

M.A. Minor Thesis

Title: The changing role of women and work concerning gender, the family and childcare issues: A work-life balance perspective.

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Declaration

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents Liz and Frank, my sister Shell

And my Fiancé Niall, for all your love and support.

Acknowledgments.

This Minor thesis for my M.A in Sociology has been an enjoyable challenge, in which there are many people I would like to show gratitude for their support, help and assistance, allowing me to achieve my goals this past year.

- First, I would like to Thank Dr. Jane Gray for your invaluable advice, help and encouragement throughout my Postgraduate year and as my supervisor for this completed Minor dissertation. Thank you for all your knowledge and support I received in my years at NUIM and for assisting me to accomplish where I am today.
- I would like to thank those who helped me complete my research. To all those women in Dunboyne who responded to my questionnaire. Thank you for your time and effort. To Margaret Fine-Davis, thank you for your assistance and time you gave me for my research.
- To the Masters Sociology class of 2006, I will never forget this year ever.

 Thanks to you all for your friendship and support and helping me make the last academic year an enjoyable and memorable time of my studies in NUIM. Best of luck to you all... Also thanks to all the lectures and staff in the sociology department. I have learned so much I can take with me on my journeys in life.
- Finally I want to thank my family and friends, for being there for me and putting up with me this past year...I finally got there. For the special people in my life, Thanks to my parents Liz and Frank for your love, friendship and all you have done for me; to my sister Shell for keeping me sane and being my best friend and to Niall for always being there for me as a best friend and Fiancé. *Thank you*.

Abstract.

Within Ireland, the number of women in employment has increased, where the female participation in 1985 was around 30% and in 2004 was over 49% . Over 50% of Irish mothers who have at least one child under 5 are now in the labor force . This thesis examines the framework that points to and informs changes of the role and status of women and work in Ireland over time. The paper observes the ambiguity of women and employment concerning the family, childcare issues and gender related issues concerning the prospect of a work-life balance for women. Work-life balance means putting in place working arrangements and policies, which assist workers in combining employment with other responsibilities and choices. Balancing work and family life may be somewhat easier for two parents who live together than a lone parent. But in reality it is a challenge for all parents, especially women, in our changing society.

Hakims preference theory, concerned primarily with women's choices between family work and market work, at the present time, is in relation to women wanting a better-balanced life. The choices or preferences women have appear as a vital issue within this study in which women's decisions act as a go-between of everyday jobs and duties of the family and of work opportunities. From my study 40 women who work, compared to 24 women who choose to stay at home to care for their family, if all women had a choice, 66.7% would preferably continue to work where as 33.3% would rather quit their jobs. Those who would continue to work, if they had a personal choice, 83% would work part-time and 17% would like to work full-time. This thesis then examines the attitudes and behaviors of women and work within the Dunboyne area, with the use of a quantitative study, observing the life experiences of women and how they cope with a work-life balance today in our changing culture.

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¹ CSO. Statistical year book 2005: 27

² CSO Labour Force Statistics, 2001

Chapter 1.

Introduction:

Research Question: The changing role of women and employment concerning gender, the family and childcare issue.

Since the mid 1990's, Ireland has experienced an era of extraordinary economic growth together with a rapid increase in Labour force participation rates, particularly among women. Based on present indicators, it seems doubtful that the existing economic pattern will modify or slow considerably in the short to medium term. Gender employment equality, concerning equal pay and equal treatment legislation originating in the 1970s, has also been supported through legislation providing for maternity protection, parental and adoptive leave, and increased employment protection rights, particularly in regard to part-time workers many of whom are women. Employment participation by women is probable to increase even more significantly in the future, particularly in the area of highly skilled employment, given the now very high female participation rates in third level education. Therefore a major issue for employers in the future will be the retention of highly skilled women employees, many of whom will have childcare requirements.

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Additionally, demographic changes including changes in family size and patterns, the loss of traditional family support systems, and the geographic spread in which people now live their lives, are contributing to the fact that the solution to a work-life balance is more and more being looked for. Concerning the issue of the family and care, its importance in Ireland, especially for working mothers, may show a concern above and

¹ IBEC report 2005: 6

beyond the financial and reveal something about the complex domain around which mothers negotiate decisions relating to care and work². Regarding childcare issues, the NWCI recently expressed that childcare is in crisis because more parents, particularly women, are stressed out trying to balance family and work tasks³. The increase of women in Labour market participation, have presented a major and urgent challenge to Irish society.

The topic of women and work is a very ambiguous one with many related matters that can be viewed from different perspectives of women and employment, whether it is gender, childcare issue or family life. I believe that with the increase of women and work in Ireland, this is due to instances such as job opportunities and employment possibilities; that within the 21st century, women have an important role in the workforce as well as the home. Therefore within this study I will look at the change and role of women and employment. The hypothesis of my thesis is that there has been a significant increase of women and employment in Ireland within recent years that it is difficult for women to cope with a work-life balance. Consequently in deciding to question women's personal experiences and attitudes on the work-life balance, I wanted to discover the facts and figures of how women cope in today's changing society and how they combine their life of family time and employment. I will examine this hypothesis and its sub-problems within this paper.

Within this dissertation, the layout is as follows:

² Coakley. 2005: 19

³ Womenzone- National council, New Magazine. First edition. 2002: 2

1. Chapter 2: Literature review.

Within this section I will examine the literature which I researched to gain a better understanding of women and employment, discussing the books, articles and studies I have used under the heading of 1) women and employment; 2) women and the family; 3) childcare and motherhood; 4) Gender and Division of Labour and finally; 5) work- life balance today.

2. Chapter 3: Theoretical framework.

In this chapter, I will observe analysis from theorists looking at the issues of women and employment. I have identified a number of factors that I believe contribute and play a part into the rise and changes of women and work. Those include 1) Feminism 2) Women's choices in Irish society 3) Observing inequality and polarization and 4) Women and the interconnectedness of work and family.

3. Chapter 4: Methodology.

Within the methodology chapter I will look at the research I completed in order to carry out my study on life-work balance of women in Dunboyne. I will look at my research problem and the sub-problems related to it. I will discuss the research method I used to collect the data for my research question. I will also inspect the sources I used to collect data and the methods of coding and data analysis. In addition I will examine the range of actions and limitations of my study and their implication. Concluding I will present and analysis the results from my study.

4. Chapter 5: Discussion.

In this chapter I will discuss the main findings of my study on the change and role of women and work in Ireland, exploring women's attitudes and experiences in coping with balancing work and family life. Observing the use of sources, I want to enlighten the main findings of my study (shown in Chapter 4) and how they fit into the extant literature on the topical study area, as well as illustrating the imperative developments I found in my analysis contributing to my hypothesis. I will discuss the findings under the following themes. 1) The modifications of women and work. 2) Working conditions of women. 3) Women, work and division of Labour 4) childcare in Ireland and women's employment and finally 5) A Work-Life Balance in Ireland.

5. Chapter 6: Conclusion and summary.

This final chapter will conclude my Minor thesis giving an overall summary of my thesis and the findings of my study.

I have also included my Questionnaire used for my research in Dunboyne and the variety of charts illustrating my findings in the appendix. A bibliography is included.

This thesis attempts to give a sociological acknowledgement of many aspects connected to the change and the role of women and work in Irish culture. My aim is to give you the reader an in-dept sociological analysis of the change and role of women and work in Ireland, observing how a work-life balance is dealt with in the lives of all women in our changing culture.

Chapter 2

A Literary review

Introduction

At the present time Ireland is experiencing much growth within the labour force, as the statistical yearbook of Ireland (2005: 28) highlights that 'the total number at work was just over 1.1 million in 1984. By 1994, this had increased to over 1.2 million and then increased by over 615,000 between 1994 and 2004 to 1,836,200. As a result, Ireland has witnessed major changes in the employment sector and in particular, a growth of female participation working outside the home for a wage. The female participation in 1985 was around 30% whereas in 2004 it was over 49%'. This issue of women and employment is an ongoing matter for the Irish economy. (Fine-Davis 1983; Mahon 1995; Smyth 1997).

Within this chapter I will examine the literature which I researched to gain a better understanding of women and employment, discussing the books, articles and studies I have used under the heading of 1) women and employment; 2) women and the family; 3) childcare and motherhood; 4) Gender and Division of labour and finally; 5) work- life balance today.

⁴ CSO. Statistical yearbook 2005. Pg 28.

Women and employment

The role of women Ireland

Article 41.2.1: In particular, the state recognizes that by her life within the home, woman gives to the state a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.

Article 41.2.2: the state shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home⁵.

This view of de Valera's constitution of 1937, defining the role of a woman as mainly within the domestic sphere, has yielded increasingly on to one that stresses a woman's role in the workforce. The focus on this study is exclusively on women and employment. Women in Irish society have a culturally and structurally particular position. (Kennedy 2002: 81).

According to Pat O'Connor (2001:4) 'women in Ireland, regardless of their age, life stage, class position and participation in paid employment, are surrounded by structural and cultural cues which define their lives'. It is these cues that refer to economic, political, religious and domestic grounds as well as experiences of caring and responsibilities in families and relationships. Yet there is no suggestion that all women in Ireland experience or entail their status in a similar way. To be a woman is to occupy a position within a moving historical context and to be able to decide what we make of this position and how we change this context⁶.

From the 1970's, a heightened international consideration of the role and the status of women in society are observed. (Mahon 1995; Connolly 1996; Connolly and

⁵ Kennedy. 2002. Pg 81

⁶ O'Connor, 2002. Pg 4-5

O'Toole 2005). This led to a growth in the studies of the changes in sex-role attitudes and behaviours. For Margaret fine-Davis (1983) many dramatic governmental and administrative developments looking at the role of women in Ireland have been acknowledged. The 'Marriage bar' removal is one key alteration which had demanded women to leave employment upon marriage and the enactment of anti-discrimination legislation in the areas of pay and employment opportunities. (Fine-Davis, 1983: 114; 1979: 380). Other key progressions become known and were achieved, such as legislation of the sale of contraceptives, legislation of divorce and the repeal of the punitive taxation laws that acted as a strong restriction to married women working⁷.

Women in early Irish society witnessed patriarchy, viewed as the authority of their father or husband. Ireland as a late industrializing country saw for many women, few opportunities available for industrial work outside of the home; fertility rates remaining high until the late 1980's, where Ireland as a religious country saw catholic social teaching incorporated into the constitution, which controlled prohibition on Divorce and an acknowledgement of the special position of women in the home. (Mahon 1995, 680).

Women and Patriarchy

Until recently, Ireland was seen as mainly a patriarchal society and this status was earned due to traditional values on matters such as reproductive rights and low participation rates of women and employment⁸. According to Hartmann (1981: 14), who perceives patriarchy at a material level, the position of women is one of inequality and subordination. 'It is a set of social relations between men which have a material base and

⁷ Fine Davis, 1983: 114

⁸ Mahon. 1995: 675.

which through hierarchical, established or create interdependence and unity among men that enable them to dominate women'. This definition observes that not all men are in similar positions of power, yet suggests that there is a pecking order among men.

Hartmann argues that key elements in the material reality of patriarchy include men's control over women's employment, reflected in women expected to provide service work such as childcare and housework, therefore attaching lower value to women's employment. (O'Connor, 2001:8).

However Walby (1990) feels that gender relations are seen as importantly constituted by discourses of masculinity and femininity, which are not immediately reducible to the economic relations of capitalism. The systematic character of patriarchy is impact in Wally's (1990) definition that 'Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress or exploit women'. Observing two forms of patriarchy, the public and private, Walby suggests that an important point to make is the difference to which whether women were excluded from the economic system (private) or segregated within it (public). The central site of private patriarchy was in household production concentrating on individual men, as the public context was based in public sites such as paid employment and the state focusing on men as employers or as part of the make- up of the state. Walby argues that in public patriarchy, individual males benefited from the appropriation of women's labour.⁹

Second-wave feminism

Observing change in women's studies, especially concerning equal opportunity, employment and self-determination, the 1970s in Ireland saw the development of the second wave feminism of the women's movement and Ireland's accession of the

⁹ O'Connor. 2001: 7-10

Europeans community. (Smyth 1997: 63; Mahon 1995; O'Connor 2001; Fine-Davis 1983).

This movement is the best example of a post-War II social movement that brought change in the development of the social and political life to women in Ireland. Facilitated by the president's commission on the status of women in 1961 within the Unites States and 1969 in Ireland, feminism plays a great part in many women's organizations¹⁰. The emergence of a range of women's movements in Ireland throughout the course of the late 20th century tells us much about the development of the women's movement and feminist politics. (Connolly and O'Toole 2005:1; Mahon 1995; Connolly 1996). This era witnessed great social developments in the work force and economic growth but patriarchal state policies restricted opportunities for women. (Mahon 1995).

Yet due to change in the legislation such as the employment equality act (1977), its purpose was to remove unfairness in employment, giving equal basis to the establishment of the employment equal agency. As a result, legal changes helped a gradual increase to women, particularly married women, in employment participation. The equal pay act (Anti-discrimination) (pay) act 1974 ensured women were paid the same as men for equal work. (Mahon 1995: 684)

According to Connelly (1996: 43) commentators and scholars describe the 1980s and 1990s as a post feminism period of politics. Former feminists have been blamed for trading political ideals for career mobility and younger women are seen to single-mindedly pursue career goals while viewing feminism as an anachronism. Yet they fail to view the continuity and vibrancy of the Irish women's movement since the 1850's.

Therefore witnessing a period of high energy of the 1970's, demoralization in the 1980s

¹⁰ Mahon, 1995, 667

and new developments in the 1990s, the women's movement continues to reform in an organic fashion. (Connelly 1996).

Women and work change over time.

Examining issues concerning change of women and employment over time, population change in Ireland has increased, were in 2002 the population was at its highest. There were more women presented then men in the state. In 1996 the census showed 1,825,855 women where as 2002 showed 1,971,039 women in Ireland. This figure is most likely due to the life expectancy of women in Ireland where at birth; the life expectancy for women in 2002 was 80.3 years compared to men at 75.1 years. This correlates to the growth and change of women in employment. From the period of 1926-1982 women in employment remained unchanged at 30%. The last fifteen years in Ireland shows females in paid work rise to over 47% in 2002. (CSO: 2002; 2004; 2005)

Recent statistics show that time use in Ireland follows generally similar patterns to that of European counterparts, that there is a large difference in gender and domestic division of labour. Out of 1023 people asked in ESRI's *Time-use study* (2005: 10), 519 were female and the average time women spent at work outside the home was 2.44 hours a day. According to Evans et al (2000: 51) the large scale of married women into the workforce is very important to the changes in today's society. Explaining these alterations remains a contentious issue, yet much theories link it to fundamental and continuing changes in the economy or society. For instance with the parsons debate on 'Global sea change', in preferences attitudes and values accompanying modernization, or accept one of the many materialist and technological arguments about changes accompanying economic development. (Evans et al 2000: 52; Klein 1963; Sweet; 1973).

With these arguments, value changes underpinning modernization and development undercut traditional sex roles by encountering us to use the same standards to judge everybody (universalism) and further the content of those standards emphasizes academic and occupational achievements (achievement orientation). So women come increasingly to hold values conductive to careers outside the home; abandon traditional sex-role attitudes in favour of modern equalitarian views and reject traditional norms that restrict them to family life. (Evans 2000: 52)

Education: Recent developments and changes of women and work

From the 1990s, the Irish economy experienced an era of much growth of employment and was at its highest in the EU that led us to the identification of Ireland as the Celtic tiger. (O'Connor 2001:2; Evans et al 2000; Giddens 2001; Smyth 1997).

According to Mahon (1995: 694), while divorce and abortion dominated the media in the 1980s there were progressive changes in education and employment for women. At the second level school for instance, gender differences in both provisions and uptake of Maths and science reduces over time. The entrance for third level became very competitive, especially in traditional high status professions like Law and Medicine. For example, at the age of 19, 61% of women and 44% of males were in full time education in 2003/2004¹¹. Therefore women were obtaining education and skills where to an extent a woman education has reflected the changing environment and the expectation that middle-class girls will be orientated to the labour market. (Mahon 1995: 695).

To work or not to work?

Gidden's (2001: 375-376) notes that we often tend to think of work as equivalent to having a paid job but this is an over simplified view. Non- paid work such as

¹¹ www.cso.ie

housework, appears largely in many peoples lives. Many types of work conform to orthodox categories of paid employment. Much work done within the informal economy, where transactions outside the sphere of regular employment, either involve exchange of cash for a service provided or direct exchange of goods and services. Work as a definition, paid or unpaid is an issue of carrying out tasks requiring the expenditure of mental and physical effort that has as its objectives the production of goods and services that cater for human needs. Hakim (2003) acknowledges from a study completed in Britain in 1999 that paid employment was often seen as an unfortunate financial necessity or insurance policy while being eagerly welcomed as an avenue for self-development and independence by others.

This study completed in Britain observed women's employment growth similar to Ireland in the last two decades, especially for women aged 45 years. This trend is viewed as bringing increased financial independence for women. Yet even though there is an increase, most British women have been in part-time work while the number of women in full-time work has risen very little. (Hakim 1993; Gin and Arber 1994). Women and paid work in Ireland has a statistical observation of an average if working week of 32.8 hours and nearly a third of women worked less than 30 hours a week according to the National women's council of Ireland (2004)¹².

¹² www.nwci.ie

Women, work and the family.

