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Vulnerability of families with children: experts' opinions about the future and what families think about it

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Abstract:

Building upon results of prior focus group research, the present study employs online surveys about possible future developments of the vulnerability of families with children in Europe. In addition, respondents assessed the relevance of societal factors influencing future family well-being and the effectiveness of ten selected policy measures in preventing the intergenerational transfer of vulnerability. One survey was directed at scientists and practitioners who are family experts (N=175). Another survey aimed at exploring the thoughts of parents themselves (N=1,343). Results show that experts are rather pessimistic and even expect vulnerability to increase in the future. In their opinion, the most relevant forces driving future vulnerability seem to be economic development—manifesting itself in unemployment and earnings inequality—and family policy. As for policy measures, childcare availability, early childhood education, assistance for children with special needs and raising awareness of employers for work–family reconciliation were ranked highly for mitigating the reproduction of vulnerability. While parents largely share the opinions of experts with regard to forces relevant for future family well-being, they evaluate some of the policy measures differently: the main disparities concern the assessment of support for stay-at-home mothers and the weight given to education for children after school and during holidays.

Keywords: family futures; vulnerable families; inequality; family policy

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Contents

Executive Summary

What will the future bring for families in Europe? Work Package 10 of the *FamiliesAndSocieties* project is dedicated to various foresight activities aiming to outline different scenarios for the future of families. Within the work package, several studies were designed to explore future challenges for social policy. Online surveys presented in this report draw on insights from the preceding focus group research. Like the focus group research, they focus on *vulnerability of families with children*: factors influencing the future shares of vulnerable families and their well-being as well as policy measures inhibiting the intergenerational transfer of vulnerability within families. An expert survey directed at scientists and practitioners and a family survey among parents were conducted separately to compare opinions of different relevant groups on these issues.

The *expert survey* sought to gather information regarding expected changes in vulnerability of families with children as well as in its underlying determinants (drivers). Therefore, the questionnaire addressed the likely development of fifteen drivers representing five major forces and their assumed effects on the shares of vulnerable families in a selected European country in 2050, distinguishing between three different dimensions of vulnerability: economic vulnerability (referring to financial aspects and poverty risks), psychological vulnerability (summarising feelings of stress, anxiety or depression) and social vulnerability (comprising stigmatisation, discrimination and a lack of social support). In addition, experts were requested to rate the relevance of ten policy components for stopping the reproduction of vulnerability within families. Data collection lasted for three months—from early December 2015 to early March 2016. In total, 203 assessments of future vulnerability developments from 175 submitted questionnaires were used for the analyses. Answers referred to 29 different European countries. The *family survey* also included questions on the relative importance of the identified five major forces driving future well-being of families and ten policy measures hindering the reproduction of vulnerability. Data collection took place between late March and early June 2016. Responding parents (N=1,343) live in 22 different European countries. Most of them, however, are from one of the following three countries: Germany, Portugal and Spain.

More than two-thirds of the experts predicted that *economic vulnerability* will increase during the next years (until 2020) and about one-half of them stated that the share of families

affected by economic vulnerability will further increase in the period from 2020 to 2050. Even more pessimistic were predictions regarding *psychological vulnerability*. Eight out of ten experts thought that the share of families whose members suffer from psychological vulnerability will increase in the next five years. Three-quarters of respondents expect the extent of psychological vulnerability to grow after 2020. Regarding *social vulnerability*, results are similar to those for economic and psychological vulnerability but slightly more optimistic.

Experts also indicated the (relative) importance of *five different societal forces* for the changes in vulnerability to be expected: (a) economic development, (b) changes in gender roles, (c) general cultural changes, (d) the development of employment factors related to the reconciliation of family and work and (e) changes in family policy. In general, each of the five forces was attributed some relevance for the future vulnerability of families with children. Some of these forces, however, were perceived to be more relevant than others. Experts assessed economic development to be most relevant for all three dimensions of vulnerability. Changes in family policy were also expected to be relevant for economic, psychological and social vulnerability. While the development of work–family reconciliation scored high with regard to psychological and social vulnerability, changes in gender roles seem to be perceived of relevance primarily for psychological vulnerability. Parents responding to the family questionnaire thought that changes in family policies and in the reconciliation of family life and professional work will be most important for future well-being of families. However, they also placed high value on the future economic development.

Findings gained from *assessments of fifteen drivers*—three indicators for each force—largely correspond to the results using the general evaluations of forces. Experts usually emphasised the effects of drivers referring to economic development (e.g. unemployment), family policy (e.g. public childcare) and—sometimes—reconciliation issues (e.g. job demands). For instance, experts estimated that a rise in earning inequality and a decrease in public financial transfers to families would contribute to an increase in future economic, social and psychological vulnerability. The consequences of changes in gender roles and other cultural aspects for the vulnerability of families with children were not considered to be as important unless psychological vulnerability was addressed. In this regard, the findings show that experts expected an increase in female labour force participation and a weakening of personal relationships to increase future psychological vulnerability.

Finally, experts assessed the relevance of policies in preventing vulnerability from being passed on from parents to their children. Drawing upon the results of focus group research, ten *policy measures* were selected and, in general, all ten measures were expected to be important by responding experts. Four of them, however, got very high ratings: (1) providing flexible, affordable childcare options for preschool children, (2) organising assistance for children with special needs, (3) making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work–life balance of their employees and (4) providing education for all children already at an early age. For each of these four measures, more than half the experts thought it to be "indispensable" or at least "very important" to stop the reproduction of vulnerability while no more than five per cent perceived it to be "irrelevant" or "counter-productive".

In line with experts, parents rated "making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work–life balance of their employees" highest, putting "assistance for children with special needs" in third place. Participants of the family survey, however, did not agree with experts on each and every policy measure. The effectiveness of support for stay-at-home mothers was given a completely different weight: while experts ranked it (on average) in last place, parents (on average) thought it to be the second most important policy component. Another disparity concerns education: although parents stated that education at an early age and education after school and in holidays are important, they were ranked lowest among the ten policy measures.

The report ends with suggestions to observe and monitor vulnerability and—by that—improve policies. Parents responding to the family questionnaire are obviously convinced that policies can make their lives easier and family experts view them as an important instrument to reduce vulnerability as well. Nevertheless, they expect the vulnerability of families with children to increase during the forthcoming decades. An operative monitoring using synthetic indices measuring the economic, psychological and social dimension of vulnerability could inform future policy. Furthermore, it is argued that a mainstreaming approach seems to be most promising because family vulnerability permeates numerous policy areas (labour market policies, family policies, educational policies etc.). Finally, raising the awareness for vulnerable families, vulnerable children and the problem of vulnerability transfers across generations is needed not only with respect to employers but to society at large. This could be an appropriate field to cooperate with NGOs.

1. Introduction

Although the Europe 2020 target on poverty and social exclusion states that at least 20 million less should be at risk of poverty and social exclusion, the absolute number of EU citizens living in vulnerable circumstances has increased by approximately 5 million since 2008. Advances in the reduction of vulnerability remain small (cf. Eurofound, 2015). Especially the high rates of child poverty are a persistent challenge for European social politics. Against this background, the current report focuses on vulnerability of families with children and concentrates on the future of these families. What major factors will drive the future vulnerability of families with children? Will there be differences between different regions of Europe? These and other questions are addressed by means of an online questionnaire that collected 176 opinions and views from experts all over Europe. This working paper is primarily documenting the outcomes of this expert questionnaire study and discusses its findings within the context of a broader framework of research—including an online questionnaire collecting the opinions of more than 1,300 parents on the same issues.

The intergenerational transmission of vulnerability is a problem closely related to the future of vulnerability in Europe, another huge challenge for European societies and the second major topic of the present report. As growing up poor deteriorates later-life chances (for a review see Jenkins & Siedler, 2007), vulnerability often reproduces vulnerability. Thus, the present paper also asks which policy measures could inhibit (or at least mitigate) the reproduction of vulnerability within families in the future. Do experts stress the importance of well-known family policies (financial transfers, childcare, parental leave) or do they prefer other policy areas? Can education really offer long-term solutions? In our questionnaire, experts expressed their opinion by rating the relevance of ten selected policy measures compromising different types of policies to support families and/or children.

The same topics were also covered in an additional online questionnaire directed at parents who are confronted with the challenges of family life on a daily basis. This allows a comparison of parents' opinions with experts' opinions on two critical policy issues: main drivers of (future) family well-being and measures to fight the reproduction of vulnerability. Especially, the parents' opinion on the second topic is crucial as any implemented policy measure will affect their family life.

The present paper is structured as follows: Section 2 explains the background and the aims of the questionnaire studies and informs about their position within the foresight approach of Work Package 10 of the *FamiliesAndSocieties* project. Section 3 outlines past trends with regard to the major topics of this report—the share of vulnerable families with children and the reproduction of vulnerability. Section 4 discusses methodological issues and organisational aspects regarding both online surveys. Section 5 presents the results of the *expert survey*. In Section 6, conducted analyses of the *family survey* are described. All findings are finally discussed in Section 7 in which the report concludes with possible implications for future policies.

2. Thematic background and foci of questionnaires

2.1. Development of research topics

The online surveys with *experts* and *parents* constitute the final segments of a bigger research scheme including several consecutive and closely related research activities (see Di Giulio et al., 2013). Their thematic foci were thus defined by previous findings. Figure 1 summarises the whole research process and demonstrates the connections between the different steps taken.

Qualitative foresight research in the *FamiliesAndSocieties* project started with the "Futures task force workshop" in Tallinn, Estonia in January 2014 (see Philipov et al., 2014). In this workshop, 25 stakeholders and 12 project participants from different European institutions discussed four topics: gender relationships, childcare arrangements, economic (in)security and intergenerational linkages in the family. It turned out that a few central themes permeated all the discussions. Among them was the topic of vulnerable families.[1] In addition, participants paid a lot of attention to children and their well-being. Together, these findings point to the ongoing reproduction of vulnerability within families, raising the question of how to break this cycle of reproduction (cf. Philipov et al., 2014). In the end, these topics delimited the core area of interest for the next step in qualitative research on the future of families in Europe: focus group discussions with family experts.

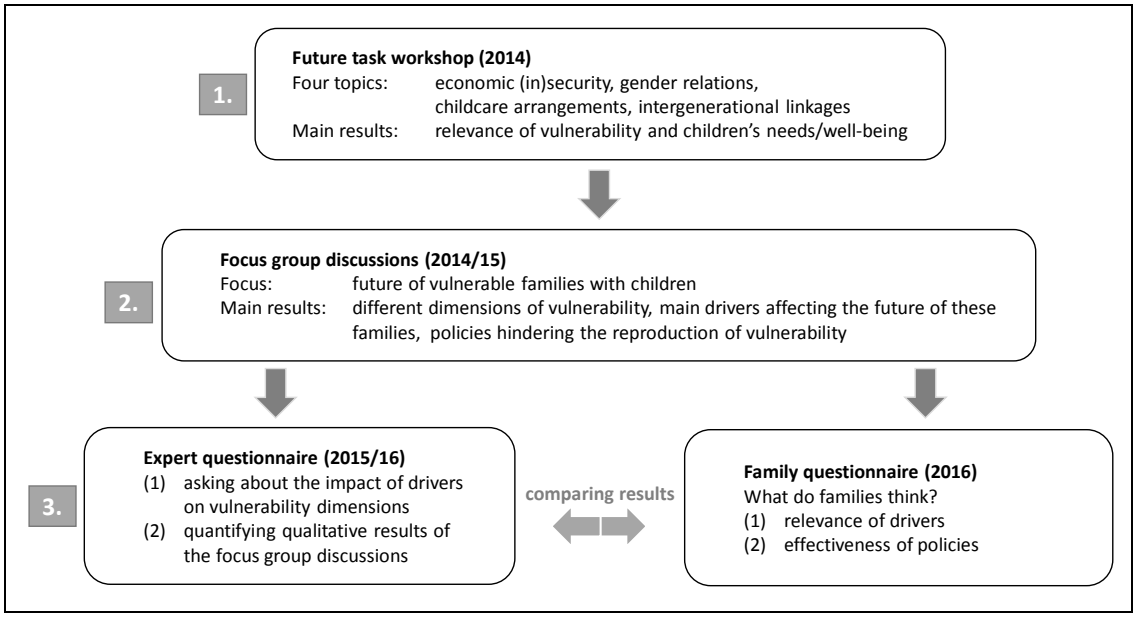
Five focus group discussions with policymakers and civil society actors engaged in family-related issues were conducted in Vienna, Madrid, Stockholm, Brussels, and Warsaw between November 2014 and January 2015 (see Mynarska et al., 2015). The participating 37 experts discussed the following three questions: (1) Which types of families with children might be particularly vulnerable and why? (2) In what ways might different future developments affect these families? (3) What policy measures would be crucial to prevent the reproduction of vulnerability within families in the future?

Results of focus groups included three basic components. First, experts identified family types with high risks of vulnerability (especially single-parent families). During the discussion of

[1] It has to be noted that the term "families in situations in which they are vulnerable" would be more adequate as there are no "vulnerable families" per se. Vulnerability is often a temporary phenomenon.

vulnerable family types, they mentioned different aspects and dimensions of vulnerability (financial, emotional etc.). Second, participants expressed their opinions on several future developments and identified major forces that may shape the future of European families and their well-being (e.g. economic development, cultural change). Finally, a wide array of policy components that could help to mitigate consequences of vulnerability for children and—in their opinion—prevent the reproduction of vulnerability within families were discussed (cf. Mynarska et al., 2015).

Figure 1: Steps of the qualitative foresight research approach



These results set the scope for the surveys that are the subject matter of the present report. The *expert survey* included definitions of dimensions of vulnerability that directly rely on results of the focus group research. Drawing upon the outcomes of the conducted focus group discussions, its main part asked about estimates of the development of five major forces and their effects on the shares of vulnerable families in 2050. Finally, the relevance of selected policy components to stop the reproduction of vulnerability within families—again based on suggestions by focus group discussants—was expressed by way of rating scales.

The *family survey* was directed towards parents to examine the needs of families and learn more about the significance of specific worries regarding the future of their children. In order to be informed about these topics, a much broader range of questions than in the expert

questionnaire had to be asked. Nevertheless, the family questionnaire also contained items covering the relevance of the five major forces for future well-being of families as well as the importance of policy measures designed to hinder the reproduction of vulnerability. These questions were not exactly the same but very similar to those included in the expert questionnaire.[2] Asking for opinions of experts and parents separately should allow comparing their opinions on these issues.

2.2. Concepts and dimensions of "vulnerability"

Vulnerability can be broadly described as "the capacity to be wounded" (Patterson, 2013, p. 1). In the literature, many dimensions of vulnerability are discussed (cf. Radcliff et al., 2012; Roelen et al., 2012). There are families with children who are at risk of poverty, and families who experience a lack of social support in daily life. Some families suffer from problems related to stress or from health problems. In other families the children experience a negative relationship with their parents (e.g. because of a lacking sense of security, conflicts between the parents or domestic violence).

For focus group research on vulnerable families, we defined vulnerability as a complex phenomenon comprising (a) financial problems, (b) social exclusion,[3] (c) a lack of social support from personal networks, (d) stigmatisation, (e) difficulties arising from poor physical or mental health, and (f) being a victim of crime (esp. family violence). Though vulnerable families are often confronted with many challenges at the same time—for example, families lacking financial resources often perceive strong emotional and social pressures, too (Holand, Lujala, & Ketil, 2011)—it is sufficient that just *one* of these aspects occurs to describe a family as being vulnerable.

[2] Specific questions directed at experts cannot be asked without any adaptions to people who are neither involved in social science nor in policymaking. For instance, even using the term "vulnerability"—while no problem at all when talking to experts or policymakers—is difficult in conversations with (or a questionnaire addressed to) people not familiar with social science. (Note, however, that "vulnerability" has somewhat different meanings in different disciplines; e.g. psychology and economics. For more information see Hanappi, Bernardi, & Spini, 2015.) In addition, questions that can hardly be mastered by non-experts (e.g. about future developments) were asked in the expert questionnaire only.

[3] We defined social exclusion to mean limited access to facilities such as shops, schools, libraries or medical services.

Experts in focus group discussions also presented various aspects of vulnerability as they discussed different reasons that families might need support for (cf. Mynarska et al., 2015). These discussions included the following aspects:

1. Economic hardship, poverty; economic uncertainty, instability, fear about one's own future; insufficient housing, low living standard;
2. Social exclusion, lack of social networks (friends, family);
3. Stigmatisation, disapproval from the society, discrimination by institutions and legal regulations;
4. Time pressure, overwork, stress, being overburdened; negative consequences: health problems, depression, anxiety, behavioural and educational problems of children;
5. Lack of family stability, risk of divorce, especially difficult situations for children (traumatic experiences, fights between parents etc.);
6. Health problems, in particular disabilities;
7. Violence, often related to the abuse of alcohol and other substances.

For the expert questionnaire, we condensed this rich material. In line with existing definitions of vulnerability in the literature, we summarised these aspects under three dimensions of vulnerability as follows: *Economic vulnerability* refers to financial aspects. It covers poverty and economic hardship, e.g. the inability to pay for necessities, a low standard of living and limited access to public facilities. *Psychological vulnerability* includes strong feelings of stress, anxiety or depression. Such problems for children and families might be attributable to parents who are overburdened because of multiple workloads and conflicts between duties, or to conflicts within families, to child neglect or domestic violence. *Social vulnerability* comprises aspects such as stigmatisation, discrimination and a lack of social support. These three dimensions cover almost every aspect of vulnerability mentioned in focus group discussions and the literature. The necessity of disregarding specific aspects of vulnerability arose from limitations in the maximal length and scope of an online questionnaire. We chose physical health and disabilities to be omitted because forces like economic or cultural development in Europe are not assumed to affect them directly.[4] These and similar main drivers identified in the focus group research, however, are at the centre of the current report.

[4] However, it should be noticed that physical problems are of high relevance exactly because they often trigger economic, social and psychological problems (Olsson & Hwang, 2003).

2.3. Forces and drivers identified in previous research on family futures

One of the main aims of the focus group research was to identify major factors (called "drivers") influencing the future vulnerability of families with children. Starting points for group discussions were retrieved from existing foresight research, in particular from two family-related foresight projects that have been completed in the European context during the last few years. One of them was part of the OECD International Future Programme (OECD, 2012b), the other belonged to the FamilyPlatform project (Kapella, de Liedekerke, & Bergeyck, 2011).[5] Both discussed different scenarios of the future and their consequences for the situation of families. In describing these scenarios, they also explore various possible—likely or unlikely—forthcoming developments. Developments mentioned are of economic, social, institutional, cultural as well as technological nature. It was assumed that they have consequences at the levels of the society, the economy, the labour market, the public sector, the care system, the family and the individual.

From an analytic point of view, economic and cultural developments can be identified as key dimensions of change in previous foresight research.[6] Therefore, a short outline of possible combinations of economic and cultural developments formed the introduction for the discussion of future changes in focus groups (see Mynarska et al., 2015). Focusing on the future of vulnerable families with children, the discussants considered various directions of macro-level developments and identified a number of drivers that might be important for the futures of vulnerable families. These factors can be grouped into four major categories of main forces: the economic development, changes in gender roles, factors influencing the reconciliation of work and family life, and broader cultural changes. Fifth, policy changes can be understood as a further relevant force because participants in focus groups often mentioned that social policy and/or family policy might modify the situation of vulnerable families to a large degree.

[5] These projects have already been described in more details in previous Deliverables of Work Package 10 (see Deliverable 10.1: di Giulio et al., 2013; Deliverable 10.2: Philipov et al., 2014; Appendix I of Deliverable 10.4: Mynarska et al., 2015).

[6] All other changes can be somewhat crudely subsumed under one of these dimensions or are related to both of them. For instance, technological advances were understood to foster economic growth and, thus, enhancing economic prosperity. Certain advances might, however, also affect family life and, thus, cultural aspects like intergenerational relations.

In the literature, each of these five forces is directly related to at least one dimension of vulnerability. *Economic development* is obviously linked to the economic dimension of vulnerability. Economic expansion and contraction affect inequality as well as poverty (e.g. Danziger, Chavez, & Cumberworth, 2012; Jonsson, Mood, & Bihagen, 2013). Most importantly, positive (negative) economic development usually raises employment (unemployment) which in turn is a major determinant of exits from (entries into) poverty (e.g. McKernan & Ratcliffe, 2005; Moller et al., 2003). Indirect links to other dimensions of vulnerability are easily established. There is a stigma related to poverty that triggers social isolation and depression (e.g. Mickelson & Williams, 2008; Reutter et al., 2009). Economic hardship clearly fosters feelings of stress and lowers psychological well-being (e.g. Belle, 1990; Belle & Doucet, 2003). Mediated by maternal depression, poverty can furthermore have harmful consequences on child development (e.g. Petterson & Albers, 2001).

Changes in gender roles also seem to be related to all three dimensions of vulnerability. Gender roles prevailing in society do not only influence the position of women in the family but also in the labour market which in turn affects their economic position (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Pfau-Effinger, 2000). Increasing female labour market participation testifies to the change in obsolete gender roles dictating that economic independence and providing for one's family belong to the male domain (OECD, 2012a). However, the increasing footing of women in the labour market was not accompanied by a redistribution of the care responsibilities. Although there is evidence that fathers are getting increasingly involved with their children (Hobson & Fahlén, 2006; Gauthier, Smeeding, & Furstenberg, 2004; Raley, Bianchi, & Wang, 2012), the division of household tasks was shown to have changed only slightly in many countries (OECD, 2011b). As employed wives usually shoulder a larger share of family labour—comprising housework as well as care for children, disabled and elderly family members—than their spouses, women are hit hardest by the strains due to demands of their multiple roles at home and at the workplace (e.g. Davis & Greenstein, 2004; Grunow, Schulz, & Blossfeld, 2012; Poortman & Van der Lippe, 2009). Role strain and problems of *work–family reconciliation* often lead to work–family conflict and stress affecting the health and general well-being of women (e.g. Allen et al., 2000; Byron, 2005; Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The division of family work and professional work between spouses, for example, is linked to relationship satisfaction and psychological well-being (e.g. Mikula, Riederer, & Bodi, 2008; Bodi, Mikula, & Riederer, 2010). Problems with balancing work and family life are also linked to economic vulnerability. Limited access to affordable and good

quality childcare, long-term care provisions, insufficient leaves or flexible working arrangements often result in a decision to leave the labour market or to reduce one's working hours (Lilly, Laporte, & Coyte, 2007; OECD, 2007). The "care penalty" negatively affects the economic position of (especially) women and their economic standing over their life course as well as their pension rights (Evandrou & Glasser, 2003).

Apart from changes in gender roles, a bulk of *broader cultural changes* affected intimate relationships in the past and thus also the social and other dimensions of vulnerability: Liberalisation of norms and processes of individualization resulted in a huge diversity of lifestyles and family forms in today's society. Intergenerational relations changed as independence of children from their parents increased. Technological progress allowed for the development of new forms of communication often replacing direct face-to-face interaction (e.g. time spent in the internet). Urbanisation was on the rise and transformations of the social environment changed the meaning of the home. As a consequence, values and norms regarding family life also changed. For instance, shifts in childrearing norms had an impact on parenting behaviour. In general, cultural changes affected ties between people, relationships within families and emotional attachments between children and parents.

Best known are the consequences of the increasing fragility of romantic relationships. Divorce and parental conflict stemming from union dissolution of parents has been shown to influence both parents and children negatively. The quality of parent–child relationships, perceived social support from others and anxiety in personal relationships have been associated with parental conflict, thus leading to both social and psychological vulnerability of children in young adulthood (Riggio, 2004). Further changes in family forms related to adverse experiences such as the death of a parent or another family member has been linked to depression (Dalgard et al., 2006). However, divorce has replaced parental death as the leading cause for single parenthood (Bygren, Gähler, & Nermo, 2004). Children of divorced parents generally fare worse in terms of emotional and educational outcomes although the effects are, on average, small or modest (Garriga & Härkönen, 2009), and they are already present before the divorce (Sanz-de-Galdeano & Vuri, 2007). Despite a variation in the economic consequences of divorce for children and parents, it is one of the main life events leading to poverty, and thus to economic vulnerability (Callens & Croux, 2009). Problems to achieve an acceptable work-family balance and dissatisfaction with their living conditions are usually

more pronounced for single-parent families (Avramov, 2002). Stress and a lack of social support are major reasons for depression in single mothers (Cairney et al., 2003).

