to education, the pattern is similar across the genders. At the lower and middle income levels, somewhat larger proportions are characterised by traditional gender formation than at the highest level.

The impact of gender formation and couple resource distribution on gender-equal practices vary according to social status. While couple resource distribution is most significant for equality practices at higher levels ("the upper middle-class factor"), gender formation is most significant at the lower medium level ("the lower middle-class factor").

The analyses we have presented above indicate that traditional gender culture continues to present a significant obstacle to equality. However, detailed analyses tend to moderate the effect. Generally, couple resource distribution, and particularly income distribution, has a stronger impact on equality than gender formation has. The cultural variables behave in a somewhat more independent way, so to say, than the structural variables. We do not, for example, see that traditional gender formation would give any particular gains regarding quality of life, or much protection against anxiety and psychological problems, as might have been expected in a more traditional context.

Gender equality in childhood and youth

Some of the main points of the chapter

- Gender equality in childhood and youth has a moderate effect on gender equality later in life.
- Current situation has a larger impact than earlier socialization. The effects of couple resource distribution and gender formation are larger than the effect of gender equality in childhood..
- Among the relevant circumstances during childhood, the parents' equal decision-making has the greatest impact. Non-traditional division of work in the childhood home has a less clear impact.
- Gender-equal childhood homes were characterised by a lower level of violence. This risk of violence in father-led homes was almost three times greater than in gender-equal homes.

Introduction

One of the surprises that emerged in the survey "Men in Norway 1988" was that the mother's work outside the home, during a man's childhood and youth, did not have a clear impact on his gender-equal orientation later in life. It was expected that an active, independent working mother would influence the man's equality attitudes. The situation and orientation of the father should also be significant. But such tendencies were only very weak in the study.

Perhaps the reason for this was that equality among the parents was not measured very thoroughly in the 1988 survey. The questions about the mother were limited to whether she was working outside the home or not. Therefore we wanted to map the respondents' circumstances during their childhood and youth in better ways in the present study, with more questions on both mother and father, which covered education, division of work and decisions in the childhood home.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ The questionnaire does not define exactly which period during childhood and youth the questions pertain to, except for the question on parental separation/divorce ("before you were 16 years old"). However, the wording of some of the questions make it clear that the period asked about is childhood (cf. question 6: "Who were you most strongly attached to as a child?").

The first impression of the new material is that history repeats itself. The occupational situation of the mother (and father) has less impact on later-life gender equality than might be expected. We see surprisingly weak effects of issues like whether the mother stayed at home or was working, or whether the childhood home was characterised by a traditional or non-traditional gender division of work. Being in day-care does not have any impact, either.

Here, we will look at this in more detail. The respondents of the study grew up, typically, from the 1950s to the 1980s. The circumstances during this period must be considered when the results are interpreted. We have retrospective data, where the respondents describe circumstances experienced long ago, which may influence the results.

The design of the index

The survey contains several questions pertaining to gender equality during childhood and youth, including whether the division of work in the home was traditional, whether decisions were made by the mother and father equally, the parents' education level, and others. Building on these, we created an index for equality in the childhood home, which we tested in a number of slightly varying versions.

The overall result is that even though there is a fairly good correlation between the parental equality questions, their combined later-life effect is not very strong. It seems that parental equality only has a moderate impact later in life. Parental equality does increase the chance of gender-equal practices in adult-life couple relationships, as well as the chance of the individual having gender-equal attitudes, but the overall impact is quite moderate..

Consistency within the dimension of gender equality in childhood appears, for example, in the fact that those who report equal decision-making among the parents, also report lower levels of violence, are less likely to report that their parents (particularly the father) were too stern, or that they missed closer contact with their parents. These results are similar among men and women.

Here as elsewhere, the construction of the dimension index revealed some problems. An example is the question about who made decisions at home. We first coded this with a view to distinguishing the main variation – the difference

between the traditional homes where the father made the decisions, and the rest. But this turned out to be partly misleading. Many respondents answered that their mother made the decisions at home. Yet we have reasons to believe that many respondents within this subgroup grew up in rather gender-traditional homes; their answers should not be interpreted as indicating “women’s lib” or the current idea of gender equality. Therefore we limited the equal group to being those who had answered that their parents made decisions equally. We also limited the index to only including the clearest variables.

The main index thus consists of three components: that the home was not characterised by traditional gendered division of work, that both parents decided equally in the home, and that the respondent had friends of the opposite gender.

Results

If we look at the men, the index for equality during childhood proves to be weakly associated with the mother and father seldom being experienced as stern, but otherwise we find little correlation with other circumstances during childhood and youth.

Men with gender equality during childhood were somewhat more seldom attached to their mother, but the difference is not dramatic. We find few signs that attachment to one or the other of the parents has much influence on gender equality-related issues later in life, except for a certain reduction of the traditional pattern of attachment to the mother among those with childhood homes characterised by gender equality. These patterns are similar among the women.

Men who experienced equality in their childhood proved, as we had expected, to be somewhat more equal in their practices in relation to the division of work in their current relationship, and we found significant correlations with cooking and daily childcare. Yet these connections were quite weak. A weak impact could also be discerned on positive attitudes to equal sharing of housework and equal responsibility for family income.

Generally, these links were weaker than one would expect from a gender role socialization point of view. We found only a few weak links to the indices for gender-equal attitudes and only a relatively weak impact on practices. This varied with different childhood variables, however.

The area where the impact of the childhood home seems to be strongest is that of decision-making. The main “lesson” learned by men from gender-equal homes seems to involve equal decision-making in adult relationships. On the other hand, the gender equality in childhood index does not display any correlation with couple resource distribution, quality of life, or health. There are weak signs of better health, but these are not clearly significant. We had expected a larger co-variation with equal couple resource distribution.

Among the women, the index for gender equality in childhood displayed somewhat clearer links to other features in childhood and later in life. Equality in the childhood home was weakly associated with the mother’s education. There is also a weak association to younger age. Like the men, women from gender-equal homes report a lower level of violence, less often felt that their parents were being too stern, and less often missed closer contact with their parents. We also found a weak positive association with quality of life as child and teenager.

On the other hand, we found no clear correlation with the women’s level of education, which is somewhat surprising. The mothers from gender-equal childhood homes were perhaps a bit more likely to cooperate with an active partner (a man who took leave) during the parental leave period, but this is weak, and we found no significant correlations with gender-equal attitudes, housework or childcare. Equality in the decision-making in the current home is, however, associated with equality in childhood, as is the case among the men. Among the women, the correlation to health is somewhat clearer, but still weak. Neither do we find any association with couple resource distribution among the women.

Are these weak results explained by the index being inadequate, including too diverse sub-dimensions, or something similar? In order to test this, we designed a separate index for “the mother as resource person”, which consisted of the mother working outside the home and having a higher level of education than the father (that is, variables that were not included in the main index).

The results did indeed display a somewhat stronger picture. We kept those whose parents had separated or divorced outside of this analysis. The results indicate a somewhat stronger effect towards balanced couple resource distribution, particularly among men, and a slightly stronger association with gender-equal practices, although the changes (from the first results using the main index) were

not dramatic. The main impression remained that equality in childhood and youth only has a moderate impact.