Women and the family

Many similar issues have risen again and again in readings that I have observed. When acknowledging about women and the family, issues about women's role in the family, her status and the function of the family as well as how women's careers have risen and become a concern in Irish society as well as other countries. (Mac Curtain 1978: 82; O'Connor 2001; Cheal 2002; Allan; 2001).

According to Patricia Redlich (1978: 82.)¹³, 'the question of woman and her role within the family cannot be viewed in abstraction, but must be examined in the context of the society at large, in terms of norms, expectations and demands of society at a particular historical time'. We are therefore confronted with the emergence of the 'women's question', where this question in Ireland has been slow to develop due to James Connolly's recognition that the development, to what is known as the women's movement, has synchronized with the appearance of women upon the industrial field.

A family as a term is an ambiguous one. Definitions of family are relative to the social and cultural environments of people who think about families and who talk about families as they go about their daily lives. We draw our image of the family from our cultural environment and then we clarify those images into specific concepts used in sociological theories. (Cheal 2002: 4).

According to Giddens (2001: 173) the basic concept of the family is one seen as a group of people directly linked by kin connections where adult members assume responsibility in caring for children. The nuclear family, which sociologists brought into

¹³ In Mac Curtain 1978, (Eds)

account within the mid 20th Century as a combined small group of a married couple and their children living permanently together until the children move out, is in contrast to the extended family, which is an important feature of the traditional Palestine family life, called the Hamula. The Hamula is a consisted group of a number of relatives living together, ranging from parents, grandparents, children and aunts and uncles. (Giddens 2001, 173; Cheal 2002: 5)

Dimensions of family life.

Principle measurements of family life including birth, fertility and marriage are important aspects of a woman's life and the workforce. (Kennedy 2002; O'Connor 2001; Fine-Davis 2002). In Ireland, women single and working within the 25-34 age groups were at 84.8% whereas married woman was lower at 66.6%. With this figure, perhaps there are more women of this age with a higher participation rate of employment because perhaps of lesser births for women aged 25-29. In 2003 women aged 25-29 was 14,806 compared to 14,330 births in 2004. Therefore women seem to work more at a younger age and then start their families within their 30's. The change of women in the workforce may be seeing an increase because more women on average choose careers first and then family life. (Census 2002)

According to Kennedy (2002: 21-22) since the 1990's marriage has fallen out of fashion. It is a noteworthy fact that in the twenty years from 1975-1995, the probability of marriage declined by one third from 90% to 60%. Yet from the 1990s, there was an increase in marriage rates of women aged 30-40 years. By the end of the 20th century, the marriage rate dropped back to the same level as the beginning of the century, while the birth rates were 25% lower. In O'Connor's view (2001: 124), married women in Ireland

face much difficulties as regards returning to work despite the fact that in many cases they were pushed out by the marriage bar (Fine-Davis, 1983: 114; 1979: 380). Even if women see themselves as unemployed and attempt to register as 'unemployed' due to being out of work for a period of time, they are unlikely to have sufficient insurance contributions to receive unemployment benefits or register for credits.

Considering Births, the total of births fell rather gradually from 1870's until the baby boom during World War II. This level ascended piercingly throughout the 1940s from 57,000 to 69,000 in 1949 due to reduced emigration and the introduction of work permits. The increase of births from outside a marriage too has been striking rising from 1,600 in 1921 to over 15,000 in 1998. (Kennedy 2002: 30).

Family size.

Observing an article from the Irish examiner (November 9th 2005), Dr Valerie Richardson agrees there is a link between family size and childcare. 'Generally across Europe in countries where women face difficulty reconciling work and family life, fertility levels are lower than those in societies committed to policies aimed at gender equality'. Therefore the supply of good quality, affordable and available childcare seems to be affecting family size today.

On one hand, research has shown that for women having children continues to hold back their career development, consequently affecting family size. (Waldfogel. 1998: 143). Yet on the other hand for men, having children seems to improve their career development since it is said that a family to support men will be highly motivated in the workplace to further their career¹⁴.

¹⁴ www.irishexaminer/archives.tcm.ie/2005/11/09/story998612384.asp

Family gap.

According to Jane Waldfogel (1998: 138), over the last few decades, the pay gap between men and women in narrowing and the gap women with children and women without is widening. Studies show that one reason for women's average wages rising to men is due to human capital rising because women increased their investment in education and reduced time out in the workforce. (Waldfogel 1998; O'Neill and Polachek 1993). These transformations began pre-1970s. However until then, the effect was offset by the entry into the labour market of females with low-levels of work practice 15.

The idea of the family gap within the British Isles points to a pay penalty for women with children and suggests that family status accounts for an importance share of the British gender gap. There is no comparable evidence on family gaps other than British and American ones. Yet all information suggests that the gap between mothers and other women may be smaller in other countries that have more extensive family policy homework. (Waldfogel. 1998. 124).

Care and responsibility.

On a recent study, the national women's council of Ireland (2002) undertook research on valuing care work, being convinced that the government and societies failure to value care was causing inequalities for women in a range of spheres. Caring is a natural expression of familial, inter-generational and social bonds and relationships and it is a commonly experienced stage of individual and family lifestyles. Care is a term used to provide help and support to a person in need of care, whether it is children, the elderly, a partner or self-care. (Sevenhuijsen 1998). The feminist ethics of care and responsibility regarding Gilligan's work show that women reach the stage of moral maturity when they

¹⁵ Waldfogel. 1998. 138

are able to transform the dilemma of caring for others into an ethics of responsibility, where a balanced between their own need for autonomy and caring for others¹⁶.

Government policy remains contradictory then, between its interest's in encouraging more women into the workforce and the assumption that women will respond to all societies caring needs on an unpaid basis. (Coakley. 2005: 19; NWCI 2002: 8). People outline their duties in actual social practices around 'the moral dilemmas that go with conflicting responsibilities of care for self, other and the relation between them (Coakley 2005. 19). The importance of family care in Ireland, especially for working mothers, may then show a concern above and beyond the financial and reveal something about the complex domain around which mothers negotiate decisions relating to care and work¹⁷. According to Anne Coakley (2005. 19) Family support then is not reducible to questions about childcare or getting women back to work. It is about giving adults and children the choice and chance to have the best in life they can.

Family- friendly policies.

Citing Fine- Davis (2002), in the context of changing social attitudes and increased labour force participation of women, especially married women, people have expressed much support for family-friendly policies. Concerning attitudes of a nationwide Irish study, a sample of 1,862 men and women were drawn out concerning potential social policies that could assist employed married women and women working at home. (Fine-Davis 1983; 2002).

In an early 1980s study of mothers halved employed and half non-employed, a support for many changes within the workforce and community were found. Those

Sevenhuijesen 1998 Pg 11-19.
 Coakley. 2005. Pg 19

included flexible hours (83.3%), greater availability of part-time jobs (96.4%), extended leave for childbirth and rearing (73.9%) and work sharing (89.2%). Both maternal and parental leave were strongly favored. Mothers reported that they commonly had to use their own manual leave, sick leave or unpaid leave in case of a Childs illness. (Fine-Davis $1983)^{18}$

Time-use study in families: research completed.

'Time is a precious commodity to working parents'. Time pressures appear continually as stressors in fulfilling work and family duties. (Beach. 1987. 412). In a time-use study in Ireland (2005: 11), it was found that on weekdays, women spend almost five times longer on caring activities than men. Domestic labour is also higher for women than it is for men. Yet in contrast, employment is higher for men than it is for the opposite sex.

Those looking after the family spend an average of almost three and a half hours on care and four hours on housework on weekdays. Time-use differs between those who have children under 18 years old and those who do not. Respondents with offspring spend on average 3 hours and 26 minutes on weekdays and 3 hours and 52 minutes at the weekend. On a weekday an average woman spends 8.58 hours with her family and the weekend spends 11.03 hours with her family¹⁹.

Boucher and Collins. 2005. 21.
 Time use study in Ireland 2005. Pg.12-15.

Childcare issues and the culture of motherhood

The NWCI recently expressed that childcare is in crisis because more parents, particularly women, are stressed out trying to balance family and work tasks²⁰. A recent survey completed by www.Rollercoster.ie (2005) has shown that 'high childcare costs are forcing women to give up work as one in five women now say that it is not worth their while to work outside the home. Almost one in five parents spends over €250 a week on childcare.

Childcare, policies and the state.

Historically the Irish state has had a minimal involvement in the provision of early childhood care and education, except its involvement with child protection. (IBEC 2005:6). The state facilitates the delivery of education rather than delivers education. Yet childcare services are observed in an ad hoc manner, one fact of this late development of childcare in Ireland compared to other EU countries is that it did not participate in World War II. Therefore the same social changes, in particular women's contribution in the workforce, did not come about and had no specific impetus for government intervention to support working parents until the economic and social developments of the 1970s and 1980s.

In Ireland the states responses to date have been:

- 1) An increase on child benefit payments and
- 2) Increase supply of childcare places under the equal opportunities childcare programme. 21

 $^{^{20}}$ Womenzone- National women's council, New Magazine. First edition. 2002. Pg 2 $\underline{www.nwci.ie}$ 21 Report from IBEC 2005: 6-7

Compared to Denmark, which was the best-known EU15 state for reasonably priced and available public childcare, Ireland was seen as the worst country. (Consumers choice 2005). From the Budget 2006, policy changes on childcare meant 'a new early childcare supplement worth €1000 per annum is being introduced for all children under the age of 6 which was affective from April 2006'. This will take the form of a direct, non-taxable payment of €250 paid in every quarter to each eligible child²². Yet according to statistics from CSO (2006), childcare cost has soared by over 23% nationwide in just two years, that hard-pressed parents will not see the government promised €1000 childcare bonus until August due to a delay because the department of social and family affairs is behind in the administration of the new scheme²³.

With recent changes in Ireland such as economic growth and rapid increase of women and work, the highest participation rates at the age of 20-44 were nearly twothirds of women are active in employment and this peaks at the age range of 25-34, where three-quarters of women work. According to a report done by IBEC (2005: 8), these are groups of women more likely to have children and therefore more likely to have childcare needs.

With reference to Blau and Robins (1991: 333) the dramatic increase of women at work with young children especially in the last twenty years, has made the issue of childcare an important one in the economic analysis of family behaviour. With childcare disadvantages and high costs, this acts as a barrier to mothers who want to work. (Kimmel. 1998: 287).

www.budget.gov.ie/2006/downloads/SummaryOfMeasures.doc
 Irish Independent 1st June 2006.

What childcare crisis?

According to Collins and Wickham (2001:1), since the economic boom in the late 1990s, childcare suddenly became a respectable concern and it was observed that childcare was a problem for women who wanted to work. Yet from statistics, Irish women are going to work in even greater numbers despite the childcare crisis. First fertility rates fell and then work participation rates rose. In 1982 the total population fertility rate was 2.96 compared to 2.1 in1989. Fitzgerald (2000) proposes that one reason for the economic boom was a 'new' pool of women able to join the labour force when its demand increased in the 1990s²⁴.

For Collins and Wickham (2001) the Celtic tiger should be called the 'Celtic lioness' that goes out and hunts as well as raises her own cubs with the assistance of an extended family. Their study proposes that those who want good childcare for their children would be recommended not to rely much on the questions of economical policies. There is no point in claiming that proper childcare is needed so that women can enter employment. Irish women are increasing in numbers to work for a wage, without the help of formal childcare²¹.

Life's greatest gift: child well-being and labour supply.

Within childcare literature, there is a great deal of research concerning childcare price sensitivity of female employment decisions and choice dimensions. (Powell 2002; Berger and Black 1992). A variety of studies look at the effect of childcare costs on the labour supply decisions on mothers independently on the choice on the mode of childcare. Based on models that center on the labour supply choices (Connelly 1990;

²⁴ Collins ands Wickham. 2001. 1-2.; 11

Kimmel 1995; Powell 2002) and those who examine joint labour supply and paid versus unpaid childcare choice decisions (Blau and Robins 1998; Michalopoulous et al 1992; Kimmel 1995; Cleveland et al 1996), results of Powell's study show that childcare costs have a significant pessimistic impact on the labour supply of mothers with estimates of childcare costs elasticity's for employment ranging from 0.09 to -0.92²⁵.

Duncan's study on income and child- well being (2005: 1-2) shows that children growing up in higher income families are advantages in many ways, including having parents who have finished formal schooling and embedded a higher status social network and whose genetic endowments may provide cognitive and health related advantages. As a result economic models of child development (Becker 1981: 186) see families with higher economic resources as being better to create important contributions into their children's well-being and maturity.

Therefore children matter. Their status and well-being speak volumes about values and the quality of life within any society. The National children's strategy (2000: 18) offers us a clear vision of Ireland seeing children as respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own, where all children are cherished n supported by family and the wider population: where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realize their potential.

Culture of motherhood and work.

The most recent figures for Ireland show that motherhood is a primary determinant of the workforce involvement. As mentioned, there is an imperative difference between the employment rates of women age 20-44 with no children at 87% in 2004 compared to 52.4% for women with the youngest child 3 years or under. (CSO

²⁵ Powell, 2002; 109

2005: 19; Coakley. 2005: 12). According to Coakley (2005:12), the department of justice, equality and law inform (2003) see that the growth of part-time work among females in the workforce is noteworthy. In the time 1997- 2004, an increase of women in full-time and part-time paid work was similar, at 30.7% and 32% respectively.

The NWCI (2002) finds that women are much more possible than men to opt for part-time work than men since it frequently shows the only possible means of linking caring work with paid work. 'The priority of the mother identity means balancing the welfare of her children and economic security'. The gendered vision of family life that exists in Ireland is to the degree to which women are required to make a complicated choice between earning and caring for their families. Full-time motherhood is highly valued in Ireland and yet mothers are under pressure to be employed also. (Coakley; 2005).

Working parents and choices.

According to Moen (1989: 38) Sweden's claim to be 'paradise' on this earth for women and parents of young children, is a nation that succeeds in making possible the combination of family and work. Parents engage in what is the most important activity in any society, producing and nurturing members of a new creation. A major turning point then during the adult years is the experience of parenthood. With first-time parents in a study accomplished in 1974 to childless respondents, 1981 saw a further study on the same group of respondents who had undergone one or more births, considering their conditions of life had improved. (Moen 1989: 125).

McRae (2003: 318) on another point observes Hakims preference theory as the clarification for the position of women in the British labour market. Applied to the United

States and Britain, the central debate of preference theory is that women are not all the same in their preference and priorities on the conflict of work and family life. (Hakim 2000: 4); that women in these countries have options about how to live and that there are no major constraints limiting or forcing their choices, that the standard of living and choices of women are now more important than constraints associated with social structure or other macro-level influences.

Mothers working versus mothers being at home.

Considerable research has been conducted on the rewards and costs associated with women's traditional roles as child bearers and rearers. (Thompson 1980). To appreciate the common decisions of women to work or stay at home, it is important to observe the rewards and costs associated with the role of employment. Thompson (1980: 552) looks at the rewards and costs such as money, education, opportunities and independence, which have been identified as sources of motivation for or against the employment of women with children. Research on working mothers then provides extensive and perhaps a confusing array of factors used to explain why some married women work and others don't. (Gordon. 1980: 328).

Women who remain in the home to care for their children and family life are also an important matter in literature. According to Byod (2002: 446), 'Being there', is a response to how paid work is planned in Australian culture, due to its compatibility with childcare and a rationale for women's place in relation to that system. Mothering at home is a private and personal response to, and the cooperation with, the domination of the public. Being there is gendered, a mother's role, an expectation carried out, therefore requiring decisions to stay at home or to work. Boyd (2002) calls this approach the *third*

shift or an emotional dimension of childcare that is powerfully gendered. It is a measurement distinguished in ways motherhood can be understood. For Boyd, it is a challenge of duty and thoughts for a new life of childcare where emotional demands take the greatest toll or women may feel guilt at work therefore make up for this feeling with spending extra time or giving extra hugs for loss of time or hugs. It is a powerful internalized belief.

Affecting children.

There is a question asked within sociological literature concerning working mothers: Do mothers harm their children when they work outside the home? (Roth-Walsh 1997; Hansebald 1976; Wylie 1942). In answering 'yes' Leach (1997: 388) believes that nurseries and day care centres may not meet an infants needs, whereas one-to-one attention is rare and children need at least one special person to whom they attach themselves. If each child is not fully attached to each successive caregiver, he/she will spend many days in Limbo, if he/she is fully attached, they will spend days in grief, as it is not her/his real mother²⁶.

Eyer (1997: 392) on the other side of the debate recognizes that 'No', mothers do not harm their children when they work outside the home. She considers that there is no scientific evidence to put forward this argument in a pessimistic way. It is said that children with working mothers show higher cognitive abilities and school achievements, to have more respect for a wide range of women's abilities and show more independence. (Powell. 2002: 109)

Timberger and MacLean (1982: 469) found with older children, especially with females, and children who stay alone after school feel more negatively affected by their

²⁶ Roth Walsh: 1997

mothers employment than younger children, boys and children who are supervised after school. Children's attitudes about their mother's employment are influenced by their awareness of their mother's feelings about the work force. Therefore observing the role of women and work concerning childcare, its ongoing debates on policy issue, choices, cost and perspectives show that with children, women want the freedom to choose. (Irish Examiner November 9th 2005)

Women and the gender changing roles.

