

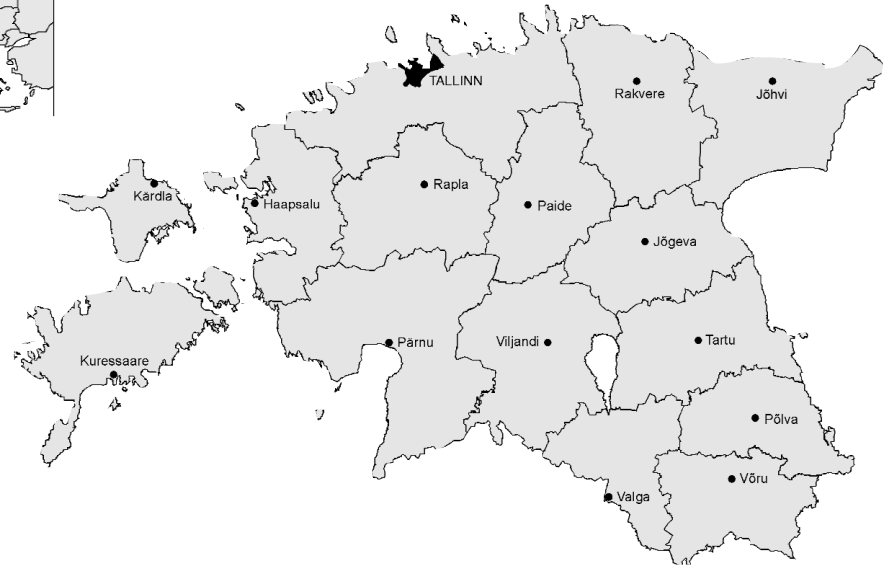
TOWARDS
A BALANCED
SOCIETY

**Women
and
Men
in
Estonia**

Tallinn, 2000

Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia
United Nations Development Programme

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General information about Estonia

Legal name:

conventional long form	Republic of Estonia
conventional short form	Estonia
local long form	Eesti Vabariik
local short form	Eesti

Area:

45,227 sq km.

Location:

Estonia lies on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. Estonia is situated on the level north-western part of the East European platform, on which there are only slight variations in elevation. The elevation in south-eastern and eastern Estonia is higher than in western Estonia. The highest point (Suur Munamägi) is 318 m above sea level. Estonia has over 1,500 islands and more than 1,400 lakes.

Population:

1,445,580

Ethnic divisions:

Estonian 65,2%, Russian 28,1%, Ukrainian 2,5%, Belarussian 1,5%, Finnish 0,9%, other 1,8%.

Religious denominations:

Lutheran, Orthodox, Baptist, and others.

Languages:

Estonian (official), Russian, and others.

State independence regained:

August 20, 1991.

Independence Day:

February 24.

Constitution, adopted by referendum:

June 28, 1992.

State system:

The Constitution established the principles of the rule of law. It recognises the principle of separate and balanced powers, the independence of the courts, and guarantees of fundamental human rights and liberties according to universally recognised principles and norms. Estonia is a democratic parliamentary republic wherein the supreme power is vested in the people. The people exercise the supreme power, through citizens who have the right to vote by electing the Riigikogu – State Assembly (parliament) and by participating in referendums. The Riigikogu is comprised of one hundred and one members. Executive power rests with the Government. The head of State of Estonia is the President of the Republic.

Capital:

Tallinn (population 411,594).

Administrative divisions:

207 rural municipalities, and 46 towns.

Currency:

National currency is the Estonian kroon (1 kroon = 100 sent). The kroon was issued on June 20, 1992 and is pegged to the German mark at the rate 1 DEM = 8 EEK.

Member of United Nations:

September 17, 1991.

Member of the Council of Europe:

May, 1993.

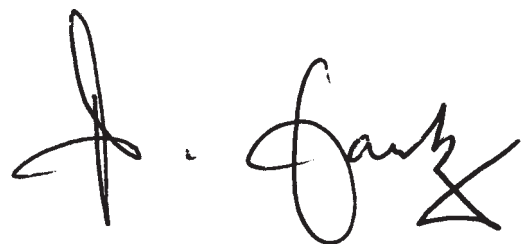
Foreword

The principle of equality between men and women was already recognized in 1945 in the UN Charter and subsequently in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948. International dialogue and policy on what today is known as gender issues have progressed since these first UN declarations. In the 1950s and 1960s, women were largely seen as a group that needed protection and certain rights. During the 1970s, the key role of women in world development and progress was recognized, especially in areas such as population, health and food production. The trend was to "integrate women into development" and women were seen as essential resources for shaping a better future. Special emphasis was placed on improving the status, nutrition and health of women and these issues are still valid concerns worldwide. However, women's dignity and rights to self-realization have not always been high priorities on the international agenda. Only by the first half of the 1980s were women finally recognized as "agents and beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of the development process". By the second half of the same decade women were recognized as "intellectuals, policy-makers, planners and contributors, and beneficiaries of development".

In 1995, the world community met in Beijing for the Fourth World Conference on Women. While progress certainly could be noted, both in terms of attitudes, policy-thinking and action, the then Secretary General of the UN, Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated that gender disparities and unacceptable inequalities exist in all countries. The conference noted that deeply entrenched attitudes and practices perpetuate inequality against women, in public and private life, on a daily basis in all parts of the world. At the same time, the conference observed that there is a consensus that equality of opportunity for women and men is essential for just and democratic societies. From Beijing emerged the Platform of Action which calls for the integration of gender perspectives in all international and national policies and programmes.

With this publication, the UN organizations present in Estonia wish to provide input into the national gender debate and to promote a country-relevant action programme of change. This publication assesses the status of women and men in different spheres of society and examines traditional values and roles. There is hardly a topic in Estonia that generates such emotions as the question of gender equality. It is clear that equality was a word that did not ring true during the period of Soviet occupation but this cannot be a reason to avoid a gender perspective today. A gender perspective means that decisions and policies are analyzed to see how they impact women differently than men. It also means studying how overall opportunities are distributed among women and men in society. In the end it really means a concern about development, democracy, progress and productivity in society as well as the creation of better living conditions and opportunities for all its members. We hope that this publication will help allay fears about what a gender perspective is, and that the richness of data and the variety of topics it covers will be used as a basis for moving Estonia's gender debate and policy-making firmly into the 21st century.

The UN organizations in Estonia are indebted to all of those who have contributed to the report and would like to thank the team of authors consisting exclusively of Estonian researchers and experts. A special mention must go to our project partners from the Bureau of Equality within the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ülle-Marike Papp and Peeter Maimik. They have prepared this publication in close cooperation with UNDP and are also members of the editorial team together with Kadi Mänd.



Petra Lantz-de Bernardis
United Nations Resident Coordinator
Tallinn, December 15, 1999

Contents

Marju Lauristin	EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN: UTOPIA OR REALISTIC AIM?	6
Voldemar Kolga	TO BE A WOMAN AND A MAN IN ESTONIA AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM	8
Andrus Lipand	HEALTH OF WOMEN AND MEN IN ESTONIA, 1990-1998	16
Malle Järve	GENDERED LEISURE: RESOURCES AND ACTUAL USE	22
Leeni Hansson	PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY AND INFORMAL SOCIAL NETWORKS	32
Anu Narusk	PROFESSIONAL AND FAMILY LIFE: COMBINING PAID AND UNPAID WORK	38
Rein Vöörmann	MEN AND WOMEN ON THE LABOR MARKET: WAGE RATIOS	46
Barbi Pilvre	MEN, WOMEN AND THE MEDIA	54
Tiina Raitviir	PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS	58
Reet Laja	WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AS PART OF THE THIRD SECTOR IN ESTONIA	66
Ülle-Marike Papp	NATIONAL GENDER EQUALITY POLICY	72

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The articles are also available electronically through the Internet World Wide Web which may be accessed at
<http://www.undp.ee/gender/>

Equal opportunities for men and women: utopia or realistic aim?

Marju Lauristin

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In 1999, the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall was celebrated throughout Europe. Many of the speeches reflected concern regarding the appearance of new walls separating western and eastern Europe. Although there are no political barriers to mutual approaches and openness, the worldviews and quality of life are so disparate that it is as premature to talk of a united Europe in the cultural and social context as it is to speak of the economic levels being equal.

Many people honestly believed that when Estonia came out from behind the Iron Curtain we would encounter the world which existed fifty years ago. Only gradually have we begun to comprehend the depth of the canyon which separated the communist world from global developments. During the fifty post-war years these developments changed the worldview of people in the West to something completely different from ours. A person, formed by the soviet school and an immoral society based on the forcible repression of an individual, not only has to get used to freedom and a secure life — but also to changed notions about human relationships, having to give up centuries-old patriarchal, elitist and racist prejudices. This is in contrast to a modern individual, who has been formed through the influence of a western education and life-style.

One of the particularly sensitive litmus tests which shows the differences between the East's and West's worldview and behavior is the attitude towards people not considered by traditional society to be able to achieve an influential position in life or to participate equally in public life. Women, too, have always been pushed into this so-called risk or minority group despite the fact that they are generally not a minority in society, but actually a majority. This deeply-rooted view of women as the "weaker sex" is very difficult to shake. Opposition to male

domination of the leading positions in society often seems challenging and impolite, even to the women themselves. Talking about equal rights for women is associated with images of blue stockings and red flags. In western societies, however, the recent decades have resulted in the understanding that superior, belittling or inconsiderate attitudes to the contribution of women in all fields, from science to politics, and from family to banking, belong to the feudal and early-capitalistic past. The sensitivity and intuitiveness of women in making decisions, their sense of responsibility and dedication, often mean that women — with the education being equal — are more valued work colleagues than men. In the high technology world today, which does not require physical strength, there is more and more talk about emotional intelligence — this is something in which women in particular tend to more often excel.

How far Estonian society is removed from the ideal condition — where we could seriously speak of the equal opportunities between women and men — can also be seen by reading this publication. Many Estonian women were undoubtedly shocked by the recent action by the Riigikogu, whereby it ratified the European Social Charter without the inclusion of the article regarding equal pay for men and women. The justification was realistic: we would have liked to but could not, because these principles cannot be implemented in Estonia, yet. Thousands of women probably interpreted it as just the opposite: an unwillingness to undertake serious action to ensure the actual equality of men and women in work.

This collection of articles is one way to find out about the actual position of women and men in Estonia — in everyday life, in work, and as reflected in the media and public opinion.

Looking at the results of sociological and psychological studies, together with statistics, a picture emerges of Estonia as a society which is adapting very slowly to the understandings and relations of the modern world. Although we are in the forefront regarding the speed of economic development and the adoption of the external indicators of a modern lifestyle, the cars and the mobile phones, there are still many traces of the traditional patriarchal society in the attitude to the role of women, and the situation at home and at work. The rapid changes of the recent decade have brought new concerns into women's lives: to provide their children with an edu-

cation of the desired standard, to remain competitive on the labor market, to obtain a job and salary corresponding to their education level, to protect their personal dignity from sexist attitudes. As is demonstrated by the data presented in this collection, the coping difficulties for families with children are borne by women. Often there are additional tensions regarding keeping a family together.

In all postmodern states there has been a sudden drop in the birthrate. This is the women's response to increased stress and tension. When a woman bringing up children is left alone with her worries, and has to pay — with the ability of her family to cope and a drop in her personal ability to compete — for the unwillingness of society to comprehend that giving birth and bringing up a new generation is the creation of society's most valuable

capital, then that society is condemned to experience a demographic crisis, which has in turn an irreversible effect on all spheres of life.

One of the more prominent social policy theoreticians of today, Gösta Esping Andersen, said in a presentation in summer 1999 at the European sociologists' congress that the changed attitudes of women, the desire of women to have the same opportunities of choice, and self-realization, as do men — in family life, education and on the labor market — has been the most powerful force affecting change in 20th century western civilization. I sincerely hope that the readers of this book understand the importance of these problems for Estonian development as well, and that Estonian women will become aware of their power and use this to change our society to become more humane and more democratic.

To be a woman and a man in Estonia at the turn of the millennium

Voldemar Kolga

Professor of the Chair of Personal and Developmental Psychology, Tallinn Pedagogical University, Head of the Women's Studies Center, TPU. He has studied the social representation of human rights, corporative philanthropy, young children's intellect; and he observes life. Recently began male studies.

Occasionally it seems that Estonia is a modern country — a country which is bravely about to enter the

ions about men and women (Tammer, 1999). Martinson is not a man from the bush, but a member of the management board of Baltic News Service, the chairman of the management board of AS Microlink, a pilot — therefore a modern man in all respects, at least outwardly. So what does this VIP think about men and women in an article published in a popular magazine?

According to Martinson, men should be above all strong, they must not cry. It is essential for men to control their emotions. Martinson states repeatedly that controlling one's feelings is an important attribute of masculinity. According to Martinson, a woman should be divine and have strong maternal instincts. Female instincts enable women to understand men and forgive them. Women may cry a little.

In society there is a general opinion that a woman exists not to work but to entertain and beautify life.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)¹

third millennium. People are travelling around the world, beautiful cars are everywhere on the streets, bank buildings are glittering in the sun, there are more Internet connections per person in Estonia than there are in France. One would think that our society is democratic in every way and therefore also that the relationships between men and women are modern. And naturally one expects that prominent public figures (VIP's) would express modern views. Unfortunately this is not always so.

A VIP expresses traditional views on relationships between men and women

Illusions about Estonians having modern views vanish if one reads, for example, Allan Martinson's opin-

The more a woman possesses such qualities, the more feminine she is. A man is characterized by the verb "must"; men must always do something whereas women need not. A woman just is, and doesn't have to do anything. Of course, a man with these views considers it unnatural that one of his Swedish business partners took parental leave. He considers this to be the wrong division of gender roles.

Public figures in the west have quite different ways of expressing themselves. Male politicians prefer to be photographed when ironing a shirt or walking with their grandchildren. Nobody knows whether they actually iron shirts or baby-sit every

¹ Quotes by A.H.Tammsaare from: A.H. Tammsaare on the women's movement. 1906. Collected works, Volume 15, appear throughout this publication.

day, but to the public they show themselves the way the public expects them to be. Similarly, the public in Estonia wants to see Martinson operating an aircraft, not ironing shirts. Therefore one could say that Estonia and western society have different views on the relationships between men and women. By the way, Estonians are often ironical about the political correctness of the West, hinting that it is only a façade and that things are different in reality. Of course it is a façade, but it is also known that sooner or later every façade starts to exert an influence on what is inside. In psychological terms, this process is called internalization, i.e. external norms becoming internal. Initially it is just for some people that external political correctness becomes an internal need, and internal norm.

do men and women have characteristics which are specific to them alone.

Being in command helps a traditional man feel like a man, but when he loses power, he feels cornered and may become violent

- Power, competition and control are the necessary prerequisites for masculinity to emerge and be retained. A man feels like a man when he has 'beaten' another man at something.
- Self control and control over others make a man feel safe. Men subject women to their control, for example in providing them with money. If such control is not possible, violence is used instead.

TABLE 1

According to the traditional point of view:

Women	Men
Are expressive	Are instrumental, business-like
Are emotional, subjective	Are rational, objective, logical
Understand the feelings of other people, are polite, forgiving	Conceal their feelings, do not show what they think
Talk a lot, their thoughts and feelings are not separated	Get to the point, do not talk too much
Have a great need for security, consider the needs of other people, go along with ideas, caring	Are independent; they know what they are doing, are competitive, aggressive, leaders
Consider their looks to be very important, cannot decide what to wear, are insecure	Are self-confident, decide quickly, have a sense of adventure

The views on gender roles in Estonia are traditional

Traditional views have developed over the centuries, they are universal and do not differ state by state or era by era. The following characteristics describe men and women who lived some centuries ago, but they also describe men and women of the modern era — men sitting in front of computer screens and women warming up meals in microwave ovens. Despite the external differences, views on relations between the sexes can be rather similar.

Such a division of gender roles has been considered normal, accepted by the society, natural — in the same way that an acorn becomes an oak and a cat gives birth to kittens, not to puppies, so

- Men believe that hard work and achievements guarantee personal happiness. Losing one's job or having a decrease in income is a great blow to masculinity.
- The self-concept and self-respect of men depend to a great extent on their success and achievements. Their inferiority and insecurities are anchored in their work.
- Men see feelings and emotions as signs of femininity. After all, men do not cry! Showing your weakness is equivalent to demonstrating femininity. The fear of femininity is one of men's biggest fears.
- Asking for help and looking for support from others reveal a man's femininity. It is a well-known fact that most men would not go to a doctor unless they were in serious trouble.

- Friendship and closeness with other men is usually avoided. Every man may become a competitor. One’s problems are talked about with women rather than with men. Also homophobia may occur.
- Sexuality is the main instrument of proving one’s masculinity. The size of the penis, the length of the sexual act and the number of women are definite attributes of masculinity. The smaller these figures are, the bigger loser a man is considered to be.

Are traditional gender roles the natural ones?

At the end of the 19th century, the women’s movement and feminism emerged; the naturalness of tra-

The fact that differences between men and women tend to diminish with each year is even more interesting. Information included in American textbooks of psychology from the 1950s is considerably different from what is presented in American textbooks today. For example, even the differences in verbal abilities of men and women are disappearing (differences in the number of words produced in a given time period remain). Simone de Beauvoir’s claim that one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman, is being recognized more and more. The same applies to men. We cannot help but raise the question — what mechanism ensures the perpetuation of gender roles as we know them today?

TABLE 2

Society perpetuates traditional men and women

Social institutions - family, school (including textbooks), the media - spread stereotypes based on which

Boys see themselves as	Girls see themselves as	Positive characteristics of boys	Positive characteristics of girls
Strong	Clever	Individuality, uniqueness	Sociality, universality
Big	Beautiful	Independence	Ability to co-operate
Rough	Nice	Strength	Empathy, sympathy, compassion
Fast	Always ready to help	Initiative	Consideration
Noisy	Silent, polite	Determination	Flexibility
Boys develop their	Girls develop their	Rationality, business-like behavior	Emotionality
Individualist awareness	Social consciousness		
Masculine extroversion	Feminine introversion		
Self-centered way of thinking	Inclusive way of thinking		
Communication skills in the public sphere	Communication skills in the intimate sphere		

ditional gender roles began to be questioned. It slowly became evident that the development of the natural behavior of girls/women and boys/men, even the development of their characteristic traits is influenced by certain conditions. This fact has been scientifically confirmed: men who stay home for some reason become expressive (talkative, helpful) and career women become instrumental (independent, decisive, aggressive).

This data very clearly indicates that working is related to instrumentality and staying home to expressiveness. What is more important — staying home decreases instrumentality and increases expressiveness, i.e. men at home become talkative like women who stay at home.

Gender differences: myth or reality? Is there any truth to gender stereotypes?

Stereotypes are usually misleading and wrong, although, some stereotypes may still adequately reflect real differences between certain groups. How different then are men and women? The opinion that certain differences between men and women do exist but these are smaller than generally believed is currently dominant in psychology (Eagly, 1987).

- The stereotypical opinion is widespread (and this opinion has also been recurrent in Estonian texts) that girls have better verbal abilities than boys. Indeed, little girls talk with longer sentences and learn to read earlier than boys. In

fact, these differences are rather insignificant and almost disappear during adolescence (Feingold, 1988; the title of Feingold's article "Cognitive gender differences are disappearing" is symptomatic here).

- The issue of differences in spatial abilities (ability to operate with images) has often been addressed stereotypically. Studies have shown that differences emerge during childhood and exist all through adulthood but they are not sufficiently extensive as to make far-reaching conclusions. When you are lost in the forest, you should trust a man rather than a woman, is a well-known example. Still, one should consider more carefully the particular man or woman before deciding.

Still, some simpler observations reveal that on the average boys are not better at mathematics than girls, although there are more outstanding achievements among boys.

- An area of difference which has been more substantiated is the greater aggressiveness of men and their violent behavior in general. There are more criminals among men (about 90% of convicts are men), men like aggressive sports and hunting. There are various reasons for aggressiveness ranging from hormonal factors to acquired violent behavior. The male hormone — testosterone — affects the brain in such a way that the threshold of anger is lowered. Greater aggressiveness is also linked to the higher level of physical activity of boys.

TABLE 3

Changes in the expressiveness and instrumentality of men and women according to activity (Eagly, 1987)

	Attributed trait	Activity not indicated	Working	At home
Woman	Expressive	3.82	3.23	4.20
Woman	Instrumental	3.06	3.60	2.88
Man	Expressive	2.99	3.28	4.11
Man	Instrumental	3.41	3.40	2.88

- It is widely believed that there are differences in mathematical abilities. An American study, in the course of which the mathematical abilities of three million women and men were tested, did not confirm this myth (Hyde, Fennema, Lamon, 1990). Still, it seems that the results of this study cannot counter the prejudice shared by millions, including Estonians, that men are better at mathematics than women. The study showed that differences were evident in the abilities to solve mathematical problems but these differences did not derive from different innate abilities but were rather caused by the fact that American boys attend more courses of chemistry and physics than girls. Unfortunately, there is no data concerning students in Estonia.
- It has been said that women recognize other's emotions better and are better at expressing their feelings.
- Another area where women may be more successful is leadership. That is to say that when women succeed in becoming leaders, they run an organization more democratically than men, they pay more attention to human relations and invite more people to participate in the decision-making process (Eagly & Johnson, 1991). Unfortunately, in Estonia we still do not know how to utilize the potential women have for leadership. Besides, for some reason women prefer to work under a male superior — probably because when you are just following orders, you do not have to take responsibility and this way it is easier to get by in many respects.

We might assume that men and women in Estonia do not differ significantly from Americans and that the principles listed above apply here as well. Besides, gender differences in Estonia, in all probability, should not increase in the future, but will decrease.

Patriarchy perpetuates traditional gender roles while concealing its power

Patriarchy is an institutionalized system of gender roles where men dominate, masculinity is more highly valued and women are subjected to men (Lerner, 1985). Patriarchy is essentially a system of power between sexes. Each power attempts to appear legal and natural. The Soviet system attempted the same and thereby reinforced its legitimacy. Thus, the Soviet system and patriarchy share some characteristics. Drawing parallels helps to understand the nature of relations between men and women today:

1. Both power structures are hierarchical; power descends downwards; the lower strata are not able to affect the situation or the power in force; there is no feedback in systems of power. Women, like subjects of the Soviet state, have no real power; they cannot be factors of influence. During the Soviet era, the nomenclature made the decisions, in patriarchy decisions are made by men.
2. Hierarchical power structure creates an impression of action. Stahhanov or the launch of sputniks are the best examples of the outward efficiency of the Soviet system. Likewise, a society run by men seems to be active; men go about men's business, women about women's business. Men's leadership is authoritarian, for example decisions are made in back rooms. Everyone plays their own role, performs their own functions. By the way, a lot of women in Estonia share this view, which indicates an acceptance of patriarchy.
3. Both power structures conceal the nature of their power. The Soviet system claimed that power was in the hands of soviets, i.e. representatives of the people. Men claim somewhat similarly that they have handed power to women. Some people like to say for instance that a woman is like the neck that turns the head every which way. A feeling of illusory power is created (as if a neck would know in which direction to turn the head). Women start to think that they do have power and there is nothing else to strive for. During Soviet times, power was in the hands of the people to the same extent.
4. Both power structures are of a bipolar nature, divided into two opposites: persons who have power and persons who do not have power, men and women. Contrast between the two sides is considered important; a man knows what he is doing.
5. Both ends of the contrasts are homogeneous. The polar worldview suppresses individual variations. Persons who do not have power and women are especially similar; powerful persons and men are characterized by relatively higher variety. Higher status produces variety; species on a higher level of evolution vary more than species on a lower level; thus reptiles are much more similar to each other than mammals.
6. Both the Soviet system and patriarchy produce isolated examples which are supposed to prove the high value of the system. The Soviet system paid tribute to workers who achieved the best results, kitchen hands became rulers, milkmaid Leida Peips was sent to the Supreme Soviet. In order to create the impression of a civilized state, a certain number of women were sent to supreme soviets. Today patriarchy pulls analogous stunts: fictitious power is given to some women. Unfortunately such single instances prove the rule: real power remains in the 'right' hands.
7. Being in power does not necessarily mean that you are a winner; thus the Soviet system repressed several of its sons and daughters who had previously been declared to be the best. Unexpectedly, men may turn out to be the losers in patriarchy as well. Patriarchy represses not only women but also men. The relations of men and women cannot be depicted as a zero-sum game where victory for one side automatically means defeat for the other. Social and health statistics show that a patriarchal society is very expensive for men (Men and Gender Equality, 1998). This cost is also expressed by the fact that men die at a younger age.

Power becomes more visible and structures more complicated with the disappearance of the Soviet system and patriarchy

Running a democratic society is more complicated; the number of subjects increases; power is divided among many people. A large middle class emerges instead of a world divided into the rich and the poor. The roles of men and women become more complicated. The polarity of the notions "a man's job" and "a woman's job" disappears. Things may even go so far that a man may take parental leave when he becomes a father, i.e. get involved in activities which until now have definitely belonged to the women's sphere (Men on Parental Leave, 1998).

A democratic state with its long-winded discussions does not seem to be as efficient as a totalitarian state. Too much talk, not enough action — that is what is said about the chat-rooms in Europe. When traditional gender roles disappear, new identities are needed. Even the term "gender identity panic" has emerged which expresses fear, insecurity of not being in conformity with the prescribed gender norms, this especially concerns gay men (Adam, 1998). Nothing is pre-determined any more. Men may start cooking breakfast and women operate spaceships, should it be found to be practical. A topical issue for Estonia is involving women in running the country because women's way of running things is more democratic than that of men. If men support the idea of democracy they will have to start getting used to women's discussions.

A characteristic feature of a democratic state is transparency, especially in what concerns power mechanisms and information flows. As feminism is not very widespread in Estonia, we share the traditional opinion that patriarchy as the ruling order is normal. We are even proud that feminism, a monster let loose in the world, has not reached Estonia. But sooner or later we will reach the conclusion that patriarchy, like the Soviet system, is not a suitable companion for Estonia in the new millennium.

The number of subjects of power increases in a democratic state, for example many non-governmental and grass-roots organizations emerge. Similarly, several different expressions of femininity and masculinity emerge. A woman may be a babe and/or a mother staying at home, just like a man may have

fighters and/or cook porridge. Femininity and masculinity are not as opposed to each other any more.

A democratic state is never complete, there are always repairs to be made, painful surgery to be carried out. This cannot always be based on majority opinion, like the Soviet system deceitfully claimed. The success of the Estonian state may be explained by some unpopular decisions made during the last decade.

