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# **Men in Caring Situations**

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Report of the Austrian pre-study for the 3<sup>rd</sup> work package  
("Towards a new positioning of men") within the European research project:  
**"Work Changes Gender – New Forms of Work, New Orientations  
for Men's Lives, Opportunities for Gender Equality"**

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## 0. Summary

Within the research project co-funded by the EU "Work Changes Gender", that dealt with new labor forms and masculinity, the Austrian research team performed a *pre-study*. The following report contains a summary of the results of this pre-study which was the first step in the third work-package of the "Work Changes Gender"-project. The pre-study consisted of a first series of interviews in Austria, in order to develop a theoretical framework for the *main part of study* in Germany, Norway, Spain, Bulgaria, Israel and, again, Austria.

As a paradigmatic case of male self-concept-change, the pre-study focused on men who had taken over caring roles at least for a certain period of time. The term "paradigmatic" refers to the consideration that "caring" is mostly untypical for perceived normal life arrangements of men. It is the division of paid and unpaid labor among the genders, with men normally providing the greater part of the household income in heterosexual households with children, that led us to focus on those exceptional individuals who tried to integrate caring roles into their lives. Relevant shifts in the distribution of paid and unpaid labor between partners can also be seen as the cases where "...new forms of work and their impact on gender equality" (Technical Annex of the project proposal) are likely to appear. As a starting point, we decided to put the focus there.

14 men were interviewed, mostly fathers with caring obligations for children. The interviews were analyzed by Grounded Theory to find and develop relevant theoretical elements of what "best practice" self-concepts are like. Finally, a process model of identity change was developed.

Several major findings are reported, emphasizing caring work and social network patterns. Men in caring situations are not a homogenous group. We addressed in a strictly behavioral way, i.e. selected exceptional individuals who performed a high share of domestic and caring work. These individuals are in a caring situation due to different reasons. They differed in terms of "preparedness" and "access" to the caring situation. Some had planned it carefully and felt that this idea was concordant with their values and attitudes, whereas others did not plan it at all and had never thought of such a thing as parental leave or the like.

## 0.1. Process

Once in a caring situation, we found a process that is quite similar for all the respondents. Despite of their heterogeneity, the men in caring situations seemed to interpret their experiences in a similar way. It is of high importance that most of the men talked about stressing aspects and problems in the beginning of the caring situation. The stages of the process were called

1. Misplacement
2. Gender status insecurity
3. Reflecting masculinity drafts
4. Adapting and rearranging self-concept

Often, a state of gender status insecurity, caused by the new and unexpected experiences of the men in caring situations, was coped with by a reflection process and the rearrangement of social networks. In some cases, the process led to a de- and re-gendering phase, where similarity was not defined by sex in the first place, but by the similarity of the situation. These phases can be described in more detail as follows:

**Misplacement:** Most of the men talked about stressing aspects and problems at the beginning of the caring situation. Being in a caring situation brings along a new, unexpected situation for men. The narrations sound like "I am in the wrong place / situation". At this stage, the respondents try to keep their self-concept stable by e.g. increasing the psychological distance to women/ mothers.

**Gender status insecurity, crisis:** Experiencing "misplacement" results in insecurity, because few or no drafts for the requested behaviors seem to exist for the men. The normal, standard male self-concept-facet "working/paid labor" is reduced or not present, the situation is new and unfamiliar. If the man has not enough resources, crisis will be the result.

**Reflecting masculinity drafts:** One's situation is compared to the standard "working-man" masculinity draft. "Being different than others" becomes accepted, and the men try to interpret this in a positive way. "Normality patterns of masculinity" are defined and rejected. Especially the meaning of the term "work" is reflected, redefined, related to one's own situation. These reflections can lead to the last stage of the process.

**Adapting, rearranging self concept:** Here, the men try to integrate their domestic and caring activities into their self-concept. They rearrange their "inner and outer worlds" in a way that allows them to evaluate themselves in a positive way and that supports their self-esteem. Ascribed elements of masculinity and femininity drafts can be mixed, with the result

of an "individualized masculinity version". We have called this stage "de-gendering and re-gendering". A strict male-female-distinction is rejected and replaced by a diversity-view. One's reference group is redefined: others are persons in similar situations (men or women): "I and the other mothers...". One could say: the reference-group-criterion "same sex" is replaced by "similarity of situation".

Many conditions shape this process, some conditions are set before the man enters the caring situations (e.g. conditions related to personality), others come into effect later (e.g. social support/rejection in various fields). Every person can leave the process at some stage. The development, results or consequences of the process depend on the stage of leaving the caring situation. Throughout all the stages, in most cases there are positively evaluated experiences concerning the direct contact with the child. These positive experiences foster the maintenance of the caring situation and start to overlay the more stressing aspects.

## 0.2. Further results

- The sense of similarity as "similarity of situation" can be considered a central result. Basically it says that e.g. a man in parental leave considers himself more similar to a woman in parental leave than to a man in full-time work without caring duties. (The same could be true for women: a woman in parental leave could consider herself more similar to a man in parental leave than to a female full-time worker without caring duties.) Similar situations, combined with diversity views on both genders, can be seen as a good basis for new alliances, beyond the sex-based man-woman-dichotomy.
- Another finding is that "caring work changes gender". The majority of the respondents evaluates the caring situation as a positive phase in their lives. The last two stages of the process described above were defined as an "area of change". Here, reflections about masculinities, the meaning of the term "work", social reactions etc. clearly take place and alter the men's views to a large degree. Most of them stay "agents" who actively try to reflect and rearrange their social environment.
- "Weak ties" are of high importance. "Networking-activities" are more successful in the area of the respondent's closer relationships ("strong ties", like family, friends, closer colleagues at work etc.). The "weak ties" cannot be shaped that easily. They consist of relationships to people one does not know well, people one does not meet regularly. They can give stronger inputs, though, as the closer network is arranged in a way that is consistent with one's views, values or attitudes. The "weak ties", however, can reinforce or punish a behavior or attitude without being asked.

- There are gender-specific rejections. A direct devaluation because of a man's violation of masculinity-norms by performing domestic and caring behavior is ascribed to other men (rejection type/ perspective of others on me: "gender-traitor"). In the respondent's eyes, women's uneasiness with these exceptional males is expressed in a rather superficial acknowledgement with underlying distrust, regarding the man as an "intruder" (rejection type/ perspective of others on me: "gender-trespasser"). Both sorts of rejections play an important role in the "process of implementation.
- All in all, the caring situation turns out to be a demanding situation, especially at the beginning. Reasons are for example the aforementioned social rejection. The men report a feeling of "sitting between the chairs". What we have defined as "crisis, gender status insecurity" deserves more attention.

## 1. Overview of the research project and context of the pre-study

### 1.1. Overview from the project's homepage [www.work-changes-gender.org](http://www.work-changes-gender.org)

*"The aim of this research is to improve our understanding of the structural changes that take place in European society, especially the new forms of work and their impact on gender equality. The study shall describe the differentiated effect that new forms of work may have on the genders and define the best collective and organizational strategies for dealing with this change. The research will pay special attention to the importance that discontinuity plays in today's labor markets, whether in terms of temporary work contracts or part-time jobs. It will try to determine men's 'best' individual strategies to cope with the situation, for gender equality and quality of life.*

#### **Description of the project**

*An interdisciplinary team of different European regions - Norway, Spain, Austria, Israel, Bulgaria and Germany - will run the research from Sep. 2001 to Aug. 2004.*

*As a first step the team will determine the influence of new forms of work on gender differentiation. It will examine the impact of gender differences in the labor force participation rates, the distribution on the different forms of work and unemployment rates. **(Work package 1)***

*As a second step the research-team will clarify the institutional and organizational context of men's changes from two main angles. By shifting the focus to institutions and organizations, new institutional patterns that may have positive effects both on the equal status of the genders and on working life will be identified. These institutional patterns will include new and viable forms of work, especially new forms of work organization and new labor market adaptations. The aim is to determine the factors that play a central role in defining 'what changes men' and to describe their features. **(Work package 2)***

*A third step contains a review of the various ways in which men cope with the growing frequency of discontinuous courses of employment. Connections between organizational/ institutional structural conditions, individual background variables and self-concepts shall be identified, and describe particularly the framework for self-concepts leading to contentedness in the change. **(Work package 3)***

## **Expected results**

*The research team starts with the hypothesis that improving gender equality, the quality of life and the contentedness of individuals during such a transition will foster economic and social cohesion.*

*The present may suggest that particularly men are developing a new culture in dealing with work and private life. There will be transitions in co-habitation and marriage, changes that seem to be welcome in terms of gender relationship. On the other hand, the cause that hegemonic men concentrate even more on the job, and that the gender division home/ job gets re-institutionalized. Just as contradictory will be the effect of changing in working life on the individuals. New masculinities will become more common but the masculinity of successful businessmen and managers will still concentrate on the hegemonic positions of our cultures.*

*For the national and European social- and labor market politics it is important to realize the potentialities in combining the steering of the labor market and a policy that fosters a better quality of life for men and women in a changing world. The research team will spread relevant policy recommendations and perspectives in the framework of conferences, consultations and literature and internet."*

### **1.2. Context of the Austrian Pre-Study**

In work package 3 of the "Work Changes Gender"-project, the focus is shifted from the economic and sociological perspective to individual men. We try to find out how individuals deal with new work forms and discontinuities – situations that are becoming more frequently, and that are usually associated with precarity and uncertainty. The sequence: *education – continuous full time employment in a certain company – retiring* has survived as an ideal norm for the male working biography. At least for men, "atypical" forms of work are defined with reference to such an ideal. Moreover, this model has survived in the heads of people as the "standard" or the "former standard". Situations related to working life that don't fit this model are seen as more or less problematic.

In our project, we were not denying that these so called "flexible" working situations are often associated with insecurity and precarity. One of our most important results and recommendations is to provide resources and some new kind of social security for people, so that they can adapt better to the ongoing changes. This will be one of the main challenges for social politics in the future.

At first sight, it may seem more convincing to link today's changes on the labor market with some kind of problematic development, and there is no doubt that there are such problematic developments. But our project has started from another angle: We asked if men could find ways to use these new situations on the labor markets and these new work forms in a constructive way, and what conditions are necessary to develop these constructive variants of dealing with the changes. "Constructive", in this respect, means that a man can partly replace a work orientation by some other element in his self-definition and self-concept, **in a way that he himself evaluates in a positive way. Sich selbst positiv sehen** Such elements could be: care giving, community or political engagement, quality aspects in social contacts and partnerships, personal interests and "identity projects", health and so on.

Two starting points emerged from the previous work packages:

- The male standard work pattern (continuous, full-time employment, with the role or connotation as the main provider of the family) is affected by changes on the labor market
- Work and labor still play a central role within the "masculinity standards".

"Masculinity standards" and gender standards in general can be derived from Holter's "sprinkle system" (2003):

"The 'sprinkle system' consists of economic incentives that favour the provider or breadwinner role, rather than the caring role. It keeps men out of care-related activities, professional caregiving work as well as caregiving in private life... The sprinkle system is not just an economic system favouring the breadwinner. It is also social, cultural and psychological. It is connected to social sanctions against unmanliness, to contempt for weakness and to a struggle for 'model power'. The two basic ideological messages of the system rest on the premise of the man as the hard outgoing instrumental type – the 'go on till you drop' syndrome. One message is that men are expendable. The other is that men do not care... When a gender ideal like the breadwinner is partially realised through such a sprinkle system, including economic rewards in working life, it becomes a normative center. It persists and has a larger impact than one would otherwise expect..." (Holter 2003, p.25f.)

We want to call the basic ideological messages "men are expendable, hard, instrumental" and "men are non-carers" and their implications "masculinity standards". These standards exist outside and inside the individuals. They are built into institutions, into every day life, into gender relations within and between the genders, and function as gender-norms within subjects. For the individual itself, these standards appear as preferences and attractions, as ought and ideal selves (see below), as "what I prefer and would like". Important masculinity standards are:

- work and career are the central facets in men's self concepts, other facets are subordinate/functional to work and career
- men are expendable, hard workers
- men are non-carers (in working life)

- men are the main providers of the family and non-carers, if they live in a family – which they should
- which implies the norm of heterosexuality.

These masculinity standards clearly reflect a specific gender relation, the one of industrialized societies, with the distinction of work and home, paid and unpaid labor etc. They reflect the historical – economical – cultural organization and development of a society. It is argued that these standards are increasingly dissolving, according to economical changes, in certain "sociotopes" more than in others. Cultural, societal, economic changes, democratization and modernization may have fostered a diversification of masculinities. This diversification in turn questions the masculinity standards. Nevertheless, we argue that for most men such standards are still valid, at least as background orientation pattern, and that they are known to all men.

From a more psychological view, the masculinity standards can be seen as "ideal self" or "ought self" in a self-system that contains the perspectives:

- "what I am" (actual self)
- "what I would like to be" (ideal self)
- "what I should be" (ought self)

according to Higgins' (1989) self-discrepancy theory.

Masculinity standards exist "outside and inside" the individuals. This view allows us to introduce the concept of "identity work" by Keupp et al (1999) here. "Identity work" means that people have to co-ordinate their "inner world" and "outer world". They have to co-ordinate their needs and impulses with societal demands and guidelines. In *work package 3*, we basically intend to interview men whose work and life-situations don't correspond to these standards. We want to reconstruct these men's identity work, and find out how they deal with frictions or conflicts between masculinity standards and their actual situation; inside themselves as well as outside.

In the *pre-study*, we focused on men in caring situations, especially on men who have taken over caring responsibilities for children. Taking over a domestic/ caring role to an amount that exceeds the one of the female partner is a rather rare situation for men in heterosexual partnerships with children in our society today, as can be interpreted from e.g. statistics on parental leave taken by fathers in Austria. Integrating a caring role by men touches central aspects of masculinity as it is pre-defined in the masculinity standards of our societies. The preference system leads men into the direction of e.g. choosing technical occupations that are connected with higher income than the income of their future or current female partners.

In connection with cultural imperatives (men are non-carers, expendable), arrangements between partners are led into the direction of (modernized) breadwinner-variants, in general. Paid and unpaid labor within a partnership has to be distributed among the partners, and modernized breadwinner variants (man as main earner, woman as co-earner) often seem "logical" or rational.

Under these circumstances, the statistically most frequent case within heterosexual partnerships with children should be an arrangement where men have the *main responsibility for the household income*, and this function is the "caring-variant" that is assigned to them by this preference system. Taking over a caring role by men under the circumstances of such a preference system thus is unlikely, rare and needs to be explained. How come? What are the circumstances? What are the reasons for doing it even if so much stands against it?

On the other hand, the labor markets are changing. The "standard working biographies" of former decades are increasingly transformed to "patchwork working biographies". Those who organize their lives relying on standard-biography-expectations risk being disappointed (a point that is clearly represented in the interviewees' statements). Under certain conditions (e.g. basic prerequisites like sufficient material resources, see Keupp et al. 1999), these developments do not only mean insecurity and precarity, but can also play a role in removing people from pre-defined patterns of living, as many institutions that used to be important in former times lose their importance. Moreover, a variety of public discourses questions and erodes gender-patterns: In Austria, we have observed a supporting discussion about fathers, also about gender gaps etc. Such discourses can be used by individuals to proceed within their "identity work" (see below; most likely, different discourses may find different resonance/ response in different "sociotopes").

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Sample and instruments

Work package 3 of the "Work Changes Gender"-project is following the logic of a "best-practice"-study on the individual level. This means that representativity (in the usual sense) is not given. The examples of cases that were selected for the study are *exceptional* in terms of the interesting features, and *not average*. In statistical terms, the analogon would be an *outlier analysis*.

The pre-study was conducted with the focus "men in caring situations", i.e. men who have taken over caring roles for their children or relatives, at least for a certain period of time. This initial focus was selected because it can be seen as a "paradigmatic case" for our definition of "best practice": Men with caring roles contradict the standard distributions of paid and unpaid labor among the genders, they show a relevant development towards more gender equal arrangements in terms of behavior. As far as their working situation is concerned, they show atypical behavior, like reducing work or taking a leave and so on, so they make some use of new work forms.

12 in depth-interviews were performed, with men according to the criteria:

- pre-defined best-practice examples, i.e. caring roles;
- discontinuous working biographies: non-standard course, atypical forms of work, interruptions (parental leave and the like) were given as a function of the men's caring situations (e.g. taking parental leave means to reduce or interrupt work for a period of time). Their working biography *before* entering the caring situation was *not* a criterion for selection.

In addition, 2 persons without (private) caring roles were interviewed. They play an important role as contrasting examples.

The core-group of the interviewed men was 30-40 years old (2 men were older (47, 59 years), to have contrast examples as far as the variable "generation" is concerned). In the core group, we held "generation" quite constant, but tried to get a diverse sample in terms of *level of education and forms and fields of work*.

A qualitative approach by half-standardized guideline interviews was the main method. Additionally, a set of different instruments was developed and used, like an initial

biographical-narrative part and a social network card (EGONET-QF<sup>1</sup>). The guideline was improved in the course of the interviewing process. The final version was handed over to all partners for the main study within work-package 3.

As stated in the Technical Annex, the analysis of the interviews was done by using the Grounded Theory methodology.

## 2.2. Some Notes on Grounded Theory

The model presented here was developed by the methodology of Strauss and Corbin, as outlined in their book "Basics of Qualitative Research" (Strauss/ Corbin 1998). For readers who are not familiar with this methodology we will outline some of its features to provide a basic idea about how Grounded Theory was applied to this study.

Basically in Grounded Theory interviews (or other sources) are addressed by the strategies "**comparing**" (e.g. comparing cases, like "Why does this person tell this, while another one tells that?") and "**asking questions**" (like "Why is this the case and not the opposite?"). This leads to a procedure that is called "theoretical sampling" in Grounded Theory. "Theoretical sampling" means that special interview cases are selected, e.g. in cases of men who enter caring situations "of their own free will" and in a rather planned way, it can be asked, "Are there also men for whom the contrary is true, e.g. entering a caring situation in a "forced way" and/ or in an unplanned way?" If you are looking explicitly for such cases in order to compare the cases, you are practicing "theoretical sampling".

Within Grounded Theory, the interview data is addressed by interpreting and labeling interview passages. The labels are called "**concepts**". It is important that concepts are not derived in a descriptive, but in an interpretative way. This means that concepts are more abstract formulations of interview passages, sentences or even single terms. These interpretations can be done on the basis of one's related knowledge and literature ("theoretical sensibility").

After examination of the interviews, a huge pile of "codes"/ concepts has to be sorted out, similar things belong to similar things. In this way, even more abstract entities are derived

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<sup>1</sup> Strauss F. (2001). Qualitative Netzwerkanalyse. München: IPP. This paper has not been subjected to formal review or approval. It was made available to the Work Changes Gender team by IPP for use in this project.

which are called "**categories**". These categories contain many concepts; categories are a form of structure that is given to a set of concepts.

On top there is the label for the category, furthermore, important concepts that are frequently found in many interview cases can be seen as "sub-categories" or "**properties**" of categories.

One also tries to find **dimensions** for properties, like "more – less"-statements. These relations are considered when coding interview passages. E.g. we found out that some men talked in detail about the process that lead to the decision to enter a caring situation. They had discussed it with their partners and thought about possible future arrangements. While others did not talk about this process. That is why the concept was called "*(Re-)distribution of paid/ unpaid labor (amount of caring) was negotiated and arranged with partner*", and *dimensionalized*: results ranged from "clearly" to "not at all". The concept was later integrated to "access to caring situation", a category that contains also other concepts/ sub-categories, and "access to caring situation" in the end was seen as one sub-category of "entering the caring situation" (see below in the report).

To structure and order the "pile of codes", the "coding paradigm" provided by Strauss and Corbin can be used:

A **causal condition**<sup>2</sup> leads to a **central phenomenon** (that is embedded into a certain **context**). People show **action or interaction** to deal with this phenomenon, and some **consequences** result due to these inter-/actions. (This structure can not only be used for the whole study, but also for a detailed view on the connection between concepts on a "lower level". *Consequences* can constitute new *causal conditions* and lead the subjects to *interact* again, under new *conditions*, i.e. a **process**). For the whole study, a "*storyline*" in connection with this coding paradigm is constructed.

When we dimensionalized the most important properties of these meta-categories, we expect results like "the more – the more" or the like, and thus the relationships between these meta-categories can be explained. But it is not that straightforward, as many **intervening conditions** play a role and influence the above stated connections. *Intervening conditions* are those that foster or hinder *action/ interaction*, mitigate or alter the impact of *causal conditions* on phenomena etc., thus they have a great influence on the outcome. It is especially the *intervening conditions* that are used for "**explaining variation**" that occurs, i.e.

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<sup>2</sup> For their understanding of „causality“, see Strauss/ Corbin (1998), p. 133. We don't want to discuss it here. It should just be noted that „intersection of conditions“ (as one constructs it in the course of proceeding and developing theories or models) is the more important perspective than causality.

giving possible explanations for the special features of the connections between the meta-categories.

Grounded Theory tries to structure a range of conditions that are all (more or less) interrelated. The coding paradigm stated above is a basic variant of such a structure. But especially with the intervening conditions, one may end up with a "jungle" of conditions, and all seem to have some influence on everything else. Thus, especially with the intervening conditions, it is recommended to use only those that have a rather direct impact on the meta-categories.

Conditions can be classified: some belong to the context, others to the causal condition, others are intervening. Often, it is useful to differentiate more general conditions ("structural, or macro conditions") and more direct ones ("micro, action-related conditions"). Within a framework that is called "**Conditional/ Consequential Matrix**", it is being tried to structure all the conditions in some way, always showing "how conditions influence what", by demonstrating the connections in e.g. interview passages.

The last passage also shows a particularity of Grounded Theory, namely the interplay of inductive and deductive thinking. A theory is constructed on the basis of some data, e.g. interviews; this is an inductive aspect. But during this process ideas are formulated into hypotheses. Next the interviews (old and new ones) are examined again to find out if the hypothesis holds; this is the deductive aspect.

What is the result? We use Grounded Theory to sort our interview data, to give it some structure, so that we are able to assign certain aspects of the interviews to certain areas within a model. Of course, there are various ways to do that, and many alternative models could have been the result of this process. When we succeed with Grounded Theory, we at least get a model that is useful for our purposes. Our data is structured and can be used much more easily. If not only e.g. a typology is the result (which is a descriptive use of Grounded Theory) but also connections between categories on the basis of dimensions can be detected (which means explanation), the outcome is even more useful. The statistical "analogon" would be: When thinking in terms of "more-less"-relations (and the like) to relate concepts and categories, we are looking for a correlation model.

At the beginning, we coded the interviews in detail, sometimes only single lines or terms. The more elaborated the concept gets, the bigger are the chunks that can be taken. In the following sections, examples are given, and we only refer to categories on a quite high, abstract level. This means, we take "big chunks" of text to interpret them.

### 3. Process model: Storyline "Caring Model"

The identity work in the **caring-model** deals with a *specific* and *paradigmatic* case: **men and caring**. Here, identity work means the effort to integrate one's experiences in performing domestic and caring tasks into one's self-concept. This case is *specific* because not every individual distant from masculinity standards has to do with *caring* (e.g. a part time worker who defines himself as a writer). The case is *paradigmatic*, however, because it touches the center of an economic and societal organization of *paid and unpaid labor between the genders* and thus deserves a special focus.

#### ***The main story is:***

The men interviewed are in a caring situation for different reasons. Some have actively worked to enter this situation, for others it was an unplanned .

The men who enter the caring situation "well-prepared" name motives like, "I always wanted to do that", they want to correct problematic experiences in their families of origin *or* to take positive experiences in their families of origin as models for their current families.

Furthermore, taking the step to entering a caring situation is right or well-fitting for them.

All of them know very well that they belong to a rare group of men, and that they "deviate" from some „drafts“ that are seen as jobs that men normally do (in Austria). Some handle this "being different" better others.

As far as their future perspectives are concerned, some of them think about their situation and their job-related plans in terms of "...until the children are grown up and go their own way", others have planned to leave the current caring situation after a certain period of time to concentrate on their jobs again (say, e.g., after a period of half a year in parental leave). For the latter group the caring-phase is a "break from work", a phase to re-orientate in terms of their future occupational plans (e.g. a transition from being employed to becoming self-employed).

We have noticed different personal backgrounds (milieus) as well as "educational-occupational-job biographies" and "value/ life-goal biographies" that seem to strongly interact with and influence the men's views at present. "Children" and "family" seem to have a high value for all of the interviewed men in the core-group.

Once in the caring situation, we have found a **process** that we have called "**implementing of the caring situation into the self-concept**" (this is the "central category" in terms of Grounded Theory). It was striking that especially the early phase of this process, called "*misplacement*", was a process almost all of the men went through, irrespective of their

access to the caring situation and their *preparedness* to enter this situation (see below for details). As a whole, the described process can be interpreted as a *reflection process on masculinity/ gender* that is *based on the experiences* of the men in caring situations.