Further research needs to be undertaken to explain the relationship between changing family forms and vulnerability, including the highly relevant questions how social support and emotional ties are affected. It has to be acknowledged, however, that claims about the disappearance of "the (nuclear) family", rising problems in building up emotional bonds and a weakening of solidarity in societies in general have been continuously raised from the 1970s onwards (e.g. Claessens, 1979; Lasch, 1978; Sennet, 1977). Not all researchers share such pessimistic diagnoses (e.g. Leary, 2001; Haller, 2005). In addition, viewed from a historical perspective the welfare state has continually taken over duties and responsibilities from individuals and their families. Acknowledging the changing family landscape, future research should address how social policies contribute to children's and parents' adjustments to adverse family events.

Finally, *policies* play an important role. Though social welfare programs and other policy measures are often criticised for not being effective enough, welfare states can reduce poverty by a substantial degree (for both, criticism and effects, see Cantillon & Vandenbroucke, 2014; Nelson, 2013; Kenworthy, 1999). In countries like Denmark or Ireland, for instance, social transfers reduce poverty rates by more than half (see EAPN, 2014; Verwiebe, 2015). Research of Fouarge and Layte (2005) shows that the level of long-term poverty varies considerably between different welfare state regimes (see also Mau & Verwiebe, 2010). In addition, a report by UNICEF (2014) concludes that the impact of the latest economic crisis on the well-being of children has been profoundly shaped by the already existing social safety net and policy responses to the economic downturn. Aiming at consolidating public finances, cuts in public welfare may harm vulnerable families in times of austerity.

2.4. Policies and the reproduction of vulnerability within families

Vulnerability is often passed on from parents to their children. Individuals who grow up in families where members suffer from vulnerability are at risk of starting families of their own that are affected by vulnerability as well. Experts participating in focus group discussion also talked about policy measures which—in their opinion—would be crucial to prevent the "reproduction of vulnerability" from one generation to another. First, reconciliation policies

were seen as a central aspect of any political strategy to counteract vulnerability. Parents need both sufficient financial resources and enough time to care for their children. Second, experts discussed how social support services for those most disadvantaged could be improved. Third, financial transfers were understood as necessary to address the most urgent needs of vulnerable families. However, it became clear in the focus group discussions that monetary benefits and support services alone would not solve the problem of reproduction of vulnerability. One key challenge for the future is to help vulnerable families not only temporarily—by mitigating the most urgent needs—but to improve their situation in a sustainable manner. In all five focus groups participants strongly emphasised the importance of education in this respect. Education was furthermore very widely defined to include education of children, parents, employers and the society as a whole (for details see Mynarska et al., 2015).

The literature on education and the reproduction of inequality, however, is not very conclusive. On the one hand, education is argued to offer the most important way to overcome disadvantages of social heritage because it affects people's "subsequent life chances—their occupational and economic attainments as well as their health and longevity" (Shavit, Yaish, & Bar-Haim, 2007, p. 37). On the other hand, however, "educational attainment is largely determined by the characteristics of people's social origins" (ibid.). Research repeatedly demonstrated that parental occupation and education are powerful predictors of students' educational achievement (e.g. Lytton & Pyryt, 1998; Marks, 2005; 2008; Rothon, 2007; Verwiebe & Riederer, 2013).

Nobel laureate Gary S. Becker (1993, p. 21) notes in his book on human capital that family affects children's "knowledge, skills, values, and habits". All these factors, in turn, influence educational performance of students. If children from higher strata who begin schooling with an advantage achieve superior certificates and higher status positions than students from lower strata, the educational system indeed administers the reproduction of inequality. According to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1973; 1984), in particular higher education serves as a means to reproduce existing social stratification. For Bourdieu, children's cultural capital is decisive for social mobility as habituation to educational contents and conformity with the respective cultural codes (elite behaviour) is rewarded in and by

schools.[7] Research has also repeatedly shown that children's chances of educational success depend on their parents' cultural capital (e.g. Andersen & Hansen, 2012; Barone, 2006; Jaeger, 2009; Verwiebe & Riederer, 2013).

[7] Cultural capital refers to transmissible parental cultural codes, practices and competencies (e.g. style of speech, physical appearance). Children become familiar with specific dispositions in their early years during socialisation processes.

Following the work of Boudon (1974), other authors highlight aspects such as educational choices, costs of education and class-specific educational risks (e.g. Breen & Goldthorpe, 1997; Breen, van de Werfhorst, & Jæger, 2014). According to this perspective, people from lower strata, on the one hand, might be concerned mostly about costs (enrolment fees etc.) and opportunity costs of education (foregone earnings). The educational choices for their children may thus be highly dependent on risk aversion. Parents with privileged socioeconomic background, on the other hand, usually perceive investments in education being the best alternative to maintain a high family status. As they are afraid of downward mobility, they will send their children to the best schools and support their children to graduate (even if the risk of failure is relatively high). Choices made by parents are especially relevant in highly stratified educational systems where early tracking is the rule (Allmendinger, 1989; Schneider, 2008). In systems with early selection, thus, children from lower social classes are less likely to attend secondary or post-secondary schools (e.g. Duru-Bellat, Kieffer, & Reimer, 2008; Kristen, 2000).

Discussants in our focus groups seem to acknowledge these arguments at least implicitly. This might be one reason why they think of education in very broad terms. For example, they highlight the necessity of early childhood education to overcome disadvantages, the relevance of high-quality education for all students and the need to support parents with information and advice when it comes to taking decisions about the schooling of their children. All these measures together should at least improve the chances of children from underprivileged educational backgrounds and might indeed hinder the reproduction of vulnerability.

Before the concrete aims of the present research and the applied methods are discussed, the next section presents some data on (economic) vulnerability of families, educational mobility and the reproduction of inequality. First, it gives an overview of the past development concerning shares of vulnerable families across Europe. Second, it describes the effect of parental background on economic vulnerability and intergenerational mobility in education.

3. Past development of vulnerability in Europe—an overview

3.1. Vulnerability of families with children

Vulnerability is a complex theoretical construct. It is extremely challenging to measure the economic, psychological and social dimension of vulnerability. International comparisons are usually based on economic vulnerability. The European Union uses the concept of "being at risk of poverty or social exclusion" to evaluate vulnerability. This refers to the situation of people either at risk of poverty, *or* severely materially deprived *or* living in a household with very low work intensity (for details see Appendix I).[8] In this respect, material needs are the key indicator of vulnerability.

If we look at the aggregate of the populations of European Union member states, a quarter of people is currently at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat database). This is approximately the same share of people as ten years ago. Ignoring individual entries into and exits from poverty, the overall share of people being at such risk has remained rather constant. Another aspect that did not noticeably change is the difference in rates between age groups (cf. López Vilaplana, 2013): while only one-fifth of the elderly population (aged 65 or over) are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, the number among children (aged below 17) reaches 27 per cent. Minors may be exposed to vulnerability most frequently.

Experts participating in the workshop were right to shift the attention towards the situation of children (Philipov et al., 2014). Within Europe, however, the share of *children* affected by poverty and exclusion risks varies dramatically across countries (see Appendix I, Table A.1). In 2013/14, the highest share of children at such risk could be found in Bulgaria (52 per cent) and the lowest in Norway (13 per cent). Norway had already registered the lowest risk for children about ten years ago (14 per cent in 2004/05). In general, welfare states in northern Europe reduce poverty and social exclusion among children to a large extent (shares are within a range of 13–17 per cent). Similar low shares of children at risk, however, can also be found in a number of central European countries like the Netherlands or Switzerland (17 per cent in 2013/14). Poverty and social exclusion among children is much higher in most

[8] It has to be noted that "social exclusion" in AROPE is not equal to the concept of "social vulnerability" defined above. The AROPE concept does not cover all aspects of social exclusion but refers primarily to enforced lacks in terms of resources not allowing full social participation (problems of affordability). For details see Appendix I; for more information see Eurostat (2012).

southern European countries where shares of children at risk lie around 30 per cent—with a remarkable increase in the last decade in Greece from 25 per cent to 38 per cent. In some eastern European countries, almost half of children are hit by poverty and exclusion (Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania).

Looking at the target group of the current research, *families with children*, the figures are very similar (Table 1). The share of households with dependent children at such risks ranges from 11 per cent in Norway to 47 per cent in Macedonia.[9] In most countries, risks remained quite stable over time. However, in some countries there was a huge decline over the last decade (in the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovakia) while in other countries, mostly those affected most by the economic crisis of 2008, shares of families with dependent children at risk increased (esp. Ireland, Cyprus, Greece, Malta). Together, a deterioration of the situation of families with children in some of the old Member States of the European Union and improvements in several of the new Member States lead to a more or less constant aggregate share of households with dependent children who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion between 2004/05 and 2013/14.

What types of families create particularly difficult conditions for children? In prior research, experts identified large families and especially single-parent families to be more vulnerable than other family types (Mynarska et al., 2015; Philipov et al., 2014). Several experts did not assume that the family type itself affected vulnerability directly. Nevertheless, work–family reconciliation was perceived to be harder if only one parent was available and/or there were more children to care for. Problems of work–family reconciliation, in turn, were said to raise the risk of vulnerability. Indeed, in most European countries the risk of poverty and social exclusion is extremely high for single-parent families. In EU-28, about half of all single adults with dependent children are currently at such risk—figures vary between 34 per cent in Finland and 79 per cent in Macedonia (for more details see Appendix I, Table A.2).[10] With

[9] Children in the prior paragraph referred to individuals below age 16 while the concept of "dependent children" includes all individuals below age 18 and even older individuals until age 24 in case they are economically inactive and living with at least one parent.

[10] Again, it can be observed that the chances of single-parent households have improved in several new Member States over time. However, an opposing development in some of the old Member States has cancelled out this improvement of the situation of single parents in the aggregate.

regard to

Table 1: Households with dependent children at risk of poverty or social exclusion

% of households	2004–05	2009–10	2013–14
Central western Europe			
Austria	17	19	19
Belgium	20	19	20
Germany	17	18	18
France	18	20	20
Luxembourg	19	21	23
Netherlands	17	15	15
Switzerland	-	18	15
Western Europe			
Ireland	24	29	32
United Kingdom	27	25	30
Northern Europe			
Denmark	13	13	14
Finland	14	13	12
Iceland	13	12	13
Norway	12	12	11
Sweden	14	13	14
Southern Europe			
Cyprus	20	19	27
Greece	27	29	39
Italy	27	27	31
Malta	20	23	28
Portugal	25	25	29
Spain	26	29	31
Central eastern Europe			
Czech Republic	22	15	15
Hungary	34	34	37
Poland	46	28	27
Slovenia	15	14	17
Slovakia	32	21	22
Baltic Countries			
Estonia	24	21	21
Latvia	42	36	33
Lithuania	39	30	30
South eastern Europe			
Bulgaria	-	44	46
Croatia	-	29	27
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	-	-	47
Romania	-	44	44
Serbia	-	-	41
Selected Aggregates			
European Union (27 countries)	26	25	26
Old Member States (15 countries)	21	23	25
New Member States (12 countries)	41	31	32
European Union (28 countries)	-	25	26

Note: The rate shown is the average rate or the rate for the only available year, respectively.
Source: Eurostat (2015; data from EU SILC).

Large families (households with two adults and three or more dependent children), we observe the most pronounced differences between European countries: Only eight per cent of large families in Norway are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, while respective shares peak with 90 per cent in Bulgaria. Aggregated, 32 per cent of large families in EU-28 were at such risk in 2013/14 (see Appendix I, Table A.3).

3.2. Reproduction of vulnerability, intergenerational mobility and education

Although the discussion about educational expansion and its consequences for inequality has been an ongoing one for decades, it is difficult to present meaningful data on the reproduction of vulnerability and the role of education. While liberal theorists of modernisation thought that increasing equality of opportunity will go along with high rates of social upward mobility, Marxists argued that the spread of routine non-skilled employment would lead to proletarianisation and downward mobility. Both groups of scholars seemed to be wrong (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1992; Hout & DiPrete, 2006). In retrospect, the period of economic growth after World War II has changed the face of Europe:[11] the living standard of all social classes significantly improved although inequality was not diminishing. If all parts of the population advance one or two steps higher, differences between them still exist.

The situation with regard to education seems to be similar to the general development of inequality. While some authors argued that in most countries inequality still persists (e.g. Pfeffer, 2008; Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993), others find a decline for the differences in educational opportunities (e.g. Ballarino et al., 2009; Breen et al., 2009; Esping-Andersen & Wagner, 2012), and still other papers remain inconclusive (e.g. Breen & Jonsson, 2005; Shavit et al., 2007). The chances of children from working-class households attaining a high-school diploma or a university degree have improved in western societies in recent decades, but not as strongly as might have been expected (Müller & Kogan, 2010). The most convincing explanation may be the following: education has become affordable for more and more people thanks to lower fees and the extended provision of scholarships. With higher

[11] The decades after World War II brought rising living standards, a redistribution of income by the welfare state as well as better nutrition and health for lower classes. This period even has its own names, being called *les Trente Glorieuses* in French (standing for "the glorious thirty" years between 1945 and 1975) or *Wirtschaftswunder* in German (meaning "economic miracle"—also known as "The Miracle on the Rhine" in the English literature).

educated populations and technological development, however, the societal standards have also changed.[12] Inequality is reproduced at other educational levels nowadays than in the past. The declining of educational inequalities at lower levels has not avoided distinction at higher levels (Shavit et al., 2007; Esping-Andersen & Wagner, 2012; Blossfeld, Blossfeld, & Blossfeld, 2015).

Using SILC data on 27 European countries, Bellani and Bia (2016) found that childhood poverty reduced probabilities of completing secondary education and thus has a detrimental effect on income as an adult. Even in their most conservative scenario growing up poor decreased later income on average by five per cent which in turn lead to a four percentage points higher poverty risk. In general, lower intergenerational mobility is associated with higher inequality (Causa & Johansson, 2010; Corak, 2013). Especially Nordic countries show both low levels of income inequality and high levels of intergenerational mobility (Corak, 2013). By contrast, southern European countries appear to be rather immobile (Causa & Johansson, 2010).[13] Table 2 gives an overview of differences in *educational mobility* in Europe.

In 2012, in European countries between 39 (Finland) and 71 (Czech Republic) per cent of non-students aged 35 to 44 years and between 44 (Ireland) and 71 (Czech Republic) per cent of non-students aged 25 to 34 years completed an educational level equivalent to that of their parents. These numbers demonstrate rather huge differences in educational mobility across European countries. With regard to (economic) vulnerability, however, intergenerational immobility in education is less problematic in countries with highly educated populations than in countries with less educated populations. In Finland, Ireland and the Czech Republic the shares of adults within this age range who completed at least upper secondary education are rather high. Especially in southern Europe, the percentage of adults within these two age

[12] For instance, much more education is needed for working-class jobs today than in the past.

[13] According to Causa and Johansson (2010), first, the wage advantage of growing up in a highly educated family is strongest in southern Europe, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg and Ireland. Second, the link between the earnings of parents and those of their children is strongest in the United Kingdom, Italy and France. Third, the link between parental socio-economic status and student achievement is strongest in France and Belgium. Finally, a highly educated family background is most important for chances of completing tertiary education in Luxembourg and Italy, but also highly relevant in Nordic countries such as Denmark and Finland.

groups who completed upper secondary or tertiary education is comparatively low (see Table 2).[14]

Table 2: Educational attainment and intergenerational mobility in education

Age group	35–44 year old non-students				25–34 year old non-students			
(% of country)	at least upper secondary education	downward mobility	status quo	upward mobility	at least upper secondary education	downward mobility	status quo	upward mobility
Central western Europe								
Austria	86	15	55	30	90	21	48	36
Belgium*	80	11	45	44	82	13	52	35
Germany	87	19	62	19	87	24	57	19
France	81	7	45	47	85	10	50	40
Netherlands	80	12	44	44	85	17	45	38
Western Europe								
Ireland	86	8	45	47	90	12	44	45
United Kingdom**	82	14	49	37	86	16	51	33
Northern Europe								
Denmark	84	18	49	33	82	18	54	28
Finland	90	7	39	54	90	15	46	39
Norway	86	16	49	35	81	27	51	22
Sweden	86	20	40	39	82	28	47	24
Southern Europe								
Italy	65	5	59	36	74	5	49	45
Spain	65	7	48	45	66	10	49	41
Central eastern and Baltic Countries								
Estonia	89	18	48	34	89	27	50	23
Czech Republic	96	11	71	18	95	12	71	17
Poland	93	6	56	39	94	7	57	36
Slovakia	94	7	65	28	92	10	67	23

Note: The reported percentage of adults who completed at least upper secondary education refers to 2013 (France) or 2014. Mobility data refers to non-students in 2012. Downward (upward) mobility means that the educational attainment of children is lower (higher) than that of their parents; "status quo" is given when their level of educational attainment is equivalent to their parents' educational level. * Mobility data refer to Flanders only. ** Mobility data refer to England and Northern Ireland only.
Source: OECD (2015a, p. 40); mobility data from Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) 2012, OECD (2015a, p. 86).

Finally, Table 3 shows results of Whelan, Nolan and Maître (2013) demonstrating effects of parental background on the economic vulnerability of adult children. In all ten countries under

[14] Caution definitively needs to be exercised in interpreting the comparison between the two age groups in terms of changes over time. Nevertheless, in Italy both upward mobility and the share of adults with at least upper secondary education are larger in the younger age group than in the older age group. This might indicate a positive trend. In Finland, on the other hand, where 90 per cent of adults in both age groups have completed upper secondary or tertiary education, a decline in upward mobility does not necessarily produce higher risks of vulnerability.

study except Denmark, children of parents in elementary occupations are characterised by higher risks of economic vulnerability than children of parents with highly skilled non-manual occupations. Differences between those two are biggest in the southern and eastern European countries (Italy: 33 vs. 12 per cent, Slovakia: 30 vs. 14, Estonia: 27 vs. 11, Spain: 25 vs. 9).

In addition, adults who experienced bad economic circumstances in their family of origin as teenagers are at higher risks of economic vulnerability in all countries considered. Differences are biggest in Ireland, Italy and Spain and smallest in Austria, Finland and the UK. Both welfare states and higher intergenerational mobility are likely to affect these outcomes. Considering the joint impact of parents' class and childhood economic circumstances on economic vulnerability, a sharp contrast between social-democratic northern welfare states and the southern European countries and Ireland becomes visible (Whelan et al., 2013).

Table 3: Economic vulnerability by parental background in Europe

Heritage:	Parental social class				Childhood economic circumstances	
Region/ Nation	higher non-manual	lower non-manual	skilled manual	elementary occupations	good	bad
Central western Europe						
Austria	8	7	9	15	8	14
France	13	15	16	22	14	24
Western Europe						
Ireland	10	13	18	22	11	38
United Kingdom	11	12	15	16	13	19
Northern Europe						
Denmark	9	7	6	5	7	15
Finland	9	8	11	14	10	16
Southern Europe						
Italy	12	16	21	33	14	31
Spain	9	14	18	25	14	31
Central eastern Europe and Baltic countries						
Estonia	11	9	17	27	16	25
Slovakia	14	21	25	30	19	27

Note: The measure of economic vulnerability was developed using latent-class analysis with three indicators: (a) income poverty, (b) consumption deprivation and (c) economic stress (cf. Whelan et al., 2013, p. 91). Childhood economic circumstances were operationalised using subjective assessments of financial problems in the parental household when the interviewee was a young teenager. Circumstances are defined as "good" if families experienced "never" or at most "occasionally" severe financial problems in their childhood (and as "bad" if the answer was "often" or even "most of the time"; cf. Whelan et al., 2013, p. 85).
Source: Whelan et al. (2013, pp. 95f.) using data from EU-SILC 2005.

Overall, available scientific evidence confirms the relevance of the issue of intergenerational transmission of (economic) vulnerability already pointed out by participants in the stakeholder workshop (see Philipov et al., 2014). As long as intergenerational mobility is not sufficiently raised, the reproduction of vulnerability should at least be on the agenda of those European countries with high numbers of child poverty. In focus groups, discussants in different European countries focused on education as a primary means to reduce the reproduction of disadvantages by families. The expert questionnaire addressed the question of useful policies again.

4. Research aims, data and methods

4.1. Research questions

Section 3 reported past trends and depicted the current state of vulnerability of families in children, intergenerational transmission of education and reproduction of inequality in Europe. Poverty and social exclusion refer to the economic dimension of vulnerability. At first glance, it seems that economic vulnerability has remained constant in Europe during the last decade. A closer look, however, revealed that there were positive as well as negative developments in different European countries. Differences in welfare states, period of EU membership and effects of the economic crisis might be factors behind these past developments. In addition, Section 3 demonstrated that the reproduction of vulnerability is an issue of high current relevance. As poverty among children is common in several European countries it can be easily argued that stopping the intergenerational transmission of vulnerability should be of great interest for European policymakers. What will future developments look like? What factors might drive the future of vulnerable families in Europe? Which drivers could affect which dimension(s) of vulnerability? What might stop the reproduction of vulnerability in a way that higher risks are no longer passed on from one generation to the next? We conducted our expert survey to contribute some answers to these questions.

In focus groups, we asked for the expertise of persons who were directly or indirectly involved in policymaking. We argued that policymakers and stakeholders might give attention to other aspects than scientists because they are experts who are working on more concrete problems and practical issues. In the expert questionnaire, we still included policymakers and stakeholders but also scientists as well as practitioners working with vulnerable families. How will these different groups assess the future effects of possible drivers upon the vulnerability of families with children? How will this more broadly defined group of experts evaluate policy measures to stop the intergenerational transmission of vulnerability? The conducted online questionnaire could give some hints to what degree opinions and suggestions of different groups of experts differ.

Below we present the chosen empirical and analytical methods, arguing their advantages and limitations. After a short discussion of the research method, we outline the construction and

design of the questionnaire, followed in the subsequent parts of Section 4 by a description of the characteristics of respondents and an outline of the analyses.

4.2. Research method

The expert survey sought to gather information regarding estimates of future vulnerability of families with children as well as its underlying determinants (drivers) in European countries. The questionnaire designed is building on the main results of the focus group study. In this respect, the expert questionnaire aims at "quantifying" the qualitative results of the prior research.

Focus groups give detailed information about informants' perspectives and opinions. They were well-suited to reveal the practitioners' subjective perspectives and allowed to explore ambivalences in meanings and views. But opinions expressed in focus groups cannot be used as a measure of consensus and consensus does not always imply general relevance (cf. Bryman & Bell, 2011; Sim, 1998). There is not necessarily a close relationship between the apparent importance of an issue within a specific group discussion and its general importance. Furthermore, only a small number of experts can participate in focus group discussions. The expert survey conducted online should overcome some of these limitations of focus groups.

In general, an online survey has both advantages and disadvantages (see Bryman & Bell, 2011; Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). First of all, an online survey is cheaper and (once implemented) easier to administer than face-to-face or telephone surveys. Thus, most importantly, our online survey allowed gathering opinions of a higher number of experts from more European countries than in focus groups. With more participants, results should have much more power. There are, however, other advantages that might be more relevant with regard to our expert survey. For instance, the structured questionnaire allowed to ask each and every participant about the relevance of the identified forces as possible drivers of future vulnerability. Using rating scales to assess future developments or policies, a quantification of our qualitative results became possible. According to leading psychologists, "prospection" is an extremely difficult task (see Gilbert, 2006; Kahneman, 2011). Even for experts, it is hard to anticipate (all) future developments and imagine future states in sufficient detail to answer concrete questions. Experts facing serious difficulties might need time to think about answers and probably would not want to show their uncertainty to others. In our online survey they did not have to disclose their assessments directly to another person and could even choose to

remain completely anonymous if they wanted to. Furthermore, experts could answer the questions at their own pace and schedule. If necessary, they could pause the survey several times and resume it later (whenever they had time to continue).