Another way of testing this is to explore the caring orientation of the young men. After the questions about childhood and youth, we ask about what was important for the respondents in their choice of education. Should stronger experiences of equality during childhood contribute to greater caring-orientation among men? Probably yes, according to qualitative research. But we get no indication of this, when we use the main index. There are just slightly more men who had experienced equality in childhood who put emphasis on getting a job where they would be able to help other people. The result is the same when we look at the variables individually (mother and father made decisions to an equal extent, non-traditional division of work, friends of opposite gender). None of these have any particular impact on occupational preferences and educational choices. This is surprising. The childhood aspect that has the greatest impact on whether young men want a job where they are able to help others, is having friends of the opposite sex.

The general picture is, among both men and women, that equality-related childhood variables have rather a small impact on work preferences. It might, for example, have been expected that young women from equal homes would more often have chosen technical occupations, and that young men more often would have chosen caring professions, but we find no clear tendencies in these directions.

“Social inheritance”?

We were hesitant as to whether gender equality in childhood and youth really has such a small (or varying) impact as the results first suggested, and suspected methodological shortcomings. The analyses so far do not, however, indicate that improvements will make any great difference. The trend is that weak correlations become moderate, but not strong. Individual variables and indices for equality in childhood continue to have rather a moderate association with the other dimensions, when we use various filters and control variables.

How are we to interpret this? It might have been expected that so-called “social inheritance” , the tendency that children reproduce the choices of their parents, would have emerged more strongly. A possible interpretation is that freedom and individuality have increased, so that direct social inheritance does not have such a

strong impact anymore. Another possibility is that the experiences of an equal home in the main childhood period of the respondents (1960s and 1970s) were a “mixed blessing”, so that the children often broke the patterns of their parents.

A thought that lies near at hand is that the weak results point to problems with survey methods in this area. Qualitative in-depth studies often seem to display more parental influences than the ones we find. It should, nonetheless, be noted that the parental impact might in fact be large, also in our results, but diverse rather than uniform. Some socialisation theories suggest that children “process” their parents’ patterns in complex ways, rather than simply copying them. It might therefore be assumed that childhood is slightly under-reported because of individual variation.

But even given these considerations, the results convey a rather clear message regarding the importance of the present-day situation compared to the childhood of the respondents. The individual’s gender equality position is primarily determined by the current situation (adult-life context), not the background (childhood), even if the background variables also play a role. For example, current couple resource distribution has a far larger impact than childhood circumstances on gender-equal practices. Couple resource distribution affects equality practices more strongly and clearly, regardless of how we modify the analysis.

One way to “rescue” a socialization view, confronted with this empirical landscape of disappointingly weak associations, leads towards diversification, individual processing and reshaping of parental patterns. The question, then, is what remains of the socialization perspective, if it is so diverse and modifiable. True, we expect socialization effects to be “micro”. But unless they appear also in “macro” analyses like this one, how much importance should we ascribe to them?

Gender equality was a controversial issue in the time period (ca 1930-2000) of the childhoods in the survey. It is probably the case that other institutions that were more gender-conservative, often counteracted the impact of gender-equal home socialization. Counteracting institutions may, so to speak, have overshadowed the impact of the childhood home, thus creating a weak total correlation. The school, the media, and childhood and youth culture, have an important independent influence on how people rework their childhood home experiences. This is an issue that the present study does not explore.

There is little doubt that the *understanding* of “social inheritance” has changed during the period covered by the study. In the 1970s, many believed that it was primarily the socialisation in the home that was decisive factor for developing gender equality in society. Social heritage or inheritance was ascribed greater significance than is the case today. Later, with post-modernism and other conceptual changes, much of this paradigm has been abandoned in gender studies. The emphasis on individual choices, processes, complex delegation, individualism and much more, has become stronger. Gender has, so to speak, moved away from the landscape of socialisation to that of discourse and social and cultural settings. Although this development is clearest within research, it has also influenced public debate, and contributed to a more individualistic understanding, which, in turn, may have influenced how people responded to the questionnaire.

Early educational choices and later couple resource distribution

As mentioned above, we find that income distribution has more of an impact on gender equality today, than childhood gender equality. The importance of “materialistic” variables also appears when we explore socialization issues in more detail, like occupational preference in youth.

Of the men who, when they were young, focused on getting a job with a good income, 62 per cent have a male-dominated couple resource distribution in their current relationship, compared to 43 per cent of the men who did not focus on this. The picture is similar regarding those who focused on a secure and permanent job. Among the men who emphasised getting an occupation where they would be able to help others, there are, on the other hand, somewhat fewer who live in a relationship characterised by male-dominant couple resource distribution (56 per cent), than among those who did not emphasise this aspect (63 per cent).

Among the women, a focus on getting a job involving technical tasks correlates most clearly with later couple resource distribution, leading to greater balance. It is somewhat curious that women who focused on getting a job with a good income, somewhat *more* often live in a relationship with male-dominated couple resource distribution (38 per cent) as compared to those who did not focus on this (29 per cent). The increase of male-dominated couple distribution at higher income levels is probably the background to this.

The desire to get an occupation with a good income has “paid off” for the men. While 28 per cent of those who did not focus on this, have a highly paid job (earning NOK 400,000 or more), 41 per cent of those who did prioritise this have reached this level of income. There is a corresponding effect also among the female respondents (but far fewer that earn 400,000 or more). The desire to have a permanent and secure job does not seem to have influenced the income level among men, while this is actually associated with a falling income level among women; 16 per cent of the women who did not focus on this, today earn over 400,000, as compared to 8 per cent of those who did prioritise it. The desire to have an occupation where one could help other people is associated with a lower income, both among men and women. The desire to have a technical job does not seem to have had any particular effect on level of income.

So, we see that the desire to have an occupation with a good income had two rather different associations for men and for women. For men, this wish was associated with a good income later in life, and a male-dominated couple resource distribution. The chance to get a higher income later in life increases also among women, but, at the same time, the female share of the couple resource distribution decreases, particularly at the higher income levels.

The desire to have a job where one could help other people was associated with a lower income later in life, both among men and women. The lower income in the social sector (in relation to, for example, the technical or financial sectors) is one of the barriers that might explain why men – even men from equal homes – do not apply for employment in that field. This example illustrates how circumstances in society can weaken the effect of equality in childhood and youth.

Intermediate circumstances

The results in this chapter so far are mostly trivariate (associations between two variables among men and women respectively). Perhaps broader multivariate methods might reveal clearer correlations?

Even given the freer personality development characteristic of post-modernity, it is surprising that the correlation between equality during childhood and current equality is not stronger. An association of about .200 would have been reasonable. Might it be the case that other variables intervene here, and make it difficult to

reveal associations that are actually strong? What variables could these be, in that case?

We started with a model with at least two important intermediate dimensions, that is, gender formation and couple resource distribution. As to gender formation, we use, as mentioned earlier, an index for masculinity/femininity and some other features. The question now is, whether the correlation between equality in the childhood home and in the current relationship becomes clearer if we control for gender formation. Since gender formation can be assumed to give different results for men and women, we need to look at the genders separately.

The study was not a detailed survey of the respondents' families and social backgrounds in the past. It does include important features connected to equality, but not much on the process of growing up. It can contribute with a certain limited testing of equality-related features. We can further explore whether the impact of equality in childhood emerges more clearly, if we keep the two intermediate dimensions (gender formation and couple resource distribution) constant.

First, we looked at gender formation. The correlation between equality in childhood and youth, and current equality practices should be stronger when controlling for gender formation, particularly among those with minimal traditional gender formation.