This process has to be seen in its **context**:

What the men present during the interview and how the implementing-process runs highly depends on

- the *point of time* of the caring situation: in the past, presently, a future intention
- the *content*, what has to be implemented: a phase (=project, with beginning and end) or a continuous, open-ended caring situation. (This can also be described as the men's "perspective", referring to the future course of life.)

As a **result** of the process, the men evaluated themselves and their situation. In addition, 3 types of consequences were observed that were called:

- "permanent scenario" (stable implementation of the caring situation into one's life)
- "temporary scenario" (the caring situation as a "project" with a defined beginning and end, yet with some persisting consequences)
- "iterative scenario" (a temporary scenario with the intention to enter a caring situation again)

The *process* itself, the types of *acting/ interacting* and the fostering or hindering *intervening conditions* are described below.

We have tried to link

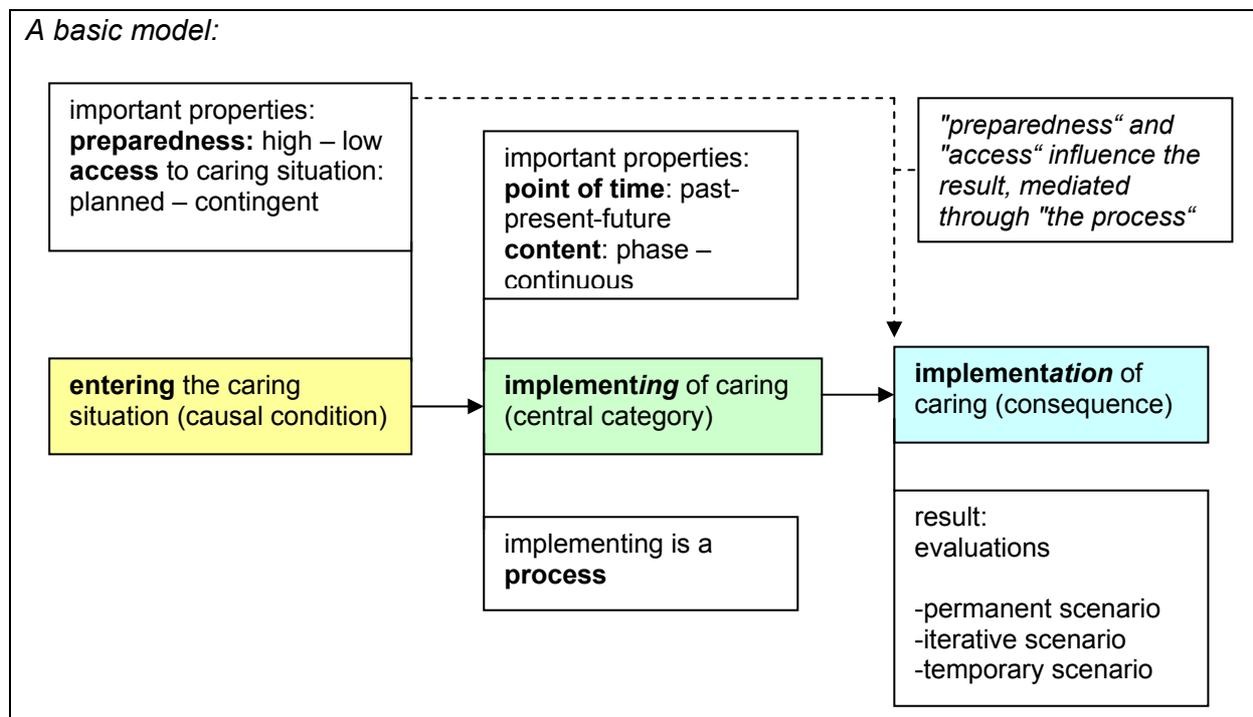
- the initial situation of the men (entering the caring situation)
- the process that follows (implementing caring)
- and the results (implementation of caring)

by using the coding paradigm of Grounded Theory, to explain what happens under which conditions.

A reduced analytical version of the storyline is:

- Under the (causal) condition of *entering a caring situation* (with a long story before),
- men *rearrange their self-concepts* by (more or less) *implementing the caring situation* (central category),
- in order to *reduce frictions/ conflicts* that result from the experiences within the caring situation, to establish a *positively evaluated self-concept* (=self-esteem)

- expressed in evaluations, a scenario, and the amount of *implementation* of the caring situation into the self-concept (consequence).



We expect the following relationships:

- If a man is entering the caring situation *well-prepared* and has *planned it well*, and furthermore has a *continuous perspective* for his caring situation, the process of implementing will result in a *stable implementation* of the caring element into the man's self concept.
- If a man is *poorly prepared* and finds himself in the caring situation *without having intended* it, and has furthermore the perspective that *this won't last long*, the process will result in a *temporary, peripheral implementation* of the caring element into the self-concept, if at all.

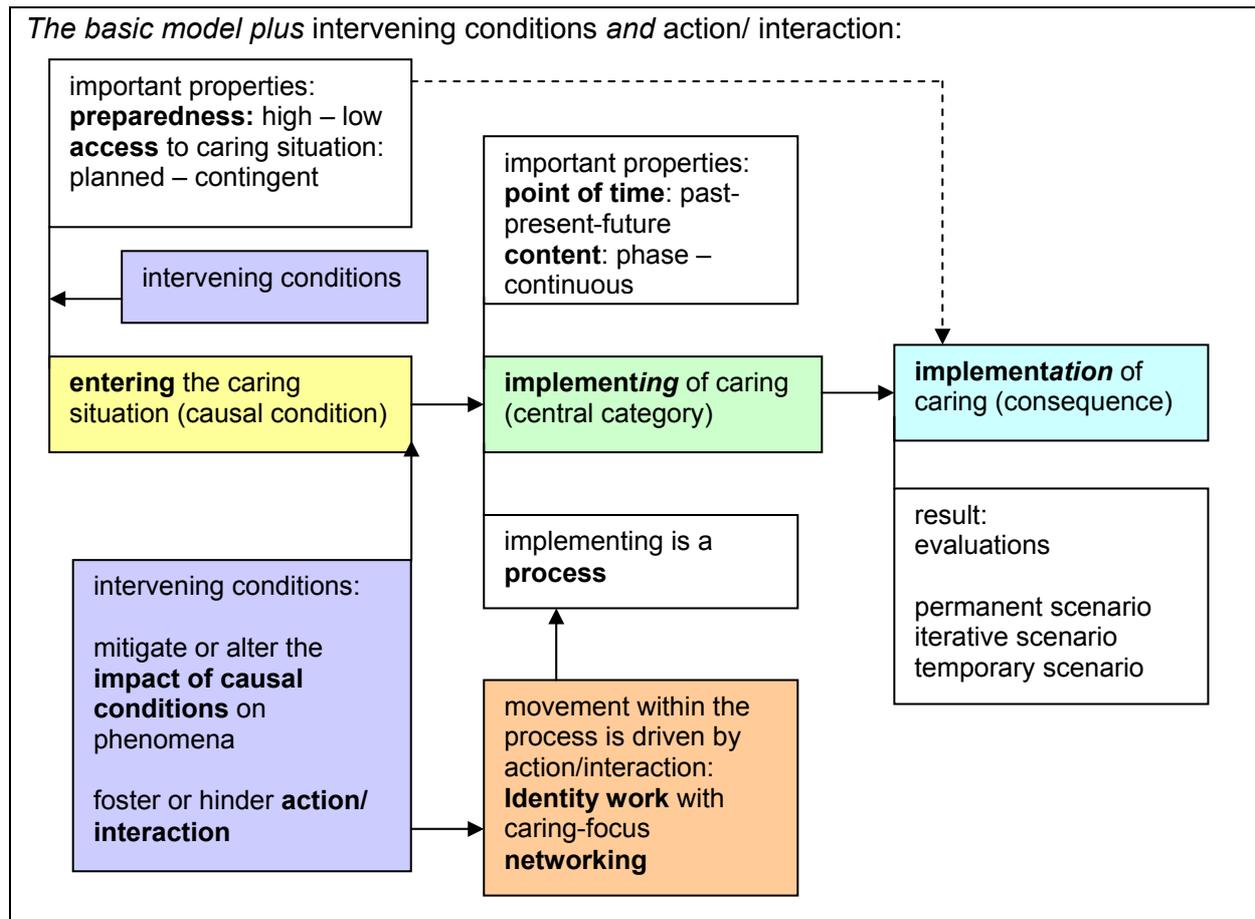
Basically, these may be the "ideal-typical poles" of what can happen. But, of course, things have shown to be much more complicated:

- Contexts may change.* Someone who has initially thought about a caring situation that lasts half a year might suddenly have to think about a continuous, open-ended caring situation (e.g., because no job to be found). This can have an influence on the further development of the implementing-process.
- Contexts are various.* In order to assess adequately what is going on, various levels of conditions can be investigated that help to explain variation and diversity. One can follow the paths of connectivity of conditions, to understand the "...complex ways in

which macro and micro conditions/consequences intersect to create a context for action/interaction“ (Strauss/ Corbin1998, p.181).

- *Intervening conditions* foster or hinder acting, or mitigate or alter the impact of causal conditions on phenomena, and have therefore great influence on the outcome. E.g. the reactions of the social network (at work, private...) can influence the reflection process about one's current situation as career, in either direction.
- People actively *reflect and act*. A dissonance-theory approach has turned out to be useful in the interpretation especially in the "unintended caring-case“ (if people behave in a way that partly contradicts their intentions, they start to adapt their attitudes in the direction of their own behavior). What Keupp et al. (1999) have called "identity work“ (=subjective efforts to fit inner and outer worlds) can be applied here: people reflect their situation, adapt to situations, and thus change. "Work changes gender“ is absolutely right also in the cases where domestic and caring labor is performed by men *who have not intended* to do so. Even if they show a back-slide into former arrangements after a period of caring, they return *changed* due to their processed experiences. This "agency-perspective“ is a central element of Grounded Theory, expressed in the "action/ interaction“-element of the coding paradigm. "Implementing of caring“ is a process, and *movement within the process* is driven by (cognitive, behavioral) **action/ interaction**.

Taking such influences into account, we can understand better why **variations** from the basic model occur, when we compare different cases.

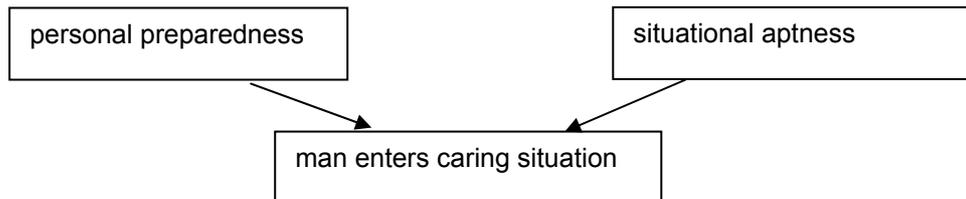


After these reflections about the general storyline, we will now turn to the model in more detail.

#### 4. Causal Condition

entering the caring situation (causal condition)

From an interactionist point of view, we expect that *personal* and *situational* factors lead to a decision like "entering a caring role". If a man is prepared to enter a caring situation and the situation is right, we expect him to do so.



But as we observed during the interviews, there are also men in caring situations who can hardly be classified as initially "prepared". In addition, in contrast to men who had worked on the situational aptness themselves, to have a suitable situational framework to enter the caring situation, for some of the men the situational context did not leave them much of a choice (e.g. lost the job, but partner worked; or partner died). Somewhere in between were men who "in principle" could imagine to take over caring tasks or had planned to be in a caring situation some day, when a situation occurred that was not planned and led them to enter the caring situation (e.g. planned to go abroad and unplanned pregnancy; or hours at work were reduced).

These differences led us to conceptualize the two properties of "entering the caring situation":

- **"preparedness to caring situation"** and
- **"access to caring situation"**.

We have clustered our interviewees<sup>3</sup> in a table with these two properties along their dimensions (see below). *Indicators* for dimensionalizing the interviewees along each dimension are given below. (Of course, the assignment of interviewees/ interview-passages to the cells in the table *relies on interpretation* and is not easily comparable to quantitative dimensionalizing. We keep comparing: each interview is seen in connection with the other interviews, which results in a "qualitative rank order" on each dimension, as a global assessment.)

<sup>3</sup> We refer to the respondents as "IPA" (=interview/ person A), "IPB"...

		<b>preparedness to caring phase</b>		
		<i>high</i>	<i>ambivalent</i>	<i>low</i>
<b>access to caring phase</b>	<i>planned</i>	IPB IPD IPF (2 <sup>nd</sup> caring-phase), IPI	IPJ	IPG
	<i>partly planned + contingent event/sit.</i>	IPH	IPA	
	<i>contingent</i>		IPF (1 <sup>st</sup> caring-phase) IPM	IPL IPO IPK

Mind that, to some extent, we have to have an eye on "distilling" a psychological situation at a ***past point of time out of the respondent's present narration*** (in the interview). This is always problematic ("construction-reconstruction debate"), but there are ways to do it, e.g. to look for details: If a respondent can *describe* past situations *in detail*, and is not only giving *arguments* and *evaluations*, a higher correspondence to the "experienced past situation" can be assumed.

The methodological contrary access to try to say something about the respondent's past would be a plain *discourse analysis* that takes the narration of the respondent as a system of signs, terms, meanings etc., not assuming that there is any connection with the respondent's situation at a past point of time. *Biographical analysis* wants to go between the poles "naively taking the respondent's answers as descriptions of the past" and "narratives as plain discourses", by differentiating the "experienced" and "narrated" biography of a respondent. This can be done by sorting out *descriptions*, *argumentations* and *evaluations* in a biographical narrative.

In terms of our model, there is a certain risk of mixing up "preparedness" with "biographical resource activation" or "discursive resource activation", which are two concepts that are discussed in the chapter "Intervening Conditions" (see below).

### **1. Preparedness to caring phase:** can be high – ambivalent - low

Indicators that can be seen in the interviews are:

1. "Standard masculinity-draft-rejection", critical attitude towards masculinity drafts/norms: high - low
2. Breadwinner-elements in self-concept: high (many) – low (few)
3. "Multi-faceted self": alternative facets to "worker" (with a high weight) in one's self concept: clearly present - no
4. "I always wanted to"-statement: clearly present – latently present – not present

5. Attitudes, values and life goals, compatible with caring: many - few
6. Skills and resources for performing caring and domestic tasks: many – few
7. Personality features related to "individuality" and "individual designing of one's life":  
high - low

As can be guessed, a high "preparedness" relies on a bunch of processes that run throughout the respondent's life (e.g. one's value- and life-goal-biography, one's experiences within work and working places that may have disappointed an interviewee and led to a rejection of total-career-plans etc.). In the general model, we should therefore use the conditional/consequential matrix of Grounded Theory to describe the interrelationships of the most important macro and micro conditions. "Preparedness" thus can be seen as a consequence of the interviewee's biography and related processes. Here, we use it as a property of the causal condition "entering the caring situation".

## **2. Access to caring behavior:** from "personally planned" to "contingent"

Definition of "contingency": "Unanticipated or unplanned events that change conditions that can call for some sort of action/interactional (problem-solving) response to manage or handle them" (Strauss/ Corbin 1998, p.181). So it becomes clear that "planned" and "contingent" become the dimensional poles for the property "access to caring situation".

Indicators:

- (Re-)distribution of paid/unpaid labor (amount of caring) was negotiated and arranged with partner: clearly - no
- Existing governmental (and other) measures: information was gathered, measures were used in a planned way: clearly – no
- Negotiations, information gathering, and preparing the framework for entering the caring situation was done *before* the "trigger situation" occurred: long before – after trigger situation

We will now give a couple of examples, as they were coded in the process of the model development (including some comments that give an impression of how we moved forward).

## 4.1. Examples for "preparedness"

### 4.1.1. "Standard masculinity-draft-rejection", critical attitude towards masculinity drafts/norms

#### preparedness / standard masculinity draft rejection / total-career draft rejection<sup>4</sup>

2003-09-17<sup>5</sup>

IPM 15/4, 29/5<sup>6</sup>

IPM: As I said, I **never was** and probably never will be a **career person**. That's why for me it's, how shall I put it? I don't need a certain profession or job to boost my ego. That's why I don't mind my job as a house-husband and single parent, I just don't panic because of this type of occupation. My two children simply need me. And because of that, well, maybe because of my education and job situation so far, so because I have, how shall I put it? **I have never been looking for self-affirmation or self-discovery in my profession** but rather in family and friends. For me, the meaning of an occupation is to earn money and to be able to afford certain things in life but other than that... Because I always knew myself if I did a good job or not.

IPM: What nowadays is called, well, a manager, I mean, I would definitely be able to do a management job. Because I'm pretty good at organizing and improvising. I've always had to do that and I'm actually pretty good at it. But what is called a **real career**, where you sometimes need to fight and intrigue, that's just not me. I think I'm **not ambitious enough** to say I need this or that job because it's better and to say I have to achieve this in the next 3 years or things like that. I'm **not that type of a person**. So, the typical career, to start a job and to get promoted and to get higher and higher. No, I don't know. That's not me. And for those jobs you need to be really tough and you gotta be prepared to sell your own grandmother and to be really nice to the ones above you and to kick the ones below you. No, I really don't think I could do that.

#### Memo:

A "total career-pattern" is rejected by IPM. He seems to attribute this rejection to personal "traits", "I am not like this". His working biography reveals that he really never went for career, rather for "McJobs". His commitment to working life as a whole seems to be low. Is there such a thing as an "initial total career rejection" versus an "acquired total career rejection", stemming from experiences in working life? Do all of the "best practices" show such a pattern? Let's have a look...

Another interesting hypothesis: the lower a man's *investment* into education, jobs and career, the easier is the implementing of other, alternative aspects into one's life. Thus, an "overload" with cultural capital could hold a man rather in his career-path. This fits well to Meuser's (1998) result that it is rather the younger skilled workers, not higher educational levels, where he finds a certain preparedness for pragmatic, gender-equal arrangements.

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<sup>4</sup> The respective headlines represent the *labels* for the interview sequences.

<sup>5</sup> Date of the coding session

<sup>6</sup> Page and line in the transcribed interview

#### 4.1.2. Breadwinner-elements in self-concept

##### preparedness / breadwinner-elements

2003-09-02

IPM 9/21

*IPM (was dismissed from company, talks about the boss)*

IPM: Well, actually he made the decision for me. I wanted to leave the company anyways. But **if you have a child and a pregnant wife** nowadays you can't just say that you don't like the job anymore and quit.

##### Memo:

The formulation "have a child and a pregnant wife" reveals a breadwinner-element in the situation of being dismissed; of course, it fits to the arrangement of the two partners, and a change was not intended (but partner died – new situation). More such elements can be found, thus: "high".

Breadwinner-elements influence the amount of implementation (consequence), if they are not modified within the "implementing"-process. IPM has the perspective of a continuous caring situation, together with the resource "mother", as his partner died. An *external attribution* of his situation is present in other parts of the interview: "I have to adjust to the circumstances, there is no other way."

.....

#### 4.1.3. Multi-facetted self

##### preparedness / multi-facetted self / self concept element: artist (clearly present)

2003-09-02

IPD 29/21

IPD: Well, I certainly didn't achieve the "financial goals".

IW2<sup>7</sup>: No, but what were the reasons why you chose that way? What was most important when you made this decision?

IPD: Well, the main reason was definitely my girlfriend. That's for sure. She gave me the chance when she said: do it! That was very important. I could never have been an **independent and self-employed artist** if my girlfriend hadn't earned enough money to afford the apartment and so on. So, she was the one who gave us financial security. That was certainly the most important reason. If I hadn't had that I might have gone to Vienna. Right. And the teachers. Especially the ones in B. [country town] and also the teachers of the master class. Those were the ones who led me on the way of **being an artist**. Right.

##### Memo:

Like in other passages in the interview, we see again that IPD has always regarded himself as an *artist in the first place*. Being an artist means personal meaning-making. He names his

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<sup>7</sup> IW1: female interviewer; IW2: male interviewer

partner and teachers as supporting resources to do something that is of high importance to him. Without this support, he would have had to go back to a work, what he wouldn't have really liked.

.....

#### 4.1.4. "I always wanted to"-statement

##### **preparedness / motives / "I always wanted to" - fatherhood (clearly present)**

2003-05-15

IPI 1/26

IPI: Well, the decision to take parental leave was, there were many reasons. **First of all I wanted to be at home to spend time with my daughter.** So, to be really there for her. I **didn't want** to be some sort of an **evening-daddy**, which is pretty hard in my job because I gotta be flexible and work a lot. It always depends on the orders and most of the time you won't be home until 8 or 9 at night and then you really don't have time to spend with your child. That was the first reason. The other was that I wanted to change my working situation anyways and become self employed, and it was the easiest way to take a year's break from work; like breaking out of the routine and do something totally different. While in parental leave, I continued my education, so I specialized on web design. The third reason was a financial one. So, my partner earned much more money than I did and that was, of course, also a reason for my decision.

##### **Memo:**

distance to "evening-daddy". IPI is looking for "balance", and is used to disequilibrium at work.

Mind: 3 points:

- I always wanted to = motive (1);
- "break from work" = motive (2);
- "She earns more than he" = intervening fostering condition to enter caring situation (3) (see below)

.....

##### **preparedness / motives / correct biographical experience**

2003-05-15

IPI 8/21

IPI: It was different in my case. There just wasn't time. Well, there was the time but you just don't take it. Some people. **That's why I wanted to do something else.** So, I learnt from it. Now that I have children I think differently about things. The lack of time or not wanting to have time for a child, I mean, for example yesterday I worked until 4 a.m. and that's not unusual. But when my daughter needs me, I'm there for her. **My situation as a child was different.** This was a decisive reason to take parental leave. Because I always had to take care of myself. Yes, since school. Also during the time I went to school.

**Memo:**

The motivation to correct an experienced deficit of parental time is clearly present in a reflected way. High connection to "I always wanted to", as can be seen in other interview passages.

.....

**4.1.5. Attitudes, values and life goals, compatible with caring**

**Preparedness / attitudes / milieu, community-values: religion/ family**

2003-08-11

IPF 26/1, 26/24

IW2: What do your parents think about the fact that you don't live your life like typical men do, that you don't work 40 hours? Paid work.

IPF: Well, at the beginning, I think, the parental leave, I think they did understand it somehow. O.k. she [partner] is still in training and should finish it. Well, yes, that was alright. So, being there for your family, I think that's – **my family is catholic and very religious**, so. I think it was the right thing for my parents. **Being there for your family** and being **responsible**, when you didn't plan to have a child, that you do what you have to do.

IPF: I think they feel that – what they taught me, that **family is the most important thing**. My parents don't feel that it's very important that I become the president of an enterprise or something like that. They were never so much into career and occupation. Breadwinning, yes. But also that family is the main thing.

**Memo:**

(more possibilities for coding. fostering intervening condition for self-concept-rearrangement, or value-life-goal-biography, in a certain milieu – this is a context process within the general model, in the sense of "masculinity draft rejection".)

To explain the supporting attitude of his parents when entering the first caring situation, IPF refers to their (=his) values (=catholic religion in this case), where the high value of "family" stems from, with a rejection of "materialism, total career". Interesting:

"Religious=conservative" would not hold in this case, here the religious family-element is transformed into a resource/ fostering intervening condition for entering/ maintaining the caring situation. "Identity work in a religious context".

.....

#### 4.1.6. Skills and resources for performing caring and domestic tasks

##### preparedness / resource-collection

2003-05-26

IPD 19/9

IW2: How did it come to the decision that you stayed at home with your son?

Because that's not so common.

IPD: Right. No. I wanted, I wanted, I just wanted that. Well, I really thought a lot about having a child or not. My girlfriend said that she wanted one pretty soon. I said: no; I don't want to deal with this responsibility. But at the same time I wanted one, too. But I wanted – maybe I thought I was too young, I don't know. And then when, when she said she wants a child now or she has to find someone else to have a child with, I said: O.k, but I also want to raise it. I want to be at least half as responsible for it as she is. But it turned out differently because I raise him since he was one year old. Because she went back to work for 75% and later 100%. And he spends much more time with me. **My mother had always been a child minder, so I grew up with toddlers.** There were always 3 or 4 other kids in our apartment. So, **it wasn't new to me.**

IW2: How did you feel about that back then?

IPD: Good. It was fun. Most of the time it was fun and varied and I also participated. I pushed the pram around. It was exciting for me.

IW2: So, you mentioned that in connection with today.

IPD: Right.

IW2: Do you see a connection?

IPD: I think so, yes. I think **that's the reason** why I do the training to be a child minder. Or one of the reasons. I just like that. And I guess it's **because of the way I grew up.**

##### Memo:

The argument goes like this: My mother had worked as child minder, I was involved, this was a positive experience. This is connected to my motivation to care for my child. This is a resource for attending the child minder education now.