In order to change the relations between men and women and undermine the power of patriarchy unpopular decisions may occasionally need to be made. Legislation governing new, modern human relations in Estonia might be based on the system of quotas applied in Scandinavia — thereby creating better opportunities for women to run the state than they had before. There has been no backlash in Scandinavia on these grounds. Democracy requires a broad basis and involving women in governing the state has proved to be only profitable. Unfortunately, such a possibility has not yet been seriously discussed in Estonia. The majority in society seem to be against quotas, which is understandable considering the experience of the past. Quotas need to be applied in order to provide weaker individuals with better opportunities. Quotas may be unfair towards someone at a given moment but if thereby society becomes more just in the future then the quotas can be positive after all. Apparently a firm viewpoint concerning this issue is needed and legislation concerning quotas will need to be prepared and quotas pushed through, and I mean pushed through, because all societies are conservative and do not want rapid change.

The need to alter the relations between men and women derives from the changing nature of the society

Patriarchal relations were adequate in an agrarian society, most probably in an industrial society as well. It was natural in such societies that a man is active outside the home, he goes out to work somewhere, he is the breadwinner, and a woman, on the other hand, is active at home, she raises the children, keeps the house clean. The individual who operates outside has more power than the one at home; he is visible, the one at home — invisible. Power also derives from visibility. A man was and is appreciated according to the size of his income. The productivity of a man can be quantitatively deter-

mined; the work a woman does in the home and in raising children cannot be quantitatively measured.

Traditional gender roles may generally change because of two reasons — changes in the nature of jobs and changes in the cultural, intellectual sphere.

Changes in the nature of jobs

Changes may be caused by the nature of work. Physical strength is not very important in an information society. Work can be done at home. A single person may produce a lot. Computers are also neutral regarding a 'feminine' way of thinking. The notions "a man's job" and "a woman's job" disappear from the labor market of such a society. Gender will no longer determine which jobs are done by women and which by men. Education and professional skills will become the determining factors.

The new labor market places men in a difficult situation, as they are used to defining themselves through work. In the new situation, work which is also successfully done by women cannot be a source of pride. For example, earlier only men worked as drivers, now women are sitting behind the wheel as well. Not long ago few women used the Internet, by now women constitute 40% of the Internet users in Estonia. Education and social status in society have become determining factors, instead of gender. Changes in jobs bring about changes in the roles of both sexes.

The values of individualism and pluralism increase in a post-industrial society. Uniform phenomena, like gender roles, are splitting up - femininity and masculinity become more diverse. Searching for one's self becomes customary for people; everything is under question, including gender. It will become more possible to change sex.

Changes in the intellectual or awareness sphere

It is increasingly common to refer to human beings as social constructs and also as gender constructs. The nature of humanity changes all the time and as time keeps moving faster and faster, it is obvious that we keep changing with the times.

Gender roles have changed. Women's awareness has increased and they have started to debate various issues that have never been discussed by

women before. One of the most complicated issues these days is the attitude of Eastern-European researchers of women's studies towards western feminism (see Beitnere 1999; Holm 1999; Kivimaa 1999). Some very radical ideas have been expressed: "Western feminism should be rejected because it does not apply to the experiences of women in the East" (Regulska 1997). Views like that are based on the conceptions of Western feminists who perceive Eastern Europe as a great marketplace for feminist ideas. Some feminists remind one of the crusaders who arrived in Estonia — a cross in one hand and a sword in the other. Perhaps there is an analogy between the reasons why they came here: the number of sensible persons who would have peacefully accepted Christianity/ feminism was not large enough. Similarly, the numbers of those who could speak the local tongue were not very large — among the crusaders or among the feminists. These might be some of the reasons contributing to the negative attitudes towards feminism in Eastern Europe. Hence, similarly to Christianity, we should not necessarily label feminism as a harmful doctrine that is inconsistent with the worldview of the local people. Here we can draw a parallel with people's attitudes towards the Soviet rule: many people still see positive features in socialism. It is difficult to close one's eyes to the fact that women became teachers and doctors and generally worked on an equal footing with men. At the same time there is the tendency to forget that women usually ended up in low-prestige jobs or jobs which were in the process of becoming less prestigious. The status of a job can be characterized by either an inflow or outflow of men. It is a well-known fact that unlike in capitalist countries, teachers and doctors were not part of the elite during Soviet times.

It would not be reasonable to reject patriarchy-exposing western feminism only on the basis of its external characteristics or one's personal experiences. Centers for women's studies in both Eastern Europe and the West should make an effort to transfer experiences from one certain context to another: from Sweden to Estonia and, why not, from Estonia to Sweden, for example. In the process of such a dialogue, the parties should develop a better understanding of themselves and of each other.

Emancipation of women has changed the way men behave. Women's studies and the feminist movement have led to the emergence of men's

movements which try to re-evaluate the nature of men. There are discussions about the nature of masculinity. Even some men's organizations have emerged, the White Ribbon Campaign was launched to reduce men's violence, for example (Kaufman 1999). Men have started to realize that traditional masculinity is not always an advantage but rather a troublesome phenomenon. Many men react to the loss of power with aggressiveness; they are not able to find other strategies for problem solving. If they cannot reach their aims by usual means then they become violent, especially towards the weaker sex.

The media is the biggest influence on gender-related behavior. Men and women are displayed differently in the media. Mainstream media publications depict both men and women as traditional figures. Yet we cannot ignore the fact that efforts are being made to provide a different image of men and women, an image that is reflective and not based solely on stereotypes. The influence of non-usual depictions might be much bigger than we think. Minorities must be extremely unanimous and display their marginality in order to be influential (Moskovic 1980). Therefore it would be useful if the disagreements between researchers in women's studies would remain in academic circles and not be reflected in the media. Otherwise the influence of this minority becomes almost non-existent.

Conclusion

Gender-related behavior was examined in a society in transition. The extent of liberation from patriarchy is one indicator showing the level of human and social development in Estonia. It needs to be clearly stated that the level of development in Estonia is not only indicated by the number of cellular phones but also by the nature of human relations. The Government could establish special programs that would help abolish patriarchal relations in Estonia. However, there is no support on the governmental level for women's studies, not to mention, for active measures that require considerable financial support. At the same time, western support to programs democratizing human relations in Estonia may be withdrawn soon. At the moment, the media should help to create a conviction in people that the relations between men and women need to be reformed. Women should be given more power

because at the moment their potential is not being used sufficiently in many areas. And even men would benefit from a better-balanced society.

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Health of women and men in Estonia, 1990–1998

Andrus Lipand

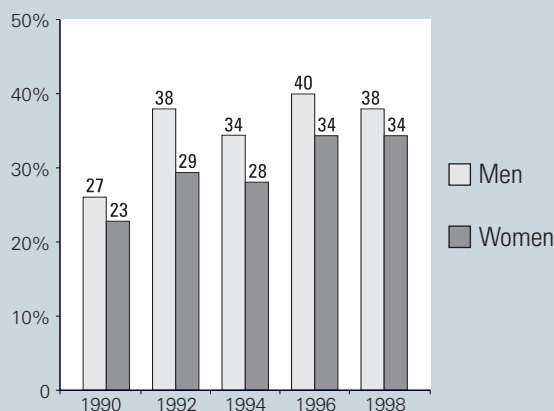
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In examining the health of the Estonian population, there has been relatively little attention paid to gender differences and similarities, particularly regarding the background to them. One of the more probable reasons is the scarcity of data. There is now, however, sufficient statistical data, together with results of population studies, which

1999, the estimated figures were 672 676 men and 772 904 women. The reduction in the population has been influenced in this period, as well as by re-migration and a negative birthrate, also by the low level of health of the people. One of the more important indicators of population health, which is used as the basis for the calculation of the human development index, is the average life expectancy at birth, which during the period under examination decreased continually until the middle of the decade for both men and women, and has increased since then. This tendency has now ceased, and for men it is currently 8–10 years less than in the Nordic countries and for women, 2–10 years less. Whereas in developed countries the difference in life expectancy between men and women is not greater than ten years, in

FIGURE 1

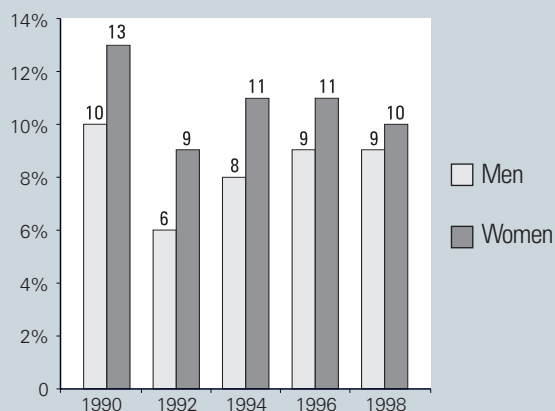
Proportion of those considering their health to be very good or quite good (%).



Source: Estonian Centre for Health Education and Promotion, 1999.

FIGURE 2

Proportion of those considering their health to be very bad or quite bad (%).



Source: Estonian Centre for Health Education and Promotion, 1999.

will permit observation of health developments in Estonia over the last decade from a gender aspect. An understanding of the differing and similar directions in the health indicators of men and women will enable the assessment of the factors affecting health, and to plan appropriate actions in a differentiated improvement of our quality of life. This overview aims to present the more important demographic and statistical health indicators, as well as people's own assessments of their health, and their habits and living environments which affect their health.

General demographic and statistical health indicators

According to data from the 1989 census, there were 731 392 men and 834 270 women in Estonia. In

Estonia it has been greater than ten years for the whole of the period under examination.

There are a number of notable general tendencies in the last decade of this century — with its characteristic drop in the birthrate, the aging of the population and a high rate of early death (regardless of where we draw the age limit between the ages of 50 and 70). The standardized mortality rate according to cause of death per 1000 000 in the population for both men and women show a growth tendency regarding neoplasms, respiratory and digestive system diseases, endocrine and metabolic diseases, infections and accidents, poisonings and injuries. At the same time there is a reduction in deaths amongst men and women from circulatory, genitourinary, congenital anomalies, blood and blood forming organs diseases, and mental disorders.

There is a rise in mortality rates amongst men for nervous system and sense organ diseases, and skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases.

During the studied period, more boys have been born than girls. In contrast to the constant drop in the general birthrate from 1990–1998 from 14.2 to 8.5, the general mortality rate has risen in the same period from 12.4 to 13.4, and it was the highest in 1994 (14.8). But at the same time, in the last years, we are approaching the Nordic level regarding the number of children under the age of one who have died, and the number of girls who died is greater only in 1997.

In the mortality rates of the population, first place is held by circulatory diseases, neoplasms and external reasons (accidents, injuries and poisonings). A characteristic phenomenon was the sudden increase

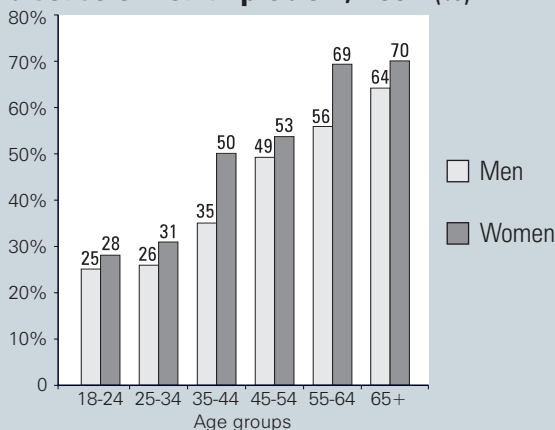
many-fold greater proportion for men than for women. The same trend exists for death caused by alcohol poisoning, where men have higher indicators.

Cases of alcoholic poisoning resulting in death grew rapidly in the first half of the decade and this was then followed by a slight drop. In the last year under observation a rising trend was again noted as was for accidents resulting in death. Compared to the start of the decade, the mortality rate is currently significantly higher. Men's problems in coping, and the resulting high number of suicides, alcohol-poisoning deaths, accidents, have all increased the gap between the average life-span of the sexes.

According to data from the Estonian Cancer Register, the incidence of cancer including early illness increased 24% for men and 12% for women in

FIGURE 3

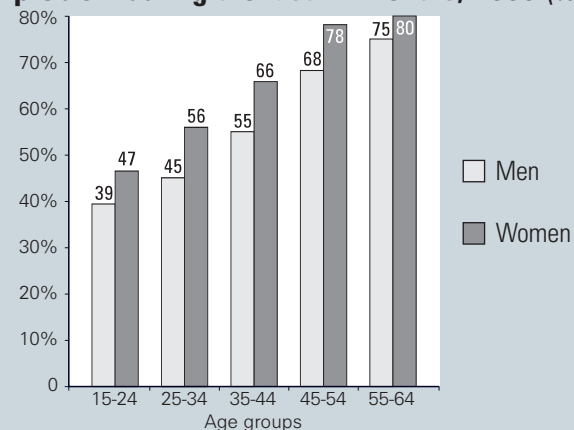
Proportion of those with a chronic disease or health problem, 1994 (%)



Source: Estonian Institute of Socio-Economic Analysis, 1995.

FIGURE 4

Experience of at least one long-term health problem during the last 12 months, 1996 (%)



Source: Institute of Experimental and Clinical Medicine, 1999.

in mortality regarding injuries and poisonings, which caused a change in the structure of the causes of death for men in the middle of the decade, where death due to external causes was placed for some years in second place, pushing neoplasms into third place. As a result, pension-age women currently form almost 30% of the pension-age population (men/women aged 62/57+ respectively), but men only 13%.

Death from external causes, which forms approximately 15% of total deaths, should be mostly avoidable, but the discovery of the reasons and their backgrounds requires more detailed classification of the existing data.

In 1990–1998, accidents resulting in death occurred three to four times more frequently for men than for women. Regarding suicides, there was also a

the period 1968–1972 to 1988–1992. Men suffered primarily from lung, prostate gland and stomach cancer, and women from breast, skin and stomach cancer. There is a concerning increase in cervical cancer amongst middle aged and younger women. There is a steady increase in circulatory organ diseases amongst both men and women.

Our high level and frequency of circulatory organ diseases and cancer is due mainly to our lifestyle and environment. These are also in turn affected by people's values, education or level of information, and behavior.

Health as seen by the person

Health as seen by the person herself or himself has been studied in numerous surveys conducted in

Estonia. The following overview is based primarily on the data published by the Estonian Institute of Socio-Economic Analysis (Living conditions in Estonia at the end of 1994), Institute of Experimental and Clinical Medicine (Estonian Health Study, 1996) and the Estonian Centre for Health Education and Promotion (Health Behaviour among Estonian Adult Population, Spring 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996 and 1998).

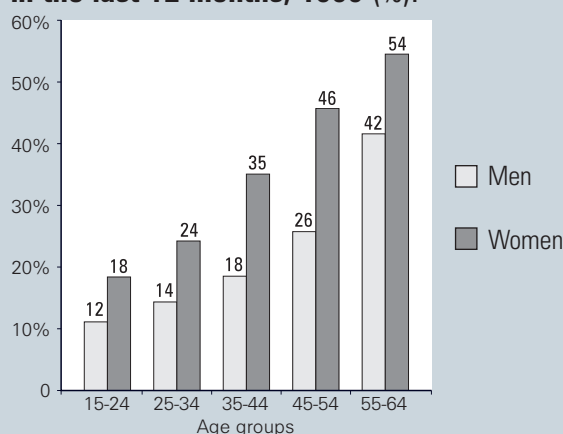
Of the presented eight life values (good health, family relationships, material well-being, education and knowledge, work achievements and recognition, travel opportunities, comfortable life), 48% of the women and 43% of the men surveyed considered good health to be the most important. Family relationships came second equally for men and women at 38%, and third place was held by material well-being (women 8% and men

women had more problems with their health than men (Figure 3).

There was an average of 51% of women and 41% of men who claimed that they had a chronic disease. From the age of 35, one-third of men and half the women had trouble with some chronic problem or disease. In the 35–44 age group, the differences between men's and women's health and feeling of well-being were the greatest. It is remarkable that fully a quarter of the respondents in the youngest age group had some chronic disease or health problem.

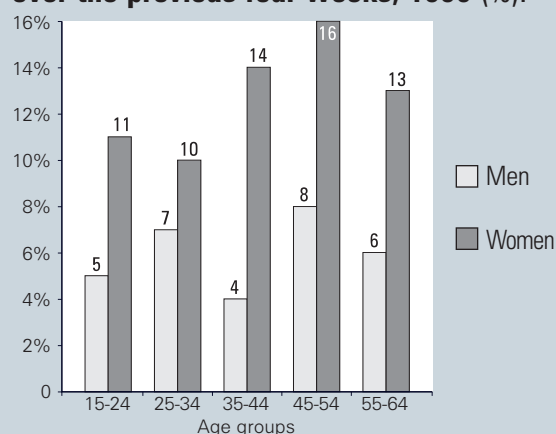
In the 1996 survey, there was clearly a greater proportion of women who had experienced at least one long-term health problem during the last 12 months (Figure 4).

FIGURE 5
Occurrence of circulatory organ problems in the last 12 months, 1996 (%).



Source: Institute of Experimental and Clinical Medicine, 1999.

FIGURE 6
Occurrence of significant depression over the previous four weeks, 1996 (%).



Source: Institute of Experimental and Clinical Medicine, 1999.

13%). In all the above-mentioned surveys, and over the entire period under observation, women have assessed their health to be substantially worse than men's. But there have been positive changes. The proportion of women and men who consider their health to be either very good or quite good has increased (Figure 1), and although this indicator was higher for men, the difference compared to women has lessened considerably.

The below average assessment of women regarding their health is clearly reducing, resulting in the difference between women and men almost disappearing (Figure 2).

A characteristic health indicator is the proportion of people in the population with some chronic disease or health problem. This question was asked in the 1994 survey, with the result that in all age groups,

In 1990–1998, the dominant diseases diagnosed by a doctor in the last 12 months were high blood pressure and chronic problems associated with joints and the spinal column. The frequency of all these is higher for women than for men. On observing the occurrence of circulatory organ problems over the last 12 months in 1996 (Figure 5), the clear predominance of women is apparent in absolutely all age groups and this predominance increases with the increase in age.

Another characteristic phenomenon is the accompanying distress which is important emotionally, and this occurred for the above problems for 2/3 of both women and men.

The increase in excess stress in Estonian society, as an indicator of mental health, has been noted by a number of researchers. If we look at the assess-

ments people themselves give for the level of stress, tension or pressure that they have experienced in the previous month, we can see that it is more frequent amongst women, and also that it is generally on the increase. It was only in the last year of the study that the proportion of people suffering under excess stress fell, which does not necessarily indicate a beginning to a constant fall.

The 1996 health study assessed the frequency of those suffering under significant depression over the previous four weeks, and here the problem was greater for women than for men in all age groups (Figure 6).

The proportion of people suffering from depression generally increases in the second half of life, and for women, according to data from this study, the figure exceeded 20% after the age of 65, but for men in the

Behavior affecting people's health

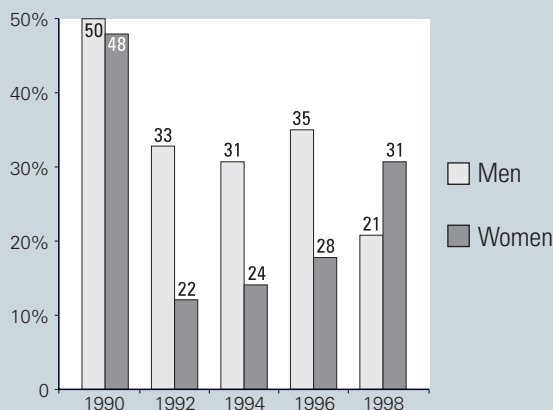
Eating habits, physical activity, smoking, alcohol usage, hygiene and reproductive behavior are the main aspects of everyday behavior which affect people's health.

Eating habits have undergone vital changes in the last decade. Reduction in fats, replacement of animal with vegetable fats, increased frequency in the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, reduction in use of sugar and salt, are the most characteristic shifts in this period for both women and men.

A little over 70% of women and under 50% of the men have permanently changed their eating habits over recent years. Every third man and every second

FIGURE 7

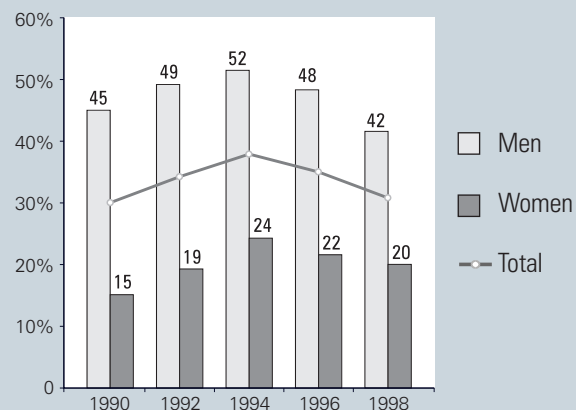
Involvement in physical exercise at least twice a week (%).



Source: Estonian Centre for Health Education and Promotion, 1999.

FIGURE 8

Proportion of daily smokers (%).



Source: Estonian Centre for Health Education and Promotion, 1999.

same age group the corresponding figure was just over 10%. The occurrence of depression was the lowest for married women and men.

The 1994 life-style study clarified the most common ways in which people looked after their health. Within the eight possibilities provided, the order of the selection was quite varied and occasionally even strange, particularly regarding the importance placed on drinking herbal teas. In addition to the provided list, men also added reading health related publications (21%), fasting (10%) and taking vitamins (9%). Women, in contrast to the men, had in fifth position reading health related publications (44%). However, women considered fasting and taking vitamins to be more important than did the men, although both women and men had these placed in the last positions, with 7% and 13% respectively.

woman has started to eat fresh fruit at least three times a week. It is the same proportion for fresh vegetables. The trend for a balanced and healthy diet, however, is more characteristic of women than of men. The latter are still attached to spreading butter on black or white bread, drinking higher fat content milk, using pork lard or margarine for frying, and eating eggs. There is also more usage of sugar and salt amongst men. Taking into account that amongst the consumers of animal fats, salt and carbohydrates there are more men than women, and that there is less fruit and vegetable consumption, women's eating habits can be considered to be better balanced and also healthier.

Regarding *physical activity*, we can be characterized by our sedentary work, which in 1996 involved

23% of men and 36% of women. In the same year, 78% of men and 81% of women responded that they had done no physical exercise over the last month. Whereas in 1990, 50% of men and women were involved in physical exercise at least twice a week, after the restoration of independence in 1991, there was a big drop in this area (Figure 7).

After 1992, there has been some increase for women, but with men there has been no discernable increase over the last six years in the number of active people. It is also noteworthy that the group of the people least active in physical exercise is not the oldest age group but those in the age group 35–54.

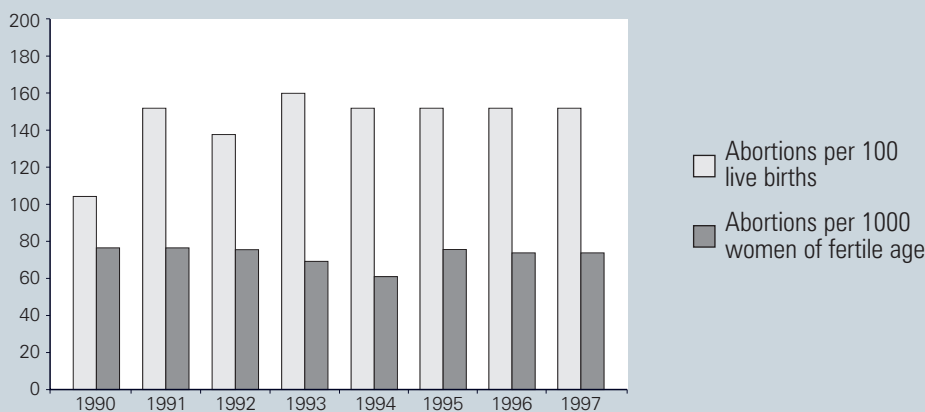
Smoking is an indicator in the occurrence frequency of at least 25 diseases, but it is also the only

spent at least one hour at work in a room where people were smoking. Only 50% of women and 30% of men were able to breath smoke-free air at work.

Alcohol consumption, for both women and men, has markedly increased over the period being studied. This is characterized by the preference for vodka and other strong alcoholic drinks over wine and beer. Whereas in 1998, 25% of the respondents did not care for wine, 35% did not care for beer and 48% did not drink Long Drink, the proportion for strong alcohol was only 19%. The frequency of consumption of vodka and other strong alcohol over the years 1990–1998 has substantially increased for women and men. Men consume three times more strong alcohol than women. The proportion of

FIGURE 9

Frequency of abortions



Source: Estonian Abortion Register, 1999.

health risk factor which can be immediately excluded. The special characteristic of cigarette smoking in Estonia is the smoking of unfiltered cigarettes (men 20%, women 5%), which is the case mainly for men and women over 45 or living in rural areas, and in relation to the lowest level of education. Over the recent decade, the trend for daily smokers has undergone a rising curve for both women and men and is now returning to its beginnings (Figure 8).

The lack of an increasing tendency in the youngest age group, where in 1996 and 1998 39% of men and 20% and 18% respectively of women smoked, means that smoking could reduce even more in the coming years. The proportion of passive smoking in workplaces is still high, but this has reduced considerably over recent years. In 1998, 14% of women and 37% of men

women who drink wine once a week or more frequently has increased from 3% in 1990 to 11% in 1998, but for men there has been no marked growth and the level in recent years is the same as for women.

Reproductive behavior determines our fertility and affects our health. The ever-earlier start of sexual activity requires more information and adds risks. Reproductive health is determined by sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, and the level of health instruction, education, together with high quality and available counseling services. In all these areas major changes have taken place over the last decade. In the first half of the decade, illness caused by sexually transmitted diseases increased dramatically, and it is

still high. The number of abortions, as well as per 1000 fertile women, has indeed fallen (Figure 9), but due to the constant fall in the birthrate, the number of abortions was 1.5 times higher than live births in 1997 (1.3 times higher than legally induced abortions).