The results confirm this hypothesis. Among those with non-traditional gender formation, there is a stronger correlation between equality in childhood and today, than among those with traditional formation. This applies to both men and women. In particular, equal decision-making in the childhood home has an impact on equality practices later in life. We generally get correlations at a moderate level. So it seems that even if social inheritance has become weaker, it has not disappeared totally.

What is the situation regarding couple resource distribution? It is somewhat dubious to include this as an intermediate variable, as compared to gender formation, but we disregard this problem for now. The results, among men, suggest that couple resource distribution does not have any particular impact; the correlation between childhood and current practices does not change much when we control for resource distribution, even if there is a weak tendency in support of

the hypothesis (weaker correlation among those with an imbalanced couple resource distribution). The parallel analysis of women does not give any significant results; the impression is that the distribution has little effect.

Violence and gender equality in childhood

The average respondent in the survey was born in 1961, and grew up in the 60s and 70s. In this period, it was often argued that women's liberation and gender equality would be harmful for children, and it was sometimes also claimed that the risk of conflict and violence at home would increase. This is still sometimes echoed in international research: increased gender equality will lead to men feeling their dominance being threatened, with a rising risk of violence.

For the first time, this question can be answered on a broad and representative empirical basis. Almost 2,800 respondents have reported on conditions in their childhood home including violence and gender equality issues. Although there may be some underreporting regarding problems in the childhood home, we have no reason to think that it is especially skewed in terms of the issue examined here, the relationship between gender equality and violence.

Among the gender equality indicators, particularly the question about parental decision-making is associated with the chance of violence. In the total sample, 27 per cent of respondents who say their father made the decisions at home, report violence or physical punishment at home, compared to 17 per cent where the mother made the decisions, and 10 per cent of those whose parents made decisions on an equal basis.

In other words, respondents from non-equal homes ran a much larger risk of experiencing violence. The results are almost identical when we look at men and women separately. Also, the correlation remains very strong when we control for third variables like age and education. The effect of gender-equal decision-making is in fact slightly larger among the younger respondents, indicating that this is still a very relevant issue.

At this point, the results convey a strong message, both in terms of policies and regarding the international research debate. What is "best for the children" cannot be isolated from issues of gender equality and democracy among the adults. Gender-equal decision-making in the home substantially decreases the chance of

violence, also when controlling for other variables. In the next chapter, we will describe how these issues also have an impact on the respondents' well-being and quality of life as adults.

Even if our childhood results are weaker than expected, some “model learning” does appear, connected to parental decision-making and a lower risk of violence. The impact of the lower levels of violence against children, associated with the historical increase of gender-equal homes, raises a number of important further research questions. Lower levels of violence may have helped pave the way for a more gender-egalitarian climate in Norway in the 1980s and 1990s, helping make the idea of male involvement in caring for children more acceptable. In this interpretation, gender equality progress in Norway in 1930-2000 was not only mainly a “home-run” process, but also to a considerable extent a “child-driven” process, more closely associated with children's rights than formerly recognized.

Conclusion

Although equality in childhood and youth in the first instance seems to have rather a weak impact on current equality and other dimensions of the study, detailed analyses indicate that it is, actually, somewhat higher. Some of the tests show that the effect of equality in childhood might emerge quite strongly.

Our initial assumption was that gender formation and couple resource distribution are “intermediate” factors influencing the connection between gender equality in childhood and youth, and current gender equality. This does seem to be the case, particularly when it comes to gender formation. The connection is strongest among those with a non-traditional gender formation and those with a balanced gender resource distribution. On the other hand, the main impression remains that the connection is only moderate, not strong.

The notion of a strong “social inheritance” factor running in families, with children copying the behaviours and choices of their parents, is not supported by the results. Clearly, things are more complex in this area. Probably, the link between gender equality in the childhood home and the situation in adult life would have emerged more strongly, if other institutions affecting childhood (like the school) had been better mapped in the survey. In the childhood period covered by the survey, gender equality issues were controversial, and the benefits from gender-equal homes were probably often counteracted by other trends in society and culture. As it is,

especially the question about parental decision-making has a clear impact – perhaps because it was the variable least counteracted by other institutions..

The results show a strong and robust link between gender-equal decision-making in the childhood home, and reduced risk of violence. The chance of violence was almost three times higher in father-dominated homes, compared to equal homes. To our knowledge, this is the first time in international research that the link between gender equality at home and reduced violence has been established on such a broad empirical basis.

Quality of life

Some of the main points of the chapter

- The main index for quality of life is based on personal assessment, detailed questions and questions about health in the survey.
- The results show that gender-equal practices are associated with a higher quality of life, particularly in the women's assessment. The association is also positive, but weaker and more unclear, among the men.
- For the women, gender-equal practices at home are at least as important for quality of life as more generally acknowledged explanatory variables such as income, marriage/co-habitation and education.
- The impact of gender equality in childhood and youth for current quality of life depends on what is included in the analysis. If problems that many will associate with lack of background equality, such as violence/punishment in the childhood home, are included, then the impact is great. If these are not included, the impact is moderate.
- Violence in the childhood home has a strongly negative effect on later quality of life. The level of risk behaviour, aggression, depression, anxiety and other mental symptoms is twice as high among those who have experienced violence or punishment, as compared to those who have not experienced this.
- Parents who have experienced a divorce or separation have a poorer quality of life, while this effect is also reduced over time. Losing contact with one's children seems to be the most central negative factor, which is particularly visible among fathers. This is of greater significance than the level of conflict between the parents.
- Gender equality may be costly for quality of life in some circumstances, even if it is mainly beneficial. In the survey results, gender equality is mainly positively linked to quality of life, but here, the results are gender-split, showing a greater impact among women than among men. A positive general tendency may be counteracted by other factors.

Introduction

The questionnaire contains 25 questions that deal with quality of life and health. These include questions about respondents' personal assessments of quality of life during childhood, youth, at work, in co-habitation and generally, and more detailed

questions about quality of life, for example, the statements: “I feel that my life is of no use to anyone” and “I have much to be proud of”.

Quality of life is, basically, a more independent dimension than those we have described so far. Gender equality practices and attitudes, gender formation, couple resource distribution and equality in childhood and youth are five aspects that concern equality. Quality of life is something else; it is the most important “independent” variable of the study. Quality of life does not necessarily have any particular connection with gender (or any other) equality. Even if equality generally works best, according to democratization theory, the situation here and now may be different. The impact of gender equality on quality of life can be positive, negative, or simply insignificant.

At the same time, quality of life is central in the debate on gender equality. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was often claimed that increased equality would impact negatively on quality of life. Children would suffer under “women’s liberation”, and many took it for granted that men’s quality of life would be reduced, since men would lose their traditional privileges. Some of the research from this period deals with how equality was problematic for men; they would become subject to poorer living conditions, and perhaps the application of pressure by women was the only way to achieve change.

Therefore the question as to how gender equality affects quality of life is relevant, not least as it pertains to men. Is it true that men’s quality of life will decrease? It is also important to turn the question around, regarding gender equality and quality of life – the study indicates that effects can go both ways in this relationship. Not only does equality influence quality of life, it is probably also the case that those with a better quality of life, are most likely to practice gender equality. A new result concerns the relative strength of these two causal links.

Research into quality of life often uses subjective evaluations as indicators. Since our study contains detail questions on well-being and questions about health in order to give a broad picture, we first focused on designing a broad overall index for the quality of life dimension. This index is tested in this chapter, although we also discuss some personal assessment and detail questions.

