



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

25 Years On: The Federal Ministry for Women

From women's policy to a sustainable policy of
fair opportunities for women and men

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I.

Introduction

It was in 1986 that the then Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Affairs and Health was reorganised to form the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Affairs, Women and Health, acquiring a new department in the process: the “*Women’s Policy*” Department. This department superseded the Directorate on Women’s Affairs established in 1979 and was given comprehensive responsibility for coordinating women’s issues.

14 years later – in 2000 – the “*Women’s Policy*” Department in what was by then the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth was renamed, subsequently operating as the “*Gender Equality*” Department – a reaction to societal challenges that made it appear necessary to develop women’s policy into gender equality policy – with the aim of actually implementing equal rights for women and men as a cross-sectional task.

In 2011, we can look back on 25 years of policies for women – and for men. This is a good occasion to take stock and examine some key questions: Which goals were achieved by the women’s policy of the 1980s/1990s, and by the gender equality policy of the 1990s/2000s that emerged from it? Where does women’s and gender equality policy stand today? What are the old and new topics of crucial importance, and what does this mean for future developments?

Not the views of the political players will be presented in this respect. Rather, the public itself is asked to strike a balance, stating its opinions in the framework of a representative survey of the population on past and future topics, and outlining the range of tasks to be tackled by gender equality policy today and tomorrow. Two things become clear in this context:

1. **Women’s policy** for supporting the emancipation and self-determination of women, for protecting women against violence and discrimination, and for enforcing equal *rights* for women and men, was a first major stage. After achieving significant goals, women’s policy had developed further since the mid-1990s, turning into **gender equality policy for women and for men**, where women and men were no longer to form fronts and be seen as opponents. The elimination of unjust structures and mechanisms, and the change of traditional role patterns towards equality of women and men in the partnership, the family and the working world, was no longer to be misconceived as being work *against* men, but as a political, social, cultural and economic task involving solidarity and support for women and men and in favour of a society of fair opportunities for all sexes. Gender equality in the various spheres of life was and is in the interests of both

women and men. Topics such as equal pay and occupational reintegration following family-related interruptions of employment are – like women in management positions, men as educators in the family and in child day-care centres – topics that appear equally important to women and men today. Women and men agree that the emergence of new perspectives for women also means complementary, new perspectives for men, such as their relief from the role of sole principal earner and family breadwinner.

In the year 2011, after 25 years of women's policy and gender equality policy, we can see that we are heading into a new, third stage, whose outlines and programmes are becoming increasingly clear: **fair opportunities for women and men is no longer considered to be only and primarily a cross-sectional task, but also a longitudinal one.** Modern gender equality policy is a sustainable policy of fair opportunities that is not limited to snapshots. In our society of longevity, in a pluralistic society, fair opportunities for women and men can only be achieved sustainably, and thus credibly, if the short- *and* long-term consequences of decisions taken individually and in partnership are consistently considered, and if politics ensures that the opportunities and risks associated with these decisions are not distributed structurally unequally between the sexes in the life course.

2. Women and men take decisions in the context of their partnership, family and occupational ties. At the same time, they can only partly, if at all, foresee the long-term effects, the direct principal consequences and the indirect secondary and late consequences of their decisions and arrangements. Consequently, a policy that hopes to enable, and sustainably safeguard, the fair distribution of resources and possibilities, opportunities and risks for women and men must combine short-term analyses of the current situation with long-term life-course perspectives.¹
3. The development from **women's policy** and **gender equality policy** to a **sustainable policy of fair opportunities for women and men** has been accompanied by a substantial change in its importance in society. From the point of view of the general public, women's policy in the 1980s and 1990s was more of a group-related topic – of interest to specific groups of the population. The job of women's policy was to correct unfair structures and fight openly or latently discriminatory rules and institutions: women's policy was *necessary niche policy*. Today, however, the public considers it perfectly natural that gender equality policy for women and men is a **central element of modern social policy**. As a policy that targets gender equity, it is of elementary importance for the **social cohesion of our society**. As a result, the range of topics covered has also become broader, meaning that "old" topics are seen and tackled in a new light (violence, discrimination), new topics are necessary and programmatic from the point of view of the public (cf. Chapter 3.1) – in an understanding of politics that balances the responsibility of state and civil-society players between solidarity and subsidiarity.

¹ First Report on Gender Equality in Germany: New Pathways – Equal Opportunities. Gender Equality over Women's and Men's Life Courses. Bundestag printed paper 17/6240, dated 16.06.2011, p. 29 ff.

II.

Demands on a policy for women and men from the point of view of the public

2.1 Gender equity for social cohesion

The equality of women and men is today a social norm that is in principle unconditionally accepted in almost all age, educational and occupational groups, as well as in all social milieus. This finding, obtained in studies² conducted on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in 2006 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Federal Ministry for Women, has been confirmed by several studies, most recently by the results of a current representative survey in 2011. The various topics of gender equality policy and life-course policy for women and men have reached, and been accepted by, all segments of the population. In addition to which, the following point becomes clear:

- | The topics and goals of this policy are not viewed in isolation or as niches by the public. On the contrary, they are seen as being very closely related to two central topics that relate to the foundations of our society and impose demands on politics:

- | **Social justice**

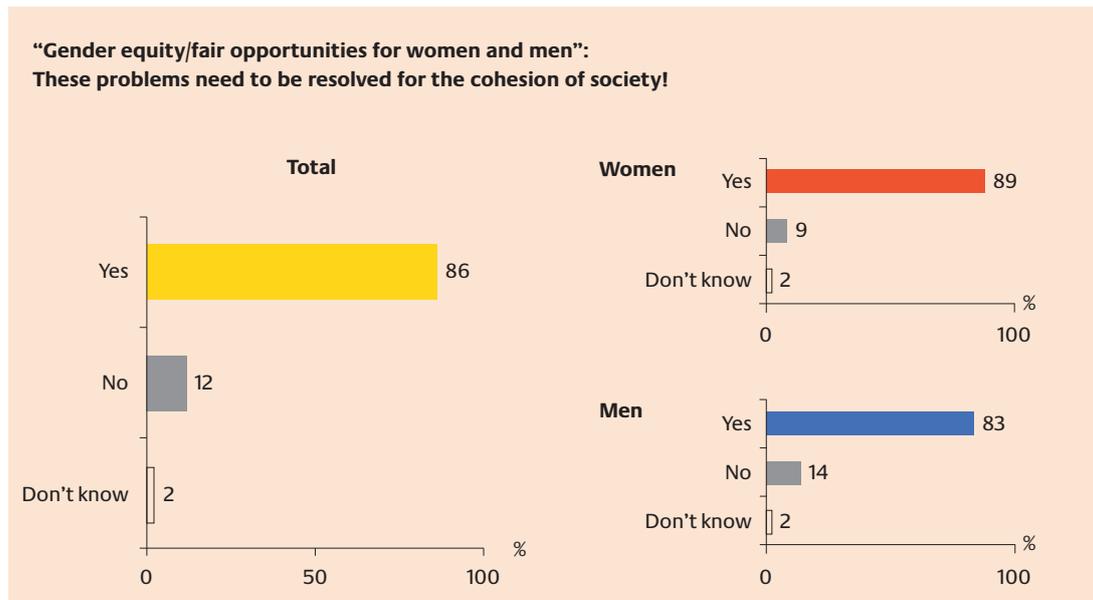
- | **Social cohesion of society**

From the point of view of the public, the continuation of the gender inequities that still exist is a threat to the cohesion of society in the long term. Conversely, a policy of gender equity contributes to promoting and strengthening the cohesion of society. In the public's opinion, overcoming gender inequity is a key task for politicians, who are called upon to take positive action.

² Wippermann, Carsten/Wippermann, Katja: 20 Year Old Women and Men Today – Life Plans, Role Models, Attitudes to Gender Equality. Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Berlin/Heidelberg 2007. Wippermann, Carsten/Wippermann, Katja: Wege zur Gleichstellung heute und morgen. Sozialwissenschaftliche Untersuchung vor dem Hintergrund der Sinus-Milieus. Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Berlin/Heidelberg 2007.

■ The public equates the subject of *gender equity* with *fair opportunities for men and women*.³ The empirical survey reveals that people in Germany consider the two concepts “fair opportunities” and “gender equity” to be virtually synonymous.⁴

“Gender equity” and “fair opportunities for women and men” are a sociopolitical topic that occupies people today. Women and men in Germany are deeply convinced that *gender equity* is a necessary factor for the cohesion of society. For them, *fair opportunities for women and men* are an indispensable basic element of a democratic, just society.

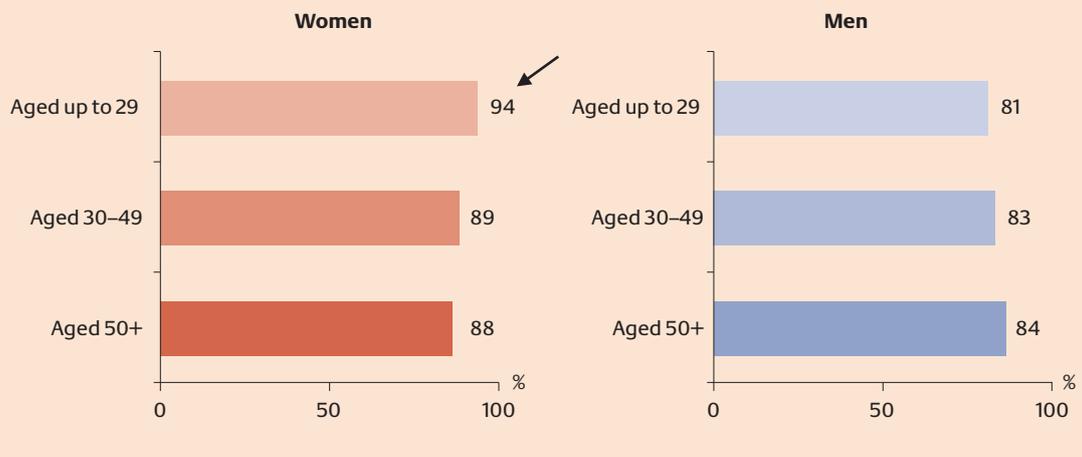


86% of the population (89% of women and 83% of men) are adamant that the deficits and problems still existing today in relation to gender equity in society must be resolved. The widespread conviction is that social cohesion can only be lastingly secured if women and men have fair opportunities.

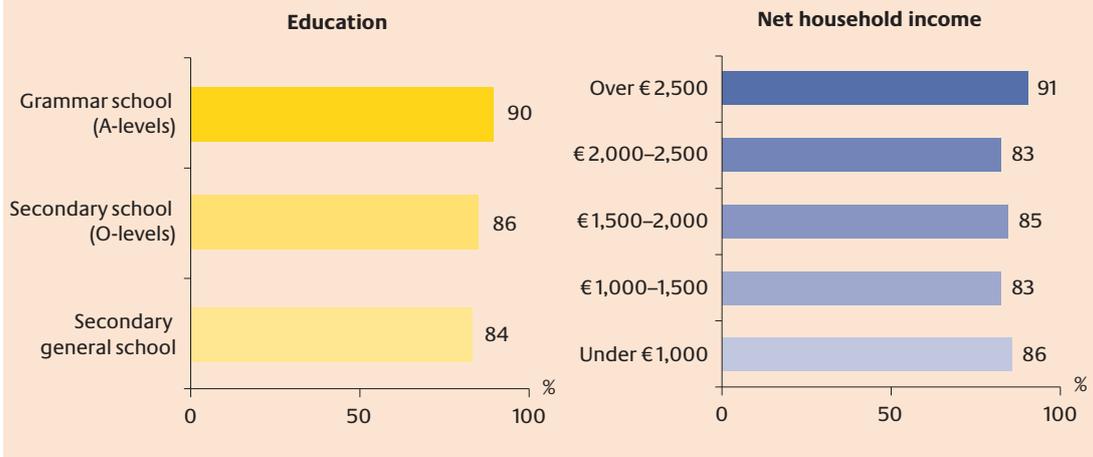
Policies geared to gender equity and fair opportunities today no longer split the population into camps of opposing interests and philosophies. Rather, there is a great consensus of opinion throughout the population – among women and men, in all age groups, in all educational and income groups, in urban centres and rural areas, and among voters of all parties:⁵

- 3 Justice as fairness – Gender equity as equality of opportunities: In this respect, there are close links to the findings of social philosopher John Rawls: *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass. 1971. Cf. also: Habermas, Jürgen: *Die Einbeziehung des Anderen. Studien zur politischen Theorie*. Frankfurt/Main 1997, p. 65–127 (Kapitel II: Politischer Liberalismus – Eine Auseinandersetzung mit John Rawls). Sen, Amartya: *Globale Gerechtigkeit. Jenseits internationaler Fairness*. In: Beck, U./Pfoerl, A. (eds.): *Grosse Armut, grosser Reichtum. Zur Transnationalisierung sozialer Ungleichheit*. Frankfurt/Main 2010, p. 653–665.
- 4 This was examined by using differently formulated questions: one-half of the respondents were given a list of statements using the formulation “gender equity”, while the statements for the other half of the respondents used the formulation “fair opportunities for women and men”. The responses of the two groups to the individual statements are almost identical, as revealed by statistical significance tests (the percentage differences were no greater than two percentage points). This is an indicator that people see the concepts “gender equity” and “fair opportunities for women and men” as being largely synonymous. Consequently, the terms are also used synonymously below.
- 5 The public has a great and common understanding regarding where the individual problems lie that need to be resolved in order to achieve more gender equity. See Chapter 3 in this context.