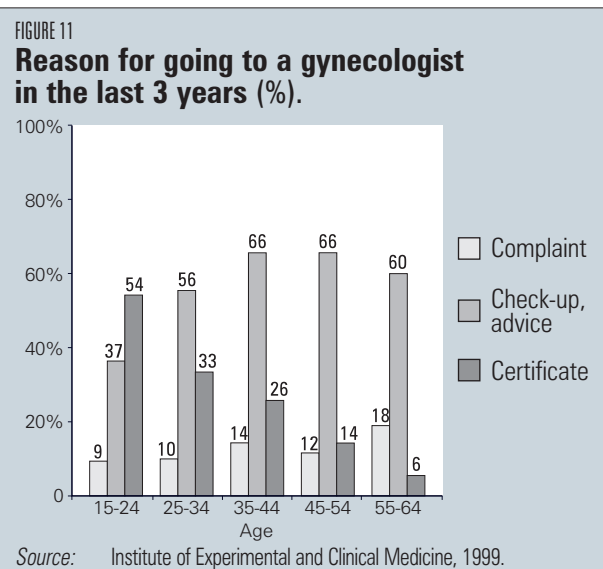
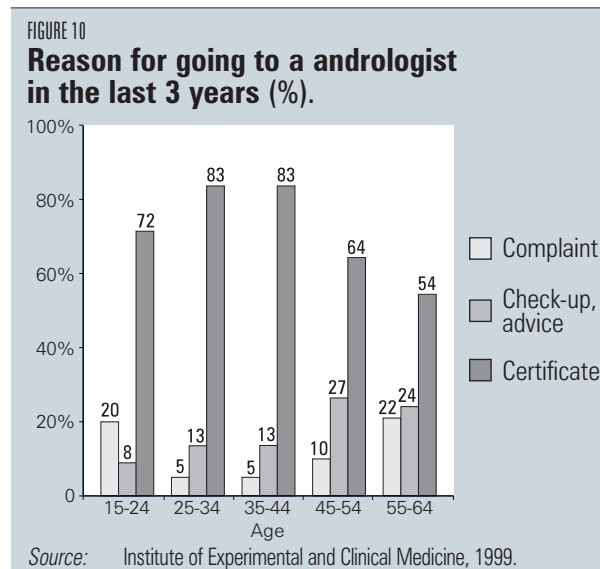
Abortion is still the main means of birth control, despite the increase in the use of birth control devices. There are now 12 towns with youth counseling facilities.

From the aspect of reproductive behavior, the reasons for people to go to a gynecologist or andrologist are quite varied (Figure 10).

In 1996, over 2.5 times fewer men than women went for check-ups or to ask advice, and more men than women went because of specific complaints (16% and 11% respectively). It is noteworthy that the highest

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number of these, regardless of gender, was in the youngest age group.

Conclusions

Proceeding from the existing database, it is the middle of the decade which is critical regarding the trends in women's and men's health indicators. In the initial years of the decade, the trend in most of the objective and subjective indicators was negative, and the breakthrough for improvement became apparent only in recent years. There is a paradox in the fact that women in every age group have a lower self-assessment of their health and see more health problems than do men, but women have a substantially longer average life and follow a healthier lifestyle.

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Gendered leisure: resources and actual use

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Amount and meaning of leisure time

Leisure time is a category which is difficult to restrict to one definite concept, since it is a very

have a substantial influence on leisure time choices and opportunities. The inequality of leisure opportunities has both a material and cultural aspect. The material aspect covers access to key resources — time and money. The cultural aspect contains perceptions and views of what is appropriate leisure behaviour for members of a particular social group in a certain socio-cultural space (Clarke & Critcher, 1995).

The amount of leisure time and its distribution between members of society is one of the important indicators of quality of life and the development level of society. How are the main resources of leisure in Estonia distributed according to gender? Do women and men have equal

Peter the Great saved higher class women from their imprisonment, brought them – mothers and daughters – into the dance halls where they choked on the thick tobacco smoke. But even then it seems that it did not occur to anyone that a woman might just need an education, just as the great Czar considered it necessary for men.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)

personal and subjective mix of the everyday experiences of an individual. Despite the numerous definitions of leisure time (see e.g. Rojek, 1995), the majority of researchers agree that the main criteria or characteristic features for leisure are freedom of choice, pleasantness and the lack of unavoidable obligations.

The main resources of leisure use are time and money. Although this is also influenced by the availability of leisure services, living conditions, existence of transport and other objective factors, most of these can be compensated with sufficient monetary resources.

Leisure activity patterns are not always the outcome of an individual's free choice. Empirical studies show that social status, age and gender

opportunities for a leisure participation which is pleasant and interesting?

In trying to answer these questions, the following article will first examine the amount of leisure time. As for the monetary opportunities, most of the recent studies show that women on average are in a worse economic situation than men (see Narusk, 1999). The surveys "Estonia 93" and "Estonia 98" used people's own assessments in answering the question: *"Please try to estimate how much leisure time on average you have on weekdays, after deducting the time*

¹ The data source for this article is mainly the results of the population survey "Estonia 98" and "Estonia 93" (adult population, 18–70 year olds).

spent on work, studies, household tasks and sleep?”.

The responses indicated that neither Estonian women nor men feel that the amount of their weekday leisure has changed much during this decade. The level of gender inequality in this sphere has remained practically the same. As was the case in the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, and now at the end of this decade, women have substantially less leisure time than men (Table 1). The same result is confirmed by the Statistical Office of Estonia’s 1996 pilot study on the time usage of the adult population, which was carried out using the time budgeting method and also calculated the leisure time allocation on weekends.

one-fifth of such women and one-tenth of men amongst the adult population.

Naturally, the bulk of leisure time varies according to the person’s economic status (employment), age, family status, ages of children living at home, and other factors. But gender inequality in potential leisure time is apparent for working as well as for non-working people, the unemployed and pensioners. Women have less free time than men throughout life — i.e. in all age and family groups. This is evident already by comparing single childless young women and young men, not to mention the later stages in life (Figure 1).

As expected, those working women with underage children at home have the least leisure

TABLE 1

Amount of leisure time on weekdays by gender, 1993–1998 (%).

		Less than 1 hour		2-3 hours		4 or more hours	
		1993	1998	1993	1998	1993	1998
Total	Men	7	9	49	44	44	47
	Women	16	19	54	50	30	31
Working	Men	8	11	55	49	38	40
	Women	21	22	62	56	17	22
Non-working	Men	5	3	31	27	63	70
	Women	9	13	42	39	49	47

Source: “Estonia 98” and “Estonia 93”, RASI.

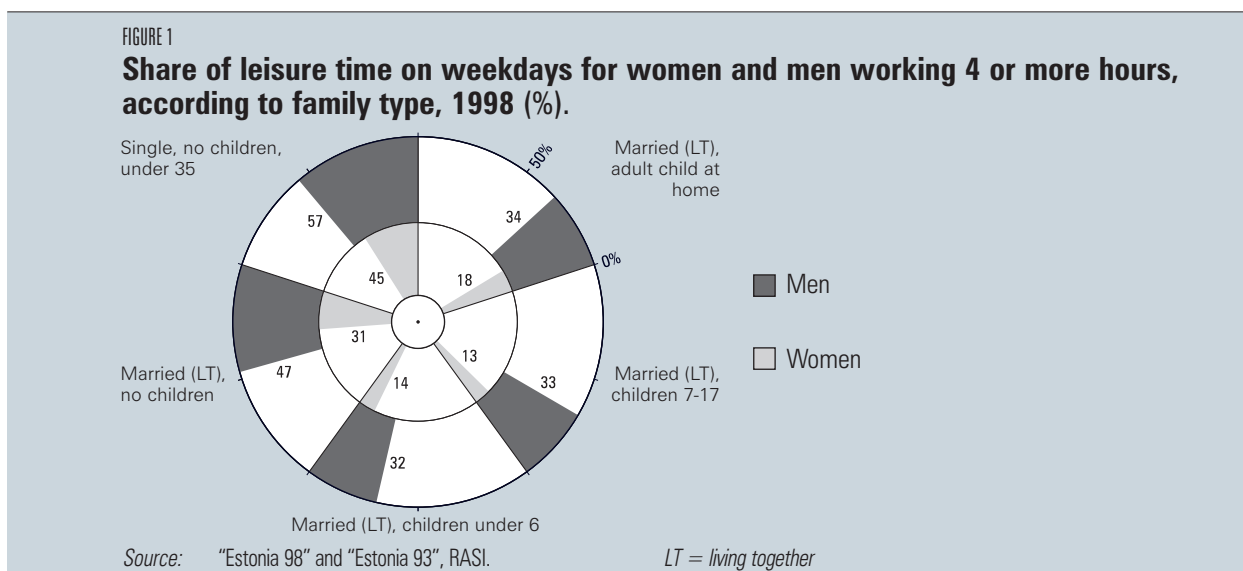
In examining the changes in the amount of leisure time in 1993–1998, we can see that the biggest group was, and still is, those working men and women who have only 2–3 hours of free time on weekdays. Over the last 5 years, the proportion of those men and women who have quite a lot of free time on working days — 4 or more hours — has not increased, and the gender inequality regarding this indicator has also remained relatively the same. It is true that the gender gap among the working people did reduce slightly, but in the non-working population this even increased (from 14% to 23%). At the same time the share of those women and men who had very little free time — less than 1 hour a day — increased slightly too. Currently there are almost

time. Whether the children attend school or not does not have much influence here. But it is clear that single mothers, who are often in a more difficult situation, economically and morally, than married women (or living together), are even slightly more masters of their time than women who have to “care for” their partner as well as for their children. During this period of life, the inequality between men and women regarding leisure time is the greatest. Whereas the average relationship between working men and women who have 4 or more hours of leisure time is 1.7, it is up to 2.5 for the parents of underage children who are married or living together. The same tendencies were typical also at the beginning of the 1990s (Järve, 1994).

So, the much discussed problem of gender inequality in the sphere of leisure time has not improved in any way during the last decade. It is only in the younger generation — under 35 year old single childless people — that one can see a clear tendency towards equality in the allocation of leisure time for women and men (in this group with at least 4 hours of leisure time on workdays, the ratio of men and women reduced from 1.7 to 1.3 over 5 years). Women’s fewer opportunities for leisure time are mainly a result of the fact that they dedicate on average considerably more time to unpaid household tasks and looking after children. So, according to data from the 1996 time use pilot study, adult women spent an average of 5.9 hours a day on

tions, but also culturally established presuppositions and views on what is appropriate for men and women, which is accompanied by certain role stereotypes. There are accepted understandings and unwritten norms regarding what suits one or the other sex, and they often exist subconsciously. It is assumed that women will participate in certain leisure time activities, spending time in those places and at those times which match the female roles held by society (Deem, 1995; Clarke & Critcher, 1995).

As shown by numerous feminist qualitative studies (Deem, 1995; Green, Hebron & Woodward, 1995), women, in their personal choices of leisure time, are much less free than



housework (incl. shopping, visiting service establishments), but men spent two hours less — 3.9 hours per day.

In addition to routine housework, it is often a woman’s responsibility to care for close family — invalids, old people, etc. Therefore, as long as traditional gender role attitudes persist which consider the multiple (paid and unpaid) working load of women to be normal, there is no hope regarding the increase of women’s leisure time and equal opportunities for both sexes regarding relaxing breaks and entertainment which are intended for intellectual and physical self-development.

Gender inequality in leisure time does not only encompass women’s scarcer time alloca-

men, because besides a lack of time, they are also more shackled by the interests of the other family members, and the pressure of role expectations. This is also the case in Estonia. Expectations for women are primarily to do with their dedication to the home — “caring” and “looking after”, understanding and responsibility, creating a home atmosphere. The actual choices for women are often leftover choices, which are subjugated to the interests of others, and which are much more dependent on everyday context than for men.

All this is also reflected in the subjective meanings of leisure, which were clarified in the “Estonia 98” survey based on the answer to the open-ended question: “What does

leisure time mean to you personally?" The analysis of the responses showed clear gender differences in the interpretation of leisure time. For men it was mostly time free of paid employment, the time between work and going to sleep and which primarily meant resting and relaxing (*"The time when the door to my workplace closes behind me"*; *"Leisure time for me starts after work or when I switch off my mobile"*; *"The time when I can put my feet up, when I don't have to do anything"*). Women, particularly of younger middle age, under 45, again often interpret leisure time as moments of time for themselves to spend as they want, but which are unfortunately limited. Compared to men, they stress more fre-

that they can only allow themselves idle moments when absolutely all "household obligations" have been fulfilled: *"Leisure time is the time when all the housework is done and there is no more to do, and I can spend it on myself and do what I want"* (41 year old Estonian woman, mother of 3).

The various meanings of leisure time are often intertwined. The wish to do what they want and be alone is often combined for women — for example, reading, an activity which requires a certain separation, and also allows it.

Besides gender differences there are also ethnic and age differences in the subjective meanings of leisure. Generally speaking it can be claimed that younger people are more indi-

TABLE 2

Activity in reading printed matter, according to gender, 1993 and 1998 (%).

Reading indicators	Men		Women	
	1993	1998	1993	1998
Does not regularly read any newspapers	21	37	22	32
Reads two or more newspapers	50	28	45	28
Does not regularly read any magazines	54	59	47	40
Reads two or more magazines	23	20	26	35
Has read over 6 books in the last 12 months	37	32	42	38
Not one book	14	20	10	14
Read fiction				
At least once a week	44	32	56	44
Not at all	13	21	9	10
Read non-fiction*				
At least once a week	52	44	51	44
Not at all	11	15	19	18

* professional literature or other non-fiction

Source: "Estonia 98" and "Estonia 93", RASI.

quently the opportunity to be alone, in peace, and also the freedom from home and family responsibilities.

All people need privacy — a time and a place to be alone, for dreaming, etc. Estonian women, particularly mothers, in talking about leisure time emphasize (more than men) aspects of personal freedom, freedom for "myself", a wish to remove themselves from family ties. This indicates that their need for privacy is to a great extent unsatisfied. It also expresses the desire by women to support their own identity — not to "dissolve" into the family.

In addition, it is quite characteristic for middle-aged and older Estonian women to believe

vidualistic in their leisure concepts than are older people, and Estonians, both women and men, are in their turn more self-centered than non-Estonians. So, figuratively speaking, whereas Estonians, particularly younger women, desire free moments for themselves and freedom from family ties, non-Estonians, on the contrary, want to spend more time in the "bosom of the family". Compared to Estonians, they are noticeably more family-centered, leisure time for them more often means relaxing time at home spent together with the family. Based on the notion of the theorists of postmodernism that the modernization process is characterized by a growing individualism and weakening of traditional bonds of

belonging, including the nuclear family (Giddens, 1991) — it could be said that Estonians' leisure time attitudes are in this sense more (post)modern.

Gender differences in leisure usage

Transition to a market economy has substantially affected the opportunities and preferences for Estonian people in spending leisure time. How is this reflected in everyday life and how have the leisure time practices for men and women changed during the last five years?

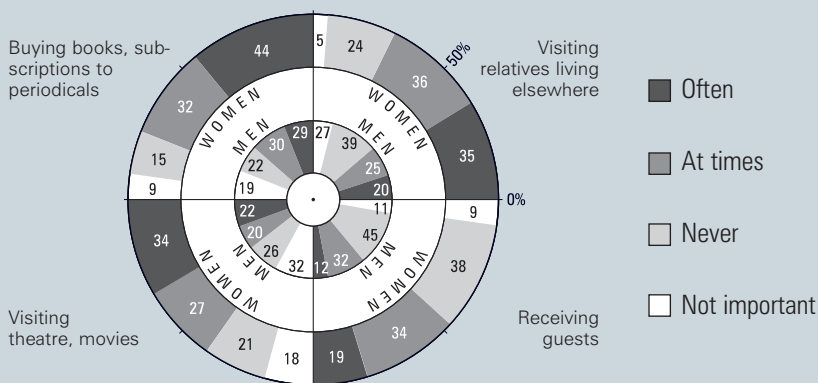
Changes in the use of leisure time have gone hand in hand with the modernization and socio-economic differentiation of Estonian soci-

watching enthusiasm, but the latter are more active in watching various channels (see Lauristin & Vihalemm, 1998). But if workday TV watching is used as a basis, then, according to the "Estonia 98" study, television still plays a slightly more important role for men than for women. On workdays in 1998, men who dedicated over 2 hours to the TV numbered 64%, compared to 55% of women.

Whereas men seem to be more attracted to television, women listen more to the radio, which is more suitable for women's everyday routines, permitting parallel activities. The keenest radio listeners are women over 50. In conjunction with the increase in TV watching, the time devoted to listening to the radio has gradually decreased in

FIGURE 2

Share of women and men who have had to give up various leisure activities in the last 12 months due to economic reasons, 1998 (%).



Source: "Estonia 98", RASI.

ety. In conjunction with the westernization of society, the home-centeredness of leisure time in the 1990s also increased — a trend, which is noted throughout the world and which is to a large degree due to the expansion of electronic media.

As regarding time, the overwhelming part of leisure time is taken up by domestic media consumption, mostly television. The data of studies carried out by *Baltic Media Facts* (BMF) shows that both the number of television channels and the average time devoted daily to TV watching has been increasing throughout the 1990s, and that this figure exceeded 4 hours in 1997. Women are no longer lagging behind the men in their TV

recent years (1993–1997) (Lauristin & Vihalemm, 1998).

Whereas the share of the electronic media (TV, video, SAT-TV, Internet) has dramatically increased throughout the decade, consumer activity regarding the printed media has noticeably lessened since the start of the 1990s — in all groups of the population. In 1993, almost half of men and women read at least two newspapers, but five years later most of them (72%) read only one, or read none regularly. But at the same time women are reading more magazines (Table 2). Since reading newspapers decreased for men even more than for women, the gender gap reduced. However, gender differences are now even greater in magazine reading, where women

were already more active at the beginning of the 1990s.

So, in contrast to the previous decade, when men's interest in printed media was notably higher than women's, women today are keener and more varied readers of the printed media than men. One reason why women's interest in magazines has remained high despite the general fall in printed media readership is undoubtedly the plentiful number of women's magazines (home, society, health, lifestyle) that are now published in Estonia.

Similar tendencies are also apparent in reading books. Whereas in the last decade, Estonian society was characterized by a high level of reading interest, distributed rather equally throughout the population, the number of readers in the 1990s, a time of social transformation, has consistently diminished, and reading activity has lessened in all social groups, among men and women. However, compared to men, women are still keener book readers, particularly fiction (Table 2).

The reduction in reading the printed media has been influenced by many intertwined factors: the forceful encroachment of the electronic media (SAT-TV, video, Internet, computer games), the rising prices of publications and the general reduction of people's purchasing power and living standard. Another reason is the growing need in society for entertainment and relaxation. Many people's economic worries, social stress and increased tensions of life need to be reduced, and, as emphasized by Marju Lauristin and Peeter Vihalemm (1998), television with its numerous commercial channels does the job better than does the printed media. Besides, it is still delivered home free of charge.

Although life in the last five years has become easier for people in Estonia (see Narusk, 1999), many are still obliged to restrict their consumer demands and previous leisure habits due to economic hardship. For example, according to "Estonia 98", only every second person (71% in 1993) buys books, and most of these buy only an occasional one. It is mostly the women, compared to the men, whose financial constraints affect their cultural con-

sumption and leisure habits (Figure 2). In 1998, 76% of women and 59% of men claimed that they had, in the year prior to the survey, been obliged often or occasionally not to buy a book or subscribe to periodicals. The figures were 61% and 42% respectively regarding attending the theatre or movies. It is not just a case of money shortage for women, particularly regarding single mothers, rural and non-Estonian women. Men just do not value these activities (reading, going to the theatre etc) as much. Almost every second man surveyed did not consider buying and subscribing to the printed media to be important to him, and regarding theatre or movies, every third man said so. Particularly non-Estonian males stand out in their relative indifference to these activities.

Less fiction and non-fiction is being read, and fiction reading has reduced especially among men: in the last five years, there has been a 8% increase among non-reading men, and only a 1% decrease for women. Regarding activity in non-fiction reading, women caught up to men already at the beginning of the transition period, when their interest in informative reading matter increased considerably (Järve, 1994).

It can therefore be said that in general women are more varied and flexible readers than men and their reading ratio is more harmonized than for men. Fiction and non-fiction are more balanced in their reading matter. They also read more varied types and genres of literature, and they are not as restricted regarding gender specific genres (Järve, 1998, 1999). This is apparent in all social groups, both for Estonians and non-Estonians.

Several downward trends which started at the beginning of social breakthrough (the shock period) also continued in outdoor leisure activities. This includes mainly going to the theatre, movies, popular music concerts, which due to the increased cost of tickets and the decline of many people's purchasing power, is markedly reduced for people in all social groups, for both men and women. Some cultural institutions have managed to retain their position and audience — libraries which

are free, and the more elite art institutions such as art exhibitions and classical music concerts, which have survived quite successfully despite the pressure of economic hardships and electronic mass culture (Table 3). There even seems to be more Estonian women than before amongst the audiences of classical concerts and art exhibitions.

Women have generally retained their head start in cultural activities outside the home, and in some areas have even increased it. Library users, audiences at theatres, art exhibitions and classical concerts have become even more feminized than before. At the same time, the socio-economic splintering of Estonian society has deepened the differences in cultural consump-

Therefore, women in Estonia are the primary holders of the continuity of culture consumption, and the institutional culture which has been created mainly by men survives thanks to the female public. Furthermore, the grass-roots level cultural sector is also on their shoulders. It is mostly women who are the local leaders in adult education and cultural life, participants in cultural societies, associations, forming two-thirds of the membership of societies (Aareleid & Tart, 1996). They also have more artistic hobbies: in 1998, every fourth woman was individually active in playing music, drawing, painting, etc. In this regard Estonia has much in common with the other Nordic countries, for example, Finland, where

TABLE 3

Attending cultural establishments and places of entertainment, by gender, 1993–1998 (%).

At least once in the last year	Men		Women		Total	
	1993	1998	1993	1998	1993	1998
Movies	67	37	60	32	63	36
Theatre	57	36	71	51	63	44
Popular music concert	51	42	43	38	47	40
Classical music concert	15	14	19	21	18	18
Art exhibition, art museum	50	35	55	48	53	42
Library	49*	40	53*	52	51*	46
Local cultural events	**	57	**	59	**	58
Sports event	**	46	**	24	**	34

tion depending on ethnicity, generation and place of residence. For example, there is a greater drop amongst non-Estonian, particularly Russian men as audience members in cultural institutions and events in comparison with Estonian men.

The only cultural institutions which men frequent slightly more often are cinema and pop concerts, and this is only characteristic of Estonian men. Women's higher activity in the consumption of art culture is apparent in most developed countries (see Cushman, Veal & Zuzanek, 1996; Ahlin, 1993; Liikkanen et al. 1995) and Estonia is no exception, but unfortunately the gender gap is tending to widen to the detriment of men.

the art public has traditionally been female-based even in the highly educated strata. Mirja Liikkanen (1999) explains this phenomenon by historical roots. Historically women, particularly the female elite, have had a central role in society in providing education and enlightenment to the people, in being mediators for the enlightenment, moral norms and values associated with cultural participation, and this has been carried from one generation to another, from mothers to daughters.

The public at sporting events and entertainment places (bars, restaurants, nightclubs) is still masculine. But it must be noted that the younger the age group, the smaller the gender differences. For example, childless women under 25

are much more similar in their entertainment activity to men than they are to their middle-aged counterparts.

As regards other hobbies not mentioned above, women have the same level of activity as men (studying languages, listening to music at home, spending time with friends), or are even keener (handicrafts, gardening, crosswords, artistic hobbies). In the other types of activities, the gender differences are not particularly great: e.g. 29% of men and 21% of women use their home computer in their leisure time at least once a month. A bigger difference exists in men's greater interest in sport: men play more sport themselves and also are keener followers of sports events.

cal on this issue than men. It is the non-Estonian women who are the least satisfied with their outside home leisure, but also women in rural areas and in small towns, who often have nowhere to go for entertainment.

Conclusions

The main problem concerning gender inequality in the sphere of leisure is the gender gap in the amount of leisure time available — women have markedly less than men, throughout life. Although this problem has not improved much in the 1990s, the younger generation's leisure time allocation shows a clear equalizing tendency, which indicates changing and more modern role attitudes.

TABEL 3 (CONTINUED)

At least once in the last year	Men		Women		Total	
	1993	1998	1993	1998	1993	1998
Spending the evening in a restaurant, bar, nightclub, at a dance	56	53	37	42	45	47
Gambling in a casino, playing slot-machines	**	9	**	2	**	5

Source: Data from RASI population surveys "Estonia 98" and "Estonia 93"; adult population, 18-70.

* data from ARIKO MG 1993 survey, adult population, 18-70.

** no comparative data.

Together with the freeing up of borders and the globalization process, ambitions regarding leisure time have grown — and this has happened faster than the ability of most Estonians to afford it. This is especially reflected in the strikingly increased desire of both sexes to travel abroad. Unfortunately, this has not become a reality for most people, because the proportion of those who had in the year previous to the survey actually travelled abroad has not markedly increased over the last five years. Real life with its restrictions, including scarcity of money, which overshadows scarcity of time, has a greater effect than expected on people's satisfaction with leisure time outside the home (i.e. the opportunities). Women are much more criti-

cal on this issue than men. It is the non-Estonian women who are the least satisfied with their outside home leisure, but also women in rural areas and in small towns, who often have nowhere to go for entertainment.

Despite having less time, women as a whole are more varied and versatile in their use of leisure time than are men, particularly regarding culture consumption. In many leisure time activities, where women were lagging behind the men in the middle of the previous decade (reading newspapers and non-fiction, travel etc), they have now caught up or even surpassed them. Today it is mostly only TV watching, sport (active and spectator sport) and visiting entertainment places that have remained areas where women participate less, but even here we can see some reduction in differences.

The reader may wonder whether there is a contradiction in the observation that although

women have less leisure time they are no less active or varied than men in their choices. This contradiction is only apparent because most of those areas where women are more active are episodic and they take up relatively little time (going to the theatre or other events once every three months is relatively easy to organize). But those activities typical to men — watching TV, regular sport, following sporting events etc — are everyday or frequently repeated events, which in total take much more time.

The higher cultural interest of Estonian women has historic roots and is in accordance with their relatively higher level of education compared to men. This is a capital which also manages to compensate for the hindering effect on leisure activities created by unfavorable objective factors (living standard, age, place of residence, etc). As in most post-socialist countries, the transition in Estonia to a liberal market economy, and the constant rise in the cost of cultural goods and leisure services, has resulted in a continuous reduction in most of the forms of cultural participation. But despite this radically changed situation it is women (particularly specialists with higher education, including many low-paid public sector workers) who have managed better, relative to men, to preserve their cultural activity in their leisure time.

Gender preferences in leisure participation have been culturally (re)produced, not given at birth. The norms, values and role attitudes dominant in society greatly determine which interests and activities are characteristic to the world of women and the world of men. Although traditional role expectations are still rather vigorous in Estonian society and the existing unwritten "gender contract" is not under serious threat from either side, the growing self-confidence of younger women gives rise to the belief that a process of liberation from old gender prejudices is underway. This is reflected in their leisure time interpretations as well as actual choices in time usage, which are based more and more on individual preferences, not on the pressure of role expectations.