Analysing questions related to well-being, our first result was that the various indicators pointed, more or less, in the same direction. We found a tendency that problems here and now have a strong impact on the self-assessment of quality of life, a somewhat more moderate impact on the detail questions, and the weakest on health.

These three elements – self-assessment, detail questions and health items – can sometimes be interpreted as three levels which reflect the way other circumstances influence quality of life. The first consists of self-assessment, that is, the subjectively experienced quality of life. This might occasionally be compared to an early warning radar. The second consists of detail questions about quality of life where the respondent gives answers on more concrete problems concerning well-being. The third element consists of questions about mental and physical health. It typically takes the longest for problems to have a visible effect at this level. It is like a slow zone, insulated, as it were, by the two others. The model is most meaningful if quality of life is perceived as a continuous process towards a given result. At the upper levels, the individual is able to avert and counteract threats against quality of life. Things that cannot be eliminated will appear at level two, and if they cannot be counteracted here, either, they will emerge at level three in the form of poorer health. Of course, things often do not fit such a simple model, but a trend in that direction can be discerned in the results.

Gender research has, for a long time, emphasised gender aspects in relation to health and quality of life. Not only is the health sector characterised by a gendered division of labour; the use of health and quality of life services is also fairly gendered; the list of diagnoses is partially gendered – and so on. Thus, it would, to some extent, be rather surprising if quality of life was ungendered. Research has, indeed, proven many differences in the experience of quality of life associated with gender; for example, that women are often more actively involved in issues pertaining to their own quality of life and health than men, and more often use health services. The lower involvement of men is associated with men not listening to bodily signals, to more often being involved in overwork, and similar traits of the traditional male breadwinner role (or a more modernised form of masculinity). Men's greater risk of negative-health-related behaviours leads to overrepresentation in the mortality rates for important illnesses in various age groups throughout adult life (White, A 2006).

The survey “The Norwegian Man 1998” showed that men, in case of personal problems, will primarily talk about this with their partner/spouse, while other potential helpers, including psychologists and family therapists, were given low priority – many would rather “seek nature/solitude”. Our study displays some of the same pattern. Speaking to partner/spouse is the most popular alternative, but professional help is valued more highly than in 1998: 50 per cent of the men and 58 per cent of the women would use it. Solving problems alone or not talking about them with anybody, is the least popular choice (22 per cent of the men, 14 per cent of the women). Men are somewhat more “closed”, but we do discern a change over the last decade.

By pointing to the gender differences in quality of life and health behaviour, we do not necessarily mean that quality of life or health issues are “deeply gendered”. Social burdens probably have much of the same effect on quality of life and health among men and women, but they partly take different forms and work in somewhat different ways. Biological, psychological and social traits are part of the empirical picture of female and male illness and mortality (Holter, Ø 1989).

Quality of life and the other main dimensions

The index for quality of life contains twenty questions about self-assessment of life quality, detail questions on well-being, and questions about health. These three components have approximately the same weight in the index.

Is gender equality at all connected to quality of life? What happens when we look at quality of life in relation to the gender dimensions?

The first impression is a relatively low or moderate correlation between quality of life and the other dimensions of the study. This is repeated when we instead use a narrower index based only on self-assessments of quality of life.

These are basically reasonable results, since the other dimensions pertain to gender and equality, while quality of life is a more independent area. There is, nevertheless, at least one important exception to this rule. We find a strong positive correlation between gender-equal practices and quality of life among women, which also emerges in a weaker and more diffuse form among the men.

Why does not gender equality have a stronger impact? Part of the reason, as mentioned above, is that quality of life is a fairly independent dimension, with much individual variation. Interestingly, we get the same rather weak picture when looking at the effects of standard background variables. We would assume, for example, that income would have a strong positive impact on quality of life, but in fact the impact is relatively low (about .130) according to our regression analyses, where we use the main indices and background variables as predictors of quality of life. The strongest correlation here is with the variable of living together with a partner or spouse (rather than alone), but even this has only a moderate strength (.162). We have a kind of “backburner” effect which applies to both the background variables and the gender dimensions of the study.

The results among men and women are somewhat different. Among the men, living with a partner/spouse and high income are the two traits with the greatest positive effect on quality of life, followed by a more uncertain positive impact of gender-equal practices. Among the women, it is gender-equal practices that have the strongest impact of all variables tested, followed by living with a partner/spouse. There is also a correlation with traditional gender formation, but this is only weak and not clearly significant. The fact that the index of gender-equal practices has the strongest positive effect of all variables tested, an even stronger impact than living with a partner/spouse, is a noteworthy and new finding. .

If we look more specifically at self-assessments of quality of life (that is, subjective life quality in general terms), we find that (in the whole sample) living with a partner has the strongest impact, followed by income and – weaker – gender-equal practices. Among the men, living with a partner has the greatest influence on self-assessment of life quality, followed by income and, very weakly, equality practices. Among the women, living with a partner and gender-equal practices have the greatest effect, while the rest of the variables have no clear impact.

Is there any difference between those with minimal and much gender equality on the one hand, and low and high quality of life, on the other? Do these divisions create four different patterns in the material? In order to explore this, we defined four groups based on gender equality and quality of life: those with a low score for both, those with a high score for the first and low for the second, low for the first and high for second, and high for both. The analyses did not show any clear differences between these four groups, however. Income and education have the

strongest impact on quality of life within the group with high gender equality and quality of life, and those with low equality and quality of life, but a somewhat weaker impact on the intermediate groups. Similar pictures emerge among men and women. Thus, it does not seem to be the case that gender equality and quality of life would create clear “blocks” of those who either have or do not have, one or both these features.

Patterns within the dimension

We used exploratory factor analyses in order to analyse how the various variables within the quality of life dimension are connected to each other. The factors that emerged most clearly here were, first, a factor associated with mental health (depression, anxiety, etc.), secondly a factor pertaining to physical health (tense muscles, back pains, etc.), and thirdly a factor associated with living with a partner/spouse and sexuality. Self-assessment of quality of life during childhood and youth also emerged as a fourth separate factor, rather isolated from the others.

These four factors emerged in the analyses among both men and women. A fifth factor pertaining to overweight and poor body-image also emerged, particularly among women.

Some of the variables within the dimension did not, however, clearly cluster to any of these factors. These included sickness leave, stress, digestive problems, alcohol/drug problems, detail questions on body-image and sexual desire, and job satisfaction.

Health

The most “objective” sub-index in the dimension includes the 12 health-related problems in the questionnaire.

When looking at the whole sample (in multivariate analyses) in relation to health, two features emerge in particular. Income is clearly associated with fewer health problems. In addition, there is a weak positive association between good health and traditional gender formation. Age, living with a partner and gender equality practices also have an impact here, but a rather weak one.

Among the male respondents, income is the variable which is most clearly associated with fewer health problems. Among the female respondents, education is the major influencing aspect. The effects are moderate.

The study gives some results indicating that a traditional gender formation plays a “protective” role as to health, especially among men. The overall picture is, nevertheless, so weak and unclear that this tendency may be marginal. The results perhaps indicate that contradictory circumstances are at work. The correlation between gender-equal practices and health is also weak, probably for similar reasons. Gender-equal attitudes are sometimes weakly connected to (lower) quality of life, but this tendency is not consistent and is probably spurious.

On the whole, we find that income plays a role, particularly for reducing the number of health problems among men, and that education plays the same role among women. Traditional gender formation may have a slightly inhibitory impact on health problems, but this effect is not very strong or clear. Thus, we are left with income and education as the two main factors associated with better health.