Changing gender roles

The changing features of modern Ireland have led to an increase of changing gender roles, therefore contributing to the factor of the change of women and work. Official statistics reveal that all persons aged 15 and upwards at work have risen from 1,513,600 in 1999 at work to 1,857,400 at work in 2005. Males within this category has risen from 917,800 in 1999 to 1,080,600 in 2005 compared to females, were in 1999 539,800 rose to 776,800 women working for a wage in 2005²⁷. What interested me as I researched this theme is that more women work outside the home than say at home; the amount of women on home duties went from 570,500 women in 1999 down to 539,400 women in 2005 that stayed in the home full-time. (CSO 2004; Census 2002). Comparing the employment rate for women within the EU, the Lisbon summit of spring (2000) predicated that by 2010 the employment rate for women would be 60%. This rate in

²⁷ www.cso.ie

Ireland was 36% in 1993, which expanded to 55% in 2003. In EU countries such as Greece, women working were over 35% in 1993, which only rose to over 43% in 2003 ²⁸. Women working full-time in the home.

Firstly I want to examine the concept of women within the home. According to Richardson (2005)²⁹ 'Unpaid work in the home is seen as work of low status and of no monetary value when compared with paid work outside the home'. While much of the difference between both sexes is related to the fact that women who are not in paid work usually do not register as unemployed, the main issue is that 'it is an inescapable fact that it is women who do the housework. (Richardson 2005). Nevertheless this quantity is declining. It is part of family ideology that a woman's place is in the home and a man's task is to go out to work and earn money, acting as a breadwinner. (Allan 2001; 191; Shelton 1996; Bourke 1991). According to Allan. 2001: 191), this specific gender division of labour is enshrined in policies and practices at all levels of society from marriage services to social security legislations. (Allan 2001: 191; Shelton 1996; Bourke 1991).

However the most notable feature of the present division of household labour is whether or not women continue to do the majority of housework (Shelton 1996; Giddens 2001). Household labour is an ambiguous and complex term, referred to as a division of unpaid work to preserve family and home needs. (Shelton 1996: 300). Gender differences on time-use for instance show that 71% of men do not cook and 81% do not clean or maintain the home on a weekday, even though these figures change slightly at the

<sup>Eurostat: Statistical yearbook 2004.
Boucher, G and Collins, G. 2005: 47-48</sup>

weekends, compared to women who spend over two-thirds maintaining the home on weekdays and weekends. (Time-use study 2005: x).

According to Giddens (2001; 398) the typology of the male breadwinner has become exceptional rather than the rule and women's economic mounting sovereignty means they are better placed to move out of gendered roles in the home if they decide to. The reality that women continue to be primary responsible for domestic chores, has led American sociologist Arkie Hochschild to speak to the *second shift* (1989) which is used to describe additional hours of housework that many employed women perform after her official workday to keep her home functioning smooth. For Hochschild, this issue amounts to a 'stalled revolution' for women, although they are mounting their rights with the labour market, they continue to bear heavy burden on housework. (Giddens 2001: 398). Nowadays not only are women working outside the home as much as men, but they are also challenging men's dominance of the public sphere and controls of power. (Cronin 2001).

Gender equalities?

There is a paradox in women's labour force participation. On one side there is a notion of women as concentrated in the lowest grade, leased skilled jobs with poor employment benefits and prospects. On the other side women report high levels of satisfaction with their jobs, often great contentment than that reported by men with their higher status and better paid jobs. (Hakim 1991:101). There are certain strategy policies that exist in Ireland that may be considered 'family friendly'. These include maternity leave, parental leave and flexi working patterns. (Fine-Davis. 2002: 48).

The maternity protection act 1994 provides a minimum of 14 paid weeks maternity leave as wells 4 unpaid weeks of leave. (Fine-Davis 2002). From the budget 2006, an additional 4 weeks of paid maternity leave and 4 weeks increase in the duration of unpaid leave was effective from 1st march this year. For that reason, 22 weeks is given to women in maternity leave. (www.equality.ie) Women who will commence their maternity leave on or after the 1st of March in 2007 will be given an additional 4 weeks leave, giving a total of 26 weeks of maternity leave.

Gender inequalities?

Within research found, despite having formal equality with men regarding participation in the workforce, certain policies and equal pay legislation (anti-discrimination (pay) act 1974) that ensured women were paid the same as men for equal work, why do women on average earn less than men during the working life and why is 70% of part-time workers women?

The NWCI has been campaigning to end biases against females in the social welfare system for a numerous years. This year the social welfare system continues to be based on a male breadwinner model that denies women's full independence. It fails to provide recognition for unpaid care work, predominantly undertaken by women as mentioned (Shelton 1996; Gidden's 2001) and it doesn't recognize the reality of women's participation in employment. Many impacts then according to Orla O'Connor's (2006)³⁰ can be viewed in many factors. One vital factor observed that women are paid 14%5 less than men in Ireland and more than half of people on the minimum wage are women.

³⁰ www.nwci.ie

Wage gap

Women earn less than men in more industrialized countries (Callan et al 1998; Giddens 2001). In Ireland regular statistics for earnings are not available. Therefore undue dependence is often placed on regularly published series for hourly earnings of both ganders in manufacturing. Yet more than 4 out of 5 women work outside the manufacturing sector. (Barrett et al 2000). According to Barrett et al (2000: 50) there are three broad theories that have been used to explain the relative labour market outcome of different groups. These theories are mainly developed in context of radical differences in the US but can apply to gender differences.

The first theory, originated by Becker (1975) 'Taste- discrimination', is a useful means for observing the concept of prejudice into an economic framework. As a simple and easy theory to use in terms of understanding how discrimination can manifest in the workforce, it is not without internal contradictions. Observing the second theory, 'statistical discrimination', the less favourable treatment of women arise due to employers believing that the information they use to predict a persons true productive capacity is less reliable for women than men. (Barrett et al 2000: 53).

The final theory, 'Occupational segregation' discussed by media studies (NWCI 2002; Giddens 2001; Barrett et al 2000), is a fact that men and women are concentrated in different types of jobs based on prevailed acknowledgments of what is appropriate male- female work. (Giddens 2001: 391). According to Giddens (2001: 391) women workers were traditionally concentrated to poorly paid jobs. Many of these occupations were highly gendered, where women work was seen as jobs such as caring or secretarial. Therefore occupational segregation even today, due to women's choices, is restricted

because of childcare, 'being there' and responsibilities of home and family life. (Barrett et al 2000: 54; Giddens 2001: 391; Carey 1994)

Work-Life Balance.

'It seems that there is never enough hours in the day to do all that we want to do'.

This statement was taken from a commentary of the work-life balance website ³¹ where observed is the fact that the 1st of March represents work-life balance day in Ireland.

Work-life balance arrangements can contribute to an organizations competitive advantage and its reputation as an employer of choice. Work-life balance means putting in place working arrangements and policies, which assist workers in combining employment with other responsibilities and choices. They also benefit employers by helping them to develop a more productive and committed workplace.

People need work- life balance for many different reasons. The equality authorities, which act on the work-life balance day, believe that some of these reasons may include:

- Care for children/ family life
- For travel purposes/ commuting
- To remain in paid employment while dealing with other duties
- To allow for some personal 'self' time. (www.equality.ie)

According to Fine-Davis (2005: 11) policies that promote a work-life balance such as flexi-time working schedules, can have benefits for different people depending on their circumstances. 'Their policies often allow groups of workers to remain or re-enter

³¹ www.worklifebalance.ie

employment by offering the requisite flexibility to combine paid work with outside pressures'. As the Irish labour market continues to tighten, the inclusions of available trained workers are becoming more essential. For instance, 68% of public and private Irish employed surveyed saw that work-life balance policies are vital in the current competitive market and 57% believe that there importance will improve over the next three years. (O'Connell et al. 2005).

What do we mean by a work-life balance?

Ever since the 1980s, many organizations throughout Europe, USA and across the globe have established Family Friendly polices which intend to assist people with caring responsibilities to balance their work and caring tasks. These strategies are generally focused on giving flexibility in terms of working time and work place. Establishment in the public sector and large private sector businesses, which have a substantial quantity of female staff, are most likely to have established these policies and many report that their introduction has facilitated to lessen staff turnover and associated costs and has improved confidence and commitment amongst employees. However, within these organizations many report that take-up is slow and is chiefly amongst women with children and often the managerial culture runs contrary to the aims of the policies. Amongst small and medium sized organizations the image is dissimilar with many simply sticking to statutory entitlements and not moving beyond. (www.wlbn.ie)

The problem and challenges that face employees aiming to balance all commitments are often a result of a deep but unstated view of an 'ideal worker' who begins their working life in early childhood and continues to work standard hours for forty years until retirement, taking no time off to bear or rear children, care for family

members or engage in non-paid work or educational activities. (Bailyn, Drago and Kochen 2002: 4).

According to Evans, (2001:10) in defining family work arrangements as 'arrangements introduced voluntary by firms which facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life', this stresses the practical role adopted by some firms. Yet Evans adds that this definition is not always easy to apply in practice. It is not always understandable which working arrangements facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life and which do not. For example, a firm may introduce shift working that could facilitate childcare for some couples, allowing them to work at certain times. While some employers and perhaps employees may see this situation as family friendly, others may prefer different arrangements. For Evans, the test of whether or not practice is family friendly or not much ultimately depend on the appreciation of families concerned ³².

Work-life balance in Ireland.

On a recent study carried out by Drew, Murphy and Humphrey (2003) on an incompany survey of employees (who had availed of flexible working arrangements) and their managers was undertaken in five organizations involving 1,006 employees, the report found that in Ireland more women (17%) than men (1%) worked part-time and more men (62%) than women (38%) worked longer than the standard hours. Flexitime is available more commonly by women though more men can avail of it than women ³³.

The report concludes that the demand for work-life balance will continue and possibly accelerate because of a number of factors including:

³² Off the treadmill 2003. 19

³³ www.wlbn.ie Pg 19

- The workforce becoming more heterogeneous with more parents
- Demographic changes, leading to an increase needed to retain valued staff
 due to a tightening labour market as a result of lower childbirth rates.
- Changes in information and technology, making it easier to work from home at a distance
- Flexible working hours has increased other EU states regardless of economic upturns and downs.

Work-life balance: A parent's challenge, a woman's reality?

Balancing work and family life may be somewhat easier for two parents who live together than a lone parent. But in reality it is a challenge for all parents in our changing society. (Cheal 2002: 119). The predominant task for making appropriate childcare arrangements usually falls on mothers. (Cheal 2002; Hakim 2004). According to Giddens (2001: 400) this work-family challenge shows a growing division between dualearner households, in which two adults have two incomes and households where there are one or no earners. He believes that these changes have coincided with much transformation in the economy and the workplace. He allocation of time has become a central problem for many homes that the simply have too much work.

With reference to Hakims study (2004) most reports on work-life balance focus exclusively on women. Hakims national survey of Britain and Spain are unusual in giving data on both men and women's work-life priorities. She shows that sex differences are small or non-existent on many sex-role attitudes. At the present time the issue of women and work, wanting a better-balanced life is in relation to women only. It appears that

there is a much greater scope than so far recognized for gender-neutral work-life balance policies within the government and employer policies. (Hakim 2000; 2004).

Chapter 2

Theoretical framework.

Introduction.

There are many changes concerning women and work, weather it be in the home or paid work. Research and theoretical studies completed on women and employment provides a widespread collection of features from the United States, Europe and Ireland that have been used to explain many issues of the changes of women at work and affects it has. Within Irelands view on this issue, many current studies have been completed by official sources such as the Central statistical office, ESRI and NDP gender equality unit. In a recent CSO report from 'Men and women in Ireland' (2004: 19), it is said that the employment rate for women aged 20-24 varied from 87.2% of women with no children, to 52.4% of women whose youngest child is 3 or under. (Coakley. 2005: 12).

As there are more women entering the workforce, there is a question to ask about the choices women have to make in life, to work or not to work? Within this theoretical framework I will observe analysis from theorists looking at the issues of women and employment. Looking at Hakim and Beckers theories on the decision-making of a person based on preferences and rational choice, feminist theories such as Hartmann and Walby look at the point to which family-work relationship are outcomes of constraints structured by power associations and discourses. I have identified a number of factors that I believe contribute and play a part with the rise and changes of women and work. Those include 1) Feminism 2) Women's choices in Irish society 3) Observing inequality and polarization and 4) women and the interconnectedness of work and family.

Feminism

Feminist theory and perspectives.

Feminism is a diverse, competing and often contrasting collection of social theories, political movements and moral philosophies, largely provoked by or concerning the experience of women. Regarding feminist theory, it is an addition of feminism into theoretical grounds. It includes work done in a wide variety of fields, mostly including the approaches to women's roles, lives and politics in anthropology and sociology, women's studies and gender studies. I want to look at this theory as it is woman-centered and is a generalized theory about ideas of social life and human experiences developed from a woman-centered view. (Ritzer. 2004. 436- 437). Therefore feminist theory will explain how women want change and take on certain equality approaches in the workforce and division of labour of the household.

This doctrine, beginning from the late 18th century, suggests that women are systematically disadvantaged in modern society and supports equal opportunities for both genders. Yet it is a social movement, which as gradually improved the position of women in the 20th and 21st century regarding voting rights, position in the workplace and in marriage. (Abercrombie 2000: 131), thus relevant to my study.

According to Ritzer (2004: 437), 'the impetus for contemporary feminist theory begins in a deceptively simply question: *And what about the women*'?

In other words his primary theoretical questions include: where are the women in any situation being investigated? If they are not present, why? If they are present, what exactly are they doing? How do they experience the situation? What do they contribute to it? What does it mean to them?

Over the last three decades, with the question of women's roles there are many universalized answers. Women are present in most social situations. When they are not, it is not because they lack capacity or interest but because there have been deliberate efforts to leave them out. Where they have been present, women have played roles very different from the population and as mothers and in many other ways, women have, along with men, actively created the situations been studied. Women roles in most situations, although essential, have been different from, less privileged than, and subordinate to those of men. Their invisibility is only one sign of this inequality³⁴.

With reference to Giddens (2001: 114), feminist theories regarding gender inequality contrast markedly with one another. While feminist writers are concerned with women and their inequality in society, their reason vary considerably. Three of the main feminist perspectives, *Liberal, Radical and Socialist feminism*, in some way or another, impact on women's lives. The first perspective, *Liberal feminism* searches for explanations for gender inequalities in social and cultural attitudes. This group draws attention to a variety of separate factors, which contribute, to inequalities between men and women such as sexism and discrimination in the workplace. Secondly, *Radical feminism* is the belief that men are responsible for and benefit from the exploitation of women. Patriarchy plays a major contribution to this perspective in which I will discuss. The final main feminist perspective is that of *socialist feminism*. This outlook sees feminist believing that men can co-exist with women in the post-capitalist vision of the future, because socialist believe capitalism to be the root cause of female oppression, rather then males themselves. (Giddens 2001: 114; Ritzer 2004; www.wikipedia.org).

³⁴ Ritzer 2004: 437

The women's movement

As observed (In the literary review Pg 8) it was the second wave feminism in Ireland to which contributed many changes to the role of women. (Smyth 1997: 63; Mahon 1995; O'Connor 2001; Fine-Davis 1983). According to Ritzer (2004: 439) 'there has always been a feminist perspective'. In the western world, feminism originated with the *published works* of protest, which dates back to the 1630's. Public feminist protests were known between times of liberationist change and of greater conservatism and repression. The first-wave feminism therefore centres on women's battles for political rights, especially the vote. The second-wave feminism, from the 1960's, show that women still wish for equal rights and opportunities. From the late 1960's, despite women's under representation in the political, legal and economic structures, Irish women showed an alarming ability to use organizational structures. From ad hoc committees of ten women's organizations in 1968, it was requested to set up the first commission of the status of women. From this, the 1970s saw a time of much activity of organizational development. (O'Connor 2001: 75; Mahon 1995; Connelly 1996).

These organizations, such as AIM, committed to family law inform; CHERISH, supporting single pregnant women and the fertility guidance clinic, offered support and services for women, which were not supplied by the wider institutional structures. The 1980's saw an era of economic demoralization whereas the 1900s witnessed up to 40 women organizations, where all universities of Ireland had women studies and a rapid growth of locally based women's groups concerned with women's poverty. (O'Connor 2001: 77; Connelly 1996) Therefore women were working for each other, paid or unpaid, for a change in civilization.

Ritzier (2004: 440) indicates that a third wave feminism is emerging as a term to explain the feminist ides of a new generation of young women who will lead most lead their adult lives in the 21st century, where feminism will turn out to be less unnoticed due to dominant groups trying to suppress it.

Feminist ideas then have had a great and justified influence in sociology in current years. Feminist sociologists have debated that sociologists, who according to Abercrombie (2000: 131) are mostly men, have neglected the sociological meaning of women in all areas of the subject. For example, much research of social stratification have until lately focused on the paid work of men as a determinant of the class position of women family members. Sociology is now far more sensitive to issues of gender and feminism has had a substantial influence on social theory³⁵.

Women's choices in Irish society

Change for women.

Observing the changes of the position and experiences of women in the last twenty-five years in Ireland, the many nuances in the saying 'changing places' seem very appropriate. According to O'Conner (2001: 246), some 'places' have changed such as families; more women single and married have increased their participation in the work force; and the world of education and training seems to be more available to young women regardless of gender. Yet in many ways the institutions such as the church and state have changed very little.

³⁵ Abercrombie, 2000. 131.