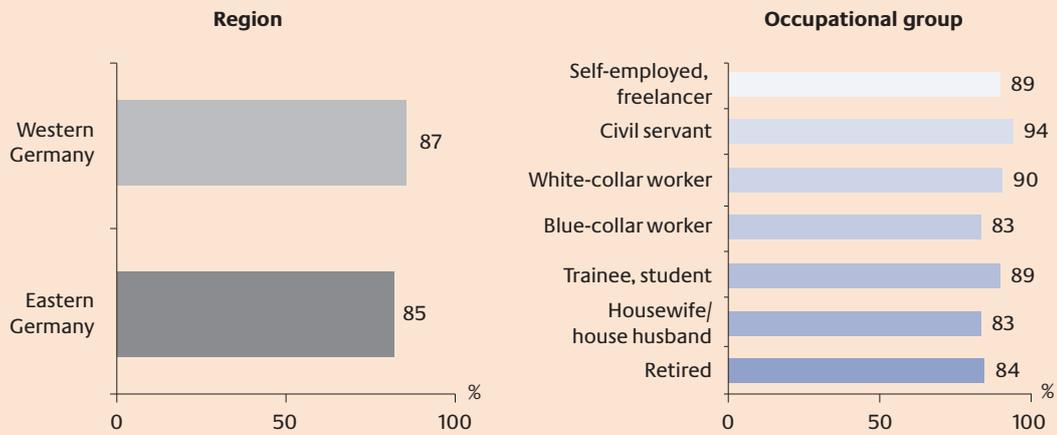
**“Gender equity/fair opportunities for women and men”:
These problems need to be resolved for the cohesion of society!**



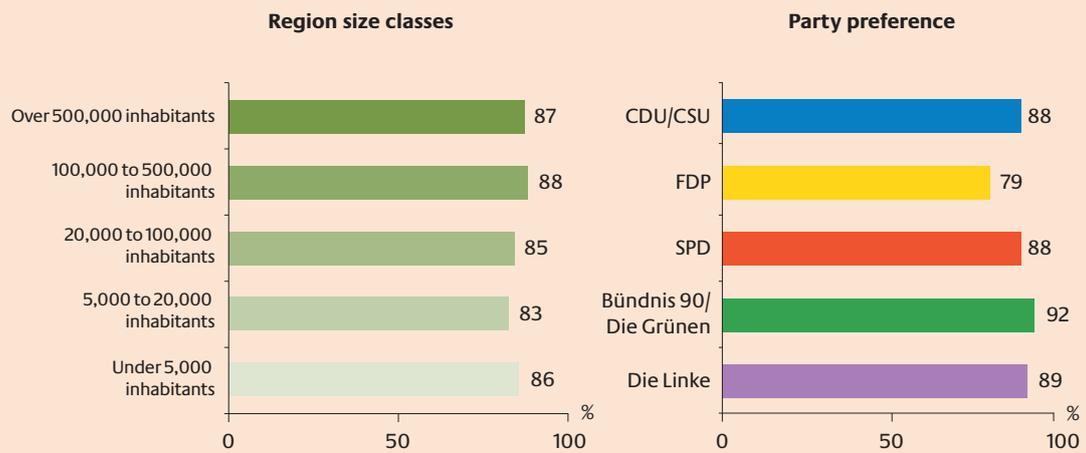
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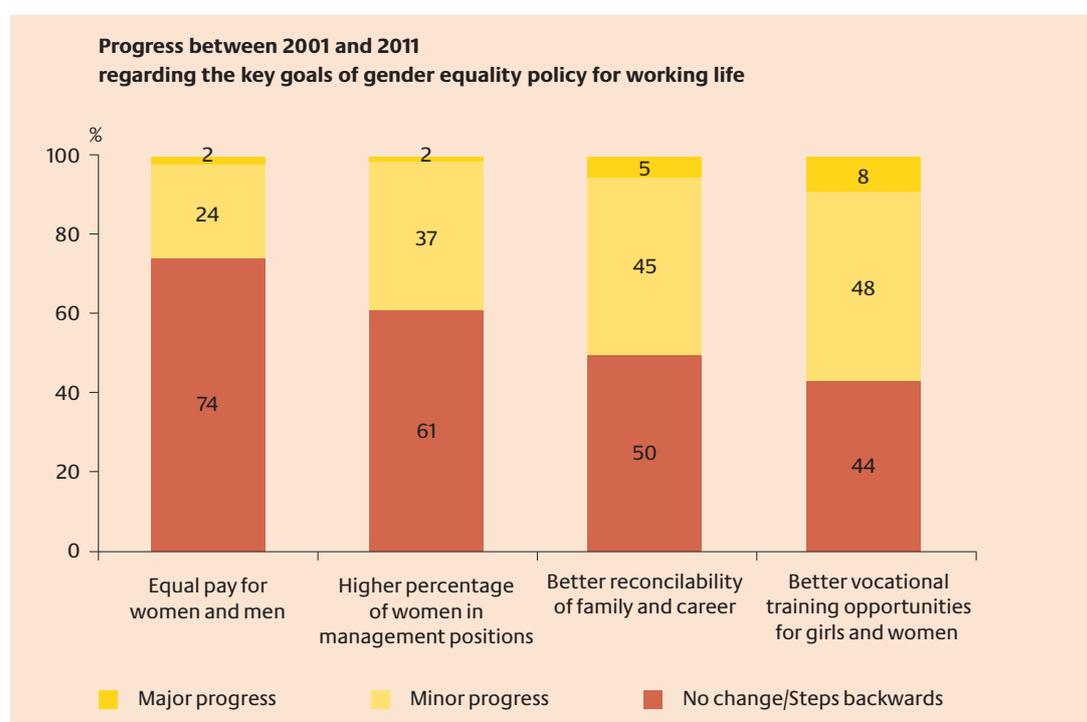
The charts make it perfectly clear: regardless of the criterion used for differentiation, the vast majority is in favour of a policy of fair opportunities for women and men.

2.2 Current opinions of the public regarding central aims of gender equality policy

The gender equality policy agenda adopted by the Federal Government when entering the phase in which the aim was to expand women's policy into gender equality policy for women and men, is expressed – at least as regards the field of working life – in the agenda of the Agreement on Equal Opportunities signed in 2001. This agreement between the Federal Government and the central associations of German business focused on four fields of action:⁶

1. Improved participation of women and girls in vocational training
2. Better reconcilability of family and career
3. More women in management positions
4. Equal pay for women and men

Taking these four target dimensions as a basis, it is found that public perception of goal achievement in gender equality policy is highly differentiated. For each of these sectors, people sensitively and specifically identify whether and to what extent there has been a change (improvement, stagnation, steps backwards). In general, the public perception is that only slight progress has tended to be made as regards the four topics of the agreement. Above all, the fact that pay differences between women and men continue to exist, and the low percentage of women in management positions, are seen as being “frozen” states.



⁶ In this context, cf. the Fourth Assessment of the Agreement “Erfolgreiche Initiativen unterstützen – Potenziale aufzeigen”, published to mark its 10th anniversary. Published by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Berlin 2011, p. 9.

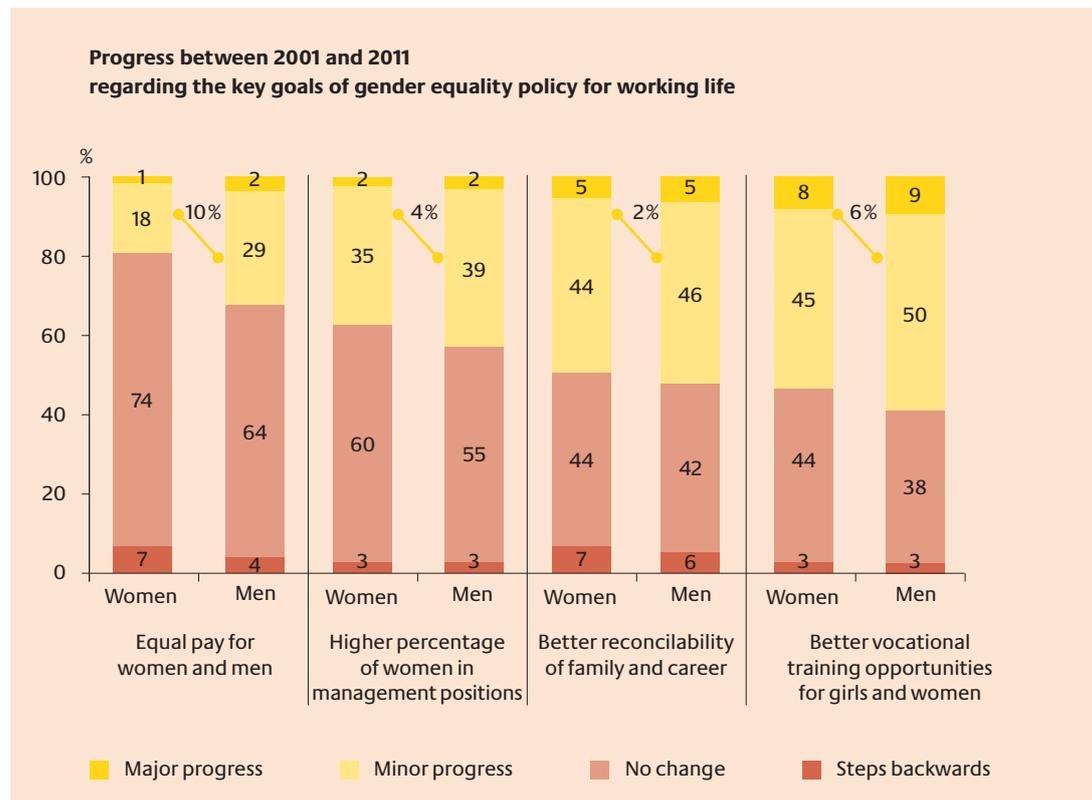
Just under two-thirds of the population (61%) see neither minor nor major progress in the field of action **“More women in management positions”**. On the subject of **“Equal pay”**, even three-quarters of the population (74%) are of the opinion that nothing has happened in the past 10 years.

Regarding the goal of **“Reconcilability of family and career”**, half of the population sees at least some progress – although 50% also only see stagnation. The public has noticed the greatest change in connection with the subject of **“Better vocational training opportunities for girls and women”**, where the starting level in 2001 was already good compared to the other fields of action: 56% of the population can see progress in this quarter, 44% seeing no change.

A sensitive group of currently or potentially affected persons establishes that there have even been steps backwards in certain areas in the last 10 years: for example, in connection with the subject of “Reconcilability of family and career”, 10% of women between the ages of 30 and 39 perceive that the situation has even deteriorated. It is particularly in this phase of life that couples who started on an equal footing, and with the perspective of a partnership based on equality, experience that, owing to seemingly rational decisions (who is going to interrupt their gainful employment when the first child is born; who does so when the second/third child arrives – and for how long? Who is then to assume the tasks in the home, who is responsible for the family income? Who is to be in Tax Bracket 3, who in Bracket 5?), they get caught in the trap of gender role retraditionalisation – although both partners originally began with a (life course) perspective based on equality and wanted to live a role model based on partnership (family and career – for both!). It is often not until women are already living in a retraditionalised division of roles that they painfully experience the obstacles and barriers that emerge when attempting to return to their occupation, that career and family are, after all, more difficult to reconcile than they had previously assumed, and that the financial consequences of a lengthy interruption of gainful employment, or of a reduced number of working hours after returning to work, will have a noticeable, lifelong impact. The structures are often resistant. In fact, however, more than half of the women returning to work still have more than 20, 25 or even 30 years of employment biography before them – with the motives of earning money to secure the family’s livelihood and to make provision for their own old age, and also of setting themselves ambitious goals, and possibly also making a career for themselves, as thoroughly qualified specialists. The reconcilability of family and career is an insufficient but necessary condition in this respect. Very many women returning to work currently underestimate their partner’s potential for relieving the burden on them and are cautious about demanding this renewed redistribution of family responsibilities in the phase of returning to work.

On the subject of **“Equal pay”**, 5% of the population in Western Germany and 11% of that in Eastern Germany diagnosed steps backwards in 2011, compared to 2001. The unadjusted pay gap in Germany – i. e. the simple comparison of the gross hourly wages of women and men, disregarding different qualifications, occupations or employment biographies – has for some time remained almost constant at 23%. The adjusted pay gap (disregarding family-related interruptions of employment) is still roughly 8%. Women are particularly sensitive to the subject of unequal pay: because the pay gap gets ever bigger in the course of their

lives and careers (especially following family-related interruptions of employment), women in the middle and later phases of employment are particularly critical, being affected themselves, and can see no improvements in this respect. However, as a result of the critical, public debate on the subject in the context of the gender equality policy of recent years, *younger women are also equally sensitised* today: 74% of women under the age of 30 can perceive no change towards equal pay, and a further 9% are even of the opinion that steps backwards are to be seen.

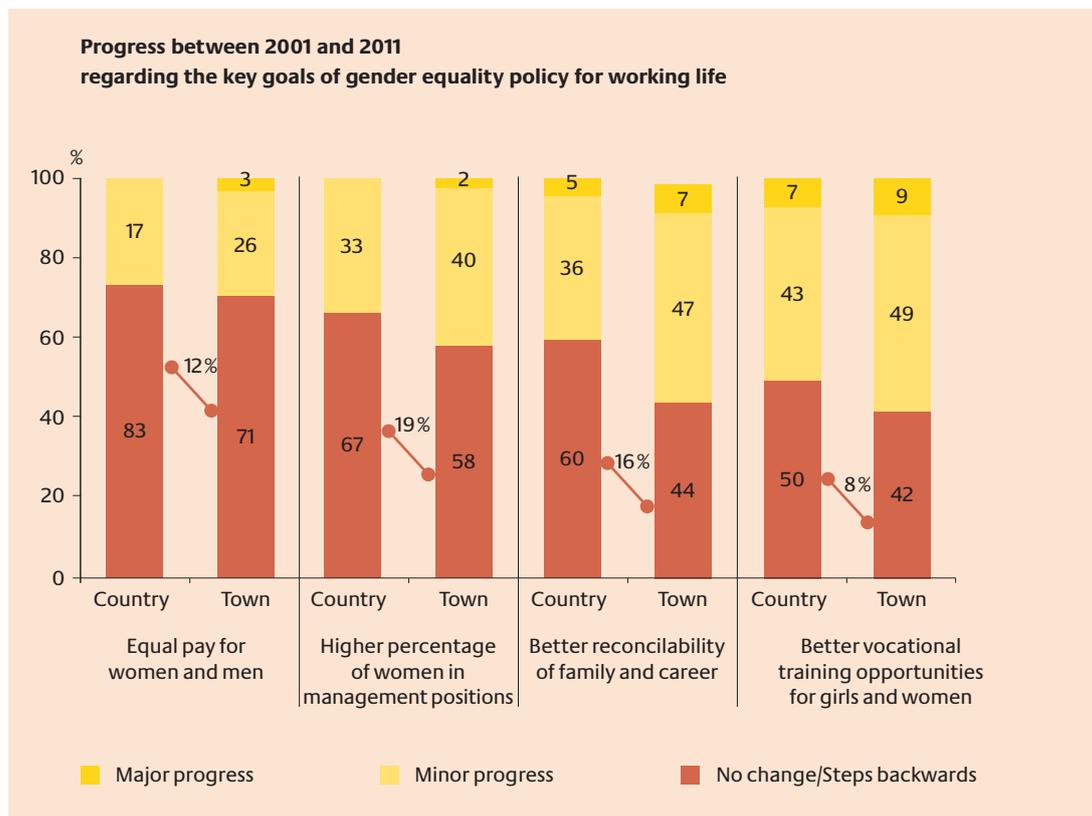


The majority of **men** (over 90%) arrive at the same diagnosis as women as regards the four surveyed goals for achieving equal opportunities: no steps backwards. Roughly 5 to 10% of men display the reflex of globally perceiving changes in society in all sectors as being only to the benefit of women, expressing the view: that ought to be enough! But these men are a minority: it is worth noting that women and men generally have the same perception as regards the successes and deficits of gender equity, and that, when it comes to gender equality issues, women have the *solidarity of men* – in all age groups.

