

Summary of the Discussion

It is important to recognize that work and employment are not isolated phenomena but have an impact on the family and relations within it, for work cannot be examined in abstraction from its environment. The analysis just presented shows the diversity of these relationships and their evolution in Western Europe. Had the purview been global, then the diversity and variety encountered would have highlighted the impossibility of the Church addressing a single social reality.

Furthermore, the presentation served to recall the disparity which can exist between professed objectives and actual practices, whose implication is that account must be taken not only of "objective" facts, but also of human subjectivity. It is the latter which concerns the magisterium, since it cannot rest content with description alone but has also to orientate our minds towards the fulfillment of its recommendations.

Social policy can be efficacious, but globalization now means that policies can be elaborated at a higher level, such as the E.U., where new solutions can be found (without ruling out policies applicable at intermediate levels).

When attempting to identify the effects of policies, the methodological difficulties are common to all cases. Whilst it is extremely important to know what responsibility can reasonably be attributed to the State, this is extremely difficult to establish because the social sciences cannot approximate to conditions of laboratory closure in order to isolate the political factor from amongst the complex social, economic or institutional forces contributing to the family division of labour. This represents a major difficulty for our Academy which is limited to presenting the best of our current knowledge. Thus it will be particularly interesting to learn the findings which emerge from this new research.

(It was confirmed that the results will be available before 2,000).

Can we agree that the family has been stripped of its functions, which have largely been absorbed by the State, especially in industrial countries? In Italy, the breadwinner gives over half of his remuneration to the State in taxes, leaving the residuum for the family, which thus depends heavily upon the State. Thus, if domestic work itself is not remunerated, could not a

selective lowering of taxation make a significant contribution to reducing the conflict between family and work? If we agree upon this loss of functions by the family, then the idea of reversing this trend could be the beginning of a solution.

(Prof. Frinking). In this context, evidence suggests that even in countries like Spain where the grandmother still plays a role in child-care, this is both marginal and transitory. Thus it will soon be necessary to think of other forms of child-care, on models which do not depend upon aid from the extended family. Spain could follow the Scandinavian model, where nurseries are collectively provided by the State, or a model less dependent upon the State, as in the Netherlands, where various social groups (e.g. in the firm or industrial sector) provide child-care, thus enabling domestic and professional life to be reconciled. As countries like Spain undergo social and economic transformation to become more like the rest of the E.U., they will have to choose between these models or invent alternatives.

If the Church's social teachings about the desirability of work applies to the human being, then they apply equally to women. Thus, far from being pushed into the workforce, more and more women rightly want to be there, but they also seek the assurance of good child-care and have championed this. One finding in the presentation, namely that in the Netherlands very young children are placed in nurseries, raises the following question — is this due to a simple absence of provisions or is it because of attitudinal resistance by parents towards using them?

(Prof. Frinking). The low percentage of children in nurseries in the Netherlands involves two intertwined factors. Firstly, until ten years ago there were very few provisions, hence the low proportion attending. However, since then nursery provision developed, but resistance remained towards using them. They are used for two to three days a week, partly because of the belief that as far as possible parents should retain this responsibility, and partly due (and here there are problems of cause and effect) to women's availability because of their tendency to work part-time.

As far as attitudes are concerned, the project will investigate the effects of parental preferences for educating their children at least partially within the family. It will seek to ascertain whether this ideology is general in Western Europe and how it is related to educational systems in which parents can play a significant role.

The notion of work is predicated upon full-employment, implying that productivity only relates to the exchange of commodities and that child-

rearing is thus defined as outside it. In Southern Africa this is increasingly debated. If mothers were paid for a period of child-rearing, how would this affect work relations?

Child-rearing is certainly not non-work, but neither is it the work which would be chosen by all women with children — hence women's interest in adequate public and private child-care provisions. This leads to the question, is there any research which indicates what proportion of women would prefer remuneration for rearing their own children, versus having a career plus good child-care facilities?

(Prof. Frinking). Firstly, it is the case that the same question could be posed for men. Do they really choose solely to work or would they wish to devote more time to their children? Secondly, since we are conditioned, though not determined, by our social contexts, it is less easy for a man to avow the latter: yet methodologically it is impossible to exclude the influence which the social context always plays.

There is a less radical alternative to consider, namely enabling both men and women to dedicate some time to both work and family roles. However, this option is only really open in wealthy Western countries. It would be interesting to see how such an option would be viewed by people whose work was harder and more exploitative (in LDCs).

Women dedicate themselves to careers because this is what society rewards, but it also penalizes women's promotion if their careers are interrupted by child-rearing. Hence the question — if a period of child-care were incorporated into the definition of a career, would this create problems for the social division of labour?

(Prof. Frinking). In principle, there are several measures for resolving the problem under discussion. On the one hand, the "Netherlands model", where professional women (at least) need not be handicapped by an interruption of career because they have their family later. Alternatively, if one brackets-out the time when women withdraw from professional work, it would be possible to eliminate negative effects. However our research project is not concerned with advancing solutions, but with detecting the effects of the various policies adopted on the division of labour. Nevertheless, as a researcher concerned with this problem, society does need some formula which stops either parent from accruing penalties because of their children — as a minimum requirement of social justice.