.....

#### 4.1.7. Personality features related to "individuality" and "individual designing of one's life"

##### preparedness / traits / being independent

2003-05-27

IPD 28/1

IW: ...biography, concerning paid labor and profession and finding your profession, what's the most important thing for you concerning that?

IPD: The school. Definitely the school. Because I lived there by myself. That's where I learned to be independent. Right, I think I just developed to an **independent person.** And that was of course also important concerning my occupation. If I had done an apprenticeship, things would have turned out totally different. I would probably have stayed d a goldsmith. But because you also see other things in such a school than mending necklaces **I thought further.** So, that I not only want to become a goldsmith

**but more.**

**Memo:**

self-concept-elements: I have become an independent person; I can think further (than others); I want to become "more" (=artist)

.....

**preparedness / traits / being extreme**

2003-05-26

IPA 23/26

IPA: Well, my parents said that, well, hmm, I know that, I probably know that from working at the CC [=NPO], I have never heard of but that I exaggerate, well, that there's too much or not enough [speaks louder and more distinct], I really learnt that you can [speaks slower and lowers his voice], so, that I found a middle course, this middle course that I never liked, more, more, more **radical**, to a **spiritualization**, you said about that you have to go a **radical middle course** [emphasizing] right.

**Memo:**

self-description of IPA concerning traits (like "I am"): being extreme, going radical ways, rejecting compromises

.....

**2003-09-02: preparedness / traits / being different**

2003-05-16

IPI 27/24 (context: "He who would never call me a 'softie' is as different as I am":)

IW2 Different than now or different than...

IPI: No, no. **Different compared to the "mass"**. They are more like me and they would never say that. But if someone I don't know says that and softie, yes, that annoys me, I feel sorry for these people.

**Memo:**

stable self-concept element: I am different compared to "the mass"

.....

**preparedness / traits / being different**

2003-09-02

IPI 9/30 (IPI talks about idols in his youth: art, music...)

IW2: And what made this group, but people, single people what made them idols?

IPI: What?

IW: Yes. Or idols, people you admire.

IPI: Because they all **swim against the current**. So, actually all of them. Yes. Not to agree with society probably. This **was** more interesting. It is more interesting. Not just was.

.....

**preparedness / traits / becoming different (socialization)**

2003-05-27

IPD 11/18 (structural context / institutional biography (context of narration: at school, in the engravers' classes, there were mostly girls))

IW2: I see. Why?

IPD: I have no idea. It was the same with the engravers. In our class there were many more women. And when we... at this school there are also gunsmiths and toolmakers and weapon-technicians. But it's all at the same school. And when we played soccer we always lost 27:0, because they were more and therefore had more good players.

Right. Because **in our group there were different people**. Different than gunsmiths and so on. This was a different situation. There were always more women.

**Memo:**

We (the boys in the engravers' classes) were different to the gunsmiths and toolmakers (=more technical occupations; more boys in these classes). Technology meets arts at the soccer field: 27:0

.....

**4.2. Examples for "access to caring situation"**

**4.2.1. (Re-)distribution of paid/unpaid labor (amount of caring) was negotiated and arranged with partner**

**access / planned / clearly negotiated**

2003-09-02

IPI 15/30

(talks about partnership arrangement, reaction of his partner to caring motivation)

IPI: She liked this idea. **We always planned to share** the parental leave when we have a child. We both always wanted to be there for the child. At the beginning it was a little bit hard for her, because when our daughter was only a year old it hurt my girlfriend to leave her alone. That's normal. She has got to work now and I stay at home. But in the meantime, in the morning I am at home and in the evening she takes care of our daughter. That works perfectly. She was in favor of this way of dealing with it.

**Memo:**

clearly planned access, as negotiation is described. (also code for: "long before trigger situation").

(Note IPI's abstract of the chain of events/conditions: the re-arrangement or alternative new arrangement of the distribution of paid/unpaid labor between the partners has of course two sides (both partners). As Roe (1996) has pointed out, concordant values are necessary... As is described well in this case, she has to perform identity-work as well, as the traditional roles are turned around, for man and woman. Meanwhile, a different arrangement was implemented, that looks quite balanced for both.)

.....

### **access / contingent /contrary negotiation result**

2003-09-06

IPM 17/4 (partner died)

IW2: You wanted to take parental leave anyways...?

IPM: No, actually I didn't. We couldn't have, well, I was going to keep working and my girlfriend was going to stay at home.

IW2: She wanted to stay at home the whole time?

IPM: Right. That's what we **planned** to do.

IW2: You didn't think about taking parental leave part of the time?

IPM: It was a question of money. Because she would have earned less than I did. It would have been, **we had calculated it**, between 4000 and 5000 Shillings [=ca. 350 Euro] less. That's why.

IW2: There is nothing more to be said.

IPM: There is nothing more to be said. If it had been approximately the same amount of money, I wouldn't have minded to stay at home for a year.

### **Memo:**

In this case, we have a negotiation situation, that leads to the result: IPM would stay at work, his partner would care for the children. So no **re**-distribution was arranged. This is an indicator for the completely **contingent access** of IPM. But it has to be noted that the negotiation took place and IPM could have imagined "somehow" to stay with the kids for a year. Therefore, he is assigned to "contingent access", but to latent, "ambivalent preparedness" (see table).

(Note: a very common pattern: the legal framework (flat rate or relatively low parental leave benefits) plus the gender pay gap is a hindering intervening condition for "entering a caring situation".)

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### **4.2.2. Existing governmental (and other) measures: information was gathered, measures were used in a planned way**

#### **access / measure use / planned**

2003-09-06

IPB 3/18 (dental technician; was dismissed while in parental leave, talks about his former boss)

IPB: For us it was clear from the beginning that I would also take parental leave when we have children, and when my son was born **I told my boss within the period stipulated** that I am going to take parental leave, then he didn't talk to me for 3 weeks, he really didn't say a single word and then I started talking to him and asked if he was ok with what I suggested, and I said I would like to stay at home **for 1 and a half years or I would also be prepared to stay at home for half a year and to work for 2 years half time afterwards**. And after about half a year in parental leave he sent me the notice that I am dismissed, but since you can't just dismiss someone who is on parental leave he closed the dental-technicians-department, that's the way he did it...

**Memo:**

IPB is well informed about legal regulations (statutory periods, possible variants). He tells that he has arranged the parental leave with his partner, and before taking parental leave he is negotiating with his boss, IPB makes 2 possible proposals. This shows that he has planned well how to use the measures.

(Note: Here, the (small) company is a hindering intervening condition for "entering the caring situation". IPB has to work against resistance and social sanctions to realize his parental leave plan. A "worst practice" company for the second work-package...)

.....

**access / measure use / not planned**

2003-09-06

IPM 11/31 (partner died 4 months ago)

IPM: This was 4 months ago. Well, since I have the two boys **I didn't have any choice**, I had to take care of everything right from the start. And the older child isn't my own, I met my partner when she was two months pregnant with him. Right, that's why the social worker had to take care of the whole thing because now I got custody for the children. Right, actually from **it's today that I finally got custody. So, now I can** finally pick up the official certificate and then register my child at the registry office. Because up to now he only has a temporary birth certificate. And then I have to go to the authorities and the bureaucracy begins.

IW2: Getting a passport and things like that.

IPM: Right. Social security. Then I can apply for orphan's allowance at the insurance company. Tax office and child-benefit. I have to take care of all this now. Right. Well, how shall I put it? It's all because we weren't married and when you are not married in Austria you really have a hard time. Especially when things like that happen, if we had been married everything would have been transformed automatically, the custody. It would also have been much easier with the child that is not my own. But since we weren't married I'm actually treated like a stranger. I don't think a stranger is being treated differently than the natural father, so...

**Memo:**

a paradigmatic example for an unplanned measure-use...

(Note: IPM's struggles with bureaucracy – hindering intervening condition for „entering the caring situation“; measures themselves, social system: a fostering intervening condition: they allow IPM to survive in his situation; this pattern is found throughout many interviews: measures are fostering „in principle“, but the actual way to get access to them is seen as „hindering“, e.g. uninformed officers who reinforce the respondent's feeling of being something exceptional, strange...)

.....

#### 4.2.3. Negotiations, information gathering, and preparing the framework for entering the caring situation was done before the "trigger situation" occurred

##### access / planned / long before

2003-05-26

IPD 18/22

IPD: And I really wanted to care for my son. Not only because of financial aspects, I just wanted to do it. **We already made this decision before he was even born.** Even **before we even begot him**, it was all set.

##### Memo:

names early decision, before child is born; negotiated with partner

(+"I always wanted to" = high)

.....

##### access / contingent / "all of a sudden"

2003-09-06

IPM 6/28

IPM: Well, now that I experienced how fast life sometimes totally changes, where **all of a sudden you're all by yourself with two sons**, I don't think it makes much sense to plan your life concerning these things. I experienced that there is not much, well, I think, of course you can make plans but very often things turn out totally different...

##### Memo:

partner died; IPM suddenly enters the caring situation which was not planned at all (note: as a consequence, IPM starts to develop a specific view on life, unforeseeable, no use to make plans, one has to adapt etc. Crisis, as in this case, can restructure values and life goals to a massive extent. Furthermore, "survived"/ coped crises strengthen the Sense of Coherence (SOC; Antonovsky 1997), a possible explanation for the fact that "the older a person, the more s/he has lived through, the higher the SOC".)

.....

#### 4.2.4. A mixed case: caring situation planned for later, contingent situation occurs

##### access / latently planned + contingent situation

2003-07-29

IPA 22/13

IW1: Then you started working again and later you intended to quit again and

IPA: Right, but that was different.

IW1: What was your motive?

IPA: **I was sure that I wanted to do the greater part of the caring of the child.**

IW1: I mean the original motive, you actually wanted to

IPA: **To travel.** That would have been the same as the first time, I don't know.

IW1: You said you actually wanted to travel

IPA: Right, finding myself probably, I think so, but I didn't really think about, **but then it came thick and fast and at that time I was glad I didn't go on this journey, that life turned out differently.**

##### Memo:

ambivalent preparedness & contingent trigger-situation, although "latently planned"

"I always wanted to" can be assumed. The plan at this point of time was different, though:

IPA wanted to travel, but an unplanned pregnancy interfered. The child was an opportunity to realize the latently planned "caring-project", which also constitutes a "break from working life", that IPA had intended by traveling. (He had also made such breaks before, to re-orientate; we are tempted to assign Marcia et al.'s (1993) MAMA-cycles = subsequent Moratoria and Achievement-phases.

## 5. Central phenomenon / central category

**implementing** of caring  
(central category)

We have called the central phenomenon "implementing of caring" and conceptualized it as a **process**. "Process" is one of the properties of "implementing" (thus it belongs to the context of "implementing"), and it has certain stages, that we are going to describe below.

**Movement** within this process is driven by certain *types of action and interaction*. As we will see, "identity work" as defined by Keupp et al. (1999) – the fitting of inner and outer worlds of an individual – can be applied here. Namely, we have action/interaction in the sphere of the subject's self-concept ("inner world") as well as in the sphere of his social network ("outer world"), both are, of course, closely linked.

Other important properties (contexts) were the **content of implementation**, namely *what* had to be implemented: a caring-phase of a certain duration, or a continuous, open ended caring-situation (as *perspective* of the men); and the **point of time of the caring situation**: was the respondent talking about a past phase, a present, ongoing caring situation or about his future plans, for how long was the respondent in this situation (recently started, already for years...)?

Another category that could have been assigned to the *context* of the central phenomenon was the **amount of paid work** performed by the respondent during the caring situation, as this might make a big difference on how the process runs. We finally decided to assign "amount of paid work" to the "*intervening conditions*", stating that a balance of paid work and caring for the man would be rather fostering and mitigating the stressing aspects of the implementing-process, respectively "caring only, no paid labor" would accentuate the stressing aspects, especially in the beginning of the process; one has to look at for each case to assess the impact of that "intervening condition".

**In sum**, we found that a state of Gender Habitus Insecurity, caused by the new and unexpected experiences of the men in the caring situations, was coped with by a reflection process and the rearrangement of the social networks. In some cases, the process led to a de- and re-gendering stage, where similarity was not defined by sex in the first place, but by the similarity of the situation ("I and the other mothers..."). In the course of this identity-work, the useable resources of the individuals (as intervening conditions) played a central role.

ad "process": We have tried to reconstruct process stages in a *cross-sectional way*, i.e. taking narrations of a person about his past experiences as earlier stages of the process. Of course, it would be better to interview each person for more than one time, to draw inferences about processes, in a longitudinal design. Such a design could not be realized within this study.

### **The stages of the process are:**

#### ***Misplacement and distancing from women***

At this early stage, the objective is to keep the self-concept stable and to fit in the caring situation.

**"Misplacement"**: Being in a caring situation brings along new, unexpected situations for the men. The narrations sound like "I am in the wrong context/situation". An example that is frequently told by most of the respondents is that of being at the playground with the child, "alone under mothers".

**"Distancing from women"**: At this stage, the respondents try to keep their self-concept stable by **increasing the psychological distance** to women/mothers ("distance regulation" is a type of action, see below). This sometimes takes on devaluating forms, where the men stress their "genuine interest" in the child, contrary to the women/mothers e.g. on the playground who are only interested in their children in a peripheral way, chatting (and forming a group that the man does not want to belong to, see example below).

#### ***Crisis, based on Gender Status Insecurity***

Experiencing "misplacement" results in insecurity, as few or no drafts for the requested behaviors seem to exist for the men. The normal, standard male self-concept facet, "working/paid labor", is reduced or not present, the situation they are in (=caring) is new and unfamiliar. Gender Status Insecurity shows that it is quite hard to reject the "men are not in caring positions" -imperative.

Positive experiences within the situation and positive reactions from the social network foster the maintenance of caring. (It has to be noted, though, that sometimes the men's partners, too, find it hard to adapt to the situation: being the main provider for the family and not to be mother in the first place seems to be a demanding situation for women, too, requiring a fair amount of "identity work".)

In the stages "Misplacement" and "Gender Status Insecurity", the self-concept is held constant. The task would be to integrate one's caring situation into the former self concept, which is hardly possible, mainly due to social reactions (perceived social sanctions). When the men experience that the strategy "holding the self-concept constant while being in a caring situation" is not possible, they start to reflect and re-arrange their self-concept: norms are questioned, the sanctioning elements are rejected. The subsequent stages, "Reflecting masculinity drafts" and "Adapting, rearranging self-concept" thus deal with **change**. A driving force behind all these process-elements is to maintain/ establish "subjectively positively evaluated self-concept and self-concept elements" = positive self-esteem.

### ***Reflecting masculinity drafts***

The own situation is compared to the standard "working-man" masculinity draft. "Being different than others" becomes accepted, and the men try to interpret this in a positive way. "Normality patterns of masculinity " are defined and rejected. Especially the meaning of the term "work" is reflected, redefined, related to one's own situation. These reflections can lead to the last process stage:

### ***Adapting, rearranging self concept (biographical change pattern)***

Here, the men try to integrate their domestic and caring activities into their self-concept in a stable and self-esteem-securing way, on the basis of the preceding reflections. They rearrange their "inner and outer worlds" in a way that allows them to assess themselves in a positive way. However, under the conditions of doing something exceptional (=men in caring situations, at least here in Austria), a certain amount of "defense" against (perceived) social rejection remains necessary.

Of course, every person can leave the process at some stage. The results/ consequences of the process depend on the stage of leaving the caring situation, i.e. how far the process has developed.

## Types of action / interaction:

### (1) Identity work "inner world":

#### ***psychological distance regulation***

to women – femininity drafts

to men – masculinity drafts

#### ***questioning gender drafts/ reflection***

reflection activities based on (gender-) normative conflicts

e.g. thinking about norms; redefining the meaning of "work"...

#### ***de-gendering and re-gendering***

= mixing ascribed elements of masculinity and femininity drafts, with an "individualized masculinity version" as a result. A strict male-female-distinction is rejected and replaced by a "diversity-view". One's reference group is redefined: ***similar others*** = persons (men or women) in the ***same situation***. (One could say: the reference-group-criterion "same sex" is replaced by "similarity of situation".)

### (2) Identity work "outer world" = "networking":

rearranging one's social network; increasing and reducing distance (contacts, form of relationship) to other people. Objective: a non-sanctioning, supporting network should result, under the condition of "doing something different than most of the others" (conflicting with norms).

## 5.1. Examples for process

### 5.1.1. Misplacement

#### process / misplacement + distancing

2003-05-15

IPI 10/11; 10/33

IPI: I also stayed at home and at the kid's playground. At the playground, we didn't have anything to talk about. I hadn't imagined it to be that way. I thought that I would have normal conversations with the mothers. But that doesn't work.

IPI: I mean, I really tried to, but it just didn't work.

IW: The person you mentioned?

IPI: No. It was a couple of them. So, I sat there **alone amongst the mothers**.

IW: Back then you were the only man at the playground?

IPI: Exactly. I was the only one and, well, and the gendered topics, but **typical housewife existence**. That's bad. It must be so frustrating. I think they can't break out of their roles, to talk about something else. They don't have any fields of interest other than child and family. Nothing else. But they **didn't even really care about their children**. They sat at the playground and **chatted**, but never talked to their kids or showed any interest in what their children did. When their children wanted to show them something: o.k. and kept talking. The didn't praise them or showed them what to do. That was pretty shocking and still is.

#### Memo:

**context:** IPI is referring to a **past stage, at the beginning of the caring situation**. He had to implement a **phase of full-time caring**, without paid labor (just some further education, with a plan to become self-employed).

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

At the point of time of giving the interview, he is not in parental leave anymore, but works as self-employed graphic artist. The arrangement with his partner was changed; they are sharing the domestic and caring work (mornings/ afternoon), with IPI working full-time, so he has to work from noon until night.

**action/ interaction:** He increased his psychological distance to women (early stage).

Networking, in this case to integrate the other mothers into his network, was not an option under the circumstances of increased psychological distance.

.....

## **process / misplacement + distancing**

2003-05-15

IPA 27/2

IPA: **I know how it is** when you **don't want to talk** to the **women** at the playground, how you really can't stand it and there is no one else to talk to because your colleagues don't have any children or their kids are already grown up and have left home. (IPA 27/2)

### **Memo:**

**context:** IPA tells of a crisis at an **early stage** of his parental leave. At the moment of the interview, his parental leave was about to end.

**content:** his perspective was: a **phase** of caring (1 year).

He was working part-time at that time (and still is).

**access** to caring situation: latently planned + contingent trigger situation

**preparedness:** ambivalent

**action/ interaction:** IPA increased the psychological distance to women at the playground. Networking was problematic, as "the others" (persons in working contexts) were in a different situation (without kids).

("Misplacement" was found for almost all of the men, this "playground narration" was frequently used as an illustrating example in the interviews...)

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## **5.1.2. Crisis / Gender Status Insecurity**

### **process stage / Gender Status Insecurity – crisis: performance related**

2003-05-15

IPA 48/7

IW1: Do you want to tell us more or...

IPA: About how things were after I took parental leave?

IW2: Yes, what would you answer

IPA: **Lousy**

[laughing]

IPA: It got worse every day

IW2: Yes

IPA: That was really something that ran badly

IW2: Yes and in hindsight...

IPA: That was, it sounds very, but that's how it was, wanted to be **perfect** and also **competitive thinking** and also some remarks like I'm better at that and I'm good at that, I can do a better job.

IW2: Who did you compare yourself with  
IPA: For example with Y [name of partner] or also other men  
IW2: Mhm yes  
IPA: Yes and I or I'm gonna do a perfect job, well actually I'm going to be perfect at it  
IW2: And what bothered you most was because of this discrepancy  
IPA: Right  
IW2: Demanding high standards  
IPA: Right  
IW2: And what was possible  
IPA: Nobody, well, so, right, discrepancy and also not to be able to do anything, not managing anything, not managing to cook, that happened very quickly  
IW2: Mhm  
IPA: I didn't manage to cook for a while and that's  
IW2: You didn't manage to cook  
IPA: Got sick, I just prepared inedible stuff although I like cooking but now, if I don't want to cook we just don't have anything homemade, we just get some Chinese food.

**Memo:**

**context:** IPA tells of a crisis at an **early stage** of his parental leave. At the moment of the interview, his parental leave was about to end.

**content:** his perspective was: a **phase** of caring (1 year).

He was working part-time at that time (and still is).

**access** to caring situation: latently planned + contingent trigger situation

**preparedness:** ambivalent

IPA tried to apply "being perfect, performing well" (which may be categories from a working context; probably the wrong "tools" for this situation...) to the caring context (and failed). This can be assigned to Gender Status Insecurity / crisis.

.....

**process stage / Gender Status Insecurity**

2003-05-15

IPA 49/18

IPA: There are some other things as well... there is this myth that only successful men are also successful lovers and things like that, that's also interesting

IW1: So, there is such a myth

IPA: Yes, the successful man or the successful woman, like, what's it called, there is this **movie starring Michael Douglas**

IW1: Don't know it, it's about...

IPA: Success

IW1: To be defined through work and the distance to their partners makes them attractive, or

IPA: There is something about this theory, so track suits and ugly, so, well, ugly dressed, **I don't wear track suits anymore, I'm always quite nicely dressed at home.** And when I get enough of that I wear something extraordinarily nice.

IW1 and IW2: Yes

IPA: So, you can, just some means to take counter measures and

IW2: Yes

IPA: There are these **housewives who stay at home and start looking ugly**, they say

IW2: Yes

IPA: I didn't have time to shave today, I wanted to shave for you but there wasn't enough time

IW1: So, we were early, see

IPA: I wouldn't have waited

IW2: What would you answer to these questions that are not asked

IPA: Well, it does make me, **make me feel insecure** to stay at home, it's different from being away from home and having **contact to attractive men and women**, than **being at home only dealing with family members**

IW2: Mhm

IPA: So, it takes some effort to, you can't just wait for something exciting to happen when you stay at home. You need to **create some excitement** within this frame.

#### **Memo:**

**context:** IPA tells of his present situation = still in parental leave, but not for much longer.

**content:** his perspective was: a **phase** of caring (1 year) that is about to end now.

IPA is working part-time

**access** to caring situation: latently planned + contingent trigger situation

**preparedness:** ambivalent

**action/interaction: distance regulation:** In this example, insecurity is coped with by increasing distance to women, esp. housewives, and orienting on male "icons", symbolically reducing the distance to masculinity drafts by dressing well at home.

"Insecurity" here can be observed as "in-vivo-code", introduced by IPA himself. Psychological distance to "housewives" is high, in devaluations and symbolic efforts IPA tries to **avoid** the "similarity = similar situation"-cognition.

As can be seen in other interview passages as well, Gender Status Insecurity is still present. IPA is reflecting masculinity drafts to a certain extent, there are not many de- and re-gendering actions (but see below for one such code for IPA); this is how far the process went for IPA: somewhere half-way from Gender Status Insecurity to adapting and changing. Interestingly, he is planning a second parental leave for the future (which he put into reality,

we got this information later), after a phase of full-time work. As if he stopped his identity work at a certain point to return to it later on (=iterative scenario)...

.....

**process stage / Gender Status Insecurity – crisis: isolation (mind male-male-relationships)**

2003-09-02

IPD 26/19

IW2: And how did your friends and acquaintances react - you said the fact that you are a house husband didn't go down very well. How did you notice that?

IPD: Because **they didn't really want to talk to me** about these things. You know, after a while you just **don't have anything else to say** but only tell them that your son started walking and you totally freak out about it and your friends are just annoyed, but at this point it wasn't actually like that. At this time they were also pretty interested. But at some point, pretty soon, you don't have anything to talk about.

**Being the one who only sits at home.**

IW2: How did you deal with it?

IPD: **I just stopped telling them things** or didn't say much. About things at home. There were other things to talk about but most of the time I left these things out.

IW2: Right. But you weren't frustrated because of it, right?

IPD: **I was**. That too. But I rather went through a crisis typical for artists. That maybe the things I made were just crap and that I should throw it all away and things like that. I think it's normal for an artist to question yourself and your art. I had that a lot. Then **also other frustrations about not being a good father** and things like that but I think everyone feels that way sometimes. I think that's normal. When my son went through a defiant phase and nothing worked. And at this point they said: Of course, because I'm a man. The additional problem of not really being accepted.

**Memo:**

**context:**

IPD tells of a **past** situation = crisis (projects seemed to fail: artist, father).

**content:** his perspective was and is: a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation.

at the moment, he is in a training program for "day-caring" (mostly women attend this program, few men) to work in a day-care position later on; works as independent artist at home; no other paid labor.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

IPD refers to a past situation. Crises occurred, as he was not successful as an artist, and in addition, he did not feel accepted by his environment as far as parenting was concerned.

**action/interaction types: networking:** As action/ interaction pattern we see the rearrangement of the social network ("**networking**") as far as the content of communication is concerned. The reactions of his male friends when IPD tells about his experiences with his child are rather sanctioning. So he increases the distance to them by deleting a possible communication content.