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Professional and occupational mobility and informal social networks

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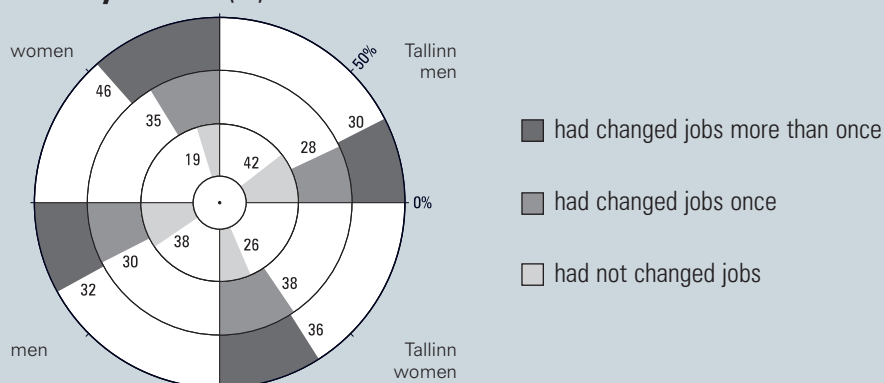
She has studied the effect of social change on the life styles and coping strategies for families, and social networks in a changing society.

The radical restructuring of the economy in the beginning of the 1990s brought about various changes in the occupational and vocational spheres for many people.

above-mentioned factors contributed to the fact that quite often many people who would have liked to continue their old jobs had to look for new ones. According to the World Bank (Report No 15647-EE), almost 50% of the workers in Estonia had changed their jobs for some reason during 1992–1994 alone.

There are two types of factors which influence the capability to adapt to the stricter requirements of the labor market and the ability to cope successfully under the new circumstances: individual factors and structural factors (Grand, Szulkin & Tåhlin 1994). Individual factors (e.g. gender, age, education, experience, skills, etc) and the surrounding social networks may either facilitate adapting to the changes or, on the contrary, hinder it. Many sociological studies (Estonian Labor Force Surveys 1995 and 1997, "Estonia 98"¹)

FIGURE 1
Changed jobs during the last 8 years, working population, 18–70 year olds (%).



Source: "Estonia 98", RASI.

Firstly, many new structures were created after Estonia regained its independence and in these structures there was mostly a need for young and educated people. New attractive jobs were created with the restructuring of the banking and financial systems, with the new industries that emerged as a result of foreign investments, and with the rapid development of the service industry and trade, etc. Young, well-educated and enterprising people promptly seized new opportunities. Secondly, reforms in the economy led to the closure of many big enterprises and even entire industries, the liquidation of large collective farms in rural areas and waves of lay-offs in the industrial enterprises that continued to operate. In many areas the reforms resulted in stricter requirements for occupational expertise and skills (e.g. computer skills, proficiency in foreign languages, etc). All the

have demonstrated that different social groups have adapted to the changes on the labor market with various degrees of success, with considerable differences in the coping success of men and women and representatives of different ethnic groups.

The questions in the population survey "Estonia 98" concerning occupational mobility covered the changes that had occurred during the past eight years, i.e. the period from 1991 to 1998. The results of the survey showed that more than two-thirds of working men and a little more than half of working women had changed their jobs during the said period. More than

¹ A survey carried out at the end of 1998 by the Family and Cultural Sociology Research Group in the Institute of International and Social Studies at the Tallinn Pedagogical University among the population aged 18 to 70 years (2317 respondents).

half the men who had changed their jobs during that period had done it more than once (Figure 1).

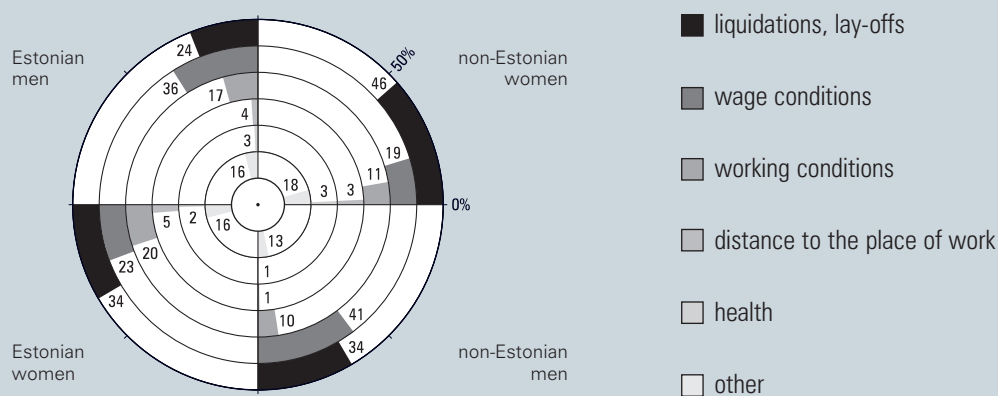
The percentage of women who had changed their jobs was lower than that of men and this also accounts for the fact that on the average the last employment had lasted longer for women than for men in virtually all sectors of the economy. Thus, in the age-group 55 and younger, men had had their last jobs for 5.7 years on the average and women for 7.4 years on the average (in 1993 the figures were 8.3 and 9.8 respectively). The number of women who still had the same job that had been assigned to them after graduation was also greater than that of men in the same position. In Tallinn the structural changes have been more comprehensive than in other regions of Estonia and many new jobs have been created, therefore it is

Whereas the most often mentioned reasons for men changing their jobs were connected with remuneration or wage conditions, for women the most frequently occurring reasons were the forced changes. Some reasons that were mentioned more often by women than by men included the unsuitable nature of the work, deficient organization of work, and stressful relations in the workplace (Figure 2). In rural areas some of the most often quoted reasons (especially by women) for changing jobs were the long distance from home to work and unsuitable transport arrangements.

It can be clearly seen from Figure 2 that in some aspects non-Estonian women have been hit harder by the changes of the last decade than any other social group. During the Soviet period many non-Estonian women used to work in the large all-Union enterprises

FIGURE 2

Main reasons for changing jobs, working population, 18–70 year olds (%).



Source: "Estonia 98", RASI.

not surprising that people living in Tallinn (especially men) have changed their jobs more often than people living in other regions.

On the basis of the population survey "Estonia 98", it is possible to outline three main reasons that have compelled or induced people to change their jobs. Firstly, there are the so-called forced changes connected with the reorganization of the workplaces and reductions in the number of workers (liquidation of a position or an enterprise, bankruptcy, lay-offs, etc), secondly, there are the changes caused by economic considerations (i.e. remuneration or wage conditions), and thirdly, dissatisfaction with the workplace, working conditions or the general atmosphere in the workplace, especially the relations between management and employees.

operating in the electronics and food industry, textile factories, etc which were either liquidated or transformed into small production units in the course of privatization, and therefore non-Estonian women, more than anybody else, were forced to change jobs because of liquidations and lay-offs. In connection with non-Estonians, it should be mentioned that only a few people referred to the much debated issues regarding the requirements of language proficiency or, to be more exact, the lack of proficiency in the official language, as their reasons for changing jobs (this is an open-ended question).

When comparing different age groups, there is a noticeable tendency that the percentage of compulsory changes increased in older age groups and especially among women. While 28% of women aged between 25 and 34 years mentioned lay-offs or liqui-

dation of the enterprise as the reasons for changing their jobs, among women aged between 35 and 44 years this percentage was considerably higher (44%).

In older age-groups, lay-offs or liquidation of the enterprise were mentioned as the reasons for changing the job by every other woman. For men such an increase occurred at a later age: between 45 and 54 years (35–44 years of age — 23%, 45–54 years of age — 46%). Thus the population survey “Estonia 98” confirmed the statements of the press about women already having difficulties with competition on the labor market after the age of thirty-five.

People who had changed their jobs for one reason or another had used various strategies to find a new job: most often they turned to relatives, acquaintances, friends, and newspapers; the help of employment

positions of the social networks of both men and women and Estonians and non-Estonians. As a general rule, women's personal networks are more focused on their relatives, while men's personal networks contain more contacts from outside their families: friends, people with similar interests or people belonging to the same political party, etc. The most important feature concerning the differences between the social networks of Estonians and non-Estonians is that the networks of non-Estonians contain a smaller proportion of relatives (some of the relatives live outside Estonia) and a higher proportion of colleagues, than the social networks of Estonians. Another feature distinguishing non-Estonians from Estonians lies in the different origins of the friendship-based component of the social network. Most of the Estonians had met their friends either at

TABLE 1

Method of obtaining the previous job: working population, 18–70 year olds (%).

	Estonian		Non-Estonian	
	men	women	men	women
via friends or acquaintances	45	47	55	52
via a newspaper advertisement	13	17	11	11
via relatives	11	9	12	13
via an employment agency	1	2	4	3
Assignment from school	5	9	4	8
Approached the employer on their own initiative	7	7	6	7
Founded a private enterprise	8	2	3	1
Other	10	9	5	5

Source: “Estonia 98”, RASI.

agencies was used less frequently. Informal social networks play a role of paramount importance in the processes of looking for and finding a job, as has been demonstrated in many studies conducted on the possible connections between occupational mobility and social networks (Granovetter 1974; Lin & Dumin 1986; Wegener 1991; Burt 1992; Podolny & Baron 1997, etc). Informal social networks consist, broadly speaking, of two major components: one component is based on kinship relations, and another component created and molded over the years by each individual which includes contacts with colleagues, neighbors, friends, and other important persons. Many studies mentioned earlier and also a study conducted in the mid-1990s in Tallinn (Narusk & Hansson, 1999) have shown that there are considerable differences between the com-

school or at university. A large proportion of the non-Estonians had obtained their professional qualifications at universities or technical schools in Russia, Ukraine, etc, and most of their schoolmates are currently working in various regions of the former Soviet Union, therefore the friends of non-Estonians are usually their colleagues or their former colleagues. Maintaining close contacts with friends and relatives living in the former Soviet republics is rather complicated because of the problems connected with crossing borders, visa regulations, and also the high prices of airplane and international long-distance train tickets.

The population survey “Estonia 98” showed very explicitly how important is the role of informal social networks in obtaining a job. This importance is evident in connection with both the people who had changed their

jobs on their own initiative with the view of getting a more interesting job or a higher salary, and those people who were forced to look for a new job because of layoffs or liquidation of the enterprise. Another fact brought out in the above-mentioned studies was confirmed, namely, not all the members of social networks can be of equal assistance in finding employment. According to the population survey, friends and acquaintances were of the most substantial assistance in solving problems connected with obtaining a job. It appears that the percentage of relatives among the people who could be of assistance to those looking for a job was relatively small (Table 1) and help from relatives was mostly used by very young people. The role of social networks is even more significant as far as non-Estonians are concerned. As shown in previous studies (Hansson 1999), friend-

information concerning jobs and to key personnel. This resulted in the fact that 62% of the Estonian men who had been assisted by their friends in finding a job had permanent jobs while only 16% of non-Estonian men had found permanent jobs (for women the figures were 70% and 41% respectively) and others were employed either on the basis of a contract for services or simply on the basis of an oral agreement.

It was mentioned already that in Estonia the majority of new jobs are found via informal social networks; a considerable number of new jobs is also found through newspapers, especially in Tallinn. The number of women who had found themselves jobs via newspaper advertisements was greater than that of men. It has to be added that non-Estonians do not benefit from advertisements as much as Estonians. There are more advertise-

TABLE 2

Answers to the question "How do you estimate your chance of finding a new job?"; working population, 18–70 year olds (%).

	Estonians		non-Estonians	
	men	women	men	women
Good	20	9	12	7
Average	45	38	31	25
Bad	18	33	26	34
Hard to say	17	20	31	33

Source: "Estonia 98", RASI.

ships are of major importance when it comes to getting a job or promoting one's career; for Estonians this means the people they went to school or to university with (the old boy network) and for non-Estonians this means their colleagues or their former colleagues. It has been stressed already that non-Estonians have in many cases lost contact with their old schoolmates and even if the contacts are still maintained by exchanging letters or phone calls, such contacts are of little help to the non-Estonians living in Estonia. Although a large proportion of non-Estonians mentioned that they had acquired their previous job with the help of their friends (i.e. (former) colleagues), such jobs were in many cases of a temporary nature. Friends of Estonians, i.e. their former schoolmates, were working in various spheres and therefore had better access to both the strategically important

ments being published in newspapers in Estonian than there are in newspapers in Russian because most of the positions require proficiency in the official language and therefore it is presumed that non-Estonians who are sufficiently proficient in Estonian would also read the advertisements in newspapers in Estonian. Only a small number of people had been assisted by an employment agency in their endeavors to find a new job.

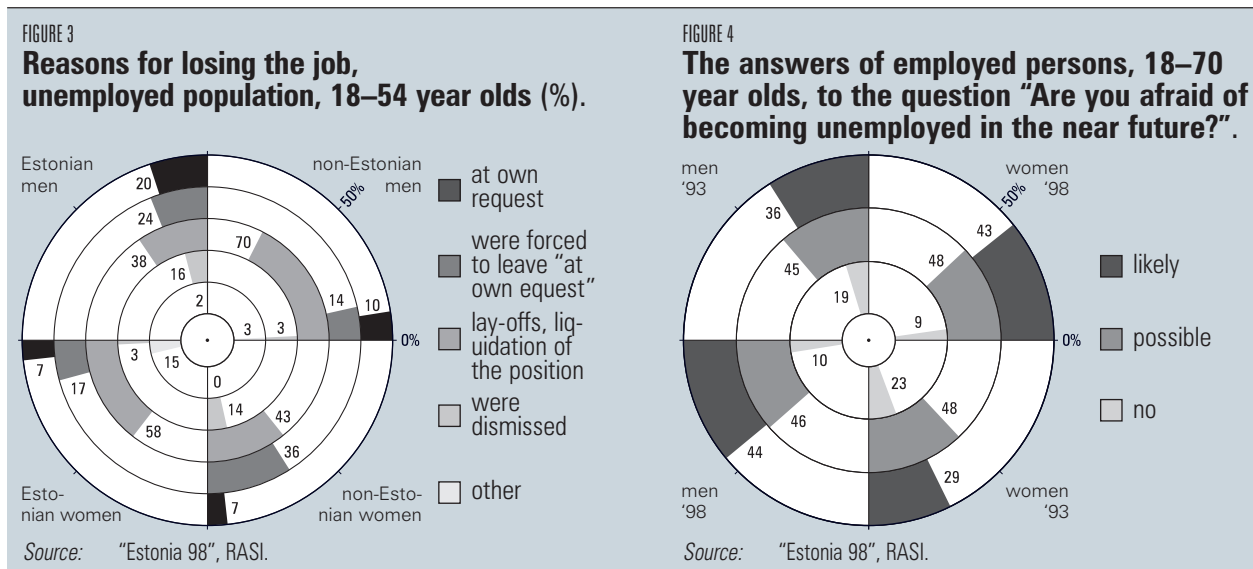
Only a few people were capable of creating jobs for themselves, i.e. starting a business of their own, and this was done most frequently by Estonian men. When comparing data from the population surveys of 1993 and 1998, it can be said that the number of people engaged in private enterprise had increased only a little during that period. In 1998 there was an increase in the number of people who claimed to have the

entrepreneurial skills and abilities but who were not interested. The proportion of people who had given some serious thought to starting an enterprise had decreased (Table 2). Quite a large number of people were engaged in enterprise alongside their principal job. People's estimates of their abilities have improved over the last few years but the degree to which they are prepared to become engaged in private enterprise has not increased. Frequent changes in legislation regulating the activities of enterprises, bureaucratic obstacles, lack of sufficient starting capital, and a relatively small number of well-off customers have reduced the interest of potential entrepreneurs to become engaged in something involving so many risks.

Although the general conditions in Tallinn should be more favorable towards entrepreneurship than in the

the people who had lost their previous job because of lay-offs or liquidation of the enterprise, every fifth man with higher education (21%) had decided to create a job for himself (for men with a lower level of education the figure was only 6%). In similar situations, only 3% of women decided in favor of entrepreneurship irrespective of their level of education.

Not all the people who had lost their jobs had found new employment. Unemployed persons were officially registered in Estonia for the first time in May 1991. It is difficult to estimate the changes in unemployment rates or to compare data relating to different years because of the incompatibilities in the presentation of official labor statistics: sometimes statistics refer to the persons who are registered as unemployed (i.e. persons who have the right to receive state unemploy-



remoter areas of the country, the average attitudes towards becoming engaged in private enterprise do not differ very considerably from the attitudes of people living in Tallinn, and even the changes in the attitudes that have taken place during the past five years are similar. The most significant differences in attitudes are due to age and education. The majority of people engaged in enterprise fall within the age groups of 25–34 years and 35–44 years but even within those age groups there are considerable differences between the attitudes of men and women. Differences that are due to education were most evident with regard to men: 21% of the men with higher education were engaged in enterprise, whereas only 8% of the men who did not have a higher education were active in the said area (in terms of principal activities, the figures were 11% and 6% respectively). Among

ment benefits pursuant to §5 of the Social Protection of the Unemployed Act) and sometimes to unemployed persons seeking employment. However, only a small number of those who are permanently unemployed turn to the employment office in order to be registered as unemployed or seeking employment. There are various reasons accounting for this: it is difficult to find a suitable job through an employment office, the unemployment benefits and support payments are low, the procedures are cumbersome and people are not used to them, a journey to the labor office may be too expensive in the rural areas, etc. According to the population survey "Estonia 98", 9% of men and 8% of women aged from 18 to 54 years considered themselves to be unemployed. The unemployment rates vary greatly within different regions of Estonia, being the lowest in

Tallinn. There is an extremely high rate of unemployment (18%) among men aged 45 to 54 years living in rural areas, and the majority of them have been unemployed for more than 6 months.

Unemployed men under 55 are characterized by a fairly high percentage (44%) of those who had resigned on their own initiative. The number of the latter was higher than the number of those who had lost their jobs because of lay-offs or liquidation of the enterprise. As for women, the primary reasons for losing a job were either lay-offs or liquidation of the company (62%); one-fourth of the women resigned on their own initiative. Two-thirds of those persons who had resigned on their own initiative claimed that the termination of the employment had only appeared to be voluntary and they had actually been forced to resign (Figure 3).

Unemployed women are more active in seeking new employment than unemployed men: the proportion of women who had reported to an employment office was higher than that of men, women participated in vocational retraining more often, etc. Only one in ten of unemployed women (and almost one in five of unemployed men) said that they had done nothing to find new employment.

Are people who are employed at the moment afraid of losing their jobs? According to the population survey "Estonia 98", five or six years ago almost one in five of men and almost one in four of women in the corresponding age groups thought that losing their job was very likely. The Estonian economy has stabilized to a certain extent during the time that passed between the two population surveys, and by 1998 the proportion of the persons who believed their jobs to be secure had increased and the number of people who considered losing their jobs to be highly likely had diminished. Fear of becoming unemployed increased substantially with age, for both men and women.

When we consider the attitudes towards the chance of becoming unemployed separately for Estonians and non-Estonians then it is noticeable that non-Estonians are more pessimistic than Estonians (Figure 4). While almost one in two of Estonians were convinced that it was not likely for them to become unemployed, the same can be said about only one-third of non-Estonians. Although the general feeling about finding a new job had become more optimistic within the past five years, the number of women who considered their chance of finding a new job (should such a need arise) to be good was still smaller than that of men (Table 2).

The number of women who believed that they had a good chance of finding a new job had increased mainly in Tallinn, but even there women are more pessimistic than men.

In conclusion it can be said that the changes that have occurred in the structure of the labor force have affected women, especially non-Estonian women, somewhat more severely than they have affected men. This is due to the generally disadvantageous position of women on the labor market (difficulties in combining work and family responsibilities; traditional gender roles that oblige women to take care of children and the elderly, etc.) on the one hand, and a structure of informal social networks that is unfavorable in regard to the labor market, on the other. Women's social networks are usually more family-oriented and therefore they do not have as good an access to strategic information as men. Non-Estonian women face twice as many difficulties in that respect: not only are their personal social networks family-oriented but they have also lost contacts with their former university friends; as has been stated above, university friends are of significant assistance to Estonians in adapting themselves to the changes of the labor market.

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Professional and family life: combining paid and unpaid work

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Family life and employment are two domains of life, which unavoidably place conflicting demands on

experience more frequently work-to-family interference, and women family-to-work interference. Studies also show that in societies with still traditional gender roles but with both women and men actively participating in working life, women experience both work-to-family and family-to-work interference more often than men do. In those societies where gender roles are less rigid and division of tasks more varied, differences found are not so much based on gender but primarily on specific conditions. In this category also belong, in addition to the gender role expectations, the division of responsibilities between the state and the individual (national social and family policies) as well as the value judgements, behavior and the actual participation of specific

There is a great stubbornness in keeping to the principle that the task of a woman is staying at home and bringing children into the world. Like it or not, the conclusion must be drawn that it is the fear of competition which is behind this principle.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)

both women and men. Three basic areas of conflict can be distinguished — time, physical and mental burdens and conflicting gender role expectations (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985). For example, time dedicated to one domain limits its utilization in the other, and tiredness or stress created in one is transferred to the other. As for the behavior norms and behavioral patterns valid in these areas, it is unfortunately the case that these are often mutually contradictory.

The results of studies regarding interaction between these areas differ according to the cultural context in which they are studied. In societies with more traditional gender roles, where women participate less than men in the active employment sphere, it has been found that men

individuals (men and women) in both spheres of life. This means that studies carried out at the same time in different countries can produce different results.

Although in the 1970s interaction of different spheres of life started to be recognized and attempts were made at abandoning separate observation, up to this day working life researchers are accused of excessive attention to work and of too little attention to reconciliation of work and family life (Kinnunen 1985). In the 1980s, research into the connections between the two areas accelerated, but research in specific social-cultural contexts has not received the required attention. Therefore, it is not uncommon to find attempts to compare research results, which have been taken

out of their various social contexts, with confusion as a result.

In order to discover the main problems for Estonian men and women in combining professional and family life, let us examine their interaction from different aspects:

1. Find out the role of employment and family in the value ratings of men and women.
2. Analyze the division of men's and women's paid work by different family types.
3. Examine the division of housework or unpaid work between men and women.
4. Assess the economic coping of men and women by different family types.
5. Deal with the mutual effect of the satisfaction assessments for these spheres of life.

(reading, going to the theatre, movies, etc), economic well-being, being up-to-date with world events (radio, TV, etc), entertainment, creative activities (technical, artistic, etc), physical fitness and maintaining it, self education, social activities, high social position, clean and unpolluted environment.

Table 1 provides an overview of the top-10 values for men and women. As can be seen, men and women have quite similar basic life values. Women on average value children, family, health, clean environment, self-education and satisfying cultural interests higher than do men. On the other hand, men place a higher value than women do on economic well-being, following world events on TV and radio, and maintaining physical fitness.

TABLE 1

Men's and women's values: the ten most important and their average assessment (5 – very important, ...1 – not at all).

MEN		WOMEN	
Health	4.71	Children	4.90
Children	4.70	Family	4.87
Family	4.70	Health	4.83
Clean environment	4.43	Clean environment	4.58
Economic well-being	4.32	Close friends	4.20
Professional work	4.17	Economic well-being	4.18
Close friends	4.16	Professional work	4.11
Keeping up with world events (TV, radio, etc)	3.82	Self-education	3.82
Self-education	3.55	Keeping up with world events (TV, radio, etc)	3.70
Physical fitness	3.47	Satisfying cultural interests	3.69

Source: "Estonia 98", RASI.

The family and professional employment as life values

According to data from the "Estonia 98"¹ population survey, the life values of 18–70 year old men and women in Estonia are relatively similar — the first three places are held by children, family and health. The survey offered values such as close friends, family, children and their future, faith, health, professional work, exciting life (new places, people, impressions), satisfaction of cultural interests

Men and women place almost equal importance on professional work. In this aspect, the situation compared to the start of the 1990s has changed substantially — the drop in the value placed on professional work has now been replaced by a rise. But the rise in importance of the values of children, family and health as the main life values in all population groups has continued. Data from "Estonia 98" show that it is in particular the people who work, are married and have children who place the highest value on the family (women — 4.92, men — 4.82).

Despite the similarity in the life values of men and women, their conditions, opportunities and actual division of labor are quite different. Let us now look at the division of work in professional employment and family life.

¹ The survey "Estonia 98" was carried out by sociologists from the Institute of International and Social Studies at the end of 1998. The survey covered the population aged 18–70. 2317 people were surveyed throughout Estonia.

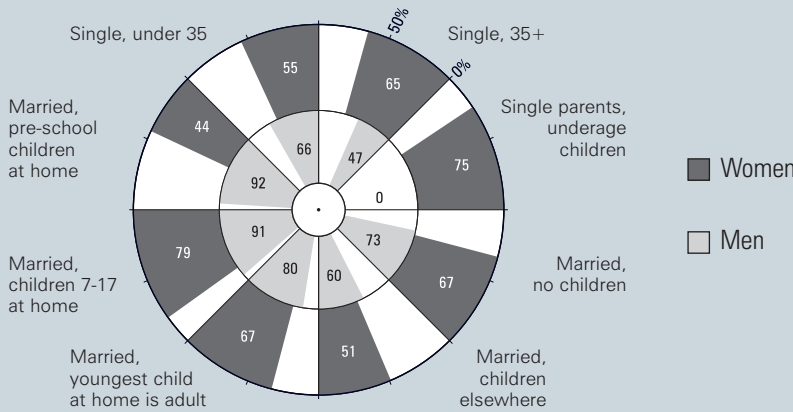
Division of paid work between men and women by different household types

Although the almost 100% employment rate for people able to work, which was characteristic of the Soviet period, has decreased amongst both men and women, employment in Estonia is still higher than the European average. Estonian women, however, have not adopted part-time work to the degree favored by women in many other countries. As with men, women work full-time. According to "Estonia 98", 16–17% of both men and women work part-time, either because of personal preference or employer request. There is also the same proportion (15%) of men and women,

Estonia the women's working day including household work is an average 10.5 hours and for men 9 hours (Statistical Office, Postimees, 9.04.99). In Norway, the respective indicators are 7.5 hours for women and 8 hours for men.

The proportion of women who earn a living from two sources (paid professional employment and unpaid housework) is high in Estonia, and also in families with children. Only mothers of pre-school children (generally until the child turns 3), are less likely than men to work outside the home (Figure 1). In families with school-age children, four mothers out of five work both in the home and outside the home. The employment rate for single mothers of underage children is also high — almost all mothers with children older than 3 go to work.

FIGURE 1
Proportions of working men and women in various households.



Source: "Estonia 98", RASI.

amongst the employed population, who hold more than one job. But two major differences have remained. Firstly, carrying out household tasks is still considered to be primarily the wife's responsibility even when both spouses work outside the home. Secondly, although engaged in the same kind of duties, women's average salary is lower than that of men's and, therefore, the proportion held by the men in the monetary income of the families is generally higher than the women's (Narusk 1998).