Major limitations of online questionnaires include the absence of interviewees providing support to participants if they do not understand questions properly, the low degree of control of who participates in internet surveys and usually low response rates. To anticipate problems resulting from the absence of interviewees, we did several feedback rounds and pre-tests to avoid misunderstanding in advance. Moreover, e-mail contact could be used to send questions to the authors of this deliverable. Although it is technically feasible, restricting access to the survey in a way to allow absolute control over participants was not possible due to conflicting aims of anonymity and confidentiality. Minimising the risk of getting participants who were not experts, we sent out invitations via e-mail only and included questions about the background of participants and their fields of expertise in the survey.

The problem of low response was addressed by sending invitations via organisations and scientific associations where experts of interest were members. Experts have usually busy schedules and invitations are easily deleted from brimful mailboxes. Invitations sent by well-known colleagues and important institutions should raise the commitment to participate in the study. Nevertheless, the sampling of experts is the "Achilles' heel" of the present research. Unfortunately, lists of experts providing a sampling frame necessary to conduct random sampling were not available. Thus, our sample of experts is not representative. When interpreting the data, we have to bear in mind that caution is necessary and the validity of our conclusions may still be limited. On the whole, however, the expert questionnaire clearly is an important step forward in foresight research.

4.3. Construction process, structure of the expert questionnaire and data collection

In the process of questionnaire construction (July-November 2015), we had several feedback rounds. The first drafts of the questionnaire were content of intensive discussions with nine scientists familiar with family topics and/or empirical social research. After implementing the questionnaire online, a pre-test was conducted inviting selected colleagues via e-mail (19

participated).[15] Next, a draft of the expert questionnaire was sent out to all work package leaders of the *FamiliesAndSocieties* project. After additional adjustments of the questionnaire, data collection started in early December 2015 and ended in early March 2016. Invitations were mainly spread among experts by several cooperating institutions and associations that encouraged their members to participate in the online questionnaire (for the content of the invitation see Appendix II).[16] Some of them kindly sent reminders to their members a few weeks after our invitation was submitted for the first time. In addition, personal contacts of the authors to colleagues were also used to further enhance participation. Some selected contacts were even asked to distribute the invitation among their networks (snowball sampling).

The questionnaire[17] itself was structured as follows: *First*, participants could choose the country their answers would refer to. If participants wanted to complete the questionnaire for more than one country, they had the opportunity to follow a link at the end of the questionnaire. *Second*, experts had to choose one of three discussed dimensions of vulnerability (economic, psychological or social vulnerability). They were invited to answer with regard to another dimension of their choice later in the questionnaire. In principle, our informants could answer for as many European countries and dimensions of vulnerability (one, two or all three) as they liked. Thus, the participants themselves controlled the length of the survey. The questionnaire was designed so that completion in its shortest version (for one country and one dimension of vulnerability) should not exceed 20 minutes.[18]

After the decisions for one European country and one dimension of vulnerability were taken, participants were, *third*, confronted with fifteen drivers belonging to five different major forces. Participants were now asked to estimate the future development of a specific driver in

[15] Online implementation was done using the Lime Survey software package (see www.limesurvey.org).

[16] Those who spread information about our survey were Population Europe, IFFD, COFACE, ESA RN 13 (Families and Intimate Lives), ISA RC 28 (Social Stratification and Mobility), ISA RC 6 (Family Research) and the project coordinator who sent invitations to stakeholders of the project on behalf of the *FamiliesAndSocieties* consortium. Other institutions that were also contacted did not reply to our request.

[17] The structure of the questionnaire is explained in more detail in Appendix II. There we also quote a link to a deactivated version of the survey so that interested readers are able to click through it.

[18] The median of the actual amount of time participating experts needed lies between 20 and 21 minutes. The quickest completed the questionnaire within 10 to 14 minutes while others needed more than one hour. However, several experts answered for more than one dimension of vulnerability which increases the time needed to complete the questionnaire substantially.

the chosen country and its impact on the future development of the chosen dimension of vulnerability, respectively. These drivers are listed in Appendix II and will be presented in the main text in the results section. *Fourth*, experts were requested to report estimates of the future development of vulnerability and had to assess the relevance of each of the five forces on this development. Next, we asked for additional (local) aspects researchers might have to consider with regard to the future of vulnerable families in Europe and for possible influences of the current flow of displaced persons (refugees). *Fifth*, participants were instructed to consider all three dimensions of vulnerability and assess how important ten listed policy measures would be if the government wanted to prevent children from inheriting vulnerability from their families of origin (for details see again Appendix II). *Finally*, experts were requested to express their (dis)agreement with four popular opinions referring to family and/or policy aspects and to give some personal information. While participants usually had to supply answers to proceed with the questionnaire, in this final part single items could be skipped.

4.4. Expert questionnaire sample description

Altogether, we used 203 assessments of future vulnerability developments from 175 questionnaires that were completed by at least 162 experts.[19] This is comparable to existing research in demography using expert surveys (e.g. segments of the IIASA-Oxford online questionnaire, see Lutz, Butz, & KC, 2014).[20] In some questionnaires, experts chose to make assessments for two or three dimensions of vulnerability (17 and 5 questionnaires, respectively). One expert made assessments for two countries. Altogether, we got assessments for 29 European countries. About half of the experts revealed their full name (49 per cent) and the majority of those who identified themselves agreed to be listed in the Appendix of this report (68 per cent; see Appendix III).

[19] Questionnaires not explicitly submitted by participants were excluded from the analyses. In total, 176 questionnaires were submitted but experts did not always identify themselves. Therefore the number of experts cannot be assessed with precision. Only two assessments obviously referred to the same person. In this case, the first of the two assessments was deleted (the second was filled out directly after the first one).

[20] Basten, Sobotka and Zeman (2013, p. 50) report 184 assessments by approximately 170 experts for the low-fertility module of the survey.

The majority of experts came from an academic background (61 per cent). Almost one-fifth of participants worked for NGOs. Six per cent regarded themselves as policymakers. Around 13 per cent of participants did not assign themselves to one of these three sectors. These experts worked for administrative authorities, regional or (inter)national organisations, in the health, educational or private sector (business, industry or banking). Some of them were mainly practitioners but were also involved in research and/or policy.

Among academics, the most prominent disciplines were sociology (mentioned 27 times), demography (13), economics (10) and psychology (7). A large number of academics, however, characterised themselves just as "social scientists" without any specific denomination. Dominant research interests referred to the following topics: family (incl. fertility), childhood (incl. child development), education, inequality (incl. poverty and stratification) and gender. Participants working in the area of policymaking were mainly engaged in family policy. One expert each also mentioned labour market policies, youth policy or welfare policy. Finally, participants worked for NGOs focussing on parents and parenting, education, children, gender issues or specific family forms (e.g. rainbow families, single-parent families, large families).

The 203 assessments of future vulnerability developments referred to three different dimensions of vulnerability: economic vulnerability was covered by 76 assessments, social vulnerability by 75 and psychological vulnerability by 52. For ten countries five or more experts provided assessments, with Austria being the most frequently considered country (29 assessments) by far, followed by Italy (20), Spain (17), Germany (14), France (13) and Sweden (11). For analyses, countries were grouped to form six European regions. This was necessary to have enough cases for regional comparisons. Table 4 gives more detailed information.

Table 4: Regions and number of assessments

Region	Countries included (n)	Total N	(%)	Economic vulnerability	Psychological vulnerability	Social vulnerability
Central western Europe	Belgium (7), France (13), Luxembourg (1), Netherlands (9)	30	(17)	7	14	15
German-speaking part of Europe	Austria (29), Germany (14), Switzerland (3)	46	(26)	15	14	21
Western Europe	Northern Ireland (1), Ireland (3), United Kingdom (7)	11	(6)	6	2	4
Northern Europe	Denmark (2), Finland (3), Norway (5), Sweden (11)	21	(12)	13	1	10
Southern Europe	Cyprus (1), Greece (1), Italy (20), Portugal (1), Spain (17)	40	(23)	22	11	13
Eastern Europe	Bulgaria (4), Czech Republic (3), Estonia (2), Hungary (4), Lithuania (1), Macedonia (1), Poland (1), Romania (7), Russia (3), Slovenia (2)	28	(16)	13	10	12

Note: The total number of vulnerability assessments can be higher than the number of assessments for regions as experts could answer for more than one dimension of vulnerability. Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

The composition of expert groups was similar across most regions. As for the experts on central western Europe, the German-speaking countries, northern Europe, southern Europe and eastern Europe, the shares of scientists varied between 57 and 65 per cent. Only in western Europe were the majority of experts practitioners (only 36 per cent scientists).

4.5. Strategy of the analysis

Analyses in the current report will be of descriptive character. Usually tables and figures show the distribution of answers given (percentages) or average ratings (means). First, Section 5.1 presents the experts' assessments of future developments of vulnerability. Participants estimated how shares of vulnerable families will develop in the periods from 2015 to 2020 and from 2020 to 2050, respectively. Second, Section 5.2 reports the respondents' opinions on forces affecting future vulnerability of families with children. Analysing different aspects of these five major forces, fifteen drivers will be discussed—with regard to their estimated future development and their impact on vulnerability. Correlation coefficients between estimated developments of drivers and assumed consequences for future vulnerability show whether experts expect the same associations between drivers and vulnerability to hold. All of the analyses described so far will furthermore distinguish between the three defined dimensions of vulnerability (economic, psychological and social vulnerability).

Finally, Section 5.3 is devoted to the estimated effectiveness of policies. In our online questionnaire, experts assessed the relevance of ten specific policies in mitigating the reproduction of vulnerability within families. Participants in the focus group discussions perceived these policies to be necessary. The results of the expert questionnaire will show whether a broader group of experts shared their opinion. A comparison between the mean ratings of different measures may furthermore establish a hierarchy of measures, thus identifying a group of policies that might deserve priority.

Our analyses will differentiate between regions of Europe whenever feasible for at least two reasons. First, Section 3 established severe differences between European countries. Second, as Table 4 shows, the relative distribution of available assessments does not represent European countries in terms of population size. In addition, we want to explore differences between scientists and practitioners. This is especially of interest as the experts participating in the focus group discussions were practitioners (although some with scientific background).

4.6. Family questionnaire: data collection, content, sample and analysis

The family questionnaire was constructed by the first author in close cooperation with partners from the *International Federation for Family Development* (IFFD) and the *European Large Families Confederation* (ELFAC). The IFFD is a federation of non-profit and non-governmental organisations that has General Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council. Its main activity, however, is parental training. IFFD programs are offered in 66 countries all around the world (for more information see iffd.org). ELFAC aims at promoting the unity of large family organisations in Europe. Currently, it has members in 20 different European countries. Its main objective is to represent the social and economic interests of families with children (see elfac.org).

The final English version of the family questionnaire (fifth draft) was translated into five other European languages (French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish) and implemented online. Data collection started in late March 2016 and ended in early June 2016. Invitations to participate in this online survey were mainly distributed by IFFD and ELFAC (see the English version of the invitation in Appendix V).[21] As with the expert questionnaire, the content of the *family questionnaire* was largely determined by the results of the focus group interviews. Most importantly, this questionnaire also included questions on the relative importance of each of the five identified main forces driving future vulnerability of families with children and the relevance of selected policy components. These questions, though not exactly phrased in the same way as in the expert questionnaire, allow some rough comparisons between opinions of experts and opinions of families (for details see Appendix V).[22]

In total, 1,370 people submitted their answers to the family questionnaire. Respondents who were not yet parents (pregnancies) or who did not live in Europe were excluded from the

[21] IFFD distributed the link to the questionnaire among its networks of families in sixteen European countries and sent two e-mail reminders to increase participation in the survey. ELFAC forwarded personal invitations to participate to each ELFAC member association in its native language, to be later distributed among the families. The link to the questionnaire together with a short description of the study was also published on the ELFAC website and disseminated through social networks: Facebook, Twitter account and the monthly newsletter.

[22] In addition, the insights from the expert group consultations and FGIs inspired questions on the sorrows of parents about the future of their children etc. These results, however, will be addressed in a separate paper.

analyses.[23] The resulting sample of parents (N=1,343) is obviously not representative for Europe. Two-thirds of the respondents were female. Almost nine in ten respondents had three or more children. About 40 per cent had at least one child below age 3. Nine out of ten were married or lived in a registered partnership. In addition, responding parents were highly educated as 74 per cent have tertiary education. More than half of the respondents worked fulltime (32 hours or more per week) and a third of them were from couples with both partners employed full-time. Although respondents lived in 22 different European countries, the huge majority of them comes from three countries only: Portugal (n=511), Spain (n=424) and Germany (n=284) together account for 91 per cent of all cases of our sample.[24] Ten per cent of respondents were migrants not born in the country of residence.

We are well aware of the non-representative character of our sample of parents. Its specific characteristics are probably due to the mechanism of questionnaire distribution and the choice to conduct an online survey. Both distributing organisations, IFFD (Madrid) and ELFAC (Barcelona) have their headquarters in Spain and are thus strongly represented in Southern Europe. In addition, civic engagement (including memberships in voluntary organisations) as well as participation in online surveys are usually lower among less-educated people (see Campbell, 2006; Reuband, 2017; Riederer, 2006).[25] Future studies should address our research topics using representative samples for a large number of European countries. Nevertheless, the present analyses will provide important insights.

The strategy of the analysis for the family questionnaire is similar to the one already described for the expert questionnaire. Because of the high regional concentration of responding parents, however, analyses by regions will be done differently (for tables showing differences by the same six regions see additional tables in Appendix VI). Furthermore, assessments of policy measures will be separately examined for several potentially vulnerable subgroups of parents (e.g. parents living without a partner who could support them). Finally, regression

[23] Some lived in Africa or South America, for others the country of residence was unknown.

[24] Countries of residence include Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

[25] Not all specifics of our sample are necessarily of disadvantage. This is not the case, for instance, with regard to respondents' high number of children. As large families are among family types with high risks of being vulnerable (e.g. Avramov, 2002; Eurostat, 2015), their opinions may be of particular relevance for policymakers.

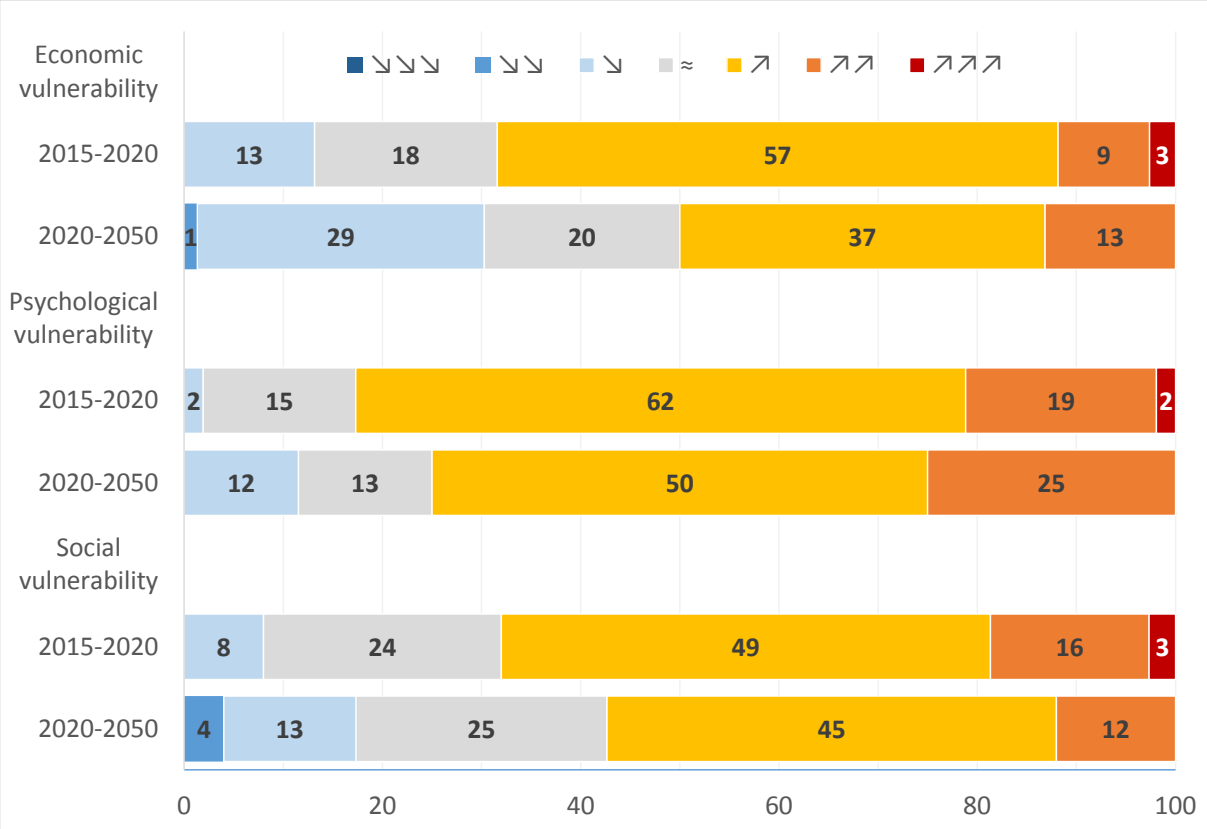
analyses will be employed to find out which kinds of policies are preferred by which group of parents. Results of the family questionnaire study are presented in Section 6.

5. Results of the expert questionnaire

5.1. The future developments of the share of vulnerable families with children

Figure 2 displays the estimates of the experts regarding the future development of the shares of vulnerable families with children. The results are shown separately for the three distinguished dimensions of vulnerability. Respondents could state whether they expected the share of vulnerable families to strongly decrease, moderately decrease, slightly decrease, stay roughly the same, slightly increase, moderately increase or strongly increase between 2015 and 2020 and between 2020 and 2050, respectively. In general, the results must be characterised as rather pessimistic: while all three options to express increases were used (two of them frequently), not a single expert assumed that vulnerability might strongly decrease. Even expectations of moderate decreases were rarely reported. Altogether, it seems that experts see vulnerability on the rise.

Figure 2: Estimating the future development of the share of vulnerable families with children



Note: $N_{economic\ vulnerability}$ = 76, $N_{psychological\ vulnerability}$ = 52, $N_{social\ vulnerability}$ = 75. This figure differentiates between estimates that the share of vulnerable families will strongly decrease (↘↘↘), moderately decrease (↘↘), slightly decrease (↘), stay roughly the same (≈), slightly increase (↗), moderately increase (↗↗) or strongly increase (↗↗↗).
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

More than two-thirds of the experts predicted *economic vulnerability* to increase in the next few years and about half of them stated that the share of families affected by economic vulnerability would further increase in the period from 2020 to 2050. Participants expecting the share of families hit by economic vulnerability to decline within the next few years were the minority. Only 13 per cent reported that economic vulnerability—in their opinion—would decrease until 2020. At least 30 per cent, however, stated that it might do so afterwards.

Even more pessimistic are predictions regarding *psychological vulnerability*. Eight out of ten experts thought that the share of families whose members suffer from psychological vulnerability was to increase during the next five years. Three-quarters expected the share of families affected by psychological vulnerability to grow after 2020. Only two per cent of the experts estimated that psychological vulnerability would decline until 2020. At least twelve per cent predict a shrinking share of families affected by psychological vulnerability between 2020 and 2050.

Regarding *social vulnerability*, the results are similar to those with economic and psychological vulnerability but slightly more optimistic. For the period between 2015 and 2020, for instance, 57 per cent of the experts supposed the share of vulnerable families with children to rise, 24 per cent thought it would not change and eight per cent expected it to decrease.

Due to low case numbers, it is hardly meaningful to compare ratings for different countries. Nevertheless, we want to give some rough impression of regional differences. For these analyses, countries were grouped as described in Table 4. In addition, the scale indicating future developments of shares of vulnerable families was collapsed indicating only decreases, stability and increases. Table 5 shows the numbers of experts expecting a decrease, no change at all or an increase for the six different regions. The results demonstrate that the general tendencies expected do not differ between regions. For each region, a majority of participants estimated the shares of vulnerable families to increase. Furthermore, Table 6 differentiates between assessments made by practitioners and scientists, respectively. Compared to scientists, a larger share of those directly working with families expected increases in social vulnerability in the short run (until 2020) and increases in psychological vulnerability in the

long run (until 2050). Differences between them are small, however (and case numbers low; n between 19 and 52).

Table 5: Estimating the future development of the share of vulnerable families with children in six different European regions

Vulnerability dimension:	Economic vulnerability			Psychological vulnerability			Social vulnerability		
2015-2020 (numbers of experts)	↘	≈	↗	↘	≈	↗	↘	≈	↗
Central western Europe	2	0	5	0	1	13	1	3	11
German-speaking part of Europe	0	6	9	0	3	11	2	4	15
Western Europe	2	0	4	0	1	1	0	1	3
Northern Europe	0	0	13	0	0	1	1	2	7
Southern Europe	3	5	14	0	1	10	2	3	8
Eastern Europe	3	3	7	1	2	7	0	5	7
2020-2050 (numbers of experts)	↘	≈	↗	↘	≈	↗	↘	≈	↗
Central western Europe	2	2	3	1	3	10	1	4	10
German-speaking part of Europe	3	2	10	1	1	12	2	4	15
Western Europe	1	0	5	0	0	2	0	1	3
Northern Europe	3	2	8	0	0	1	1	5	4
Southern Europe	9	4	9	2	0	9	2	3	8
Eastern Europe	5	5	3	2	3	5	7	2	3

Note: This table gives numbers of experts who estimated that the share of vulnerable families will decrease (↘), stay roughly the same (≈) or increase (↗) between 2015 and 2020 or 2020 and 2050, respectively.
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

Table 6: Estimating the future development of the share of vulnerable families with children: assessments of practitioners and scientists in comparison

Vulnerability dimension:	Economic vulnerability			(N)	Psychological vulnerability			(N)	Social vulnerability			(N)
2015-2020 (in %)	↘	≈	↗		↘	≈	↗		↘	≈	↗	
Experts (total)	13	18	68	(76)	2	15	83	(52)	8	24	68	(75)
Practitioners	17	13	71	(24)	0	15	85	(33)	7	15	78	(27)
Scientists	12	21	67	(52)	5	16	79	(19)	8	29	63	(48)
2020-2050 (in %)	↘	≈	↗		↘	≈	↗		↘	≈	↗	
Experts (total)	30	20	50	(76)	12	13	75	(52)	17	25	57	(75)
Practitioners	29	25	46	(24)	6	6	89	(33)	19	26	56	(27)
Scientists	31	17	52	(52)	21	26	53	(19)	17	25	58	(48)

Note: This table differentiates between estimates that the share of vulnerable families will decrease (↘), stay roughly the same (≈) or increase (↗) between 2015 and 2020 or 2020 and 2050, respectively.
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

These first results clearly indicate that the majority of experts did not believe that the situation of families with children would improve in the near future. The majority of respondents assumed that—irrespective of the specific dimension of vulnerability considered—shares of families with children affected by vulnerability would be increasing in Europe. While this is not desirable from the perspective of European societies in general and European politics in

particular, expected increases should nevertheless not be overly dramatised either. Only very few experts expected strong future increases of vulnerability. Figure 2 showed that most respondents assumed the future to bring slightly increasing shares of vulnerable families with children.

5.2. What drives different dimensions of future vulnerability of families with children?

Different kinds of questions were asked to reveal the experts' opinions of the relevance of specific societal developments for the future vulnerability of families with children (called "forces" of future vulnerability). We focussed on economic development, changes in gender roles, general cultural changes, the development of (employment factors related to the) reconciliation of family and work, and changes in family policy. Experts indicated the (relative) importance of each of these forces for future vulnerability by distributing 100 points among them. Before, however, we asked for estimates of the developments of fifteen drivers explicating these five forces (three drivers per force) and for probable effects of these developments on future vulnerability.