.....

**Gender Status Insecurity / crisis:**

2003-09-08  
IPD 28/16

IW2: How do you deal with, how did you deal with such a crisis?

IPD: I **withdrew**. Hardly ever left the house .... for example after the exhibit, I actually didn't do anything at all except for caring for my son. I managed to do that. But other than that, I didn't see my friends anymore, or only very few. I just didn't want to see anyone.

**Memo:**

**context:**

IPD tells of a **past** situation = crisis (exhibition failed).

**content:** his perspective was and is: a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation.

at the moment, he is attending a training program for "day-caring"; works as independent artist at home; no other paid labor.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

**action/interaction types: networking:** After failure within the "artist-project" (nothing was sold at an exhibition) that is linked to a "work-concept", IPD is "networking": he reduces social contacts (to avoid "sanctions"?).

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**Gender Status Insecurity/ crisis:**

2003-09-12  
IPA 24/25

IPA: I can see my **dark side** also in the area of child-rearing, so like today, for example, I am very nervous, very nervous, I freak out, I yell, yes, I can't stand it anymore, well – it is not that extreme, but, well...

**Memo:**

**context:**

IPA tells of **present** crisis. At the moment of the interview, his parental leave was about to end.

**content:** his perspective was: a **phase** of caring (1 year).

He was working part-time at that time (and still is).

**access** to caring situation: latently planned + contingent trigger situation

**preparedness:** ambivalent

The sequence shows that this phase may constitute an excessively demanding situation for the men, where they meet their psychological frontiers.

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### 5.1.3. Reflecting masculinity drafts

#### reflecting masculinity drafts/ defending against devaluation

2003-09-10

IPI 20/2; 21/26

*(IPI is talking about reactions to his caring situation:)*

IPI: The admiring questions. Those with exclamation mark. Well, **it's not really accepted**. Well, you, well, they don't know how to deal with me. Like at the job centre. I needed something, right, after I handed in my notice. So, I went to the Employment Service, I got into the "program for business-founding". I wanted to take part in it anyways. And when I went to the job centre, this program is located at the centre. I see, what are you doing at the moment? So, you are on parental leave? Well, I don't know how we do that. **They just don't know how to deal with men who are on parental leave**. And then they make a phone call and the next one: I've got someone here who is on parental leave; how are we dealing with him? Like a woman? Well, no, that's strange. Every day life. When you go grocery shopping, and the sales woman, after you've been there 30 times they ask: Do you stay at home?

IW2: When you talk about these "admiring questions", did you feel comfortable to be asked about it or not or how did you experience that?

IPI: It wasn't bad. I didn't, **I didn't really mind that people react that way** when a man is on parental leave. It's probably just strange. I didn't imagine it to be that way. I thought that's normal nowadays. But it's different. Especially **older men** can't cope with it. I noticed that. **Apparently you lose your masculinity when you take parental leave**. I definitely noticed that.

IW2: You talked about fear. You said men are scared. What are men scared of?

IPI: Well, for example of **not being seen as men in society**. To lose credit. Like I sometimes experienced it. Or like it felt to me. Right. Like: you are the man, you have a job; a woman has to stay at home. **Like the typical model**. And here it's the other

way round. There is something wrong. That's what they are scared of. Of this discrimination.

*(IPI is talking about people who devalue him:)*

IPI: ... The **devaluation** came from people who I, well, who are not important to me. **Those who are not to judge about me.** I somehow feel **sorry** for them because they can't break out of their roles. I have experienced that for the last 25 years. It's sad but true. It really doesn't bother me. If it bothers them, well, then there's something for them to talk about.

**Memo:**

**context:**

IPI is referring to a **past stage**. He had to implement a **phase of full-time caring**, without paid labor (just some further education, with a plan to become self-employed).

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

IPI reflects his experiences in the caring situation, as far as social reactions are concerned. (Mind the first section: reactions of the officers at the Employment Service were coded as "Intervening conditions / unprepared institutions / hindering for entering/maintaining caring situation". This is a pattern that we have seen often, not only at the Employment Service but also other institutions, e.g. Public Insurance Agency).

IPI tries to become clear about these reactions and – differently to his expectations - finds that norms are implemented everywhere: institutions, men and women, the older generation of men. "Unmanliness" as a topic in his arguments can clearly be seen. Equipped with a rather high level of resources (=fostering intervening conditions; e.g. "being different", "motivation to autonomy", supporting network...) and a high preparedness, he is able to reflect the ascribed masculinity drafts in quite a clear way.

**action/ interaction:** psychological distance regulation: increasing distance to (certain) men (=“the older generation“) respectively masculinity drafts, based on:

questioning gender drafts:

is evident here, see the definition above: reflection activities based on (gender-) normative conflicts, e.g. thinking about norms

networking:

Here we can assume that contacts are reduced or the form of contacts is changed if IPI faces devaluation by someone.

Masculinity drafts are questioned and rejected, when IPI talks about "breaking out of the roles".

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## reflecting masculinity drafts / reflecting social sanctions

2003-09-10

IPD 25/8

*(IPD has been in the day-caring" course for a short time)*

IW2: How do you deal with these expectations, the expectations about the traditional male role and that you are not conforming. What do you feel about it, what are your experiences?

D: Mhm, that's, difficult. It's got nothing to do with being in this course but it's generally when I talk to women. It's strange. **I'm not always accepted**. Or rather not often. And even my own **girlfriend** started feeling strange about it. About this picture. It's difficult. **It's difficult in every area**. It's difficult with my parents, my relatives, acquaintances. But it was stronger when I stayed at home with my son. **It's hardly accepted just to be a house husband**. But now that I'm training for an **occupation** I suddenly am **accepted**. At least at the moment. Everybody is going: hey, that's great. But maybe they just don't want to hear about my stories about owners of galleries and are just happy that there is some change. Maybe. But what I'm doing right now is seen as something positive. But **just being a house husband and a part time artist wasn't, well, wasn't really accepted**, let's put it that way.

D: So, you say your girlfriend also felt strange about it. About what exactly? Maybe you...

D: The one thing **she** really didn't like was **being the only breadwinner** of the family. That I don't want to be or that I can't be responsible for it. The **traditional man is the breadwinner** of the family. And in our case **she is the one** who earns money. And it just doesn't work **like we imagined** it. It's often **too much for her**.

### Memo:

#### context:

IPD tells of a **past** situation = the situation before the education (day-caring course), as well as about the **present** situation (being in the course), and compares...

**content:** his perspective was and is: a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation.

At the moment, he is attending a training program for day-caring; works as independent artist at home; no other paid labor.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

IPD has a clear picture about what has happened: he is not only experiencing social sanctions (by women and men), he is also able to reflect them. Thus, he has also a certain critical distance to the – now - positive reactions to work in day-caring. He is clear about "the norms" and can reflect what happens when violating the norms, also to his partner.

Note: the partner's identity-work on her role as a breadwinner...

**action/interaction:** questioning gender drafts: IPD questions not only masculinity, but also femininity drafts. "Intruding" female connoted areas results in perceived sanctions from women as well as from men. So IPD was in a situation of "sitting between the chairs".

.....

*redefining the meaning of "work":*

**reflecting masculinity drafts / redefining the meaning of "work"**

2003-09-11

IPF 34/16

IW2: What would you say if a man called you a softie? like, because you don't work full time. And that you are not a real man and things like that.

IPF: I can only laugh about it because he doesn't know what he's talking about. He doesn't know me and what I'm doing. And then I'm wondering if he could do it. Well, if you think it's easy – I mean, **it's really hard work; takes a lot of effort.**

**Memo:**

**context:**

IPF can refer to a **past** situation and the **present** situation: he was in parental leave with his first child some years ago, now he is working 20 hours a week as a masseur, being the one who is mainly responsible for his children (2 meanwhile). His partner is working full-time.

**content:** his present perspective is: a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation.

**access** to caring situation 2: planned

**preparedness** for caring situation 2: high

**action / interaction: questioning gender drafts / reflection:** The tasks to be done in the domestic and caring context are defined as "hard work".

.....

**reflecting masculinity drafts / redefining the meaning of "work"**

2003-09-11

IPD 20/6

It's fun to be with kids. It's life in the literal sense. **And you can call it job.** So, I did the practical training at a day-caring facility and **she also calls it a job** but it's really fun. Yes, I just like it. I love it.

**Memo:**

**context:** IPD refers to the **present** situation: being in the day-caring course and doing practical training

**content:** his perspective was and is: a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

**action/ interaction: questioning gender drafts/ reflection:** IPD is definitely "working", doing a practical training within the day-caring course, working together with a day-mother. Despite this "outside"-view, he uses the expression "You can call it job" that shows that this is not self-evident for him, but has/had to be redefined. His model here, the day-mother, uses the term "job/work" as well, which is the more a reason for him to see it in the same way. It seems like for IPD the "fun"-element is conflicting with the equation "caring=work" to a certain extent (Like: "Something that is fun cannot be work" or the other way round; this is an older view on work (that might be linked to his milieu of origin<sup>8</sup>)).

.....

#### **reflecting masculinity drafts / redefining the meaning of "work"**

2003-09-11

IPD 21/4

IPD: As an independent artist you sometimes don't earn any money for 3 months and then you have another exhibit you work for half a year where you don't get any money. For **working hard** for half a year. It happens. There is always insecurity. But now it's different. Now I have, when one of my exhibits in February failed I started thinking about a change. It can't go on like that. There were two options. Either working as **laborer**, because I wouldn't get a job as a goldsmith. Or doing something I enjoy. And I would enjoy **working with kids**. And that was it. That was the reason why.

#### **Memo:**

##### **context:**

IPD refers to the **present** situation: being the homemaker and attending the day-caring course, with a **future** perspective: working in day-caring later on.

**content:** his perspective was and is: a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

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<sup>8</sup> As Keupp et al. (1999) point out, a post-materialistic meaning of "work" would very much include the fun-element, many of the youngsters and younger adults in their study said, "I want a job that is fun". In this view, work nowadays is becoming even more important: it is a restricted resource, not accessible for all; and people even assign higher demands to work (like "fun"), to compensate for former meaning-making institutions.

### **action / interaction: questioning gender drafts / reflection**

Here we meet the definitions from above again. There are more possibilities for him to go for paid labor, which reveals his identity-work on the term "work":

(1) working as self-employed artist: he failed to make money, various difficulties...

(2) going for a McJob: he doesn't give arguments here why he rejects this alternative. His cognitions are the following:

IPD: The other option was to work on an assembly line in a car manufactory but in this case I couldn't be there for my son anymore. Or hardly ever, like a regular father. And this is still not what I want. (IPD 33/5)

(3) working in his profession: goldsmith. But: he defines himself as an "artist", not as "goldsmith". He is "too far away" from working as a goldsmith.

(4) working in a domain that is **fun** for IPD: working with children.

### **5.1.4. Adapting, rearranging self concept (biographical change pattern)**

#### **process stage / adapting, rearranging self concept / I "as" a woman**

2003-09-11

IPF 27/13

IW2: In what way do you differ from men? From men who have a full time job?

IPF: Well, what's the difference? **There is none, I hope.** Because then it would be true what this guy said<sup>9</sup>. No, I think I just decided to be there for my family and that's what I do, 100 per cent. If I worked full time I wouldn't be able to do that. But I want to. It's not easy. Well, it's – I think **I'm in the same position as thousands of house wives.** Housework **isn't fun** and you don't get any credits for it and you don't – it is at times horrible. Really hard sometimes. **But I'm nothing else than a woman.** It's the **same for women who do that job**, it's a lot of work. It's more than a regular full time job. You don't get any credits. That's not true, you do get credits for your work but my children don't praise me everyday for the meals I cook, not even every second day. Sometimes they show their appreciation but not often. Compared to what you do and for the time you spend on it. And you don't have much time for yourself when you have a family. But, as I said, I – it's the same for women, as I said, like men who work full time – I like my 20 hour job just as much. It's great to work 20 hours. I think I found the right thing for me personally, I don't know what others feel about it. To live this way and to be lucky and be able to be a house husband and have another job. I don't think it would be good just to stay at home. So there is diversion and also what society passes on to everyone about achieving things. It's very sad that house wives don't get any credits for their work. Maybe it's wrong that you have to have a 20 hours job to get these credits. To satisfy this need. So that you say to yourself that you do achieve something in your life and others notice it. And then you can be a house husband and don't have to worry about that anymore.

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<sup>9</sup> IPF refers to a colleague who had directly told him, "You are not a real man!"

**Memo:**

**context:**

Here, IPF mainly refers to the **present** situation, being the main person in charge for his children (meanwhile 2 ).

**content:** his present perspective is: a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation.

IPF was in full-time parental leave with his first child some years ago, now he is working 20 hours a week as a masseur. His partner is working full-time.

*past:*

**access** to caring situation 1: contingent

**preparedness** for caring situation 1: ambivalent

*present:*

**access** to caring situation 2: planned

**preparedness** for caring situation 2: high

In the first section of this sequence, IPF compares his situation with the situation of other women who have the main responsibility for caring and domestic work; so this is his reference group in this context.

In the second section, he refers to his part-time work which in principle is convenient for him. In this example it becomes clear that the category „paid work: full-time, part-time, none“ can be seen as an **intervening condition**; here, "part time work“ is **fostering** for maintaining the caring situation, IPF has found an alternative that is OK for him.

"Only houseman and being at home, I don't know if this can work“: with this statement he refers to his first caring situation, when this was exactly his situation and he had a hard time with it.

A whole variety of aspects/ codings is included in the above statements. Here are the ones that refer to the process stage "adapting, rearranging self concept“, plus another interesting aspect:

**action/ interaction: de-gendering and re-gendering/ similarity means similar situation:**

IPF's reference group is the women in the same situation ("housewives“). He is finding various similarities between him and them. "Same situation“, not "same sex“ seems to be the important criterion for perceiving similarity.

**action/ interaction: de-gendering and re-gendering/ positive evaluation:** IPF presents himself (to the interviewer, to himself) as a person who has made a decision and is committed to this decision ("I said 'yes' to my family").

"reflecting masculinity drafts/ redefining the meaning of work" can also be seen:

**action and interaction: questioning gender drafts/ reflection:** In the last section of the sequence, IPF reflects the connections of "work", "performance", "social acknowledgement". He observes the satisfaction that is derived from "functioning well" for himself, and states that this is implemented into people by society. Comparing his first and second caring situation, he finds out that he cannot completely get rid of these "implants", and the combination of part-time work and caring situation turns out to be the best compromise for him. "Social acknowledgement for domestic and caring work" is an important issue in the whole sequence.

.....

#### **process stage / adapting, rearranging self concept / similar situation**

2003-09-11

IPD 33/14

IW2: Right. If you add all the hours you work, how much is it? Work at home and paid work.

IPD: I can only speak for the moment. At the moment it's 10 hours a day at home. When my son is at nursery school, I mostly sat at the table or at work. But, wait, you said at home and – ok, then it's 8 hours. Since I sit at the table for 2 hours and the rest is housework and take the boy out and yes, just the typical **homemaker or housewife** where you never get out of work. It's housework when the boy is awake. When he goes to bed and wakes up half an hour later and his foot hurts, it's still housework. So, you can't just leave and the job is done. And you can't say it's only 8 hours a day. No way.

#### **Memo:**

**context:** IPD refers to the **present** situation: being the main person in charge for child and homemaker.

**content:** his perspective was and is: a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

IPD is attending a day-caring course; self-employed artist

**action/ interaction: de-gendering and re-gendering/ similarity means similar situation:**

Housemen and housewives are IPD's reference group. They are grouped together in the above statement.

(Also, the action-type "redefining the meaning of work" is touched upon...)

.....

**process stage/ adapting, rearranging self concept/ similar situation**

2003-09-11

IPB 15/22

At the moment I'm actually unemployed, at the job centre they put me into the wrong category, at first I was entitled to get 'precarity-benefit' [=a benefit after the unemployment benefit expires, for precarious situations] and then I read in a **folder for women after parental leave** that when you get dismissed while you are on leave you are entitled to educational leave afterwards or rather I think it's called "unemployed benefit for further education".

**Memo:**

**context:**

IPB refers to the **present** situation: he was in parental leave, was dismissed from his company, is now unemployed and doing further education, he gets money from the Employment Service within a measure to qualify and reintegrate persons (after parental leave) into the labor market.

IPB is the main person in charge for child and homemaker.

**content:** his perspective is a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation. He has changed the context group: when he entered the parental leave, his perspective was a phase of caring, and then going back to his workplace.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

**action/ interaction: de-gendering and re-gendering/ similarity means similar situation**

Here we get an idea of how "accepting to be in the same situation like many women" could go. In this case, IPB scans existing measures that could be useful in **his** situation, detecting that his situation resembles the situation of **women** after parental leave who are addressed with this folder. (As we have already stated, the fact that institutions are not thinking in terms of "men and caring" is seen as a "hindering intervening condition" for entering/ maintaining a caring situation for men. Like in the folder-example: it is not a folder for persons of both genders, nor exists a folder for men in this situation.)

.....

**process stage / adapting, rearranging self concept / similar situation**

2003-09-12

IPD 30/18

You are locked into your apartment and you have to look for social contacts. It really takes some effort. If you work full time you spend the day with 20 colleagues and when you go home after work you are likely to be glad to be alone. With me it's the other way round. I go out in the evening. I'm in a chess club where I participate in the organization because I really need time with other people. You really need to work for it. That's not really a disadvantage, you just don't have a choice. It's bad if you don't do it because then you might really suffer from the **typical housewife depression**. If you stop being active in meeting people.

**Memo:**

**context:** IPD refers to the **present** situation: being the main person in charge for child and homemaker

**content:** his perspective was and is: a **continuous**, open-ended caring situation.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** high

IPD is in a day-caring course; self-employed artist

**action/ interaction: de-gendering and re-gendering/ similarity means similar situation:**

Talking about his situation, IPD names the "typical **housewife**-depression" as a danger.

**action/ interaction: networking:** Networking is seen as necessary to avoid the typical housewife depression. It is not seen as a disadvantage (compared to men in a company), but as something that just has to be done.

.....

**process stage / adapting, rearranging self concept / similar situation**

2003-07-29

IPA 52/31

IPA: It would be interesting to know what others experienced but I can't imagine that I'm an exception, that it is an individual problem, I can't imagine... it's **the same with housewives** with 2 or 3 children, it is good to have the part time job. It's great for the employer because I work hard and I like my job, I work really hard and fast. That's exactly what women tell me, that they are really good at their jobs.

**Memo:**

**context:** IPA's **present** situation: in parental leave and part-time working. The parental leave period is about to end.

**content:** his perspective was: a **phase** of caring. He is intending to go in parental leave once more with his second child (partner pregnant).

**access** to caring situation: planned + contingent

**preparedness:** ambivalent

For IPA we find few such sequences, he still seems to be more occupied with Gender Status Insecurity at the time of the interview. But to a certain extent, he is in the "changing"-regions of the process. He is leaving the caring situation soon, going back to full-time work. So this is how far the process has developed for IPA by then. He is intending to re-enter a caring situation in one year's time (probably using his experiences in the first caring situation as resource and starting point, like IPF had done...)

**action/ interaction: de-gendering and re-gendering/ similarity means similar situation**

IPA connects his situation and the situation of other men in caring situations to the situation of "housewives", especially in terms of the fostering intervening condition "paid labor" for both women and men, in this case "part time work".

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.....  
.....

## 6. Consequences

**implementation** of  
caring (consequence)

In this section, we take a look at the **consequences** of the process, labeled as "implementation of caring", i.e. the man's present self-representation/self-concept, at the point of time of the interview, as far as relevant aspects are concerned.

Relevant properties of "implementation" are:

(1) Subjective retrospective **evaluation** of the **caring situation** ("balance sheet"), with a special focus on reflections on the changing impact of the caring situation ("having changed/having been changed by caring") so far.

**dimensions:**

balance sheet positive - negative

subjectively ascribed amount of change: high - low

(2) **Self-presentation and self-evaluation:** Elements of self-concepts (facets) at present are presented by the respondents in the interviews, and evaluated. Often, *positive comparisons to the former situation or normality patterns* are made, to construct or maintain a positive self-esteem in the current situation.

The end-points of the implementing-process constitute the results, so sometimes there is a certain overlap between "implementing" and "implementation". The difference is that in the *process*, the focus lies on "what they *do* (action/interaction) to integrate the caring situation into their lives", whereas in *implementation*, the focus lies on "what has resulted, what can be seen at the moment", a sort of "self-concept-snapshot".

**dimensions:**

re-gendered elements in self concept: many - few

self-evaluation: positive - negative

The opposite side of a highly re-gendered self-concept would be a straight assignment of tasks and areas to the genders, like in the breadwinner-variant: he is responsible for the income, she for domestic and caring tasks. Here, we sometimes found a pattern that we called "**appreciation**" (as a sub-category of "re-gendered elements in self concept").

"Appreciation" means that the men say that after having seen what domestic and caring work means by having experienced it, the outcome is that they can *highly value* the work of their

partners/women. "Appreciation" is there if we find an implicit assignment of unpaid work to women, and not to oneself.

(3) In addition, we use "**scenarios**" as a summarizing category to classify the whole process.

3 scenarios were found:

- "permanent scenario" (stable implementation of the caring situation into one's life)
- "temporary scenario" (the caring situation as a "project" with a defined beginning and end, yet with some persisting consequences)
- "iterative scenario" (a temporary scenario with the intention to enter a caring situation again)

**Non-standard distributions or changes in the distribution** of paid and unpaid labor between the partners (if appropriate) are the basic properties of "scenarios", with "**amount**" as important dimension: much – little.

"Scenarios" is *not* redundant to "content of implementing: continuous – phase", although in most cases the two categories overlap. But bear in mind that the content of implementing may change: someone who enters the caring situation with a plan to leave it later on (=phase) could find himself in a continuous caring situation at some point of time (e.g. because conditions have changed, e.g. IPB who was dismissed in his parental leave). Furthermore, "scenario" rather focuses on the **present situation** of the respondent and his **plans for the future**, whereas "content of implementing" is closer to the past situations of entering the caring situation and each process stage (as context).

## 6.1. Examples for implementation

### consequences / self-presentation and self-evaluation

2003-05-27

IPD 23/27

IW2: We already touched the subject, we talked about your present work situation. So, training. You are doing a training, do you get money for it?

IPD: No, nothing at all. I have to pay 6000 Shilling [=436.- Euro] for it.

IW2: On the whole?

IPD: Right. Actually my girlfriend pays for it. **She supports me** and therefore **she also pays for my training**. But the 6000 Shilling are paid by my mother, because she doesn't mind. Otherwise she would purchase another TV or something. So that's no problem.

IW2: But you do have an income at the moment?

IPD: Right, but not a regular one.

IW2: Building models.

IPD: Right. And I make jewelry as well. Whenever there is an order. But at the moment **I don't really try to get new orders**. If there is one I do it but **I don't mind if there is none** either.

### Memo:

IPD definitely has very few breadwinner-elements in his self-concept. His partner is the breadwinner, he is co-earner, not regularly, without a high motivation to earn money with art. He has a co-earner plan, as now he is going to work in "day-caring" (professional child minder at home). He does not try to hide his exceptional situation, but speaks about it in a clear and self-confident way.

(in connection with other interview passages of IPD we assign:)

**Re-gendered elements in self concept:** many

**self-evaluation:** positive

**note:** allocation scenario (individual redistribution, cf. Kreimer 2002, see below)

.....

### consequences / self-presentation and self-evaluation / "I can do it"-experience

2003-09-08

IPF 28/15

IW2: So, you say it wouldn't be all that great if you stayed at home the whole time. You were at home for 16 months, right? If I remember that correctly.

IPF: Exactly.

IW2: How was that?

IPF: It went alright, so it worked. Because apparently **a man is also able to raise an infant**.

IW2: Your wife stayed at home for the first 6 months, right?

IPF: No.

IW2: Not at all?

IPF: Not at all. When our son got hungry, I took him to the hospital where the school

is at. I knocked at the classroom door and said we are hungry. Then we went to the other building because we weren't allowed to stay there for breastfeeding him. He was fed and we went back home. She was only breastfeeding for 4 months. **But that's the only thing you can't do, breastfeeding.** But other than that **you can do everything just as well as a mother.** That's the good thing even if people don't think you are capable of doing so. And that makes you **proud.** You just feel that it works just as well. But **you notice that some women aren't very happy about the fact that men can do it.** Because you **take it away** from them. Yes, there are **some who have a problem** with it. But it's not like you always hear: ok, take parental leave; it's good, women want you to do it. **But when you really do it it's different.** Not all women think it's ok. Because you enter this area that was, because I was one of the first who did it, I don't know, you take something away. Some of them really feel that way about it.