However, if the unpaid household work were assessed in monetary value, and this added to the paid work, the share of women who are the primary income earners of a family would increase markedly. The international time budget survey shows that in

Division of domestic tasks between employed parents

In the case where there is the most housework, i.e. in families with underage children, the division of chores between a working father and mother is rarely equitably distributed. The most equal division occurs in those families with working parents where there are no children or the children have already left home. This means that the equality in dealing with household tasks occurs primarily due to the reduction in housework.

The assessment by men of the division of household chores is more optimistic than by women. If we look at shopping, cooking, cleaning and laundering, for example, in every family type,

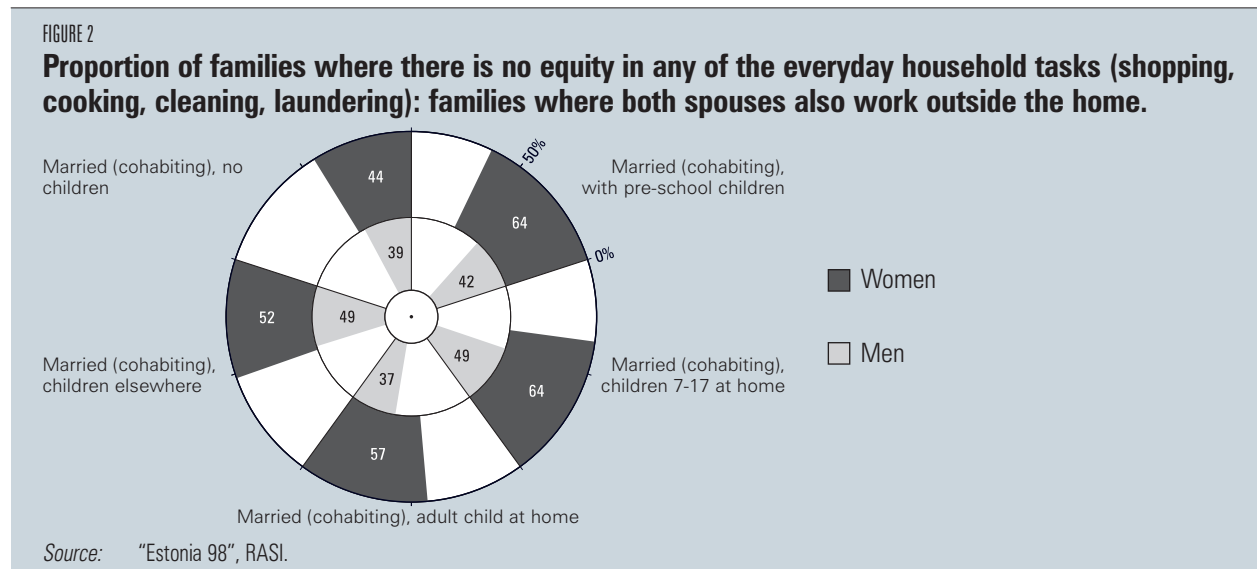
women are more frequently convinced that these household tasks in their family are not equitably shared (Figure 2). The men’s answers also show that there is the least equity regarding housework amongst partners in families with underage children.

A separate issue again is how dependent the assessments regarding division of household chores are on the attitudes of men and women towards this distribution of work. Since men generally have more traditional views on this issue than women, they assess their part as being larger than it is assessed by their wives. In the same way, the assessments regarding the work contribution of men by those women who are more traditional are higher than those by women with

families, therefore, are particularly negative — if 28% of unmarried men under 35 and only 7% of the women support the traditional division of housework in the family, then it will be difficult to avoid disputes over housework.

Since public opinion is overwhelmingly in support of traditional gender roles, and there is no constructive dialog in the community between men and women on these issues, this problem ends up on the level of the individual (family) and everyone has to find their own solution. It is not possible to solve a social problem on the individual level, but it is still possible in this situation to use various individual means of adaptation.

However, despite public opinion’s relative conservatism, it is apparent that in real life



egalitarian attitudes. In the case of older married couples, where both spouses are characterized by traditional attitudes ('women should do "women’s work" and men "men’s work"'), the contribution by the husband can often be over-estimated by the wife. Similarly, younger women with much greater expectations can often under-estimate the same contribution by the man (Figure 3).

The surveys also show that if both spouses are agreed on the division of household tasks and they consider the existing distribution to be fair (regardless of how much housework they actually do), then they are both more satisfied with family life. If, however, the opinions of the men and the women are too different, then there is no avoiding discord and dissatisfaction. Forecasts regarding future young

there has been a movement towards equalizing the distribution of home duties between men and women. This is in contrast to the start of the 1990s, when at the time of the re-establishment of the Estonian state many families responded positively to the slogans encouraging women to return to the home. This resulted in an increase in the proportion of those families where the housework was done by the wife alone or mostly by the wife, but, according to "Estonia 98" data, the proportion of such families is no longer increasing. The number of those families has actually increased, where one or the other of the basic everyday tasks is equitably distributed, according to both the man and the woman.

Economic coping in various family types

The distribution of men and women into different types of households and families is characterized in Figures 4 and 5. As was seen above, the life and work conditions of mothers are more often determined by the existence of children than those of fathers. The employment, domestic workload and income of mothers are greatly dependent on the existence, age and number of the children.

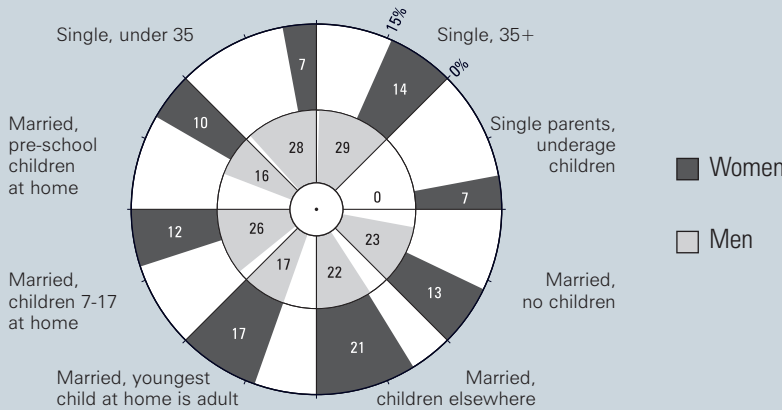
In contrast to the Soviet period, where the existence of one, two or even three children did not greatly change the economic ability of a family to cope, having even one child in Estonia at the end of the 1990s is already a decisive factor. Regarding

Interaction of family life and professional work: satisfaction assessments

As demonstrated by the population surveys, men and women are generally similar in their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their lives. Being satisfied with life has slightly increased during the last five years (for women it is an average of 3.38, and for men 3.30, on a 5-point scale). Working women and men have a similar satisfaction level with work (women 3.75, men 3.70). However, married (cohabiting) women are noticeably less satisfied than men with their family lives (and mainly with the emotional relationship with the spouse) — for men: family life 4.10, emotional relations 4.01; for

FIGURE 3

Proportion of men and women who selected the answer “women should do women’s work and men men’s work”.



Source: “Estonia 98”, RASI.

income per family member, it is childless married (cohabiting) women, and unmarried men under 35 who are the best off. The economic situation for single mothers is the most difficult. Of men, fathers with underage children live in the most restricted economic conditions.

The same picture can be obtained using subjective assessments provided by men and women themselves regarding their economic conditions. The best off are single men under 35, of whom half say that their income limits them only regarding making major purchases. Next come the married (cohabiting) fathers of small children and married (cohabiting) women without children, of whom 42–43% sees themselves as living quite well (Figure 6).

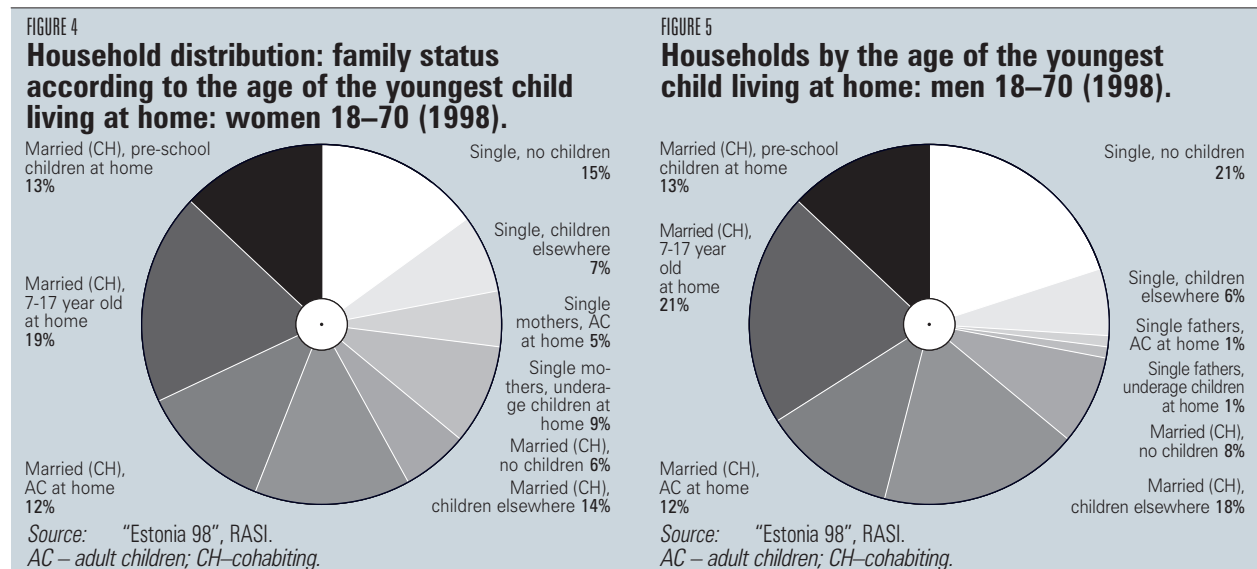
women: 3.87 and 3.74, respectively. At the same time, there is a correlation for both men and women between satisfaction with family life and work, and this connection is also influenced by the other life spheres.

In Estonia, the existence of the so-called satisfaction wheel is confirmed by the survey regarding correlation between family life and work (Narusk 1988, 1991, 1994) — the satisfaction of both men and women with one facet of life is in a direct and statistically sound correlation with satisfaction regarding other facets. Observing separately those who work and who have a family (married (cohabiting) with underage children), we can see that the data from “Estonia 98” survey also supports these research results.

On the basis of the subjective satisfaction assessments by men and women, the difficulties experienced by them in combining work and home in various stages of life can be assessed. In Estonia today, these difficulties can be clearly seen in the decrease in satisfaction with family life shown by particularly working mothers, in parallel with the increase in age of the children. The average level of satisfaction of mothers with pre-school children is the same as for the father. But in families with teenage children it is lower, and it is even lower in those families where the youngest child at home is already an adult. The satisfaction of mothers with family life begins to again increase after the children leave home (if the family has managed to stay together up to this time). Together with the fall in the

more satisfied than the fathers once the children are older. Since women's work does not substantially change during the stage in life when there are teenagers in the family — and there is neither increase in salary nor responsibility — it must be a case of looking for compensation in another facet of life. Such compensation seeking is considered — in those societies where married women mainly dedicate themselves to the home, and do not work, or work part-time — to be more characteristic of men (Lambert 1990).

Following on from the above, it can be concluded that in Estonia, where at the end of the 1990s traditional gender expectations dominate and where the unequal opportunities, rights and obligations of men and women are not considered to be



average family life satisfaction level for mothers, there is a rise in the average satisfaction level for mothers regarding work — they are more satisfied with work when the children are older. For fathers it is the opposite — their satisfaction with family life increases with their children's ages. At the same time, their satisfaction with work does not depend on the ages of the children in the family.

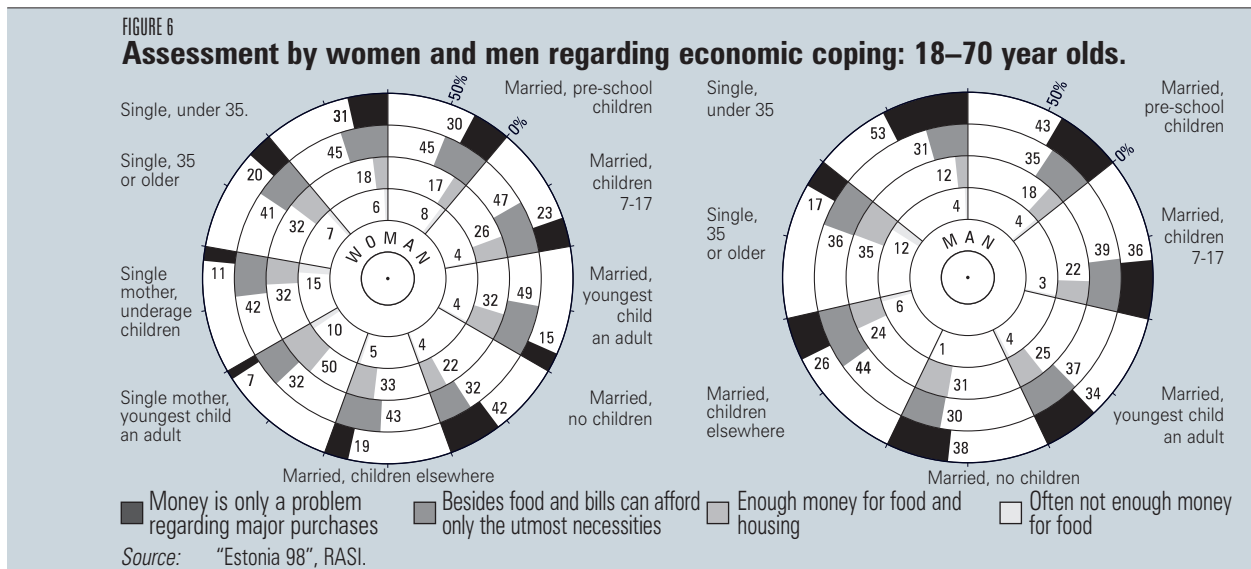
Regarding satisfaction with family life and work, there is yet another difference between the attitudes of mothers and fathers. Fathers and mothers are similarly satisfied only in families with small children and thereafter the fathers are consistently more satisfied than the mothers. But with work, regarding which there is a similar level of satisfaction in families with small children, the mothers are

social problems, the majority of men and women try to adapt themselves, in combining their professional employment and family life, to the current behavioral norms. Women accept in their work lower wages and "women's work". Men consider participation in housework as assisting the wife, and do considerably less than the women, particularly in families with children. The actual result of such a division of work, which is inappropriate to modern requirements, is primarily the increase of dissatisfaction in women. This is accompanied by family discord and also divorce, which in turn affects the satisfaction of men, not to mention the atmosphere of the whole family, including ruining the relationship between parents and children, reducing the positive effect of the family on bringing up children.

Dissatisfaction and stressful work at the workplace and at home also have a negative effect on women's health, and it is no surprise that the surveys "Estonia 93" and "Estonia 98" show that Estonian women have a higher stress level than men, and that this occurs mainly in families with under-age children. The reason is the greater burden of paid and unpaid work, and primarily its unfair division, of which women have started to become aware. This problem is encouraged by the state's family policies which support traditional gender expectations, and take little account of the situation of women with children. For this reason, comparison with Finnish women shows Estonian women to be worse off (Narusk & Kandolin 1998). The level of stress is higher for women in Estonia than in

option but to postpone starting a family. At the same time, individual value judgements become ingrained and so often even young women do not wish to bear family responsibilities when they start a family.

It will not be possible to find a solution while constructive public discussion on these topics is avoided, and an equitable distribution of rights and obligations between men and women is not considered to be necessary. With the artificial separation of mutually related facets of life, and the forcing of rigid gender roles on men and women, it is society as a whole which loses, since those men and women who would like to fulfil their obligations and to use their abilities in both spheres of life are unable to do so.



Finland, and the stress level of a working woman in Finland is less dependent on the existence of children in the family than it is in Estonia. This latter aspect is justifiably considered to be a result of the more "woman-friendly" social and family policies in Finland.

In a situation where the education system, the mass media and public opinion all encourage the out-of-date and inappropriate strict gender roles, and where the inequality of the distribution of opportunities, rights and obligations of men and women are not considered a problem — and this is not publicly debated — young women, who just like men of the same age, value good education, interesting work and a work-based career, as well as participation in politics, often have no other

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Men and women on the labor market: wage ratios

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The ratios of men and women on the labor market is an extensive topic. This article will explore the differences and similarities that occur in eco-

Economic status of men and women

The employment rate has been fairly high in Estonia over the last decades and there have been no major differences in the employment of men and women. According to the population census of 1989, 86.1% of the working population (men aged 15 to 59 years and women aged 15 to 54 years) were employed, the percentage of employed men was 87.3% and that of employed women 84.9%. Slightly more than half (52%) of the employed persons were women.

Changes in the labor market have affected both men and women (this overview focuses on persons aged 15 to 69 years). In the labor force surveys that started retrospectively documenting the changes that had occurred since 1989, a distinction was

As has been noted previously, factory owners gladly use women as cheap labor, as far as is allowed by law, and those laws certainly provide extensive rights in this regard.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)

conomic status, employment according to employment spheres and professions, and the income of men and women. In Estonia, such questions have only been studied during the past ten years. The official policy during the Soviet era was that men and women are equal and therefore there is nothing to study. There was also a lack of relevant statistical data. The situation is now changing and there are some very comprehensive statistics being compiled which will provide us with the data necessary to analyze gender differences on the labor market. One source of data are the labor force surveys carried out under the auspices of the Statistical Office of Estonia (ELFS 95 and ELFS 97; Eamets, Pettai, *et al.* 1997; Pettai, Sõstra 1998).

made between three different types of economic status:

- 1) employed persons
- 2) persons seeking employment, and
- 3) unemployed persons who are not seeking employment.

We might label the first two groups as "active" and the third group as "passive" (or inactive). Employment has decreased during the past ten years and the number of people who are either seeking employment or are inactive has increased.

Activity rates

When comparing the proportions of those three groups among men and women aged 15 to 69

years, it becomes evident that the activity rates for men were considerably higher than for women. Since then, the number of active persons has decreased and the number of passive persons has increased.

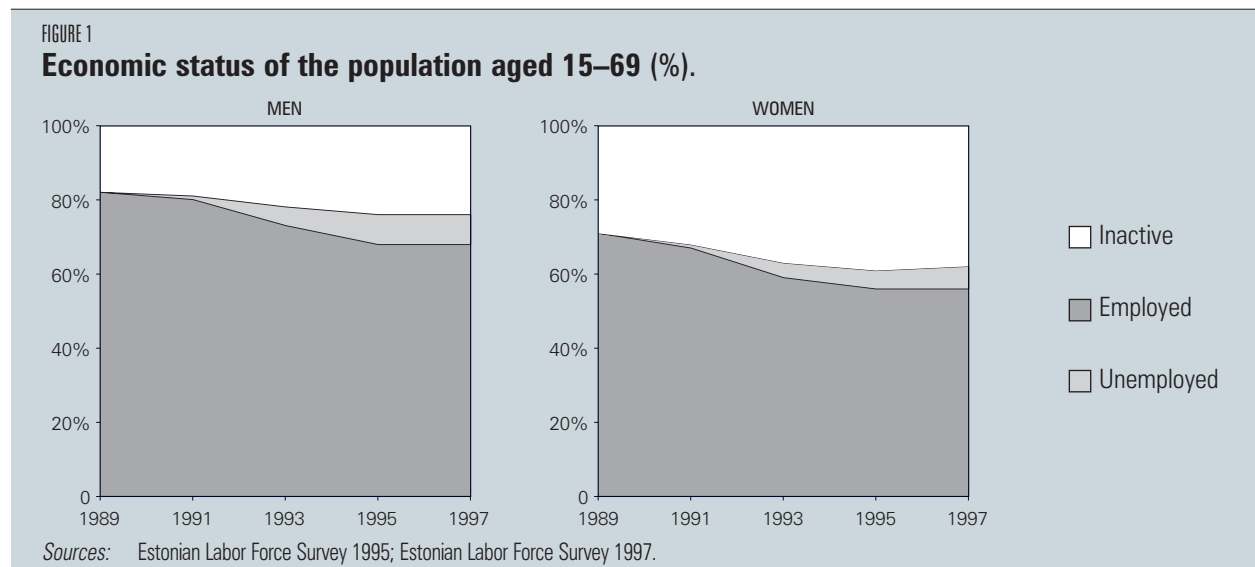
In the 1990s the activity rates for women decreased slightly faster than for men: while in 1989 the activity rate for women aged 15 to 69 was 71% and the activity rate for men was 82%, in 1997 the corresponding figures were 62% and 76%. A more detailed analysis reveals that activity rates decreased mainly because older people left the labor market, and a more rapid decrease in the activity rates for women was due to the fact that the number of women active in the economy who had reached retirement age decreased more

some women to return to traditional gender roles whereby men are seen as the breadwinners in the family and women as the caretakers of home and family. The changing social situation offered various possibilities for this (Andreson, Vöörmann 1996).

Women living in rural areas have been in a very vulnerable position during the economic reforms: activity rates for women living in rural areas declined more drastically than activity rates for men or for women living in towns.

Employment

Employment rates (i.e. proportion of employed persons among in the working age population) for men and women are different: employment rates for men



than that of men. This coincided with the waves of lay-offs due to the liquidation of big enterprises that initially affected mostly women. After losing their jobs, women often leave the labor market altogether. There was a very rapid decline in the activity of women in the economy in the beginning of the 1990s, but the decline of activity rates for men was spread more evenly over the entire period.

Young women left the labor market at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s because, on the one hand, they were forced to leave their jobs and, on the other hand, there was an increase in the birth rate, the duration of parental leave was prolonged and many women did not re-enter the labor market. Such a phenomenon might be due to the desire of

are considerably higher. In 1997 the employment rates were 67.6% for men and 56.0% for women. It needs to be pointed out, however, that the employment rates for men and women are clearly dependent on age.

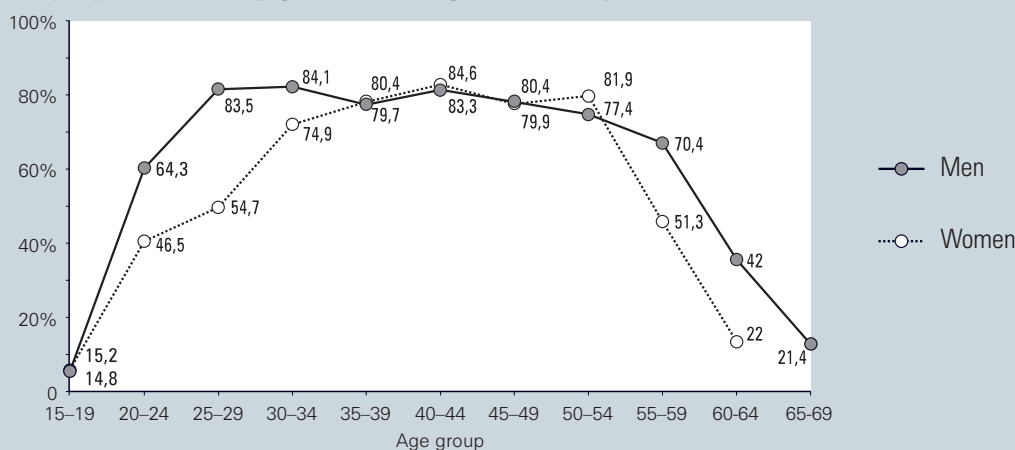
Employment rates for women younger than 34 are considerably lower than the employment rates for men of the same age: this is obviously due to the women's role in the family. Childbirth inevitably involves a shorter or longer period of absence from work. In Estonia caring for young children has also traditionally been a woman's task. The employment rates for men and women are more or less equal among persons aged 35 to 54 years; in this age group the employment rates are also the highest (approximately 83–85%). In the oldest age group

the employment rates for women are again considerably (1.5 to 2 times) lower than the rates for men. There are various reasons for that: lower retirement age for women, difficulties in getting/ finding a job at that age, etc.

While employment rates for women had declined more radically than the rates for men, the decline within both groups had been more or less equal: the employment rate for men was 82.1% in 1989 and 67.6% in 1997 (decline of 14.5%). Corresponding figures for women were 71.3% and 56.0% (decline of 15.3%). There was a fairly clear turning point in the decline of employment rates in 1992/1993. The restructuring of the Estonian economy also resulted in some radical changes on the labor market. While the employment rates were

ple employed part-time. Having a part-time job was inevitable for some people and a matter of choice for others. Part-time jobs were mostly preferred by pensioners (wishing to retain a full pension) and young people (wishing to combine work and studies). Part-time work during the early years of economic reforms can be characterized on the basis of data from the longitudinal study "Lives of a Generation"¹. This study shows that the number of young men working full time and having a long-term employment contract was greater than the corresponding number for women of the same age. The proportion of young women was greater in those groups who worked part-time or whose work was of a temporary/ contractual nature.

FIGURE 2

Employment rate by gender and age, second quarter of 1997 (%).

Sources: Estonian Labor Force Survey 1997.

80.5% for men and 66.6% for women in 1991, three years later the figures were 72.2% and 58.0% respectively. Thus a significant decline occurred in the employment rates for both men and women during a very short period of time.

Employment rates were lower in rural areas than in towns during the entire transition period. The employment rate for women living in rural areas was only 45.5% in 1997. It should be emphasized that the gender-based differences in employment are much bigger in rural areas than in towns.