5.2.1. The relative importance of major forces for future vulnerability

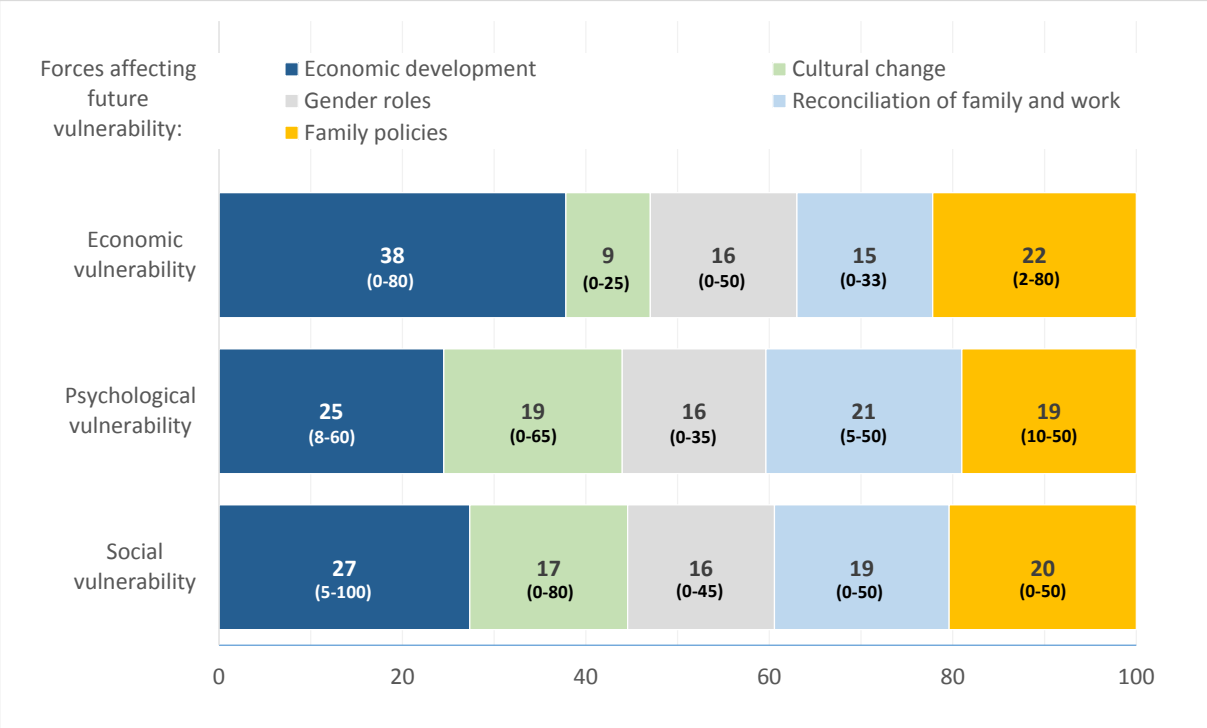
Figure 3 gives the average amount of points (relevance) that experts allocated to the five different forces. In general, experts thought that each of the five forces had some relevance for the future vulnerability of families with children. Nevertheless, some of the forces were perceived to be more relevant (at least to specific dimensions of vulnerability) than others. For *economic vulnerability*, the economic development can be clearly identified as the most relevant aspect. Eight out of ten experts awarded more than 20 points to this force (if each force were of the same relevance, each would get 20 points). On average, experts distributed 38 points to it. Nevertheless, there were severe differences between single experts: two experts distributed 80 points to economic development, while one gave it no points at all.[26] The other four forces reached average scores between 9 and 22 points. The only force assumed to be of minor relevance for economic vulnerability seems to be cultural change: almost one-quarter of the experts did not award it a single point.

With regard to *psychological vulnerability* as well as *social vulnerability*, the results were somewhat different. Economic development was again perceived to be most important on average but differences between the mean estimated impacts of the five forces were much smaller than for economic vulnerability (with a distance of 16 points between economic development and family policy). While economic development reached scores of 25 and 27

[26] For this expert policies were most important (80 points), followed by gender roles (10) and work–family reconciliation (10). In total, eleven per cent of the experts awarded ten points or less to economic development.

points, family policy and reconciliation of family life and professional work received between 19 and 21 points in each of these two dimensions (6 and 7 points between first and second).

Figure 3: Relevance of different forces for future vulnerability



Note: $N_{economic\ vulnerability}$ = 76, $N_{psychological\ vulnerability}$ = 52, $N_{social\ vulnerability}$ = 75. Experts expressed the relevance of each of the five major drivers of future vulnerability on scales from 0 to 100. The sum over all five forces had to equal 100. The figure shows average ratings and ranges (minimum–maximum in brackets).
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

Overall, the highest relevance for future vulnerability of families with children was attributed to economic development. Family policy was apparently assumed to have the second biggest influence. Experts awarded around 20 points to family policy for all three dimensions of vulnerability. Thus there is a belief that policies can affect future vulnerability in Europe. In addition, while especially average points given to gender roles were remarkably constant across the different dimensions of vulnerability (16 points on each of the three dimensions), it seems that general cultural change and the reconciliation of work and family life were assumed to be more relevant for psychological and social vulnerability than for economic vulnerability.

5.2.2. Drivers of economic vulnerability

Experts assessed the developments of fifteen drivers on 7-point rating scales ranging from "strongly decrease" (-3) to "strongly increase" (+3). Immediately afterwards, they indicated the probable effects of these developments on future shares of vulnerable families with children using the same 7-point rating scales. Table 7 summarises all answers referring to the economic dimension of vulnerability. In addition, it gives correlation coefficients (Pearson *r*) for the association between the estimated development of a driver and its estimated consequence for the share of families affected by economic vulnerability. A positive (negative) correlation coefficient indicates that an increase of the driver is—on average—assumed to lead to an increase (a decrease) in the shares of vulnerable families in the future.

Table 7: Main forces and corresponding drivers of economic vulnerability

Forces and corresponding drivers of future vulnerability (share of vulnerable families in 2050)	Development of driver (-3 to +3)		Effect on economic vulnerability (-3 to +3)		Association between them
	m	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*r*
Economic development					
Real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita	.17	(1.17)	-.08	(1.08)	-.06
Unemployment	.16	(1.13)	.32	(1.27)	.75
Inequality in earnings	.88	(1.17)	.78	(1.20)	.77
Cultural change					
Acceptance of the pluralism of family forms	1.11	(.93)	.05	(.83)	.11
Strength of personal relationships	-.32	(.80)	.25	(.82)	-.16
Demands of parenting (i.e. the effort expected of a good parent to make children grow up safe and happy)	.97	(.98)	.38	(.94)	.17
Gender roles					
Female labour force participation	1.11	(.89)	-.26	(1.15)	.04
Share of men engaged in childcare	1.09	(.61)	-.13	(.87)	-.23
Frequency of arrangements of shared physical custody (with alternating residence) of a child after divorce	1.29	(.78)	-.04	(1.26)	-.10
Employment factors affecting the reconciliation of family and work					
Job demands (in terms of longer working hours and more work commitment)	.67	(1.09)	.21	(1.07)	.37
Frequency of flexible working arrangements (such as telecommuting, working from home, flexi-time etc.)	1.26	(.68)	-.18	(.98)	.23
Work-related geographical mobility of parents	1.00	(.65)	.16	(.94)	.28
Family policies					
Financial support to families (provided by national or regional governments)	-.24	(1.03)	.28	(1.26)	-.63
Access to childcare provided by the government	.45	(1.01)	-.16	(1.28)	-.47
Government support for fathers and mothers to reorganise their workload when they want to dedicate time to parenting (reduce worktime or temporarily quit their job)	.50	(.68)	-.12	(.86)	-.31

Note: N = 76. Experts assessed whether the driver and thus the share of vulnerable families will strongly decrease (-3), moderately decrease (-2), slightly decrease (-1), stay roughly the same (0), slightly increase (+1), moderately increase (+2) or strongly increase (+3). Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

Two out of the three drivers subsumed under *economic development* show strong associations with economic vulnerability: rises in unemployment and in inequality of earnings were assumed to raise the share of vulnerable families (*r*=.75 and .77). Looking at the mean ratings, experts on average assumed only a very small increase in unemployment (*m*=.16) but a clearer one in inequality of earnings (*m*=.88) leading to corresponding increases in future shares of vulnerable families (*m*=.32 and .78, respectively). Surprisingly, the estimated development of real gross domestic product per capita was not linked to expected changes in economic vulnerability. The slight increase in real gross domestic product per capita assumed by experts (*m*=.17) was not expected to lead to a decrease in economic vulnerability (*m*=-.08; *r*=-.06).

Another driver that showed a strong association with economic vulnerability belongs to *family policy*: higher financial transfers were assumed to decrease the share of vulnerable families with children (*r*=-.63). On average, however, experts expected financial support to families by governments to decrease (*m*=-.24) so that economic vulnerability would slightly increase in the future (*m*=.28). Medium associations between assessments of future developments of drivers and estimated consequences on future economic vulnerability of families with children were found for access to public childcare (more childcare, lower vulnerability) and job demands (increasing job demands, higher vulnerability).[27] Noteworthy might also be associations with the other drivers belonging to *family policy* or *employment factors affecting the reconciliation of family and work*: public support to reorganise workload (more support, lower vulnerability), work-related geographical mobility (higher mobility, higher vulnerability) and flexible working arrangements (higher flexibility, lower vulnerability).

Overall, drivers related to the future economic development—except real GDP per capita—were perceived to be most important for future economic vulnerability of families with children, followed by public policy and the reconciliation of family and work. This finding corresponds to results obtained with relative relevance scores. According to the correlational results, however, cultural changes in general seem to be less relevant than the reconciliation of family and work. Again in line with previous results, changes in gender roles were not assumed to affect future economic vulnerability.

[27] Job demands were explained to comprise working hours and commitment to the job.

5.2.3. Drivers of psychological vulnerability

Table 8 summarises all answers referring to the psychological dimension of vulnerability and gives correlation coefficients for the association between the assessment of the development of a driver and its estimated consequence for the share of families affected by vulnerability. Strong associations between estimated developments of drivers and their consequences on future psychological vulnerability of families with children were again found with unemployment (higher unemployment, higher psychological vulnerability) and earnings inequality (higher inequality, higher psychological vulnerability). In addition, future job demands and the development of the strength of personal relationships were also assumed to be strongly linked to future psychological vulnerability. On average, experts expected that increasing job demands and a weakening of personal relationships would amplify future psychological vulnerability.

Table 8: Main forces and corresponding drivers of psychological vulnerability

Forces and corresponding drivers of future vulnerability (share of vulnerable families in 2050)	Development of driver (-3 to +3)		Effect on psychological vulnerability (-3 to +3)		Association between them
	m	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*r*
Economic development					
Real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita	.02	(1.16)	.46	(1.31)	.06
Unemployment	.27	(1.12)	.69	(1.20)	.81
Inequality in earnings	.81	(1.17)	.69	(1.06)	.77
Cultural change					
Acceptance of the pluralism of family forms	1.19	(.91)	.10	(1.43)	.02
Strength of personal relationships	-.27	(1.01)	.44	(1.11)	-.66
Demands of parenting (i.e. the effort expected of a good parent to make children grow up safe and happy)	1.13	(1.01)	.71	(1.45)	.16
Gender roles					
Female labour force participation	.90	(.87)	.46	(.94)	.54
Share of men engaged in childcare	1.02	(.75)	-.35	(.95)	-.40
Frequency of arrangements of shared physical custody (with alternating residence) of a child after divorce	1.23	(.94)	.52	(1.36)	.23
Employment factors affecting the reconciliation of family and work					
Job demands (in terms of longer working hours and more work commitment)	.73	(1.05)	.81	(1.09)	.75
Frequency of flexible working arrangements (such as telecommuting, working from home, flexi-time etc.)	1.31	(.70)	-.42	(1.00)	-.06
Work-related geographical mobility of parents	1.04	(.74)	.75	(1.03)	.45
Family policies					
Financial support to families (provided by national or regional governments)	-.46	(1.11)	.48	(1.28)	-.52
Access to childcare provided by the government	.21	(1.02)	.00	(1.17)	-.46
Government support for fathers and mothers to reorganise their workload when they want to dedicate time to parenting (reduce worktime or temporarily quit their job)	.23	(1.02)	-.27	(1.05)	-.23

Note: N = 52. Experts assessed whether the driver and thus the share of vulnerable families will strongly decrease (-3), moderately decrease (-2), slightly decrease (-1), stay roughly the same (0), slightly increase (+1), moderately increase (+2) or strongly increase (+3). Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

The following drivers showed medium associations between assessments of their future developments and the estimated consequences on future psychological vulnerability of families with children: female labour force participation, the share of men engaged in childcare, work-related geographical mobility and financial support by governments. While an increase in female labour force participation was assumed to lead to an increase in the shares of vulnerable families, an increase in male engagement in childcare was assumed to counterbalance this negative effect. Furthermore, greater geographical mobility and lower financial support by governments would contribute to an increasing share of families affected by psychological vulnerability.

Small but noteworthy correlation coefficients result from assessments concerning arrangements of shared physical custody and government support for parents to reorganise their workload. A future increase in government support for fathers and mothers to reorganise their workload when they want to dedicate time to parenting (reduce worktime or temporarily quit their job) was assumed to bring a reduction in the share of families affected by psychological vulnerability in Europe. A rise in the frequency of arrangements of shared physical custody (with alternating residence) of a child after divorce, however, was expected to increase psychological vulnerability of families with children.

None of the five forces was assumed to be irrelevant with regard to future psychological vulnerability of families with children. In contrast to results for economic vulnerability, at least certain drivers related to changes in gender roles or other cultural aspects were given some importance. Nevertheless, drivers referring to the economic development (unemployment, earnings inequality) were again perceived to be most important for future vulnerability.

5.2.4. Drivers of social vulnerability

Table 9 summarises answers referring to social vulnerability and gives correlation coefficients for the association between the assessment of the development of a driver and its estimated consequence for the share of vulnerable families. Strong associations with social vulnerability were found for unemployment, inequality in earnings, financial support for families by the government, access to public childcare and public support to reorganise workload when parents want to dedicate more time to their children. Once more, drivers representing the

economic development and family policy seemed to be most important. While increases in unemployment and earnings inequality as well as decreases in financial transfers to families were assumed to contribute to increasing social vulnerability, improved access to public childcare and more government support to parents who want to reorganise their workload were expected to decrease the future share of vulnerable families with children.

Table 9: Main forces and corresponding drivers of social vulnerability

Forces and corresponding drivers of future vulnerability (share of vulnerable families in 2050)	Development of driver (-3 to +3)		Effect on social vulnerability (-3 to +3)		Association between them
	m	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*r*
Economic development					
Real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita	.21	(1.14)	.13	(1.12)	-.40
Unemployment	.36	(1.12)	.59	(1.16)	.67
Inequality in earnings	1.07	(1.19)	.89	(1.10)	.77
Cultural change					
Acceptance of the pluralism of family forms	1.31	(.96)	-.08	(1.26)	-.17
Strength of personal relationships	-.40	(.90)	.31	(.87)	-.15
Demands of parenting (i.e. the effort expected of a good parent to make children grow up safe and happy)	1.09	(1.05)	.71	(1.00)	.26
Gender roles					
Female labour force participation	1.01	(.98)	.03	(1.09)	.01
Share of men engaged in childcare	1.03	(.73)	-.41	(.93)	-.08
Frequency of arrangements of shared physical custody (with alternating residence) of a child after divorce	1.19	(.80)	.05	(1.10)	-.06
Employment factors affecting the reconciliation of family and work					
Job demands (in terms of longer working hours and more work commitment)	1.04	(1.08)	.75	(1.15)	.48
Frequency of flexible working arrangements (such as telecommuting, working from home, flexi-time etc.)	1.32	(.90)	-.03	(1.11)	-.11
Work-related geographical mobility of parents	1.01	(.86)	.49	(.94)	.33
Family policies					
Financial support to families (provided by national or regional governments)	-.64	(1.28)	.37	(1.36)	-.60
Access to childcare provided by the government	.28	(1.16)	-.13	(1.21)	-.65
Government support for fathers and mothers to reorganise their workload when they want to dedicate time to parenting (reduce worktime or temporarily quit their job)	.41	(1.14)	-.08	(1.10)	-.65

Note: N = 75. Experts assessed whether the driver and thus the share of vulnerable families will strongly decrease (-3), moderately decrease (-2), slightly decrease (-1), stay roughly the same (0), slightly increase (+1), moderately increase (+2) or strongly increase (+3). Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

Medium associations between assessments of their future developments and the estimated consequences on future social vulnerability were found for job demands (higher demands, higher social vulnerability) and, interestingly, real GDP per capita (the higher the GDP, the lower increases in social vulnerability). The weak association of the estimated development of GDP per capita with expected future economic vulnerability was surprising. It seems,

however, that experts think that development of GDP is more relevant for social vulnerability. Finally, small but noteworthy associations were found with work-related geographical mobility (higher mobility, higher social vulnerability) and demands of parenting (higher demands, higher social vulnerability).

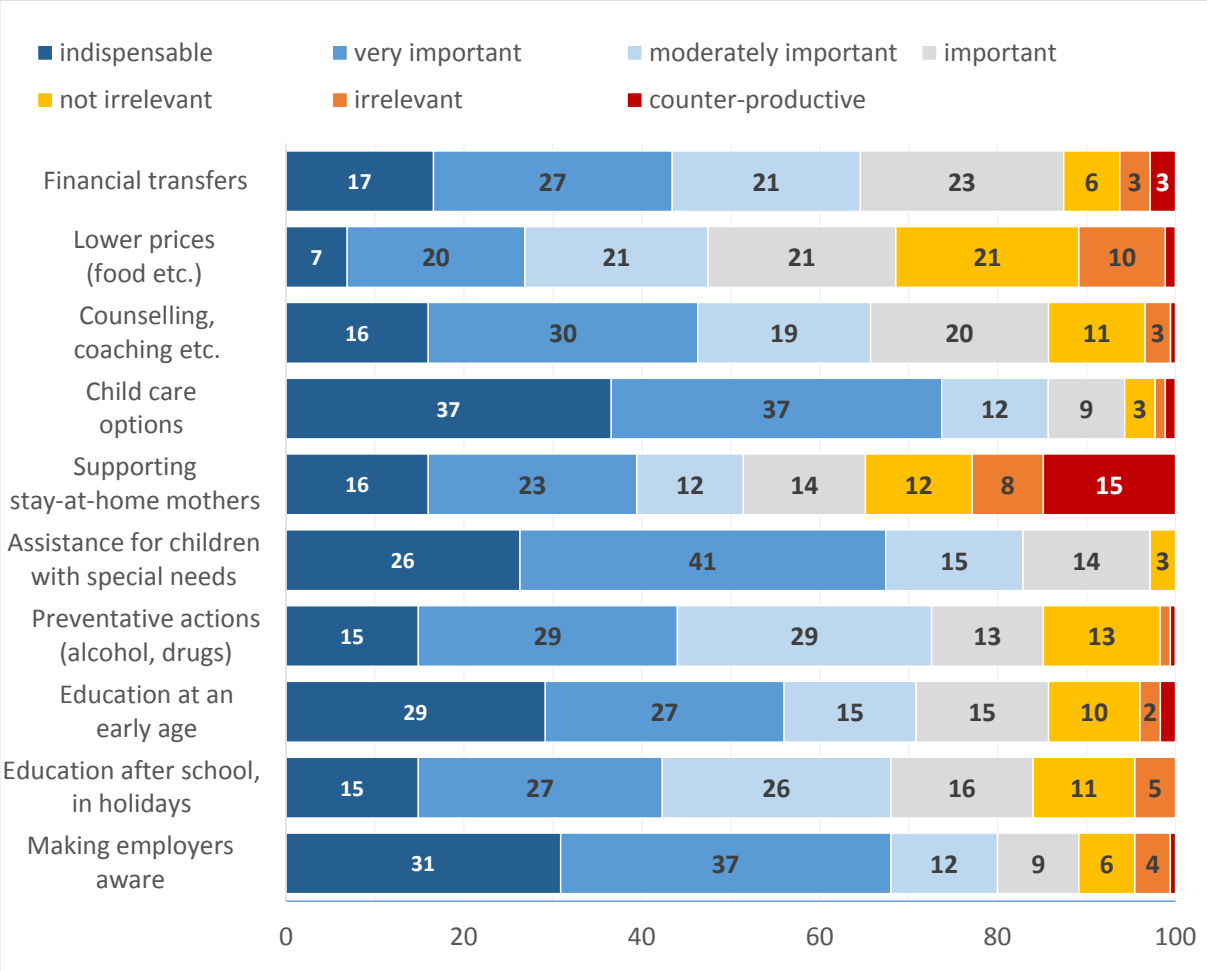
To sum up, drivers referring to economic development or family policy were assumed by experts to be most important for social vulnerability. The drivers concerning changes in gender roles were given least relevance. These observations largely fit into the picture drawn by our previous results. Experts usually highlight economic development, family policy and (sometimes) reconciliation issues. The consequences of changes in gender roles and other cultural aspects for vulnerability of families with children were not emphasised to the same extent—at least until psychological aspects of vulnerability are discussed.

5.3. Policies to stop the reproduction of future vulnerability of families with children

Preventing children from inheriting vulnerability from their families of origin is a major future challenge for European policymakers. The last section describing the results of the expert questionnaire therefore addresses policy measures to stop the intergenerational transmission of vulnerability. In the focus groups, several forms of policy measures were mentioned but discussants obviously placed most emphasis on educational policies. For us, it is therefore of special interest to see how a larger group of experts evaluated the discussed policies and whether the result that educational measures are most important can be replicated in the questionnaire study or not. Though our sample of experts is not representative, this would at least allow a rough quantification of our qualitative results.

Experts assessed the relevance of ten selected policy measures. Figure 4 presents the results for Europe in some detail. Table 10 gives mean ratings and standard deviations differentiated by regions and type of expert (practitioners/ scientists). In general, all ten measures were expected to be important. Even the measure rated worst on average, i.e. supporting stay-at-home mothers, was at least not irrelevant for more than two-thirds of the experts. Nevertheless, there were marked differences in the degree of perceived relevance as the shares of experts who thought that a specific measure was indispensable varied from 7 to 37 per cent (lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance/ providing flexible, affordable childcare options for preschool children aged 0–5).

Figure 4: Relevance of policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability



Note: N=175. For detailed wording in the questionnaire (policy measures) see Table 11 or Appendix II.
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

The three policy measures rated highest on average were (1) *providing flexible, affordable childcare options for preschool children*, (2) *organising assistance for children with special needs* and (3) *making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work–life balance of their employees* (for means see Table 11). More than two-thirds of the experts thought that assistance for children with special needs and raising employers' awareness are indispensable or at least very important in preventing children from the intergenerational transmission of vulnerability. Nevertheless, the relevance given to childcare for preschool children was outstanding. Almost three-quarters of the experts thought that childcare options are either indispensable or very important. An additional 12 and 9 per cent stated that childcare options are moderately important or important to stop the reproduction of vulnerability. Less than two per cent rated this factor to be irrelevant or counter-productive.