#### **Memo:**

IPF (tells about his first caring-situation, was 16 months in full-time parental leave with the first child (unplanned child); partner was in education (nurse), so IPF was the main person in charge for the child; at the moment, IPF is working half-day and is the main responsible for the (meanwhile) 2 children, his partner is working full time)

A "biographical change pattern" can be assigned to this narrative sequence of IPF. He has detected abilities and competencies (retrospective narration). The first caring-situation which he tells about was an experience that fostered his second entering in a caring situation.

Note that caring-sit. 1 and caring-sit. 2 have different contexts: caring situation 1 was seen as a phase by IPF. Caring situation 2 (present) is continuous.

#### **Re-gendered elements in self concept:** many

Similar others = persons (men or women) in the same situation, and a strict male-female-distinction is rejected and replaced by a "diversity-view": some women see it like this, others in another way... Reinforcing sources are: the children, some people (women or men; evident in other interview passages)

**self-evaluation:** positive. IPF is proud of his abilities. He seems to say, "I can do it" and presents it in a self-confident way.

.....

#### **consequences / evaluation of the caring situation / positive comparisons**

2003-08-19

IPM 19/7, 22/10

To experience daily how the child develops and learns new things every day and to see how they behave and what they do. I really notice it with the older one, right, **I was only at home in the evenings and at the weekends.** Yes, **then** you don't notice changes that much.

No **job** could make up for experiencing all this. No, well, of course the financial situation plays a role but I don't see it as a disadvantage at the moment.

**Memo:**

IPM contrasts two situations, he has experiences in both: the "worker", the "carer". The balance sheet shows a positive result for the "caring situation" (to be seen in other sequences as well). Thus:

**evaluation of the situation:** balance sheet positive for caring.

As IPM's partner died, he is in a **permanent scenario**, like his perspective (=“content“, the process-context) has been. His cognitive efforts go in the direction of implementing the caring situation in a stable way, although this was not intended at all. In many interview passages, we see that he is "activating resources" as much as he can to perform the necessary identity work (see chapter "Intervening Conditions/ resources").

.....

**consequences / evaluation of the caring situation**

2003-09-12

IPJ 13/4, 10/12

IPJ: Well, just sitting at home, well, I realized that I feel better when I go on outings and things with M. [=son], it's much better than just sit at home. This **passiveness**, sitting at home and M. keeps asking me things and doesn't know what to do as well. There is something **depersonalizing** about it. You **lose structure**. It's ok for a day or so. But when I stayed at home at Monday and we didn't do anything at all, not even went for a walk or play some games, that was **difficult**. It was **hard**. For M. as well. It **wasn't enough structure for him as well**. (IPJ 13/4)

IPJ: Well, this is something you realized, that I – as I said before, that to me **recognition through a job is important**. And I realized that I won't take full time parental leave... I don't know but it was important to know that **if parental leave then only part time**. It's no solution to take half a year of full time leave **like it's recommended**. But it's rather about an acceptable long time solution. It doesn't make sense to work full time and then stay at home for 6 months **with all its changes of mood**. And to then go back to a full time job. And that's what I realized back then, so, that I'm looking for **part time systems/solutions**. I felt that **I wouldn't help my children and myself by staying at home for a whole year**. (IPJ 10/12)

**Memo:**

In the interview, IPJ rather emphasizes problematic aspects within his caring situation. He is a self-employed organization-consultant and psychotherapist (note the respective discursive traces, terms: depersonalization, structure, part-time systems/ solutions...), living together with his partner and 2 kids in a small village (which he describes as a conservative environment, e.g. the reactions of neighbors). He was not in parental leave but had taken over caring tasks for 2 days a week, while reducing the amount of work. In the moment, IPJ is working full-time again, his partner is in parental leave again. They will return to the former caring-arrangement again when IPJ's partner will go back to work. Up to now, **some redistribution** of paid and unpaid labor between the partners was observed (plus

"outsourcing", as they have hired a **paid help**, that reduces domestic and caring tasks for both partners). The future arrangement will include this redistribution again.

As stated further above, IPJ belongs to the group with the most educational/cultural capital and highest investments into work and career. To a certain degree, the corresponding **economic capital** allows the actors to outsource some of the domestic and caring work by **hiring the paid help**.

Thus we code "**iterative scenario**" with some past and intended redistribution of paid and unpaid labor.

**balance sheet:** rather ambivalent for the caring situation

**subjectively ascribed amount of change by caring:** rather low

Some additional information about IPJ, as far as "process" is concerned:

**context:** IPJ refers to a **past** situation

**Content:** his perspective was: a **phase** of increased caring-activities. As stated above, he is trying to integrate "caring" to some amount as a continuous arrangement into his life.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness:** ambivalent

.....

### **consequences / evaluation of the caring situation**

2003-09-12

IPI 22/1

IW2: You earlier talked about the feminine side, a necessary change in thinking when caring for children. Could you tell me more precisely what you mean by that.

IPI: Well – how shall I put it? You get a different point of view. The whole day is totally different. Everything you do is different and **more sensitive**. Because what I call **feminine** in this respect is the **sensitivity**. It's what you **lack as the traditional man**. Because you're always **forced** to think differently. You give more time and attention to people and certain things and activities and events. You become just more sensitive. More **attentive**. You get **softer**. **Not so rigid**. That's **feminine** to me. I don't know if that's typically feminine or something. Right. Typically feminine to me is more sensitive. Men are **not allowed** to be sensitive.

IW2: So these are the expectations about qualities men ought to have. And women shouldn't have. But it's actually something that can be changed?

IPI: Yes. **It changes automatically. While I was on parental leave I changed automatically**. Not consciously, but **it just happened**. You become more sensitive. I was sensitive before but not as much. And you don't have to do anything about it, **it's automatically when dealing with children**.

**Memo:**

**balance sheet:** positive for caring (interpreted together with other passages...)

**subjectively ascribed amount of change by caring:** rather high

What could be said about IPI's *implicit* gender concept, by looking at the quotation above? IPI can assign traits to genders (he also uses some socio-biological arguments in other sequences). At the same time, he links this assignment to social pressures/ socialization ("not allowed", "typically") that can be changed in principle.

(What we see quite often in the interviews: the lines of argumentation are **inconsistent** or **insecure**. We conclude that the respondents *don't simply display* some stable concepts, attitudes, values etc., but they have to perform a different task: they have to invent self-explanations in the situation of the interview, and to do so they use "modules" or "elements" used earlier. So, they sometimes produce *contradictions* or "*zigzag*" in terms of **discourses**. The point is that they **cannot rely on some predefined ideological systems**, but have to **create their own patchwork frameworks** that fit to their situations and experiences. More "degrees of freedom", but also more work... so far the aspects that are dealing with **"intervening conditions/ macro/ discourses"**)

IPI is now working full-time as self-employed graphic artist, working at night hours as well to reconcile his work and the caring-activities before noon, where he is responsible for his child. His partner is responsible for caring in the afternoons. Thus, we see very flexible reconciling efforts by IPI, who has left the full-time caring situation and entered a full-time-working situation again.

We code "**temporary scenario**" with a rather **high amount of non-standard distribution** of paid and unpaid labor between the partners as a "persisting consequence".

Note that on a "plain data"-level, this arrangement rather looks like a "male breadwinner - female co-earner"-arrangement: IPI is full-time self-employed, his partner is part-timer. A closer look reveals a fair amount of caring activities of IPI at the moment.

.....

**consequences/ evaluation of the caring situation**

2003-09-10

IPF 33/20, 36/7

IPF: I am definitely much closer to my child. Closer than I would be if I had a job and a career. And maybe I know that, I know what I missed out on if I wouldn't do it. My career, I can – well, **I'm not going to take care of them forever. At some point**

**they will leave home. It's just like with mothers.** It's the same. And maybe I'll start my career then and go back to work. This is how I see it. And it's great, I only work 4 hours a day; I can really plan my day just like I want to, I structure my day; and what do I do with my children?

IW2: And what are your plans?

IPF: It more or less depends on the children. The older one is at grammar school and the little one is in second grade (primary school). Right, I'll keep caring for them until they don't need me anymore. And then, well, my dream, I'm not sure, certainly not at the insurance company, no, maybe I start working as a masseur. Become self-employed.

IW2: What could go wrong? Is there anything you are afraid of?

IPF: Nothing can go wrong.

### **Memo:**

Many assignments of interview passages to categories/concepts that were described earlier are possible here, like e.g. "similar others = persons (men or women) in the same situation".

Concentrating on "implementation", we code:

**evaluation of caring situation:** balance sheet positive for caring situation

**Permanent scenario:** IPF's **future plans** are connected with familiar considerations, i.e. the time when the children have grown up. Work and career plans start at that point of time. The **amount** of redistribution of paid and unpaid labor between the partners is **high**, i.e. a "role change" (male co-earner, female breadwinner/ main provider).

.....

### **consequences/ self-presentation and self-evaluation/ appreciation**

2003-05-27

IPG 18/18, 26/31

IW2: Why did you decide to do a part of the caring work in your family and quit working full time to be there for your children?

IPG: Well, on the one hand **my partner wanted me to take parental leave** partly. My partner then wanted to go back to work. But she didn't because she had the second child. This was one reason why I did it. Well, I thought about it and the other reason was that I wanted not a real **break** but, you know, **not to work full time** to have more time for **other things**. And to spend time with the **children**. And **housework**, but I still think it's great. Right. I don't know, was this the answer to the question? I forgot the question.

IW2: You said your partner wanted it. Ok, so she tells you about it. But you could also have said: no, I don't see it this way; I don't want to stay at home.

IPG: Right. Now I gotta be careful not to forget things. Well, as I said I wanted a **break**. And then I do **appreciate family-work**. I think it's very important and that's why I like doing it. The third thing is that I think it's **good for the relationship** to share it. So that the **partner also has the opportunity to have a life outside of the family frame**. I experienced that it's really **not good** if you **don't give each other this opportunity**. Like the generation before us, I know some women who first worked and then had children and never made it back to the work life again. **They were very discontent**.

IW2: What do men miss out on, when they don't do family-work? Like what you told us about before, the enrichment. That's how I understood it. And the meaning for the relationship on the other hand.

IPG: Right. Because they don't see, for me it also shows the **appreciation for each other's job**. They don't experience how **relationships to children** turn out when you can't spend much time with them. There is not such a deep understanding. But you can still do it. But many men just don't manage to. I understand that it's very difficult when you have a full time job. Apparently you can still do it. But it's a great opportunity to **intensify** it. The other thing is to be able to be more **sociable**. To see **friends** and meet **neighbors** and so on. You miss out on that too. But if you don't have time you can't help it. Right.

#### **Memo:**

**appreciation:** IPG uses the term "appreciation" frequently, referring to the what the caring and domestic phase means to him. Being in part-time-parental leave is an "investment" in the partnership, the partnership profits if the man shows his appreciation for the **woman's work** by doing some of it. Within the "appreciation pattern", a certain amount of assignment of tasks to genders ("her work, his work") remains.

Another form of *investment in the partnership* is to fulfill the partner's wish to take parental leave. The man taking parental leave then means that the woman can increase her paid work share, which increases the woman's contentedness, and as such the man's parental leave is an "indirect investment" in the partnership.

IPG is prepared to "share" things with his partner, paid and unpaid labor, and is prepared to accept redistributions, although not very "actively" intending to do so. As we have seen in other IPG-interview passages, there is a link to **religiously interpreted family values** (Catholic, elements of the Catholic community also appear in the network card), and a respective understanding of "**fairness**".

**scenario:** IPG will go back to work after this parental leave (which is also a "break from work"=Moratorium), he will reduce work from full-time to 30 hours a week. His partner is looking for a part-time job for about 10 hours a week later on.

We code "**temporary scenario**" with some intended redistribution of paid and unpaid labor.

**subjectively ascribed amount of change** by caring situation is rather low

**self-evaluation** seems not to be much touched, is positive.

Some additional information about IPG, as far as "process" is concerned:

**context:** IPG refers to the **present** situation: being in part-time parental leave, working 20 hours a week as technician. Sometimes his working hours come up to full-time work.

Content: his perspective is: a **phase** of increased domestic and caring-activities, that also included an increase of relaxing activities (gardening), repairing the house, of social contacts. To a certain extent, he is intending to integrate "domestic and caring tasks" as a continuous arrangement into his life and partnership.

**access** to caring situation: planned

**preparedness**: rather low/ ambivalent

## 7. Important notes so far

In assessing how far the **process** has developed for a person, we have to find out which stages are or were present and which were missing. That means that we also have to find out which stages are missing for a person, in order to assign how far the process has developed for a person.

		preparedness to caring phase		
		<i>high</i>	<i>ambivalent</i>	<i>low</i>
<b>access to caring phase</b>	<i>planned</i>	IPB IPD IPF (2. c-phase) IPI	IPJ	IPG
	<i>partly planned + contingent event/sit.</i>	IPH	IPA	
	<i>contingent</i>		IPF (1. c-phase) IPM	IPL IPO IPK

Coming back to our initial classification of respondents within "entering the caring-situation / properties" (see table), we saw the following rough tendencies:

In the core group, the process has developed furthest for the persons IPD, IPF, IPB, to some extent for IPI and IPM (and for IPK who is older and not in the core group). IPM and IPK are interesting cases: they were **not** assigned to the "highly prepared, planned access"-cell of the causal condition. So the relation of "preparedness/access" and "process-stages" is *not* straightforward, in the way "the higher – the further". Rather, the following connections deserve additional attention:

- These 6 persons do **not** belong to the group with the highest education or "best jobs" (These are the persons IPA, IPG, IPH, IPJ). Thus we want to interpret in the following way: a very **high investment** into cultural capital and/or career makes it more likely that one's identity-work to implement a caring situation **stalls at a certain level**. A lower commitment to "the world of work and career" may foster the process (=hypothesis).
- 5 out of the 6 persons (all except IPI), and only these 5, have "continuous caring situation" as the *content* of implementing. Thus, the men's **perspective** of being in a continuous, open-ended caring situation might be a driving force to go ahead in the process (=hypothesis). There is no "exit scenario" for these men, so the task for the

identity-work is to find a stable, self-esteem-assuring variant of implementing the caring situation into one's self-concept.

In some cases (but not always), a rather *high commitment to work and career*, respectively high investments into education and work, was concordant with an *ambivalent preparedness* for caring.

Ad "career": In general, *reflexive, not total career-patterns* were observed, i.e. a combination of one's working-life ambitions with other facets, like partnership and children.

**Misplacement/Gender Status Insecurity** was present for all men, to some extent. We think that it might turn out as a general, trans-cultural concept. Insulting the respective, country/culture/milieu-specific norms might always result in some kind of (perceived) social rejection and thus in a certain insecurity of the men, "sitting between the chairs".

Interestingly, the two persons with no direct narratives on *insecurity or misplacement*, IPL and IPG, had low *preparedness* and strict *phases as content of implementing*. IPL instead gives arguments connected to "*appreciation*", IPG strongly refers to "break from work" and emphasizes the relaxing aspects of his domestic/caring phase.

In the left, upper cell of the table, the process "implementing" seemed more demanding. It seemed that "disappointment" in the early stages of the process was higher if a man had a high motivation to the caring situation and had planned it well, and then faced social rejection and consequences for "insulting the norms". If, on the other hand, a man was mainly attributing his situation as homemaker or carer to external conditions (like: lost the job, partner died), i.e. a contingent access, and had a lower preparedness, there were no "high expectations" to the caring situation. Maybe processes like disappointment and "post-decision dissonances" play a role here.

Domestic and caring work "changes gender", mostly into a positively evaluated direction. For the men in the study, it meant struggle to be in the caring situation, no matter how they got there. In the end however, balances mostly turn out positive, due to the men's reflection and networking activities.

Dissonance theory seemed to be a fruitful perspective to a certain degree here (especially under the conditions of more contingent access and lower preparedness): "Behaving in a certain way leads to an attitudinal change, so that in the end, attitudes fit one's own behavior".

Gender Status Insecurity seemed to be mitigated by the amount of paid work the men were performing in their caring situation. The whole process seemed to be easier under this first important intervening condition.

## 8. Intervening Conditions

intervening conditions:

mitigate or alter the **impact of causal conditions** on phenomena

foster or hinder **action/ interaction**

If the process models basically hold for other countries, the **intervening conditions can be used as the level of comparisons**, and **accordance and differences** to the proposed model in this report can be observed. Especially in connection with the intervening conditions on the higher levels like the "national context", it is necessary to refer to information of the countries that are compared. If we find e.g. an impact of the parental leave regulations (in Austria) on the men's behaviors (in Austria), then it will be necessary for researchers in other countries to have some information about these regulations to compare it with the regulations of the respective country, to assess and evaluate the respective impacts.

The important point with intervening conditions is to demonstrate how they change or alter some of the main categories and what kind of impact they have. Sometimes these comparisons resemble case-studies that show how *in a special case an intervening condition had an impact*. Even more interesting are intervening conditions that occur *often* or *always*. If e.g. the men frequently refer to their "company" as an important condition in the time of entering the caring situation (either fostering or hindering), then this is of special interest because "patterns" are likely to appear. It is recommended only to go for the intervening conditions that are regarded as important because it is impossible to take *all* intervening conditions (and their interrelations) into consideration.

### 8.1. Intervening Conditions to enter the caring situation

The first set of intervening conditions we want to take a look at is the one that is situated at the point of the process **before** the man enters the caring situation. At this stage, some have a higher, some have a lower preparedness, and are more or less planning to enter a caring situation. Intervening conditions foster or hinder their decision what to do. In our sample, there are only men who did enter the caring situation; nevertheless, fostering and hindering intervening conditions on the following levels (according to the conditional matrix) can be seen:

- national: **gender pay gap** ("she earns more than he")
- national: **measures** (for active fathers, other elements of the social system)
- national: **institutions** and authorities
- organizations, departments in organizations: **workplace**

### 8.1.1. Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap in general is definitely a hindering intervening condition for "entering a caring situation". It rather has to be asked why some men enter a caring situation despite of the gender pay gap. "She earns more than he", on the contrary, is a situation that strongly fosters the decision to take over a caring role.

The following example shows the hindering nature of the gender pay gap.

#### intervening conditions/ entering/ gender pay gap/ hindering

level: national

2003-09-15

IPM 17/4

IW2: You wanted to go take parental leave anyways...?

IPM: No, actually I didn't. We couldn't have, well, I was going to keep working and my girlfriend was going to stay at home.

IW2: She wanted to stay at home the whole time?

IPM: Right. That's what we planned to do.

IW2: You didn't think about taking parental leave part of the time?

IPM: It was a question of money. Because **she would have earned less than I did**. It would have been between 4000 and 5000 Shillings [ca. 300 Euros] less. That's why... There is nothing more to be said. If it had been approximately the same amount of money, I wouldn't have minded to stay at home for a year.

#### Memo:

IPM's partner had died. The fact that the partners had calculated the household-income-difference was one hint to assign a latent, "ambivalent" preparedness to IPM. Here, we see the "household as a rational choice-making entity", which they are to some extent. Under the condition of a gender pay gap, the income difference serves at least as a convincing argument for the actors. Non-rational areas don't need to be touched in such negotiations.

.....

#### intervening conditions/ entering/ gender pay gap/ she earns more than he

level: national

2003-05-27

IPD 21/21 (context: IPD argues why he differs from most fathers, being the homemaker and not the family provider)

IPD: Well, I don't worry about the other 98%. For me it was the right way. So, I really

want to be there, I wanted to see my child grow up. This was incredibly important to me. So how others, why others don't do it, I think that's probably because they earn much more money than I do. In my case it didn't matter. What I earned by building models and as an independent artist at the beginning, it was about 7000 to 8000 Shilling [ca. 550.- Euro]. That's almost nothing. And not even regularly. At that time my girlfriend earned 3 or 4 times as much. So, it wasn't hard decision in this respect. That's how probably the 98% of men who earn much more than the women think about it; they don't want to care for their child or they just can't. It's a question of money. I bet it would be totally different if men and women got paid the same for their work. That's what I think.

**Memo:**

IPD attributes much influence of the financial situation of himself and his partner to his decision to enter the caring situation, besides such factors like his high preparedness etc. In addition, he thinks about the "gender pay gap mechanism" in connection to other men, men in general.

For another example of "she earns more than he" see e.g. an interview passage of IPI in the section: ***Causal Conditions, preparedness, "I always wanted to"-statement***

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**8.1.2. Measures**

As far as measures are concerned, we have to differentiate 2 levels:

- existence of these measures and the fact that these measures, at least in principle, refer to men as well.
- and the concrete shape of the measures, e.g. the amount of money or the fact that there is a flat rate in Austria nowadays (436.- Euro a month). A function of this flat rate is that the more a person who takes parental leave has earned, the more the household/ person loses.

**intervening conditions/ entering/ measures in principle/ fostering**

level: national  
2003-08-11  
IPF 36/2

IPF: I think it's great that, somehow – like, when you take parental leave that fathers can also do it, I think that it's possible now. I think it was some politician's good idea. And, yes, because men can do it if they are willing to; if they want to.

.....

**intervening conditions/ entering/ measures concrete/ hindering**

level: national  
2003-08-11  
IPF 24/9

IPF: But at least nowadays there are many. At the beginnings it was different, even when I went to the job centre I was seen as this alien. And when I got home I was asked strange questions: what is it like to be on parental leave and things like that. And also the income. And I answered that I have to make a living with 5700 Shilling and my wife doesn't earn anything, that's not really funny. But he said, like I said, probably there isn't more money, I answered. He said there wasn't more. But it was ok. It was alright for me, 5700 Shilling (=414 Euros) and I knew it before, I just had to accept to lose money.

**Memo:**

IPF refers to the former Austrian regulations (they were changed recently; the amount of cash benefit in this case is about the same). This is an example for "despite loss of money" someone enters a caring situation. Here, the measure doesn't have a fostering impact.

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**8.1.3. Institutions**

Institutions and authorities did not seem to be well-prepared for the case of "men and caring situations", as was already outlined in previous interview sections. This is a rather general pattern throughout most of the interviews, so we have to talk about a hindering intervening condition.

**intervening conditions/ entering/ institutions/ hindering**

level: national/ local  
2003-08-11  
IPI 20/3

IPI: Well, you, well, they don't know how to deal with me. Like at the job centre. I needed something, right, after I handed in my notice. So, I went to the .... I got into the "program for business-founding". I wanted to take part in it anyways. And when I went to the job centre, this program is located at the centre. I see, what are you doing at the moment? So, you are on parental leave? Well, I don't know how we do that. **They just don't know how to deal with men who are on parental leave.** And then they make a phone call and the next one: I've got someone here who is on parental leave; how are we dealing with him? Like a woman? Well, no, that's strange. Every day life. When you go grocery shopping, and the sales woman, after you've been there 30 times they ask: Do you stay at home? (IPI 20/3)

**Memo:**

This sequence refers to a slightly later phase than "entering", when IPI already had entered, but is at the very beginning. What is important is that the counselors at the Employment Service were not prepared to the case "men and parental leave". As can be expected, such experiences are hindering intervening conditions also for "implementing" and maintaining the caring situation.

(Note that we have also coded this sequence under "process", with a different perspective.)

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#### 8.1.4. Workplace

For our project, "workplace" is a very important intervening condition, especially in **connection with work package 2**. What we see in general is that the men's experiences with their workplaces are mixed, but never without importance.

In bigger organizations in the public sector (respectively quite near to the public sector) and NPOs, people sometimes had *relatively* good experiences, i.e. a non-hindering attitude. This was the case for IPA, IPG; and mixed experiences for IPF, IPH. In the private sector, where it was possible to look at the company's reaction to the men's plans (IPB, IPI), the experiences of the men seemed more difficult.

#### **intervening conditions/ entering/ companies/ hindering**

level: organizations

2003-09-15

IPB 3/20

IPB: ...and when my son was born I told my boss within the period stipulated that I am going to take parental leave, then he didn't talk to me for 3 weeks, **he really didn't say a single word** and then I started talking to him and asked if he was ok with what I suggested, and I said I would like to stay at home for 1 and a half years or I would also be prepared to stay at home for half a year and to work for 2 years half time afterwards. And after about half a year in parental leave **he sent me the notice that I am dismissed**, but since you can't just dismiss someone who is on parental leave he closed the dental-technicians-department, that's the way he did it, not firing, his wife or rather this girlfriend said that, it's a joint practice because a couple of days later they hired a new dental technician, so she reopened it or he reopened it a few days later.

#### **Memo:**

IPB's company is a small one, consisting of the dentist (owner), IPD as dental technician and a changing, small number of female apprentices/assistants. IPD describes his boss as "suddenly into money" and the atmosphere at the job as bad: the dentist treated the apprentices and assistants badly, insulted them, yelled at them. Conflicts arose, and IPB had thought about changing the job.

.....

#### **intervening conditions/ entering/ companies/ "not-fostering", ignoring**

level: organizations

2003-09-15

IPI 18/7

IW2: What was the reaction of the company you worked for when you took parental leave?

IPI: Well, they were confused. Said: why?