Preference theory

Catherine Hakims *Preference theory* is a recent theory used to explain women's choices between market work and family work, which is therefore a significant factor to the role and change of women in Ireland today. With this theory, I want to give details on why women have certain choices in life concerning employment and family life.

Regarding Hakim (2004: 13) 'this historical informed concept is empirically based, multi – disciplinary, prospective rather than retrospective in orientation, and applicable in all rich modern societies'. Three features distinguish it from other theories: first, it is historically specific; secondly it recognized the diversity of single homogonous group; thirdly Hakim carried out new surveys in Europe to test and develop the theory. (Hakim 2003).

Although we live in a century of constant and accelerating change, the social sciences have not been very successful at theorizing social change. The broadest of sociological theories clarify social change within an evolutionary viewpoint, which presents modern industrial society as the highest or most complex stage in human social development. (Hakim 2000: 287).

Preference theory debates that five historical changes collectively construct a quantitatively new state of affairs for women in rich modern societies in the 21st century, giving them options that were beforehand unavailable. Hakim notes that small elites of women born into wealthy families did occasionally have real choices in the past. Yet, genuine choices are now open to women in the sense that the vast majority of women have choices, not only the very particular subgroups in the population.

Therefore there are five circumstances that create a new scenario. These include:

- The *contraceptive revolution*, from 1965 onwards, which gave sexually dynamic women consistent and independent power over their fertility,
- The equal opportunities revolution, that guaranteed women obtained equal rights to access all positions in the workforce,
- The growth of white-collar careers,
- The production of jobs for secondary earners, that is, people who do not ant to give priority to paid work at the expense of other life interests,
- The rise importance of attitudes and personal preferences in life style choices of well-off, liberal contemporary cultures. (Hakim 2004: 14).

These five changes in women's lives are historically specific developments in any society, and the timing of the five changes varies greatly between countries. The two revolutions are the essential core to the social revolution for women. These changes as a whole are necessary to create a new situation that women have genuine choices and female heterogeneity is revealed in its full extent. Hakim (2004: 14) disputes that once genuine choices are open to women, they choose three different lifestyles: adaptive, work-centered or home-centered.

The first choice is that of *adaptive* women. This group prefers to combine work and family life in their lives without giving priority to one over the other. In other words, they want to enjoy the best of both worlds. Hakim has shown that this group is the largest group choice and certain occupations, such as teaching, are attractive because they are considered to facilitate good work-life balance. Secondly, regarding *work-centered* women, despite the higher percentage of women in education and into higher grades of work, this preference is focused on competitive activities within the public sphere.

Family life is fitted around work and according to Hakim (2004: 14) many of these women remain childless, even when married. Preference theory predicts that men will retain their dominance in the work force because only a small quantity of women are prepared to prioritize their jobs in the same way as men. Therefore this has made the theory unpopular among feminists.

The third group, *home-centered* women, is also a minority, with reference to Hakim (2004), is a relatively invisible one. This group prefers to give priority to their home and family life. They are inclined to have larger families and these women prefer to avoid paid work after marriage except in times of financial stress. Home-centered women are less likely to choose vocational courses with a direct economic value and more likely to take a course in arts, humanities and languages, that provide cultural capital bit have lower earning potential³⁶.

The three-lifestyle preference groups are dissimilar, as each has a substantively different value system, as well as different goals. It is this difference, which for Hakim (2003: 55), bring women into conflict with one another. In a sense, there is no single, representative group of women in today's society, but three contrasting or conflicting groups with differentiated work and lifestyle alternatives. The three groups differ in consistency of aspirations and values, not by strong versus weak preferences.

Competing social policy.

Preference theory presents a fresh approach to policy development, one that takes description of the variety of lifestyle choices rather than adopting the common one-size-fits-all approach. The heterogeneity of individual and domestic employment strategies in today's culture makes it unfeasible to get precise measures of the impact of family policy.

³⁶ Hakim 2004: 13-14

Policies that treat women as a homogeneous group are bound to fail, or work poorly. Policies that are measured to be neutral between the three preference groups, offering each of them a flexible benefit, will greatly be victorious in terms of the take-ups rates and political popularities. (Hakim. 2003: 58).

Theory of the Heterogeneity of women.

According to Procter and Padfield (1999: 152) 'Women's employment is often characterized as part-time and segregated in low status, poor paid jobs'. A number of theories have used such characteristics as the basis of their explanation of the different location of men and women in the workforce. Bruegel observed women as a 'reserve army of labour' (1979), whereas Barron and Norris as the occupants of the 'secondary labour market' (1976). Such theories have been confounded by significant explanations.

Regarding Hakim (1996) 'theory is neither right nor wrong. It is either useful, or not useful, in making senses of the world'. Hakims heterogeneity theory makes a virtue of the differences of gender. The sociological explanation of this theory is that women choose between two life priorities on the basis of their commitment to either family life or a career, therefore having relevance to preference theory. The majority of women are mainly committed to family life and this account for their location of part-time jobs, low-paid jobs in a restricted range of occupations. This controversial theory also observes the modern 'home-makers', who retain the traditional housewife's commitment. (Procter and Padfield 1999: 153). These are significant factors in influencing women to have a choice in their work and family lives.

Observing inequality and polarization.

Young people growing up in Ireland in the era of the Celtic tiger have observed dramatic transformations in the country, especially with the increase of employment, wealth and modernization. (O'Connor 2001: 2). It is largely known that the concept of youth is socially created and hat what is defined as 'youth' has changed very much over the past thirty years. According to O'Connor (2001: 161) participation in education has very much extended the period to which a young person is likely to be financially dependent on the family and the amount of young people in this situation has increased.

In Ireland in 1996 there were 635,300 young people, of whom half were young women; i.e. women aged between 15 and 24 years old. (Labour force survey 1996). Just over two-fifths (42%) of young Irish women were in the labour force. Approximately the same amount was in education and the remainder in unpaid jobs or home- duties. ³⁷

Subordination

Hakim (1996) argues that the most components of a clarification of women's subordination to men are already in place including:

- Steven Goldberg's theory explaining the inevitability of male dominance and patriarchy based on psycho-physiological processes;
- Heidi Hartmann's theory explaining men's collective organizations to further their own interests against those of women through trade unions, the legal system and political organizations and

³⁷ O'Connor 2001: 161-162

 Gary Becker's rational choice theory giving explanation of the allocation of time and labour to domestic work and employment based on the role specialization of husband and wife. (Procter and Padfield 1999: 153).

According to Procter and Padfield (1999) within this theoretical construction there is a 'missing link', which Hakim aims to supply. This is a diversity of women, which contains two senses. The first is an expressive account about the polarization of women between very dissimilar life encounters. The second is an enlightened claim on the subject of the heterogeneity of female preferences.

Patriarchy: Hartmann's theory.

The major theoretical contribution of feminism has been to explain and elaborate on the concept of patriarchy and to develop explanations for the universal subordination of women, therefore acting as a noteworthy contribution to the change or role of women and work. Lerner (1986) reviews a succession of theories offered from Engel's onwards to explain the creation of patriarchy during the change of hunter-gather societies to the creation of kingship states, and finds all of them either theoretically unsatisfactory or else unsupported by the evidence. Her own explanation of the historical origins of patriarchy rests on the thought that men's control of women's sexuality and reproductive capacity was vital to the basis of private property and inheritance. Therefore this involves the artificial division of women into 'respectable'- that is, attached to one man- and 'Not respectable'. (Hakim 2000: 281)

Hartmann (1979; 1981) defined patriarchy as men's domination of women, specifically men's control over women's work, as illustrated by historical developments in trade union policies in Britain and the US. She added to the concept of patriarchy to

include heterosexual marriage; women's economic dependence on men; male-dominated social institutions; the domestic division of labour; women's disproportionate share of housework and childcare; as a result, all creating the potential for conflicting rather than harmonious interests between spouses or men and women. (Hakim 2004: 8).

Hartmann's theory emphasizes the level to which family-work patterns are results of constraints framed by power relations whereas Walby's theory observes family-work patterns resulted by discourse and beliefs. Hartmann's theory was developed by Walby, initially in a historical study of British trade union policies to prohibit women from paid work and restrict then to less well-paid areas of work through occupational segregation, (Walby 1986) then later in a broader theoretical statement (Walby 1990). Walby defines patriarchy as a system of inter-related social structures and practices through which operates through the private household, the workforce, heterosexuality, culture, male violence and through state support for the ideology of patriarchy, as illustrated by laws that restrict women's employment and control divorce, through welfare states regulations that impose traditional sex-roles. With Hartmann's theory, it emphasizes occupational segregation as the central mechanism used by men to restrict and constrain women's access to income, therefore rendering them financially dependent on the opposite sex, and forcing them to be domestic servants for their husband. She observes that this is not the only mechanism but is the main focal one. (Hakim 2004: 9)

According to Hakim (2004: 10) the exclusion, segregation and unequal pay all achieve the same purpose of limiting women's access to earnings and the independence of spirit that comes with an independent income. Therefore the key element of Hartmann's theory is the notion that men organize collectively to further their own

interests against those of women through the labour market, laws, political organizations, culture and ideology.

Polarization

A number of recent observers have noted the polarization of women's employment between those jobs that are full-time and at whatever level, can give the main basis for sustaining a household, and those jobs that are part-time and can at best be secondary remuneration for a household. (Procter and Padfield 1999: 153).

Crompton and Sanderson (1990) speak of women's 'equality of advantage' in higher-level occupations but this arising alongside a growing 'equality of disadvantage' at the lower levels. Gaillie (1991) argues that full-time jobs have normally been up skilled whether head by men or women. This contrasts then with the deskilling of part-time jobs and again a polarized job market for women. McRae (1991) and Brannen et al (1994) examine the same theme, which put women workers into their family and class context. Women who tend to work always in full-time jobs tend not only to hold higher quality jobs but also to be partnered by men higher in the job hierarchy. Women who break their working life some any particular reason and return to part-time jobs tend to be partnered by men in the lower hierarchy. Therefore the class division in occupations is exacerbated by the polarization trend in women's combination of family and work. (In Procter and Padfield 1999: 153)

The fact that women's work is tending to polarize is thus widely documented. The distinctiveness of Hakims theory from her contention that difference in women's jobs can be analysed and explained in terms of heterogeneity of women. She has two key elements here. The first one is that all women (unlike men) face a choice as to whether their life's

main activity is to be career or home goal-orientated and the second is that the basis of this choice is long-term work 'orientations' which are present and come into play early in the life cycle of women. (Procter and Padfield 1999: 153). Therefore Hakims theory invites us to distinguish women as either career orientated or home orientated or a drifter. The polarization of women's employment.

The evidence of increasing diversity of women's attitudes is strongest for countries such as the USA and Britain and the clearest in employment patterns.

Polarization is a long-term trend, and the degree of change over a single decade for example may be minute. However, the notion of diversity in women's preferences and behaviour does not point clearly enough to the fact that women are now choosing polar opposite lifestyles. (Hakim 2000: 84).

According to Hakim (2000: 85) the polarization of preferences was first notice in small-scaled qualitative studies, such as Sexton's (1979) study of middle class female graduates of collective colleges in the USA. Social scientists agree that there is a new trend towards the polarization of women's employment in the rich modern societies. According to Hakim (2000: 102), some women are achieving the highly paid jobs and interesting work offered by professional and managerial occupations, while others remaining unskilled jobs that offer few benefits and relatively low pay, but are less challenging and do not intrude upon family life.

The polarization of women's work is mirrored in many key elements such as: women who regards themselves as having careers versus jobs, full-time versus part-time work; continuous employment versus fragmented work histories; highly qualified versus unskilled work; and women who see themselves as primary earners versus secondary

earners. Yet most social scientists believe that earnings dispersion for women increased most of all due to the dramatic increase of women in employment in professional and managerial occupations. (Hakim 2000: 102-103).

In the second half of the 20th century, female employment rose in most countries. By the 1990's, it became clear that the labour market measures designed for men did not work at all well for women, that women's employment patterns were more diverse than had been previously realized, and that sex differentials were reduced in size, but were otherwise persistent and stable. (Jonung and Persson 1993: Hakim 1993; 1995; 1996)³⁸.

The polarization of women's employment is due then to a combination of social structural constraints and personal preferences, or 'tastes' for homemaking versus employment. (Hakim 2000: 110). Women who make realistic plans and acquire the necessary skills fare best in the workforce. Those who fare worst are women who aim for an exclusive homemaking career but end up working for economic reasons. (Hakim 1991: 1996)³⁹.

Women and the interconnectedness of work and family.

"To the extent that as sociologists we are interested in ordinary people representative of major population groups rather than in exotic and extraordinary individuals...attention to social roles and the strains experienced within them serves us well. Clearly, it is around daily and enduring roles such as breadwinner and work or marriage and

³⁸ Hakim 2000: 104 ³⁹ Hakim 2000: 110

parenthood that much of our lives are structured through time. It is here that researchers are most likely to find the seedbeds of stress." ⁴⁰

Traditionally studies of work and livelihoods have focused almost wholly on the individual only as a worker, neglecting the fact that he (and commonly the worker is seen as male) typically and at the same time functions as a member of a family unit. Those who have recognized the essential intertwining of work life and life outside work has generally subscribed to either a compensatory or an overflow understanding of work-non-work relationships. (Hakim 2004: 13)

Becker's theory.

According to Becker's Rational choice theory, it is basically economics applied to social institutions, which are more commonly studied, by sociologists or political scientists, such as the family. Where Hakims theory emphasizes individual decision-making on preference, Becker's theory emphasizes rational choice. The most well-known area of Rational choice theory is the 'new home economics' and human capital theory which observes non-economic aspects of the family, including sexual division of labour in homes, the supply of wives to the workforce and decisions of offspring. Rational choice theory focuses on the personal or mutual advantage individual's gain through cooperative exchange. It assumes how people know what they values (have stable preferences) and act rationally to achieve their aims, to maximise or optimize their desires. (Hakim 2004: 11)

Becker's key text 'A treatise on the family', originated in 1981, argues that if they all worked, most married women economize on the effort expended on paid employment by seeking less demanding jobs. It prompts an immediate rejection by some sociologists

⁴⁰ Moen 1989: 31

as having no empirical basis (England and McMreary 1987; Bielby and Bielby 1988), although others showed the thesis to be vindicated by research on the characteristics of part-time workers in Britain (Hakim 1991; 1993; Bradley 1989)⁴¹. Becker argues that even if a husband and wife are intrinsically identical, they gain a division of labour between employment and household work, with one specializing more in the workforce and the other in domestic work. He argues that the sexual division of labour in the home leads women to invest less and men to invest more in their human capital: education, training and career development.

Becker notes that the family is becoming a less important institution as functions are transferred out of it. Education and training for instance are provided by public sector or commercial organizations therefore reducing the reliance on families for these services. Becker's thesis is the fullest development to date of human capital theory and models formulated by Mincer (1962) and extended by others seeking to explain the characteristics of female labour force participation with reference to the family division of labour. (Mincer and Polachek 1974; Padavic and Reskin 2002)⁴².

Work and family.

According to Moen (1989: 135) 'the ties between work and family constitute a fertile ground for analysing the links between macro (societal) and micro (individual) events'. Large-scale social changes in gender-role prescriptions, which are taking place in all superior societies, and ground-breaking social policies such as adopted in Sweden, always adapt to the interconnectedness between the institutions of the family and the

⁴¹ Hakim 2004: 11-12

⁴² Hakim 2004: 13

workplace. However these links also symbolize contingencies in the lives of individual men and women trying to make a living and raise their families as best as they can.

In understanding the sources of stress and well-being one must scrutinize life conditions as they exist at a particular moment and as they change over time. (Moen. 1989: 136). While the nature of the labour force changes as a function of growing maternal employment, family life is also undergoing a corresponding shift in organization and definition. Marriages are being transformed from a complementary relationship, where husband and wife perform different independent tasks, to a parallel relationship in which both spouses are employed and both share the housework duties for home and children. These trends at work, in family life and in gender prescriptions can be expected to have consequences for the emotional states of the men and women experiencing them. (Moen 1989: 35).

The future for women and work.

According to O'Connor (2001: 249) the most primary issue for the future is the relative value of men and women. The differential valuing of women and men lies beneath our ideas of the nature and value of their work in the home and in paid employment. The choice for both men and women in the public and private arena is clear. At the heart it is one of choosing whether they want to enforce the subordination of women, through physical or sexual violence; through the denigration of the value of their work inside and outside the home; through the devaluing of heir skills; through the de0legimation of their emotional power and through their exclusion from centres of power that men define as key. Insofar as men do not desire to do this then it is clearly necessary to eliminate privileges based on gender. (Connell 1995). This therefore will

require a rethinking of the complete nature of man hood, work and power that exemplifies these ideas in the context of a renegotiation of their relationship with women and a restructuring society. (O'Connor 2001: 250).

Women in Ireland are familiar to making choices and creating meaning and identity within structures, which, to a greater or lesser extent, are not of their own choosing. O'Connor (2001: 252) notes that what confirmation we have suggests that the existence of substantial areas of predominantly female employment, and the equation between 'natural' femininity and skills, has been connected with the devaluing of such skills and with lower pay levels in those areas where women are concentrated. There is proof that women are establishing to challenge gender-biased job evaluation schemes, although this can be expected to be strongly resisted.