A high importance rating could be also observed for *providing education for all children already at an early age*. More than half of the responding experts believed that the provision of early education is indispensable or at least very important to stop the reproduction of vulnerability. At least of moderate importance were the following measures: (a) *investing in preventative actions with regard to problems with alcohol, drugs or violence*; (b) *providing information, counselling and coaching for families*; (c) *organising education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays*; (d) *direct financial transfers to families in need*.[28]

Two measures were clearly perceived to be of less importance in preventing children from inheriting vulnerability from their families of origin in Europe: *lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance* and *supporting mothers who want to leave the labour market to take care of their children*. A look at Figure 4 shows somewhat polarised opinions with regard to both measures but especially regarding the support for stay-at-home mothers. One in six experts thought that supporting mothers wanting to leave the labour market is indispensable to stop the reproduction of vulnerability but almost as many considered this to be counter-productive. Indeed, this policy measure is characterised by ambivalence: staying at home means that mothers can spend more time with their children but might also increase financial insecurity of families and undermine the career prospects of mothers—who are also often role models for their children.

Table 10 gives results differentiated by region. In three of the six regions, provision of childcare was rated highest—in the German-speaking countries, northern Europe and western Europe. In western Europe, childcare shares the position on top with assistance for children with special needs which lead the relevance rating in southern Europe as well. Raising awareness of employers was perceived to be most relevant in central western Europe and eastern Europe. The lowest relevance ratings within regions were obtained by support of stay-at-home mothers in the German-speaking countries, northern Europe and eastern Europe. In central western Europe, western Europe and southern Europe, least relevance was given to lower prices of daily products. The highest average relevance rating was found for provision

[28] For Europe in total, the average ratings of these measures were still higher than five on the 7-point-scale where 5 stands for “moderately important”, 6 for “very important” and 7 for “indispensable” (see Table 10).

of childcare in the German-speaking countries (*m*=6.17) and the lowest for support of stay-at-home mothers in northern Europe (*m*=2.52).

Table 10: Policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability

Policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability within families	Central western Europe		German-speaking part of Europe		Western Europe		Northern Europe		Southern Europe		Eastern Europe		Europe (total)		Practitioners		Scientists	
	m	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)
1. direct financial transfers to families in need	4.63	(1.69)	4.78	(1.47)	5.27	(1.56)	5.10	(1.09)	5.40	(1.45)	5.18	(1.44)	5.03	(1.48)	4.86	(1.44)	5.14	(1.49)
2. lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance	3.97	(1.45)	4.13	(1.44)	4.27	(1.27)	4.00	(1.30)	4.88	(1.52)	4.75	(1.58)	4.38	(1.48)	4.32	(1.45)	4.39	(1.52)
3. providing information, counselling and coaching for families (parents and kids)	4.77	(1.55)	5.50	(1.38)	4.82	(1.25)	4.52	(1.17)	5.10	(1.46)	5.32	(1.12)	5.10	(1.39)	5.39	(1.36)	4.91	(1.37)
4. providing flexible, affordable childcare options for preschool children (age 0–5)	5.47	(1.50)	6.17	(1.20)	5.73	(1.27)	6.05	(1.07)	5.85	(1.14)	5.75	(1.32)	5.87	(1.26)	5.65	(1.35)	6.01	(1.19)
5. supporting mothers who want to leave the labour market to take care of their children	4.50	(2.03)	3.93	(2.18)	5.36	(2.25)	2.52	(1.69)	5.13	(1.76)	4.57	(1.50)	4.34	(2.04)	4.97	(1.95)	3.91	(2.02)
6. organising assistance for children with special needs (e.g. migrant students with language deficits, disabled children)	5.53	(1.04)	6.04	(1.01)	5.73	(1.19)	5.48	(1.12)	5.98	(1.05)	5.32	(1.09)	5.74	(1.09)	5.72	(1.07)	5.75	(1.10)
7. investing in preventative actions with regard to problems with alcohol, drugs or violence	5.07	(1.08)	5.15	(1.41)	4.73	(1.56)	5.05	(1.24)	5.08	(1.25)	5.46	(1.48)	5.14	(1.31)	5.14	(1.22)	5.12	(1.39)
8. providing education for all children already at an early age (age 3–5)	5.43	(1.59)	5.48	(1.55)	5.55	(1.04)	5.10	(1.61)	5.38	(1.46)	5.21	(1.73)	5.36	(1.54)	5.19	(1.54)	5.48	(1.53)
9. organising education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays	5.07	(1.08)	5.30	(1.40)	4.64	(1.50)	5.14	(1.24)	4.98	(1.56)	4.82	(1.44)	5.05	(1.38)	4.80	(1.38)	5.21	(1.36)
10. making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work–life balance of their employees	5.63	(1.43)	5.91	(1.28)	4.82	(2.27)	5.38	(1.20)	5.58	(1.58)	5.64	(1.13)	5.63	(1.42)	5.67	(1.31)	5.60	(1.49)
N	30		46		11		21		40		28		175		69		106	

Note: The original scale ranges from 1 “counter-productive” to 7 “indispensable”. Shown are means (m) and standard deviations (sd).
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors’ own computations.

Differences between regions do exist but are often small. The differences between the maximum and the minimum of means across regions is below half a point on the 7-point rating scale, with providing early education and organisation of education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays (e.g., *m*=5.55 in western Europe and *m*=5.10 in northern Europe for early education). It is around .7 or .8 with (a) childcare, (b) assistance for children with special needs, (c) investing in preventative actions, (d) financial transfers and (e) lower prices for products of day-to-day importance. Investing in preventative actions with regard to problems with alcohol, drugs or violence was given most emphasis in eastern Europe (*m*=5.46) and least emphasis in western Europe (*m*=4.73). Financial transfers and lower prices for products were both rated highest in southern Europe and lowest in central western Europe. The relevance ratings of childcare and of assistance for children with special needs were highest in the German-speaking countries.

A remarkable difference could be found with regard to raising employers' awareness. Its relevance was rated highest in the German-speaking countries (*m*=5.91) and lowest in western Europe (*m*=4.82). The difference between the maximum and the minimum of average regional ratings for providing information, counselling and coaching for families was of similar size than the one for raising employers' awareness. It was rated lowest by experts for northern Europe (*m*=4.52). The highest rating came, once more, from experts for the German-speaking countries (*m*=5.50).[29] By far the largest difference between the maximum and the minimum of average regional ratings could be found with support for stay-at-home mothers. While experts for northern European countries did not think that this support is of great help to break the cycle of reproduction of vulnerability in families (*m*=2.52), experts for the German-speaking (*m*=3.93), central western (*m*=4.50), eastern (*m*=4.57), southern (*m*=5.13) or western European countries (*m*=5.36), put much more emphasis on such a policy.

Furthermore, Table 10 reveals interesting *differences between practitioners and scientists*. Pronounced differences could be found with regard to support for stay-at-home mothers (*m*=4.97 vs. 3.91) and the relevance of counselling and coaching for families (*m*=5.39 vs. 4.91). Both measures were more important for practitioners than for scientists. Scientists, on

[29] It should be noted that the highest average regional ratings were found with experts for German-speaking countries for five out of ten statements. The lowest average relevance ratings referred three times to northern Europe and three times to central western Europe.

the other hand placed slightly more emphasis than practitioners on education after school and in holidays, childcare for preschool children, education at an early age and financial transfers. Maybe practitioners directly working with vulnerable families and in part responsible for counselling and coaching indeed perceive and thus highlight other aspects of vulnerability than scientists who are more involved in analysing abstract data and aggregated outcomes. While childcare was most important, and support of stay-at-home mothers least important for scientists, practitioners considered assistance for children with special needs to be most important and lower prices of products needed for daily life to be least important.

In focus groups, education was understood to be the main instrument against the reproduction of vulnerability. Education was broadly defined and comprised education for children, parents and other important societal actors, in particular employers. What can results of the expert questionnaire add to the results of focus groups? First, the evidence regarding education for children came out somewhat mixed. The two policy measures directly referring to education of children were not among the three measures identified as the most important ones. However, while education after school and during holidays was of medium importance only, the average relevance rating of early childhood education was very high. In addition, the two policy measures with highest relevance scores—childcare options and assistance for children with special needs—include educational elements. Second, the only policy measure listed which referred to parents (providing information, counselling and coaching) was considered to be of medium relevance as well. Third, "education" of employers was perceived as very relevant to stop the intergenerational transmission of vulnerability as raising awareness of employers was among the top three policy measures. To sum up, the present results do not contradict the result of focus groups. Rather, they add important information. The results of the questionnaire study allow differentiating between relevant and highly relevant policy measures from the area of education.

Another interesting finding is that results did not emphasise the relevance of financial measures. While experts on average perceived transfers for families to be of medium importance, lowering the prices of daily used products would be placed in ninth position within a relevance ranking among the ten listed measures.[30] This is generally in line with

[30] Table 10 shows that the mean rating is 4.38 (all assessments). This is the second lowest mean rating among the ten policy measures.

results of the focus group research. Several discussants in focus groups already had serious doubts that financial measures were the right policies to overcome the effects of heritage on future vulnerability. Among other things, it was mentioned that financial transfers might even have counter-acting effects when children get used to living on welfare payments. The conclusion in focus groups was that monetary benefits were necessary for those with most urgent needs but had to be embedded in a broader political strategy to successfully fight the reproduction of vulnerability within families.

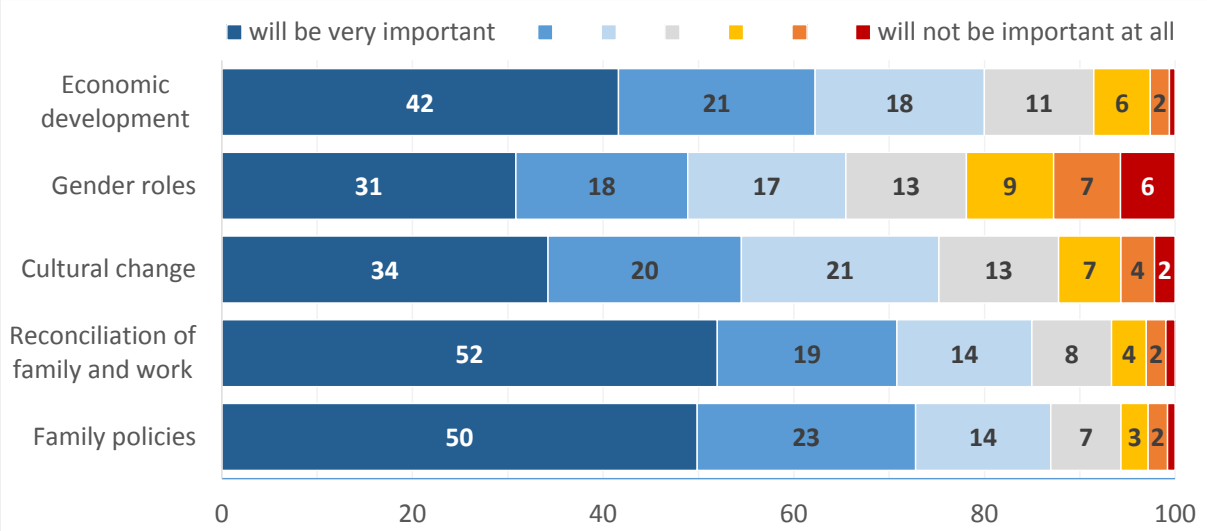
The findings of the present research also indicate certain differences between groups of experts that might be due to diverse perspectives resulting from diverging experience with vulnerable families. Finally, the results of the expert questionnaire provide some hints on regional differences within Europe that by and large correspond to the welfare state regimes dominating in the respective parts of Europe. For conclusions to be drawn, however, future studies including a higher number of experts—and experts that are in some way representative for their regions and different professions—are needed. The only implication the present research allows in this respect is stressing the need of knowing different perspectives, probably all of them being important.

6. Results of the family questionnaire

6.1. The relative importance of major forces for future vulnerability

In the family questionnaire, participants were asked for their opinion on how important future developments (changes) in five areas will be for the well-being of families. The five areas reflected the five major forces identified by experts in focus group discussions: (1) changes in economic development, (2) changes in gender roles (relations between the sexes; division of housework, childcare and professional work between women and men), (3) changes in culture (lifestyles, values etc.), (4) changes in the reconciliation of family life and professional work, (5) changes in welfare and family policy. Figure 5 gives the results showing average relevance ratings for these five forces.

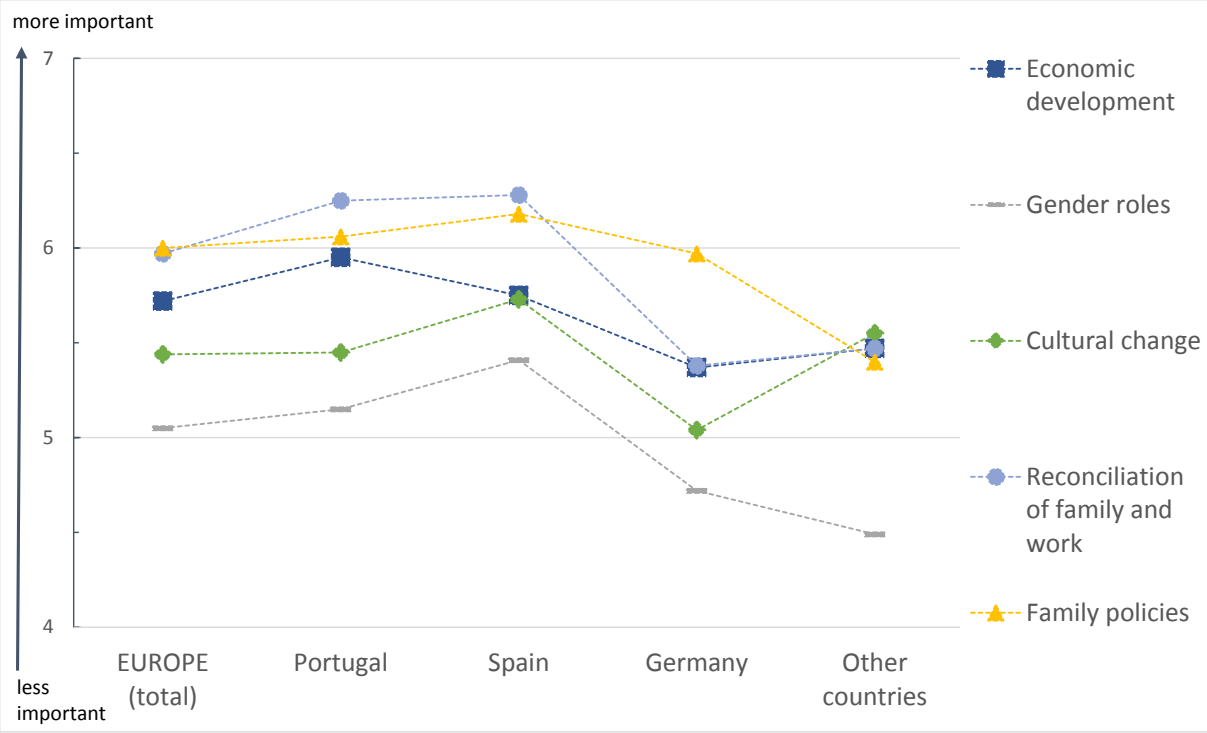
Figure 5: Major forces affecting vulnerability of families with children



Note: N between 1,124 and 1,170. Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors' own computations.

The parents interviewed perceived all of these five factors to be relevant, as all average ratings are clearly above the middle of the available scale reaching from 1 (not important) to 7 (very important). In line with results obtained in the expert questionnaire study, respondents rated changes in gender roles and other cultural changes the lowest. Though not ranked highest, economic development was regarded as highly relevant for future well-being of families with children. Most important for parents, however, were welfare and family policies and the reconciliation of family life and professional work (reaching a mean rating of 6).

Figure 6: Major forces affecting vulnerability by country of residence



Note: N between 1,124 and 1,170. The original scale ranges from 1 "will not be important at all" to 7 "will be very important for families". Shown are means (m). Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors' own computations.

Table A.5 in the Appendix gives mean ratings of parents by the six regional groups used for analysis of the expert questionnaire.[31] With the family questionnaire, however, a different grouping seems to be more meaningful as most respondents live in one of three countries. Figure 6 thus gives the results by country of residence for parents from Germany, Portugal, Spain and other European countries. The basic pattern of results seems to be the same: In all four groups, gender roles are perceived to be less relevant than other forces while welfare and family policies are highly rated. Policies obtained the highest mean rating by parents from Germany. In Portugal and Spain, changes in reconciliation of family life and professional work were perceived to be most important for future well-being of families with children. Surprisingly, parents of other countries emphasised cultural change. This may be a hint that though there are a lot of commonalities, regional differences might still matter. In addition, it should be noted that in general mean relevance ratings of parents from other European

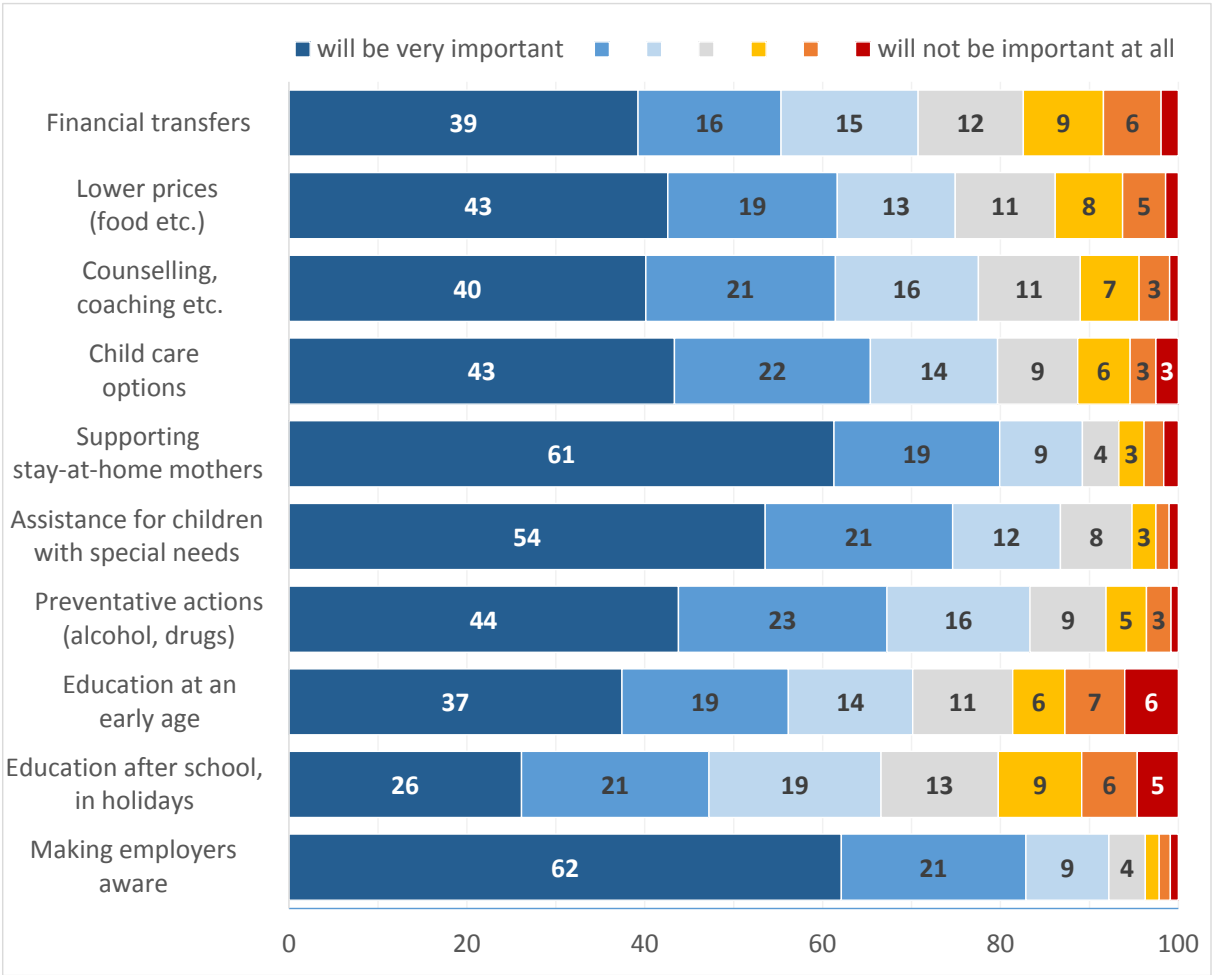
[31] Comparing the relevance of one force across regions, it becomes obvious that both economic development and work–family reconciliation are perceived to be of exceptional relevance in southern Europe. Cultural change is rated higher in central western Europe and changes in gender roles as well as family policies are rated higher in western Europe than in any other region. Comparing the relevance of forces within regions, economic development was ranked surprisingly low by parents from western and central western Europe (see Table A.5).

countries were lower than the ones of parents from Portugal and Spain (with the exception of cultural change).

6.2. Policies: overview

Parents were also asked how important specific policy measures will be if governments want to reduce vulnerability in the next generations. Beforehand, it was explained that the next question will be about children who grow up in families where members suffer from vulnerability, i.e. from social risks and problems such as poverty, stress and depression and/or a lack of support by other people. It was also made clear that vulnerability is often passed on from parents to their children and that individuals who grew up in vulnerability are at risk of starting families of their own that are affected by vulnerability as well. The ten policy measures mentioned were exactly the same as in the expert questionnaire.

Figure 7: Relevance of policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability



Note: N=1,343. Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors' own computations.

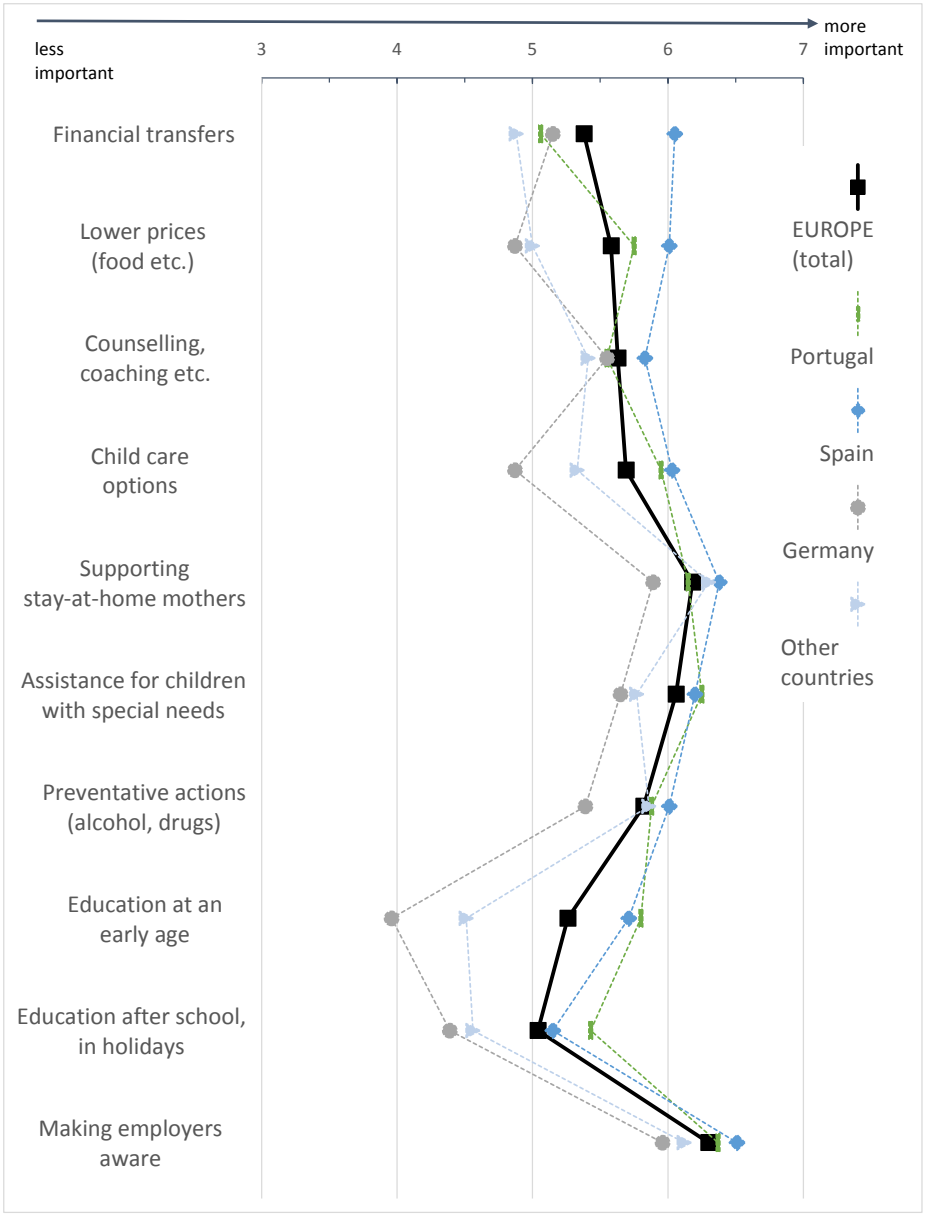
Figure 7 displays the detailed answers given by responding parents. They perceived *raising awareness of employers for work–family balance* and *supporting stay-at-home mothers* to be of prior importance, followed by *assistance for children with special needs*. With regard to one of these policies, there is a huge discrepancy between the parents' opinion and the assessments by experts. For experts, *support of stay-at-home mothers* was (on average) the least important of these ten policy measures. It was (almost) the only measure where a certain polarisation could be observed as a considerable fraction of experts found this measure to be even counter-productive. This is, however, mainly due to experts from northern Europe. For them *support of stay-at-home mothers* seems to be much less relevant than for experts from other parts of Europe or parents—including parents from northern Europe (see Table 10 and compare with Table A.6 in the Appendix).[32]

Parents, on the other hand, were least convinced of educational measures (education after school and in holidays, early schooling). Interestingly, those were exactly the policies whose relevance for inhibiting the reproduction of vulnerability was emphasised most by experts in our focus group discussions. Views of scientists and practitioners seem to differ from opinions of parents. It has to be noted, however, that only the *relative ranking* of educational measures among all the other policy measures was lower with parents than with experts. Disregarding the other policies, the absolute ratings of parents and experts were very similar (compare percentage points shown in Figures 4 and 7): both think that education is of great importance.