At the levels of the normative principle (equality between women and men) and of concrete goals (equal pay, women in management positions, reconcilability of family and career, equal vocational training and career opportunities for girls and boys), men do not set up a front against women (and vice versa). This is a success of modern gender equality policy, which has developed from originally pure (and initially necessary) women's policy into *gender equality policy for women and men*.

But: These successes of a change of awareness in the hearts and minds of women and men have not yet been fully implemented in the structures of the labour market, in everyday life in the private setting, and in new role patterns. In the male-dominated boardrooms in industry, firmly rooted, self-reproducing mentality patterns act as the guardians of the glass ceiling and as a barrier to women; for women returning to work, mini-jobs (low-paid, part-time work) frequently prove to be no bridge on the way to regular employment, but far too often a dead end – they encourage unequal pay, consolidate the traditional division of roles, are unsuitable for securing the family’s financial livelihood and increase women’s risk of poverty in old age.

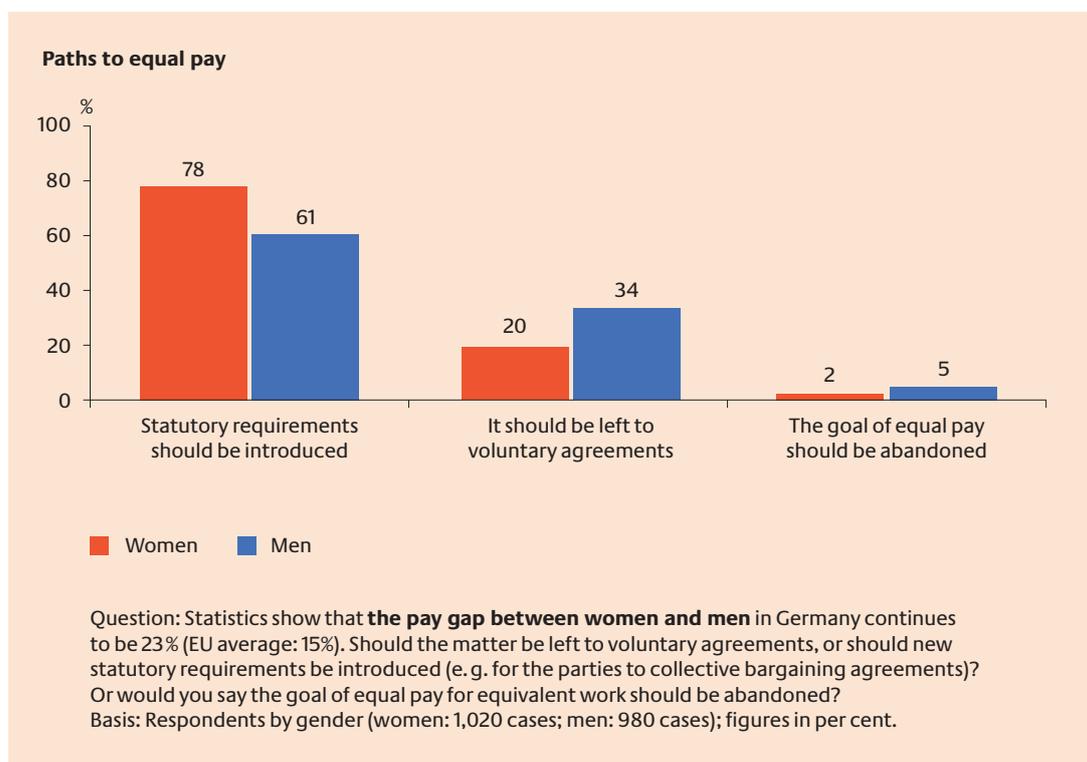
The diagnosis is dramatic when **comparing town and country** – the difference is substantial: in the opinion of people *in rural regions*, the vocational training opportunities for girls and women have not improved in the last 10 years (no change: 50%) – and that is the “good” news. There has been no change for 60% as regards the obstacles to the reconcilability of family and career, for 67% as regards access to management positions, and for 83% as regards unequal pay.



2.3 What the public expects of politics ...

... regarding the goal of “Equal pay”

Women and men are almost unanimously (96%) of the opinion that the goal of equal pay may not be abandoned. In this context, two-thirds of women put their hopes in statutory requirements (e. g. for the parties to collective bargaining agreements).



... regarding the goal of “More women in management positions”

Although the demand for “More women in management positions” has a far less direct effect on women and men in the great mass of the population than the pay gap between the sexes, the public’s views in relation to this goal are again surprisingly unanimous. The subject undisputedly belongs in the catalogue of important topics for gender equality policy (cf. Chapter 3.1). In order to increase the proportion of women in management positions, there is a need – and the majority of the public is convinced of this – for further improvement of the reconcilability of family and career and additionally (!) for statutory regulations. The conviction is that the reconcilability of family and career must be ensured; however, that alone is not an effective instrument and not powerful enough to break through the glass ceiling.

With an eye to the results of gender equality policy since 2001 and the importance attached to a society where gender equity prevails, 70% of the German population expect politicians to come up with a combination of intensified efforts to achieve reconcilability of family and

career with targeted **statutory regulations** in gender equality policy. Moreover, 32% would like to see politicians additionally take action to support the **change of the role of men** in society (e. g. assumption of family tasks).

One-third of men (32%) believes that the key to solving the problem lies solely in the reconcilability of family and career. However, almost two-thirds of men (62%) are today convinced that this falls short of the target and that, in order to really achieve anything, statutory measures are a necessary step in the efforts to offer women fair career prospects.

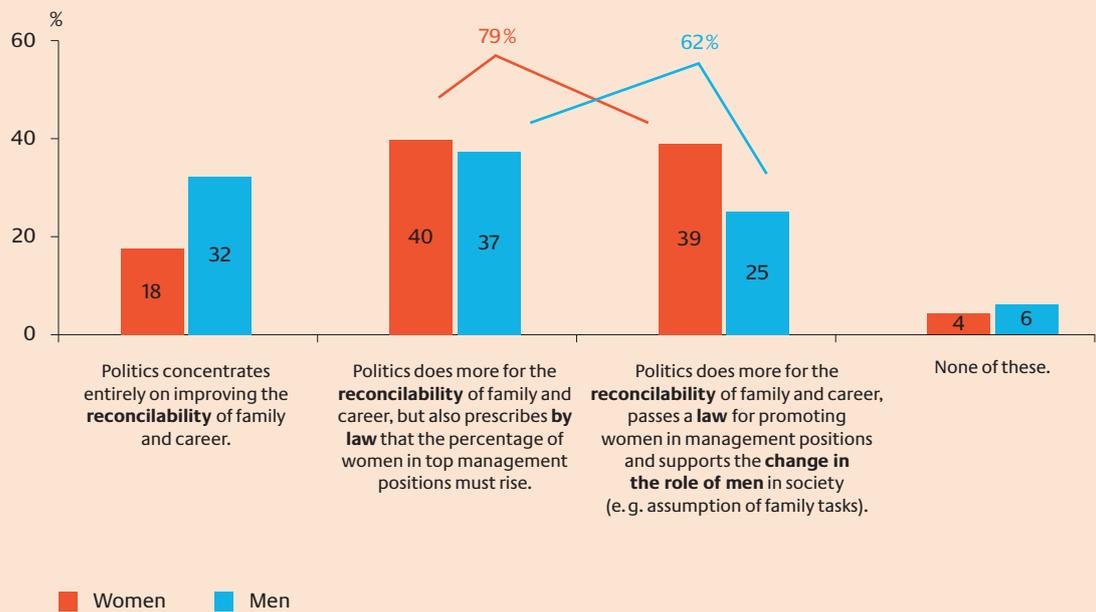
Eighteen per cent of women (predominantly over-60s; singles, no children) are of the opinion that improving the reconcilability of family and career is sufficient for achieving the goal of better career opportunities for women. In contrast, 79% of women are convinced that, in addition to family-friendly framework conditions, statutory measures are necessary today to promote equal participation of women in top management. This is a conviction of women (with a family) in all age groups, occupational groups, educational strata, and also across party boundaries: among women who vote CDU/CSU, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and SPD.⁷

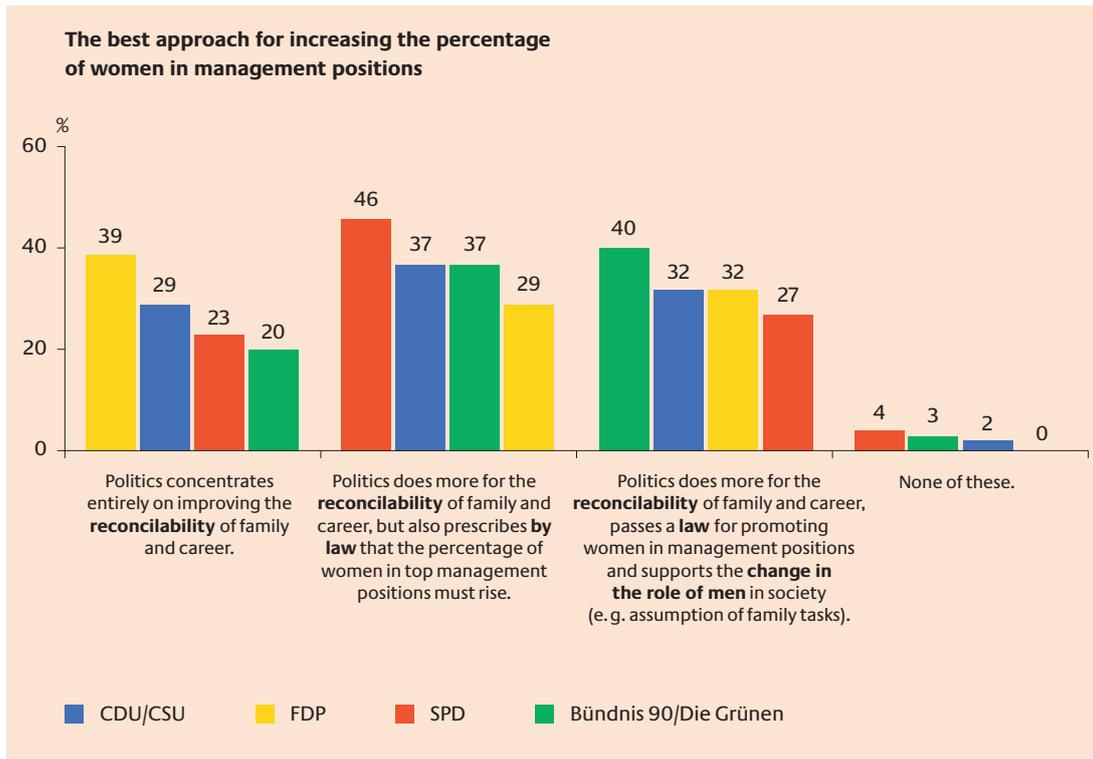
⁷ Women and men with a preference for the FDP are a slight exception in this context: among them, more than one-third is of the opinion that the goal of career promotion can be achieved without statutory regulations, solely by promoting the reconcilability of family and career; 29%, however, advocate additional statutory measures, a further 32% are in favour of statutory measures plus support of a change in the role of men.

The best approach for increasing the percentage of women in management positions



The best approach for increasing the percentage of women in management positions





Conclusion: The public is disillusioned, and also impatient, in its assessment of goal achievement in connection with long-standing topics of gender equality policy for overcoming concrete inequities between women and men. Particularly women, but also men, expect politicians to launch further initiatives. In this context, **the absolute majority also advocates “tougher” measures, e.g. in the form of laws.** Politicians are called upon to enforce the goals of gender equality if and because things are not moving, or moving too slowly, towards equal participation “on their own” or solely on the basis of voluntary commitments.



A sustainable policy of fair opportunities for women and men

3.1 Wide range of tasks

Women and men in Germany appear to consider it clear that existing injustices between the sexes are a threat to social cohesion, and they deduce a call for political action from this fact: if politicians want to strengthen social cohesion, they must tackle the injustices between the sexes that continue to exist.

People have clear ideas about what needs to be done in order to promote fair opportunities for women and men. For women and men, gender equity means **mutual fairness**. Women are today no longer only occupied with safeguarding the interests of women, but also with the interests of the other sex. On the other hand, at least at the attitude level, men today no longer see the equality of women as a threat to their own chances and freedoms, but as a just and justified goal that is in line with their own ideas of a partnership based on an equal footing, relieves them of the burden of being the principal family breadwinner, and offers them new opportunities to have time for both career *and* family.

It is clear to women and men today that their respective **living situations and life opportunities are interconnected** (“linked lives”), and that mutually ensuring fair opportunities is one element contributing to the cohesion of a partnership, a family and society as a whole. That is what people mean by fair opportunities today: fairness between women and men.

From the point of view of the population, **gender equity** is not an abstract principle and not a diffuse feeling, but **very concrete**. In this respect, people identify a host of topics, deficits and challenges in connection with gender equality policy in various fields. From the point of view of the public, the thematic programme of politics for women and men today has to be far broader than it was just five years ago. In this context, people mention both topics that have already been on the agenda of women’s policy for a long time (violence against women, equal participation of women in political offices), and topics that became more clear in the phase of gender equality policy (unequal pay, men as fathers), as well as issues whose topicality arises more from a life-course perspective and whose importance is growing again in a society of longevity (security for women in old age). The range of topics emerging here is, on the one hand, multidimensional. On the other hand, however, the topics are clearly not unconnected and isolated, but closely linked to each other. The results cast a new light on the “task of gender equality policy of influencing the intertemporal and interpersonal distribution of time and money”.⁸ Implementing gender equality policy in

⁸ First Report on Gender Equality in Germany: New Pathways – Equal Opportunities. Gender Equality over Women’s and Men’s Life Courses. Bundestag printed paper 17/6240, dated 16.06.2011, p. 32.

this situation means considering long-term periods of time (security in old age), offering support at turning points in life (occupational reintegration) and ensuring that phases of gainful employment, care work and education can be integrated in the life course in such a way that, for example, interruptions of employment “leave no scars in the life history”.⁹



9 Ibid.

One success of the gender equality policy of recent years is the extensive consensus between women and men regarding all these topics. The assessments of women and men are very close together, there are no major differences. Though the agreement levels of women are always higher than those of men, still **more than half of all men** are convinced **on each of these topics** that they are **important for gender equity**. In the past – *at the start of women's policy* – the topics were generally rated as specific interests of and for women. It can also be seen as confirmation of gender equality policy that questions of gender equity are perceived as being relevant both to women and to men. From the point of view of the public, the following political tasks are of eminent importance for the overall subject and goal of fair opportunities for women and men:

1. The pay gap between women and men must be closed. Women must receive the same pay as men for the same or equivalent work. That is demanded not only by women, but also by men: a) for reasons of social justice, b) out of solidarity with their partners, c) because it also relieves them of the burden of being the principal earners or because they know that growing numbers of women are (temporarily) taking over the role of family breadwinner.¹⁰
2. Women who interrupt their gainful employment for family-related reasons must have the same social security as men in old age.
3. Occupational reintegration following a (lengthy) family-related interruption of employment must be made easier, since it makes a substantial contribution to safeguarding the financial livelihood of the family and to women's own security in old age. That calls for fair and equal income prospects for women returning to work.
4. More women in management positions is a demand of 97% of the women, but also of 80% of the men taking part in the survey.