The position of women then in Irish society is a fluctuation. Many changes have occurred in and out of Ireland concerning emotional power of women in the family, their background and educational achievements and their disproportionate access to positions in the labour market. However, unless its institutional structures reflect and reinforce a positive valuation of womanhood in all its mulitfacetedness then, truly, O' Connor (2001: 257) believes that Ireland is not a country for women in the future...or for men.

Chapter 4.

Methodology and Results.

Statement of research problem.

There has been a significant increase of women and employment in Ireland within recent years that it is difficult for women to cope with a work-life balance.

Statement of sub-problems.

- It is probable that when the significant increase in women's participation in paid
 work is examined, the growth in part-time employment reflects choices around
 care as an important social practice and continuity in the unequal gendered
 division of labor in the home.
- 2. It is assumed that there is a contradiction in women's labour force participation.
 On one side there is a notion of women as concentrated in the lowest grade, leased skilled jobs with poor employment benefits and prospects. On the other side women report high levels of satisfaction with their jobs, often great contentment than that reported by men with their higher status and better paid jobs
- It is hypothesized that childcare is in crisis because more parents, women in particularly women, are stressed out trying to balance work and family responsibilities.
- 4. It is likely that it is more young women who are married, that struggle to cope on having a sense of balance on both family issues and employment choices.

Introduction

Within this methodology chapter I want to look at the research I completed in order to carry out my study on life-work balance of women. I will discuss the research method used to collect the data for my research question. I will also examine the sources I used to collect data and the methods of coding and data analysis. I will in addition observe the range of actions and limitations of my study and their implication. Concluding I will present and analysis the results I found in my study and discuss these results in the next chapter. In my results I will discuss three groups of women, those in Full-time work, Part-time work and home-centered.

Research Methods of data collection

Research methods are a vital element of the social sciences. They have an importance to their programme and give a means through which their academic progress is enhanced⁴³. Social research includes everything involved in the efforts of social scientists to 'tell about society'. (Becker 1968)⁴⁴. There are many methods in which I could have examined my research question of the role and change of women and work in Ireland, whether it is qualitative or quantitative approaches. The research strategy in which I decided to perform for my study was a quantitative approach. The research method I choose was self-administered questionnaires.

Quantitative analysis focuses on the notion that the best route to understanding basic patterns and relationships is to examine patterns across many cases. Therefore it is achievable to average out peculiarities of individual cases and produce an image of social life that is purified of phenomena that are specific to any case or small groups of cases.

⁴³ May. 2001: 1

⁴⁴ Ragin, C. 1994: 6

Quantitative research tends to be more prescriptive than qualitative research investigates. It is a method of survey analysis with a purpose to explain social life; it aims at testing theories and it is etiological. It makes use of random sampling and it employs high levels of measurements by hand or computer. What makes quantitative research is the use of facts and figures. It sacrifices detail and in-depth knowledge of an issue to that of general statistics. (Ragin 1994: 131).

Through the use of *survey*, which is a series of self-report measures, administered through interview or a written questionnaire, I have chosen to carry out my study with the use of self-administered questionnaires. This type of method is an instrument used to collect information from people who complete the instruments themselves, where the stimulus in such questionnaires is exclusively visual. (Bourque and Fielder 2003:2). I believe that the respondents would have more freedom to be honest with their answers on their experience and attitudes with a work-life balance in our changing society. With the use of eighty self- administered questionnaires, I used both closed and open-ended questions.

The population I used was that of women of any age within Dunboyne, county Meath. The population of Meath in the last four years has grown (+28,616) by over a fifth from 2002-2006. I choose to examine the north of Dunboyne, that of the Summer Hill Road, where there are recent developed housing estates. Dunboyne's population has grown in the last four years from 7,757 people in 2002 to 8,691 people in 2006, therefore showing a percentage change of 12%⁴⁵. Most of this growth of population then was due to the new residential developments in the north and east part of the town. Dunboyne (Dun buinne) a dormitory town for Dublin city has a history stretched back to the middle

⁴⁵ www.cso.ie Census of population 2006: Preliminary report

ages and has seen major changes since the early 1980's as suburban housing estates were developed around the fringes of the traditional town⁴⁶.

I used probability sampling, as every member of the target population has a known, nonzero probability of being included in the sample. Through the use of stratified random sampling, the population is divided into sub-groups and a random sample is then selected from each subgroup⁴⁷. For my sample I used a recently built major housing estate, where I choose every third house, therefore allowing women to respond to my questionnaire in which they had the option of two days to fill it out. I believe that this method was the best approach for my study, as this new residential state in Dunboyne has many new and young women and families and stratified sampling gave me the opportunity to observe different work-life experiences of women in today's working environment.

Sources of data

The research question for my study was observing the changing role of women and work and I hypothesised that the more women are working, the more it is difficult to contain a work-life balance in today's society. Therefore the object of my study was that of women of any age in the Dunboyne area, as mentioned. Designing my questionnaire, I observed five themes containing demographics; employment experience and behaviour; partners roles; childcare and finally attitudes and values to issues concerning women and work. From this I was able to observe women's lifetime experiences, goals, attitudes and family matters relating to balancing work and family life.

www.wikipedia.org Fink. 2003: 11

The first draft of the questionnaire was completed with 56 questions as well as the ethical guidelines and note of confidentiality to each respondent. I also added my Phone number and e-mail address in case problems encountered. The completed questionnaire was then tested by a pilot study to six women using the same administrative procedure for the main study. A cover letter was provided explaining who I was and the objective of my study, along with a feedback form to suggest any problems or confusions encountered while filling out the survey. I issued these surveys on the 6th of June and collected them the following day at the same time. This test was an accomplishment, yet I added one question (Q40b) as 50% of the women were inclined to add to the question 40a 'If you had a choice would you quit your job to look after your family or continue to work?', that they would work part-time rather than tick the appropriate boxes given to answer (shown in appendix). Consequently I added a question asking women continuing to work, would you work part-time or full-time? (Q40b).

From the success of the pilot testing I distributed 80 questionnaires at random to every third house in the residential estate on the 12th of June, and those either not at home, women not available to answer the survey, or those who did not want to participate, I simply carried on to the next house marking the house number for me to return and collect the questionnaires on the 14th of June. No names were needed only the number of the household. The purpose of my study was to discover general trends of women and work and get an over all picture of their work-life balance, as well as how work affected family life or family life affected women and work.

The advantage of using self-administered questionnaires was that of timing, as once all surveys are given out, all respondents receive it simultaneously. They also had a

low cost, as there were no stamps or telephone bills. What's more, the self- administered questionnaires were easy to implement, as the number of personnel needed was low since there was no need for long interviews. These types of questionnaires are simple and short with fewer personnel and less complicated procedures to process them. (Bourque and Fielder. 2003: 12). Overall the response rate was high quality and even though some questions were not answered, this did not have a remarkably effect on my overall findings.

Data analysis and methods of coding.

On the 14th of June I collected the 64 questionnaires that were completed. From this I had to code the data collected. Data processing is the link between data collection and data analysis, involving the changing of the observations gathered in the field into a system of categories and the translation of these categories into codes amenable to quantitative analysis. Coding then is a process of classifying responses into meaningful categories involving combining the detailed information into a limited number of categories that enable simple descriptions of the data and allow for statistical analyses. (Nachmias: 1976: 143). It is therefore putting answers into numerical data for analysis of statistics, which symbolize sources of data on changing outlooks on particular social issues, available for examination. With the use of statistics, they aid societies, such as Dunboyne, to understand the dynamics of their own culture as well as monitoring trends of civilization. ⁴⁸

Firstly I gathered all the questionnaires and put numbers 1-64 on them to identify them for data analysis. With each questionnaire and each question I had a coding

⁴⁸ May. 2001: 73

guideline, which shows numerical codes to all the possible answers for each question. The 49 closed-ended questions were straightforward as a number was given directly to the possible answers. For example using the marital status question (Q2a) the numbers 1-8 was used to represent a possible answer shown to the respondent. Coding number 1 for instance represented 'married' whereas code number 3 represented 'single'. With the 7 open- ended questions, these were more difficult to code as there were many different answers given by different women indicating their personal attitudes and experiences. When observing each questionnaire and the open—ended questions, there much time and attentiveness was needed. Yet similar answers rose for many questionnaires.

Secondly as the coding guide was finalized and each question was coded to each possible answer, I had to analysis the data. I used SPSS. The *statistical package for social scientists*, is a computer software package that is particularly designed to carry out statistical operations and ease data analysis, which by far, according to R.L. Miller et al (2002), the most popular statistical package used by social scientists⁴⁹. This programme, up-dated each year, has a great advantage as it enables the user to score and analysis quantitative data fast in many ways. It therefore helps to eliminate long hours spent on working out results, carrying out involved calculations and making mistakes by hand. It also helps to use more complicated and more statistical techniques that you may not be able to do by hand.

SPSS gives its users the chance to use more complex and more suitable statistical techniques. (Bryman. 2001: 15). The first stage involved opening SPSS file and imputing the questions data from the questionnaire into the variable view. Once this was completed, the answers received from the questionnaires were imputed into the data

⁴⁹ Miller, R. et al. 2002: 12

view. Therefore cases and variables are added and questions open and closed- ended are inserted into the file. Any mistakes made are picked up by the programme and can be corrected there and then rather than going through the whole process by hand and realizing errors at the end. The programme informs you what the fault of the question is if something is incorrect with the form of instructions inserted, but not if you have told the computer to add up the wrong set of numbers. Therefore 'it questions the presentation but not the objectives of instructions'. (Bryman. 2001:16). When all data is correctly inserted, my analysis was carried out.

I compiled *frequency tables* identifying the general distributions of variables reacting with the questions. This technique allowed me to summarize the data as a whole as well as individually, by observing the mean, mode and the median as well as the standard deviation, which measures the dispersion and is found by working out the square root of the variance. I used *tables and charts* to envisage the frequencies with the option of bar charts, pie charts and line charts, as a result signifying data in graphical form, as I will show. (In Appendix) I also undertook some statistical tests such as cross-tabulations that allowed me to compare the frequency of cases situated in one variable in two or more unconnected groups of another variable. With the use of a chi-Square test, it is based on comparing the expected with the observed frequency in each cell. (Bryman. 2001: 123). Once I had a full print out of my results of the frequencies, I put the results into charts on the SPSS programme as well as the Excel. I will use excel and SPSS charts for visualization.

Range of actions and limitations.

From my research on the change and position of women and work in Ireland observing the family and gender issues, I wanted to examine if women today can cope to balance work and family life and their attitudes and values, in a recently built residential area. The extent of my study is a challenge to determine the general trends, facts and figures of women and their balance of work-life commitments and achieve an overall illustration of the position and change of women and work in Ireland.

reliable and interesting results for statistical analysis. This choice of research method was of benefit as it was a cheap and quick means to administer, with no interviewer variability and it was convenience to respondents as women could complete the questionnaire in their own time and speed. My study was advantageous as the respondents asked to fill out the questionnaire were of a mixed age and had different backgrounds, consequently giving various work-life experiences and attitudes to women and work in Ireland. The women who responded to my questionnaire were happy to partake in the study and were interested in what my results who be. From the population I choose, there were high-priced large houses, with many new expensive cars in the driveways and children's toys in the front garden. Many of the women were formally dressed and others were in casual clothes. Regarding the lack of time to complete the study, I feel that I gained successive overall results and response.

As regards the limitations of my study, I would have liked to expand on answers given in open-ended questions as there was very interesting and eye-catching answers and attitudes women had to say on certain subjects. But because it was a self-

administering survey, this was not capable. Therefore I could not probe respondents to further explain an answer they have given that could be expanded on.

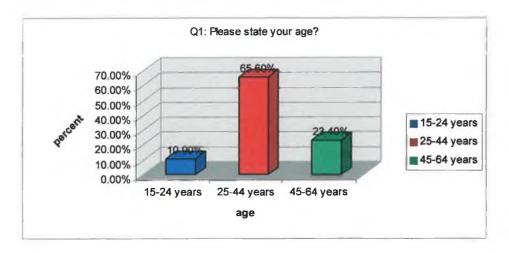
Overall my study for a minor thesis was accomplished even though there may have been limitations. This study was an appealing and straightforward result in acknowledging the question of women and work and their change and role in an expanding Irish society, observing their capability to balance their commitments.

Analysis and presentation of data collected

Within this section of my methodology, I want to present and analysis the results I collected for my research carried out in Dunboyne to women of any age, which took place from the 12th of June to the 14th of June 2006. In the next chapter, I will discuss these results. By distributing 80 self-administrating questionnaires to a stratified random sample in a recently new developed housing estate, I surveyed a variety of women working and not working, with different backgrounds and experiences. With the use of closed and open-ended questions this sacrifices detail and in-depth knowledge of a question to that of general statistics for the use of facts and figures. From the 80 questionnaires, I received 64 back, which I was satisfied with. I will observe the themes in which I examined in my questionnaires, highlighting the main findings of my research. I will also put the questions numbers relevant to the findings, which the questionnaire can be viewed in the appendix. All charts are shown in the appendix.

Section A: Demographics.

To begin with, the questionnaire commences with closed-ended questions of demographics, which illustrate women's background and personal traits. The first question observes *the age of women* asked to complete the survey. The highest age category of women was 24-44 years (65.6%) compared to 15-24 years (10.9%).



In question **2a** stating women's marital status, those women married was 81.3% compared to 6.3% living as married and 7.8% separated. 3.1% of women were divorced and 1.6% was never married. When asked (**Q2b**) if the 81.3% of married women lived with their partner before they wedded, 39.1% said that they did live with their partner before marriage whereas 59.4% did not.

Surprisingly, 87.5% of women were Roman Catholic (Q3) compared to only 7.8% being Church of Ireland. 3.1% were Presbyterian and 1.3% Islam, therefore showing that in a small area of Dunboyne it has a growing phenomena of religions.

Observing the background of women in Dunboyne, only half of the women were born in Leinster. (Q4). Women from both Connaught and Muster were 12.5% to each province, whereas women born in Ulster showed to be 9.4%. Interestingly, 15.6% of

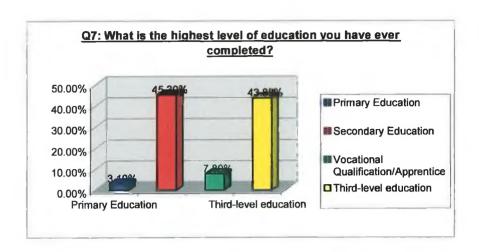
women were born outside of Ireland in places such as England, Scotland, France and Zambia. Therefore (Q5) from the women who were born in Leinster, only 25% have always lived in Dunboyne compared to 75% who have lived elsewhere.

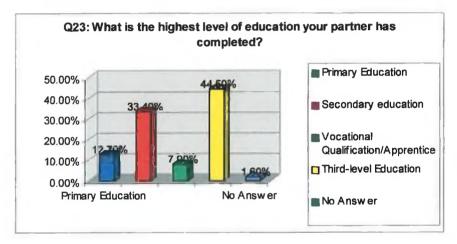
When asked *if all women had children* (**Q6a**), all women responded yes. Asking how many children lived with them (**Q6b**), 76.6% of women had 1-3 children living with them compared to 17.2% of women having 3-5 children living with them at present. One did not answer.

		Do you have children? Yes	
		Count	Col %
If yes, How many children are living with you?	1-3	49	77.8%
	3-5	11	17.5%
	5-7	2	3.2%
	7+	1	1.6%

Section B: Employment experiences and behaviour.

Within this section, I ask closed- ended question looking at past and present personal experiences of women and work. Beginning with a basic question to all women, (Q7) 'What is the highest level of education you have ever completed? 29 women completed secondary education compared to 28 of all the women asked, completed third level education. Compared to their partners highest level of education completed, (Q23) 21 men completed secondary education and 28 of women's partners completing third-level education.





In Question 8 regarding principle status, those women working for payment was 51.6% compared to 37.5% of women who decided to look after their families. 1.6% was unemployed and 4.7% were working from home. 4.7% of women had other options such as being on a career break. Therefore there are 40 women in the labour force and 24 women looking after their family. With reference to women working, 26.6% (17) were at work full-time and 35.9% (23) were at work on a part-time basis. (Q9).

There were many reasons to ask why women were working part-time (Q10).

The most common answer was that women wanted to attend to their family commitments (21.9%) as well as work, therefore observing a work-life balance. 1.6% accounts both for women in education and having another job. Regarding women being finically secured

but working because they want to, 9.4% women were in this category and 7.8% of women earn enough part-time and are happy that way rather than full-time work. 53.1% were not applicable and 4.7% did not answer.

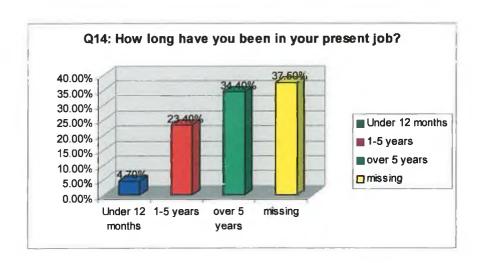
Q11: Where you in a job during the last month? This question was asked to all women. The results show that 60.9% were in a job in the last month contrasting to 39.1% not being in a job. Those in a full-time job, 17 women were in a job in the last month and 21 women who work part-time were in a job in the last month. Two of the women working part-time now were not in a job in the last month. With this question it identifies if women are flexible to their work. Whether they are in long or short-term jobs.

Women not working.