In the following, average relevance ratings are shown instead of detailed results. Figure 8 displays results for Germany, Portugal, Spain and other European countries. Figure 8 reveals that especially parents from Germany did not believe in avoiding the reproduction of vulnerability by *early education for all children* (mean rating below 4 on the relevance scale from 1 to 7). *Raising awareness of employers* obtained the highest average relevance rating in Germany, Portugal and Spain. In other European countries it was *support for stay-at-home mothers*, followed by *raising awareness of employers*. (These two items obtained mean ratings between 5.9 and 6.5.)

[32] Table A.7 in the Appendix gives mean ratings of parents by the six regional groups used for analysis of the expert questionnaire.

Figure 8: Relevance of policy measures by country of residence



Note: N=1,343. The original scale ranges from 1 "will not be important at all" to 7 "will be very important". Shown are means (m).
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors' own computations.

6.3. Policies: in-depth analyses

6.3.1. Ratings by potentially vulnerable subgroups

What do members of vulnerable families themselves think? The family questionnaire does not allow an identification of vulnerable families. Nevertheless, it is possible to get some hints by analysing specific subgroups of parents reporting financial difficulties (problems to make ends meet), parents living without a partner who could support them, parents stating that their

family does not do many things together or that they do not talk a lot with their own child(ren), parents reporting severe interferences of their family life with other areas of life (professional work, friends, sports, cultural activities etc.) and parents complaining about not having enough time for their child(ren). Table 11 gives the mean relevance ratings of policy measures for exactly these subgroups of responding parents.

According to Table 11, for instance, parents with financial difficulties awarded much more relevance to *lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance* than parents did on average. In addition, they attached more value than others to *direct financial transfers* of the government. Nevertheless, *making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work–life balance of their employees* is most relevant also for this subgroup of parents—as it is for all of the subgroups analysed.

Similar to parents with financial difficulties, those who live without a partner in the same household also gave more importance to *direct financial transfers* than the average parent. Though still perceived as very important (among the top three measures), *support of stay-at-home mothers* was rated below average by this subgroup of parents. By contrast, *organising education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays* was rated higher by parents not living together with a partner than by other parents.

Interestingly, parents stating that they do not talk a lot with their own child(ren) attached less relevance to the *provision of information, counselling and coaching for families* than the average parent. With regard to other measures, average assessments of this subgroup of parents are mostly close to those of all parents. More or less the same holds for parents reporting that their family does not do many things together.

Similar to parents with financial difficulties, parents reporting severe interferences of their family life with other areas of life and parents complaining about not having enough time for their child(ren) attached great importance to *raising awareness of employers for work–family balance*. In addition, these two subgroups of parents rated the *provision of childcare options*, *preventative actions*, *early education* and *education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays* higher than the average parent—thereby indicating that these measures might all help to improve the reconciliation of family life and professional work.

Table 11: Relevance of policy measures for potentially vulnerable subgroups

Policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability within families	Economic/ financial difficulties		No partner or not in same household		Family does not do many things together		Do not talk a lot with each other		Interference of family life with other areas		Not enough time for child(ren)		Total sample	
	m	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)
1. direct financial transfers to families in need	5.89	(1.50)	5.80	(1.48)	5.42	(1.80)	5.27	(1.71)	5.63	(1.82)	5.39	(1.90)	5.38	(1.72)
2. lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance	6.03	(1.40)	5.68	(1.59)	5.63	(1.64)	5.51	(1.61)	5.91	(1.48)	5.92	(1.52)	5.58	(1.63)
3. providing information, counselling and coaching for families (parents and kids)	5.79	(1.50)	5.86	(1.47)	5.47	(1.58)	5.39	(1.55)	5.82	(1.56)	5.64	(1.58)	5.63	(1.51)
4. providing flexible, affordable childcare options for preschool children (age 0–5)	5.93	(1.59)	5.87	(1.43)	5.75	(1.49)	5.60	(1.64)	5.98	(1.56)	6.03	(1.50)	5.69	(1.57)
5. supporting mothers who want to leave the labour market to take care of their children	6.38	(1.25)	6.01	(1.42)	6.17	(1.42)	6.03	(1.53)	6.26	(1.47)	6.12	(1.64)	6.18	(1.36)
6. organising assistance for children with special needs (e.g. migrant students with language deficits, disabled children)	6.28	(1.20)	5.82	(1.51)	6.04	(1.32)	5.89	(1.32)	6.29	(1.31)	6.09	(1.41)	6.06	(1.31)
7. investing in preventative actions with regard to problems with alcohol, drugs or violence	6.02	(1.34)	6.03	(1.37)	5.76	(1.48)	5.71	(1.42)	6.00	(1.43)	5.97	(1.38)	5.82	(1.40)
8. providing education for all children already at an early age (age 3–5)	5.46	(1.94)	5.35	(1.89)	5.34	(1.84)	5.30	(1.94)	5.59	(1.92)	5.62	(1.82)	5.26	(1.88)
9. organising education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays	5.31	(1.77)	5.54	(1.67)	5.11	(1.73)	4.98	(1.76)	5.28	(1.89)	5.34	(1.85)	5.04	(1.75)
10. making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work–life balance of their employees	6.54	(.97)	6.38	(1.18)	6.37	(1.04)	6.18	(1.27)	6.52	(1.13)	6.49	(1.16)	6.30	(1.16)
N	378		71		161		122		234		181		1,343	

Note: The original scale ranges from 1 “will not be important at all” to 7 “will be very important for families”. Shown are means (m) and standard deviations (sd).
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors’ own computations.

6.3.2. What affects the relevance ratings of different policy dimensions?

The final subsection presenting results obtained with family questionnaire data should give some hints which groups of parents prefer what kinds of policies. To answer this question, tools of factor analysis (principal component analysis, varimax rotation) were employed. It turned out that three items clearly belong to one policy dimension: (a) *direct financial transfers to families in need*, (b) *lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance* and (c) *supporting mothers who want to leave the labour market to take care of their children*.[33] Four items obviously belong to a different dimension: (i) *providing flexible, affordable childcare options for preschool children*, (ii) *investing in preventative actions with regard to problems with alcohol, drugs or violence*, (iv) *providing education for all children already at an early age* and (iii) *organising education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays*.[34] The three remaining policy items (*information, counselling and coaching for families*; *assistance for children with special needs*; *raising awareness of employers*) were more closely related to the second dimension but their assignment to one of them was not that clear.[35] Items (a) to (c) were used to construct a mean index measuring the *financial benefits* dimension and items (i) to (iv) to capture the *educational policy* dimension. Finally, regression analyses were employed to analyse who gives more relevance to these dimensions. The results of these regression analyses are discussed in the following (for details see Table A.7 in Appendix VI).

Regression analyses confirm that both financial benefits and educational policies were more often perceived to be relevant in hindering the reproduction of vulnerability by parents from Portugal and Spain than by parents living in Germany. In addition, mothers perceive both policy dimensions to be important more than fathers. Interestingly, the highly educated find both policy dimensions to be less relevant than parents without tertiary education. One's own age, age of the youngest child, number of children and household composition seem to be less important for relevance ratings of policy dimensions. The financial situation of the household influences relevance ratings of both dimensions. The more easily ends were met by household

[33] Factor loadings varied between .68 and 75 on the one factor and between .07 and .28 on the other factor.

[34] Factor loadings were between .64 and .83 on this factor and between .00 and .34 on the other one.

[35] Factor loadings varied between .54 and .59 on one and between .32 and .38 on the other factor.

income, the less relevant policy measures were perceived. This association, however, is stronger with regard to financial benefits than with regard to educational policies.

Additional regression analyses also include attitudes regarding the role of the government and the importance of traditions (see Figure A.13 and Table A.8). Among parents, four in five respondents agree that the government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for.[36] The stronger the agreement, the more important both dimensions of policy measures are perceived. This association also seems to be stronger with the financial benefits dimension than with the educational policy dimension. About 72 per cent of parents think that it is important to uphold tradition (i.e. the customs handed down by one's religion or family).[37] This opinion has no influence on the relevance attached to educational policy measures. However, it seems that those who strongly agree to this (and are maybe more conservative) also think that financial benefits supporting families are more important. One may conclude that both, necessities as well as attitudes, affect the relevance ratings of different policy measures among parents.

7. Discussion

7.1. Summary and contextualisation of findings: a policy perspective

The present report summarised the results of two online surveys being part of the foresight activities of the *FamiliesAndSocieties* project—one directed at experts from science and practice and the other one asking parents to represent those who are affected by socioeconomic developments and family policy in daily life. Learning from the results of a "Futures task force workshop" (Philipov et al., 2014) and focus group discussions with policymakers and civil society actors engaged in family-related issues (Mynarska et al., 2015), the surveys focussed on two central themes: the future of vulnerability of families with children and policies to break the cycle of the ongoing reproduction of vulnerability within families. The topic of vulnerability remains an important issue for future research. Although living standards have been rising in Europe and most other parts of the world in recent decades, significant proportions of the society remain vulnerable. Needless to allude, income inequality has even increased in the course of the last decades in several countries (cf. OECD, 2011a; Pew Research Center, 2014). In Europe, the events following the financial crisis in 2007/08 lead to a deterioration of the economic situation for the working-age population and

[36] This is also true for three in four experts though among those who agree, agreement of experts is less strong than agreement of parents (compare Figure A.9 and Figure A.13).

[37] On the other hand, only 32 per cent of experts are of the same opinion (Figure A.9).

their children (European Commission, 2016). Children are the age group with the highest risk of poverty or social exclusion (cf. López Vilaplana, 2013)—a specific challenge for European politics.

In our expert questionnaire study, we first sought an answer to the question *how vulnerability of families with children will develop until the year 2050*. Information from 176 submitted questionnaires revealed that experts expected the share of vulnerable families with children to increase across Europe. Irrespective of the dimension of vulnerability (economic, psychological or social), scientists and practitioners seemed to be rather pessimistic, thus further establishing the relevance of the topic for future politics. Second, we were interested in views about *societal developments that might drive future vulnerability of families with children*. Experts considered economic development to be most relevant for the vulnerability of families with children in the future. They assumed that economic development would not only affect economic vulnerability but also influence psychological and social vulnerability. However, it was not the development of GDP per capita that was perceived to be influential but rather the future development of unemployment and (in)equality in earnings. Family policies were also considered important for all three dimensions of vulnerability. In particular, financial transfers to families and access to public childcare were assumed to affect economic and psychological vulnerability. Both these measures plus government support for parents to reorganise their workload were also thought to influence social vulnerability. As experts on average estimated unemployment and earnings inequality to increase as well as public transfers to decrease expectations of a rising vulnerability of families with children in the future are probably not surprising.

Cultural changes were not perceived to affect economic vulnerability. Nevertheless, experts thought that they might be important for social and in particular psychological vulnerability. Detailed results indicated that a weakening strength of personal relationships might lead to higher psychological vulnerability in the future. In addition, it turned out that rising job demands were expected to be a threat for psychological well-being. Changes in gender roles were evaluated with some ambivalence: while higher female labour force participation (to be expected) would increase the future share of families affected by psychological vulnerability, more involvement of men in childcare would decrease it.

On the one hand, there is a pessimistic evaluation of the future development of vulnerability of families with children in Europe. On the other hand, however, experts expect policies to be capable of reducing vulnerability in principle. Family policy was rated the second most important driving force of future vulnerability after economic development. In addition, future policy might counteract unemployment and rising inequalities in earnings. Anyway, family policy is key to reducing poverty (e.g., Lohmann, 2009; Troger & Verwiebe, 2015) and to enhancing life chances of children in Europe in the future. Unsurprisingly, the experts' assessments are largely in line with the existing literature. However, the assumed relevance of policy was even more pronounced for the parents responding to the family questionnaire. They attached the greatest importance for future well-being of families with children to changes in welfare and family policy and to the reconciliation of family life and professional work.

Another main aim of the present study was to assess the relevance attributed to ten selected policy measures that should be able to mitigate or even stop the reproduction of vulnerability within families. In the literature, family structure, family policy and educational policy are considered to be important determinants of societal inequality (cf. Huber & Stephens, 2014; McLanahan & Percheski, 2008; Solga, 2014). In focus groups, discussants primarily stressed the relevance of education to overcome social heritage (Mynarska et al., 2015). Indeed, education and childcare policies affect differences in intergenerational social mobility across industrialised countries (Causa & Johansson, 2010). Existing evidence indicates that educational reforms can help children from a disadvantaged background—at least to a certain degree—to close the gap between them and more advantaged groups of children (e.g. Jacob & Ludwig, 2009; Riederer & Verwiebe, 2015). Furthermore, education has become ever more important for inequality in the US in recent decades according to Autor (2014), as the wage premium to higher education shows a tremendous growth.

Findings of the expert questionnaire confirm the relevance attributed to education—at least to some degree. The three policy measures identified as being most important by experts were the *provision of childcare options* for preschool children, *assistance for children with special needs* and *raising the awareness of employers* regarding the work–life balance of their employees, closely followed by providing *education for all children already at an early age*. Raising the awareness of employers refers to another aspect emphasised in focus group discussions: to understand education in a broad sense including informing of all societal

actors but especially parents and employers (Mynarska et al., 2015). Other suggestions such as lowering the prices of daily used products or supporting stay-at-home mothers were perceived as much less useful in stopping the transfer of vulnerability within families from one generation to the next. Support for stay-at-home mothers was even evaluated as counter-productive to this aim by a noteworthy proportion of experts. Parents participating in the family survey, on the other hand, did not share this opinion. For them, support for stay-at-home mothers was among the most important policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability.[38] In line with experts, however, responding parents also emphasised the relevance of *raising the awareness of employers* regarding the work–life balance of their employees and the necessity of *assistance for children with special needs*. To sum up, there is much coherence between experts and parents but also some disagreement. As our samples are neither representative for experts nor for families in Europe, the extent to which differences between opinions of experts and parents result from their different positions remains an open question. Nevertheless, it seems plausible that the perspective of parents is different to the one of experts. While parents experience concrete needs in their daily life, experts usually adopt a more distant and forward-looking perspective. Financial support or staying at home, for instance, will solve problems of a family in the short run but not necessarily improve the situation of vulnerable families (as a large societal group) in the long run.

The dynamics of inequality differ across Europe (Mau & Verwiebe, 2010) as well as availability and affordability of quality childcare or support for early childhood development (Bouget et al., 2015). Therefore the way how public policies "structure a child's opportunities and determine the extent to which adult earnings are related to family background" differ across countries (Corak, 2013, 80). Education is of importance in this respect; however, existing (national) policies and current involvement of the European Union in education were characterised as "ambivalent and partly contradictory" (Agostini & Natali, 2015, 154). The rhetoric relevance of education and training has not led to higher investments in education. Improvements of policies seem to be necessary to stop the reproduction of vulnerability within families. Without any doubt experts perceived education to be important while a large part of parents did not seem to be equally convinced. Maybe the quality of, and the

[38] It has to be noted that the difference between experts and parents regarding the effectiveness of support for stay-at-home mothers is partly driven by a specific group of experts: The average rating of experts from northern Europe is much lower than ratings from experts from other regions (or parents from northern Europe).

confidence in, the educational systems have to be increased. In addition, several other policies were identified as relevant as well. An integrated approach might thus be a possible answer to future challenges.

7.2. Policies: a specific outlook

Experts share the view that vulnerability of families with children will not decline and is likely to increase during the forthcoming decades. This inference holds for all three dimensions of vulnerability, based on rising uncertainty in times of diversifying markets, swift technological advance, merging of cultures as well as open borders. The response of governments to these globalisation changes is linked to the provision of policies and safety nets designed to support people in need such as the poor, the invalidated, elderly people and vulnerable families with children. Indeed, our survey showed that experts view policies, along with economic development, as an important instrument towards preventing vulnerability and thus supporting not only individual families but societies as a whole. Parents themselves were even more convinced of the usefulness of policies.

The expected rise in vulnerability requires an adequate policy enforcement. However, policy instruments might be restricted in their aim to effectively counteract negative trends in vulnerability that accompany future social, economic, technological and cultural change. Moreover policies can be costly and governments' capacities to provide these costs are restricted. Capacities are an external constraint that policymakers have to comply with, yet policy effectiveness can be continuously improved when policies need to be adjusted to changing societal environments. To this end, operative policy monitoring would be helpful (see also Eurofound, 2015). Monitoring should also include the acceptance of offered policy instruments by parents (as views of parents might differ from those of experts). In the following, however, we discuss two other, rather specific aspects of monitoring, namely the use of synthetic indices describing the object of interest and the use of the mainstreaming approach. In our case, indices can refer to the three dimensions of vulnerability.

During recent years the use of indices constructed for specific policy purposes has been expanding. One example is the active ageing index (AAI) developed by the European

Commission together with the UNECE.[39] This index describes the situation of elderly people in European countries and indicates whether expected advances in "active ageing" have actually been observed—optimising the opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance the quality of life in old age, both for individuals and population groups. So it supports policymaking with the provision of direct information about the object of interest. Another index of similar nature is the material deprivation index constructed and followed by Eurostat, which is an index used for monitoring poverty. These and other similar indices can be used for international comparisons but are also applicable for comparison of regions within a country.

The index about risk of poverty and social exclusion is directly relevant to material vulnerability. It is extensively used in this report and at the beginning of our work it served its verification. It can be effectively used for monitoring the economic dimension of vulnerability as illustrated in its analysis in Section 3 in this report. The other two dimensions of vulnerability of families are not linked to a similar index. Apparently, if such indices were available the monitoring of vulnerability change would be improved. It might be too demanding, however, for statistical bodies to consider an index specifically for the vulnerability of families with children and for the reproduction of that vulnerability. These indices can be constructed by scientific experts from different disciplines. A potential research would first have to identify the components of the index (the AAI, for instance, is based on more than 30 statistically observed items) and second have to combine them (weighted in accordance with the significance of their effect on vulnerability).

The second aspect in monitoring policies' effectiveness refers to advantages and disadvantages in the mainstreaming approach. We consider policy measures which experts participating in the focus group discussions identified as most important and experts participating in the online survey (as well as parents responding to the family survey) evaluated for their relevance to reproduction of vulnerability.

Tables 10 and 11 include these measures, ten in total. They belong to different social or economic policies, some to more than one. For example, the first measure (direct financial

[39] See http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home.

transfers) belongs to family policies but also to policies that fight poverty in general. This also applies to the second measure, as lower prices can be understood as indirect (financial) transfers in kind. Childcare is a fundamental measure related to family policies but also to policies related to the reconciliation of professional work and care for the family. Assistance for disabled children is an item that belongs to well-designed policies for the disabled in line with the international *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Several items in the table relate to education policies.

To these items we can add others not explicitly specified here although they are bound to have an effect on vulnerability: for example, policies related to employment and unemployment, policies mitigating income inequality and other economic policies. In general, the list of relevant policies is extremely large, thus indicating that family vulnerability can permeate, and does permeate, numerous policies. Therefore, it is a topic that has been mainstreamed across diverse policies.

With the inclusion of the matter of interest in a broad circle of policies mainstreaming bears important advantages. Care should be taken however for possible potential shortcomings in its application which might arise when certain policy measures may contradict each other as is the case, for instance, with policies aiming to increase female labour force participation and policies supporting childcare leave. The issue that single measures have to go hand in hand with each other was repeatedly raised during the focus group discussions where experts recognised the necessity for a comprehensive strategy and complementarity of policies in supporting vulnerable families and children in them. Monitoring can help to identify cases of conflicting policies. Yet monitoring a large list of adequate policy measures is time-demanding and can hardly be effective. An appropriate way would be to give priority to certain policy aspects and link them with indices related to family vulnerability. This match assures that contradicting policies can be avoided.

A couple of items included in Tables 10 and 11 call for additional attention. The last item refers to awareness among employers. Raising the awareness given to needs of families with children is necessary not only with respect to employers but to the society as a whole. This is an appropriate field of work for non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Counselling, advocacy and other activities typical for NGOs are also related to our topic of interest. We have witnessed these activities being carried out by the participants in the preparation of this

survey: the *International Federation for Family Development* (IFFD) and the *European Large Families Confederation* (ELFAC). NGOs can successfully support governments and communities in raising awareness about needs and problems, informing the public about policymaking and explaining the meaning of policy measures related to the vulnerability of families with children.

7.3. Implications for future research

The final section of this report might offer some implications and suggestions for future research. First, future research should observe the development of child vulnerability across Europe in more detail. As already mentioned in the section above, the development of synthetic indices that measure different dimensions of vulnerability and are appropriate for the situation of children is of high priority.

With regard to the accumulation of wealth and the intergenerational reproduction of vulnerability, social research should, second, observe for which sectors of the societies "gains" or "losses" might arise. This is important for several reasons: culminations of disadvantages might be particularly problematic (and unfair) if existing differences manifest themselves over generations—with consequences for the society as a whole. For instance, rising inequality resulting from increasing disadvantages to the lower classes might be detrimental to economic growth (OECD, 2015b). Families belonging to lower strata often react to a worsening of their situation by restricting their children's education. In consequence, the potential of future generations will not be fully exploited.

Third, studies that clarify possible interconnections between societal developments, contradictory consequences of changes, conflicting aims and all kinds of ambivalences of different policies are desperately needed. Concerning the effect of changing gender roles, for instance, focus group participants made very clear that they expect higher female employment to positively affect economic vulnerability. At the same time, however, it might negatively affect psychological vulnerability if neither childcare by fathers nor public childcare were to increase. In the present study, higher shares in female employment were indeed assumed to increase psychological vulnerability while higher male participation in childcare and an increase in availability of public childcare were assumed to help decrease it. Furthermore, there was some disagreement among experts concerning policy measures. One policy measure

in particular was perceived very ambivalently: while 16 per cent of respondents stated that support for stay-at-home mothers would be indispensable, another 15 per cent expressed the opinion that such support would in fact be counter-productive. Thus, findings of the expert questionnaire study are in line with the (high degree of) ambivalence found in focus group research and may even add to the complexity.