IW2: Did you work in V. (big city)?

IPI: Yes, in V. What was their reaction? First they were surprised. And later – mhm? Well, they never, not negative. No, they were just amazed. But they didn't have a negative attitude. I don't think so. Of course, you announce it – how was the time after that? I think I had to tell them two month after the child was born, so that you can't get dismissed. But that wouldn't have been a problem. Well, not in my case. After the leave I left the company. No, what did they say? No, somehow nothing much. Like when a woman takes parental leave. Not much difference.

IW2: Were they supportive of rather negative?

IPI: Supportive? No. **There is no way to be supported when you take parental leave.** That doesn't work. Doesn't happen. Maybe there is support but I can't imagine. Not negative. No, more like: ok, well. Rather **indifferent**. Just fact: a man has the right to take parental leave so. They accepted it. There wasn't much reaction. But sometimes they asked my why. Isn't it boring? And I said, no, certainly not. No, they really just said, ok, so, then do it. **Neither negative nor supportive**, didn't notice anything like that. I can't think of anything.

#### **Memo:**

IPI describes his sector, graphic art, as "exploiting one's creativity", with a high fluctuation and an extensive overtime-culture. On the other hand, under these circumstances, people are only loosely committed to the company, and vice versa. Changing companies is the norm. So no hindrances for quitting are built up. (It would probably be different with reducing working time.)

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#### **intervening conditions / entering / companies / mixed**

level: organizations

2003-08-11

IPF 12/24

IPF: But the 20 hours weren't really just 20 hours, rather 40 hours if they needed me. My employer just claimed what he needed. And when someone was sick I did their work when I was actually supposed to be at home. Then my wife was offered to work full time and therefore I couldn't keep working full time like I did most of the time. So, I talked to the personnel manager and he said 20 hours and more as required. So I told him that 20 hours is not enough but my wife was offered and now thinks about working full time. But we can't both work full time because of the children. Then he said, ok, it's 20 hours and I accepted **but not without saying once again that 20 hours and not more**. Because I told him it's impossible for us both to work full time.

#### **Memo:**

A good example to show how the areas of companies and private life interfere, can be found in this narrated negotiation situation. In principle, the new working forms (IPF works part-time, 20 hours a week; public organization) would provide the possibility for IPF to take the main responsibility for the children. The organization's usual behavior to extend the working hours of their part-timers if necessary (a sort of extra-hours-culture) speaks against it. IPF has to emphasize that he wants to work only to the amount that he is employed for.

.....

## 8.2. Intervening Conditions to maintain the caring situation

Similar intervening conditions play a role when shifting the focus to "**maintaining/ leaving the caring situation**", where they can again play a fostering or hindering role for "maintaining the caring situation". To show the complexity of the conditions within one workplace, we provide a longer passage from the IPF-interview:

### intervening conditions/ entering/ companies/ mixed

level: organizations, departments

2003-08-11

IPF 20/23

IW2: So, the attitude of your company concerning your situation. How would you summarize it? Do they support you or are they rather critical. Or indifferent.

IPF: It depends – **my personnel manager was really great**. Like, when I told him about the children and when I said I want to work 20 hours, he – he said 20 hours is ok. I just have to talk to my boss in the department about it. And he even asked me later how things are; if it's ok for me; if everything works well. And if I like it. And that was really – well, I really felt that, I mean, I don't know if he was all that honest, but. **Maybe he just wanted to know how to deal with it, like, if I was going to stay** or hand in my notice, I don't know. I can't really tell. But it was **positive anyways**. And I never got into any trouble because of him. It was really totally, well, positive – apparently he accepted it. Well, but on the whole it wasn't like that. There are **bosses in my department**. Female ones. And they – well it was **easy for the personnel manager but they had to organize it**. He only has to accept it but they didn't really know how to deal with it. Because **I wasn't flexible** anymore. That was the **problem**. My bosses are about 40 years old, they are not married and don't have any children. **So, they are career people**, job is very, very important.

And it's difficult at times to say, ok, I work part time and I take care of the children. But I understand it, because when someone is sick, but the patients have their appointments; so they have to **organize** all that. Not like the personnel manager. And that's hard at times. And they often asked me if I couldn't do this or that. And it's ok for a couple of hours if someone is sick they can ask me if I can work it out with my wife and the kids. But I often just can't come to work. And once they said I really have to come. And I think they didn't call someone else but just called me. And then there was nobody to look after the children but I had to work. This was not easy for me. In the meantime **I don't think they were happy about me, that I'm not flexible about working hours**.

IW2: So, your superiors.

IPF: The ones who have to **organize** it. But now they **accept** it. Even that I'm not always available. And – right, **it works very well**. But there's also the **colleagues**. Because it seems nice just to work 4 hours a day. My colleagues have to stay for 8 hours and I just go home after 4. And sometimes when I take off to reduce surplus hours, and leave for the weekend on Thursday, of course, **they think it's great for me**. But you know, they really don't know what else there is. When I leave work I have to hurry home and the child is on its way home from school... That's, well, a little... (IPF 20/23)

### Memo:

IPF differentiates:

- level of personnel manager (organization): he is supportive, but might also want to check out IPF's plans better...
- direct superiors (department): IPF describes them as bound to constraints of the department. They have to make time-schedules, have to find substitutes in case of illness etc. The situation is described as a conflict, especially in the beginning. IPF's "positive prejudice" that his superiors would be supportive because they are women and understand his situation turns out to be inadequate. It is not the *gender* of the superiors that influences their behavior and attitudes in the first place, but their *function* within the department, IPF interprets. Here again, we see a pattern that can be labeled as "similarity=similarity of situation/function" and not "similarity=same gender".
- colleagues (department): To IPF, they assess the amount of domestic work and the resulting constraints in a wrong way.

On the level of the organization, the company seems rather fostering.

On the level of the department, more hindrances for "maintaining the caring situation, reconciliation" appear.

.....

### 8.3. Intervening Conditions for the process "implementing the caring situation"

With the view on "maintaining/ leaving the caring situation" we have left the area in the model where the men *enter* the caring situation. "Maintaining or leaving the caring situation" is in fact a later stage within the **process**, and the **Intervening Conditions** for the process of "implementing the caring situation" is what we want to take a look at now.

For the variety of possible intervening conditions, Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.181) propose an (artificial) distinction of:

- **Macro** conditions/ consequences: Those that are broad in scope and possible impact
- **Micro** conditions/ consequences: Those that are narrow in scope and possible impact

Sometimes, other classifications are found in literature, e.g. "structural context" and "action context" etc. (e.g. Strauss/ Corbin 1996) that come quite close to the above definitions. We will use the micro-macro classification here, where "micro conditions" show a more direct connection to actions/ interactions, whereas "macro conditions" are more indirect.

In the above IPF-example, the level of "organizations" represented by the personnel manager, represents a more broad condition for IPF's efforts to reconcile job and family duties. If we had more information about this organization, we could e.g. link the personnel

manager's attitudes or behaviors to a general line of the organization, their embedded state into the "organizational landscape" that could explain why they foster such working-time-models in general and so on, i.e. a **fostering macro condition**. (*In terms of the work package 2-organisations in the Work Changes Gender project, in some cases we had this information due to the organizational reports of the best practice companies which we recruited the interviewees from.*)

On the other hand, IPF's problems are much more determined by the *conditions within the department* where he works. That is why we coded the department as a **hindering micro-intervening condition**. Somehow, the example shows what the difference between "words and practice" within organizations can look like.

Intervening Conditions, both on the micro and macro level, should help us to explain the observed **variety** when we look at our case examples; the general pattern was described in the previous chapters, where we have tried to find out what can be said in general about the men in caring situations, i.e. the process in its "ideal formulation". When we look at the cases in detail, they do not totally fit into the model. This is because so many other conditions can come in and play a certain role. Those conditions that seem important to "shape individual processes" in more cases are considered as relevant and are described below. Thus, the observed variety can be explained to a certain degree (but never completely; there are always too many conditions at work, taking *all* of them into consideration is definitely impossible).

(Mind that not only Intervening Conditions, but also changes in contexts, new planned and unplanned events, new constraints etc. can have an influence).

### **8.3.1. Micro Conditions**

Micro conditions are those that are narrow in scope and possible impact, now in terms of "implementing the caring situation into one's self-concept". As possible micro-conditions within the process of implementing we have defined:

#### **8.3.1.1. Domestic- and caring-work-related experiences**

Here, the concrete experiences of the man when performing household and caring tasks are under consideration. The way how fostering or hindering these experiences are, is dependent on the amount of "personal meaning-making" out of these activities, on the one hand. This is a cognitive task for the men: assigning a certain personal meaning to the things one does or has to do.

On the other hand, this category also includes "reinforcement" by household members, i.e. partner, children, or whoever is living in the close, "household" context of the individual. Positive reactions and personal meaning can co-vary positively: Something that is highly estimated e.g. by the partner or the children, represents a personally meaningful activity, as it is embedded into an important context: the closest private context (e.g. the family) – and vice versa.

The "reinforcement power" of the female partners or children in our core-sample, where appropriate, should not be underestimated. It is not only the positive assessment of the outcomes of the men's activities by partners or children that has a great impact, but also the acknowledgement for the man's preparedness (here: in a general sense) to behave in that way in principle. The view of some men of their caring situation as an "investment into the partnership" can be related to this aspect.

In this context, we want to mention once more the **"identity work" of the female partners**, where appropriate, although this was not so much under consideration in this study. E.g. a complete "role change" did not only put a high demand on the men's identity work, but also on the women's. Handing over the main responsibility for the children (at least for a certain time), and being the main provider like in some cases, means a conflicting situation for women as well, as norms and gender drafts would imply a different arrangement and behavior for women as well as for men. The ways in which women cope with this situation and the interplay of acknowledgement and/ or rejection between partners (=reinforcement systems) under arrangements like the ones in our sample, would be well worth another study (as well as women's reactions to reducing their paid work and entering a domestic/ caring phase, in its variety).

In general, we have observed rather positive reactions of the partners. Problematic aspects were already described, like for IPD and his partner, in their case of a complete "role change".

### **8.3.1.2. Amount of paid work performed by the man**

As we have already mentioned earlier, the "domestic and caring/ paid work ratio" played a certain role in the process of implementing. In general, a combination of paid and unpaid (domestic/ caring) work mitigated the stressing aspects of the implementing-process, whereas integrating a "pure domestic/ caring situation" was a more demanding task for the respective men.

*Some specifics have to be noted:*

Men who completely quit paid work for a while lost the respective social context, with all the relating problems. On the other hand, problems related to reconciliation or social rejection at

the workplace (in the context of "unmanliness") could not occur. *So one should expect a mitigating effect of "paid work" only in workplaces that were supportive and non-rejecting.* In case of reconciliation troubles and/ or social rejection, "paid work" could become even more stressing than "no paid work at all".

### **8.3.1.3. Reactions "outside the household": job, other living fields; the "weak ties"**

The "job" dimension in connection with "amount of paid work" was outlined above. Of course, neighbors, friends, social networks in general play an important role for the process of implementing.

To a certain degree, the men could shape their social networks (this was called "Identity work 'outer world' = networking" as a *type of action/ interaction* by increasing/ reducing distance to certain network elements. But it has to be noted that e.g. "increasing distance to my neighbors (because I got the feeling they are looking down on me because I'm homemaker)" is already a reaction (action/ interaction) to a previous situation: realizing or perceiving social rejection. The more rejecting the network elements are perceived by the man, the more demanding the process, i.e. the more networking becomes necessary, and vice versa. An extreme variant would be social isolation as a result to the necessity to increase distance to all of the existing network elements, and a lack of supportive elements to whom one could reduce the distance.

Networking in the area of the close social relationships is important to assure a stable social basis in terms of social acknowledgement. On the other hand, it is the "outskirts" of the social network(-card), the "weak ties", that we get new impulses for reflection from, think about attitudes, allow new influences, of course in either direction. The closer social environment is too familiar to provide new impulses, because it is constructed in a way to be compatible to one's behavior and self-concept, as we have argued. So, we should not underestimate the "weak ties", as the next example shows:

#### **Intervening Conditions/ micro/ reactions "outside the household": neighbors:**

2003-10-02

IPJ 23/10

IW2: Concerning paid labor, your life differs from that of most men, the majority of men working 40 hours or more a week. Right now it's not different. But a year ago it was. How do people react? Parents? Friends, acquaintances?

IPJ: How? I don't know. What was hard for me was, well I live outside of K. [big city] in the country. Not too far from town but it's really a rural area. And the people are very poor and also conservative. And I noticed that it's hard for me to stay at home the whole day living in this environment. So, when I'm not confronted with things directly and when I can't make out differences, knowing what is just subjective perception, when I don't feel well and what people say or how people react. But I noticed that it doesn't feel good when I lapse into the role of a house husband. Or that

it's strange to put the laundry on the line. The only thing that was clear from the beginning was that L. (partner) is going to do laundry and I won't. Because L. has got a very good Laundromat and she separates these things. But behind that is that I really don't want to do that and that I'm very sloppy. Maybe I managed to do it as sloppily as I could. But there are other reasons. But laundry – but when L. is not at home, I notice, it's strange for me to be in this role, to do the laundry. But it's no problem. But when I was at home full-time I noticed, there was this picture, I really had difficulties with these gender roles people have in rural areas. Then there was the time when we started building the house and a female neighbor came by to show her children the excavator. It's only women, or retired people or men who are unemployed. And children. Well, one of the female neighbors came by and said something like: well you are right, your wife has to work and you get the unemployment benefit. It took about one or two years until I talked to her again. When I noticed that it affects me. And it did affect me.

#### **Memo:**

The social environment in an area described as rural/conservative plays a hindering role for IPJ in his daily domestic performance and identity work. Mind that it is the weak ties (neighbors) that are in the center in this quotation, and that have high influence.

### **8.3.2. Macro Conditions**

Macro conditions are those that are broad in scope and possible impact, now in terms of "implementing the caring situation into one's self-concept", with a less direct connection to the categories within the process. As possible macro-conditions within the process of implementing we have defined:

- milieu
- resources
- discourses

#### **8.3.2.1. Milieu**

*Some important definitions for the subsequent sections:*

**Disposition:** *the (inside and outside) attitude of a person, the taste, the mentality, and the "ethics of everyday life".*

**Milieu:** *a group of people who have a similar disposition; they come together because of work, education or other reasons. These people develop a similar living culture. They are connected through social cohesion and a similar territory within the social room (former "stratum, class")*

**Lager:** *field of ideological and political disassociation.*

"Milieu" is a structural concept to describe the features of large societal groups. Like in its precursive concept, "class", there is a vertical dimension ("upper", "middle", "lower"), but with additional differentiations, called "dividing line of distinction and respectability" (income, reputation). In addition, there is a horizontal dimension: the "dividing line of ties to authority and self response". Milieus differ from each other in the style of living and mentality. The difference is based on the dividing line of ties to authority and self-response, followed by a specific disposition and structure of authority (from right to left, extreme distinctness on the outside – from authoritarianism to avant-gardism). This forms a spectrum of five different traditional lines of social milieus, based on traditional attitudes, which are passed from parents to their children. For Germany, a detailed description of milieus was given by Vester et al. (2001). As similar descriptions for other countries are missing, it will not be possible to use the concept of milieu in this sense in the Work Changes Gender-project. Instead, rough descriptions of the "social areas" that the interviewees *stem from* (like family of origin) should be given by concentrating on the men's respective descriptions (values, gender drafts...). Furthermore, their path through *other social areas* throughout their biography should be observed (milieu-mobility). Such a perspective is useful to explain or give hypotheses about variability, this "rough conceptualization" of "milieu" is seen as the central macro condition. A good indicator for a "social area/ milieu" are the **discourses** that the respondents use (see below), as can be derived from the definition of "milieu" above. We should expect "mixtures" of discourses for people that show milieu-mobility, the ones who have changed their milieu during their biography.

#### **8.3.2.2. Resources**

Somewhere in between macro and micro conditions there are the individual's **resources**. As Keupp et al. (1999) have pointed out, it is essential for one's identity work to have a solid basis of resources to be successful. The resources of an individual heavily rely on

- **economic**
- **social and**
- **cultural capital**

These capital-forms can be **transformed** into resources in a given situation.

Without resources, any crises or demanding situations can hardly be coped. Also Antonovsky's (1997) considerations on the Sense of Coherence and the resistance resources to cope stress and develop/ maintain health are relevant here.

For the "**high preparedness**"-group, many of the processes throughout the men's biographies don't only lead to "**preparedness**", it is exactly some of these features that

**function as resources** for the men when they perform their identity work within the implementing-process. Of high importance in this respect are:

- **Pre-reflections on gender roles, masculinity drafts** like breadwinner arrangements etc. The respective attitudes, values and life goals were developed in the course of the biography (sometimes, **life-events** like death of a relative or illness played an important role for the development of life goals, values, attitudes). The basic equipment with these resources often stems from **families/ milieus of origin**, being later *shaped by the institutional life course* of the individual, within an "agency-structure"-interaction.
- The development to a **"multi-faceted self"** results in an important resource that can be used to cope difficult situations like the implementing-process. Again, resources are needed to develop this structure, as well as to develop personality features related to "individuality" and "individual designing of one's life"
- **Skills** and resources for performing caring and domestic tasks. Sometimes, interviewees directly refer to earlier sources of their developed skills, like "having lived alone for a while during studying", or "good models at my parents' place" etc.

Even more interesting are the individuals that were assigned to the **"ambivalent/ low preparedness/ contingent access"**-group. In a similar way like the the "prepared" individuals, these men referred to resources, but they had to **activate these resources in a first step**. Here, we got the impression to observe the men's identity work in vivo, in the interview. The men seemed to **seek for "bits and pieces"** within their biographies to provide arguments that should **convince the interviewers and themselves** of the positive aspects of their situation.

We called this pattern **"biographical resource activation"**. In a way, it means that if an individual has a relatively low preparedness for entering the caring situation, there is still the chance to "make up for preparedness" within the implementing process. Here, behavior comes first, and attitudes are adapted. If not, we don't see a big chance for a subjectively well-fitting adaptation to the situation.

A sequence of the interview with IPM serves as an example (ambivalent preparedness and contingent access):

### **intervening conditions / macro / resources / biographical resource activation**

2003-10-02

IPM 4/1

IW2: Do you have brothers and sisters?

IPM: I've got one brother. He's 12 and a half years younger than me. We don't have the same father. He is my half-brother. And, well, I actually, when he was born I was 12 and a half years old. So, I learned very early how to deal with children and babies.

And that's why my situation right now is not, well, let's put it that way, so "difficult" for me compared to someone who is working on his career and never before dealt with children. Well, that would be worse for someone else I guess. And because of the first one, who is now 4 years old it wasn't new to me, a baby...

(Also see the notes above referring to IPM 19/7, 22/10, and the respective sequences:  
IPM: To experience daily how the child develops and learns new things every day and to see how they behave and what they do. I really notice it with the older one, right, I **was only at home in the evenings and at the weekends**. Yes, **then** you don't notice changes that much.

IPM: No **job** could make up for experiencing all this. No, well, of course the financial situation plays a role but I don't see it as a disadvantage at the moment.

#### **Memo:**

IPM entered the caring situation completely contingent (death of partner), equipped with only some preparedness (ambivalent-group). At a very early point in the interview, after telling his job biography and when he is asked facts about his family etc., he connects his actual caring situation with the experiences with his brother, and transforms these experiences into resources for his actual situation.

#### **8.3.2.3. Discourses**

The following section combines the macro-conditions

- milieus
- capital (economic, social, cultural)
- discourses

to a model that should help us to understand the men's argumentations and self-presentations in the interviews.

Irrespectively of their "preparedness", the men sometimes referred to arguments that they knew from some public (or other) discussion and that were useful to serve the implementing process. We thus called this *argumentative strategy* of the men "**discursive resource activation**".

On a macro level, various discourses can be identified (e.g. by analyzing public discussions...). **Discourses**, i.e. a *pattern/ structure of terms and arguments*, are offered by "**discourse providers**", e.g. a "fatherhood-discourse" can be offered by men's literature or men's groups. In the interviews, some men referred to these discourses, to explain their situation and views or to link their situation to positive, self-esteem-serving arguments; thus, they can be seen as "**discourse users**".

Discourses are public, "large-sized" social *argumentative patterns*, shared by more people. Different discourses can be compatible or incompatible; e.g. there is an "essentialist" as well

as a "constructivist" discourse on the topic "genders", that may be more academic in the first place (the way that in such discourses terms and arguments are used are called "semantics" in discourse analysis), but the discourses do arrive in broader discussions, newspapers, consulting literature, and other mass media as background patterns, although in "light versions" (and as such they appear with a specific reduced semantic). They are more or less accepted, combined and used in different "sociotopes": milieus or social networks. (Actually, the research of Meuser (1998) and colleagues in Germany on different "masculinity patterns by milieus" can also be seen under this perspective.) Individuals who use these discourses develop their own "implicit semantic".

The point is that at any time, in a specific culture, a variety of different compatible and incompatible discourses on different topics is provided, and thus – in principle - available for the individuals. The task for the individuals is to select these ones that serve their purposes in their situations best, to – again – fit "inner and outer worlds", i.e. construct their local variant of masculinity by selecting the socially shared arguments (discourses) that fit to their values and attitudes, or by shaping/fitting their values and attitudes to these discourses.

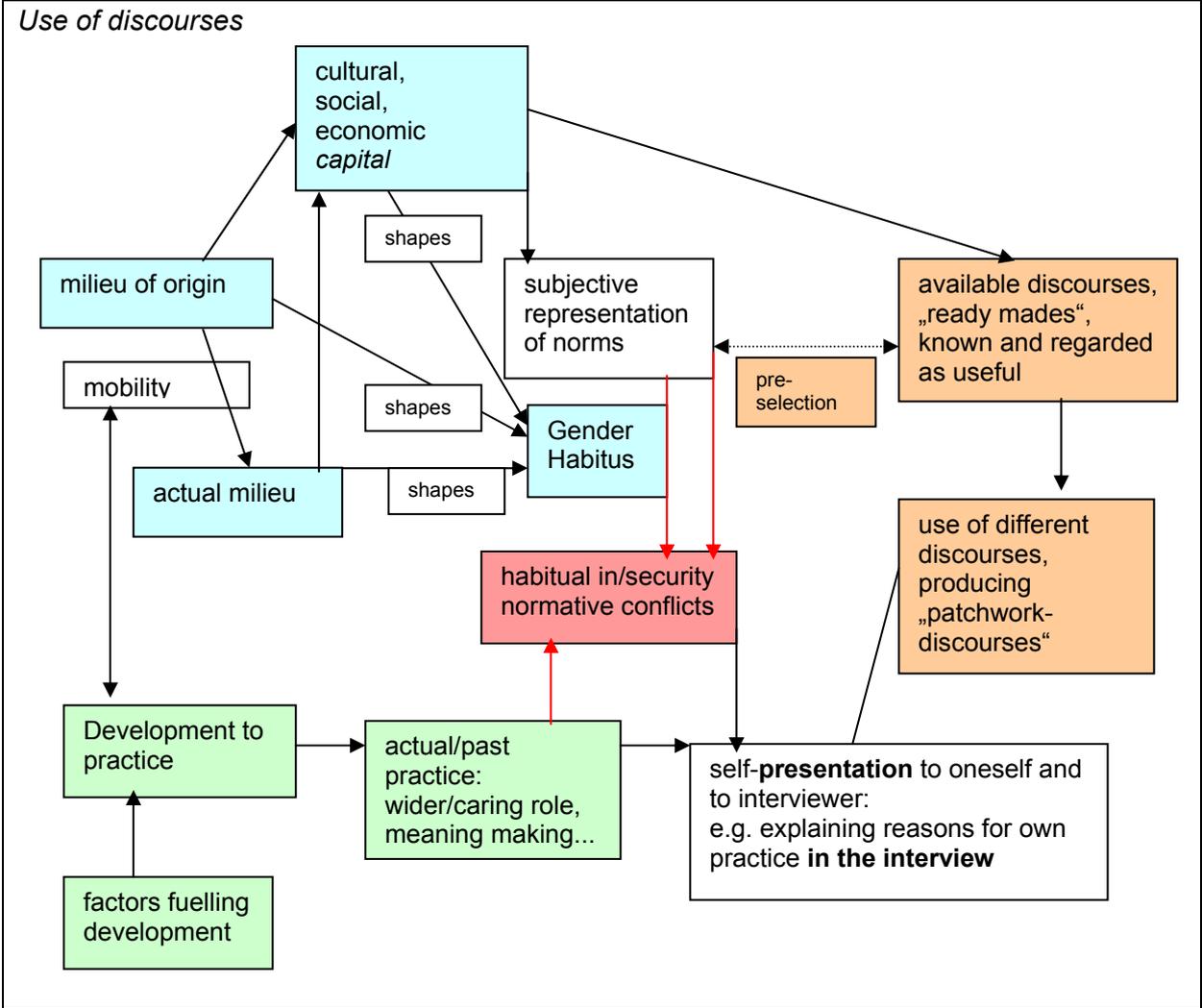
The chance to do so is *not equally distributed*. This is so because *resources are required* to get access to some discourses, e.g. high cultural capital is necessary for the more academic discursive variants. And of course a good economic basis is needed to perform identity work well: without a certain amount of social security, precarity rises for individuals in situations like the described ones. *"Without participation in the societal living process in the form of meaningful activity and fair wages, the daily identity work becomes a precarious state of floating along, that can only be called 'post-modern empire of freedom' from a very cynical point of view"* (Keupp et al. 1999, p. 277; our translation). A basic "start" equipment with economic, cultural and social capital is given to an individual by his family/milieu of origin; each can be higher or lower. On his way through life, the individual transforms the capital sorts into various kinds of resources in order to be successful in his projects. In connection with the use of available discourses, we consider **cultural capital** (education, information, variety of experiences) and **social capital** (networks and their reception of different discourses) as relevant, on an **economic basis** that gives enough security to the individual to work on his identity projects.