Economic restructuring and a decrease in the number of jobs also resulted in an increasing number of people being employed only part-time. Part-time jobs are more widespread among women: women constitute about two-thirds of all the peo-

Generally speaking, Estonia is a society of salaried workers. Men have been much more active in enterprise than women. In 1997, the number of entrepreneurs was much higher among men (9.1%) than among women (3.0%) and the proportion has not changed much during the past decade. Men and women aged 25 to 45 years are the most enterprising. The number of entrepreneurs is highest in that age group. Areas of activity are relatively similar for

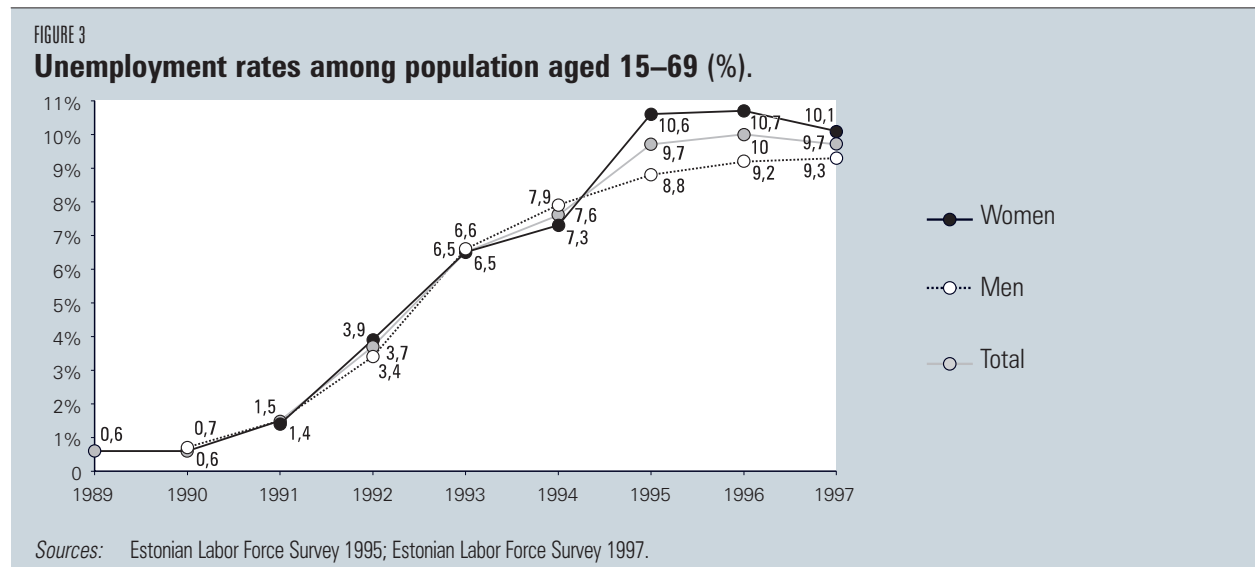
¹ Longitudinal study "Lives of a Generation" supervised by Mikko Titma was launched in 1983 and is targeted at people who had completed their secondary education in 1983. The aim of the study is to follow the lives of this generation throughout the period of social change in Estonia. The last questionnaire so far was carried out in the end of 1998 by the Institute of International and Social Studies at Tallinn Pedagogical University in cooperation with the Department of Sociology at the University of Tartu.

both male and female entrepreneurs. Agriculture and trade seem to provide ample possibilities for starting an enterprise. Those areas are followed by industry and construction for male entrepreneurs and by catering and industry for female entrepreneurs.

Whether people become engaged in enterprise or not depends to a great extent on their level of self-confidence and a positive attitude towards life. Many studies have shown that women are less self-confident than men and do not believe in their ability to successfully conduct a business. It can be concluded that women should be encouraged to become engaged in enterprise. First steps in that direction have already been taken in specific training centers for women.

women since 1995. According to age, unemployment rates in the 1990s were the highest for young people (aged 15 to 24 years), and young men have been in a slightly less favorable position than young women. It needs to be emphasized that unemployment rates for young people have more than doubled since 1992 and at present the unemployed account for one sixth of the entire age group. This shows that young people are having considerable difficulties in finding employment. The situation is especially difficult for those young people who have recently graduated from a secondary school (especially girls who constitute a majority of this type of school student) and have received no vocational training.

When analyzing unemployment according to place of residence, it can be said that during the first



Unemployment

Unemployment was a relatively unknown phenomenon in Estonia at the end of the 1980s. The first government regulation regarding the social protection of persons seeking employment was adopted in January 1991, and the registration of such persons commenced in May 1991. As far as unemployment is concerned, 1991 and 1992 were crucial: unemployment rates for both men and women increased rapidly during this period.

While there were no considerable differences in the unemployment rates (i.e. proportion of the unemployed persons in the labor force) for men and women at the beginning of the 1990s, unemployment rates have been slightly higher for men than for

half of the 1990s there were no major differences in the unemployment rates of men and women in rural areas and in towns. The situation has changed somewhat since the mid-1990s: unemployment rates for men and women living in rural areas are higher than for men and women living in towns.

A very important factor in analyzing unemployment is its duration. When unemployment first emerged, most of the unemployed persons were unemployed for a short period of time (up to six months). Then the proportion of the short-term unemployed started to decrease and the proportion of the long-term unemployed (more than a year) increased. According to the 1998 labor force survey, the proportion of short-term unemployment has been increasing lately, and short-term unemploy-

ment is more widespread among men (almost 2/5) than among women. Long-term unemployment is more widespread among women.

What do people think about the likelihood of becoming unemployed? According to the longitudinal study mentioned above, one in every eight young people considered it very likely that they could lose their jobs within one year after the time of the survey and one in four considered it quite likely to happen. Surprisingly, men's attitudes were somewhat more pessimistic than women's. This could be explained by the rapid increase in the rates of unemployment at the beginning of the 1990s (Helemäe, Saar & Vöörmann 1999) which must have created a generally pessimistic attitude in young men towards the future. According to several studies carried out

man and woman claimed that preference should be given to men. There was an equal number (one-third) of men and women who did not agree with that statement. Among non-Estonians, there were clearly more men than women who were in favor of preferring men. Contrary to what had been expected, people with higher education preferred men much more readily than workers with secondary education (Vöörmann 1992).

Employment according to areas of activity and profession

Differences in economic status are not the only factors contributing to the unequal positions of men and women on the labor market. The fact that, as in

TABLE 1

Percentage of women aged 15–69, according to their profession (%).

	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997
Legislators, high officials, and managers	40	39	38	36	34
Highly qualified specialists	65	65	66	61	69
Technicians and middle-ranking specialists	77	75	69	71	70
Officials	89	90	88	86	83
Service staff, salespeople in shops or markets	85	82	76	76	76
Skilled workers in farming, forestry, and fishing industry	63	60	50	48	43
Skilled workers and craftsmen	26	25	24	20	24
People operating and assembling equipment and machinery	15	14	12	20	16
Unskilled workers	70	63	59	55	55

Sources: Estonian Labor Force Survey 1995; Estonian Labor Force Survey 1997.

more recently that included the entire population of Estonia ("Living Conditions in Estonia" and "Adult Education", for example) there is an equal amount of men and women who do not believe that they are likely to lose their jobs in the near future due to layoffs, liquidation of the company or some other reason (Sillaste, Purga 1995; Helemäe, Saar & Vöörmann 1997). The feeling of security regarding one's job had also increased among both men and women (in 1997 almost 3/5 of people were convinced that they were not likely to lose their jobs).

People were also asked who, in situations of unemployment, should be preferred in recruitment — men or women. At the very beginning of the 1990s, with unemployment rates still at a minimum, every seventh 40 year-old Estonian

other developed countries, men and women in Estonia have different jobs is as important if not even more important. This can be proved by looking at the proportions of male and female employees in different areas. Traditionally there are more women employed in the health care system, social work, education system, research, culture, financial institutions, hotels, and restaurants. Men constitute a majority of employees in agriculture, energy, supply of gas and water, construction, fishing industry and mining. In between there are the industries with an almost equal amount of male and female employees: processing industry, public administration, social welfare institutions, real estate, rental and commercial services, and, in recent years also trade, and maintenance of consumer items and home

appliances. When we compare data from 1989 and 1997, then there are certain areas where the proportion of women has decreased substantially and the proportion of men has increased: wholesale and retail trade, maintenance of consumer items and home appliances, and also finance, real estate, rental and commercial services. Reforms in the economy brought new life to these areas and this attracted men immediately. The proportion of men has increased by only a few percent in most other sectors of the economy. Special attention should be drawn to the education system where, unlike other sectors, the proportion of women has increased and the proportion of men has unfortunately become even lower than previously.

When we analyze employment for men and women according to areas of activity, we can see that considerable changes have taken place during the past decade. In 1989 almost half of the male workforce was employed in two sectors of the economy: processing industry (24.6%) and agriculture, hunting, and forestry (22.5%). The largest proportion of women were also employed by the processing industry (26.8%) followed by agriculture, forestry (13.4%) trade (11.1%), and health care system and social work (10.8%). In 1997 there is a new tendency of employing a fairly large number of men in trade (increase from 3.8% up to 12.2%) and a smaller number of men in agriculture. The latter phenomenon is due to radical reforms in agriculture in the 1990s and these changes affected women to an equal extent. The number of women employed in the education system and trade increased. Attention should be drawn to the increasing numbers of women, and especially the numbers of men, employed in trade (which was traditionally considered to be a "women's sphere") showing the development in the said area and referring to some potential future developments in the changed economic circumstances.

In addition to the fact that men and women are engaged in different areas of activity, there are also some clear-cut differences in their professions.

The proportion of women has declined in almost all professions and the importance of men has increased during the transition period (proving once again that women become inactive more often than men). The proportion of women declined considerably among skilled workers employed in the farming, forestry and fishing industries and among

unskilled workers. Unfortunately, the category of legislators, high officials and managers has become even more male-dominated. In this period there was one category in which the proportion of men decreased and the proportion of women increased, namely the category of highly qualified specialists; a similar tendency, although on a much smaller scale, occurred in the category of people operating equipment and machinery.

Occupational gender segregation

Occupational gender segregation (separation) can be defined as the domination of one or the other gender in certain occupations or professions. On the one hand, a division of tasks in a society is a completely normal phenomenon: some people are employed as teachers, others as engineers, yet others as fishermen, etc. Thus there basically should not be any objection to a division of occupations and professions between the sexes. It has been much discussed that women are better suited for jobs requiring a high level of precision and men are better suited for jobs requiring great physical strength. However, division of occupations and professions on the basis of sex has many undesirable consequences. Besides horizontal occupational segregation there exists also vertical gender segregation with regard to occupations and professions. ***Women are widely represented mostly in occupations that are not very prestigious in society and where the wages are below the average. The number of women in higher positions is much smaller than the number of men. Men usually have better-paid jobs and they have more power.*** Comparing the proportions of men and women in different areas of activity and according to their professions, as was done above, is one way of assessing gender-based division of employment in society. Another way which allows us to analyze the extent of gender-based division of employment, is to calculate the index of occupational gender segregation. Such an index shows the percentage of the female (or male) labor force that should change their jobs and be employed in such an area where the respective sex has been underrepresented in order to achieve a well-balanced gender structure in the distribution of occupations and professions (corresponding to the gender structure of the entire society).

When comparing the indices of gender segregation according to areas of activity in the 1990s, it becomes evident that there have been no significant changes in the gender-based division of areas of activity. When we compare gender segregation according to areas of activity and according to professions, we see that gender segregation according to professions is bigger, although the division of professions into those of men and those of women has become less frequent in the 1990s.

Differences in income

An analysis of the segregation according to area of activity and according to professions is particularly important as far as the wages of men and women are concerned. It is common knowledge that the average wages of women are much lower than the average wages of men in all developed countries. The wages of women have been approximately 25% lower than those of men during all the years after Estonia regained its independence, and the differences in wages have increased during this decade.

In 1992 women's wages constituted approximately 80% of the wages paid to male employees. During the subsequent years this number decreased and in 1997 the wages earned by women constituted only 72% of men's average wages. It is important to emphasize the fact that there is no profession where women earned wages equal to or higher than those of men during any year in the entire period covered here.

Men's average hourly wages increased much more rapidly in the 1990s than that of women (4.3 and 3.9 times respectively) for all professions. The category of officials is the only exception here; the gap between wages of men and women decreased significantly in 1997 and this accounts for a slightly higher increase in the average wage of women. The greatest differences in increased rates for men's and women's wages were in the categories of service staff, salespeople, and highly skilled professionals.

There should be an explanation for such a situation. The differences between the wages of men and women have been analyzed over a long period of time in developed western countries, and they have come up with two factors that might account for the lower wages of women: first, so-called human capital, and second, unequal treatment of

women. According to the first approach, women take into account the fact that due to childbirth and raising children they will be excluded from work for a certain period of time, and therefore they plan a shorter period of education (i.e. acquire a lower level of education) and this results in wage differences. However, this theory has not been confirmed elsewhere in the world, nor in Estonia; the investments that women have made in their professional training are by no means smaller than those made by men. Quite the opposite, women are becoming increasingly better educated than men. Therefore, the wage differences are more often explained by an unequal treatment of women based on the occupational gender segregation described earlier. On the one hand, women are over-employed in certain areas of activity (horizontal segregation) where there is an excess of supply over demand which results in wages that are lower than those of men. On the other hand, men have acquired higher positions within areas of activity (vertical segregation). Unfortunately, the wage-differences between men and women cannot be explained simply by saying that their professions and positions are different. According to the sociological longitudinal study "Lives of a Generation" women receive lower wages even if all the other characteristics (education, qualifications) are equal (Helemäe, Saar, Vöormann 1997b). Transition to a market economy has broadened the gap in wages and this might predict even lower wages for women in the future.

In conclusion it could be said that the positions of men and women on the labor market differ to quite an extent. The situation of women is much more complicated than that of men. Although unemployment rates are higher for men than for women, women have to face a larger number of negative factors: lower-paid occupations and positions, being employed under a temporary employment contract, a higher proportion of long-term unemployment, average wages that are much lower than those of men, etc. These differences can be leveled with an active employment policy, taking into account the different positions of men and women on the labor market. Such a policy should include employment training and all types of in-service training and re-training; creation of suitable conditions and benefits to facilitate entrepreneurship (especially among

women); creating new jobs to reduce unemployment; special training programs designed to help inactive persons (especially women) to re-enter the labor market and become accustomed to changes in the labor market. The question of wage differences needs to be addressed especially carefully.

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Men, Women and the Media

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The topic of gender and the media can roughly be divided into three areas:

1. Employment policies and everything related — the keywords here would be equality of treatment and the following issues are dealt with: how many/few women are employed in different media, what are the positions and salaries

Media is not an institution which stands outside the society and culture – it reflects, but it also produces and reproduces via the texts such approaches which already exist in a given society/culture. Such a claim can also be made when the topic is man/woman, masculinity/femininity, the real man/real woman, etc.

Men and women as journalists

A considerable number of women are employed in Estonian media but the higher up in the hierarchy, the fewer women you find – no editor-in-chief of a major newspaper is female. Some women are executive editors or heads of departments, women also edit the weekend or culture editions of daily news-

The important citizen is quite right - of course from his own point of view. He naturally does not want to see the *person* in the woman but a *plaything*, something for the satisfaction of his desires and his entertainment. Even the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle with his superb mind could not understand how society could live without slaves, although no clear intellectual difference could be found between slaves and masters. In the same way, bourgeois society is unable to comprehend how it could possibly live without *playthings*.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)

2. Portrayal of women/men in the media texts of a certain society and age, where media texts mean printed press together with visual materials, TV and radio broadcasts and also advertising. Why are women and men portrayed like this? How does a man/woman become a media hero? Are men and women portrayed differently?
3. Women and men as a media audience: audience analysis by gender. Do men and women have any clear preferences? Do they have a different way of looking at media output?

papers. Actually women in journalism are mostly employed in sections handling social affairs and culture. In the news, current affairs and economy sections, women usually work as reporters or editors. Women's, health and family magazines have female editors-in-chief. As media in Estonia is for the most part in private hands and the amount of salary is determined by an agreement between the employer and the employee, there is no exact data available concerning the salaries of journalists. One can only assume that the salaries of men and women differ according to their positions.

There are more women in public broadcasting (radio, state television). The attitude that women can work in areas which are paid less (an attitude generally accepted among women as well) is based

on the widespread idea that a man is the breadwinner in the family and his salary should indeed be higher. At the same time, the salaries of men employed in, for example, cultural journalism may be lower than that of a female journalist in the field of economy. It would seem that we are dealing with a wider cultural phenomenon here – if people see a field of activity as feminine/having become feminine (e.g. areas of culture or social affairs), it seems natural that employment in such a field is not well paid. It has been said that information concerning the economy and politics is more expensive and that the providers and analysts in that field must be paid more. Thus economy/politics that have traditionally been considered male fields of activity or masculine fields of activity in a wider cultural context accordingly mean more expensive knowledge and better-paid jobs.

Why are mostly men being promoted to heads of sections and higher positions? Is this based on the qualifications and abilities of the given employee, is there a stereotype involved that men are naturally better leaders or is it the old boy network? In any case, the so-called phenomenon of a glass ceiling which prevents women from rising higher than certain positions certainly exists in Estonian media circles.

Gender of the author and the content of media texts

Does the gender of an author determine anything in the content of the texts? If the number of women authors increased, would that automatically make the media friendlier towards women? Experience has shown that everything depends on how women perceive themselves. If women see themselves 'through the eyes of men' and write about women 'through the eyes of men', a larger number of women authors will not make a publication friendlier to women. For example, both men and women journalists have written "sexist" portraits of women in the column "Persona" in the weekly newspaper Eesti Ekspress. Estonian society and women's magazines often publish stereotypical portrayals of women, thereby producing and reproducing so-called patriarchal or traditional ideas about men and women. As the patriarchal view of women is dominant and generally accepted in Estonian culture, the

authors themselves consider it only natural. Neither do the readers see a problem here, they reject change and prefer traditional notions. For example, the circulation of the magazine "Eesti naine" (Estonian Woman) started to decrease in the years 1996–1997 when editor-in-chief Ene Paaver attempted to publish more material about a new type of heroine, a successful woman who was not yet well-known in society. Circulation started to increase again when the magazine reverted to the traditional worldview with the new editor-in-chief Katrin Streimann in charge and once again started to display well-known women and celebrities from society magazines on the cover. One might say that Estonian women's magazines, while creating the so-called women's world, mostly reinforce traditional cultural values. But besides old stereotypes, new ones have appeared in Estonian women's magazines, for example, the stereotype of a superwoman, a woman who is able to handle anything. Such a woman is the perfect mother, wife, she is beautiful and a top professional in her own field.

The relative conservatism of women's journalism is ultimately caused by the audience. As readers/viewers perceive media texts based on their own cultural context, it is not possible to provide them with just any ideas. If what is offered by the media differs too much from what the audience thinks is 'right', the audience will not perceive the media text as the 'truth' and may choose not to purchase the publication any more.

Construction of gender in media texts

The media is one of the institutions in society which produces and reproduces meanings and generally recognized notions in a culture, including what is a 'normal woman' in this culture, what is a 'real woman', what is a 'normal man' and what is a 'real man', what is 'feminine/masculine', what is not, etc. The media carries out all this primarily by the selection of persons portrayed and interviewed — this is determined by who are written about and how. So the construction of gender in texts happens via representation. What are the criteria according to which newspapers and magazines (also women's magazines) choose the persons they display on the cover, and which articles about which men/women constitute news?

As for quality journalism or the part of media which claims to be objective, it is much more concerned with men and their activities. It can be concluded from a study of the column "Persona" in Eesti Ekspress carried out by the author of this article that in 1992–1998 an average 18% of the persons portrayed in the column were women, the numbers did increase from 8% in 1993–1994 to 25% in 1998. The media is also often interested in the so-called ordinary man but an ordinary woman who is good at what she does rarely becomes a media hero. Generally only unusual or exceptional women make their way into the media.

One might speculate that the image the media offers corresponds with real life, where women do not accomplish anything to be written about, where men make all the important decisions and where only men are connected with big money, big power or big scandals. For example, the increase in the proportion of women in the "Persona" column has been explained in the editorial office by the fact that there are no more 'persons', the standards have been lowered and thus more women are depicted in the column. A more naïve explanation to the increase in the number of women in "Persona" would be the democratization of society which is also reflected in the media. The study of "Persona" reaffirms the widespread theory that for women it is enough to be exceptionally good-looking (beauty queens) or closely connected with important men (Ilona Ots, wife of Georg Ots, Vilja Savisaar, wife of Edgar Savisaar, Kerttu Olmann, recently married to Jüri Mõis). It would be very uncommon for the good looks of a man or his connection with important women to constitute news (there were no such cases in the said study).

Top managers and female politicians are also unusual because they are exceptions in the so-called male-dominated spheres of life. Their activities are constantly covered by the media, although one might question the manner in which it is done. It may even be easier for women in the political or economic elite to capture the attention of media than for men, especially if a change in clothing style constitutes news. There is a rule that important women are mostly depicted by the media in a trivializing way, focus is on their appearance and relationships instead of their actions and so-called soft portraits are created of them (this is common prac-

tice in "Persona" and almost all portraits of the so-called great women are subjected to such treatment, for example Helo Meigas, Marju Lauristin, Merle Karusoo, Irina Raud, Liina Tõnisson and many others). In media texts, the success of women is usually explained by favorable circumstances (chance, important patrons) and their own actions are under-emphasized. In the case of a failure, on the other hand, it is the woman's fault. This is normally the other way round for men, success is the result of the actions of a man as an active agent and failure is caused by unfortunate circumstances. Here the media reflects and amplifies the psychological attribution which occurs also in real life.

The media also loves crazy women: for example the healer Luule Viilma and pop artist Maie Parrik have been portrayed in the column "Persona". In the case of "eccentrics" or "deviants", emphasis is on the woman being the agent (they create their own work). Media researchers in the world have found that, on the average, the media rather prefers younger women but as there are very many young men among the influential people of Estonian society, it also changes the image offered by the media. For example, we cannot say, regarding the "Persona" column, that the age of women portrayed is less than that of the men.

Women's personalities are usually reduced to stereotypes or even archetypes (whore, Madonna, superwoman, victim, symbol) by the media. In the opinion of journalists, a woman who can be classified as a stereotype or an archetype is more likely to gain media attention (the latest rage is a business or euro-babe, an attractive young specialist).

Men and the media

In portraying women, the media concentrates mostly on their private lives and appearance, but with men, the emphasis is on their "business", their work. As for men, the gender of men depicted by the media is usually of secondary importance. The texts of major daily newspapers and so-called serious magazines are generally gender-neutral when it comes to portraying men. Man is a human being in general, he is a neutral norm compared to whom a woman is a deviation (she has gender – a body, children, private life). Not much attention is paid to a man's gender in media texts, especially if he is sup-

posed to be a person to be taken seriously (for example, someone who belongs to the economic or political elite) and who says something important. A portrait of a business man or a male politician in a so-called serious publication often deals with the 'subject matter' instead of the person, which makes it actually not a portrait but an article about a problematic issue, as far as the genre is concerned.

Of course, a lot depends on the publication, a portrait of a male politician in a women's magazine or a society magazine may differ substantially from a portrait in a daily newspaper and is often based on the criteria generally used for portraying women. The way a man is portrayed depends also on the profession of the man. Gender is almost always mentioned in the case of men who represent the so-called more frivolous professions: actors, rock musicians, models, sportsmen. This fact, which is confirmed by media researchers, is also true about the Estonian media. Sportsmen and rock musicians are sex symbols like women – the media does not forget the masculinity of Erki Nool or Henrik Sal-Saller.

In the "Persona" column, men's gender is always emphasized (mostly in the form of descriptions of the body) in the case of representatives of military professions. Obviously, the military is very closely connected with masculinity in Estonia.

A major breakthrough in the way men are depicted in the media has taken place during the last few decades. Especially the public discussions on

homosexuality and heterosexuality in western societies during the last few decades have led to men's gender also being mentioned. What has always existed has become a topic of discussions and analysis. Although the Estonian media often tackles the issue of homosexuality, the homosexuality of certain important male public figures has not been mentioned in the serious media (unlike the portrait of a woman theatre director Merle Karusoo in "Persona"). Homosexuality is usually pointed out only in the case of men connected with the entertainment industry or culture, where eccentricity is a must.

Conclusion

The topic of gender and the media has remained almost untouched by research in Estonia. It is quite possible that as a result of rapid progress and pressure from foreign owners, our media figures will soon require information regarding men and women as journalists, as definers of media content. The depiction of men and women is of more academic interest – although this has a great influence on society as a whole. This could be a subject where research could be commissioned by institutions interested in promoting equality. Women and men as an audience must be a topic of interest in the future for media organizations oriented to circulation figures and ratings. So – the field for research is extensive, but it is currently sparsely populated.

Participation in Politics

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This article, based on a study of the elections to the *Riigikogu* and local governments, aims to examine the reasons why there are so few women in the decision-making bodies of Estonia.

between the sexes in the ESSR Supreme Soviet? Hardly.

In early spring 1990, elections to the Congress of Estonia and the Estonian Supreme Council took place. 12% of the candidates and 10% of the members of the Congress of Estonia were women; the numbers were even smaller for the Supreme Council of Estonia — 6% and 7% respectively. The proportion of women among candidates to the *Riigikogu* has been increasing steadily, but not sharply. In the years 1992, 1995 and 1999 — respectively, 14%, 17.4% and 26.9% of the candidates were women. And, respectively, 13%, 11.9% and 17.8% of those who became members of parliament were women. Thus men still constitute a large majority in the *Riigikogu*.

Those opposed to modernization predicted all kinds of terrible evils when women were given political rights. These rights were bound to be accompanied by family disputes, revolutions in manners, chastity and clothing. Also, women would be pushing men aside from everything. What has actually happened? /---/ Women are using their rights in a responsible manner.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)

Men and women in the *Riigikogu*

There are few women in the Estonian parliament compared to men — such a statement can be made on the basis of the election results of all elections which have taken place in the 1990s. In the early days of the Republic of Estonia there were even fewer women in the parliament.

In Soviet Estonia, the number and proportion of women were determined in the Communist Party committees and, according to these numbers and other socio-demographic indicators, suitable candidates were found. Do we miss such times, when there was greater formal equality

Men and women in local government councils

Recently the balance between the sexes has been somewhat better at local elections. At the elections of local councils in 1989, only 15% of all the candidates were women and even fewer were elected — 9% of all council members were women. After Estonia regained independence, at the elections of local government councils in 1993, 1996 and 1999, 24%, 31% and 28% respectively of those elected were women.

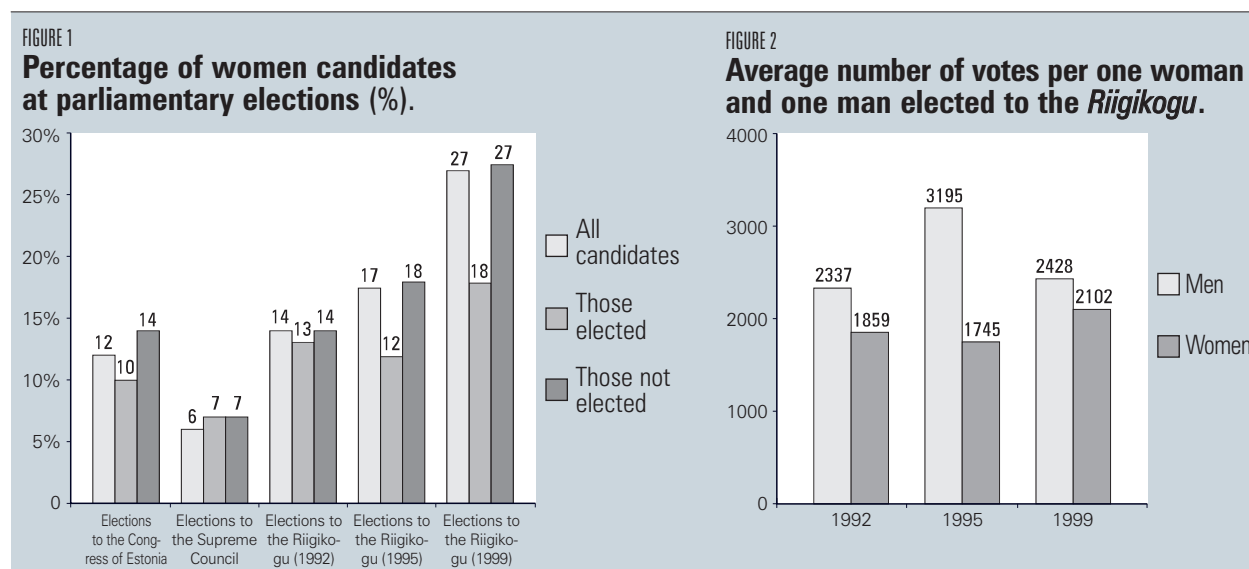
Why are there more women candidates at elections of local government councils than at parliamentary elections and why do more women get elected at local elections? Here are some of the main reasons.