Fourth, future research should go beyond the present research that was based on convenience sampling. In particular, the research questions of our family questionnaire have to be addressed using representative samples for populations of as many European countries as possible. In addition, the obtained data should allow for detailed analyses of frequently vulnerable family types because different family types likely have different priorities regarding policy measures.[40]

Fifth, the present paper nevertheless clearly demonstrates that opinions of experts who are advising policymakers and parents who are affected by implemented policies do sometimes differ. Politicians seem to be aware of this and for the sake of their popularity (to maximise the number of votes), they do not always follow scientific expertise. On the other hand, scientific studies other than political (opinion) research directly focussing on popular views could also take into account public acceptance of suggested measures, at least if it wants to support political decision making.

Sixth, researchers may consider more drivers of vulnerability in future studies. Following from our methodological approach, we included only those drivers in our questionnaire that were identified to be most important in prior focus group discussions. Other developments like technological progress or educational mobility, for instance, were not explicitly addressed. Effects of the latter seem to be of particular interest. At least economic vulnerability should be reduced with larger shares of high-educated people. While educational

[40] For instance, the family questionnaire study does not allow final conclusions about differences between large families and single-parent families due to the low case number of respondents living without a partner. In focus groups, participants mentioned that single-parent families have the same problems all families have but that these problems are sometimes more severe when the support by a partner is missing. Though descriptive results showed that most policy measures were more important for single parents than for respondents on average, the absence of a partner in the household did not have any significant effects on assessments of policies in multivariate analyses. The reason for this result, however, may also be that the questions analysed in this paper referred to the *effectiveness of policies in mitigating vulnerability reproduction in general* and *not* to the *effectiveness of policies in improving the present-day situation of parents.*

policy measures are expected to be relevant to stop vulnerability reproduction, economic vulnerability did however not disappear albeit the educational expansion of the last decades. As average education of the labour force is rising, standards expected by employers and competition for well-paid jobs changes as well. In addition, a difference between poverty in absolute and in relative terms has to be made. Finally, it is even less clear how education affects psychological and social vulnerability. On the whole, effects of education on vulnerability may thus be extraordinarily complex.

Finally, demographic research has not yet given much attention to intergenerational reproduction of vulnerability and its possible consequences for the future distribution of family forms and demographic change (for one notable exception see Musick & Mare, 2004, albeit with a focus on the US only). Mare (2011) even suggests that looking at more than two generations might be necessary to realise the consequences of intergenerational transmission. Future research in demography might be well advised thinking along these lines.

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Appendix I: Additional tables on vulnerability in Europe

The European Union uses the concept of "being at risk of poverty or social exclusion" to measure vulnerability. This refers to the situation of people either at risk of poverty, *or* being severely materially deprived *or* living in a household with a very low work intensity:

- The *at-risk-of-poverty* threshold is set at 60 per cent of the national median equalised disposable income after social transfers.
- *Severe material deprivation* refers to a state of economic strain, defined as the enforced inability to pay for at least four of the following items: (a) rent, mortgage or utility bills, (b) to keep the home adequately warm, (c) unexpected expenses, (d) to eat meat or proteins regularly, (e) to go on holiday, (f) a television set, (g) a washing machine, (h) a car, (i) a telephone.
- The *work intensity* of a household is the ratio of the total number of months that all working-age household members were working during the income reference year and the total number of months the same household members theoretically could have worked in the same period (a number between 0 and 1). Low work intensity is defined to be below a threshold set at 0.20.[41]

The following tables give rates of (1) children below age 16, (2) large families, and (3) single persons with dependent children who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Large families were defined as households with two adults and three or more dependent children. For EUROSTAT, dependent children are children below 18 as well as children between 18 and 24 if living with at least one parent and economically inactive.

Data was taken from EUROSTAT database. Rates of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion are presented for 2004/05, 2009/10 and 2013/14 to give an overview of developments during the last ten years. The rate shown in the tables is the average rate over two years or the rate for the only available year, respectively.

[41] Cf. Eurostat glossary and included links available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:At_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion_%28AROPE%29.

Table A.1: Children under age 16 at risk of poverty or social exclusion

% of households	2004-05	2009-10	2013-14
Central western Europe			
Austria	19	22	24
Belgium	23	22	22
Germany	17	21	19
France	19	22	21
Luxembourg	22	22	25
Netherlands	20	17	17
Switzerland	-	20	17
Western Europe			
Ireland	28	33	34
United Kingdom	32	29	32
Northern Europe			
Denmark	15	15	16
Finland	15	14	14
Iceland	16	14	17
Norway	14	14	13
Sweden	16	14	15
Southern Europe			
Cyprus	21	21	27
Greece	25	29	38
Italy	28	28	31
Malta	24	26	32
Portugal	29	27	31
Spain	29	32	32
Central eastern Europe			
Czech Republic	25	17	16
Hungary	38	38	42
Poland	47	30	29
Slovenia	15	15	17
Slovakia	35	24	25
Baltic Countries			
Estonia	28	24	22
Latvia	45	40	36
Lithuania	42	33	35
South eastern Europe			
Bulgaria	-	48	52
Croatia	-	29	29
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	-	50	50
Romania	-	50	48
Serbia	-	-	42
Selected aggregates			
European Union (27 countries)	28	27	27
Old Member States (15 countries)	23	25	26
New Member States (12 countries)	44	35	34
European Union (28 countries)	-	27	27

Note: The rate shown is the average rate or the rate for the only available year, respectively.
Source: Eurostat (2015; data from EU SILC).

Table A.2: Single persons with dependent children at risk of poverty or social exclusion

% of households	2004-05	2009-10	2013-14
Central western Europe			
Austria	43	40	44
Belgium	55	49	55
Germany	40	52	47
France	44	43	46
Luxembourg	38	56	54
Netherlands	59	49	44
Switzerland	-	40	36
Western Europe			
Ireland	69	62	65
United Kingdom	61	58	62
Northern Europe			
Denmark	38	32	37
Finland	40	32	34
Iceland	35	38	42
Norway	36	37	39
Sweden	37	36	39
Southern Europe			
Cyprus	61	44	49
Greece	55	50	55
Italy	45	48	44
Malta	65	74	60
Portugal	45	51	51
Spain	47	53	48
Central eastern Europe			
Czech Republic	58	49	35
Hungary	54	55	60
Poland	68	52	47
Slovenia	32	39	38
Slovakia	57	41	44
Baltic Countries			
Estonia	54	46	45
Latvia	65	58	58
Lithuania	68	60	56
South eastern Europe			
Bulgaria	-	67	72
Croatia	-	42	46
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	-	-	79
Romania	-	60	59
Serbia	-	-	61
Selected aggregates			
European Union (27 countries)	50	50	50
Old Member States (15 countries)	48	50	50
New Member States (12 countries)	62	54	51
European Union (28 countries)	-	52	50

Note: The rate shown is the average rate or the rate for the only available year, respectively.
Source: Eurostat (2015; data from EU SILC).

Table A.3: Large families at risk of poverty or social exclusion

% of households	2004-05	2009-10	2013-14
Central western Europe			
Austria	24	34	29
Belgium	22	19	23
Germany	16	22	18
France	23	24	25
Luxembourg	24	27	28
Netherlands	21	19	22
Switzerland	-	26	25
Western Europe			
Ireland	29	30	33
United Kingdom	33	35	36
Northern Europe			
Denmark	16	14	18
Finland	15	15	14
Iceland	15	12	12
Norway	12	11	8
Sweden	15	14	15
Southern Europe			
Cyprus	23	25	27
Greece	36	33	42
Italy	37	42	46
Malta	32	36	40
Portugal	45	41	51
Spain	44	48	41
Central eastern Europe			
Czech Republic	27	27	20
Hungary	46	47	51
Poland	62	44	45
Slovenia	21	18	20
Slovakia	41	33	38
Baltic Countries			
Estonia	32	27	23
Latvia	58	48	45
Lithuania	60	42	59
South eastern Europe			
Bulgaria	-	83	90
Croatia	-	35	38
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	-	-	66
Romania	-	73	73
Serbia	-	-	54
Selected aggregates			
European Union (27 countries)	32	32	32
Old Member States (15 countries)	26	29	29
New Member States (12 countries)	57	48	50
European Union (28 countries)	-	32	32

Note: Large families are household with two adults and three or more dependent children. The rate shown is the average rate or the rate for the only available year, respectively. Source: Eurostat (2015; data from EU SILC).

Appendix II: The expert questionnaire

Experts received a short invitation via e-mail. All invitations contained the same information but were slightly modified by the forwarders of the invitation (e.g. Population Europe, the Research Network for the Sociology of Family and Intimate Lives of the European Sociological Association, the Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility of the International Sociological Association). To give an example, the e-mail text sent by Population Europe on 2 December 2015 is presented below.

Dear Colleague,

The Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital / Vienna Institute of Demography / Austrian Academy of Sciences invites you to take part in a study on the future of vulnerable families, which is part of the FamiliesAndSocieties project, funded by the EU's 7th Framework Programme (www.familiesandsocieties.eu). The network Population Europe is part of this programme.

So far the research project has identified a number of factors important for vulnerable families, for instance economic development or cultural change. You are invited to enrich the project's knowledge base by taking part in an expert questionnaire study. By collecting your views, the project can assess which of these factors have a strong impact on vulnerability of families in the future.

The online questionnaire will only take 20 minutes to complete for one country (a European country of your choice) and one dimension of vulnerability. You will also have the possibility to choose a second country or another dimension of vulnerability. The exact procedure is explained during the completion of the questionnaire.

The expert questionnaire is available at the following link: https://survey.econ.tuwien.ac.at/limesurvey/index.php/987648?lang=en

The results of the survey will be used for a scientific report to be submitted to the European Commission. You can choose to remain anonymous or identify yourself. In the latter case, the organisers will send you the results of the compilation and list you as a contributor, if you wish. A working paper presenting the most important results will also be available at www.familiesandsocieties.eu.

The Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital would very much appreciate your participation!

For further information, please feel free to contact to Bernhard.Riederer@oeaw.ac.at or Dimiter.Philipov@oeaw.ac.at.

Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital (IIASA, VID/ÖAW, WU) Vienna Institute of Demography/ Austrian Academy of Sciences, Welthandelsplatz 2 / Level 2 A-1020 Vienna / Austria

The expert questionnaire itself was structured as follows:

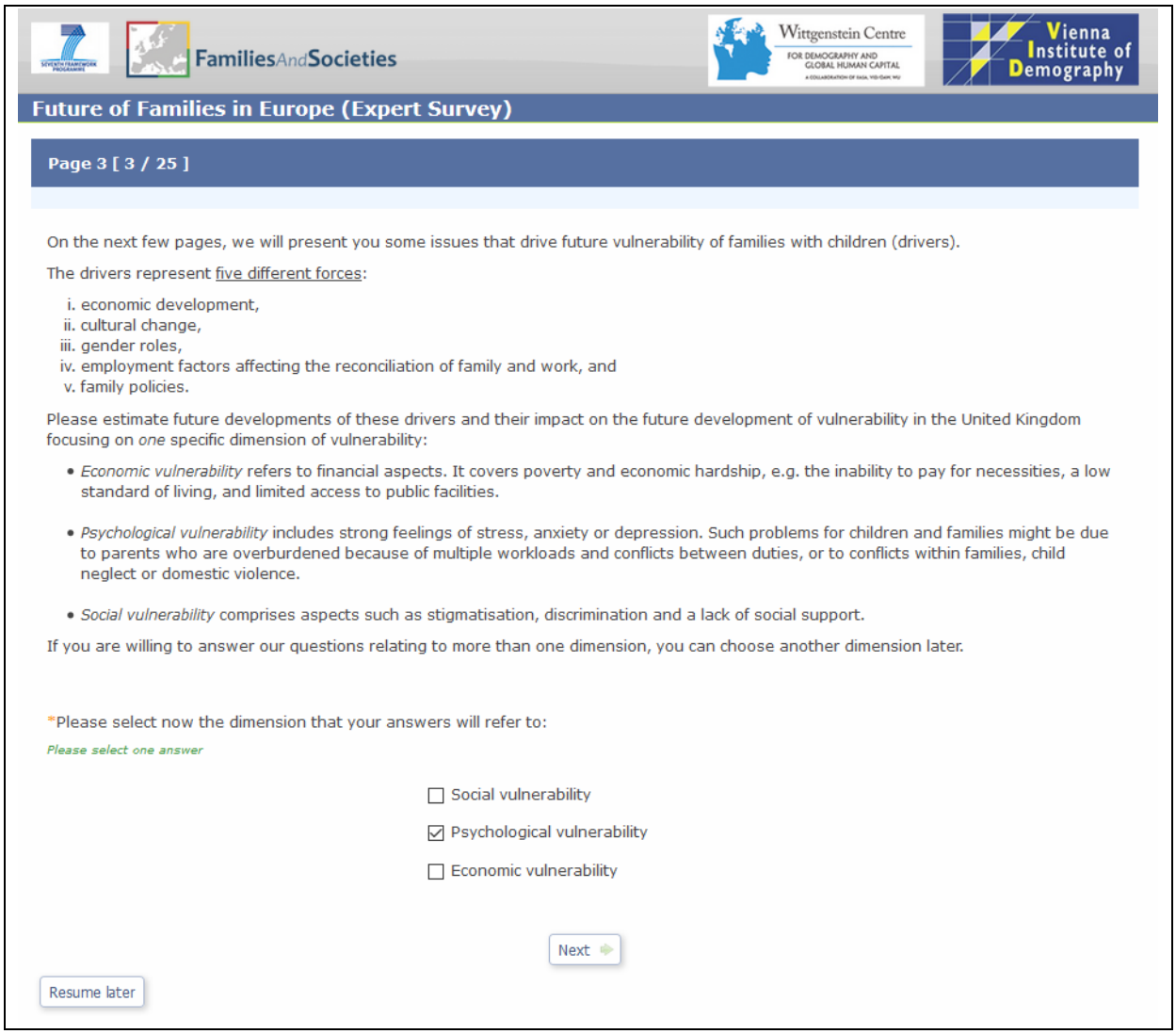
The *first page* gave an introduction and a short explanation of the questionnaire. On the *second page*, participants could choose the country their answers will refer to. The biggest part of the questionnaire had to be answered with regard to the respective country chosen. If participants wanted to complete the questionnaire for more than one country, they had the opportunity to follow a link at the end of the survey. This link lead to a shorter version of the survey not repeating questions that were not country-specific. (This second, shortened survey could be repeated for as many countries a participant wanted to.)

Figure A.1: Title screen of the expert questionnaire

On the *third page*, the questionnaire gave definitions of three dimensions of vulnerability (economic, psychological and social vulnerability). Participants had to choose one of these dimensions. The order in appearance of the three dimensions of vulnerability was randomised so that it was not always the same dimension which was shown first. The next group of questions had to be answered with regard to the dimension of vulnerability chosen (page 4 to 21). The definition of the respective dimension of vulnerability chosen was shown at the

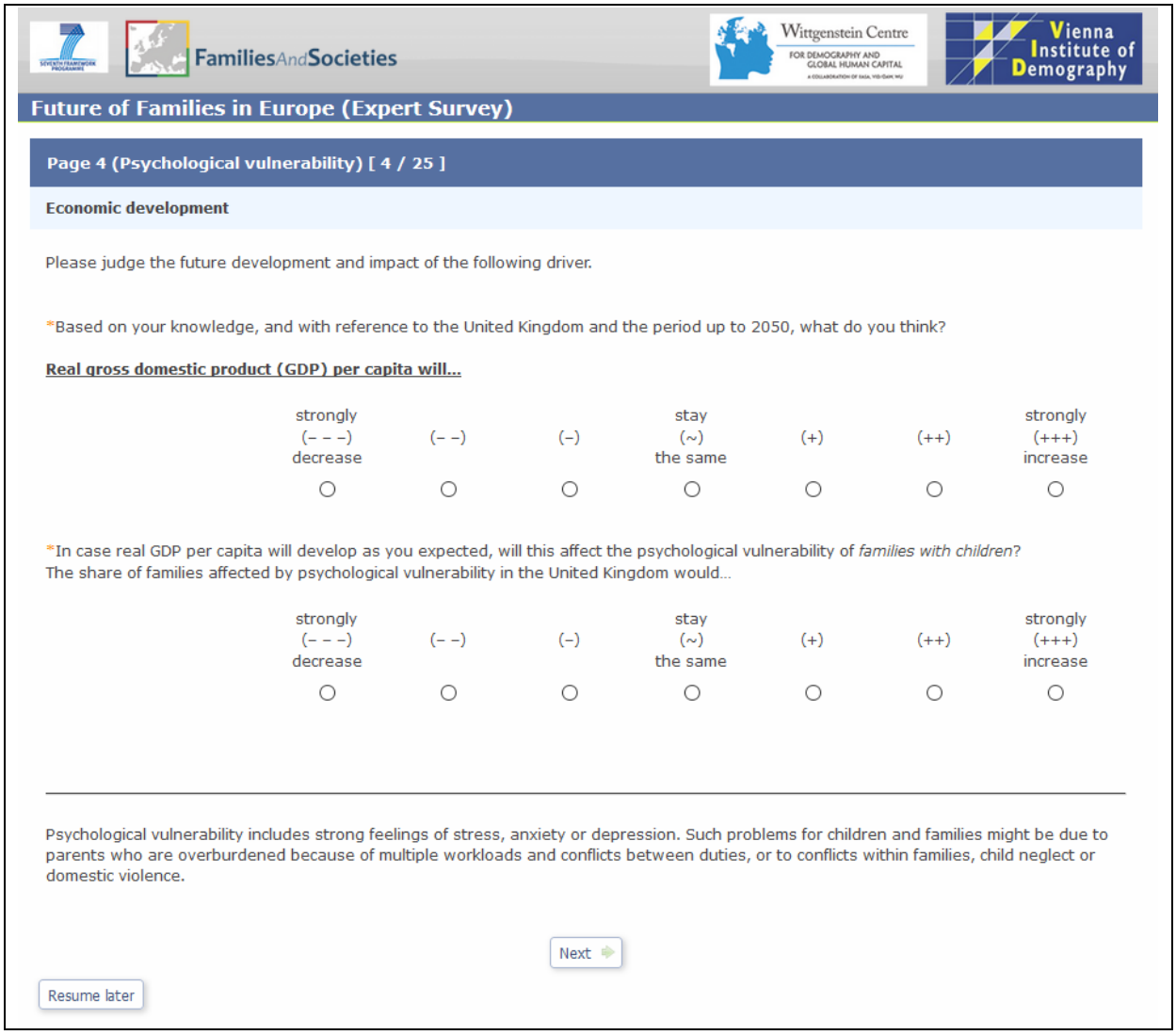
bottom of the following pages. If participants were willing to answer about more than one dimension, they could choose another dimension of vulnerability later (on page 21).

Figure A.2: Screenshot of Page 3 of the expert questionnaire



Beginning on *page four*, participants were asked to estimate the future development of a specific factor (driver) in the chosen country and its impact on the future development of the chosen dimension of vulnerability. The screenshot below displays an example of these questions (country chosen: *United Kingdom*; dimension chosen: *psychological vulnerability*; driver: *real gross domestic product per capita*).

Figure A.3: Screenshot of Page 4 of the expert questionnaire



This procedure of estimating the future development and its impact on vulnerability was repeated with each of the fifteen drivers listed below. These drivers represent the five somewhat general forces that were identified by participants in prior research (focus group discussions).

Main forces and corresponding drivers of the future of families

Economic development

- Real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita
- Unemployment
- Inequality in earnings

Cultural change

- Acceptance of the pluralism of family forms
- Strength of personal relationships
- Demands of parenting (i.e. the effort expected of a good parent to make children grow up safe and happy)

Gender roles

- Female labour force participation
- Share of men engaged in childcare
- Frequency of arrangements of shared physical custody (with alternating residence) of a child after divorce

Employment factors affecting the reconciliation of family and work

- Job demands (in terms of longer working hours and more work commitment)
- Frequency of flexible working arrangements (such as telecommuting, working from home, flexi-time etc.)
- Work-related geographical mobility of parents

Family policies

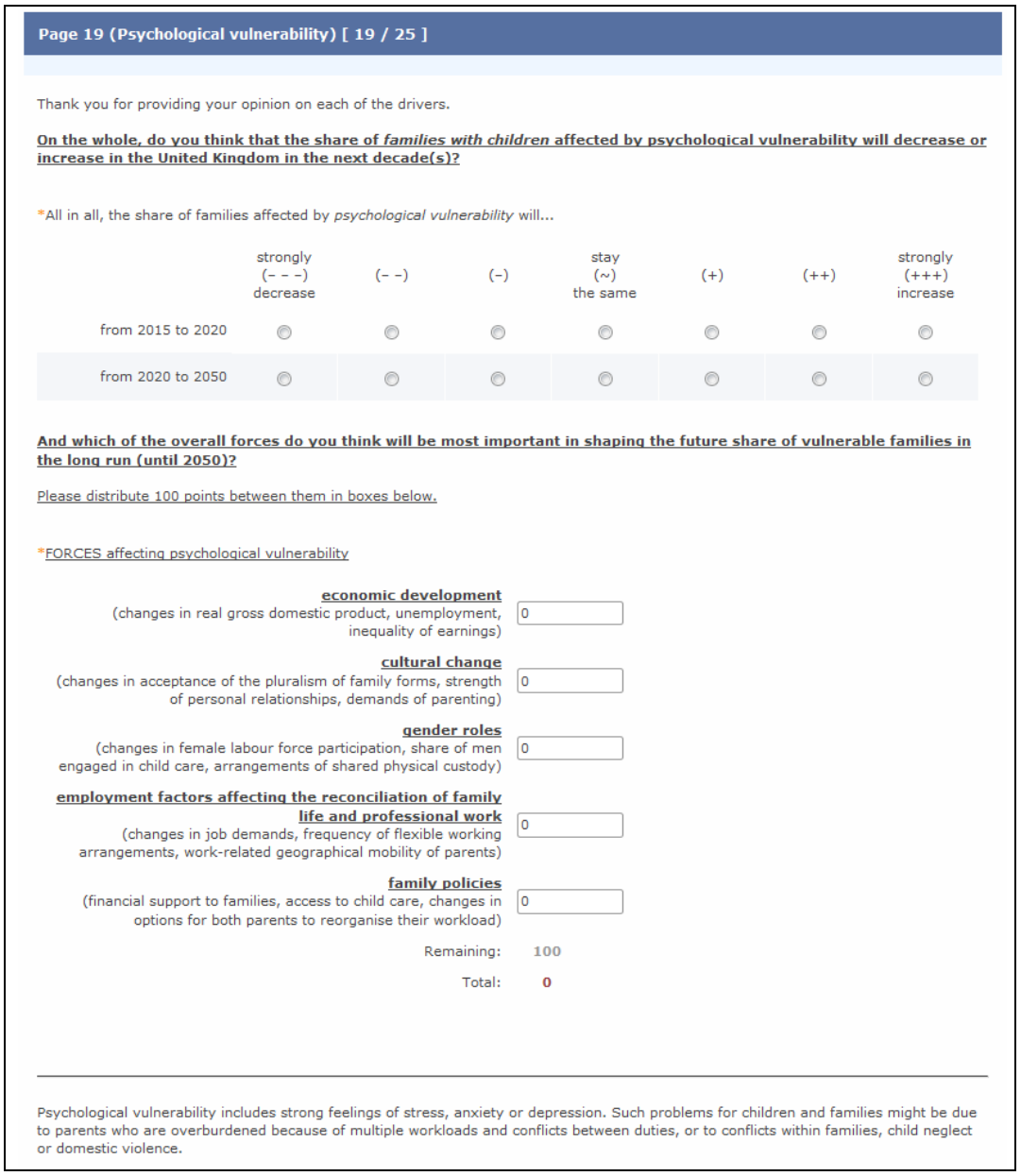
- Financial support to families (provided by national or regional governments)
- Access to childcare provided by the government
- Government support for fathers and mothers to reorganise their workload when they want to dedicate time to parenting (reduce worktime or temporarily quit their job)

After asking for the impact of each of the fifteen drivers separately, questions on *page nineteen* aimed at eliciting general assessments of the relative importance of the five forces. Participants could distribute an amount of 100 points to the five forces summarising the 15 drivers to weight the relevance of each force for the future development of vulnerability. First, however, it was intended to get estimates for the overall development of the dimensions of vulnerability in the country chosen for the near future (until 2020) and the distant future (until 2050) as well.