In addition to these “classical” gender equality topics, the public is of the opinion that new topics are also of importance for gender equity in Germany:

- 95% of women and 91% of men say – when asked about the urgent topics for a policy for greater gender equity – that businesses must give consideration to the fact that men are also fathers and would like to be there for their children/families. This reveals **new gender roles** that also assign men tasks relating to child-raising, care and the family.
- 92% of women and 79% of men demand that **family tasks must be divided on a partnership basis** between women and men – from looking after the children to doing the laundry.
- For 87% of women and 77% of men, it is a matter of gender equity **to relieve the burden on men in the role of the traditional principal breadwinner**. At the same time, however, they are of the opinion that a change of this kind is impeded by a cultural-economic system of traditional role patterns and structural barriers on the labour market.

¹⁰ Cf. Wippermann, Carsten: Zeit für Wiedereinstieg – Potenziale und Perspektiven. Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Berlin 2011, p. 39 ff.

- | The **changing role of men** (“*What comes after the breadwinner model?*”) is increasingly becoming a central topic of gender equality policy. Both the relief of men of the sole responsibility as the principal earner, and the specific support of boys at school and when choosing a career (Boys’ Day), demand a programmatic **life-course policy for men and boys** that is systematically based on structures and everyday cultures.
- | **Mini-jobs** (400-Euro jobs), which the legislature intended to serve as a bridge to the labour market, **must** not lead to women being unable to get a regular job subject to compulsory social insurance: mini-jobs must not provide the wrong incentives and turn out to be an occupational dead end. That is important to 97% of women and 94% of men when it comes to ensuring gender equity. At the moment, mini-jobs tend more to result in stigmatisation on the labour market; they are associated with temporal, social and financial disadvantages and conceal illicit work.¹¹
- | The funding of **household-related services** is demanded, particularly in order to relieve the pressure of time on women before, during and after returning to work, and as a way of promoting the gainful employment of women in general, especially in rural regions.
- | There is a call for more **men as educators in child day-care centres**, in order to give girls and boys the experience of both female and male role models.
- | Changes in the **free co-insurance of spouses** in health insurance: the higher the health insurance contributions become, the more this can impede the return of (married) women to work in regular employment subject to compulsory social insurance.

Despite the young “career” of many of these topics, more than half of all women and men today already demand solutions to them and consider them to be of decisive importance in relation to the future viability of our society. There is an extensive consensus of opinion on all these aspects, across generations, among women and men from all strata and milieus, and also across party boundaries!

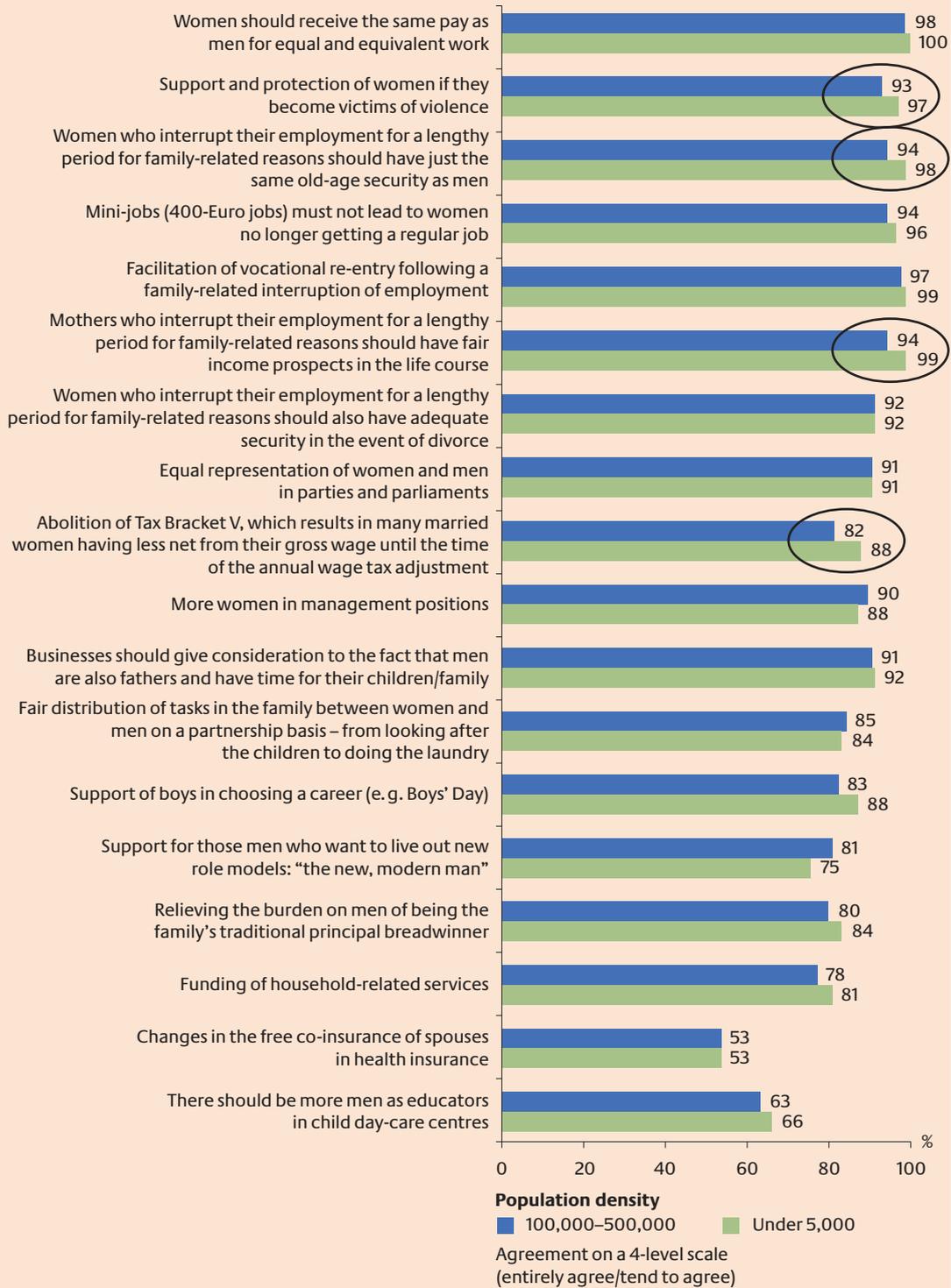
Those topics that were considered to be specific concerns of higher classes with urbane views of life and lifestyles 25 years ago, and still even 10 years ago, are today concerns of every group of the population. Gender equity is today far from being a subject only for women and men in towns and cities, but is also considered to be an important social and political task by the population in rural regions. Most of the topics of gender equity are even more important to women and men in **rural regions** than to those in urban centres. This particularly relates to:

- | Support and protection of women as victims of violence.
- | Financial security in old age for women who, for family-related reasons, were never gainfully employed, interrupted their employment for a lengthy period, or were only employed in part-time, low-wage jobs.
- | Fair income prospects for women with a family-related interruption of employment.
- | Abolition of Tax Bracket V, which results in many married women having less net from their gross wage until the time of the annual wage tax adjustment.

¹¹ Result of a qualitative social-science study by the DELTA-Institut in 2011 on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Tasks of a policy for gender equity/fair opportunities

Breakdown: town/country

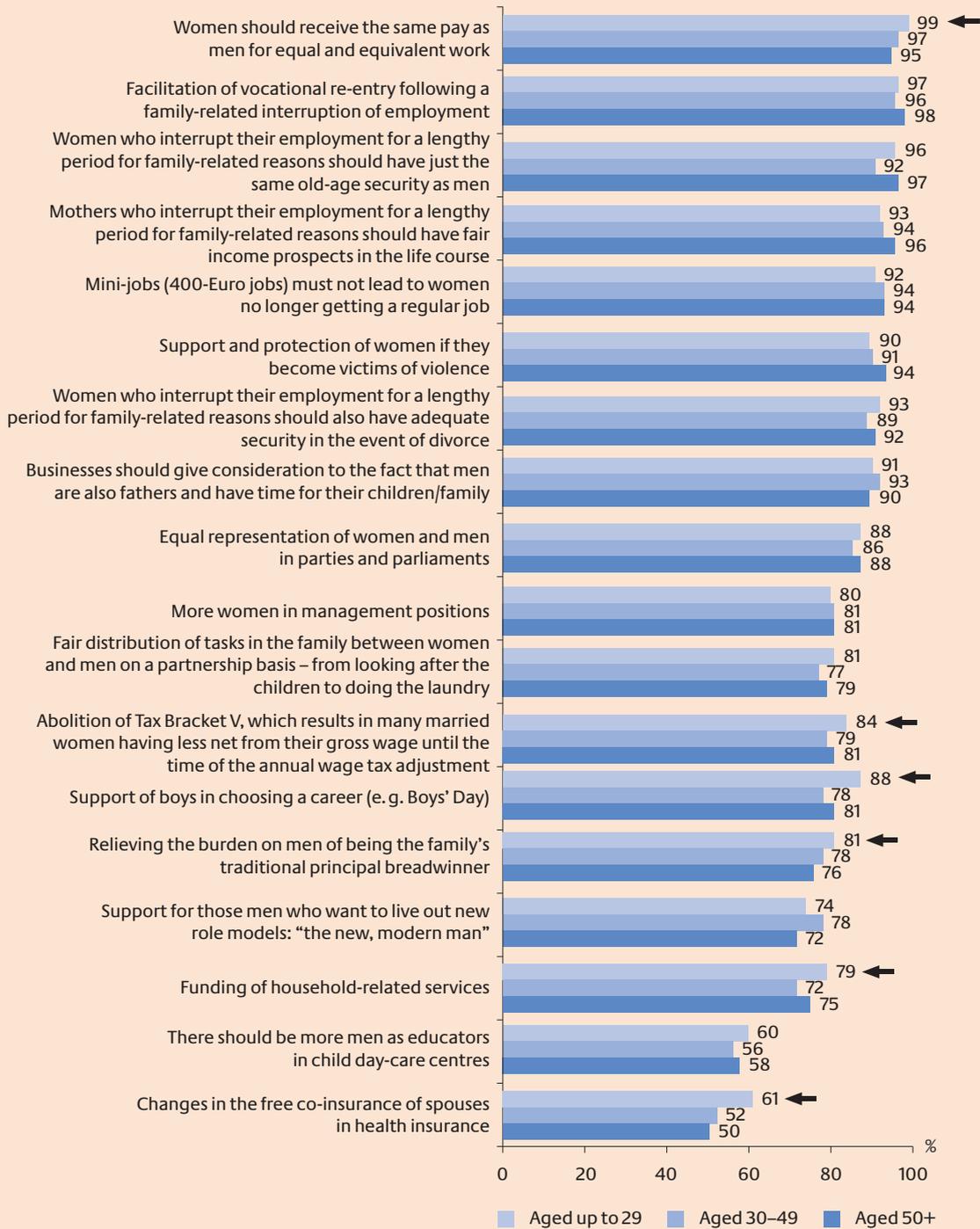


There is also extensive agreement between the generations regarding the relevance of these topics for the issues of fairness and gender equity. It can at the same time be seen that the **younger age groups** (e. g. up to 30 years of age), in particular, focus even more than older age groups on: 1.) equal pay for equal and equivalent work; 2.) support of boys in choosing a career; 3.) relief of the burden on men of being the traditional principal breadwinner of the family; 4.) funding of household-related services; 5.) change in the free co-insurance of spouses in health insurance.

There are signs that younger generations not only examine the current situation and assess it on the basis of equity issues, but also more emphatically **demand an opportunity and life-course perspective geared to change and the future.**

Tasks of a policy for gender equity/fair opportunities

Breakdown: age groups



Agreement on a 4-level scale (entirely agree/tend to agree)

3.2 Priorities of a policy of fair opportunities for women and men

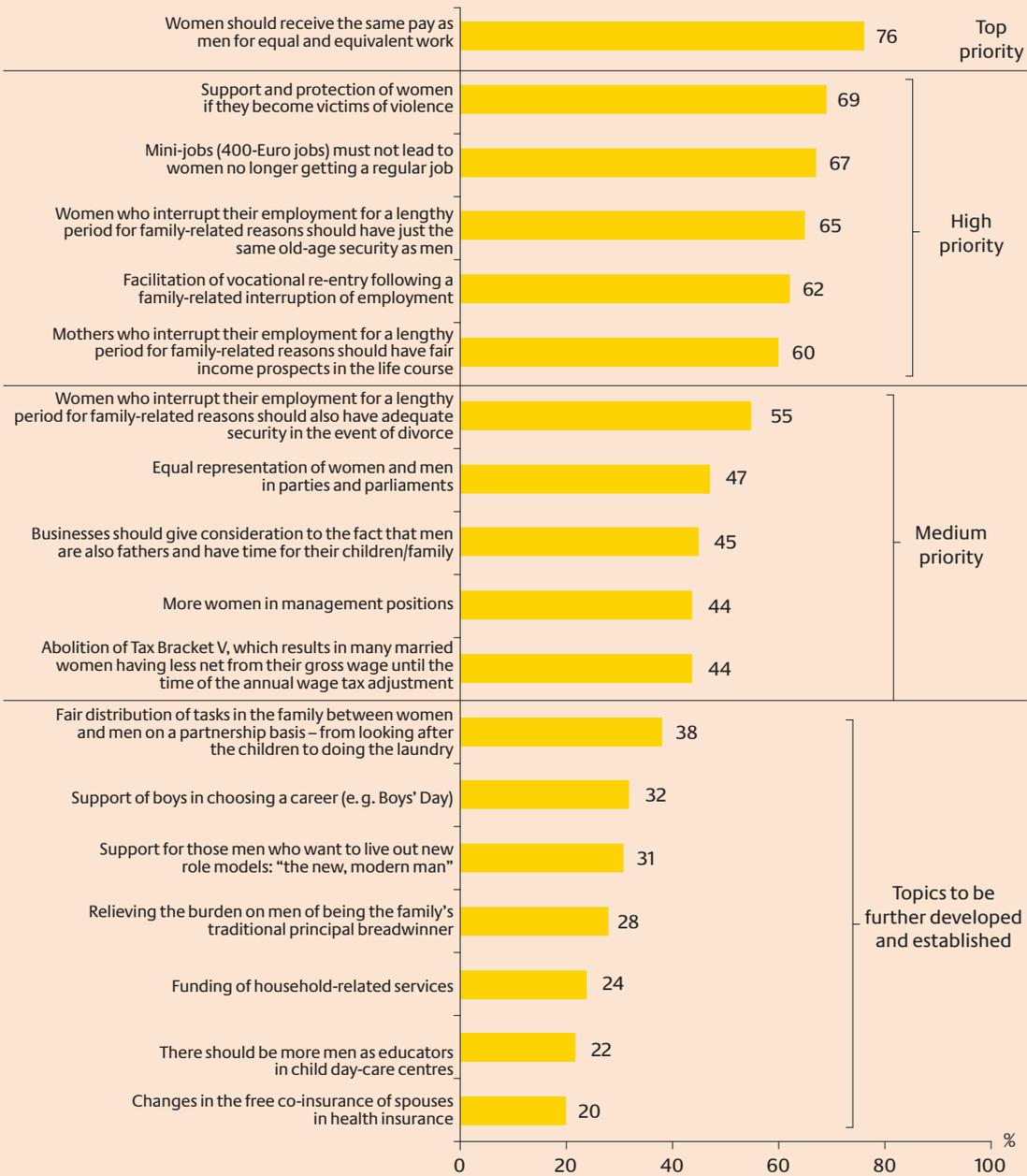
The topics and the expected political action derived therefrom cover a wide range of subjects, but have different priorities from the point of view of the population. For the public, there is one **top issue** above all else: equal pay for equal/equivalent work. Above all this means that there is an urgent need to upgrade so-called “classical women’s occupations” in the child-raising and care sectors.