In general, the study shows that women somewhat more often than men suffer from health problems. Some patterns are most typical among women – not only lacking sex drive and the feeling of having unwanted excess weight, but also headache, depression and stress. Other patterns are more gender-neutral, such as back problems. And as noted above, there are signs of men becoming more open about their health-related problems.

The study data suggests that it would be valuable to do more detailed analyses of health, gender and equality. This chapter offers some examples.

Gender equality in childhood and current quality of life

Some of the questions in the study deal with possible reasons for a poor quality of life. We will now look more closely at four of these, which pertain to childhood, violence, work and separation.

As mentioned above, the first impression is that the main index for gender equality in childhood and youth has a fairly marginal significance for current quality of life. This is, however, partly misleading. The picture is clarified when we look at the individual variables in more detail. Although parental decision-making by itself

only has a weak influence on adult well-being, it is strongly associated with violence, which does have a strong effect on adult well-being. Violence/punishment during childhood strongly reduces the chance of good quality of life, later. Parental divorce also has a negative impact in adult life, but only a very weak one. On the whole, the effects of circumstances in childhood and youth are very similar, regardless of whether we look at the main index for quality of life, or at the sub-index for self-assessment. Furthermore, the indices give approximately the same results for both genders.

Of the childhood circumstances, missing one's father and mother is particularly related to a lower quality of life, and the same pertains – somewhat more weakly – to the statement that father and mother should have been less stern. Those who experienced the separation or divorce of their mother and father as difficult, have a considerably lower quality of life later. Social environment factors in childhood and youth, including friendships, also have a certain impact. Bullying in the childhood environment has quite a clear negative effect.

All in all, we see quite clear tendencies that some childhood circumstances affect later quality of life, but the overall effect of the gender equality in childhood index is rather weak. The three components of the index point in somewhat different directions. Equal decision-making among the parents has a weak positive impact on quality of life. Non-traditional division of work in the childhood home has a weak negative impact. Friendships across the gender line do not seem to have any clear effect. The total result is a weak impact.

It might be claimed that other variables should have been included in the childhood index. Violence, punishment, missing one's parents and stern parents are connected to gender equality. These should be included in a more realistic version. This might be correct, but it also entails taken many things for granted. We would, nonetheless, obviously have detected a much larger impact on quality of life and health, if we had included both gender equality in childhood and youth, and the problems that we, in this case, associate with lack of equality.

We can test this by looking at how the childhood problems, in total, influence quality of life. We now include sternness, missing parents, and violence/punishment in an additive index. Not surprisingly, this index turns out to

be very strongly associated with a lower quality of life, and also quite clearly associated with a lower self-assessment of life quality.

Thus, we can say that a broad definition shows that gender equality in childhood is of great significance for later quality of life, while a more narrow definition gives a moderate significance. Further research will show whether the truth lies somewhere in between.

Violence in childhood and later quality of life

One aspect differs from the rest, regarding childhood and quality of life: violence/punishment in the childhood home. The negative long-term impact of this is clearer than that of the other aspects. As described in the previous chapter, violence in the childhood home is linked to a low level of equal division of power between the parents.

The 1988 survey of men showed that violence in the childhood home was associated with traffic accidents, risk behaviour and aggression. However, this has not been followed up in later research to any large extent.

The new study confirms the results from 1988. We find almost a doubling of risk behaviour among those who experienced violence/punishment in their childhood home, compared to those who did not experience this. The new aspect here is, that this does not only apply to men, but also to women.

While 6 per cent of the men who did not experience violence/punishment in their childhood homes, have been involved in traffic accidents causing personal injuries, 11 per cent of the men who did experience violence/punishment have been involved in such accidents. The corresponding numbers among women are 4 and 7 per cent. The question: "Do you sometimes become angrier and more aggressive than you would like?" is answered in the affirmative by 17 per cent of the men who did not experience violence/punishment, as compared to 31 per cent among those who did experience this. Again, the numbers among women are very similar: 21 and 38 per cent, respectively.

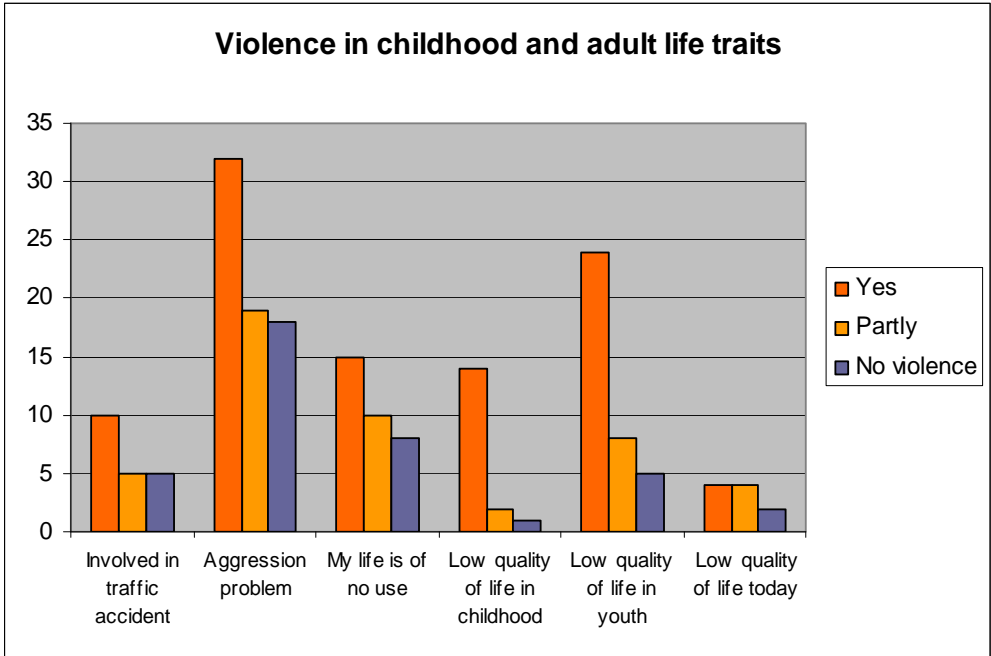
Those who experienced violence/punishment during their childhood, also considerably more often suffer from anxiety and depression. Among the men, 3 per cent of those with no experience of childhood violence, suffer from anxiety, as

compared to 5 per cent of those who did experience violence. The corresponding numbers among women are 2 and 9 per cent. Depression is also far more common: 2 per cent of those with no violence experience suffer from it, as compared to 11 per cent of those with experiences of violence. The proportions are the same among men and women. The pattern is similar for suicidal thoughts and other mental problems.

The 1988 study indicated that experiences of violence had a particular impact at a bodily level, which was illustrated by the question on whether the respondent had been involved in traffic accidents with personal injuries. The present study suggests that experiences of violence have a rather broad psycho-somatic impact, and that it is similar among both genders. The numbers give rise to the question, for example, as to how large a proportion of the total of traffic injuries is associated with aggressive risk behaviour, and explained by a background of violence.

Does violence by partner in co-habitation have the same effect as violence during childhood? The numbers reveal that this is also associated with an increased proportion of problems. For example, the proportion of those who have been involved in traffic accidents grows from 6 to 8 per cent, and the suffering of anxiety increases from 3 to 8 per cent. However, the impacts are weaker, and do not create a consistent pattern, as violence in childhood does. Violence between adults also causes negative influences, but, again, not as clearly as does violence experienced in childhood.