Discourses that are interesting in the context of the study deal with: the **genders** and **work**, topics that are connected to these aspect like **fairness/ equality**, **caring** and **fatherhood**, **partnerships**, etc. (but it cannot be said in advance what will turn out as relevant in every interview and country).

In the interviews, we found "traces of public discourses" that were used by the men to present themselves (to us and to themselves) in a positive way. We consider a collection of these discourses as an important result, because...

- the men showed us which socially shared argumentative patterns were **useful to them**, to perform their identity work within the implementing process, which means an "evaluation" of the "usability" of these discourses
- relevant "**cultural changes**" become visible by concentrating on discourses/ by looking at the respondent's "discursive work", comparing a (theoretical) state of **unquestioned, "habitual" masculinity** with the "**patchwork of arguments**" given by the respondents
- the use of discourses partly relies on the individual's cultural and social **capital**, so distributional aspects are touched. (E.g. to understand and use the discourse on the genders within Gender Mainstreaming requires quite high education / in addition, there is nearly no reception outside "insider" circles – political actors should improve this situation)
- as a practical **policy recommendation**, we would be able to give directions in which ways the topic "men and caring" (but also within the general model: "male diversity") should be discussed by policy-makers, to provide more useful "tools" for individuals in such situations
- we expect the *available* and *known* discourses to **differ from country to country**, so the "traces" of these discourses in the interviews should differ as well; this would be an interesting comparison.

The following diagram the ideas from above are **summarized**, focusing on the problems and stressing aspects of the implementing-process (Gender Status Insecurity). Gender Status Insecurity is seen as a **normative conflict** between masculinity norms (or the "ought self", (Higgins 1989); norms/disposition have a structural, milieu-specific background), and one's (caring) situation or practice that is not consistent with these norms. (In the interviews, we directly touch these "hot areas", e.g. asking, "What would you say if someone calls you a softie" and other questions.) The men try to explain their decisions and their practice, to us and to themselves, and try to "neutralize" the normative conflict. To do so, they use various arguments, under which **references to discourses** is one argumentative strategy. The ability to use a discourse (in either direction: accepting it or rejecting it; to take some position towards it) can be helpful within the implementing process, to stabilize one's position or self-esteem under the circumstances of a normative conflict.



## Examples for "use of discourses":

"Use of discourses" was already discussed in various sections above. Some additional examples follow:

### Intervening Conditions/ macro/ discourses/ economy, demography:

2003-10-06

IPM 26/21

IW2: So, what are your plans?

IPM: Well, because I'm going to stay at home for 2 and a half years I want to get some extra training. I would like to do a 2-year course at F. (=a centre for further education). It's about computer basics, and additional training... But, as I said, I'm not sure yet, I would just like to do it. Something, so that after the 2 or 2 and a half years I can get a job that allows me to make a living. I mean, **there is no such job as a secure job anymore**. Or a job where you started working right after school and stay **until you retire, those times are over**. And, well, there are no such jobs anymore where you know you can stay until you retire. Because **economy changes so fast** and it affects every area, **no matter what job** you are doing. And you have to **be flexible** and say: ok, that's not it or I have to find something else. You **can't rely on anything** today. But, well, there are one or two things I'd like to do. I don't know, maybe, I talked to a friend and thought maybe a **geriatric nurse**. Something like that. Because I think that there are more and more older people, due to this **increasing "age-pyramid"**. I notice that in the house I live in. We live in the K.-area and each day I see the cars of a caring organization that cares for older people in their homes. And then I think, well, that's what I mean, I don't know how these things are, I have to get some information on it, see if you are employed without time limit, or if you are flexible in terms of working hours. But there are flexible working hours, then it's easier with the children. I have to bear that in mind. Right, I think that would be an area that makes sense. I mean, there are so many new old people's homes, **they keep building new ones**. I guess most people can't really afford them but there are more and more of them anyways. I guess this is **an expanding area**, old people. In whichever way. Well, as I said, I've got more than 2 years to find something.

IW2: So, what you just told me, a computer training or education in the field of caring for the elderly would be two things you would like to do in the next 2 years? Right?

IPM: Yes.

IW2: Is there anything that could go wrong? Anything you're afraid of?

IPM: No. Do you mean job wise? No.

IW2: Right, together with the caring position.

IPM: I can't think of anything right now. Well, if there was anything with my mother. Then the situation would be different again. We would have to adjust once more. But about the computer class, the good thing is that it's in the evening. And the other thing is yet only an idea. I don't even know what sort of training there is or where I have to ask for information. Because I think the most important thing is to be **communicative and sociable**. And even if it sounds strange but I think **caring for old people and children is not so much different**. In general. So, I could be **in a better position**. You often hear people saying that old people behave like children. So, I think there are things in common. Of course I don't have any experience but I really believe this to be true.

### Memo:

The following "discursive traces" can be identified in the quotation:

Discursive trace: "**economic macro conditions**":

*"Economic conditions have become unstable, changing jobs and flexibility have become necessary"*. This discourse is provided almost everywhere, especially by discourse-providers from politics (at least here in Austria). As labor market research shows, data can be interpreted in that way, but what counts is the **way** in which such interpretations are **transported, by whom, to whom**. There is a large range to address such changes/ data by interpretations and concrete shape of transporting them in discourse-making, e.g. a "flexicurity"-approach, a "neo-liberalistic anything goes"- or a pessimistic "rien ne va plus"-position. Moreover, the content of this discourse certainly holds for many people/ for a significant share of the labor markets, but not for all. In the form that the content is "wrapped" into the discourse, one gets the impression that this development is universal, and concerns every individual.

As a **discourse-user**, IPM accepts the general line of the discourse, as the given situation; so his *evaluation* of the discourse is neither negative nor rejecting nor critical, it is rather like, "OK, this is the way it is. One has to adapt." In doing so, he simultaneously accepts that the "traditional male working biography" (as he defines it: retiring from one and the same company) is not a pattern that one can expect in his life.

IPM **uses** this discourse to **interpret his own patchwork-working biography**. His attitude that *"...everything is changing all the time, nothing to be foreseen, one has to adapt"* in private life (recent life-event: partner died) goes well with his view on the "macro-level". (Actually, two extremely demanding life-events just stroke IPM: death of partner, loss of job. It tells of a high SOC that IPM is actively dealing with his situation and already has plans for the future.)

As a result from his working biography and loose commitment to job and career, he is prepared to adapt to new situations and is motivated/prepared for further education. So it is a **self-esteem-serving strategy** to accept the discourse on "economy and the new conditions of working life" to interpret the own educational and working biography: under such circumstances, *his educational and occupational/ working biography is not failure but normal and "up to date"*.

A discourse is effective if it is accepted by both, provider *and* user. Apart of the discussion what *social reality* is like, we here concentrate on the respondents' views, what they accept and believe, what they choose from a variety of public discussions, "patchwork" it together because it is of some use to them within their identity work.

For IPM, we can say that the "Be flexible! Everything is changing!"-discourse has arrived at him, and that it is useful for him in some respects. The discourse is increasingly provided by political actors nowadays in connection with arguments concerning reforms, unemployment

rates, etc. To some degree, we might apply the idea of "performative politics" here, i.e. political actors *create* social reality by providing discourses. The IPM-example shows how the performative mechanism works.

Discursive trace: "**demographic development**":

The topics "demographic development, pension system, care for the elderly" are discussed very much in the media since some time (a pension reform was discussed and passed etc.). Interestingly, *IPM combines the discussions on economic conditions and demography, his observations and his experiences within child care to an **occupational plan**: attending a course for geriatric care. The experiences within child care function as a "biographical change pattern" (=competencies are detected that enable IPM to a new step/ direction). (This "preparedness" to enter the occupational area of geriatric caring might be hindered by factors like *low payment*, and IPM might well choose the other alternative to go in the direction of further IT-training...)*

.....

**Intervening Conditions / macro / discourses / cultural change-related:**

2003-08-19

IPM 17/26

IPM: No, I really don't care about such macho remarks. And I think it's only a small number who, well, friends or acquaintances who are the same age as me, right, today there's only, nobody is so very serious about it if they say anything like that at all. So, I think that in my generation these things really have changed. Remarks like that are not common. Maybe older people, people around 50, maybe some of them would see themselves as a softie or something. But in my generation it's, well, normal. But I can only speak for the people I talk to, but I don't think that people today would. But you would know more about it. I didn't come across it.

**Memo:**

This is a part of IPM's reaction to the "What would you say if someone calls you a softie..."-question. By using the term "macho", he interprets "*someone*" as a *male person*, as the quotation further down shows as well. (Social rejection for insulting gender norms obviously takes different forms: here, for the "male weak ties". For the "female weak ties", see IPF's quotation on p.42.) On the other hand, the use of the term "macho" indicates a certain discourse (defined as a specific set of terms and arguments). Although we are not sure which one, rejecting a certain male disposition by using the term "macho" could be close to feministic discourse variants.

(Note: Persons in the closer social surrounding would not say such "macho"-things: here, IPM's *networking activities* arrange the close social contacts in a way that this cannot happen. Once again, it is rather the "weak male ties" where such an attack could be expected from.)

IPM implicitly refers to an interaction of "Milieu x Generation" to explain why he doesn't face social rejection by "macho-statements". He is not sure about "milieu", but refers to his social network. As a whole, he concludes that "generation" is the factor fuelling a cultural change in connection with a more "liberal" societal attitude. IPM talks about a positive trend in this direction. We could label the referring discursive traces "Younger men have been changing".

.....

### **Intervening Conditions / macro / discourses / parental leave for men:**

2003-10-09

IPF 29/6

IPF: But you notice that some women aren't very happy about the fact that men can do it. Because you take it away from them. Yes, there are some who have a problem with it. **But it's not like you always hear: ok, take parental leave; it's good, women want you to do it. But when you really do it it's different. Not all women think it's ok.** Because you enter this area that was, because I was one of the first who did it, I don't know, you take something away. Some of them really feel that way about it.

### **Memo:**

Here, the "parental leave for men"-discussion is rejected as superficial, containing only a part of what IPF experienced when he had entered a caring situation. (Discourses are often not used straight away, but are processed before use by a reflecting agent. So this passage contains a *reaction* to a discourse on parental leave for men. It's like IPF would say, "I know the discussion, but it is not useful!")

It can be concluded that public discussions about issues like parental leave for men, or "advertising" e.g. in campaigns, should be exact and contain much more information and aspects than they do at the moment. If not, they are not believable, not regarded as useful. This is a pattern that was observed more often, we provide another example:

2003-10-09

IPJ 10/12

IPJ: Well, this is something you realize, that I – as I said before, that to me recognition through a job is important. And I realized that I won't take full time parental leave... I don't know but it was important to know that if parental leave then only part time. **It's no solution to take half a year of full time leave like it's recommended.** But it's rather about an acceptable long time solution. **It doesn't make sense to work full time and then stay at home for 6 months with all its changes of mood. And to then go back to a full time job.** And that's what I realized back then, so, that I'm looking for part time systems/solutions. I felt that I wouldn't help my children and myself by staying at home for a whole year.

.....

## Gender-discourses:

The next example should demonstrate how we look at the use of **discourses in terms of the topic "gender"**. We have chosen IPI and summarize his respective views here. Note that gender topics play an important role also in terms of other categories (e.g. "preparedness", within the process...). We take the argumentations and the use of discourses as aspects that can be seen all through the interview. Here, we look at what the respondents say to see if any ready-mades, and if yes: which ones play a role in the men's identity work.

Central aspects are:

- IPI's implicit concept(s) of **masculinity**
- IPI's implicit concept(s) of **gender differences**
- IPI's implicit concept(s) of **reproductive work**

## Masculinity:

IPI describes the "man in general" in the following way:

- the man normally earns more than the woman
- the man is less sensitive than women because paid work is meant to be hard and tough
- If paid work is performed successfully, men get social appreciation
- If men devaluated him because of his behavior, IPI would devalue them, e.g.: *"...I feel sorry for all the guys who cannot escape from their **pre-defined traditional masculinity images**. Maybe they're just envious because they don't have the guts to do it themselves. Maybe they would like, but they rather go **working like ill**. Of course **they would like** to spend more time with their child but they don't dare..."*

(In terms of interactionism, this is the perspective of "I" on the others.)

- Men who actively take on domestic tasks lose social appreciation, they are threatened by loss of masculinity and can become "unmanly/ non-men"

(perspective of the others on me)

- IPI: "I am no classical man"
- IPI calls himself more courageous than "the others". In distinction to other men, IPI emphasizes his courageous behavior to take parental leave, while "the others" would be fearful of losing social appreciation
- IPI says he has a higher interest for his child
- and a more "feminine way of thinking"

(perspective of “I“ on “I“/me)

The summary of IPI’s description shows the usefulness of some critical discourse on masculinity for IPI, and maybe his familiarity with such discourses. Almost all elements to be found in literature are there: breadwinner, focus on paid work, go-until-you-drop-syndrome, non-carer; latent preparedness for increasing caring activities. IPI uses terms like “unmanly”, “pre-defined traditional masculinity image” etc., and all these elements serve well for IPI’s argumentative activities.

Note that apart from all the purposes that these arguments serve for, a pattern of “*what IPI considers to be normal for a man*” appears. **In distancing from it, he defines it.** Moreover, the important **role of other men for rejecting “not-normals”** becomes visible: Much argumentative energy is put into the (imaginative) devaluation of the devaluators. (Note that it is always men who are associated with the “...someone calls you a ‘softie’...”-question, never women. Women’s negative reactions are described as ambivalent or acknowledging only at the surface, with an underlying skeptical attitude.)

### **Reproductive work:**

“*Child-discourse*” versus domestic reality: An argumentative pattern that we met more often was the following: children were ascribed a very high value, the experiences in connection with caring for children were described very valuable (“intense relationship to the child cannot be substituted by anything; experiencing how the child grows and learns;”...), the activities with children were in general described as positive experiences. Domestic work, on the other hand, was described less in detail, and it was more ambivalent. *Activities inside the household* that had to do with children directly, like cooking, were presented more positive than activities that were *visible for other people (weak ties)*, like looking for the children at the playground, hanging up the laundry in the garden, shopping. We interpret the **open, public, visible reproductive activities in terms of Gender Status Insecurity/ normative conflict** (activities inside the house are not touched).

We assume that the men’s emphasis of “contact to the child” has a discursive basis that can be used in this situation. It is not only an **individualistic “fatherhood”-discourse**, it is also the contemporary **emphasis of close “personal relationships”** in general, while neglecting the public area as a possibility to be in “argumentative contact” with other people, as outlined by Sennett in his classical book “The Fall of Public Man” (1976). But “being only private person, being not-public” during a caring phase does not work, in general. Thus, many of the men’s reactions, like “distancing from women”, “Gender Status Insecurity” etc. can be seen in this context: It’s the *public aspect* of violating norms, and *individual reactions*.

Also action/ interaction patterns like “investment into partnership” and other codes go well with the interpretation of “emphasis of close personal relationships”.

### **Gender differences:**

We have stated earlier that inconsistencies in the argumentations of the men occur, referring to their arguments related to the topic “gender” (see above for more discursive aspects of IPI’s argumentations). In the example of IPI, we see a mixture of **discourse-traces**.

IPI: ...I think it somehow brings to life the **feminine side** in a man. You have to adjust yourself and react more sensibly in many situations. Surely, this is exactly the opposite of the **stereotypical breadwinner concept of masculinity** and of what we are asked to do in regular **paid work**. The **classical tough man**. And I believe many men just can't show their feminine side, **most** of them are not even able to acknowledge the **fact that they have a feminine side**.  
and **essentialist discourse-traces**

IPI: ...Well, our child has now two equal partners who take care of her. I mean, if something’s wrong, she has a tendency to run to her mum, but I guess she’s not aware of that. It must be a **biological instinct**.

The essentialist, socio-biological discourse has reached a considerable popularity nowadays (at least here in Austria, but probably also elsewhere). The reception of this discourse by individual men in most cases produces a certain amount of argumentative difficulties for men in caring situations, as elements like “gender traits by nature” and “changeable genders” need a fair amount of sophisticated arguments, if no contradictions should occur.

As IPI refers to how the caring situation changed him,

IPI: „...It happened automatically, you change automatically. In my case, when I was on parental leave, I wasn't aware of the fact that I changed or that I had already changed, it just happened. I realized though, that over time I became a bit more sensitive and empathetic. Not that I wasn't sensitive in the first place, but now it's far more distinctive. You don't even have to make an effort, it just happens while being engaged in childcare and the like.

his discourse-use produces the **paradox result** that as a tendency the constructivist gender discourse is used for men (=himself), and the essentialist socio-biological one for women.

We do not believe that this is really IPI’s attitude, we rather believe that **he does not have a consistent, fixed attitude towards these topics at the moment of the interview, but he is producing it in the interview, using “ready made” and “argumentative modules”**.

**Our hypothesis is that if there were better, convincing, usable and popular discourses, men in caring situations would rather use these ones. As a recommendation to policy makers we can propose to develop and provide these discourses.**

.....

### **Family-discourses:**

As a last point we would like to mention the **emphasis** that some of the men put on “**family**” as a value and related topics, and the discourses that play a role in the background.

Sometimes in literature, we find “family orientation” and “work orientation” as two poles of an attitude-continuum, or as two dimensions with “high” and “low” for each one. If at all, we favor the second view. There might be *some* tradeoff between family and work orientation, respectively *some* negative correlation (“the higher family – the lower work” and vice versa), but the connections have turned out as quite complex.

Let us take IPM as an example. We have “decomposed” his “**caring**”- and “**work**”-related **statements** into:

- some “**preparedness**”: rather little, but not none; not enough to let him enter a caring situation before his partner died, *ceteris paribus* (mighty intervening conditions, like the gender pay gap for example, were present for other respondents as well)
- some “**biographical resource activation**”, in his completely contingent caring situation (like, “I have cared for my younger brother when I was a child, so caring is not so strange to me now”)

Connecting the aspects “work” and “caring”, as IPM did, results in a “*low commitment to work, higher commitment to family, high commitment to private life/ social contacts in general*”-pattern. Some aspects of this pattern, like IPM presents it in the interview, seem to consist of “stable modules”, other aspects might be new combinations in the course of the argumentation in the interview. We have got the impression that there are at least two caring-related aspects that rely on “stable modules”:

- **partnership**
- **responsibility for raising the children**

“**Partnership**” has become the “standard” discourse for the topic “living together” in the interviews, probably in general. In her discourse-analysis on “romantic love and partnership” in sociology of the family, Leupold (2003) has argued that “partnership” is a relatively young term that is applied where former (or present) **hierarchical systems are questioned** (e.g. the “social partners”, “physician and patient” as partners, men and women living together). For relationships of men and women, “partnership” mainly covers the aspect of *common daily life*, whereas “romantic love” covers the aspect of *starting relationships*.

So, a basic “equality-orientation” can be identified by the traces of the partnership-discourse in the respondent’s statements, and this is so for almost all of the interviewees (the only exception in the interviews was IPL, to a certain degree, and IPL is definitely using different discourses; see further below).

**Intervening conditions/ macro/ discourses/ family, partnership:**

2003-08-19

IPM (22/32)

IPM: Well, relationship means **compromise**. I think that the ideal partnership doesn't exist. There are always points where you have to make compromises, or where you have to **discuss** again. I couldn't say now how people should live together. Maybe in a way that you **understand each other**, that you **master daily life together**. And if children are there, that you **raise the children together**. But there are so many individual factors that one cannot say how people should live together. I can't think of anything concrete now.

The second stable module was “**responsibility for raising the children within the partnership**” that contained a **rejection of public caring facilities**, for IPM and for most respondents. So, raising children is seen as a matter for the two equal partners, public facilities are only accepted to a certain degree. Sometimes, this attitude was embedded into a religious framework (e.g. IPF who named his family of origin as a positive model, with their attitude-system of rejecting material values and emphasizing family as a value; in contrast: see IPL's use of a religious discourse further below). Such rather stable value-systems might develop as *features of partnerships*, rather than of single persons, including the woman's *and* the man's views and combining them by the time.

#### **Intervening conditions/ macro/ discourses/ family, partnership:**

2003-08-19

IPM 23/9

IPM: Well I mean, it worked well with us the last 3 years. I went for work, and my partner went for work three times a week in the afternoons. **She didn't want**, didn't want to go to work every afternoon or noon, all the week, because then she wouldn't **have had anything of the child** if she had done that. So she chose this variant, three afternoons a week, and being at home two whole days. **And this was how we wanted to go on**. Well, with the baby she would have been completely at home now. But later on, when he is 1 and a half years old, we thought of giving him to a **caring facility** and she would have gone to work two afternoons again. This was the plan. I mean, where I don't agree basically nowadays anymore, **this is this extreme variant, to give the children somewhere from the beginning, and both go to work full time. I don't think that this is necessary**. I mean, well, OK, there may be some situation where it is really necessary from an economical point of view. But in principle I don't think that this is necessary for most of the people, to give the children to some facility, from baby age onwards, and to go to work full time. On the other hand, it is not absolutely necessary **that one partner is only at home all the time and only the other one is going to work**. Then it may become a little bit tough, economically. If you aren't the director of some managing committee, or the like. With only one income, it is quite difficult nowadays. Well, I think there should be **some good compromise. You have to assure that the children have something of their parents, either mother or father. So that the parents don't become the adults who are there on the weekends**. I consider that as **totally wrong**. Because, well, I consider it as basically **wrong that kindergardens and schools raise the children**. This is **part of being a parent**. And this is why I don't agree to giving the children to baby-facilities, kindergardens, all-day-schools – **I don't think positive of that**. Like I said, the „**golden mean**“ is the right thing.

**Memo:**

Child caring facilities are OK and used, but only to a certain degree. All-day caring facilities are rejected in principle. A high value of certain elements, like "family", "child-raising", "parent-child-relationship" that come close to idealizing views of "motherhood" and "fatherhood" seem to foster the maintenance of a caring situation and the implementing process. Child care facilities are seen as stopgap-solution.

**Mind that within such a set of values, it is rather modernized breadwinner-variants (male main-provider, female co-earner) that are likely to emerge, rather than e.g. dual-earner arrangements. This would have exactly been the case for IPM and his partner ("This was how we wanted to go on"): Without the death of the partner, IPM wouldn't have been in the caring situation.**

The "golden mean" is necessary from an economical point of view (household income) in IPM's eyes, *and* it is evaluated as the best variant. That means: the way in which IPM and his partner would have handled their situation (IPM: full time work; partner: part time work; giving the 1 and a half year old boy to a facility 2 afternoons per week; older kid: kindergarden/school) represents this "golden mean" (behavior first, evaluation is adapted to behavior - Dissonance Theory). The arguments in the statement are not very consistent, either. All in all, we *would* see a rather standard arrangement (male breadwinner, female co-earner) if IPM's partner was still alive, with the respective attitudes *of both partners*: a rather idealizing, romanticizing idea of "family".

Now that there is only IPM remaining, he still holds to this attitudinal system. This is possible because he receives benefits and his mother is there as resource etc.

In general, arguments like "***children who are in facilities can profit in terms of social learning***" etc. were missing (except for IPD, who has a professional caring background by the time of the interview). Neither was the quality of the facilities questioned by the respondents; it just was the *high value of the family* that made the respondents reject the possibility of increased use of child caring facilities.

This rejection is mainly focused on the facilities for the very young children, i.e. under 3 years. **Especially in the age group under 3 years, Austria has a very low rate of children in facilities.** For this age range of the children, the "**good motherhood**"-discourse is used by the respondents in the sense of "good fatherhood/ parenthood".