Only after that are women and men of the opinion that the following topics are of **great relevance and urgency**:

1. Support and protection of women if they become victims of violence.
2. Mini-jobs must not lead to women no longer being able to get a regular job.
3. Financial security in old age for women who interrupted their gainful employment for several years for family-related reasons.
4. Facilitation of occupational reintegration following a family-related interruption of employment.
5. Fair income prospects in the life course for women who interrupt their gainful employment for a lengthy period of time.

Priority tasks of a policy for gender equity/fair opportunities from the point of view of the public

Top box of a 4-level scale (entirely agree)



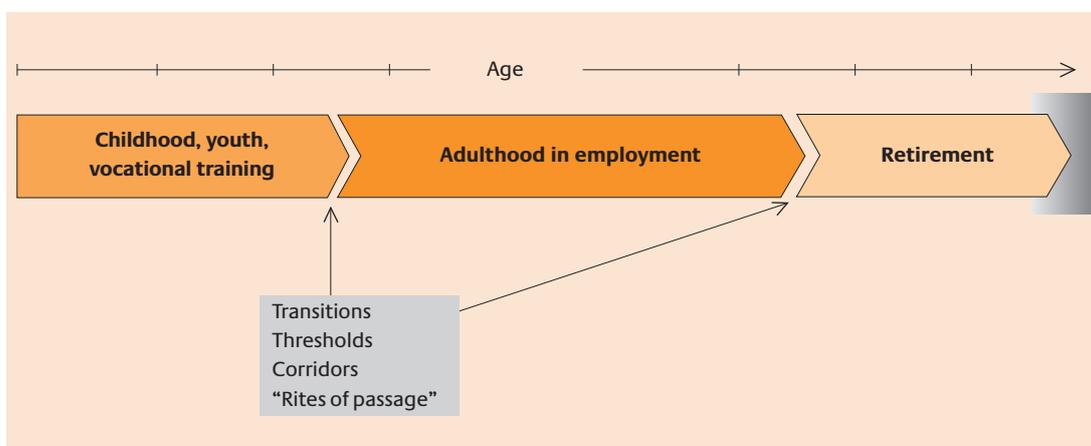
The investigation of social inequality is no longer based on snapshots, but examines the entire life course. It is only when studied from this longitudinal point of view that the consequences of events in life, and of decisions taken in different phases of life, become clear.¹²

¹² Cf. First Report on Gender Equality in Germany: New Pathways – Equal Opportunities. Gender Equality over Women's and Men's Life Courses. Bundestag printed paper 17/6240, dated 16.06.2011, p. 39.

It must be borne in mind in this context that the individualisation and pluralisation of views of life and actual life courses has led to the pluralisation

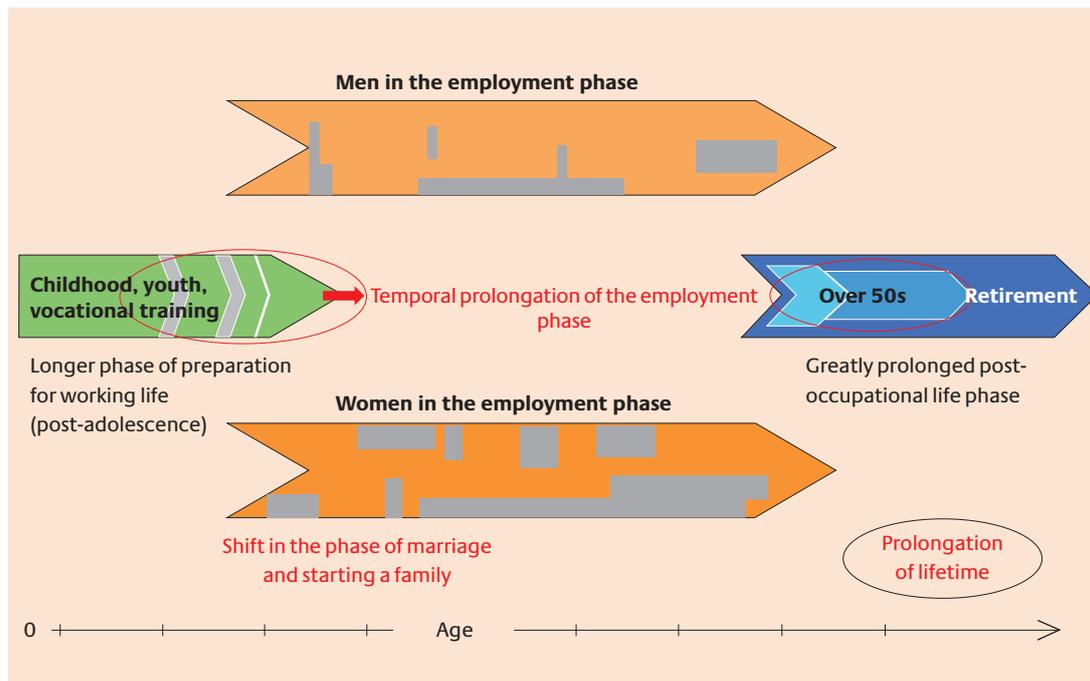
- a) of the life courses of women and men and,
- b) in a milieu-specific fashion, of the sociocultural perspectives on life courses (biographic plans).

The issue of the different institutionalisation of **life courses of women** and men was for a long time ignored by life-course research, or at most dealt with as a marginal item. The “gender-blind” three-stage life-course model distinguishes between the phases of I.) Childhood, youth, vocational training; II.) Adulthood in gainful employment, III.) Retirement. It implicitly assumes the traditional division of roles and is focused on the **life courses of men**.



“Even if an attempt is made in the case of women to give particular consideration to family-related interruptions in a corresponding model of the life course, female employment biographies are in reality so varied that not even a five-step life course (vocational training – employment – family – employment – retirement) can be clearly defined.”¹³ As a result of pluralisation and individualisation, there are: 1.) temporal shifts and extensions of the phases, 2.) overlaps between the phases, 3.) discontinuities within the phases, resulting in perforation of the life courses, these generally being very different for women and men in terms of form and duration, principal, secondary and long-term consequences, 4.) also individualisation of the thresholds, transitions and courses.

13 Cf. Naegele, Gerhard (ed.): Soziale Lebenslaufpolitik. Wiesbaden 2010.



Depending on the position in the social hierarchy and the setting, the possibilities for women and men in the individual phases of life and at the individual thresholds open up (or are limited) to different degrees. In this context, decisions taken (separately or jointly) in earlier phases of life play a substantial (prejudicing) role, are often irreversible and – for the individual – are hard to compensate for after the event. The consequences of discontinuities in the life course during the employment phase that are of sociopolitical and setting-related relevance include the following:

- | *Interruptions of employment* reduce future earned-income opportunities and pension expectations.
- | Occupational groups that have a *low level of qualification* and are exposed to particularly great burdens retire earlier and have to accept higher actuarial deductions.
- | *Low-earners* have a greater risk of a premature reduction in earning capacity.
- | *Precarious employment relationships* and (long-term) unemployment increase the risk of permanent economic undersupply and poverty in old age.
- | *Care work for children and long-term care work* for one's own parents impair later occupational opportunities and pay.
- | The *biographic patterns of divorced women* display a particularly high risk of inadequate security in old age, since it is often the case that neither derived nor independent pension claims have been acquired.
- | *Part-time work* reduces later career and earned-income opportunities, as well as one's own pension claims.
- | *Job profiles* and the associated career opportunities (implicitly) presuppose certain family and role models.

This outlined tableau of gender-specific institutionalisation, individualisation and re-institutionalisation of life courses has led to a *diversity of normality biographies* with *respectively different consequences and perspectives* in the life course for women and men. It is therefore not surprising that the different social milieus in society each have their own life-course perspectives, too. Some milieus are characterised by the normality and security of the three-stage life-course model, while for other milieus, the perforation of life courses is the normal perspective and has no negative connotations for them. The milieu perspective clearly reveals the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous of opposite and sometimes contradictory life-course plans. People in the social milieus have very different preferences for life plans – and they react very differently when their actual life courses do not match their life plans. In this context, not only are the material and cultural resources distributed very unequally between the milieus, but also the notions regarding their individual and joint – private and occupational – life courses. See the Appendix for the main structural and cultural lines of life-course perspectives in the milieu landscape.¹⁴

¹⁴ Cf. Wippermann, Carsten: *Milieus in Bewegung. Werte, Sinn, Religion und Ästhetik in Deutschland*. Würzburg 2011.

IV.

From gender equality policy to a policy of fair opportunities

Against the backdrop of this plurality of gender-specific and milieu-specific life courses and life-course perspectives, the need arose to further develop the previous gender equality policy.

The switch from women's policy to gender equality policy began to also pay attention to men and "*took them on board*".¹⁵ In this process, however, it all too often stuck to the concept of a status comparison, which many women and men (especially from socioculturally young milieus) tend to see as being old-fashioned and outdated: "gender equality policy" is in fact (or at least the way younger addressees understand it) about establishing equality, i. e. about the corrective adjustment of the situation of women to that of men in relation to status attributes (employment, income, etc.). This seemingly static and sociotechnocratic form of social policy is increasingly less in accordance with the dynamic life concepts of young people and their experience of the interdependence of decisions.

Today, women and men in the young generations and milieus are no longer concerned with equal rights (which are taken for granted) and equal status (a status comparison is often hardly plausible in view of the dynamic nature of people's lives), but with **justice and fair opportunities for both sexes in the course of life**.

Against this backdrop, the concepts of "gender equality" and "gender equality policy" easily acquire a horizon of meaning for younger women and men that is foreign to them, that does not express their expectations in *the* concept that they associate with a policy for greater gender equity, and that also does not fit in with their view of life and their understanding of politics. After all, "gender equality policy" suggests that there is a defined goal and yardstick, to which women and men are to be *adjusted*, that politics assumes the task of actively structuring the process of establishing gender equality.¹⁶ However, the self-image of people today is that they actively take their own individual and joint decisions themselves in accordance with their individual goals and concepts of partnership, family and

15 This approach was taken up – also figuratively – by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in the material entitled 'Gleich geht's weiter', which is intended for use in schools. The material is available from the Ministry. The information package includes a postcard showing two young people – a young woman and a young man – who are literally sitting in the same boat. They are also obviously "equal" – equally strong. However, they lack a common life perspective and direction!

16 In addition, the concept of "equality" has become increasingly blurred in the context of the diversity debate of recent years, no longer primarily meaning the equality of women and men, but also the equality of people with disabilities, migrants, etc. As a result, however, the current issues of gender equity remain in the realms of comparing status and securing status.

gainful employment. Women and men *do not want to be made equal*, but rather to individually structure their lives as equals and steer their lives as partners. It is clear to them in this context that they – as women and men – may be affected differently by direct and indirect secondary and long-term consequences of decisions and can often not even predict them adequately (because the economic, legal and social framework conditions are changing faster all the time).

Therefore, politics is expected to create a framework that ensures that, in an uncertain and open future, **social structures, and the secondary and long-term consequences of decisions and arrangements, do not generate a one-sided disadvantage for women or men.**¹⁷ This means that the dynamic processes in the life course of women and men must be politically perceived and – preventively and remedially – structured in such a way that **fair opportunities in life and a fair distribution of risks for both sexes** are created and secured. This in no way releases the state into a “night watchman” function, but calls upon it to take an active part in the practical enforcement of equal rights for women and men in view of the diversity of life courses.

Conclusion: Twenty-five years after the establishment of the Federal Ministry for Women, a life course-oriented policy of fair opportunities for women and men is one of the items at the top of the agenda of modern social policy. Fair opportunities between the sexes is a topic that everyone considers necessary for social cohesion! Today, however, this no longer means and demands – from the point of view of women and men alike – just “women’s policy”, and also not just “gender equality policy” aimed at achieving equal results, but a social policy geared to equality of opportunities **in the life course!**

By presenting its First Report on Gender Equality in Germany, the Federal Government made it clear that it has adopted this concern and this point of view. Its gender equality policy faces up to the demand for an integrating, longitudinal perspective. To be able to exploit the opportunities of an effective gender equality policy in the long term, the development of political measures for women and men must pay attention not only to situational improvements, but particularly also to supporting the development of new perspectives. It is a question of devising a consistent gender equality policy in a life-course perspective that pursues the goal of structuring transitions as a resource of biographic realisation opportunities. A dynamic (not status-oriented) policy of this kind develops measures that facilitate transitions, support decisions in the life course with their long-term impact, and expand the options for women and men as equals. This guiding principle also applies to projects that are – at first glance – not relevant to gender equality. In this way, a policy of fair opportunities combines gender equality policy, social and education policy to form a sustainable policy of social cohesion – gender-related disadvantages are reduced, responsibility based on partnership is strengthened.

¹⁷ In this respect, the First Report on Gender Equality in Germany already looks beyond itself. By putting the focus of a modern gender equality policy on the life-course perspective, it makes it clear that it should in future no longer simply be a question of “making” equal, but of distribution and compensation, fair/equal opportunities and risks for women and men in the life course.

This is the consistent response of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth to:

1. today's diversely fragmented life courses, in which phases of employment and unemployment, phases of single parenthood and living in a partnership, can alternate dynamically;
2. the fact that pivotal decisions in the life course are frequently not taken "alone", and have structurally different consequences for women and men;
3. the changes in key institutional and sociocultural frameworks that no longer stably shape gender relations for life;
4. the fact that, in a society of longevity, the experiences of different generations lead to a new simultaneity of the non-simultaneous, and that life courses are lastingly affected by radical, historic changes (fall of the Berlin Wall, global financial and economic crisis, etc.).¹⁸

18 This characterisation of the challenges is largely based on systematisations by Prof. Marianne Heimbach-Steins, who repeatedly provided social ethics impulses in the framework of the "Was kommt nach dem Ernährermodell?" ("What comes after the breadwinner model?") project, funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, most recently at the Final Conference on 29.11.2010 (cf. the conference documentation in: *Zeit für Verantwortung im Lebensverlauf – Politische und rechtliche Handlungsstrategien*. Brochure published by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, 2011).