1. At elections on the local level the number of mandates is relatively large and the electoral districts are small. So women also get a chance to have their say. It is the other way round at parliamentary elections: the electoral districts are large and there are few mandates.
2. Competition is not so fierce at local elections (with the exception of larger towns, especially Tallinn).
3. Local elections are less prestigious. Not everyone wants to fight for a seat on the council of a rural municipality from which one gains nothing apart from a little prestige.
4. Often there are not too many people (men) in a rural municipality or a small town who would suit the job (do not drink too much, keep their

doctors, teachers or librarians, i.e. females, end up on lists of candidates.

Taking account of all those factors, increasing the proportion of women in the *Riigikogu* to the level it is on local councils will not be possible in the near future. Although the proportion of women in both representative bodies is growing, the difference between the two levels will remain.

When we compare the *Riigikogu* elections in 1992, 1995 and 1999, we see that there were more women candidates in 1995 but even fewer were elected than three years earlier. The nature of the matter is very clearly indicated in Figure 2. which depicts the average number of votes per one woman or one man who was or was not elected. While in 1992, a woman who was elected got 79.5% of the



promises, work hard, etc.). That is why women's participation has to be tolerated.

5. A person needs to be well-known and recognized across the country in order to be elected to parliament. It is not enough that a person is well-known in Valgamaa, he or she also has to be known in Võrumaa and Põlvamaa, otherwise he or she will not be put on the top of the list of candidates. Local recognition is enough to be elected to a town or rural municipality council.
6. Well-known and recognized people are more often than not top leaders and professionals, incl. former members of parliament and the government. There are not too many women among them. The local level does not require a high social-professional status. This is how

number of votes given to a male candidate, in 1995, the same proportion was only 54.6%. The value of women as represented by the number of votes had decreased suddenly. This means that in the matter of equality of sexes, things did not get better but rather worse. By 1999, a big step had been taken in treating women equally in politics. As could be seen earlier, more women were elected to parliament and they received more votes than ever. The difference between the average number of votes received by men and by women who were elected decreased as well: the average number of votes given to an elected female candidate was 86.6% of the average number of votes given to an elected male candidate.

Next we focus on the balance between the sexes in the lists of candidates and in the lists of

members of political parties, in order to find out what are the backgrounds of future members of parliament.

Women in candidate lists and among the members of political parties

Women in candidate lists

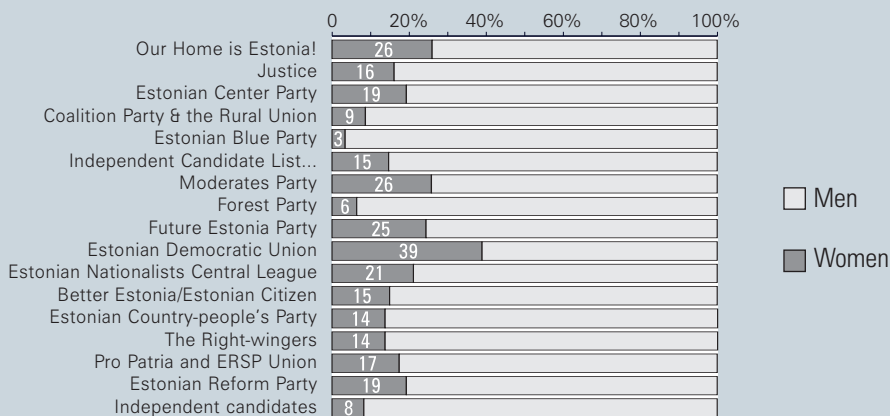
Whether more women will be elected to the *Riigikogu* in the future depends, with the present electoral system, to a great extent on political parties. Let us consider the proportion of female candidates in various candidate lists because if you're not a candidate, you certainly will not be elected. If we compare the proportions of women in all the lists of

tain nostalgia for the past. Being on the right or center-right means the opposite: people are important, not the state, attention is paid to the development of the economy, the employers and success; conservatism, liberalism and, to a certain extent, also nationalism prevail. Focus is on the future, and fast development and innovativeness are emphasized.

When it comes to the question of women, our understanding of left and right was rendered untrue because, at the elections in 1999, the right-wing parties displayed a reactionary and non-innovative trend, and the left-wing parties turned out to be progressive (if we consider increasing the proportion of women an increase in innovation and a positive process). Firstly, one might say that this is an accidental result which may be proven wrong by the next elections.

FIGURE 3

Proportion of women among all candidates at the 1995 *Riigikogu* elections, according to political parties.



candidates (political parties and election coalitions), it is evident that there were more women candidates in 1999 than earlier. In the Figures, the lists are depicted on a left-right scale. Of course, placing the political diversity in Estonia on one line is an oversimplification, and the suitability of a left-right scale for Estonian political parties in general is debatable. The political orientation of the parties is depicted the way most journalists and politicians understand it.

In Estonia, being on the left or left of center means that the state is considered more important and the freedoms and rights of individuals are less so, and more attention is paid to issues of social affairs and employees. The main indicator of being on the left is complaining about changes that have occurred too quickly (little innovativeness) and a cer-

Secondly, such results could be considered part of a trend according to which there are, as a rule, more women among the candidates of left-wing parties than among the candidates of right-wing parties in Estonia (as elsewhere in Europe). The third possibility could be that the right-wing parties in Estonia are conservative and reactionary in their worldviews. If the last statement turns out to be true, it would mean that the inclusion of women among candidates standing for election is not considered in Estonia or elsewhere in Europe to be a positive innovation, but that women are rather seen as a minority which requires politically correct treatment, or a group which needs social support (similarly to the unemployed, young people, immigrants). However, the right-wing parties of Estonia put a lot of emphasis on

success, and it would not be natural for them to drag along a social burden in the form of women.

The proportion of women in the candidate lists at the *Riigikogu* elections in 1999 clearly did not correspond to the proportion of women who were elected to the *Riigikogu*. For example, no women were elected to the *Riigikogu* from the Estonian Country-people's Party, in which there were very few women in the candidate list (17%), but seven men were still elected. However, three women and fifteen men (17% women) were elected to parliament from the Reform Party, although the proportion of women was not very large in their candidate list either (20%). Four women and fourteen men (22% women) were elected from the Pro Patria Union and the proportion of women in their list of candidates was the same. There was a large number

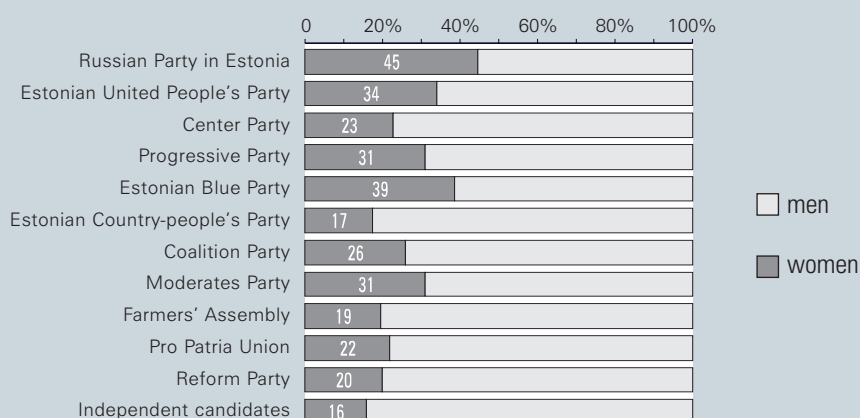
practical and what not, from the point of view of trying to get elected. A large number of women in the list of candidates is useful for the party's development, for women themselves and for the entire society but it is not helping the members of the party to be elected to parliament. If the principle of one woman getting, on the average, less votes than one man continues to apply, it is obvious that the more there are women candidates, the less there are votes coming in!

Women at the top of candidates' lists

The proportion and number of women in a list of candidates on the whole is one thing, their proportion and number at the top of the list, another.

FIGURE 4

Proportion of women among all candidates in the 1999 *Riigikogu* elections, according to political parties.



of women in the list of candidates of the Estonian United People's Party (34%) but only one woman and five men were elected to parliament (17% women).

Two women and five men (29%) were elected to the parliament from the Coalition Party, where one-fourth of the candidates on the list were female (25%). 18% women were elected from both the Center Party and the Moderates Party which had 23% and 31% of women respectively in their lists (5 women and 23 men were elected from the Center Party and 3 women and 14 men from the Moderates Party). Thus, relatively the largest number of women were elected to parliament from the Pro Patria Union and the Coalition Party.

Despite democracy and equality of treatment for both sexes, parties need to consider what is

er. The Estonian electoral system implicitly prescribes that only the women among the first ten or maybe twenty candidates on a candidate list are likely to be elected to parliament and that goes only for such parties which have the potential to receive enough votes to surpass the threshold. Women generally do not acquire personal mandates, and very few women enter the parliament by mandates from their candidate list. For the rest of the women there are compensation mandates. A position at the top of the list of candidates is much more important than the actual number of votes you get. According to the electoral system currently used in Estonia, the members of the *Riigikogu* are actually chosen some time before the election day — at the

time when parties compile their lists of candidates.

Women in politics and those taking an interest in politics were expecting a shift towards equality of sexes at the elections to the *Riigikogu* in March 1999, and the elections to the local government councils in October 1999. Such expectations for the *Riigikogu* elections were based on the larger proportion of women in the candidate lists: there were 508 female candidates which constituted 27% of all the candidates. However, there were very few women in the front parts of almost all candidate lists (Table 2), only the Progressive Party had a woman in the number one position and there were 0–4 women among the first 10 candidates and 2–6 women among the first 20 candidates.

The local government council elections, which were held in October 1999, indicated a step backward: there were actually 3% fewer women elected to the councils than there were in 1996. Although women were keen candidates in 1999 (35.6% of the candidates), they received limited votes and many were not elected. As was mentioned previously, women form 28.4% of council members. Whereas a man received an average of 46 votes, a woman received only 30. According to the number of votes, the “average value of a woman” is only 65% of a man. There were substantially more women elected to councils only in Ida-Viru county (41.8%). But there were relatively few elected to the councils in larger towns — Tallinn 26.6%, Pärnu 21.2% and Tartu 18.4%.

TABLE 1

Women in lists of candidates and in parties (%).

List of candidates / Party	1995	1999	October 1998
Russian Party in Estonia	-	44.5	...
Estonian United People's Party	-	34.3	56.9
Russian Unity Party	-	-	59.0
Our Home is Estonia!	27.4	-	-
Justice	16.2	-	-
Estonian Social-Democratic Labor Party	-	-	39.8
Center Party	20.2	22.7	47.5
Progressive Party	-	30.8	56.2
Estonian Country-people's Party	-	17.46	31.8
Coalition Party (with the Rural Union and UEFPF)	-	25.5	-
Coalition Party and the Country-people's Union	8.7	-	-
Coalition Party	-	-	30.5
Rural Union	-	-	46.7
Union Estonian Pensioners and Families Party	-	-	69.6
Farmers' Assembly	-	19.4	41.8

Results of the 1999 Riigikogu and local government elections

Parties which are elected to the *Riigikogu* are stronger, better-known, have more candidates, are better financed, their election campaigns are better organized, and they have loyal supporters. Prior to the *Riigikogu* elections in 1999, it was predicted that about 15–17 women will be elected to parliament, and actually the number was 18, so reality turned out to be more optimistic than the predictions. Apparently there was a certain shift in the attitudes of the leading figures of parties and also women themselves were more active than during the previous *Riigikogu* elections.

Women as members of parties

Although there are more men among the members of registered parties (54.5%), the proportion of women has increased compared to what it has been earlier (Aaskivi 1998; data as of October 1, 1998). The proportion of women is small in the more powerful coalition and opposition parties, for example 30.5% of the members of the Coalition Party, 31.8% of the members of the Estonian Country-people's Party, 28.5% of the members of the Reform Party and 30.4% of the members of the Pro Patria Union are women. Although the Center Party and the Moderates are strong parties as well, there are considerably more women among their ranks (47.5% and 41.5% respectively).

The number of women is relatively large among the members of left-wing parties, especially the Russian parties, and less so in the right-wing parties.

There are enough women to form candidate lists but for the most part they remain among the last two-thirds of the candidates, thus the key issue is still the proportion of women at the top of candidate lists.

It is easier to change the role of women in politics through the personal development of the segment of society which is politically more aware, i.e. members and leaders of the parties, but until now there has been a large and louder number of men than women in the councils and management boards of parties voicing their opinions as to who should be included in candidate lists.

It is characteristic of Estonians that they are interested in politics but prefer not to get actively involved: 88% of Estonian women and 77% of Estonian men claimed that they are not involved in politics and do not want to be involved. Still, there is some potential: 14% of men and 6% of women are not involved in politics but would like to be. 7% of men and 4% of women participated actively in politics. The fact that a large number of those who participated were not satisfied with their level of participation was intriguing (Raitviir 1996: 228–233).

The poll results revealed that women's participation in politics was condemned by two population groups more than others — people with higher education and people with the largest

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

Estonian Blue Party	3.4	38.7	60.2
Moderates Party / with the People's Party in 1999	25.7	31.0	41.5
Estonian Farmers' Party	13.7	-	-
Right-wingers	13.9	-	-
People's Party (incl. Right-wingers)	-	-	31.0
Estonian Christian People's Party	-	20.0	...
Pro Patria Union/Pro Patria and ERSP Union in 1999	17.4	22.47	30.4
Reform Party	20.4	20.3	28.5
Independent candidates	9.1	15.8	-
Estonian Democratic Union	38.9	-	-
Future Estonia Party	23.5	-	38.9
Estonian Nationalists Central League	21.2	-	-
Better Estonia / Estonian Citizen	16.4	-	-
Independent Candidate List of Royalists and the Greens	14.8	-	-
Forest Party	6.9	-	-
Total/Average	17.4	26.9	45.5

Women's interest in politics

Sociological polls carried out in 1992 and 1993 showed that women participate and are interested in politics 1.3 — 2.5 times less than men. In comparison, it should be remembered that the number of women among the members of parliament is 7–8 times smaller than that of men. It can be concluded from this comparison that in order to make women more interested in and more active in politics, increasing the proportion of women to approximately 25–30% in the parliament and 35–40% in local councils is required. Women's interest in politics and their activity in this field do not differ significantly from those of men and cannot thus be the reasons for the few female candidates and women not being elected.

These are the groups with the most influential opinions. Women will not be elected to parliament, to town or rural municipality councils until these groups change their minds. Also younger people, pupils and students were of the opinion that women should stay out of politics.

It is possible that more recent studies do not confirm quite so clearly the conservative attitudes towards women of influential and progressive groups. In the early and mid-nineties, it was probably a reaction to Soviet pseudo-equality which caused the more wealthy, more educated and younger men to prefer that their wives be housewives, an attitude which they then directed towards all women. Or maybe it was already an echo of the tendency which had caused men

to be more highly valued in the labor market and women to be left aside, despite the fact that they asked for lower salaries. The lower value attributed to women in the labor market, which is also expressed by the size of the salaries, is reflected in politics and other spheres of the society as well. Tradition is partially to be blamed — women did not become top leaders during the first Republic of Estonia, or in Soviet Estonia, and these positions are not on offer in Estonia today. A logical conclusion can be drawn from the situation — if women do not deserve to be top leaders in professional areas, why should they deserve to be offered such positions in politics, especially in the parliament where the most important political decisions are made?

It can be concluded from the above that the interest of women regarding politics or their values do not differ from those of men so radically as to explain the exclusion of women from politics.

People and women do not object

The small proportion of women in elected political bodies will undoubtedly seem undemocratic when looked upon from the outside, but local politicians, the people or the women do not see it that way. Apparently there is no conflict between men and women regarding this issue — women are not protesting. On the contrary, according to sociological polls, the minimal participation of women in politics

TABLE 2

Number of women in candidate lists in 1999.

	Top of Party list	Among the first		
		10	20	30
Russian Party in Estonia	-	0	3	8
Estonian United People's Party	-	2	2	5
Center Party	-	4	5	6
Progressive Party	1	4	5	9
Estonian Country-people's Party	-	0	2	3
Coalition Party	-	2	4	6
Farmers' Assembly	-	0	2	5
Estonian Blue Party	-	3	6	9
Moderates Party	-	3	4	7
Estonian Christian People's Party	-	1	3	6
Pro Patria Union	-	1	4	5
Reform Party	-	1	3	6

Women's values differ somewhat from those of men but those differences are not crucial. It is difficult to say whether there are more or less men and women in Estonia who are looking to acquire a high social status than in other countries. There are about 9% of such men and 6% of such women in Estonia. During the Soviet times those who wanted to stand out were condemned, wanting to make a career was something of which to be ashamed. Men have overcome these attitudes, at least when it comes to running for election — the competition is fierce. Women, on the other hand, are more reserved and need encouragement. Men are more likely to be interested in achieving higher status (power) and the accompanying freedom than are women.

is not seen as a particular problem. In 1993, only 19% of the respondents believed that there are too few women in politics, and 16% of the respondents claimed that statement to be false. Later polls have shown that people have started to pay more attention to the issue, and three years later over half the respondents agreed that there are too few women in politics. 19% of respondents shared the opposite view. 83% of respondents pointed out that new people were needed in politics. Apparently women were not counted as being new or necessary.

Our socio-cultural situation today and the reactionary attitudes of people with higher education, especially men, and the unwillingness of women to be freed from the pressure of men in social spheres do not give us much hope for the near future.

Everything will remain the way it has been, and women in politics will continue to be overshadowed by men for the coming years.

Conclusion

So, what is the situation with the pyramid, the top of which is the parliament, the middle part the parties and the base of which are the people (voters)? Although obstacles exist in the way of women's access to politics on each of these different levels of politics, there are also possibilities to change the situation and to achieve a parliament with a better balance between the sexes which would adopt legislation better suited for the needs of all members of the society.

The top level of politics. The small proportion of women in parliament has now become an accepted fact, but, at the same time, female politicians are already being treated as equals. Still, the number of women is small both in the parliament and the government. The parliament is not able to affect its own membership but it does have a significant amount of influence over the lower levels, especially the parties. The women of the different parliaments have contributed significantly and increased the reputation of women as top politicians through their everyday work and their activities as figures of the women's movement.

The level of parties. The parties comprise the politically enlightened segment of society. In today's Estonia, the core of the parties is located at Toompea in the form of parliamentary factions and it leads the parties from there. The leaders of the parties are those who have great influence over the compilation of the lists of candidates and the placement of women therein. The understanding of women's role in politics at the top of the party is thoroughly European, although not yet Scandinavian. In spite of this there has been no breakthrough in the proportion of women; still, such a breakthrough could perhaps be expected to take place at the first parliamentary elections of the next century. The most direct way to increase the proportion of women in the parliament is through the parties. And

the parties have to be more careful in finding and choosing the female candidates, so that the electorate would have a better choice. Members of the government as representatives of parties can use their positions to attack society's prejudices against women by promoting women professionally. The rise from being top leaders and professionals to top level politicians is the logical way not only for men but also for women.

The level of the public. At this level, prejudice is the strongest and the most enduring. Scandinavian ideas about the role of women will surely not be accepted before another generation has passed or even longer. The attitudes of men, and also women, do not change easily. Feminism is somewhat known but not popular in Estonia; there is no such movement as 'Women, elect women!'; the most influential groups in society, the people who should be the most democratic, but are not, are against women entering politics. Another obstacle is the fact that women do not crave fame and high positions as much as men do. Should the parliament contain too many women regardless of what the voters want (which our electoral system makes quite possible), the electorate would not be pleased. In spite of everything, a more positive awareness of the role of women can also be predicted on the level of public opinion/the electors in the future because the socio-cultural situation in Estonia is changing more rapidly than in the past. Modern views reach the voters via the parties from above on the one hand and via education and mass media on the same level on the other.

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Women's organizations as part of the third sector in Estonia

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Estonian representative in the permanent committee for equality
in the Human Rights Directorate at the Council of Europe, 1994-1999.

It is just in recent years that the issue of the importance and the re-emergence of the third or non-profit sector in our society has been raised by Estonian politicians. Fortunately, the pioneers of voluntary

History of women's organizations

Researchers of the Estonian women's movement link its beginnings to the period of national awakening. The first voluntary women's organizations were founded for the support of the Aleksander School movement (to found the first Estonian-language secondary school) in the 1880s.

1907 — Women's Society was founded in Tartu. The society publicized issues concerning the rights of women, e.g. equal pay for equal work.

1911 — female university students founded the Society of Women Students.

1917 — The First Estonian Women's Congress was convened on the initiative of the Tartu Women's Society. The main report was on the social rights of women.

There is much that needs to be done. Only through the cooperation of both sexes can we hope for a better future. But first it is the women themselves who must wake up, women, many of whom remain untouched by the women's movement. The strivings of a few prominent women are not sufficient to solve this issue: it is absolutely necessary to follow the same path as used by women in western Europe, and that path is the one involving organized community work.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)

work did not wait for this realization, and therefore projects outside the direct interest of the state or companies have already been initiated and promoted for more than ten years. Estonian researchers have attempted to study these development processes in society by carrying out opinion polls and monitoring the activities and influence of organizations. A clear picture of citizen initiatives has not yet developed. This overview attempts to describe women's organizations and their activities in Estonia.

The activities of women's organizations commenced at the end of the last century, developed rapidly during the first independent period and have become a multi-faceted movement in Estonia in the first decade after the restoration of independence.

1918 — Republic of Estonia was proclaimed and equal rights were established for men and women. The Estonian War of Independence was a common tribulation for men and women.

1920 — The Second Women's Congress was convened on the initiative of female members of the Estonian Constituent Assembly (Asutav Kogu) and the Association of Estonian Women's Organizations (since 1930, Association of Estonian Women) was founded with the aim to bring women together for joint activities in order to promote and ensure the legal, economic, intellectual well-being and health of women. Women were also active in other organizations such as the Women's Home Defence League (Naiskodukaitse), the Central Society of Rural Women, the Association of Academic Women etc. In 1936, the

Board of Home Economics was founded which also revised the draft laws and projects concerning household economy. Through the foundation of this Board, housework done by women was recognized and valued. State support to women's work increased significantly. Hundreds of training courses a year were held with the help of approximately 50 paid advisers. The Central Society of Rural Women functioned in the countryside and the Association of Estonian Women in cities (Eesti naised muutuvast ühiskonnas, 1995; Kivimäe, 1995, Mäelo, 1999). The activities of women's organizations changed the position of women in society by increasing their political rights. However, the leading positions in legislative institutions still remained in the hands of men. Upon the occupation of Estonia in 1940, all women's organiza-

tions. After the restoration of independence, several new women's organizations were founded. Some of the organizations founded in the first wave have become quite well-known; others have remained centred around the organization or have gradually faded away. The active women's organizations have had the wisdom and desire to review their areas of activity which were formerly important from the point of view of restoring independence, but no longer suited the rapid growth of society. In the second wave, many new local women's organizations were founded, some organizations became umbrella organizations, local branches of big international or European women's organizations were founded or contacts were made with international partner organizations. At least ten of the larger women's organizations and most of the political party women's organizations

Many serious women are still keeping their distance from elections. Participation by women in elections has supposedly not managed to noticeably raise the moral characteristics of those elected. Unfair actions are said to be still occurring in elections. It is of course understandable that women taking part in elections could not immediately make all of society newer and better.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)

tions acting in Estonia were also subject to compulsory dissolution.

The women's movement was very contradictory in the Soviet period. Women were declared as having all rights, compulsory emancipation justified women's work in all fields. Activities were mostly formal and guided by the state, but there was also some self-initiative — family values were considered to be important, especially protection of the health of mothers and children, handicraft and housework skills were developed.

A new beginning

Major social changes in Estonia started at the end of the 1980s. The Women's Union of Estonia was recreated, as well as a number of other influential women's organi-

are members of international networks. At the moment there are more than 160 different organizations in the women's organizations database. Research on women's organizations carried out in 1997 indicated that Estonian women's organizations have four main areas of activity: in-service training and individual development, small enterprise, charity, increasing participation in decision-making bodies. There are rather clear differences between the organizations in cities and rural areas. In the countryside, more energy is put into preserving family traditions and handicraft; while in the cities emphasis is on individual development, in-service training and also the rights of women — especially in the case of branches of international women's organizations in Estonia. Smaller organizations in the rural areas have fewer possibilities financially; therefore the members of such orga-

nizations usually participate in events carried out in the county or in the events organized by umbrella organizations. However, many local women's organizations are able to receive support in the form of free use of rooms or free transport to their events. Women's organizations in rural areas may apply for assistance for their small projects from the Popular Education League and the Foundation for Regional Development. Usually the organizations in cities do not have such support. They themselves finance the events, or they make the effort to find sponsors.

The development and success of women's organizations depends on whether the organization is able to set objectives and plan its activities, and whether the organization has considered the importance of finding new leaders. If a long-time leader decides to resign from her duties and there are no motivated people to replace her, the organization may fade away.

The activities of organizations and associations acting in the public interest

Development towards accessibility of information

In 1994, the Information Centre of Estonian Women's and Family Organizations was founded in order to facilitate the finding of supporters, for cooperation and information exchange. The creation of a database of Women's and Family Organizations was commenced; a roundtable meeting with representatives of Estonian women's organizations and female politicians was held in cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Association of Norwegian Housewives in December 1994; in many subsequent years, events called *Naiste November* (Women's November) were organized in cooperation with the Norwegian Embassy and the Finnish Institute in several counties. The Centre for Women's Studies was founded at Tallinn Pedagogical University and special courses were developed in the field of women's studies. Since it became impossible to find financial support for the maintenance of the Information Centre of Estonian Women's and Family Organizations, the activities of the centre subsided after a few years. The Women's Training Centre carried on the development of the database and organized a thorough opinion poll on women's and family organizations. Since the number of organizations and the need for information increased rapidly, the Centre for Women's Studies at Tallinn

Pedagogical University, the Women's Training Centre and a gender research group working at the University of Tartu founded the Centre for Estonian Women's Studies and Information in 1997. This project was supported by a donation from Canada for the provision of publications to the Centre, and a project application to the Phare Program of the European Union was prepared. Partners from Canada, Norway and France, who have experience concerning information centres working at universities in their home countries, had a significant role in the preparation of the project.