The effects of violence in childhood are presented in the following diagram.



Violence in the childhood home was associated especially with parental gender inequality and violence (bullying) in the social environment. In turn, it had a range of negative effects. Before the new survey, researchers thought that some of these long-term reactions to violence, like aggression, were specific to men. Yet the new results indicate that they are quite similar among men and women.

Occupational experiences and quality of life

The study enables a closer exploration of education, choice of occupation and occupational experiences in relation to quality of life.

Equal co-operation with the opposite sex at work (co-operation at the same level) has a weak but significant *positive* impact on men’s quality of life, while the effect is unclear among women. The impact would probably prove to be greater if controlled for other occupational circumstances, but such an analysis is not made here. Regarding youth choices, interest in the school subjects in youth and the wish to have a technical job are weakly positively associated with current quality of life, while the wish to help others is weakly associated with health problems.

Those working within the private sector have somewhat fewer health problems, and the same applies to those who work many hours per week. Female-dominated workplaces are weakly associated with lower quality of life. Working more than one would like to has a somewhat negative impact, while taking work home does not have any clear effect on quality of life.

Independence at work is a factor that seems to have a more independent and clearly positive impact on quality of life – it is strong on self-assessed life quality, weaker on health.

In many respects, the study repeats “classic” findings within occupational research. For example, predictable working hours have a positive, but weaker, impact. On the other hand, conflicts and backbiting at work have a clear and strong negative impact (a correlation as large as $-.277$ with life quality, $-.280$ with self-assessed life quality and $.219$ with health problems). The same applies to women being negatively discriminated against, which has a more moderate impact. Negative discrimination against men also has a weak negative effect.

In line with earlier research, the present study shows that the factors of independence and quality of environment at work, as well as the relationship to superiors and experienced occupational development opportunities, have a strong impact on quality of life. The fact that the correlations are this strong, supports our earlier arguments concerning the importance of the social context.

It is possible that some of the seemingly gendered variation in terms of quality of life and other variables in the study, is in fact a variation linked to two different occupational positions: one that allows a combination of work and family caring, and one that does not. (sometimes called “encumbered” and “non-encumbered” jobs; cf. Acker 2005; Halrynjo, S 2004). The study can contribute to testing this hypothesis in working life and family life, but we have not been able to do this within the present framework. The results so far might indicate that those with “caring obligations” tend to influence the occupational culture in other ways than those with no such obligations.

Separation and quality of life

Divorce / separation and quality of life can have a mutual effect; a separation can cause lower quality of life, but low quality of life also increases the risk of

separation. The study provides material for testing which of these two causal connections is the strongest one. We can look at self-assessed quality of life in childhood and youth, in relation to later separation and quality of life.

If we keep childhood and youth quality of life constant in the analysis, the correlation between separation and current quality of life is somewhat reduced; it becomes approximately 20 per cent weaker. Thus, it seems that the main causal connection runs as we would expect – separation leading to a lower quality of life. The opposite connection, where earlier quality of life contributes to a later separation, is less important.

Among the respondents, there are approximately 600 parents who have experienced a separation or divorce that has also involved their children. These have answered “yes” or “no” to four statements on conflicts over the children after separation. These pertain as to whether the other parent can take care of the children well enough, whether the other parent has moved far away with the children without considering the respondent, criticism and attempts to get the children to dislike the respondent, and whether the other parent has not followed agreements as to meeting the children.

About 60 per cent of those who have experienced a divorce or separation involving children, have not experienced conflicts over the children. 40 per cent have experienced conflicts, and most of these have experienced 1–2 types of conflict.

The first two conflicts are mostly reported by men. 24 per cent of the fathers who have experienced a separation, say that their ex-partner did not trust them, as compared to 10 per cent of the mothers. 12 per cent of the separated fathers experienced that their ex-partner has moved far away, as compared to 4 per cent of the mothers. Criticism is more or less gender neutral; about 25 per cent of both genders report this. The experience of the other parents not following agreements is still much more common among women than among men; 26 per cent of the mothers and 6 per cent of the fathers report this.

Looking at the separated parents who have answered the questions on conflicts over the children after separation, we find that the break-up took place, on an average, about ten years ago (that is, on an average in 1999 among the men, and in 1998 among the women). It is probable that the negative impact on quality of life is

reduced over time. The results show that a separation in the recent past has a more negative impact on quality of life, than when the respondent has experienced a separation at an earlier point in time.

There are large differences in the quality of life between those who are currently divorced or separated (of whom 91 per cent are parents) and the rest of the respondents. While 51 per cent of the respondents in general have a high quality of life, this applies to only 34 per cent of those who are divorced and separated. If we look at those who have experienced a separation at some point in their lives, the difference is smaller. The index for quality of life is approximately ten per cent higher among those who have not experienced a separation. The results show that the negative impact on quality of life is large, but also that it is strongly influenced by the time that has passed since the separation. It is of course also strongly influenced by whether the respondent has entered a new relationship, but the analyses here only concern those who have remained single.

The level of conflict does have an impact on quality of life, but the correlation is weak, and further weakened over time. The correlation is somewhat clearer among men. A moderate negative effect on quality of life also emerges in a multivariate analysis where background variables are included. The effect emerges more strongly in relation to self-assessment of life quality, than to health.

As mentioned above, the analyses show that some separation experiences are rather strongly gendered. 73 per cent of the reports that the non-resident parent does not follow agreements on meeting the children apply to fathers. Nevertheless, the failure to follow agreements on spending time with the children, in total applies to a rather small proportion of the sample: only 14 per cent of all parents who have experienced a separation or divorce. This is less than what might have been expected, as based on some of the image conveyed by media and debate. Most parents follow agreements; as many as 86 per cent have not experienced any conflicts in this respect. Many cope with the separation without creating a conflict around the children. It might appear as if separations have become more common, also in the sense that more people are coping with it better – the “peace-rate” seems to be higher today, than what was found in divorce studies twenty or thirty years ago, although we cannot make direct comparisons.

Before continuing the analysis of separation and quality of life, we will take a look at the group of separated respondents compared to the rest of the sample. Does this group display features that would distinguish them from the rest? Is the pattern different among men and among women?

The analyses show that parents who divorce or separate are very similar to the parents in intact families regarding the main dimensions of the study: equality in childhood and youth, gender-equal attitudes, practices, couple resource distribution and gender formation. In other words, we do not find any specific “divorce profile” related to the equality dimensions. This contradicts a common idea in the debate, where increasing equality has been seen as a risk factor causing divorce. The risk is obviously quite general – it hits traditional couples as much as gender-equal couples. We get similar results analysing the background variables. Income seems to somewhat lessen the risk of conflict about the children. Education does not seem to have any particular impact. Based on these results, individualism and rising expectations regarding intimate relationships seem more important for explaining the high divorce rate than the factors associated with gender equality.

If marriage and co-habitation as an institution gradually becomes more gender-neutral, it is not surprising if the exits from this institution also increasingly display the same tendency. The study shows great changes in the division of household work in the home as compared to the 1988 study, particularly in the traditionally female areas. Men’s role in caring and housework has been strengthened, and equal decision-making emerges as a dominant norm.