V.

Appendix

Chronology of women's and gender equality 1986–2011

Women in Germany Gender equality measures and laws since 1986

January 1986

Recognition of child-raising periods in pension insurance (one year) for women born in 1921 or later.

February 1986

Guideline Concerning the Professional Advancement of Women in the Federal Administration.

June 1986

Reorganisation of the **Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Affairs and Health** to form the **Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Affairs, Women and Health**. Assignment of central coordination of women's issues, including legislative competence.

January 1987

The newly established **Department for Women's Policy** in the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Affairs, Women and Health starts work.

April 1987

The **Victim Protection Act** greatly improves the legal protection of victims of criminal offences, particularly also the victims of sex offences, in criminal proceedings.

July 1987

Amendment of the Standing Orders of the Federal Cabinet. The Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Affairs, Women and Health is granted the following, new rights of participation:

- Right of initiative
- Right to speak
- Right to request adjournment

October 1987

Act on Benefits for Child-Raising (Act on statutory pension insurance benefits for child-raising to be granted to mothers born before 1921). Mothers born before 1921 are also granted recognition of child-raising periods in pension law for each live birth.

April 1988

First Informal Minister for Women's Council of the EC in Germany.

May 1989

Appointment of a "Scientific Advisory Council for Women's Policy" at the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Affairs, Women and Health. The Advisory Council is intended to supplement the existing instruments for equal rights and provide the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Affairs, Women and Health with independent advice on matters of women's research and women's policy.

June 1989

An overall review of the **equality bodies** of the Federation, the Länder and the municipalities is presented in the form of a Report of the Federal Government.

July 1989

Extension of the child-raising allowance and child-raising leave introduced in 1986 to 15 months.

July 1990

Extension of the child-raising allowance and child-raising leave from 15 to 18 months.

September 1990

The **Federal Government's First Report on Implementation of the Guideline Concerning the Professional Advancement of Women in the Federal Administration** is published.

September 1990

The **Unification Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic** enters into force. Article 31 of the Unification Treaty commits the legislature of the unified Germany to further develop the legislation on equal rights for women and men, and to structure the legal situation in a manner favouring the reconcilability of family and career.

October 1990

Revised version of the Guideline Concerning the Professional Advancement of Women in the Federal Administration.

January 1991

The **Federal Armed Forces** open all careers in the medical corps and the military music service to women.

January 1991

The **Federal Ministry for Women and Youth** becomes a department in its own right.

May 1991

The Federal Government publishes the **First Report on the Appointment of Women to Boards and Committees** under Federal Government influence.

January 1992

1992 Pension Reform Act

- | The recognition of child-raising periods in statutory pension insurance, introduced in 1986, is extended from the previous one year to three years for births after 1992.
- | In addition, child-raising periods up to a child's tenth birthday, and periods of voluntary caring for a person in need of long-term care after 1992, are considered when calculating qualifying and waiting periods.

January 1992

The **child-raising allowance** for children born after 1 January 1992 is extended to two years.

May 1992

First Act Amending the Maternity Protection Act: improved protection against unfair dismissal.

June 1992

Act on Assistance for Pregnant Women and Families: The act on the protection of prenatal life, promotion of a child-friendly society, assistance in pregnancy conflicts and regulation of abortion is passed by the German Bundestag. As Article 1, it contains the Act on Contraception, Family Planning, Education and Counselling (Counselling Act), which enters into force on 05.08.1992 and provides a legal foundation for comprehensive psychosocial counselling for pregnant women. The act moreover establishes the legal claim to a kindergarten place with effect from 01.01.1996.

July 1992

The **penal regulations on trafficking in human beings** are amended to improve the protection of foreign girls and women against sexual exploitation in Germany under criminal law.

November 1992

EC Pregnant Workers Directive 92/85 with minimum requirements for maternity protection enters into force.

January 1993

The **10th Act Amending the Employment Promotion Act** adds a regulation to the Employment Promotion Act, according to which women should be included in the measures of active labour market policy in accordance with their proportion of unemployed people.

August 1993

The **Second Report of the Federal Government** on the **equality bodies** of the Federation, the Länder and the municipalities is presented.

November 1993

The Federal Government publishes the **Second Report on Implementation of the Guideline Concerning the Professional Advancement of Women in the Federal Administration.**

April 1994

Family Law is amended. From now on, married couples are free to decide on the shared family name.

May 1994

A single provision in the **Penal Code** protects girls and boys under the age of 16 against sexual abuse, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator.

July 1994

The **Working Time Act** abolishes bans and restrictions on the employment of women – except the ban on employment for work underground. Among other things, this includes the ban on night-time work for female workers.

September 1994

The **Act to Enforce Equality of Rights for Women and Men (Second Equal Rights Act)** enters into force. It focuses on the following:

- | Act on the Promotion of Women and on Reconciling Family and Professional Life in the Federal Administration and the Federal Courts (Act on the Promotion of Women) – supercedes the corresponding 1986 Guideline.
- | Tightening of the ban on gender-based discrimination in working life.
- | Extended participation rights for works councils and staff councils as regards the promotion of women and the reconcilability of family and career.
- | Act to Protect Employees Against Sexual Harassment at Work (Employee Protection Act).
- | Act on the Appointment and Delegation of Women and Men to Bodies within the Sphere of Influence of the Federation (Federal Bodies Act).

October 1994

The **equal rights precept** in Article 3 Para. 2 Basic Law is supplemented: “The state shall promote the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and take steps to eliminate disadvantages that now exist.”

January 1995

The **Long-Term Care Insurance Act** enters into force. The long-term care insurance benefits are introduced in two stages: the benefits for care at home as of 01.04.1995, the benefits for institutional care as of 01.07.1996. The benefits for care at home bring about improvements in the social security of the carers. As a result, depending on the category of care and the scope of the care activities, contributions to the pension insurance of the carers are paid from the long-term care insurance system.

August 1995

The **Act Amending the Act on Assistance for Pregnant Women and Families** implements the demands of the Federal Constitutional Court regarding the legal regulation of abortion. The act centres on amendment of the Counselling Act to the Pregnancy Conflicts Act, which now regulates the obligatory counselling of pregnant women in an emergency or conflict situation.

September 1995

4th World Conference on Women of the United Nations in Beijing.

January 1996

The legal claim to a kindergarten place for children from their third birthday enters into force. The **child benefit** for the first and second child is increased to DM 200 per month, that for the third child to DM 300, and that for each further child to DM 350 per month, the age limit being raised from 16 to 18.

January 1997

Act Implementing the Programme for More Growth and Employment in the fields of pension insurance and employment promotion. From 2000 to 2004, women's retiring age is gradually to be raised from 60 to 65.

January 1997

The **Act Amending Maternity Protection Law** enters into force:

- | Improved maternity protection for domestic staff and mothers following premature births,
- | Improved reimbursement of maternity protection costs for small businesses.

February 1997

Constituent meeting of the nationwide **Federal Working Group "Trafficking in Women"**, the aims of which among other things include the integration of the great diversity of viewpoints regarding the subject of prevention, the combating of trafficking in women and the dignified handling of victims.

March 1997

Ordinance on the Pregnant Workers Directive

- | Second part of the implementation of the EC Pregnant Workers Directive.

June 1997

Resolution of the European Council in Amsterdam. The objective of promoting equal rights for women and men is laid down in Arts. 2 and 3 EC Treaty. Art. 119 EC Treaty expands the principle of equal pay for equal work to include equivalent work.

July 1997

Entry into force of the revised **Section 177 Penal Code**: marital rape is made a criminal offence.

November 1997

The **Act to Amend Foreigners and Asylum Provisions** includes an improved hardship scheme and permits an independent right of abode for foreign wives who have become victims of marital violence.

May 1998

The **Second Report of the Federal Government on the Appointment of Women to Boards and Committees under Federal Government Influence** is presented to the German Bundestag.

March 1999

The Department “Women’s Affairs” in the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is renamed the Department “**Gender Equality**”.

June 1999

Adoption of the “Women and Work” Programme. The “Women and Work” programme implemented by the Federal Government encompasses, inter alia, the advancement of women in private enterprise and the honouring of exemplary enterprises that have earned recognition through the structuring of their working hours, child-care facilities or targeted advancement of women, e. g. by the TOTAL-EQUALITY commendation or the “Work and Family” Audit. A further objective is to improve the framework conditions regarding the reconcilability of family and career for mothers and fathers and, at the same time, to communicate a new model for men. The new Federal Child-Raising Allowance Act enables mothers and fathers to take child-raising leave simultaneously in future. They have a legal claim to part-time work for up to 30 hours per week each during this time.

December 1999

With the **Action Plan of the Federal Government to Combat Violence Against Women**, the Federal Government for the first time presents a comprehensive concept for every level of combating violence – from prevention, work with offenders and better networking of offers of assistance for victims, all the way to legal measures, such as a Protection Against Violence Act for women and greater sensitisation of the public. In this context, the Act on Protection Against Domestic Violence not only makes provision for facilitated assignment of the marital home, but also includes statutory regulations for restraining orders (“no contact” order, “stay away” order) on the violent husband. The Action Plan also places emphasis on cooperation between state institutions and non-state projects, on nationwide networking of offers of assistance, and on the relatively new field of work with offenders.

April 2000

The **Federal Government/Länder Working Group on Combating Domestic Violence Against Women**, chaired by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, starts work.

July 2000

A **judgement of the European Court of Justice (ECJ)** confirms the reconcilability of statutory measures for promoting equal opportunities for women and men, especially by eliminating the inequalities actually existing, with European Equal Treatment Directive 76/207/EEC.

September 2000

According to the new **Joint Rules of Procedure of the Federal Ministries**, the equality of women and men is a universal guiding principle and is to be promoted in all political, normative and administrative measures of the Federal Ministries in their spheres. Gender equality as a cross-sectional task is to be set on a broad footing in this way. It is additionally regulated that the wording of bills is to linguistically express the equality of women and men.

October 2000

In its Resolution 1325 “**Women, Peace and Security**”, adopted in October 2000, the UN Security Council emphasises the importance of the role of women in securing peace and preventing conflicts, specifying political guidelines for a gender-sensitive peace and security policy. Resolution 1325 demands the involvement of women in political processes and institutions, in the planning and staffing of peace missions and in the negotiation of peace treaties. The Security Council calls on the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Member States to take concrete steps, e. g. to promote the role of women in conflict prevention.

December 2000

The Federal Government presents the **Fourth Report on the Promotion of Women within the Federal Institutions** (reporting period 1995–1998) to the German Bundestag.

December 2000

The **amendment of Article 12a Para. 4, second sentence, Basic Law**, which entered into force on 23 December 2000, puts voluntary armed duties of women in the Federal Armed Forces on a clear constitutional footing, permitting women access to all segments of the military forces.

January 2001

For the first time **244 female volunteers took up armed service** with the Federal Armed Forces on 2 January 2001.

January 2001

New parental leave supersedes old child-raising leave. The new regulations regarding child-raising allowance and child-raising leave entered into force on 1 January 2001. They apply to children born or adopted after 1 January 2001:

- Mother and father can for the first time take parental leave (formerly child-raising leave) simultaneously over an unchanged period of a maximum of three years. During this time, both parents have a legal claim to part-time work, this applying to businesses with more than 15 employees. Moreover, instead of the previous 19 hours, mother and father can now each work for up to 30 hours per week, i. e. for a combined total of up to 60 hours. This offers parents new opportunities to share gainful employment and family work. In addition, parents are given greater flexibility by the option of taking one year of their parental leave between the child’s third and eighth birthday, if the employer agrees.

26 April 2001

The first “**Girls’ Day**” is held. Businesses and organisations invite female school pupils to events in technical and scientific fields of work, in order to give them an insight into occupations untypical for women.

July 2001

The **Agreement between the Federal Government and the Central Associations of German Business on Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Private Sector** is signed. The goals are:

- | sustainable improvement in the vocational training prospects of girls and women,
- | sustainable improvement in the reconcilability of family and career for mothers and fathers,
- | significant increase in the proportion of women in management positions, and
- | reduction of the income differences between women and men.

It is agreed that a regular assessment is to be drawn up in collaboration with the Institute for Employment Research.

July 2001

The **Act Reforming the Works Constitution Act** enters into force. Regarding the participation of women in the works council, the act includes a proportional regulation reflecting the share of women in relation to the total number of employees.

November 2001

Parliament ratifies the **CEDAW Optional Protocol**. The Optional Protocol supplements the CEDAW Convention (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women), ratified by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1985. The Optional Protocol, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1999, provides an international legal remedy for women who have become victims of violations of human rights.

December 2001

By passing the Act on Gender Equality within the Federal Administration and the Federal Law Courts, the legislature modernises the 1994 Act on the Promotion of Women. Among other things, the competences of the Gender Equality Commissioners are expanded.

January 2002

The **Act to Improve the Civil Jurisdictional Protection against Violent Acts and Harassment and to Facilitate the Assignment of the Marital Home upon Separation (Protection against Violence Act)** enters into force. In addition to simplified assignment of the marital home, it also includes express regulations regarding a “no-contact, non-molestation and stay-away” order.

January 2002

The **Act Regulating the Legal Situation of Prostitutes** enters into force. Its aim is to abolish the immorality of prostitution, secure prostitutes the suitability of their pay, facilitate access to social insurance, eliminate the grounds for criminal concomitant phenomena of prostitution, make it easier to abandon prostitution and permit working conditions in prostitution that are the least possible threat to health.

January 2002

The **Job-AQTIV Act** enters into force. The objective of the act is to promote gender equality on the labour market by expanding special measures of labour market policy for women and improving the reconcilability of family and career (increase in the subsidies towards child-care costs if unemployed persons take part in basic and advanced vocational training or other training measures).

January 2002

The **reform of the “Upgrading Training Assistance Act”** enters into force on 1 January 2002. Better funding conditions now apply to women with children.

April 2002

The Federal Government publishes the **Report on Equal Pay** and the economic situation of women.

May 2002

The **Third Report of the Federal Government on the Appointment of Women to Boards and Committees under Federal Government Influence** is adopted by the Federal Cabinet. It continues to reveal only a slight increase in the proportion of women in bodies within the sphere of influence of the Federal Government.

June 2002

The **Amendment of the Maternity Protection Act** enters into force. The maternity protection period for all mothers is a minimum total of 14 weeks, i. e. also for mothers who give birth prematurely. The act additionally makes clear that the bans on employment under maternity protection law count as working periods for the purpose of calculating leave.