Research

The financing of voluntary organizations' research projects by domestic or international funds is not common. A research group for gender studies was created at the University of Tartu in 1995 and it has so far functioned as an information and research centre (Taid 1, 2, 3). Besides undertaking a study on organizations, the Women's Training Centre has also carried out smaller studies among the participants of several seminars and training courses. In 1995 and 1999, women working at the Central Federation of Estonian Trade Unions carried out, with the help of union representatives, a study on the working and living conditions of women. This is a good example showing that it is possible to use a network of an organization for carrying out a study.

Such organizations are able to quite clearly identify the needs of women. There is a continuing lack of information concerning legislation, rights of women, business promotion, credit schemes, funds, training courses, events held in Estonia and abroad. The founding of support centres, which provide counselling services for women, is also considered important.

Independent studies, as well as analysis of social processes and needs of women is essential in regard to understanding possible problems and solving them by amending legislation and adopting concrete activity plans (Inimarengu aruanne 1995, 1996).

Training courses and lifelong learning

There are several training centres and organizations offering seminars and training for women, but only a few organizations are engaged in advanced training courses or vocational training.

Transition to a market economy created a need to train entrepreneurial women and so the Training

Centre for Women was opened in 1990. The motto for the Centre was "A better future for women". The Centre organized training courses on the basics of starting a business, the Commercial Code, export and import possibilities, accounting fundamentals, organizing fairs, and also offered language and computer courses. Through the courses, Estonian women became to know each other and also met business-women from neighbouring countries.

In 1995 courses were started where women were trained to be able to influence public life. The results of the training courses organized with help from some funds became evident in the local government election in 1996. The seminars encouraged women to participate in the elections and more than a quarter of the elected candidates were women. The Training Centre for Women has also organized events to introduce and carry out the activity plan of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. As a new area of activity, a mentor program for women is being developed, and the business training courses are being modernized. A database of female owners of enterprises, and of businesses managed by women, will be created, and an opinion poll is to be carried out among businesswomen in order to have better view of their needs. The Rural Development Institute, then the Agricultural University and Farmers' Union, have for many years organized seminars, which were meant mostly for women from rural areas. Women have gathered for major events at least once a year. Year after year, women's organizations have requested adult education courses through the Estonian Popular Education League, which is partly financed by the state.

The Centre for Women's Civil Training commenced its activities with the objective to prepare women for the 1999 *Riigikogu* (parliament) elections and for the 1999 local government council elections. The objective of the Centre is to give women general knowledge about civil society, politics, and world-views, promote personal liberty and human rights, and so value an individual and the family. The seminars educate participants in several areas of activity, including providing expertise and practical skills for participation in public life. The basic part of women's organizations pursues the policy of neutrality. However, they are eager to encourage women to go into politics and support them once they have reached the political arena.

More women into politics

In 1998, all 11 female members of the *Riigikogu* established the Association of *Riigikogu* Women in order to draw attention to the poor representation of women at the decision-making level, and to support women's involvement in politics. The Association has an objective to promote the adoption of legislation that grants equal rights and opportunities for men and women for self-realization and for participation in the life of society. A discussion was initiated on how to support women's involvement in politics.

The Roundtable of Political Party Women's Associations was established in autumn 1998 with the objective to develop a people-friendly society, improve the domestic political climate and promote women's involvement in politics. The parties in the roundtable are all equal, decisions are made only through consensus. In 1999 before the *Riigikogu* elections, a public proposal was made in the name of the Roundtable to all parties to prepare the candidate lists so that in the national lists three out of each ten candidates would be women. A video clip was made to support female candidates. All private television channels agreed to broadcast the video clip before the election without charge as a community service. In autumn 1999, before the local government elections, the women's election campaign was supported by broadcasting an advertisement in all national and local radio stations.

Cooperation and finding consensus in issues which concern women, or Estonian society as a whole, is a sign that the women's movement and the civil society in general has moved to a new level of development. Such agreements would not have been possible four to five years ago, but now the roundtables of women who are members of political parties are a positive example to other civil movements (ENUTi Uudised, 1/2 1999).

Cooperation with international organizations

Voluntary organizations are considered to be the third sector, after the state and private sectors. However, the World Bank has called important international organizations the fourth sector, which influences the life of society in a global manner. The UN Development Programme, as one of the most flexible among international organizations in responding to

local needs, has supported activities and training courses of women's organizations. The United Nations IV World Conference on Women in Beijing was also important for Estonian women's organizations. The UN Development Programme enabled the publication of a national report, which was prepared with the participation of the Association of Estonian University Women, the Women's Training Centre, the Estonian Association of Business and Professional Women, the Women's Union of Estonia etc.

The Nordic Council of Ministers and its information bureau in Estonia have supported the numerous events of Estonian women's organizations and their cooperation with Nordic countries. The main cooperation projects were the Women's Forum in Turku before the Beijing Conference and Beijing follow-up conferences in all Baltic countries in 1997. Further cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries and the United States at the beginning of the next century is being prepared at the meeting of the representatives of the named countries in Iceland in autumn 1999.

The representatives of Estonian women's organizations have participated in the meetings of non-governmental organizations carried out each summer by the Council of Europe. The participants have jointly debated all the problems that the non-governmental organizations wish to discuss with governments. The following strategic subjects were the cause of debate: equal opportunities in the economy and professional life, politics, access to information and education; finding finances for women's organizations; involvement of young people in voluntary work. The cooperation of women's organizations with local governments and creating a network between organizations has been considered important in these meetings. (Ashworth, 1996). The problems concerning violence, which have not been very widely discussed by women's organizations so far, but are still very important to the organizations, were separately considered. The Council of Europe has received a number of recommendations on how to promote the development of the third sector, and on gender equality of men and women as an essential part of human rights. During the last five years, four conferences on human rights and gender equality were organized in Estonia in co-operation with the Council of Europe. Most women's organizations had the opportunity to participate in the conferences.

The Open Estonia Foundation has organized many similar project contests over recent years. The activi-

ties of women's organizations have also been supported through direct applications of funds by foreign states and by cities, counties and local embassies of these states. Such mutual communication and cooperation deserves further research and analysis.

In conclusion

The development of the third sector, especially the development of women's organizations as networks based on citizen initiatives, has been rather slow in Estonia. The formation of women's organizations has definitely helped women and their families to adjust to rapidly changing circumstances. A common cause creates trust in the environment. (Heidmets, 1999). However, it is understandable that such organizations do not develop overnight. Each organization needs a shorter or longer development period and appropriate conditions for participation in public life.

The quality, strength and viability of the third sector rely on the environment in which these organizations operate. The three components, on which the development of the third sector depends, are the following:

Legislation and legal environment, financing and resources, capability of organizations and individuals (Mittetulundussektori käsiraamat seadusandjale, 1997).

A rather essential prerequisite to the development of the third sector is a national policy that considers the third sector as important to the state.

Legislation concerning non-profit associations need constant review (Liiv). As the discussions and opinion polls indicate, for instance the accounting requirements specified in the Non-Profit Associations Act are too stringent for smaller organizations. There are several different solutions to this problem — on the one hand, the organizations could be differentiated according to the extent of their activities and, on the other hand, providing the organizations training courses on management and accounting for non-profit associations may solve the problem. Training could also be used to find new leaders. There is a constant need for leaders (Proos 1998). Voluntary work should include a wide range of forms of social activities, as in many other countries. Appreciation of voluntary work is a good incentive to people (Giddens, 1999). The current ways of financing organizations should be researched thoroughly. When the aid from big international organizations to Estonian organizations decreases or ceases to exist, we should be ready to find new

solutions. But Estonian voluntary organizations must also network and consistently work towards finding cooperation partners on the international arena (Ruutsoo, 1999). If Estonian entrepreneurs wish to participate in the actual process of change in society, there must first be properly considered activity regarding preparation for aid programs and the development of an ideology for assistance (Hellam, 1999).

It was stated during the roundtable for the non-profit sector and political organizations in February 1999 that compared with the public and business sector, the third sector is greatly underestimated and under-financed. Political parties have so far had no clear concept of a model of a modern civil society, therefore the development of the mechanisms of a civil society (appreciation of citizens initiative and responsibility) has not been sufficiently supported.

Civil associations have been mainly a form of spending leisure time. The authorities have not noticed the social, intellectual and economic capital (number of provided services, created jobs, involvement of the finances of the private sector in the social sphere, education and culture etc) created by voluntary societies, associations, independent centres, as well as community foundations and funds.

In order to improve this situation, the Association of Estonian Non-profit Associations and Foundations has made a number of proposals:

1. to involve non-governmental organizations, within the area of their competence, in legislative drafting and if necessary, in the stage of implementing legislation
2. to develop legal procedures or good practice so that agencies can turn to non-governmental organizations for necessary services, since the activities of such organizations are generally economical and flexible
3. to make public all draft legislation and accompanying explanatory texts through the Internet and government and parliamentary document centres; also inform people of the positive and negative impacts of legislation on different areas of life
4. to create positions in various parliamentary committees to develop contacts with non-profit associations, as well as to counsel the committees on issues concerning the third sector.

Taking into account these proposals is also important to the further development of the network of women's organizations and the development of civil

society in Estonia as a whole. In spite of the ups and downs of the organizations, many of them have reached a level where their opinions should be heard.

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National gender equality policy

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The meaning and purpose of equality between men and women

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes that everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the declaration can be fully realized (Article 28). It is the obligation of the state to ensure such

society has somehow shackled us and perhaps even generated a fear of standing up for our rights or for arguing with the authorities". [1] (Human Rights in Estonia, UNDP Tallinn, 1998, page 9)

The issues of gender equality were addressed to a wider audience at the Conference of Estonian Women in 1989. The program "Estonian Women Today and Tomorrow" also included a proposal to adopt an Equal Treatment Act, to create a state institution for dealing with such issues, and to include the equality theme in school curricula to ensure its faster and more extensive distribution. These proposals were not supported by neo-conservative public opinion, since a decision had been made to continue from the pre-soviet past. One could assume that many worldviews at that time

European society is still mostly imprisoned by the view that a woman with such an intellect must be man-like; only the more progressive circles and people with a more informed worldview have managed to free themselves of this prejudice.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)

an organization of social order in society. The issue concerning equality and equal opportunity between women and men should be considered as a general and wider social problem which needs to be solved on the level of society, rather than as an issue of individual relationships between men and women.

R. Maruste has indicated the reasons why the issue of human rights in its contemporary meaning has not been seriously considered in Estonia: "As a result of living for half a century under a totalitarian system of government, Estonians' knowledge of the character of human rights and their protective mechanisms, is not at all comprehensive. There was no free, democratic and liberal society to provide an experience of developing rights and freedoms, and their practical application. In addition, the totalitarian

were primarily based on giving up soviet views and attitudes. Contemporary philosophies were yet unknown and so one turned back to the past.

Therefore, although we would like to believe that communist ideology did not influence us, the attitude towards the issues of gender equality during the soviet times was a good example of the opposite — for many people it still is incomprehensible that the equality declared in the Soviet Union was a cover for actual discrimination and the lower status of women. Estonia was of course unable to participate in the United Nations world conferences, so Estonia was not familiar with the platforms for actions adopted at these conferences nor with the international agreements on human rights entered into by the United Nations and the Council of Europe,

not to mention the interpretation of the content of these documents. The social sciences were much more isolated from the world than were the natural sciences, therefore Estonia did not have a gender study tradition, and today has only the beginnings of one.

Estonia has difficulty in complying with several international provisions due to the lack of definitions, laws and penalties. There are also no competent authorities to turn to regarding direct or indirect discrimination.

In Estonian legal culture, gender equality must be recognized as a fundamental human right, the main principle of democracy and a main prerequisite for social development. Equality does not mean that men and women are identical, on the contrary — all

International context of gender equality policy

Estonia has clearly expressed its political will to adopt the respective strategic goals of the western world by signing the United Nations conventions on human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the agreements of the Council of Europe, and by commencing negotiations for accession to the European Union.

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is legally binding and Estonia is required to carry out this principle in practice by establishing the corresponding legislative and other measures [2].

When there is a reluctance to give the same rights to a woman as to a man, it is perhaps not usually because she is a woman, but more often because once people have taken over the reigns of power they are reluctant to give them up without a fight.

(A. H. Tammsaare, 1906)

men and women have different values, different lifestyles, different goals. At the same time, all men and women must be ensured equal rights and opportunities as well as equal responsibilities and obligations. Transition to a free, democratic and liberal society presupposes abidance by generally recognized principles and provisions of international law, and knowledge of their contemporary content and meaning. Estonia must rapidly gain knowledge of the contemporary interpretation of human rights at an accelerated pace. Also, the objectives and norms of a civil society must be adopted. Development of an Estonian national equality policy can only be based on international trends, the obligations taken by Estonia and analysis of the existing situation.

There is also an obligation to set sanctions which prohibit all kinds of discrimination against women; to ensure effective protection through the courts and other state institutions against discriminative acts; and to apply all necessary measures in order to amend or repeal the laws, regulations as well as traditions and practices which discriminate women.

Estonia is a member of the Council of Europe which, during the last five years, has adopted approximately twenty documents determining the development of gender equality policy in European states [3]. The Europe Agreement entered into force in February 1998, and a comparative analysis of Estonian legislation and the legislation of the European Union commenced in spring of the same year. It became evident that there are significant dif-

ferences between the objectives set in the equality directives and the Estonian legislation in force. In the accession negotiations, Estonia has committed to adopt a Gender Equality Act. This would also be one of the most important steps in implementing the United Nations Convention.

Equality issues were included in the platforms for action at the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development, 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights, 1994 Cairo Congress on Population and Development, 1995 Copenhagen Conference on Social Development, 1996 Istanbul Conference on Human Settlements, all of which have been signed by Estonia. The platforms for action are not legally binding. However, compliance with the action plans is considered good practice and a prerequisite for participation in international cooperation. The commitments by the states for gaining gender equality are most clearly specified in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 [4]. The Platform for Action consists of 360 different articles including tasks for the governments of the member states of the United Nations. Estonia is required to comply with the prescribed requirements and to report its activities to the Secretary General of the United Nations on a regular basis.

The definition of equality in all the named documents is the same — women and men must have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities to find employment which ensure them economic independence, the possibility to dedicate themselves to home and children, to participate in political, professional and other societal activities.

The constitutional discrimination prohibitions and equal rights *de jure* are necessary but not a sufficient basis for ensuring equality between men and women. The necessary and sufficient prerequisites will be met only when women, in addition to rights, also have equal opportunities with men to participate in societal activities.

In Estonia, as well as in many other countries, the wages of women are lower than the wages of men and such differences in wages show a tendency to increase; the labor market is segregated both horizontally and vertically, which on the one hand is connected with the different valuation of the work of men and women, but on the other hand hinders the expedient usage of the resources of both sexes; it is

mostly women who are engaged in unpaid housework at home; women have only a modest influence at the decision-making level; non-rational stereotypes and division of gender roles both in professional and family life are deeply rooted in society; there is an unacceptably large gap in the average life expectancy.

There is no country in the world where discrimination against women has been eliminated. National equality policies, strategies and concrete action programs have been developed in the majority of the United Nations member states in order to reduce gender inequality.

Western countries have undergone three clear stages in the process of applying equal opportunities for men and women: women fought for their rights in the seventies (most of all the right to elect and be elected to political bodies); in the eighties, legal rights were formally established and actual changes in the situation were attempted (temporary measures were taken in order to eliminate discrimination and inequality). In the past decade, positions have been developed that have to take into consideration the interests and differences of both genders in order to create equal opportunities to participate in all areas of life.

The structures that ensure gender equality have been developed in Europe, including the Nordic countries, since the seventies when most states ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and passed the respective internal gender equality acts. Finland was one of the last Nordic countries to adopt such an act (the law entered into force in 1987 and was significantly amended in 1995). Among the Baltic states and other East-European countries, Lithuania is the first to have passed an act on equal opportunities and has established the institution of ombudsman dealing with the issues of gender equality.

The number of structures responsible for the application of the principles of equal treatment has increased since the eighties; national platforms for actions have been prepared for all areas of social life. Therefore, specific units for issues of gender equality have been founded in the institutions dealing with education, employment, health, social security, economy, environment and other spheres. The tendency to bring the respective bodies closer to the people is becoming more and more common.

The founded structures also fill the functions of counseling, information provision and monitoring.

The central social problems nowadays are equal opportunities in employment, career and professional training, business development, reconciliation of professional and family life, social insurance, health and the equal participation of men and women in politics. Violence against women, including domestic violence, is considered to be a violation of human rights. The creation of stereotyped images of men and women by the media is a problem of gender equality, and it is dealt with from the point of view of the protection of human dignity.

Proceeding from the principle that economic independence is the foundation of equality between women and men, unequal treatment of women and men in the labor market has been declared an urgent problem both internationally and in Estonia that has to be speedily resolved. The inadequacy of existing legislation or lack of legislation, and the different status of men and women in the labor market often lead to direct or indirect discrimination of women. The European Commission has also stated that Estonia should pay more attention to the problems of the equal opportunities of men and women in the labor market.

Equal opportunities for men and women as an area of the social policy of the European Union

If Estonia becomes a member of the European Union in the next few years, socio-political trends and principles that are common in Europe must be adopted.

The legislation ensuring the social policy of the European Union has dealt with the issues of equal opportunities of men and women for more than 30 years. The principle of equal treatment of men and women was prescribed in the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community.

Legislation regulating equal rights of men and women in employment and the social sphere in general has been adopted during this time. Besides the Treaty, seven directives and numerous recommendations, resolutions are in force and activity programs have been and are being implemented for ensuring equal opportunities for men and women. Several publications regarding the equal opportunities of men and women in the European Union have

been issued. The main directives on equality between women and men are published in a collection "Selection of European Union Social Legislation. Volume I" [5]. The Ministry of Social Affairs has published: "Equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the European Union" [6], "One hundred words for equality" [7], "A code of practice on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for men and women" [8]. The delegation of the European Commission in Estonia has published "The rights and obligations of a citizen of the European Union" [9]. The Faculty of Economics at the University of Tartu has prepared a collection "The socio-economic policy of the European Union in the light of eastern expansion" [10].

Estonian readers have difficulties in accessing the interpretations of the European Court of Justice which are legally binding to the member states, as well as the many recommendations, decisions and resolutions [11–24]. The latter are issued in an attempt to change the direct reasons for discrimination — traditional presumptions of gender roles and power relations.

The EU White Paper [25], which determines activities in the social sphere, is focused on three main areas from the point of view of ensuring equal opportunities.

The first area is connected with the desegregation of the labor market and valuing women's work.

The other area is the reconciliation of working and family life which is based on the principle that unpaid housework must also be valued, and done by both men and women. In connection with this, so-called paternal leave is prescribed, which means that both parents individually are granted the right for parental leave.

The third area is about the participation of women in decision-making processes with the objective of having a more equal representation of women in decision-making for political and economic issues. The European Commission has commenced a number of action programs, which pay attention not only to the working conditions of men and women but also to outside-work structures. The first community action program (1982–1985) specified the relationship between childcare and employment. The second program (1986–1990) concentrated on supporting women going into "men's work" (mainly by providing vocational education), more equal division of

housework and childcare, and participation of women in the decision-making process. The third action program ended in 1995 and was focused on the strengthening of the position of women at work and on the decision-making level.

The fourth action program (1996–2000) is based on the principle of mainstreaming, and the objective of the program is to integrate the principle of gender equality into all activities promoted by the member states. Ensuring equal opportunities to men and women in the labor market is one of the main objectives of the Structural Funds and one of the main pillars of employment policy.

Mainstreaming gender equality into labor market policy, therefore also into education policy, is inevitable as part of the accession process to the European Union. The Treaty of Amsterdam [27] identifies that ensuring equal opportunities to men and women is one of the fundamental aims of the Union.

The Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs monitors the application in the member states of the directives and measures which support women. The Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men has been functioning since 1982, the Council on Women's Issues has been operating since 1988. A Women's Rights Committee is working in the European Parliament. A report on equal opportunities has been prepared annually since 1996 on the initiative of the Commission and it is used to monitor the application of the gender equality policy in member states.

The above mentioned is necessary for the development of new gender role models and a change in the present mentality. It is this very objective which has been kept in mind in the recent documents prepared by the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Achieving gender equality in Estonia

The objective of national social policies is to ensure the health, social security, and well-being of people, guarantee the preserving and development of a nation, to prevent social problems, crises and conflicts and to balance social relationships.

The equality between women and men has not become a clearly developed field in Estonian social

policy. The respective legislation is insufficient and there is a lack of institutions with concrete specific functions on all levels. However, the public is more willing to discuss the rights and responsibilities of men and women. Equality between sexes in its contemporary, internationally recognized meaning is a relatively new concept for Estonia as well as for other transition countries. The social problems caused by changes in gender roles cannot be solved on the level of individuals. Therefore, the project carried out in 1995–1997 with the assistance provided by the United Nations Development Program must be considered particularly valuable. The goal of the project was to increase the awareness about gender equality, establish a research center in the University of Tartu, support the political and economic activity of women and highlight these issues in the media.

On the basis of Order No 480-k by the Government of the Republic of Estonia of May 27, 1996, an inter-ministerial committee was formed and this committee specified the development priorities for Estonia concerning gender equality:

1. establishment and strengthening of national machinery for gender equality at all levels of government
2. analyze the concordance of Estonian legislation with international standards on equality
3. ensure the availability of official gender-sensitive statistics
4. improve the position of women in the labor market and increase their participation in the decision-making process.

In December 1996, a new unit, the Bureau of Equality between women and men was established in the Ministry of Social Affairs. The main activity of the Office is to coordinate the mainstreaming of the gender equality perspective into socio-political development.

In its activities, the Bureau is guided by the legal and political documents of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and other international organizations, and common international practice. The Estonian national equality policy has been developed on the basis of the principles stated in the national report to the Fourth World Congress on Women in Beijing in 1995 [28]. The first three of the ten principles are listed below:

1. Implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

2. Apply for the founding of national machinery for gender equality, and for dissemination of information in society about the human rights of men and women
3. Increase the competitiveness of women, ensure their position on the labor market and in public life and abide by equal salary conditions based on the law.

The following specific principles have been added in connection with European integration:

1. Equal pay for work of equal value (connected with the desegregation of the labor market, accelerating the participation of women in decision-making, creation of a vocational classification system, analysis of work evaluation criteria, analysis of individual labor contracts and collective agreements).
2. Equal treatment of men and women at work (reducing unemployment, reducing current segregation in vocational training, improving career opportunities and working conditions).
3. Reconciliation of working and family life (issues of paid and unpaid housework, accessibility of child-minding services, possibility for men to take parental leave).
4. Development of legal guarantees and protection mechanisms (drafting of the Gender Equality Act and preparing implementation mechanisms).

This list shows very clearly that the different institutions in Estonia face many problems which need to be solved. The most important of these is the issue of the applicable legislation, the development of national gender equality machinery, the preparation and adoption of concrete action plans by the government, in order to promote equality. Also, increasing the awareness of the society and changing current practices and customs is equally important. The Bureau of Equality in the Ministry of Social Affairs has, in cooperation with several partners, initiated and organized various events in order to make the problem of gender equality known to the public, politicians, researchers and members of non-governmental organizations.

In 1997, a seminar "Equal Opportunities" with more than 600 participants took place in Tallinn. In November of the same year, an information forum on the issues of family planning and reproductive rights was held in cooperation with the Council of Europe in Tallinn.

Analyzing social processes and monitoring the influence of legislation is dependent upon the existence of the respective data. In 1998, a second project was commenced with the assistance of the UN Development Program with the objective to analyze Estonian legislation, train state officials and representatives of non-profit organizations, collect basic research data and increase the awareness of the public in regard to the issues of gender equality.

In 1999, the ILO program "More and Better Jobs for Women" was commenced initially in Valga county with the main objective being to support and promote self-employment and entrepreneurship development for women..

As preparation for the development of national machinery, permanent cooperation contacts have been established with other state institutions and non-governmental organizations, and training seminars have been held for state officials. In addition to the UN Development Program, the Nordic Council of Ministers has also provided significant support.

In the Nordic Council of Ministers action program for neighboring areas, resources have been allocated for activities related to achieving a balance between the sexes since 1997 when the cooperation program for Baltic and Nordic countries in the field of gender equality was approved by the ministers. State institutions have benefited from assistance for training, supporting activities which help Estonia fulfil the obligations taken on an international level for creating a legislative and regulatory framework, and awareness raising. These are activities which most closely affect Estonia's accession to the European Union, the extent of ratifying the European Social Charter, compliance with United Nations conventions on human rights as well as the well-being of the whole population, both men and women.

Although Estonian society has changed quicker than the values of people, the activities of non-governmental organizations — in raising the issues of gender equality, achieving participation democracy and economic independence of women — have been significant. The values of western society are reaching Estonia due to our open society, through training and direct aid. Pursuant to international agreements, all foreign states and international aid organizations have set a goal to promote a policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all the pro-

jects and programs being undertaken [29–31]. This aspect should not be ignored regarding successful cooperation and mutual understanding. On the contrary, the actual situation of our men and women should be analyzed on the basis of research and statistics. And there are a number of cases where it is actually the man who is being discriminated against.

Gender mainstreaming proceeds from taking into account the differences between men and women, the different interests and world views of men and women in all areas of activity, in planning, carrying out and evaluating activity programs on all levels — international, national, regional and institutional [32]. The prerequisite to this strategy is improving, developing and evaluating the decisions and activities of different levels in a new manner. Gender mainstreaming requires that the perspective of equality between men and women is taken into account by key persons involved with preparing policies in different fields. Increasing awareness on equality issues and the respective legal guarantees and protection mechanisms are essential for the implementation of the gender equality mainstreaming strategy. Both legal guarantees and protection mechanisms are associated with the improvement of national statistics, regular research, and organizing training courses necessary for the preparation of gender equality specialists.

Hopefully, Estonian society — which is becoming more and more open — understands that the so-called natural development of welfare societies, which we were not able to observe for 50 years, is actually based on progressive, systematic, planned and coordinated long term activity. This has had the objective to guarantee each individual the opportunities to achieve financial independence as a result of his or her work, to reconcile professional and family life, and to ensure the opportunities to develop and participate in all spheres of societal life, according to individual ability.

This activity was based on social science research, the expertise of specialists and the data necessary to monitor social processes. It also required, and requires, the acquisition of specific expertise on the social relationships of the sexes and the factors influencing these relationships. It was and still is necessary to understand the differences between the two main social groups and to foresee the different impact of gender neutral legis-

lation and regulations on men and women. Research and gender sensitive analysis of social processes are the preconditions, possibilities and means for the development of a human-centered society and policies

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