**To refer to this high value of the family that makes a quite traditional impression is seen as a use of the traditional discourse on the family, to assign a high value and personal meaning to the situation that the men are in.**

A hypothesis that can be derived is that these idealizing/ romanticizing family picture are less likely and positive arguments for child caring facilities are more likely in arrangements where these facilities are used by parents:

- in dual earner arrangements with higher use of caring facilities; there we would expect a more positive evaluation of these facilities, and a rejection of idealizing family discourses (but this was not our sample...)
- single parent households with children that make use of these facilities
- in countries with a higher rate of child-care facility use in this age range.

## 9. Comprehensive example: IPL

We have not introduced IPL yet, so this example contains comprehensive basic information about IPL, before we mainly turn to the macro condition "discourses". Interpretations are becoming more complex and comprehensive at this level.

### **Basic data IPL:**

age: 58 years

form of living: married – living apart, living in new partnership now

children: 2 from first marriage (adult; in their 30s); 3 in current partnership (4 years, 3 years, 1 year)

religious: was Protestant, now without confession

military/ civil service: military service

edu: high school

learned occupation: engineer

job: self-employed in agriculture and forestry, has a farm

working biography: named 8 employments, in management

why selected? reduced work for caring for child (half day)

domestic tasks shared: he:she=5:95 (now)

child caring shared: he:she=10:90 (now)

job partner: insignificant employment

income: IPL earns more

residence: lives in small village

### **Familiar background/ milieu:**

Father: academic; higher positions until retirement.

Mother: nurse until marriage, then housewife.

IPL: I would have loved to start an apprenticeship when I was 14 years old. But this was no path to go, in the eyes of my mother in the first place, and also in the father's eyes. Not milieu-like for me. They didn't want that. In contrary, they always said: if you don't learn, you have to make an apprenticeship. I would have loved to do so. I did it when I was 52 years old, actually, and I am still good at manual working today." (IPL 13/24)

IPL uses the term "milieu" himself in this quotation. But even without it: here we see that IPL's background is "upper class", his parents lived in a traditional way (breadwinner model). They provide a straight milieu-like masculinity draft for IPL: good education, distinction from manual work.

### **Working biography:**

A rather traditional linear job biography (one full-and-more-time-job after the other) from a salesman to management positions followed. IPL changed jobs according to career prospects. Manager-career. IPL names 8 full-time jobs. Quit last job, couldn't find appropriate new job; got self employed in forestry/ farming, after a phase of unemployment.

IPL: This change is no deterioration for me. It is the fulfilling of my life plans, at the same time. This job is nearer to my desires and to my objectives in life, compared to some job in lower management, employed – since I was in higher, middle management. If I was a clerk now, I would always look at my watch and say: Hey, what am I doing here? My life is ending without meaning in occupational terms as well. I don't like that. (IPL 36/12)

(Note: A sort of **biographical resource activation** in terms of "job/ occupation" might have been given some time ago. IPL lost the job as a manager and couldn't find an adequate job. A former idea to do something manual (probably not in the stage of being a real project when IPL was young - maybe a "draft") was stored in a "project bin" and re-activated in the situation of being unemployed.)

### **Private life biography:**

Married, 2 children (now grown up). After a period that he calls "midlife-crisis", he separated from his family. He has still contact to his grown-up children and their kids. He is living with a younger partner now, 3 kids.

His actual network still contains people he had worked with before, middle/ higher-level-managers (=friends), also neighbors and business partners concerning his current job; actual and former family, relatives. He is living in a small rural village now. (IPL has a "mixed" network in terms of milieus: farmers, managers)

### **Caring phase:**

IPL cared for his daughter after the parental leave of his partner was finished, for half a year, half day. The caring-episode in IPL's life course was less a "planned sequence", but more a "contingency" that is influenced by external situational aspects. He brings in little "preparedness", some maybe can be seen in the sequence where his partner and he are discussing about looking for a job again (see below). He seems to be fed up with business life as a manager, being principally in the wrong occupational field.

IPL: First there was a collision point in terms of time, because I said I should do this or that at the farm, I should do something here and there. But then it was all right, because there was the money of my partner, so we didn't run out of money. On the other hand, I got used to it in a positive way, to have breakfast with my daughter, to change nappies, to do everything. And I liked it by the time...

Later on, the economic situation of IPL and his partner changed, because IPL got more orders as self-employed forestry worker. They changed the arrangement, so the caring situation of IPL developed to a **temporary scenario** as a result, with rather little contribution of IPL to domestic and caring work (yet with a positive evaluation of the caring phase).

**Result overview:**

Subjective retrospective **evaluation** of the **caring situation**: balance sheet: rather positive  
subjectively ascribed **amount of change**: some

**Self-presentation and self-evaluation:**

**Re-gendered elements** in self concept: few

**self-evaluation**: positive

rather an "appreciation-pattern"

**scenario**: temporary scenario, few persisting consequences (present amount of changes in the distribution of paid and unpaid labor between the partners: little)

**ad: The role of material resources for the identity-project "caring":**

IPL: If I had found a job, I would have gone on for a couple of years like crazy and said: get money, get money, get money. I had some points later on, if we were run out of money, I said to my partner: I don't know, I don't know, I call the general director of M (big company). This was a friend of mine. He is chief there, he should give me a job... I was sometimes quite close to call someone and ask them for a job... My partner said: you are crazy. You entangle there again. I said: yes, but then we have more money, and it is hard if we have too little. And she said: this would be completely crazy. Then you are never here and travel around all the time. Then you wouldn't see your children, like before. I abandoned this idea then. It was the lack of money then, that made me think of such desperate speculations.

Here we see: if the material basis crumbles, identity projects like "caring phase" are very likely to be abandoned. IPL is still equipped with a high social capital (= contacts to company owners, managers) so he could transform the social capital into economic capital (= getting a well-paid job by calling his friend. The passage could also be seen as an "exit strategy" from the caring situation under the circumstance of an underlying Gender Status Insecurity.)

**Discourses:**

IPL describes that he got used to do housework and caring tasks for his little daughter. He can have more contact to his child than ever before (first partnership, 2 kids, already grown-up), so their relationship developed in a good way.

IW2: And it was no problem that these tasks, domestic tasks, don't fit that well for men?

IPL: No. Not at all. Never. And I dislike those who disqualify women today, if they have domestic ambitions or ambitions with children... I am someone who is even strongly of the opinion that women should also get to know about job-life, but rather should follow their satisfaction as woman and mother. I know it from a relative who is over 60 years now and has no kids. I know it from a cousin who has no children. Both are unhappy... First, they have no purpose in this sense. So I am of the opinion that women become very unhappy sometimes in later years if they don't have children.

IW2: And men? Do they become unhappy as well?

IPL: I mean, I guess, yes. Certainly. Even if they have the tasks done by their women. But some day, men ask themselves – I know that from my friends, they say, well, all right, all this struggle continues, if you have children. It doesn't pay at all otherwise, like my friend, my best friend, he is working and says, well, for whom I should do all that? If I didn't have children, I wouldn't know for whom I do all this. With my friends, this is obvious... [children]...I mean, maybe I am not in the mainstream, but I think one shouldn't move away from all these things. And the personal satisfaction in life, these are the near-to-earth things, like here with all the animals and plants, and similarly the contact to children is important for people. Despite there are some who deny this, because of egomania or other reasons... So I don't despise the job at all.

IW2: You mean, you don't despise household-tasks?

IPL: No, not at all. A mother who manages the household and has the children under control and is a good mother for them, to me she has a much more significant role than if she would sit at a supermarket-cash-desk or struggles in a higher position. This is not adequate. This is good for a certain time, but doing both leads to too much stress, that has interfamilial consequences. It is not a good situation that so many women are working.

IW2: Does a father have the same significance in terms of caring for the children, like a mother?

IPL: No. No. My father, for example, has thought about educational things only in a very marginal way. It was much better for us, because we could love him much more in some phases than our difficult mother. I know that in the imprinting-phase of siblings, one primary person is the most important, and this should be the mother. And the father plays a significant role as well, but he is not in the first row. Except he has the main duties at home with the kids, then he can do it as well as the mother. But however he is struggling, the tolerance, the calmness that mothers bring with them for such tasks from their biology – to use this old term – all these things men don't have at all. Or less.

IW2: Why do you think that this is the case with men? ...

IPL: Well, a man is set up in a different way by nature. If we look at evolution, the man is the one who does the peripheral things for the family. Getting food. Today: getting money. Being a figure that has a certain patrimony over the family. This is good. Who is there for certain questions. And who is an alternative for the children who need this, also for the bi-gender development later on. Very important... But the most important is the mother role, that one person is there for the child. You cannot say who is more important. In my opinion, the mother is the best alternative. Father is the second-best alternative. Sometimes, the grandmother is better, if the father is not apt. If you have one (...) I am certainly an exaggerated father in some things, from my genes from my mother's side. I have to handle this with care. I am so empathic (...) I am convinced that children are the course of life. The female friend of a friend of mine once said, '*I want to live, I want to drive a motorbike and experience adventures*'; I said to her, '*The biggest adventure of a woman in a positive sense is to have children.*' I mean, someone might not like to hear this, if a person is too young for it. But this is my standpoint. My philosophy of life, and also a sort of my religious philosophy of life that is part of it. Even when you move towards an uncertain future, it has always been that way, and it will always be that way, this is nature's power, the future will never be only positive, the handing-it-on in your children remains. Because my friend and I, we say, well, who does not reproduce is vanishing. Nature cannot accept him. He is not apt for life on earth. He will become extinct. Because he is gone then. If a woman dies without kids, then nothing is there, actually. If a man dies without kids, then nothing is there either, actually. And this is my standpoint, because it is my inner conviction, one lives on in one's children, probably. As far as one can talk about living on. (...)

If I have a paid job, I take it very serious. Then this job comes first, for me as a man. And I take care that my children are with my partner. If this doesn't work or if she is ill or away... then I necessarily do this caring task as well; then this comes first. Then I must leave work... But if the arrangement for the kids is OK, and I can do my work,

then this job has the first priority in the moment, of course. Is this sufficient?

**Memo:**

In terms of our core-sample in the pre-study (30-40 years old men who did caring tasks), IPL is a contrast example, due to the fact that he stems from another *generation* (ca. 60 years old).

*Generation* and *milieu* (of origin, actual; also: religion) can be seen as central factors that influence his discourse about the genders, and work. It is quite a cognitive task for him to reconcile his behavior (a period of caring while his partner worked) and his beliefs (his discourse can be labeled an essentialist gender discourse, with religious facets).

Breadwinner-elements are "imprinted" into IPL's social network: the manager-friends that he mentions see their role as providers, and it pays if there are children; this is linked to the biologic/ religious reproduction-discourse that IPL uses: Men have to go out to provide the family and children, so that something remains when they die.

Although quite traditional attitudes at first sight, IPL shows a post-modern patchwork-spirituality that contains bits and pieces from here and there (biology, psychology, religion). He is producing this view on life in the interview situation (certainly using already used "modules", like "Who does not reproduce is vanishing" etc.), to integrate his past caring phase into a framework that allows him to **explain why he entered and later left the caring situation to the interviewer and himself**. Of course, a certain degree of knowledge/ education (cultural capital) is needed to know and combine terms and arguments like "imprinting phase", "bi-sexual development" etc.

## 10. Discussion

We want to finish with a short overview of the main findings, and also want to focus on some aspects that were not discussed so far.

The most important findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

**Men in caring situations are not a homogenous group.** We addressed in a strictly behavioral way, i.e. selecting exceptional individuals who performed a high share of domestic and caring work. A first result was that these individuals are in a caring situation due to different reasons. They differed in terms of "preparedness" and "access" to the caring situation, some well-planning it and feeling this idea to be concordant with their values and attitudes, others not planning it at all, having never thought of such a thing like parental leave or the like.

But they behave in the way they do. The heterogeneity of this group may be the reason why such "best practice samples" lead to "strange patterns" in quantitative respects<sup>10</sup>. As we have done a qualitative study, we cannot say anything about shares and quantities. But the variety that emerged implies a complex interaction of a variety of predictors. If we take e.g. the role of the respondents' religious beliefs for being in a "best practice"-group, it is almost impossible to derive hypotheses what could be under focus in a quantitative study. It does play some role, actually very different roles for different respondents, from fostering to hindering. So, either no predictive value or a quite complex interaction pattern (that also could show up in some moderate correlation coefficient) should be expected for some "religion"-variable in a quantitative study.

**Once in a caring situation, we found a process that is quite similar for all the respondents.** Despite of their heterogeneity, the men in caring situations seemed to interpret their experiences in a similar way. It is of high importance that most of the men told about stressing aspects and problems in the beginning of the caring situation. The stages of the process were called

1. Misplacement
2. Gender Status Insecurity
3. Reflecting masculinity drafts
4. Adapting, rearranging self-concept

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<sup>10</sup> see e.g. Ramos' BHPS-profile of the "best practitioners", as discussed it in the "Work Changes Gender" partner meeting in Barcelona 2003.

(This process model was developed as an interpretation of interview data in a cross-sectional access. ***A longitudinal design should be used to test this model in future studies.***)

In sum, we found that a state of Gender Disposition Insecurity, caused by the new and unexpected experiences of the men in the caring situations, was coped by a reflection process and the rearrangement of the social networks. In some cases, the process led to a de- and re-gendering stage, where similarity was not defined by sex in the first place, but by the similarity of the situation ("I and the other mothers...").

**Similarity=similarity of situation:** We consider the last point as a central result. Basically it says that e.g. a *man in parental leave* considers himself more similar to a *woman in parental leave* than to a *man in full-time work without caring duties*. (The same could be true for women: a women in parental leave could consider herself more similar to a man in parental leave than to a female manager.) This **diversity view on both genders** implies a good basis for new alliances, apart from the sex-based man-woman-dichotomy.

**Caring work changes gender.** The majority of the respondents evaluates the caring situation as a positive phase in their lives. The last two stages of the above described process were defined as "change-area". Here, clear reflections about masculinities, the meaning of the term "work", social reactions etc. take place and alter the men's views quite a lot. Most of them stay "agents" who actively try to reflect and rearrange their social environment.

Most of the men who have engaged in a domestic/ caring phase **enter the next "institution" as changed persons**. Maybe this was most visible for these examples who thought about or did re-orientate in the direction of a caring or non-technical job after the caring situation (IPD, IPM, IPF), but also in other respects the respondents reported about personal changes.

**"Weak ties" are of high importance.** "Networking-activities" are more successful in the area of the respondent's closer relationships ("strong ties", like family, friends, closer colleagues at work etc.). The "weak ties" cannot be shaped that easily. They consist of relationships to people that one meets only from time to time, that are known from sight and the like. They can give stronger inputs, though, as the closer network is arranged in a way that is consistent with one's views, values or attitudes. The "weak ties", however, can reinforce or punish a behavior or attitude without being asked.

**There are gender-specific rejections.** A **direct devaluation** because of one's violation of masculinity-norms by performing domestic and caring behavior is ascribed to **other men**. In the respondent's eyes, **women's** uneasiness with these exceptional males is expressed in rather **superficial acknowledgement** with an underlying **mistrust**, regarding the man as an **"intruder"**. Both sorts of rejections play an important role in the "implementing-process".

All in all, the caring situation turns out to be a demanding situation, especially in the beginning, due to reasons like the aforementioned social rejection. The men report a feeling of "sitting between the chairs". What we have defined as **"Crisis, Gender Status Insecurity"** deserves more attention. **Measures are necessary** to address this problematic aspects of men in caring situations:

1. **Counseling** and other offers should be provided for the respective men
2. **Campaigns and information material** should **include** these **problematic aspects**.  
The few existing campaigns try to "advertise" parental leave for men, emphasizing positive effects and a possible transfer of soft skills into business life, not focusing on the negative aspects and disadvantages of such a step. Discourse providers and political actors are asked to **take the "target persons" serious**, as agents and reflecting persons who can assess information in terms of seriousness, as the interview examples in this report show.

In sum, the "known and usable discourses" for the men in our sample were rather **limited**. A much broader variety of themes could be implemented in the person's argumentations, if these discourses were provided by political actors. Topics to be discussed would include **individualism, fairness, distributional justice, diversity within men and women, family concepts**, all that in acceptable and usable form. The most important feature of a provided discourse is its **credibility** (see above).

We haven't concentrated very much on the **working biographies** of the respondents in this report. But it was interesting to see that most of the respondents had in fact "patchwork working biographies" rather than "classical" working biographies, including non-standard forms of work, former leaves, changes of jobs/ branches/ occupations and so on *before* entering the caring situation, and this was *not* a selection criterion. We are not able to tell if this is a particularity of the persons that we have interviewed (men in caring situations), or a general pattern, a sort of "new normality" on the basis of this study. What we can say is that **these biographies in some contexts led to a high preparedness for entering a caring situation**, via the "low investment into education and career"-path (see chapter "Causal Condition").

In this context, we should start to think about a "split of the men's labor market". There are some who can compete, due to high resources, and others who cannot. Those who can and who stay in the labor market accumulate more and more experiences and other market related values, while the others decline and give up. Is there already something like a "male silent reserve" in the societies, eventually to be found among "the carers"? At least, we have found some men that could be assigned to such a category in this study (IPK, and IPD before). On the other hand, a caring phase sometimes constituted a "transition", e.g. to self-employment.

**Companies** turned out to be a **difficult area** for men who wanted to enter a caring phase, which is important in terms of the organizational analyses in the *second work package* of the *Work Changes Gender-project* (see "Workplace" in chapter 8). Again, we want to link what we have said about the workplaces with the "weak ties"-idea. In a bigger company, normally a person should have more weak ties than close ties. As the close ties (but not so much the weak ties) can be rearranged by networking, the weak ties remain as a permanent source of questioning and being skeptical about a man's caring plans or behavior. A considerable impact of these reactions on the man's identity work can be expected. Of course, this depends on various features in an organization, like "climate" or "culture".

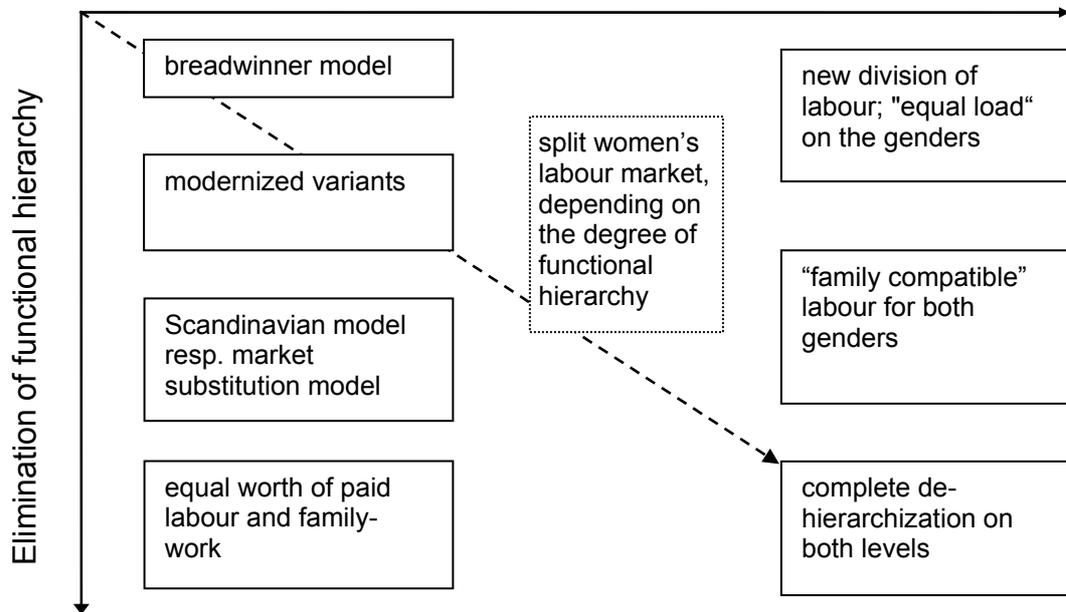
As we have seen, most of the respondent's considerations take place in the area of the **"allocation scenario"**, using Kreimer's (2002) inputs (summarized in the diagrams on the next page). The redistribution of paid and unpaid labor is seen as a task that has to be performed mainly by the **respondent himself and the partner** (where appropriate). So, the respondents struggled for some **"individualized" solutions**. As we have seen for the discourses used by the respondents, the lower two scenarios (outsourcing-/household wage-scenario; combination-scenario) played a less important role, only some points could be assigned to these models to some degree, like the statements that *unpaid labor isn't acknowledged in general, complaints about too low parental leave wage compensations that expressed the lack of acknowledgement* etc. But in general, we got the impression that the role of politics was underestimated by the respondents. Possibly, an "agency bias" prevents people from assigning more influence for being in a certain situation to "structure", but it is oneself and the partnership that is seen in the center.

For example, we have *not* observed a discourse-use that would emphasize distributional fairness in society as a whole. No such arguments like "Jobs and homework/caring are not distributed in a fair way in general; I want to do it in a different way, that's why..." Such "fairness-arguments" seemed **latently present**, but in connection with the partner, i.e. very close social environments. Thus, "fairness" was rather seen as a particularity of the

partnership or individual feature, less as a political category. This impression fits well to the notion of "individualized societies". On the other hand, people can use discourses for the purpose of their identity work only if they are *provided*, discourses must be "known and regarded as useful". A point to start could be e.g. the pattern "redefining the meaning of work" (see chapter 5).

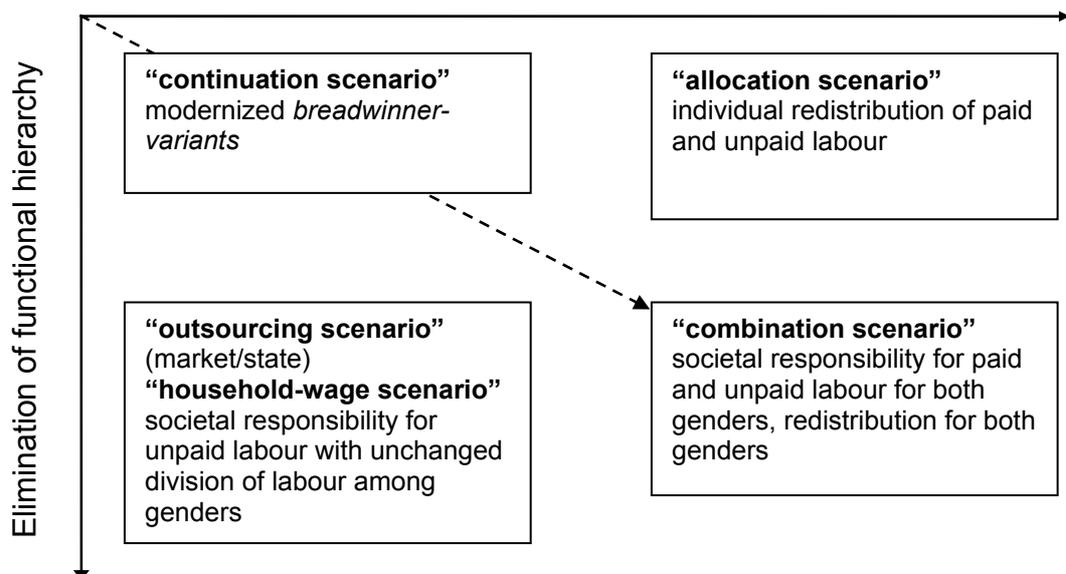
Maybe, in organizations or other social fields where such discourses are provided in a way that arrives at men in similar situations, they would make use of them in some way. If that holds, **such "tools" for identity-work should be fostered.**

Matrix of possibilities for changing the gender-specific division of labor  
 Elimination of the gender hierarchy – new forms of division of labor



(from Kreimer 2002, our translation)

Scenarios of elimination of segregation  
 Elimination of the gender hierarchy – new forms of division of labor



(from Kreimer 2002, our translation)

A last notion on "**implicit values**" within this report:

By using certain terms as labels for interview passages, categories etc. one might get the impression that there is a distinction of those respondents who reached a "high" stage of the process versus those who tried, but left the process earlier etc., i.e. an implicit definition of the "good guys" and the "very good guys". This impression should be put into perspective here: Our **interest** was especially high for those who had distanced the most from what we know as masculine normality in our society. These have become the examples where the **most need for explanations** occurred. *Not* to enter a caring situation at all, to remain skeptical about it once having entered it, or to leave it as soon as possible is logical and rational from the perspective of the individual, when many influences stand against it (measures, institutions, workplace, pay gap...).

On the other hand, **complete role changes** like for some of the "very interesting examples", that implied "the opposite situation" in terms of the distribution of paid and unpaid labor (female breadwinner, male homemaker), or similar **unbalanced arrangements**, were **not evaluated as "best practice" by the respondents themselves**. Precarity, dependency, and other disadvantages of such arrangements are present for any person in such an arrangement, male or female. The **precarity** that such arrangements imply are seen by the respondents very clearly. As IPD expresses this view:

IW2: ... Any other disadvantages of your situation?

IPD: Mhm, you are dependent on your partner, in financial terms. Big disadvantage. Very big disadvantage. Because you can never say, if the partnership isn't working anymore, I go another way now. So this is a big disadvantage.

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