January 2004

First Assessment of the implementation of the Agreement between the Federal Government and the Central Associations of German Business on Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Private Sector (Assessment 2003). The assessment shows that the formal education of girls and women has in the meantime reached a high level. However, there are still gender-specific differences as regards career choice behaviour and the transition to working life.

January 2004

The **Third Act on Modern Services for the Labour Market** gives labour market promotion an objective in terms of gender equality policy. Full-time Representatives for Equal Opportunities on the Labour Market are appointed at the employment agencies, the regional directorates and the headquarters of the Federal Employment Agency.

January 2006

All businesses receive full reimbursement of expenditure on maternity protection benefits that they pay for their female employees. They participate in a **general pay-as-you-go system of the health insurance funds**. This results in the **comprehensive equalisation of risks** between businesses in female- and male-dominated sectors.

February 2006

The **Second Assessment** of the implementation of the Agreement between the Federal Government and the Central Associations of German Business on **Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Private Sector** is published. It focuses on the subject of women in management positions. In the private sector, the proportion of women among employed management staff rose only very slowly, from 21% in the year 2000 to 23% in 2004.

August 2006

The **General Equal Treatment Act** enters into force. It implements EU directives on equal treatment in Germany, whose purpose is also to protect against discrimination on grounds of gender. What is new, above all, is the protection against discrimination on grounds of gender in civil law transactions in connection with “bulk business” and contracts whose subject matter is insurance under private law. Based on the General Equal Treatment Act, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency is established at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. This independent agency supports all affected persons by providing information and counselling on relevant issues, including discrimination on grounds of gender.

December 2006

The Federal Cabinet adopts the **First Report on the Federal Act on Gender Equality**. According to its findings, the proportion of women in management positions at the top level of the Federal Administration continues to be low: as to heads of division, it merely rose from 8.8% in 2000 to 11.2% in 2005. However, further improvements were achieved after the end of the period covered by the report: women were for the first time appointed as heads of division in the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Foreign Office in 2006. Part-time employment continues to be a matter for women within the Federal Administration.

January 2007

The **Act on Paid Parental Leave** (Federal Parental Allowance and Parental Leave) entered into force on 1 January 2007. It replaces 67% of the earned income lost following the birth of the child, for a maximum of 12 months for each parent or a maximum of 14 months together. The two parents can divide the period between themselves at will. By introducing the “partner months”, the parental allowance provides positive incentives for greater involvement of fathers in the task of child-raising: the partner months are only granted if both parents reduce their gainful employment in favour of child care for at least two months.

January 2007

The Federal Government presents the **Report on the Impact of the Prostitution Act**. The Federal Government commits itself to improvements in the report – e. g. regarding the prosecution of the clients of forced prostitutes or regarding the assistance offered for prostitutes wishing to abandon their activities.

February 2007

The Federal Cabinet adopts the **Fourth Report of the Federal Government on the Appointment of Women to Boards and Committees under Federal Government Influence**. According to its findings, success has been achieved in increasing the average proportion of women among the members of the bodies, but the statutory goal of creating equal participation of women in bodies is still not reached.

March 2007

Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and the heads of the EU Commission and EU Parliament sign the **“Berlin Declaration”** on the occasion of the anniversary “50 Years of the Treaty of Rome”. The declaration prominently emphasises the equality of women and men as a common ideal of the European Union.

March 2007

The **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, including the **Optional Protocol concerning the right of individuals to complain**, is signed by the worldwide community of states – including Germany – in New York. The convention comprehensively refers to the situation and rights of women with disabilities.

March 2007

The **Stalking Act** enters into force. Stalking victims suffering from ongoing persecution, harassment and threats, are afforded better protection under criminal law. By introducing a new criminal offence and supplementing the reasons for arrest in the Code of Criminal Procedure, the act closes gaps in punishability and permits more effective protection of victims.

May 2007

During the **German EU Council Presidency** in the **“European Year of Equal Opportunities for All”**, Germany organises an informal meeting of the Ministers for Gender Equality. To concretise the **EU Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men (2006–2010)**, Germany and the other two members of the first Team Presidency, Portugal and Slovenia, present a joint declaration. The three countries express their intention to use their Team Presidency in order to actively promote important goals of the European Roadmap: equal pay, role change and participation of women with a migration background.

September 2007

To effectively protect women against violence, the Federal Government again adopts a comprehensive overall concept in the form of the **“Action Plan II to Combat Violence Against Women”**. Action Plan II starts where the First Action Plan indicated a particular need for action. This includes the consideration of women with a migration background and women with disabilities, the field of medical care, and prevention that begins as early as possible.

October 2007

The **Management Board of the European Institute for Gender Equality** is constituted. Germany is elected as the presiding country for three years.

January 2008

The claims of divorcees and children change when the **Act Amending Maintenance Law** comes into force. The act strengthens the principle of the self-responsibility of both spouses.

March 2008

The **Programme of Action “Vocational Re-entry as a Perspective”** starts as a broad-based initiative in close partnership with the Federal Employment Agency. It supports women who want to return to working life following a lengthy interruption of employment for family-related reasons, and also their partners and families. Alongside numerous other projects, the pilot employment-policy project at 20 locations throughout Germany and the internet portal at www.perspektive-wiedereinstieg.de constitute the most important pillars of the Programme of Action.

April 2008

An **Equal Pay Day** is organised for the first time. This day of action has been held annually since this time. It addresses the difference in pay between the sexes in Germany.

April 2008

The **Third Assessment of the Agreement between the Federal Government and the Central Associations of German Business on Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Private Sector** is published. It presents the status of equal opportunities between women and men in the economy, not only in Germany, but also in a European comparison. Progress is primarily noted in relation to the better reconcilability of family and career, while no decisive improvement is to be seen as regards women in management positions and equal pay.

October 2008

The Ministers and Senators for Gender Equality and Women of the Länder resolve to compile a **Gender Equality Atlas for Germany** for the first time. The atlas for comparing core indicators was published by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in September 2009.

December 2008

The **Child Day-Care Promotion Act** enters into force. It is designed to accelerate the expansion of a high-quality offer of child day-care and to give parents a real choice. From 1 August 2013, following completion of the expansion phase, a legal claim to a day-care place is to be introduced for all children between their first and third birthdays.

April 2009

The second **Equal Pay Day** is – like the first one in 2008 – funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and supported by a broad-based campaign alliance.

May 2009

The **Helene Weber Prize** is awarded for the first time on 5 May 2009 – to mark the anniversary “60 Years of Art. 3 Basic Law”. The Helene Weber Prize is an award for outstanding commitment of young female politicians at local government level. In addition to the principal prize-winner, a further 14 women from across Germany receive an award. The prize is named in honour of Helene Weber, one of the four mothers of the Basic Law.

September 2009

The **Act on Procedure in Family Matters and on Matters of Non-Contentious Litigation** enters into force on 1 September 2009. It results in thorough reorganisation of the procedure in family courts, which is intended to do justice to the practical needs of the parties to the proceedings and also be comprehensible to the interested layperson in terms of its content, structure and language. The family court is now responsible for all matters relating to protection against violence.

October 2009

The entry into force of the **2nd Amendment of the Law on Victims' Rights** on 1 October 2009 marks a decisive step towards improving the protection of victims, particularly also the protection of children and young people. In future, the state bears the lawyer's fees in cases of criminal offences, such as bodily harm, robbery or stalking with severe physical effects – regardless of the financial situation of the victim. The 2nd Amendment of the Law on Victims' Rights protects injured persons and witnesses even better against stress in the criminal proceedings, also strengthening their rights compared to the 1st Amendment of the Law on Victims' Rights of September 2004.

October 2009

To identify hidden pay differences between women and men in business enterprises, and to specifically examine the internal factors playing a role in this context, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs has been offering the **Logib-D computer programme** since October 2009.

November 2009

A **new unit** with the name “**Equality Policy for Boys and Men**” is created in the Department “Gender Equality” in the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Cooperation with fathers' organisations and other gender equality-oriented men's organisations is to be intensified.

December 2009

The **Treaty of Lisbon enters into force on 1 December 2009**, and thus the **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)**. Equality of the sexes is a fundamental principle of the European Union that is embedded in the TFEU and is part of the goals and tasks of the EU. Article 8 TFEU reads: “In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women.” Gender equality is likewise embedded in Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, underlining the consistent consideration of the principle of equality of women and men in all areas, as already demanded in the Treaty of Amsterdam.

January 2010

As a response to the negative employment incentives of Wage Tax Bracket V, a new wage tax option is introduced in the form of the factor method (**Wage Tax Bracket IV** with factor). The advantage of the new method is that the wage-tax sum quite accurately corresponds to the annual income tax – the subsequent tax demands are lower than with the Tax Bracket III/V combination. Above all, however, many married women get significantly more net from their gross wage.

January 2010

The **Act Amending the Pregnancy Conflicts Act** enters into force. Among other things, it includes regulations on the comprehensive medical information, care and support of pregnant women following a pathological prenatal diagnosis and ahead of the establishment of a medical indication. Moreover, the legislature ensures that affected pregnant women and their partners are informed of their entitlement to in-depth psychosocial support and that, through the mediation of medical contacts, they more easily find access to a pregnancy counselling centre.

January 2010

As part of the peer review programme of the EU Commission, the Federal Government gives interested Member States a presentation of the **Federal Foundation “Mother and Child – Protection of the Unborn”**, which has been in existence for 25 years. The interplay of financial benefits and infrastructural assistance, through the awarding of the Foundation funds via local pregnancy counselling centres, is unique in Europe. By providing this targeted support in a critical transitional phase in the life course, the Federal Foundation is an exemplary model of a preventive policy of social inclusion and a modern gender equality and women’s policy in the life-course perspective.

January 2010

Launch of the Federal Initiative **“More Men into Early Childhood Education”**. The initiative aims to expand the range of occupations chosen by boys and men. Another concern of the initiative is to make it easier for girls and boys of pre-school age – at the time when they are developing their gender identities – to experience both women and men as role models.

February 2010

The Department “Gender Equality” is renamed the Department **“Gender Equality, Equal Opportunities”**. This indicates the development from women’s policy and gender equality policy to a sustainable policy of fair opportunities for women and men.

March 2010

In March 2010, the European Commission adopts a **Women’s Charter** on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Declaration and the Platform for Action of the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing and the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, in which the Commission again emphasises its commitment to gender equality and promises to give greater consideration to the gender perspective in all its policy spheres.

June 2010

Germany is returned to office for a further term as presiding country of the **Management Board of the European Institute for Gender Equality** in Vilnius. The institute officially commences work at its offices in Vilnius on 21 June 2010. The institute supports the gender equality policy of the bodies of the European Union and the Member States by specifically gathering, analysing and preparing data. The institute will additionally set up a Documentation Centre, where best-practice examples and materials from all European countries relating to the promotion of gender equality are to be collected and made available.

September 2010

The **EU Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men (2010–2015)** is adopted on 21 September 2010. The strategy is based on the Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men (2006–2010) and constitutes a comprehensive framework, within which the Commission commits itself to promoting the equality of the sexes. The strategy clearly points out the benefits of equality of the sexes in relation to economic growth and sustainable development, and is intended to contribute to implementation of the gender equality measures in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy.

October 2010

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council “Women, Peace and Security”, the Federal Ministries involved in implementing the resolution launch concrete initiatives for improving the structuring and coordination of inter-departmental cooperation at the national level, with the aim of coherent cooperation, also on-site in crisis and conflict regions. The main coordinating impulses in this context came from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, together with the Federal College for Security Studies and the German Institute for Human Rights.

December 2010

The **Second Report of the Federal Government on the Federal Act on Gender Equality and the Fifth Report of the Federal Government on the Act on Appointment to Federal Bodies** are adopted by the Federal Cabinet. Positive developments are to be seen regarding the proportion of women relative to the total number of employees in the service of the Federation, as well as in the utilisation of part-time employment for reconciling family and career. At the same time, the participation of women in management functions, particularly at the upper levels of the hierarchy and in federal bodies, continues to be unsatisfactory. The report recommends amendment of the Act on Appointment to Federal Bodies. The corresponding commission to review from the Coalition Agreement, which announces a multi-stage plan for increasing the proportion of women in the economy and the civil service, has thus been fulfilled.

January 2011

“UN Women”, the new entity of the United Nations for the advancement of women and gender equality, starts work on 1 January 2011. Together with German non-governmental organisations, the German Government was intensively involved in the efforts to create a single entity by combining the four institutions of the United Nations previously responsible for gender equity and the advancement of women – the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The objective is to internationally strengthen the effectiveness of gender equality policy and ensure more efficient working methods.

January 2011

There is to be a **Representative for Equal Opportunities on the Labour Market** at all basic security benefits offices and approved municipal funding agencies. Among other things, the representative participates in planning and steering processes regarding business policy, as well as in the planning of educational targets and measures, develops and implements information events for people in need of assistance who are capable of employment, and advises employers on matters of family-oriented personnel policy.

January 2011

The Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth Dr. Kristina Schröder presents her concept for the private-sector part of the multi-stage plan for the advancement of women in management positions, demanded by the Coalition Agreement: a statutory **“Flexi-Quota”** is designed to commit companies that are codetermined by the employees and listed on the stock exchange to set themselves transparent, binding target quotas for women on supervisory and management boards.

March 2011

A competition for the **Helene Weber Prize** is held for the second time on the occasion of “100 Years of International Women’s Day”. As in 2009, it is intended to honour the achievements of outstanding, young female politicians.

March 2011

At the summit conference organised by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the **DAX 30 companies** give the Federal Government a commitment to submit transparent, differentiated targets for their companies before the end of 2011 in order to advance the proportion of women in management positions.

April 2011

In cooperation with the German Countrywomen’s Association, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth focuses on the subject of **“Pay differences in rural regions”** on the **Fourth Equal Pay Day**.

April 2011

The **First Nationwide Boys’ Day**, initiated by the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Dr. Kristina Schröder, attracts a great response from a standing start: more than 90 initiatives, over 4,000 events and roughly 35,000 places for boys – Boys’ Day is a resounding success in its very first year.

April 2011

Federal Minister Dr. Kristina Schröder appoints an **Advisory Committee on Policies for Boys** for the first time. It is to submit recommendations by 2013. The advisory committee consists of 12 members: six independent representatives from research and practice on the subject of boys and work with boys, as well as six young men as experts in their own cause.

May 2011

The Federal Cabinet resolves to sign the **Council of Europe Convention to Prevent and Combat Violence** against women and domestic violence. The convention contains the first set of detailed provisions for the European region that is binding under international law and affords women in all Member States of the Council of Europe protection against gender-specific violence. The states are additionally committed to effectively protect all victims of domestic violence.

May 2011

Launch of the **Re-entry Calculator** at www.wiedereinstiegsrechner.de, which is designed to assist women when deciding on whether to return to employment subject to social insurance contributions. The calculator helps them to work out their personal, financial advantage of returning to their occupation, thus also offering valuable tips for salary negotiations at job interviews.