Q12a focuses on that issue of women who are not working. 39.1% women who don't work want to have primary responsibilities of their families needs. Yet, from the women who were not working, 21.9% said that they did occasional or voluntary work from time to time with comparison to 23.4% not doing any occasional or voluntary work. 54.7% were not applicable as they worked. (Q12b).

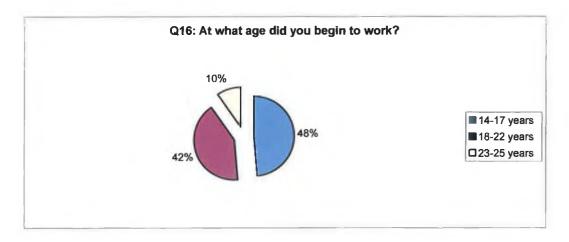
Women working.

The next set of questions deals with women who are working and all women's experience with working. 21 women, who work, are employed within the public sector. 17 women working are employed in the private sector. 25 women did not answer. (Q13). 22 Women, who work, showed that they were in the same job for over five years. 3 women were in the same job under twelve months and 15 women were in the same job between 1-5 years. 24 women did not answer. (Q14).



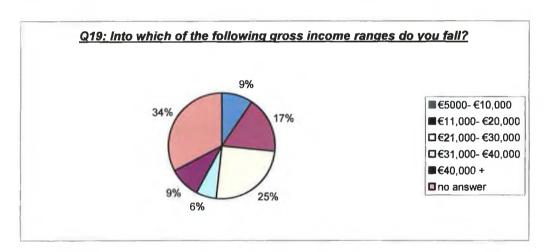
To examine the extent of change of women and work, I asked all women *if they worked* before they had their children (Q15a). 93.8% did work compared to 4.7 who did not work at all before they had their children. One woman did not answer. Following this question, I thought it was appropriate to ask women if they worked full-time or part-time before they had children. (Q15b). 93.8% of women worked full-time before they had their children compared to only 1 woman working part-time. 4.7% did not answer.

Continuing with the questions on the change and experience of women at work, I found that women began to work at a variety of ages. The common age to begin to work was 18 years (22.6%) where 21% of women began to work at 17 years old. (Q16)



(Q17). Have you always been in the same line of work since you began working? 45.3% of women have always been in the same line of work compared to 50% who have not. 4.7% had no answer to give. From this question, I wanted to ask the respondents how many jobs they had throughout their lifetime. (Q18). Interestingly 54.8% had 1-3 jobs throughout their life. 19.4% had 3-5 jobs; 16.1% had 5-7 jobs and finally 9.7% had more than 7 jobs in their life.

Concerning the women who work at present, I asked what was the gross income they received? (Q19). The common category women received on a whole was ϵ 21,000- ϵ 30,000. Only 3 women working full-time earned more then ϵ 40,000, where the common amount for part-time women working was between ϵ 11,000 and ϵ 15,000.



Observing work-life balance, I wanted to ask women working how much time they gave to their work (Q20), and family (in which I will show). 44.4% worked less than 30 hours a week compared to 17.5% working more than 30 hours at any given week. 38.1% did not answer. Therefore this result indicates that women would rather commit to work less and family more as it is shown less time is given to employment.

Section C: Partner's roles.

Within this section I wanted to observe the issue of gender concerning women's partners roles and status in women's lives. **Q22** asks to *describe women's partners'* principal status? As I assumed, there was a high amount of men working for payment. 84.4% of men worked compared o 1.6% unable to work. 1.6% of men were in education at the present time and 4.7% were retired from their employment. 4.7% of women did not answer this question and 3.1% choose their partners principal status as 'other', such as self- employed or ex- partner.

Firstly looking at gender division of labour, (Q24) 14.1% of women believe themselves to be the chief wage earner in their household whereas 73.4% show that their partner is the chief wage earner. 12.5% observe that both themselves and their partner are equal wage earners of their home.

Secondly when looking at housework, Q25: Do you feel that the amount of work you do in the house is: 19 women believe the amount of housework done in the home is too much; 41 women believe it is about right and 4 women believe the amount of housework done is not enough. When asked does your partner help with the housework? (Q26a), 75% of all women say that their partners do help with the housework compared to only 20.3% who believe that there partner does not contribute enough to housework and equal household division of labour. 3.1% gave no answer and 1.6% was missing. Therefore to sum up this idea, 48.4% of women believe that there is an equal division of labour in the home and 45.3% disagree. 6.3% had no opinion. (Q26b).

Concerning family life, from the 20 partners who modified their working hours after their children where born (Q27), those who answered, 12 of the women's partners

decreased their working hours, whereas 5 partners increased their time at work (Q28). 38 of the women's partners did not modify their working hours outside the home after their children were born and 6 women had no opinion.

Section D: Childcare.

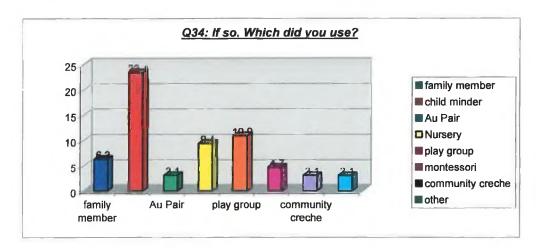
In order to observe a work-life balance pattern of women in Dunboyne, the family and childcare issues had to be identified. In answering if childcare responsibilities had a bearing on women's decision to work (Q29), 59.4% of all women answered yes whereas 12.5% did not believe that their childcare responsibilities had a bearing on their decision to work. 28.1% did not answer.

		Are you currently employed on a full-time or part-time basis?							
		Full-time		Part-time		Not applicable			
		Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %		
Have your childcare responsibilities had a bearing on your decision to work?	Yes	11	28.9%	14	36.8%	13	34.2%		
	No	2	25.0%	4	50.0%	2	25.0%		
	No answer	4	22.2%	5	27.8%	9	50.0%		

As I observed in Q20 to how much women gave time to work commitments, Q30 shows that 54.7% of women give more than 7 hours a day to their family needs. 10.9% spend between 1-3 hours with their family and 32.8% spend between 4-6 hours a day. 1.6 did not answer. Therefore showing that more women want to spend time with families rather than in employment. From those who answered for instance, 20 women looking after their family spend more than seven hours with their family whereas those working full-time, 9 women said they would spend between 4-6 hours a day with their family compared to 11 women working part-time spending more than seven hours a day with their family.

Childcare responsibilities then are a crucial topic for mothers, especially working mothers. 26.6% handle childcare responsibilities on their own compared to 62.5% sharing duties with their partners. 9.4% women do/ did not handle childcare responsibilities, as they did not need to. (I.e. they did not work). (Q31).

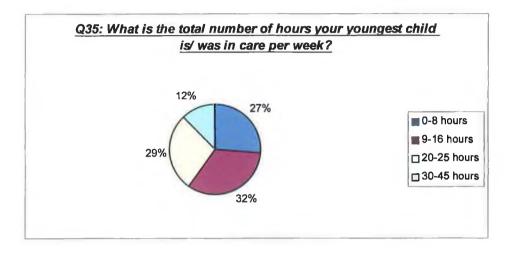
Using childcare facilities, 62.5% of all women used these services where as 20.3% did not. 17.2% was not applicable. (Q33). With much choice of childcare today, I thought that it was appropriate to ask what type of childcare facilities women used for their children when they are in employment. The most used type of childcare with all women asked was the use of a child minder, 23.4%. With all women in full-time work, 30.8% of women used a child-minder whereas commonly those women in part-time work, 56.6% used a childminder. 33.3% of all women caring for their families use a playgroup for their children.



Asking each of the women who had their children in care, the amount of time their children were in childcare per week, there were a variety of answers given in the open-ended Question (35). 12.5% of the total women did not use childcare services. Surprisingly, the highest amount of hours a child was in care during any given week was 20 hours, partly due to family members and partners minding children also. Only 5

women who worked full-time had children in childcare between 30-40 + hours a week.

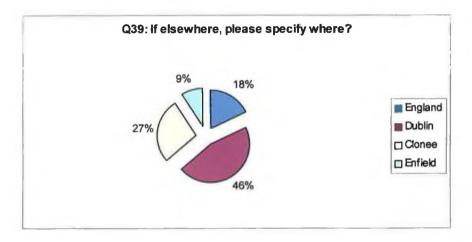
15 women working part-time had children in care for 20 hours or less a week.



From research completed on the debate of the high cost of childcare in Ireland today (In literary Review Pg 24), 27.6% of women in Dunboyne paid up to €50- €100 a week compared to 22.4% having no cost, as families look after their children or they work out flexitime between parents to look after children. 17.2% pay €50 or under a week for childcare whereas 5.2% pay more that €200 a week. (Q36). From this outcome of child care facilities, 37.5% of respondents were very satisfied with their facilities on one hand and on the other hand, 7.1% were dissatisfied. 19.6% had no opinion, and 7.1% were just happy with it. (Q37).

Q38 Are/Where your children in Dunboyne or somewhere else? 62.3% of children were in childcare in Dunboyne in contrast to 22.6% being elsewhere. 15.1% had no answer. The results show that women who worked who had their children in care elsewhere were in places such as England (2 women); Dublin (5 women); Clonee (3 women) or in Enfield (1 woman). Therefore most women used childcare in Leinster,

whereas other women who lived in England used childcare services there and not in Dunboyne.



My study found that with all the women asked, if they had a choice (Q40a), 66.7% would continue to work where as 33.3% would rather quit their jobs. Those who would continue to work if they had a personal choice, 83% would work part-time and 17% would like to work full-time. (Q40b).

Section E: Attitudes and values.

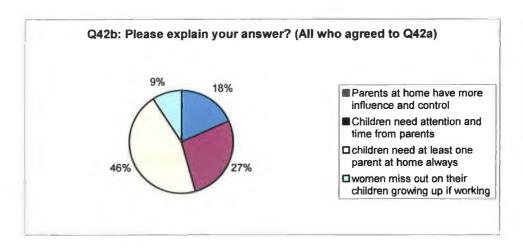
Within this final section of my questionnaire, I wanted to find out what attitudes and behaviours women had to work and the issues that concern women and employment in Ireland. 34 women working felt that the job they were in was up to standard with their experiences and abilities, which I will discuss. (Q41a). When I asked all women if they believed that mothers being at work outside the home has an affect on their family life, the results show that 80.3% of all women agreed with this statement, whereas 19.7% disagreed. 19 women looking after their family said they agreed a mother working outside the home has an affect on family life. Surprisingly 13 women working full-time agreed to this question and 19 women working part-time agreed also.

(Q42a) I asked what the reason was for choosing this answer. 23.4% of all women said that,

"Children need at least one parent in the home, acting
As a role model, to look after the children"

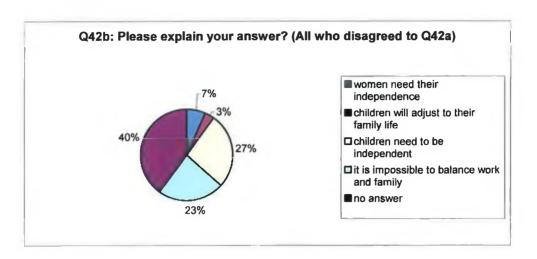
Some of those who agreed to O42a:

23.5% of women working full-time agreed that children need attention and time from parents whereas 21.7% of women working part-time agreed that parents who stayed in the home have more influence and control. 8.3% of women caring for their families agreed that women miss out on their children growing up if they are working outside the home.



Some of those who disagreed to 042a.

Those who disagreed that mothers working outside the home has an affect on their families lives, 17.6% of women working full-time believed that *children need to be independent*. 4.3% of part-time women working said that *women need their independence*. Yet 16.4% of women caring for their families said that *it is impossible to balance work and family*.



Observing that March the 1st is work-life balance day in Ireland, 85.9% of all women agreed that it was difficult to balance these commitments in today's changing societies. (Q43). Half of all women believe that the facilities and services in Ireland for childcare need more attention. 34.4% feel that it is poor in this country compared to other countries and 15.6% consider being happy with childcare services in Ireland. (Q44).

From the Budget 2006, the Government stated that children under six were to receive €1000 per annum. When I asked all respondents their attitudes to this 21.9% considered that this amount was not enough. 17.2% were happy with the amount and 12.5% believed that this matter needs more attention. The annual rate did not apply to 4.7% of the respondents where as 9.4% saw that the €1000 should be given to older children, not just to six years of age. 10.9% said that they would rather see a change in policies than money that may be used for parent's benefits rather than children's. (Q45). For instance, 7 women working full-time believed that this amount was not enough whereas 5 women working part-time believed that this amount was not enough. 5 women who cared for their family full-time believed that this introduction was a good idea and 4

women from this group believed that the amount should be for older children, up to school age.

Concerning women and their employment status, 43.8% were just satisfied with it compared to 4.7% who were dissatisfied with their Job. (Q46). I wanted to conclude my questionnaire on issues in Dunboyne. So I asked women if they believed that there were plenty of job opportunities in the town. 40 women said there were not enough jobs in Dunboyne for women and 24 women felt there were. (Q47).

		In Dunboyne do you believe that there are plenty of job opportunities for women?					
		Ye	s	No			
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %		
How would you describe your present principle status	Working for payment	14	58.3%	19	47.5%		
	Unemployed	1	4.2%				
	Looking after family	7	29.2%	17	42.5%		
	Working from home	2	8.3%	1	2.5%		
	Other			3	7.5%		

Finally, 53.1% of all women also agreed that there was a lack in childcare facilities in Dunboyne where as 25% disagreed and believed there were enough childcare facilities in the area. 9 women working full-time agree that there is a lack of childcare facilities in Dunboyne compared to 12 women working part-time who agree to this statement.

		Do you agree or disagree that there is a lack of childcare facilities in Dunboyne?							
		Agree		Disagree		No opinion			
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %	Count	Col %		
How would you describe your present principle status	Working for payment	16	47.1%	8	50.0%	9	64.3%		
	Unemployed					1	7.1%		
	Looking after family	13	38.2%	7	43.8%	4	28.6%		
	Working from home	2	5.9%	1	6.3%				
	Other	3	8.8%						

Therefore this concludes my analysis of the results found in my research on women and work. I would have liked to see more answers given to certain open-ended questions that were not answered. Overall I was satisfied with the response rate and the variety of answers given.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Introduction.

Within this section of my MA dissertation, I will discuss the main findings of my study on the change and role of women and work in Ireland, exploring women's attitudes and experiences in coping with balancing work and family life. From completing my study in Dunboyne, County Meath from the 12th to the 14th of June 2006, 64 women out of 80 responded to my self-administrated questionnaires. Observing the use of sources, I want to enlighten the main findings of my study (as shown in Chapter 5) and how they fit into the extant literature on the topical study area, as well as illustrating the imperative developments I found in my analysis. I will observe three groups of women, Full-time workers, part-time workers and Home centered women.

The modifications of Women and work.

With the role of women today in Ireland compared to those in recent decades, the change of the status of women and their role as a worker, mother, and a female in Ireland has much to talk about. When I started this study from a simple statistic showing the amount of women in the workforce has increased, from 1985 at 30% to over 49% in 2004⁵⁰, I assumed that women and employment has an effect on family life and gender issues and vice a versa. Therefore in deciding to question women's personal experiences and attitudes on the work-life balance, I wanted to discover the facts and figures of how women cope in today's changing society and how they combine their life of family time

⁵⁰ CSO. Statistical yearbook 2005. Pg 28.

and employment. Choosing Dunboyne as a personal choice, for the reason that I live there, I set out to discover, women of any age, their behaviour and values to this matter at hand. My concluding remark of this study and from examining Catherine Hakims work on her *Preference theory*, is that even though there has been so much research done on the issue of women and work especially since the 1960's, this theory concerned primary with the conditions of life for women and the social changes creating a new scenario for women in the 21st century, is an underlying theme of preference, diversity and choice.⁵¹

Hakim believes that women choose between three choice in life, that of being work-centered, home-centered or adaptive. 52 Within my study, 98.4% of the women worked before they had their children full-time (Q15a). Yet now 39.1% of women choices for not working were because they want to commit to their families (Q12a). Observing then the choices women make concerning their employment status in Dunboyne, 22.6% preferred to begin to work from the age of 20 compared to 19.4% at the age of 16. (Q16)

Concerning Preference theory, I believe that women have a structural choice for either staying at home with their families full-time or working part-time. 38.2% of women in the home agreed that there is a lack of childcare facilities in Dunboyne and 35.3% of women working part-time agreed that there is lack of such facilities in the area. 47.5% of women working believed that there was not enough job opportunities for women in Dunboyne and 42.5% of the women who were home-centered thought that there was not enough job opportunities for women in the location. This result shows that

⁵¹ Hakim.2000: 272

⁵² Hakim 2004: 14

it is therefore difficult to balance work and family life in Dunboyne due to lack of resources and opportunities.