Against this background, more gender-neutralising might also be expected in the previously very female-dominated area of divorce and separation, where it has usually been the woman who has taken the initiative and been most prepared and active. The study gives signals in this direction. We do indeed see a certain traditional imbalance between women and men on the question as to whether one has considered a separation, but the difference is only about 10 per cent in the favour of women. It might seem that the surprisingly stable pattern pertaining to separation initiatives – about 75 per cent of initiatives are taken by women, 25 per cent by – is about to change. As to the worry about one’s partner breaking the relationship, the gender difference in the study is even smaller, about 5 per cent. These findings can be interpreted as a sign that gender-neutralisation and individuation will gradually even out the initiative rate.

Exploratory analyses of separation among parents and other variables in the study display some interesting patterns. Conflicts over the children correlate moderately with bullying during childhood, and more weakly with the mother having a lower level of education. These conflicts are also associated with poorer quality of life in the respondents' own childhood, lower income level, shorter duration of couple relationships, and having a violent partner. It is also weakly associated with lower contentment in the current couple relationship, less frequent use of parental leave, less wish for longer parental leave, and more frequent worry about the children when not being with them. If we take a closer look at health, we find that a major symptom among separated parents with conflicts over the children, is back pain. Other correlations also appear (headache), but are weaker. We find a weak but significant impact of violence in the childhood home on later separations involving children. All in all, these results can be taken as a sign of the "normalisation" of separation and divorce.

The separated parents have more often changed their working time because of their children. They report couple relationships of shorter duration. The correlation here is rather strong (duration of relationship $-.226$). Shorter duration seems to be the risk of negative conflict involving the children, perhaps mostly because the children are younger (we have no proof of this).¹²¹ Somewhat more conflicts are also reported in relation to current co-habiting relationships and more worries about the children.

Parents who have experienced a separation, as well as those who are currently divorced/separated, score higher as to having experienced responsibility as the main supporter. Since this also applies to parents in new couples, a possible interpretation is that the subjective experience of the having the main responsibility for supporting the family increases the risk of separation and conflict.

Quality of life among the separated parents is somewhat influenced by the level of conflict and other circumstances, but the contact with the children emerges as the main factor in this area. Here, the pattern is quite similar among men and women. The correlation is seemingly not linear, but U-shaped. Those whose children live with them a few days a week, have a lower quality of life, compared to both those

¹²¹ Regression analyses indicate that particularly the older age of respondent, and the shorter duration of the relationship, increase the risk for conflict.

whose children do not live with them and those who live permanently with their children. The fact that those whose children do not live with them display such positive results, is probably explained by the separation having happened a long time ago (the children are older and often live on their own by now).

The quality of life is, as we have mentioned above, strongly influenced by the current co-habitation situation. Separated parents who live with a new partner have a better quality of life than those who live alone. This applies particularly to self-assessment of life quality, and – more moderately – to the general index for quality of life. Among the parents who have experienced a separation, about half currently live with a new partner. If we control for the current co-habitation situation, we still find a significant negative correlation between separation and quality of life, but it is rather weak. Here, the patterns for the genders are different from each other. Among the fathers, there continues to be a rather clear correlation between experienced separation with conflicts and quality of life, while there are only small differences among the mothers. The impact of having experienced a separation, regardless of conflict level, is strongest among women. The current situation is rather important and subdues the effect of an earlier separation, without totally eliminating it. The separation and the situation after it were more difficult for men, but the difference is not very great (Thuen, F 2004)¹²².

It seems that the negative effects of a separation among parents might be divided into three aspects: the conflict as such, losing contact with children, and poorer living conditions (including economic losses). Of these, it is the loss of contact with the children that has the strongest negative effect on quality of life..

We see a clear correlation among men between having taken parental leave alone (and not together with the spouse or partner), a positive evaluation of the leave period, and better quality of life. This finding can be interpreted in various ways. One is that a better quality of life among men is linked to better caring abilities. Similar indications emerge in that direction, regarding the question as to who wanted children when the couple last had a child. If both (or the man) wanted to have children, the risk for separation and lower quality of life decreases, while it

¹²² Thuen finds data which indicates a doubling of mental problems among "non-residential fathers". Our weaker results might be explained by, among other things, the time factor (separation long ago).

increases if the woman alone wanted to have the child (the so-called “one-sided female project”). Quality of life as a dynamic factor also emerges in some of the questions about parental leave. Those with a poor quality of life are less inclined to wish they had had a longer parental leave. Here, it is feasible to regard quality of life also as a causal factor, not just an effect.

The study measures contact with children after separation by a question to those who have children with a partner they are not co-habiting with, about how many days per week the children live with them. A large proportion answered that the children never live with them, and, as mentioned earlier, this probably often applies to older children. If we look only at parents under 40 years of age, we find that the proportion of those whose children “never” live with them, decreases strongly, to 28 per cent, while it increases to 66 per cent among parents who are 40 years and older.¹²³

Looking at all parents who have children whom they do not live with, in relation to quality of life, we find a negative association with quality of life which is more or less in line with what we have seen above.

Losing contact with their children is a clear feature among the non-resident parents. This applies particularly to the fathers. A regression analysis among separated fathers, which includes age, education, income, gender-equal practices, couple resource distribution and other variables, shows, in ranked order, a strong positive impact of income on quality of life, followed by a moderate negative effect of being the non-residential parent who spends little time with the children. This is repeated if we include other control variables, such as the respondent’s quality of life in childhood. Having little contact with the children is an independent negative factor, which is somewhat weaker than the positive effect of income. This is in line with earlier research (Thuen 2004). An increase in the amount of time which passed since the separation reduces the impact.

Conclusion

We have measured quality of life on the basis of three components – self-assessment, detailed questions and health questions – which were collected in a

¹²³ Cf. Skevik & Hyggen 2002, who also found the highest number of visiting days among the youngest fathers.

main index for quality of life. In this chapter, we have seen how this index and sub-indices for each component are associated with other dimensions and variables in the study.

Of the main dimensions of the study, gender-equal practices are associated with quality of life, especially among women, and especially pertaining to self-assessment of life quality. The picture is weaker and more uncertain among men. It is interesting that gender-equal practices, in some of the analyses among women, prove to be as important as more acknowledged explanatory variables such as income, marriage/co-habitation and education. Among men, improved quality of life emerged especially in the context of taking parental leave (and doing it on one's own, without the mother being present), and the feeling that the leave period led to an improved relationship with one's child.

It might have been assumed that traditional gender formation would still have a certain "protective" effect on health and quality of life, but this tendency is today only weak and diffuse. The study includes many variables that co-vary with quality of life and that can be used in further research, for example, the conviction that the relationship will last to the end of one's life.

The impact of equality in childhood and youth for current quality of life depends on what is included in the analysis. If problems that are associated with lacking equality, such as violence/punishment in the childhood home, are included, then the impact is great. If these are not included, the impact is moderate. All in all, violence/punishment, missing one's parents and – more weakly – parents' separation, are the aspects with the greatest negative impact later in life, but these are not, except for violence, very strong. There are many ways to process childhood experiences.

Violence/punishment do, however, have a clear negative impact on later quality of life. Risk behaviour, aggression, depression, anxiety and other mental symptoms are consistently about twice as frequent among those who have experienced violence/punishment. The same goes for the probability for having been involved in traffic accidents causing personal injuries. The result confirms the findings in the 1988 survey of men, and, in addition, we now see an impact among both genders.

In general, however, one's current situation is the most important aspect for quality of life, and not childhood and youth circumstances. The picture we get here is reminiscent of the one for equality. The circumstances at work are very significant, including relationship to superiors, development opportunities, the workplace not being characterised by conflicts and backbiting, and independence at work. The circumstances in the family/co-habitation also have an impact, even though we have not discussed this in detail here.