June 2011

The Federal Government adopts the **Draft of the Act on the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings of 16 May 2005**, thereby initiating the legislative procedure necessary for accession to this convention. It is the first convention under international law that focuses on the protection and support of the victims of trafficking in human beings. The Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings improves the prerequisites for fighting trafficking human beings, particularly in the European region.

June 2011

The Federal Government presents the **First Report on Gender Equality in Germany**. The report entitled “New Pathways – Equal Opportunities. Gender Equality over Women’s and Men’s Life Courses” consists of the expert opinion of an independent commission of experts and a statement by the Federal Government. The report is submitted to the German Bundestag and the Bundesrat and is the main topic at the 21st Equal Opportunities and Women’s Ministers Conference. The report makes it clear that, after 25 years of women’s and gender equality policy, the year 2011 marks the transition to a new, third stage: equal opportunities for women and men will in future have to be tackled not only as a cross-sectional task, but primarily also as a longitudinal task.

June 2011

On the occasion of the **10th anniversary of the Agreement between the Federal Government and the Central Associations of German Business on Promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Private Sector**, the **Fourth Assessment** draws a mixed conclusion. Visible success is to be seen as regards the reconcilability of family and career, while the advancement of women in management positions requires further – sub-legislative and legislative – efforts on the part of industry and politics.

July 2011

The Federal Cabinet adopts the **Act Establishing a National Telephone Hotline**. By launching the **national telephone hotline “Violence Against Women”**, the Federal Government for the first time creates a scheme that offers women affected by violence nationwide, round-the-clock and free initial counselling, information and referral to local institutions offering support. This greatly facilitates access to the existing assistance system for affected women of all age groups, social strata and ethnic affiliations. The hotline will be available from the end of 2012.

July 2011

The **Act against Forced Marriages and for Better Protection of Victims of Forced Marriages** enters into force. In cases of abduction to foreign countries for marriage, the right of return of the affected parties under residence law is extended. In addition, a separate criminal offence of “forced marriage” is introduced, and the application period for annulment of a forced marriage extended.

July 2011

Equal Pay Day is strengthened by the “Forum Equal Pay Day”. The problem of pay inequality between women and men, the causes, and measures for overcoming it, are to be brought even more strongly to the public’s attention, not only on the campaign day itself, but also at events held across the country throughout the year.

October 2011

As called for at the summit conference in March 2011, the DAX 30 companies for the first time present **concrete, individual target agreements regarding women in management positions** on 17 October 2011.

Life-course perspective in social milieus

The outlined tableau of gender-specific institutionalisation, individualisation and re-institutionalisation of life courses has led to a *diversity of normality biographies* with *respectively different consequences and perspectives* in the life course *for women and men*. It is therefore not surprising that the different social milieus in society each have their own life-course perspectives. Some milieus are characterised by the normality and security of the three-stage life-course model, while for other milieus, the perforation of life courses is the normal perspective and has no negative connotations for them. The milieu perspective clearly reveals the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous of opposite and sometimes contradictory life-course plans. This above all applies to the milieu-specific reactions, accesses and resources when confronted with this complexity of normative concepts of normal biographies, on the one hand, and of people’s own actual life course, on the other. The main structural and cultural lines of life-course perspectives in the milieu landscape are outlined below.

Value Segment A: Common traditions

The “conservative” and “traditional” milieus in Value Segment A (Common traditions) assume that a three-stage life course is the normative normal biography. The predetermined path through life has defined stations and transitions with relatively short transitional periods. People should and must reach a decision in early adulthood regarding the occupation they want to work in and the spouse they want to spend their life with. These choices are made with the expectation of lifelong validity - they define the programme for working and family life. In these milieus, the term “life path” is holistically important and binding.

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Upper class	Conservative milieu 4%	Established milieu 5%	Post-materialist milieu 9%	High-achiever milieu 14%	Mover milieu 8%	
Upper middle class		Traditional milieu 15%	New middle-class milieu 18%			Hedonist milieu 11%
Middle class						
Lower middle class	Disadvantaged milieu 16%					
Lower class						
Social status acc. to microcensus and OECD	A 1	A 2	B 1	B 2	C 1	C 1
Fundamental orientation	Subordination, duty, acceptance, self-control "Holding on"	Integration, conservative modernisation "Accepting change"	Standard of living, status, property, participation, knowledge, ability, acknowledgement "Status and enjoyment"	Education, emancipation, change, resistance, holistic life "Being and changing"	Flexibility, mobility, optionality, success, pragmatism "Doing and experiencing"	Management of limits, syntheses, synaesthetics, pragmatic idealism "Overstepping borders"
	Common traditions		Self-realisation		Self-management	

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The preset mode is not to abort this programme unless absolutely necessary, and in no way to radically change course on a subjective “whim”: neither to give up the career, nor to leave the partner. The life course in these milieus is closely linked to the values of “solidarity” and “mutual responsibility”. Reciprocally, this also means the normative expectation of analogous responsibility and solidarity a) on the part of the partner and b) on the part of the employer. This is also the explanation for incomprehension and moral outrage: in private life, in the event of separation, or even divorce; in working life, in the event of being fired despite many years of service; similarly, if employers fail to keep on the apprentices they have trained. In the horizon of the life course, businesses are ascribed social responsibility and the norm of demonstrating solidarity with employees. The family sphere is dominated by the traditional principal breadwinner model, where the man is responsible for the family income, and the woman has the role of being primarily responsible for day-to-day provision and for raising the children, for the household, relations with neighbours and relatives, and with the option of earning supplementary income through a mini-job or part-time employment.

No provision is made for breaks and perforations in the life course; they are considered to be accidents, misfortunes, deviations. If people then leave their partner or quit their job, the internalised pressure to provide an explanation and justification that exists in the close social environment is great.

But all the same, members of the “traditional” and “conservative” milieus increasingly experience the fact that biographic breaks are today no longer accidents for which the individual is to blame, but an experience made by many people, through being affected themselves, through their children, through neighbours and acquaintances, as well as through reports in the media: the high divorce rates cannot be definitively and sufficiently explained by the moral decay of society. Nevertheless, there is regret that, for many couples, the values of “faithfulness” and “cohesion” no longer have the same importance as just a few decades ago (“*They split up at the slightest problem*”). Particularly the younger generation in the “traditional” milieu, however, is distancing itself from the moralising reflex of their own (grand)parents’ generation and increasingly thinking in categories of sympathy for the affected persons.

When, as a result of the global financial and economic crisis in 2008/2009, also a major portion of men from the “traditional” milieu in full-time employment lost their jobs, were forced to work reduced hours, or saw early retirement as the answer, it was often the women who (involuntarily) became joint earners or even family breadwinners (albeit usually at a low income level). People from traditional milieus do not break down when confronted with biographic deviations of this kind, because they have cultural resources that enable them to adjust to factual situations and accept and bear blows of fate (in silence or bemoaning them in the familial environment). However, deviations of this kind in the life course continue to be perceived as “breaks”, and only gradually, but unstoppably and lastingly, does the perspective increasingly become the focus of their image of the world that life courses are no longer predictable and straightforward.

Value Segment B: Self-realisation

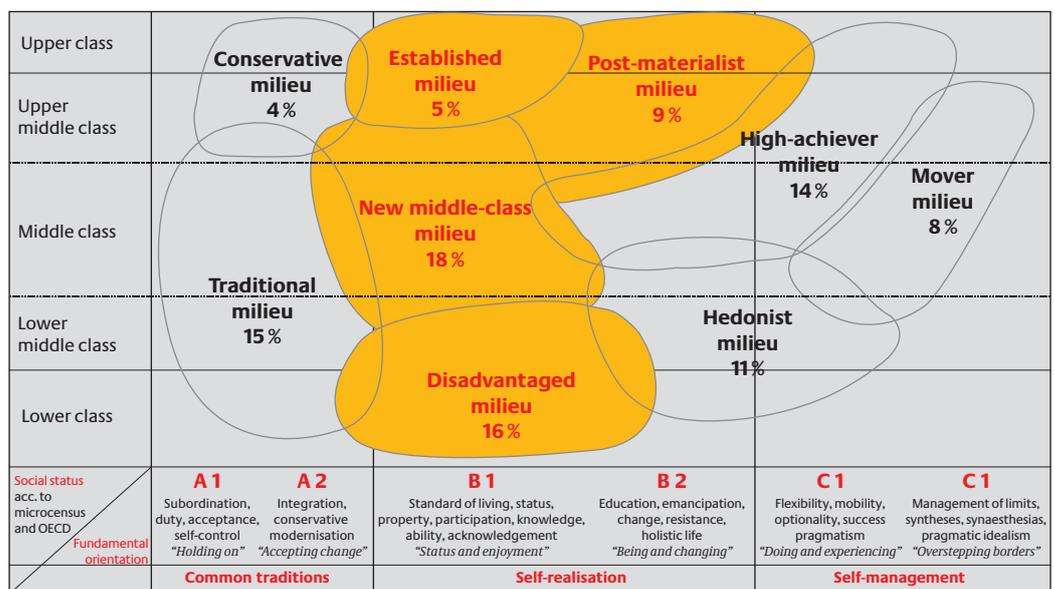
The milieus positioned in Value Segment B (Self-realisation) – “Established”, “Post-materialist”, “New middle class”, “Disadvantaged” – are much more characterised by the opportunities and emancipation promised by individualisation. They expect that life courses are not only selectable, but can also be changed by the individual “on the way”, without this entailing social sanctions or the individual being pressed to provide justification. Particularly in the higher milieus, individual caesuras are legitimate and an expression of autonomy and vivacity.

The preset, normative life-course perspective is: people can (and often *must*) decide several times in their life – in different phases of life – what career and private paths they want to take. In the normal life course, people want to have the option not only of changing employers once or more, but also of possibly changing their career direction and starting something completely new, giving their life (another) turn. This is often triggered and motivated by the worry of not having lived *right* or not *to the full*, of having missed something, not having exhausted their own talents, or even not having completely probed them, or having put off their own earlier dreams for a long time (or too long). The background to this is an individual and emphatic expectation of “their own life”. The justification pressure and the expectations in the event of private or career turnabouts and breaks are far less pronounced than in the “conservative” and “traditional” milieus. The inclemency of fate no longer has to be used as an argument. What counts is the *individual decision*. In contrast to private breaks, career changes no longer need any justification: in the career sphere, uninterrupted conti-

nity is considered to be a flaw. People who have worked for the same employer for 30 years and never gone for a career change are particularly likely to be suspected of being undemanding or lazy. At the same time, people in these milieus have a very accurate picture of the risks of *radical* breaks and new beginnings – and shy away from them out of consideration for the financial security and social integration of their families.

At the same time these milieus have their own notions regarding life in old age. For them, the phase after employment marks the start of a new life that they intend to shape differently than their parents did (often from the “traditional” and “conservative” milieus).

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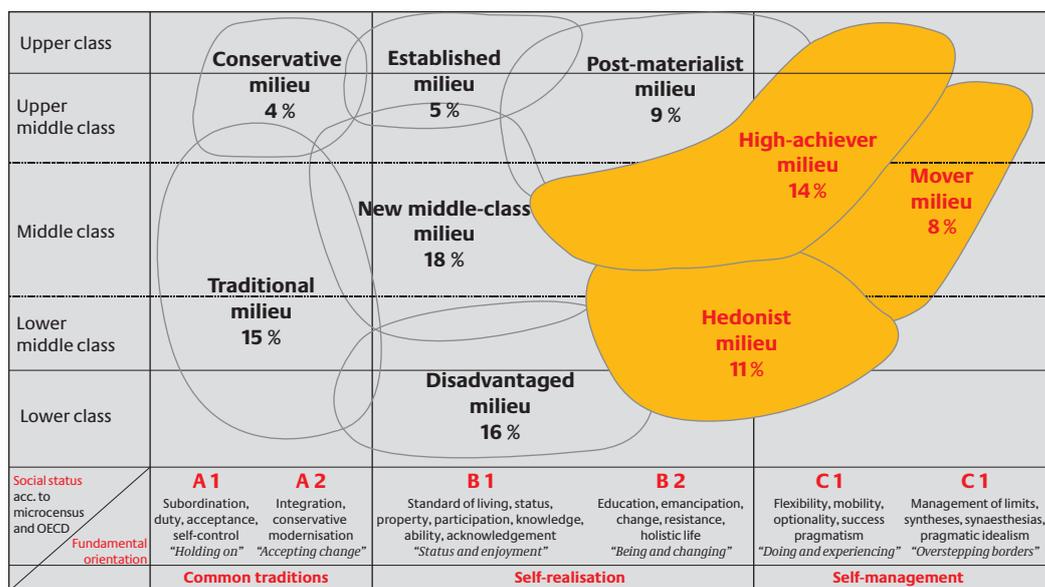
Value Segment C: Self-management

The “Mover” milieu, clearly positioned in Value Segment C (Self-management), and the milieus in a bridging position between fundamental orientation segments B and C (“High achievers”, “Hedonists”), have an everyday, temporal and biographic perspective *beyond life planning*. For them, our current society, with the symptoms mass unemployment, increasing public debt, ecological destruction and risks, differentiation of the social hierarchy and dwindling solidarity, growing poverty, growing bureaucracy of the state (and of major corporations), is the fundamental experience. The preset perspective for these milieus is the increasing shift of social security, encompassing almost all spheres of life, from the community to the individual (self-responsibility; fully comprehensive individualisation). Other fundamental experiences of these milieus are the deregulation and flexibilisation of the labour market, particularly at the fringes: part-time work, minor employment, mini-jobs, freelance work on an intermittent project basis, temporary work, sub-contracting, homework, and casual work.

People’s personal orientation is governed by the realisation that *flexibility* and *mobility* are necessary skills, the degree of which is the yardstick for an individual’s modernity, competitiveness and capacity for the future. The everyday and life-course perspective of these milieus is determined by permanent readiness to reposition and to navigate adaptively in the constantly changing topography of our transnational society.

Given this fundamental experience of a fragmented world that needs to be explored individually, and in which every individual has to find her/his niche and develop her/his own consistent weltanschauung, the life course seems like an obstacle race that is usually not straightforward and not plannable. Things that are options today, may be impossible, a dead-end or unattractive tomorrow; things that become main-stream the day after tomorrow, do not even exist as a possibility today, or only in niches. Beyond a “life plan” is the maxim of these milieus. As little faith they have in the stability of the social and natural environment, as great is their confidence that their own resources (flexibility, mobility, competence) will enable them to pursue their own goals under changed conditions.

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Study design

- Population:** Resident population over the age of 18 in Germany
- Sample size:** 2,000 cases
- Sampling:** Representative, stratified random sample
- Survey type:** Standardised questionnaire with closed questions
- Survey method:** CATI interviews
- Survey period:** May 2011
- Data weighting:** The sociodemographic attributes (sex, age, education, net household income, region) were weighted in accordance with the distributions in the microcensus.

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