From an international study done in Ireland, the United Kingdom and Denmark on Women and Employment, it was found that the amount of women who worked aged 14 and over in Ireland, from 1966-1971, decreased from 19.6% to 18.8%. ⁵³ Therefore more women work from an older age due to resources such as education, where in my study, I found that the highest level of education women completed was a third-level Non- degree (25%) and 10.9% completed a postgraduate degree (Q7). Within my study 39.1% of married women are working for payment compared to 4.7% single women working. 34.4% of married women are looking after their family where as 1.6% of single women are not working as they are looking after family. (Q2a & Q8)

When the significant increase in women's participation in paid work is examined, the growth in part-time employment reflects choices around care as an integral social practice and continuity in the unequal gendered division of labour in the home. Drawing on empirical research, despite significant changes in the rate of women's employment the emergent consensus is that continuity rather than change is the defining feature of women's position relative to that of men in both employment and the family. While women with young children have increased their employment rates across the social spectrum, the majority of these employees are in low-paid, part-time jobs. (Coakley: 2005:10). Within my study, 17 of the women work full-time compared to 23 of women working part-time. 24 women did not work. (Q9)

⁵³ Cornu. 1974

As a result there are a higher percentage of women working part-time in Dunboyne. 3 of the respondents work from home for a wage full-time. Women work part-time for many reasons, the main being to attend family commitments and needs (43.5%). 8.6% either have another job or are in education and it was found that 21.7% work part-time because they want to even though they are finically secured. 21.7% of women also believe that they only work part time because they earn enough working this way, they do not need to work part-time. (Q10).

When observing choices for women returning to work after childbirth, McRae (1993) examined the relationship between women's employment intentions during pregnancy and their labour market preference after childbirth. McRae suggests that there is likely to be an increased division of advantage and disadvantages among women in the labour market, and among families in general. Within my findings, 15% of women, if they had a choice to continue to work, would work full-time. On the other hand, 85% said that they would only continue to work if they could work on a part-time basis. (Q40a & Q40b).

Working conditions of women.

A study competed in four countries Ireland, France, Denmark and Italy in 2002 on work-life balance dilemmas, found that respondents from the four countries, on average, had spent 38 hours per week at work; however men had a significantly longer working week than women (42 hours on average for men and 34 hours for women). Irish men had the longest working week (45 hours) and Irish women had the shortest. (32 hours)⁵⁴. What I discovered in my study is that the 11 women who work 30 hours or more a week,

⁵⁴ Margaret Fine- Davis. 2002: 67

27.3% spend 7 hours or more with their families each day compared to 28 women who work less than 30 hours a week, 42.9% spend 7 or more hours with their families on an average day. 25 women did not either work or answer. (Q20 & Q30) Therefore when observing Hakims finding on the choice women make in life, more women tend to be home centered or adaptive.

According to Moen's study on working parents in Sweden during the 1970's, she found that possibly no working conditions is more central to family life than the time and timing of working hours. Given the physical separations of work and home, time on the job is inevitable time spent away from family. Moen found that Swedish parents believed time to be the most stress-producing feature of their jobs⁵⁵.

The average employee has been at work for a little over 15 years and has spent an average of 8 ½ years in their current employment. On average, male employees have spent a total of 17 years at work while women have spent 13.4 years in employment. Public sector workers have spent an average of 12.6 years in their current employment and 18.8 years in all jobs. In the private have been at work, in total, for just over 14 years ⁵⁶. Within my findings, women who are working, 33.3% work in the public sector whereas 27% work in the private. 39.7% did not answer. (Q13). 36.4% of women who are in their job over five years running are very satisfied in their work compared to 9.1% who are dissatisfied. Those in there job for the last 1-5 years, 20% are very happing with the work they are doing where as 13.3% are just happy to be there. Those women (7.5%) who are in their jobs under 12 months, all are either satisfied (66.7%) or very satisfied (33.3%) with their present job. (Q14 & Q46).

55 Moen. 1989: 64

⁵⁶ CSO: Employment survey 2003.

There is then a contradiction in women's labour force participation. On one side there is a notion of women as concentrated in the lowest grade, leased skilled jobs with poor employment benefits and prospects. On the other side women report high levels of satisfaction with their jobs, often great contentment than that reported by men with their higher status and better paid jobs. (Hakim 1991:101). 72.3% of women in Dunboyne believe that they are up to their experiences and abilities in the work they are in. (Q41a). This finding has many interesting optimistic and pessimistic answers. (Q41b). Some of the positive answers given within my study to the question of women believing they are up to standard with their abilities and experiences to their current employment status, include women having the qualifications for the job they are in and many women's jobs suits their family life and needs, which is an important aspect for many women in Dunboyne. Numerous of the women work in childcare or education and felt that their experience as a mother and a carer in the home gives them more of an ability to do their job accurately and enjoy it. Other women were recently promoted in their jobs therefore indicating their ability to accomplish what they are experienced and qualified to do.

On the other hand, those with a pessimistic view on this topic feel that they are doing a job they like but believe they are capable of doing better in the workforce. For instance one woman said:

"I'm working in childcare at the moment because the hours suit me, it's close to home and I work when my children are in school, so this lets me have my own independence and be there for the kids at the same time. But I believe that I could do more and I hope to go back to college next year".

Further women have chosen jobs such as part-time office work because they want to spend more time with their families. Several women believe that they are not using their skills from previous working and education qualifications they received before they had children. Another woman said that she only took the position in her job for the hours it gave her rather than for the job itself.

As a result, the issues of women and employment show that there is a combination of preferences. Firstly the choice for women, either who want to work, or those who want to care for their families? Secondly, the preference for women who are working, weather many work because they have to and other women work because they are qualified and have the practice for the job they are doing and thirdly, the option of either part-time work or full-time work. From this study, many women work part-time to combine family life and some women work full-time as they need to in order to earn for family needs and have their own independence.

Within the national employment survey conducted by CSO in 2003, employees earned an average of €16.41 per hour in March 2003. Men eared €17.74 and women earned €14.93 an hour. In all occupation sectors, not surprisingly men earned more than women. 6.3% of women in Dunboyne earned under €5000 whereas 9.4% earned over €40,000 a year. 15.6% of respondents earned between €11,000 and € 15,000 a year compared to 14.1% earning €26,000 to €30,000. With this finding, there is less women earning a high and low amount of wage where as more women are earning an annual average wage of €20,000 to €30,000 in Dunboyne (Q19). From the National Employment survey 2003, it was stated that the average annual wage women received in total within the economic sector is €23,737.

Women, work and Division of labor.

All human societies recognize biological differences between men and women, and the differentiation of masculine and feminine social roles seem to be universal, with or without the possibility of an intermediate position, temporary or permanent. (Hakim 2004: 201). Official statistics reveal that all persons aged 15 and upwards at work have risen from 1,513,600 in 1999 at work to 1,857,400 at work in 2005. Males within this category has risen from 917,800 in 1999 to 1,080,600 in 2005 compared to females, were in 1999 539,800 rose to 776,800 women working for a wage in 2005 ⁵⁷.

Within my study, the main finding was that 20% of the respondent's partners working have a third level non-degree whereas 18.5% working have their leaving certificate completed. 13% of women's partners working have a postgraduate degree or PhD compared to 7.4% working that completed primary schooling. (Q22 &Q23)

In the time-use Ireland (2005: 11), it was highlighted that on weekdays, women spend almost five times longer on caring activities than men. Domestic labor is also higher for women than it is for men. Yet in contrast, employment is higher for men than it is for the opposite sex.

Firstly concerning gender division of labor, in my study, 5 women who believe that they are the chief earners of their home say that there is not an equal division of labor in their household. 26 women who consider their partner to be the breadwinner of their home feel that there is an equal division in the home. 5 of the respondents, who judge that both they and their partner are chief earners in the household, believe that there is not an equal division of labor. (Q24 & Q26b).

⁵⁷ www.cso.ie

Secondly concerning domestic division of labor, from a recent study on housework contribution, it was found that the general normative language used by parents to refer to their expectations of young people's contributions to housework rarely alluded to gender as grounds for different expectations of males and females, reflecting the growing societal assumption of equal opportunities.⁵⁸ In my study, when asked if their partners help with the housework, 48 women said yes whereas 13 said there no, partners did not help with the housework. (Q26a).

The time use study observes those who look after the family, spend an average of almost three and a half hours on care and four hours on housework on weekdays. Timeuse differs between those who have children under 18 years old and those who do not. Respondents with offspring spend on average 3 hours and 26 minutes on weekdays and 3 hours and 52 minutes at the weekend. On a weekday an average woman spends 8.58 hours with her family and the weekend spends 11.03 hours with her family⁵⁹. Discussing time in my study, when asked if women's partners modified their working time after their children were born, 75% of those who did change their working hours decreased them compared to 25% who increased them. (Q27 & Q28). This perhaps is to the fact that Paternity leave is not recognised in employment law in Ireland. Therefore employers are not obliged to grant male employee's special paternity leave (either paid or unpaid) following the birth of their child. Annual leave taken following the birth of a child is treated in employment law in the same way as leave taken at any other time of the year. It is at the discretion of the employer to decide who can and cannot take annual leave at a given time.

⁵⁸ Brannen. 1995:327

⁵⁹ Time use study in Ireland 2005. Pg.12-15.

Some employers in Ireland, however, (for example, the Civil Service), do provide a period of paid leave from work for male employees following the birth or adoption of their child. Fathers employed in the Civil Service are entitled to a period of special 3 day (paternal) leave with pay in respect of children born on or after 1st January, 2000 or for children adopted after 1st January 2000. While male employees are not entitled under Irish law to either paid or unpaid paternity leave, they may be entitled to Parental leave. Parental leave entitles both parents who qualify to take a period of up to 14 weeks unpaid leave from employment in respect of:

- Children born on or after 3 December 1993
- Children born on or after 3 December 1993 who were adopted on or after 3 December 1993. 60

Childcare in Ireland and womens employment.

"The total lobour force in 2011 is likely to be of the order of 1,899,000, an increase of about 25%...over the 1997 level of 1.525.000. A large share of this increase is projected to come from the amount of women, especially married women into the work force. The female labour force is projected to grow by 218,000 (from 589,000 in 1997 to 807,000 in 2011), an increase of 37%, accounting for the 58% of the total increase". On the basis of this, the demand for childcare could increase by between 25 and 50 percent over the period to the year 2011. 61

⁶⁰ www.oasis.gov.ie/employment/holidays and leave/paternity leave.html ⁶¹ Fine-Davis. 2002: 53

From my research, all women have children (Q6a) and 77.8% of women have 1-3 children living with thw, compared to 1.6% having seven or more children in the household. (Q6b). Where 59.4% of the women believes that their childcare responsibilities have had a bearing on their decision to work, (Q29) 56.8% say that their employer does not provide childcare responsibilities. (Q32).

Among parents, there is a general awareness of the necessity for a variety of childcare service options to suit the particular needs of parents and children to enable parents to participate in education, vocational training or employment. These range from formal childcare facilities, child minders, relatives or friends to availing of flexible or family-friendly options in the workplace or in the education or training environment. The Childcare Directorate undertook an analysis of the CSO childcare study. Its results suggested that the numbers of children in receipt of non-parental childcare in Ireland were some 140,000 in the case of pre-school children, and some 126,000 in the case of primary school children.⁶²

From my own research, concerning childcare, 62.5% of the respondents used or are using childcare facilities. Concerning the type of childcare the women in Dunboyne used, 38.5% of women use child-minding facilities compared to 10.3% using a family member. 5.1% of women used an Au Pair due to the fact that the Au Pair lives in the home with the family and is available to mind the children when ever convenient. 15.4% of women used a nursery as a facility for child minding whereas 7.7% used a Montessori. (Q33 & Q34).

As I have found, while some mothers choose to care for their children full-time within the home, other mothers are reluctant to abandon careers that have taken years to

⁶² IBEC report 2005: 11-12

establish. Statistics from the Central statistic office show that 87.2% of childless Irish women aged 20-44 were employed in 2004, but for women with children aged less than 3 years, this figure dropped to 52.4%. Therefore according to a report issued by the forum for the workplace of the future in March 2005, cost of childcare is one of the largest obstacles for working mothers. Irish mothers pay on average 20% of their annual income on childcare facilities, almost twice as much as the EU average. Yet at costs of up to €10,000 or more annually per child, childcare for larger families may be a far higher percentage. Denmark was the best EU-15state for reasonably priced childcare, while Ireland was the worst.⁶³

From my study, the highest amount of hours a child was in care any given week was 20 (9.4%). When asked about the cost of childcare, 27.6% of women in Dunboyne claimed that their childcare services cost between $\[mathebox{\ensuremath{\&child}{\ensuremath{\ensuremath{e}}}}$ said it cost them more than $\[mathebox{\ensuremath{\ensuremath{e}}}$ a week for childcare services. 22.4% of women had no cost for childcare as they had family, friends or neighbours looking after children. And 15.6% of women spend under $\[mathebox{\ensuremath{\ensuremath{e}}}$ a week on childcare facilities. Therefore in Dunboyne, women who work on average are paying between $\[mathebox{\ensuremath{e}}$ and $\[mathebox{\ensuremath{e}}$ and $\[mathebox{\ensuremath{e}}$ a week for their children's care. (Q35 & Q36).

From this outlook on childcare in Dunboyne, 62.3% of women have always used childcare services in the place. 22.6% used elsewhere, perhaps for the fact that 62.5% of all women believe there are not plenty of jobs for women in Dunboyne and that 53% of all women believe there is a lack of childcare facilities in the area. Women then who use childcare facilities elsewhere, 45.5% use childcare services in Dublin; 18.2% used the

⁶³ Consumer choice. 2005: 376

facility in England; 27.3% used it in Clonee County Meath and 9.1% used it in Enfield County Meath. (Q38& Q39).

There is a wide range of views in society as to who should pay the costs associated with childcare. Across Europe, the models vary considerably, with central and local Government funding the entire cost of childcare in some Scandinavian countries, which have necessarily high tax regimes to fund their welfare state models. In other countries there is minimal state support, except for the most disadvantaged, accompanied by low tax regimes. Tax credits are available in certain circumstances in some of these countries such as the UK.

In Ireland, the main Government responses to date have been to invest in:

- Increased payments of Child Benefit; and
- Increased supply of childcare places under the EOCP.⁶⁴

From the examination of women, work and childcare in my study, it is shown that the use, cost and choice of childcare is a very important aspect for women's preference in order to balance their work and family life. With the introduction of the €1000 a year for children under 6 years from the Budget 2006, women in Dunboyne have many different views on this payment (Q45). On one hand, 17.2% believe that this introduction from the government is a good idea for families in our changing society. On the other hand 7.2% also believe that the income for childcare needs more attention. This introduction from the government does not apply to 4.7% of the women who answered my questionnaire.

10.9% have the notion that this amount is about time and better than nothing. When observing this question, many women (4.7%) were concerned that the money that is to be given to children under the age of six would be used for the parents benefit rather than

⁶⁴ IBEC report 2005: 15

the children. 9.4% of women believed that the age limit of six should be higher, where many women suggested that it should be up to the age of 18 and other women said it should be given to all school children. 10.9% of respondents would rather see a change in policies such as paternity leave, or childcare strategy childcare policies in Ireland, i.e. childcare provision.

A Work-Life Balance in Ireland.

Observing a work-life balance, since the 1980s many businesses throughout Europe, USA and across the globe have introduced Family Friendly policies which aim to help people with caring responsibilities to balance their work and caring responsibilities. These policies are usually focused on providing flexibility in terms of working time and work place. 65 Many studies have shown the dichotomy of women and work and those who want to stay at home. One resent study observes women who want to 'Be there' for their children and family, which is part of the childcare debate and public childcare rhetoric. While the phrase could be regarded as a version of 'quantity time' as opposed to 'quality time' invoked by mothers in paid work, the term also points to an emotional dimension of childcare⁶⁶.

On the other hand, those women who value employment, much research has been conducted on the rewards and costs identified as sources of motivation for or against the employment of married women with children. The main motivations for employment then are that of money, independence and opportunity. ⁶⁷

March the 1st is life-family balance day in Ireland. 85.9% of women in Dunboyne agreed that it was difficult to balance employment and family life, whereas 9.4% agreed

⁶⁵ www.wlbn.ie Boyd. 2002: 463

⁶⁷ Thompson. 1980: 552

it was straightforward and that they could cope with work and family life as equilibrium. (Q43). When examining the aspect of family and work balancing, out of the 14 women who were very satisfied with their employment status at present, 57.1% of the respondents believed that childcare in general was poor in this country compared to others. Those women who were dissatisfied with their employment status, 66.7% of women said that childcare in Ireland needs more attention. Women who were somewhat happy with their employment, 28.6% of women were satisfied with childcare in this expanding country. (Q44 & Q46).

As I have examined, women have a choice to work, stay at home or be adaptive with both. Yet when we look at the family or children's attitudes, many studies completed observe the child's perspective on their mother's employment. It was assumed that a child who feels positively affected by his mother's employment would have a more positive attitude towards it than those who feel negatively affected by it. ⁶⁸

Within my own study I observed that 80.3% of all women in Dunboyne believe that mothers being at work outside the home have an effect on their family life and children. 19.7% of the women felt that mothers working for a wage outside the home did not have an effect on their family life or their children. Those women who believed mothers working do have an effect on their children, 16.3% gave a negative answer whereas 28.6% agreed that mothers working affected their children but gave a positive answer. There were many positive answers given by women in Dunboyne who believed that mothers working outside the home did not have an effect on family life. Those include women needing their own independence (3.1); each family is different and has

⁶⁸ Trimberger and MacLean. 1982: 469

their own ways of dealing with this situation (1.6%); children will adjust to their own family life (1.6%) and 12.5% believe children need to be more independent.

Yet on the negative side to those who felt mothers working outside the home had an effect on family life, 23.4% agreed that children need at least one parent or guardian in the home and 14.1% believed that children need attention and time from at least one parent. 10.9% thought that it was difficult to balance work and family where as 4.7% of women felt that if a mother is working all the time, she will miss out on her child growing up and special moments such as their children's first word or first step. (Q42a & Q42b).