A separate analysis of divorce or separation involving children, shows that those who have experienced this consistently have a lower quality of life, but that the effect is reduced over time. Losing contact with one's children seems to be the most important component, particularly among fathers; it is more significant than the level of conflict between the parents. Many separated parents do, however, manage to avoid conflicts over their children, which, together with the time factor (the separation happened some years ago), reduces the impact on quality of life in our material. We see signs of a greater gender-balance as to separation initiatives, in line with the numbers showing a more balanced division of caring and housework among intact marriages/co-habiting relationships.

Initially, we described quality of life as a more independent dimension than the five other main dimensions of the study, that is, less clearly associated with gender equality. However, the results show that gender equality has a positive impact on quality of life. Among women, it appears as a very central predictor of quality of life. Among men, the overall effect is (still) weak, although stronger effects can be seen in some detail questions including fathers' involvement in caring for the children.

Contrary to expectations that are still quite common in international research and debate, we do not find that increasing gender equality increases the risk of divorce or reduces quality of life. Instead, the main trend is towards a stronger, positive association between gender equality and quality of life. This trend is clearly related to people's everyday experiences. It is not "ideologically driven". We find, for example, that gender equality in the childhood home reduces the risk of violence by almost two thirds. Even among those who are sceptical to active state policies regarding gender equality, most want to practice gender-equal norms in their own family situation. Although some of these patterns are more visible among women than among men, they are increasingly visible among men also, and the

experiences – e g regarding gender equality and violence in childhood, and later-life effects of the violence – are similar among men and women. Even if gender equality is still often controversial, and even if there often remains a gap between ideals and practices, the net gains of the “gender equality project” is becoming much more visible, showing that it affects both private lives and society at large in highly significant ways.

Appendix: Methodology

Is gender equality a peripheral issue for women or a central social question? A starting point of the present survey was the latter view – a focus on gender equality as a central issue with wide-ranging implications. This was based not only on gender research, but also on research within areas such as welfare (Kautto, M 2001), innovation (Damvad 2007, Florida, R 2005), the family (Haavind, H 2006; Holter, Ø ed. 2007) and democratization (Skjeie & Teigen 2003). There is reason for taking gender equality more seriously as a research area, which we wanted to contribute to by illuminating variation and change.

The data material is extensive. We have 2,805 respondents and about 700 variables (half of these are directly from the questionnaire, the other half is constructed on the basis of these). The level of detail is greater than in earlier surveys. The questionnaire and analytical framework were designed to map six dimensions (five dimensions on gender equality and one on quality of life). Much is new, but we also build on former surveys in the area, including Men in Norway 1988, The Norwegian Man 1998, ISSP 2002, the power elite survey (2003), and others. Gradually, the level of detail has increased in the surveys, with more variables and respondents. This development of the detail level in survey research is very important for research development, as has been shown e.g. in research on violence (Pape & Stefansen 2004; Haaland, Clausen & Schei 2005). This also applies to gender equality, even if this is such a broad and extensive theme, that one needs to be selective as to the details.

In our presentation, we first look at the individual results (Part 1) and then adopt a more comprehensive perspective (Part 2). In Part 1, we include a number of important background variables, such as social status and age. Ideally, all questions should have been controlled in relation to important variables and dimensions, but this was not possible within the time frame of the present study. In Part 2, we could not, either, carry out an optimal analysis of the dimensions. We therefore focused on testing possible patterns through various types of analysis. Findings that could not be reproduced using different techniques were put aside in favour of the more robust results. We used explorative multivariate analyses as support for many of the indices (using e.g. Tabachnick & Fidell 2007; Midtbø, T 2007; Skog, O 2007, Merton, R 1987 as references).

The questions were designed using informal testing, discussions (e.g. in the survey reference group), and balancing various aspects. We further developed the life-cycle design used in the 1988 questionnaire, and also attempted a more intersectional design; although we did not manage this to the extent we would have wanted (partly because we found little information on quantitative method development within intersectional research).

When we received the data, we re-coded the variables in order to make them useable in multivariate analyses. We also carried out non-response bias analysis. It shows, to put it briefly, that even if the response rate of the survey was only 41 per cent (which is now quite usual for surveys), the sample is fairly representative. It does include some imbalances – over-representation of ethnic Norwegians, some over-representation of respondents with higher education, and a certain under-representation of respondents who experienced the questionnaire as too personal and/or too demanding – but is, nevertheless, relatively normal. It might, of course, be assumed that resistance to gender equality does not emerge clearly enough, but many attitudes and political preferences correspond to a normal distribution, and we have no strong indications that this is the case. The sample is perhaps somewhat more gender-equality oriented than the population, but not very much.

In the text, we used the expression “very strong” for correlations from .300 and over (correlation coefficients), “strong” for .200 to .300, “moderate” for .120 to .200, and “weak” for .120 and down to about .070 (significance limit). In a four-field table, “strong” usually means a difference of 30 to 50 per cent between the groups, while “weak” means about 5 to 15 per cent. The choice of wording is perhaps somewhat liberal, but seems realistic. A correlation of .256 (between male gender and experiences supporting responsibility), which some might call moderate, does actually mean more than twice as many affirmative answers in one group than in the other, so the term “strong” is realistic. The same applies to many of the correlations between the gender equality dimensions. Even a correlation which is often described as extremely strong, that between education and income, is “only” very strong: .356. The conclusion is thus, when it comes to the “anatomy” of the analytical framework, that the parts that we assumed would be connected, actually do correlate well.

We have, in particular, used two multivariate techniques in our analyses: factor and regression analyses. The limitations of these (diffuse findings, misleading ranking,

etc.) are well known. We use them primarily to distinguish major patterns, and to see whether bi- or trilateral correlations hold true. In some cases we get a “technical error” which would have demanded more analyses than we had the time for. One example is the co-variation between income and couple resource distribution, which probably results in one and the same pattern (male-dominated couple resource distribution having a negative impact on gender equality practices) emerging differently among men and women (we get the impression that couple resource distribution is very significant among men, while among women, it is only their own income that counts). Possible spurious findings are mentioned in the text.

Further research might improve the analysis of the present material, and the design can be used as a starting point for new research that can provide better data. The questionnaire was, as mentioned, designed to satisfy a variety of needs, and with hindsight it is clear that some dimensions (like gender formation) and background variables (like social status) could have been better covered. Better questions can be made regarding gender equality, gender power, and other subjects, with more focus on social processes and changes. These are tasks for future research.

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Gender Equality and Quality of Life

A Norwegian Perspective

Norway recently scored as number one in the World Economic Forum's Gender gap index, of the 130 countries measured. Over the last decades, Norway and the other countries of the Nordic region have consistently held a first position, regarding global gender equality achievements. What does this peripheral but persistent development consist of? And what are the results for society as a whole, for example, in terms of quality of life, and the level of violence?

The answers, described in this report, are relevant for anyone concerned with achieving gender equality and ending male dominance in the world today. The report describes the most detailed survey of gender equality in the Nordic region so far – mapping not just attitudes, but practices and resources also. Issues like violence and rape, as well as health and friendship, are included.

The first part of the report describes main findings from the survey, ordered by life phase and topic. The second part presents a new, comprehensive gender equality analysis. The report discusses developments over time, uneven development in different areas like working life and private life, the main causes of equality development, and how it influences well-being and health.



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