From the study competed in Ireland, Denmark, France and Italy, Ireland stood out from having the longest commuting time, as having the highest number of people working typical hours and having highly sex-differentiated working hours. ⁶⁹ Within my study, one of the main findings was that 32.8% of women traveled to work by private transport and only 9.4% traveled on public transport. When observing if employers provide childcare facilities for working mothers, only three women who use private transport have employment childcare facilities, therefore making it convenient to balance family and work life as these women can take children to work rather than paying for care in the home place.

⁶⁹ Fine-Davis. 2002: 205

Conclusion

Examining then work-life balance in Dunboyne, women believe that it is difficult to do so. With the introduction of more policies such as childcare, this would make it easier to balance family and work. Many women feel that they have to commit to their family rather than work and other women want to work and are happy with their children in childcare. Consequently there is a sense of pressure, both time-wise and in terms of work pressures, finding it hard to combine work and family life. Within my study there was a combination of women who spend their time in the home now who use to work and women who still work outside of the home spending little time with their families, as well as women who work to suit their family's needs.

The issue of time highlighted from the data collected, in many ways such as, spending time with a family, working or concerning childcare, was significantly correlated with simple *versus* difficult combinations of family and work life. Within Ireland, much has to be done in order for women and parents, to have the ability to manage a work-life balance, rather than many women, as shown from my study, being unhappy with the way they cannot cope with having a sense of balance of family life and an independent work life, as well as time for themselves. I think that with a greater option of family work strategies or flexible working arrangements such as flexible hours, shorter days or fewer days, this may aid the equilibrium of work and family lives of women. Perhaps even more employers facilitating childcare services would help women to balance work and family.

Regarding Preference theory, Hakim (2004: 14) argues that once genuine choices are open to women, they choose three different lifestyles: *adaptive*, *work-centered or*

home-centered. From my study I have found that women in Dunboyne have chosen to either work full-time (17), work part-time (23) or stay at home with their families (24) giving them priorities over employment. Therefore more women would rather have more time with their families than work. Hakim has shown that *Adaptive women* is the largest group choice and certain occupations, such as teaching, are attractive because they are considered to facilitate good work-life balance. Within my study women who stay at home full-time is slightly higher than those adaptive. Yet my study found that with all the women asked, if they had a choice, 66.7% would continue to work where as 33.3% would rather quit their jobs. Those who would continue to work, 83% would work part-time and 17% would like to work full-time. (Q40a & Q40b).

Concerning gender and division of labour of the household, men do not contribute as much time to the home or childcare as women. This is no surprise, yet if there were family policies such as flexible working conditions; men may be able to give more to family life. Men's role may be observed as a breadwinner in the study completed and a woman's place in the home, yet Ireland is changing, so perhaps this illustration of gender may change. There is hope...

Women and work then is a complicated issue in Ireland on a social and political agenda. It is hope that the EU and national policies encourage measures to promote work-life balance, for women's well-being depends on it. ⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Fine-Davis, 2002; 213

Chapter 6.

Conclusion and summary.

From my study on the changing role of women and employment in Ireland, I have looked at many issues relating to the topic such as family matters, gender roles and childcare issues. When examining a work-life balance and how women cope today with such pressures of balancing their family life with careers, it was found that women are stressed out and find it difficult to cope with the equilibrium of both sides. Ireland currently is facing a great deal of growth within the labour force, as the statistical yearbook of Ireland (2005: 28) highlights that 'the total number at work was just over 1.1 million in 1984. By 1994, this had increased to over 1.2 million and then increased by over 615,000 between 1994 and 2004 to 1,836,200. Therefore, Ireland has observed key changes in the workforce and especially has seen a growth of female participation working outside the home for a wage. This issue of women and employment is an ongoing matter for the Irish economy.

While there are changes in Irelands economy, and an increase of women in the workforce, many factors affect or are affected by women and employment. For instance childcare is a major issue in Ireland, which is a key responsibility for parents, particularly women, and gender roles, where the issue of equality and inequality relate to women and work.

Many interesting factors were found from my study completed in Dunboyne with women of any age. For instance, 36 women are working compared to 24 women looking after their family full-time. 98.4% of the women worked before they had their children full-time (Q15a). Yet now 39.1% of women choices for not working were because they

want to commit to their families (Q12a). Observing then the choices women make concerning their employment status in Dunboyne, 22.6% preferred to begin to work from the age of 20 compared to 19.4% at the age of 16. (Q16)

Right through my dissertation I have examined the factors in which I believe contribute to the change and role of women and work in Ireland, concerning the family and gender issues. From my literature review I examined five themes in which play a role in the change of women and work over time in Ireland, including 1) women and employment; 2) women and the family; 3) childcare and motherhood; 4) Gender and Division of labour and finally; 5) work-life balance today. From the theoretical framework, I examined the reasons and factors that contribute to why and how the role women and work has changed and the factors that play a part with this matter at hand. There are many theories, which contribute to women and work. For instance Catharine Hakims preference theory plays a major role in the area of women and work, as she believes that women have choices in which they can choose to be home-centred, workcentred or adaptive to both. Within my study, 11 women who work 30 hours or more a week, 27.3% spend 7 hours or more with their families each day compared to 28 women who work less than 30 hours a week, 42.9% spend 7 or more hours with their families on an average day, 25 women did not either work or answer. (Q20 & Q30). Therefore women are more adaptive and home-centred rather than work-centred.

My research and studies already completed have revealed that the role of women and work is a common topic to examine, as it is an ambiguous subject with many everyday ordinary issues being affected by it or affecting it, whether it is childcare or gender inequality. What I set out to find was the particular work-life balance women have

to intake in order manage family duties and a career at the same time. When observing my hypothesis that there has been a significant increase of women and employment in Ireland within recent years that it is difficult for women to cope with a work-life balance, many of the women in my study believed that it was difficult to balance work and family and have to chose certain choices of either a career, family-life or have a job for the sake of family commitments, rather than 'having it all'. There were different circumstances for women concerning work such as women who gave up on their employment opportunities to take full responsibilities for their family; women who worked full-time and were happy with childcare facilities or women who worked part-time as the hours combined with their families needs. Therefore perhaps policies such as childcare strategies, flexitime and reduced working hours for women need to be looked at for women to cope with a equilibrium of employment and family life.

This study also emphasizes the findings of previous research in demonstrating that the take-up of work-life balance is highly gendered. A major challenge is to avoid a twin track, where men are on the fast lane involving continuous and extreme hours of full-time employment and women in the slow lane where they are either working, looking for reduced hours at work or a career break. If this illustration continues or is emphasized, it will only add to the existing evidence that the work-life balance is for women as mothers of young children only and not for other employees⁷¹.

If a future examination on this study was to take place, I would like to observe attitudes and experiences of men and compare both sexes. Therefore from this motivating and challenging study conducted on a major issue of women and work in Ireland, the more women that work, the more it is difficult to contain a work-life balance in today's

⁷¹ Drew, E, Humphrey's, P and Murphy, C. 2002: 132

society. Our changing society is one that will continue to be a challenge for women and work regarding a work-life balance.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Women and work Questionnaire 2006



This questionnaire is an essential part of my survey for my M.A degree in Sociology, in which I am carrying out a study on the life experiences and behaviours towards a work- life balance practice of Women in Dunboyne, County Meath and to explore their attitudes and values held towards the idea of women and work today. I would like to thank you for your time and effort on answering my questionnaire. All information that I receive will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be used only for statistical purposes.

Thank you.

Lisa Butler: NUIM student of Sociology.

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Section A: Demographics

1.	Please state your age:	3				
	15-24 years		25-44 years			
	45- 64 years		65+ years			
2a	. Please indicate your c	urrent	t martial status?			
	Married		Living as married			
	Single		Widowed			
	Separated		Divorced			
	Never married		No answer			
2b.	Did you live with you	ır part	tner before you got n	narried?		
	Yes		No			
	Not applicable	(if not	married)			
3.	What is your religion	n?				
	Roman Catholi	c \square	Church of Ireland		Presbyterian	
	Methodist		Islam			
	Other, please sp	pecify				
4.	Where were you bor	n?				
	Leinster		Ulster			
	Connaught		Munster			
	Abroad, please	specif	y			
5.	Have you always live	ed in D	unboyne?			
	Yes		No			
6a.	. Do you have Childre	en?				
	Yes		No			
6b	. If yes, how many chi	ildren	are living with you?	(Do you	have dependent	
childr	en living with you i.e. t	those to	emporary living else	where; i	in college, pupils	
away	during term)					
	1-3		3-5			
	5-7		7+			

Section B: Employment experiences and behavior

7.	What is the highest level of e	ducat	tion you have ever completed?	
	No formal education		Primary education	
	Secondary education (.	Junior	/ intermediate/ group certificate)	
	Secondary education (leavin	g certificate)	
	Vocational qualification	n/ Ap	prentices	
	Third level non degree			
	Third level Primary de	gree		
	Third level postgradua	te		
	Doctorate (PhD).			
8.	How would you describe you	ır pre	sent principal status? (Tick one o	nly)
	Working for payment		looking for first regular job	
	Unemployed		In education	
	Looking after family		Retired form work	
	Unable to work		working in home	
	Other, please specify			
9.	Are you currently employed	on a	full-time or part-time basis?	
	Full-time		Part-time	
	Not applicable			
10	If part-time, why do you w	ork p	art time? (Please tick one only)	
	You are in education		You want to attend family commit	ments \square
	You have another job		You are ill	
	You have a disability		You can't find a full time job	
	You are finically secur	ed bu	t work because you want to	
	You consider you earn	enou	gh working part-time	
	Not applicable		Some other reason	
11.	Where you in a paid job du	ring t	he last month?	
	Yes		No	

12a. If not workin	g, what is you	r maiı	n reason for not worki n g in a pa	id job at
the moment? (Tic	k one only)			
You are	in education		You are financially secured	
You are	ill/ disabled		You can't find a job	
You wa	nt to attend far	nily co	ommitments	
Not app	licable			
12b. Even though	you are not in	a pai	d job at the moment do you do a	nny
occasional work o	r voluntary w	ork		
Yes			No	
Not app	licable			
13. If working, do	you work in	public	or private sector?	
Public			Private	
No answ	ver			
14. How long hav	e you been in	your p	present Job?	
Under 1	2 Months		1-5 years	
Over 5	years			
15a. Did you work	before you h	ad you	ır children?	
Yes	□ No		Not applicable	
15b. If so, did you	work full or p	part tii	me	
Full- tin	ne 🗆 part-tin	ne 🗆		
16. At what age d	id you begin t	o wor	k?Years	
17. Have you alwa	ays been in th	e same	e line of work since you began w	orking?
Yes	□ No		No answer	
18. How many Jo	bs have you h	ad in y	your life time?	
1-3	□ 3-5		5-7	
7+				

19. Into	which of the following	gross	income ranges do you fall?	
	Under €5,000		€6000- €10,000	
	€11,000-€15,000		€16,000- €20,000	
	€21,000- €25,000		€26,000- €30,000	
	€31,000- €35,000		€36,000- €40,000	
	€40,000+			
20. Ho	w many hours a week do	you v	work in your current job?	
	30 hours a week or mo	re		
	Less then 30 hours a w	veek		
	Don't know			
	No answer			
21. Ho	w do you usually travel t	o wor	k? (tick one only)	
	On foot/ Bicycle		Public transport	
	Private transport		other	
	Not applicable (E.g. w	ork fo	rm home, don't work)	
Section C:	Partners roles			
22. Ho	w would you describe yo	ur pa	rtner's present principal status?	(Tick one)
	Working for payment		Looking for first regular job	
	Unemployed		In education	
	Looking after family		Retired form work	
	Unable to work		Working in home	
	No answer		Other, please specify	
23. Wh	at is the highest level of	educa	tion your partner has ever comp	leted?
	No formal education		Primary education	
	Secondary education (.	Junior	/ intermediate/ group certificate)	
	Secondary education (leavin	g certificate)	
	Vocational qualification	on/ Ap	prentices	
	Third level non degree	;		
	Third level Primary de	gree		
	Third level postgradua	te/ Do	octorate (PhD).	

			_		in your household?	
	My self		Partner			
25. D	Oo you feel that th	e amou	ınt of work y	ou do in	the home is:	
	Too much		about right			
	Not enough					
26a D	oes your partner	help wi	ith the house	work?		
	Yes		No		Sometimes	
26b. D	Oo you feel that th	ere is a	n equal divi	sion of lal	bour in your househo	ld?
	Yes		No		No opinion	
27 If	f working, did you	ır partı	ner modify h	is workin	g time after your chil	dren
were l	born?					
	Yes		No		No opinion	
28 If	f yes, did your par	tner de	ecrease or in	crease the	eir working time?	
	Decrea	ase	□ Inc	rease		
ction <u>D</u>	: Childcare					
work?	n e					
	<i>:</i>					
		averag	ge would you	spend wi	ith your family each o	lay?
30 H			ge would you	spend wi	ith your family each o	lay?
30 H	low much time on		ge would you	spend wi		lay?
	low much time on Less than one	hour			1-3 hours	lay?
	Less than one	e hour			1-3 hours	lay?
	Less than one 4-6 hours o/ did you handle	e hour childer	are responsil		1-3 hours	lay?
	Less than one 4-6 hours o/ did you handle	chour childes wn ith my	are responsil partner	oilities?	1-3 hours 7+ hours	lay?
	Less than one 4-6 hours o/ did you handle Yes on my ov yes, shared w	chour childes wn ith my	are responsil partner	oilities?	1-3 hours 7+ hours	lay?
31 D	Less than one 4-6 hours o/ did you handle Yes on my ov yes, shared w Yes but share	chour childes wn ith my j	are responsil partner a non co habi	oilities?	1-3 hours 7+ hours	lay?
31 D	Less than one 4-6 hours o/ did you handle Yes on my ov yes, shared w Yes but share	chour childes wn ith my j	are responsil partner a non co habi	oilities?	1-3 hours 7+ hours	
31 D	Less than one 4-6 hours o/ did you handle Yes on my ov yes, shared w Yes but share No	childes wn ith my id with	are responsil partner a non co habi de childcare	oilities?	1-3 hours 7+ hours	

34	If so which do you use?			
35	What is the total number	of hou	rs your youngest child is/ was in	n care per
	week? (other than by parer	nt)		
36	How much would/ did chi	ildcare	cost you per week?	
	No cost		Under € 50	
	€50- €100		€100- €150	
	€150- €200		€200 +	
37	Overall how satisfied are	were y	ou with your childcare facilitie	es?
	Very satisfied		Satisfied	
	Somewhat happy		Dissatisfied	
	Very dissatisfied		No opinion	
39a	Are/ were your children	in child	care in Dunboyne or somewher	re else?
	Dunboyne		Elsewhere	
39t	o. Please specify where?			
40	If you had a choice would	you qu	nit your job to look after your f	amily or
	continue to work?			
	Quit Job		Continue to work	
tior	n E: Attitudes and values			
417	A. Do you feel that the wor	k you a	re doing at the moment is up t	o standard
711		lities?		
	th your experience and abi			
	th your experience and abi		No.	

	Yes	No			
42b. P !	lease explain your ans	wer:			
43. M	arch the 1 st is Life fan	nily bala	nce day in Irela	and. Do you ag	gree or
disagre	ee that it is difficult to	balance	work and fami	ily life in Irela	nd today?
(Tick o	one only)				
	Agree	Disa	gree \Box	No opinion	
44. W	hat is your attitude to	childca	re in Ireland to	day? (Tick on	e only)
	Its poor in this cour	ntry com	pared to other co	ountries	
	It needs more atten	tion			
	T2 41 C1 1 141 1	4			
	I'm satisfied with i	τ.			
	om the budget 2006, the	he minis			
		he minis			
	om the budget 2006, the	he minis			
annum	om the budget 2006, the	he minis x from l	oirth. What is y	our opinion?	
annum	om the budget 2006, the for children under si	he minis x from l	oirth. What is y	our opinion?	
annum	om the budget 2006, the for children under sin	th your	employment sta	our opinion?	
annum	om the budget 2006, the for children under single s	th your	employment sta	our opinion?	
46. Ho	om the budget 2006, the for children under single ow satisfied are you winder with the very satisfied. Somewhat happy	th your	employment standard Satisfied Dissatisfied No opinion	our opinion?	21000 per
46. Ho	om the budget 2006, the for children under single was satisfied are you wing very satisfied Somewhat happy very dissatisfied	th your	employment standard Satisfied Dissatisfied No opinion	our opinion?	21000 per
46. Ho	om the budget 2006, the for children under single ow satisfied are you wing very satisfied. Somewhat happy very dissatisfied Dunboyne do you belief	th your	employment standard Satisfied Dissatisfied No opinion	our opinion?	21000 per
46. Ho	om the budget 2006, the for children under single ow satisfied are you wing very satisfied. Somewhat happy very dissatisfied Dunboyne do you beliemen?	th your	employment sta Satisfied Dissatisfied No opinion there are plent	our opinion? atus?	tunities for
46. Ho 47. In I wor	om the budget 2006, the for children under single ow satisfied are you wing very satisfied. Somewhat happy very dissatisfied. Dunboyne do you beliemen?	th your	employment sta Satisfied Dissatisfied No opinion there are plent	our opinion? atus?	tunities for

Appendix 2: Charts

Results from Study.