Questions on *pages twenty and twenty-one* asked for additional aspects researchers might have to consider with regard to the future of vulnerable families in Europe. While page twenty focussed on possible influences of migration flows—especially with regard to the current flow of displaced persons (refugees)—page twenty-one provided some space to give more detailed opinions on key (local) factors that we might not have taken into account as well as

on unexpected developments that might affect social vulnerability in the future (see the screenshots below).

Figure A.4: Screenshot of Page 19 of the expert questionnaire



Page 19 (Psychological vulnerability) [19 / 25]

Thank you for providing your opinion on each of the drivers.

On the whole, do you think that the share of *families with children* affected by psychological vulnerability will decrease or increase in the United Kingdom in the next decade(s)?

*All in all, the share of families affected by *psychological vulnerability* will...

	strongly (– – –) decrease	(– –)	(–)	stay (~) the same	(+)	(++)	strongly (+++) increase
from 2015 to 2020	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
from 2020 to 2050	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

And which of the overall forces do you think will be most important in shaping the future share of vulnerable families in the long run (until 2050)?

Please distribute 100 points between them in boxes below.

*FORCES affecting psychological vulnerability

economic development
(changes in real gross domestic product, unemployment, inequality of earnings) 0

cultural change
(changes in acceptance of the pluralism of family forms, strength of personal relationships, demands of parenting) 0

gender roles
(changes in female labour force participation, share of men engaged in child care, arrangements of shared physical custody) 0

employment factors affecting the reconciliation of family life and professional work
(changes in job demands, frequency of flexible working arrangements, work-related geographical mobility of parents) 0

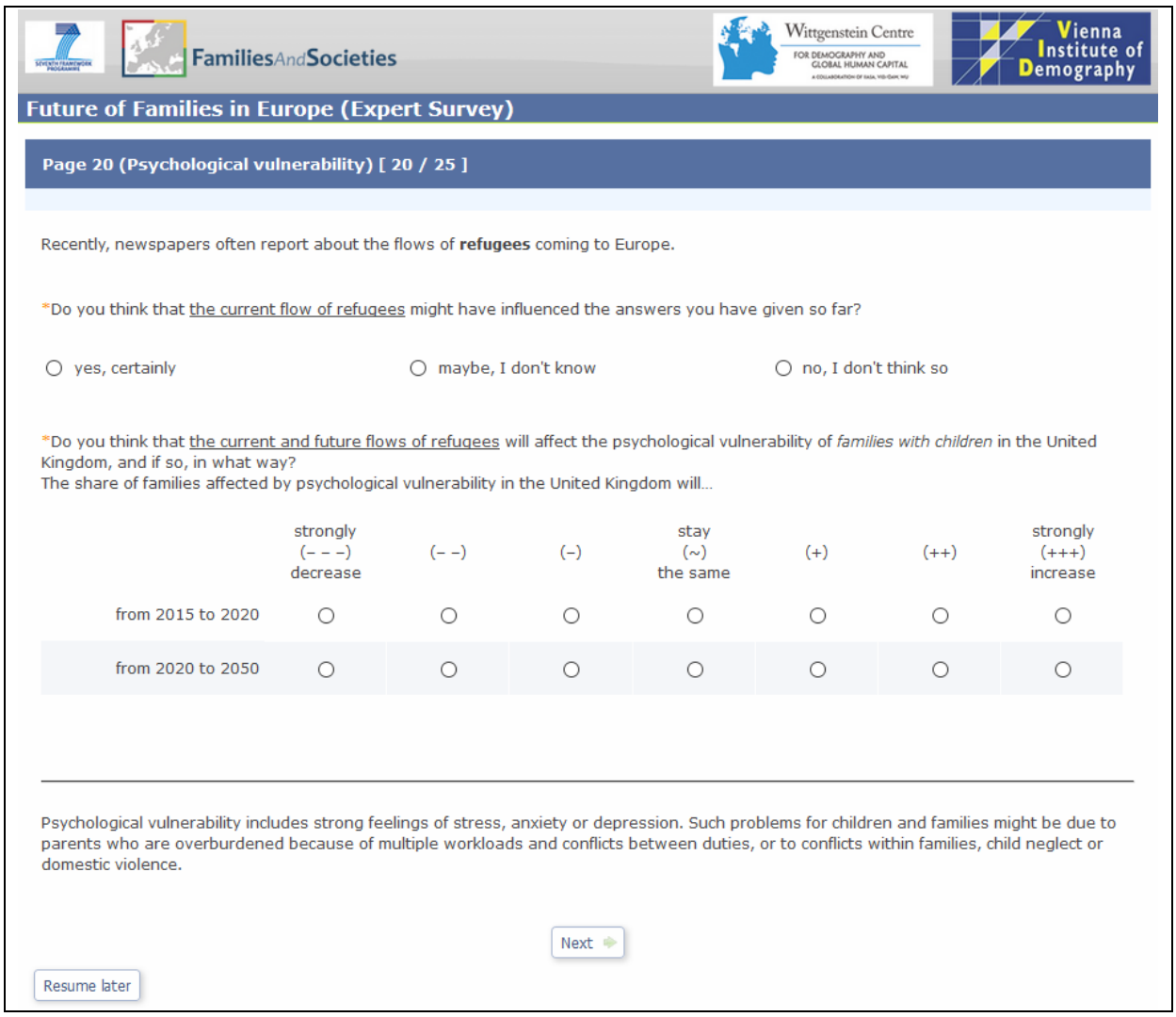
family policies
(financial support to families, access to child care, changes in options for both parents to reorganise their workload) 0

Remaining: 100

Total: 0

Psychological vulnerability includes strong feelings of stress, anxiety or depression. Such problems for children and families might be due to parents who are overburdened because of multiple workloads and conflicts between duties, or to conflicts within families, child neglect or domestic violence.

Figure A.5: Screenshot of Page 20 of the expert questionnaire



At the end of page twenty-one, participants could choose to proceed with the final questions or to answer the same questions with regard to other dimensions of vulnerability (see Figure A.6). If they decided to answer with regard to a second (and a third) dimension of vulnerability, they were shown their prior assessments of the developments of the fifteen asked drivers. The screenshot below gives an example (see Figure A.7). The sentence displayed varied depending on the prior answer of the participants as follows: "You stated that real gross domestic product (GDP) will slightly decrease / moderately decrease / strongly decrease / stay the same / slightly increase / moderately increase / strongly increase."

Figure A.6: Screenshot of Page 21 of the expert questionnaire

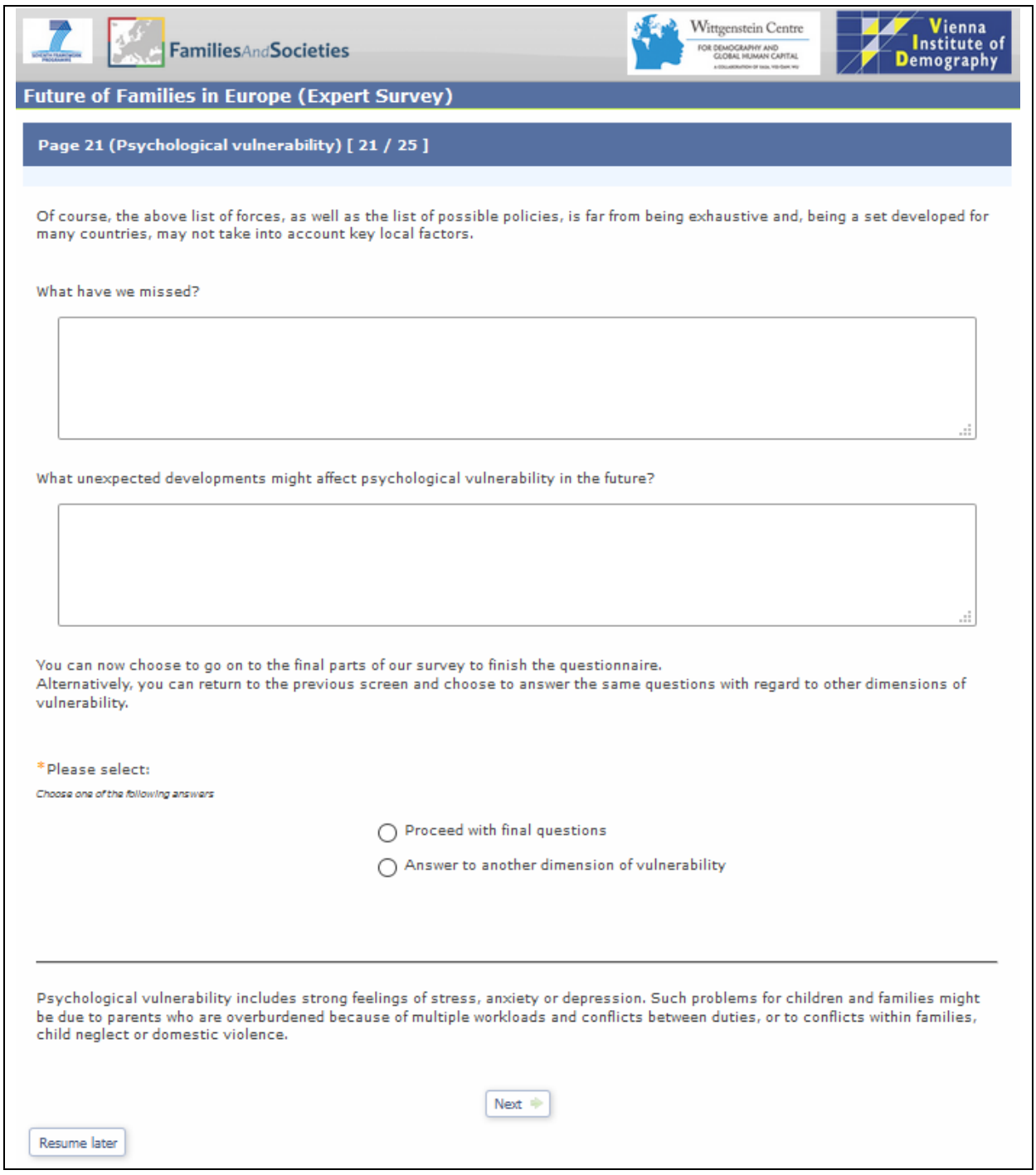
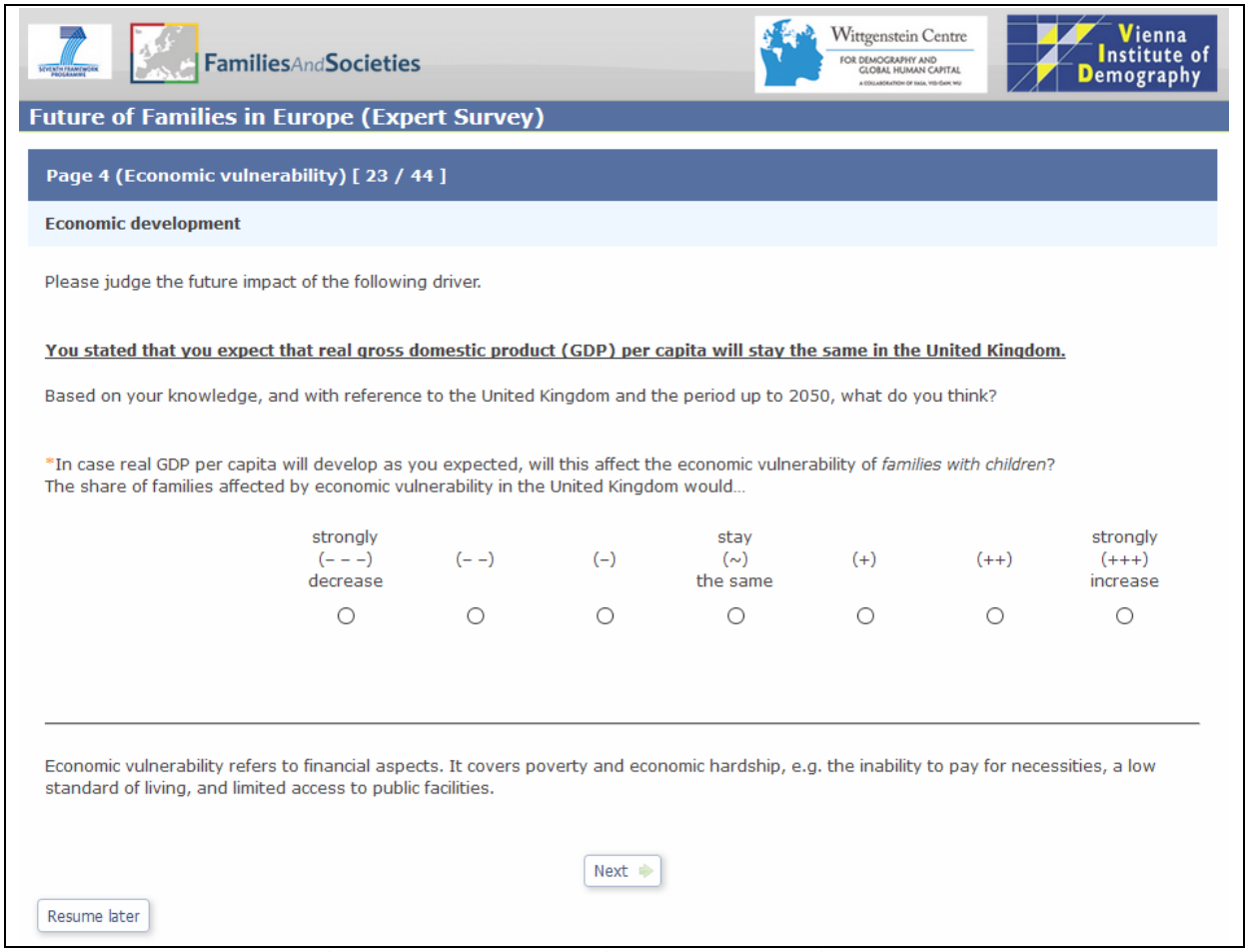


Figure A.7: Screenshot of Page 4b of the expert questionnaire



Note: This screen was only shown if participants decided to answer for a second dimension of vulnerability (here: economic vulnerability).

If participants decided to go on to the final questions (or after giving their assessments for a second or third dimension of vulnerability), *page twenty-two* confronted them with the more specific topic of reproduction of vulnerability within families. This time, participants were instructed to consider all three dimensions of vulnerability (economic, psychological and social vulnerability). Experts were then asked to assess how important several policy measures will be if the government wants to prevent children from inheriting vulnerability from their families of origin. The screenshot below displays page twenty-two, the list following the screenshot gives all policy measures asked for. The choice of policy measures was again based on results of the focus group research.

Figure A.8: Screenshot of Page 22 of the expert questionnaire

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Vienna Institute of Demography

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Although related to the same topic, the next question is different from the questions above. Please consider all three dimensions of vulnerability now (economic, psychological and social vulnerability). Studies show that vulnerability is often passed on from one generation to the next (i.e. from parents to children). Individuals *who grew up in vulnerable families* are at risk of starting families of their own that are affected by vulnerability as well.

***Given this challenge, how important are the following policy measures if the government in the United Kingdom wants to prevent children from inheriting vulnerability —in any form— from their families of origin?**

	indispensable	very important	moderately important	important	not irrelevant	irrelevant	counterproductive
direct financial transfers to families in needs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
providing information, counselling and coaching for families (parents and kids)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
providing flexible, affordable child care options for preschool children (age 0-5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
supporting mothers who want to leave the labour market to take care of their children	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
organising assistance for children with special needs (e.g. migrant students with language deficits, disabled children)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
investing in preventative actions with regard to problems with alcohol, drugs or violence	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
providing education for all children already at an early age (age 3-5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
organising education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work-life balance of their employees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

- *Economic vulnerability* refers to financial aspects. It covers poverty and economic hardship, e.g. the inability to pay for necessities, a low standard of living, and limited access to public facilities.
- *Psychological vulnerability* includes strong feelings of stress, anxiety or depression. Such problems for children and families might be due to parents who are overburdened because of multiple workloads and conflicts between duties, or to conflicts within families, child neglect or domestic violence.
- *Social vulnerability* comprises aspects such as stigmatisation, discrimination and a lack of social support.

Next

Resume later

Policy measures to prevent children from inheriting vulnerability from their families of origin:

- direct financial transfers to families in need
- lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance
- providing information, counselling and coaching for families (parents and kids)
- providing flexible, affordable childcare options for preschool children (age 0–5)
- supporting mothers who want to leave the labour market to take care of their children
- organising assistance for children with special needs (e.g. migrant students with language deficits, disabled children)
- investing in preventative actions with regard to problems with alcohol, drugs or violence
- providing education for all children already at an early age (age 3–5)
- organising education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays
- making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work–life balance of their employees

Page twenty-three is about opinions referring to very relevant aspects that could not be taken into account in the main body of the questionnaire. Participants should reveal their agreement or disagreement with regard to four statements:

- The government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for.
- It is important to hold on tradition, i.e. the customs handed down by one's religion or family.
- A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.
- A same-sex couple can bring up a child as well as a male–female couple.

Experts could answer on a seven-point rating scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". In addition, it was indicated that the category in the middle of the seven-point rating scale stands for "I am undecided".

The *final two pages* (pages 24 and 25) asked for personal information of participants (age, gender, area of expertise and professional affiliation). These questions were all non-mandatory. Participants could furthermore decide to remain anonymous or give us their name to be listed as a contributor in Appendix III of the present report. Finally, participants had an opportunity to comment on the questionnaire.

After the questionnaire had been finished and submitted, we thanked participants once more for their time and expertise. If they wanted to submit assessments relating to other countries, they were free to follow a link to a shortened version of the same questionnaire (with a much shorter introduction and country-specific questions only).

If readers of the present report want to look into the questionnaire, a demo version of the expert questionnaire is available online: bit.ly/ffeexpsrvy

Appendix III: Contributing experts

We want to declare our deepest gratitude to *all* the experts who shared their knowledge with us. Some of them explicitly stated at the end of the questionnaire that we are allowed to mention them as contributors in the Appendix of the present report. These experts are listed in the following (in alphabetic order).

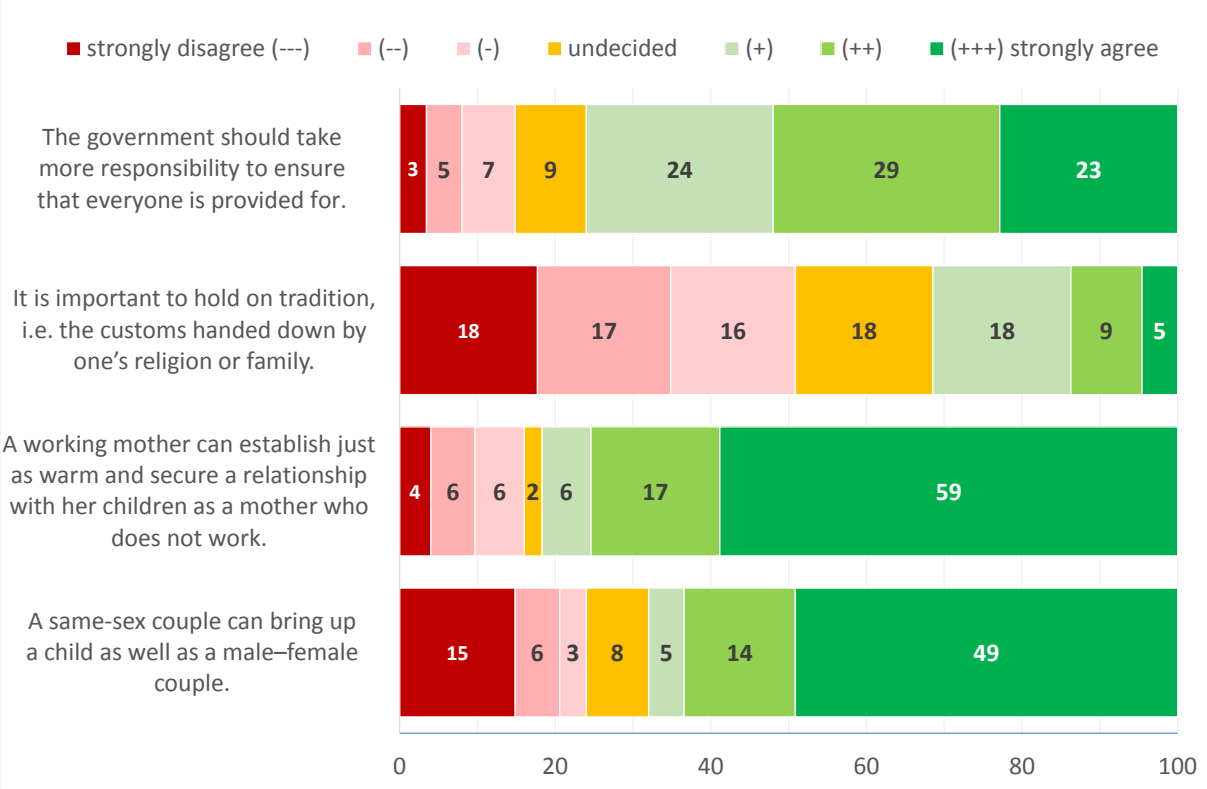
Kim Bastaits	University of Antwerp
François de Baudus	IPEF (Institut pour l'éducation dans la famille)
Renaud Chrestien de Beauminy	Bank manager, expert on financial issues
Sanduleasa Bertha	National Research Institute for Labour and Social Protection, Bucharest (INCSMPS)
Gian Carlo Blangiardo	University Milano Bicocca
Diederik Boertien	European University Institute
Ioan Bolovan	Babeș-Bolyai University
Daniela Bulgarelli	Università degli Studi di Torino
Sara Darias Curvo	University of La Laguna, Tenerife
Gro Hexeberg Dahl	Norwegian National Parents' Committee for Primary and Secondary Education (FUG)
Olivier Delplanque	Association Noémi
James Stuart Duffin	Women for Women
Ann-Zofie Duvander	Stockholm University
Andreas Eickhorst	German Youth Institution (DJI)
John Eriksen	Nordland University, Bodø
Gøsta Esping-Andersen	Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona
Tineke Fokkema	Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI)
Alessandro Gentile	Universidad de Zaragoza
Christine Geserick	Austrian Institute for Family Studies
Christian Hellevang	Norwegian Municipalities, KS
Matthias Herzog	Psychotherapist, expert for family psychology
Hana Janata	National Institute of Public Health
Maria Von Kaenel	Dachverband Regenbogenfamilien/ familles arc-en-ciel
Werner van Katwijk	Ouders van Waarde
Yuri Kazepov	University of Vienna

Irina Kletsina	Herzen State Pedagogical University
Alison Koslowski	University of Edinburgh
Johanna Lammi-Taskula	Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)
Trude Lappegard	Statistics Norway
Jianghong Li	WZB Berlin, Social Science Center
Niklas Lofgren	Social Insurance Agency
Valerie Maher	One Family
Seamus Mannion	Youth Advocate Programmes
Gillier Maylis	Femina Europa
Elvira Mendez	Asociación Salud y Familia
Julio Carabaña Morales	Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM)
Ingrid Moritz	Chamber of Labour Vienna
Mariela Nankova	NM “Women and Mothers against Violence”
Despina Naziri	University of Liège, Belgium
Jaap Nieuwenhuis	Delft University of Technology
Lina Papadopoulou	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Silvia Pasqua	Università di Torino
Victor Petuya	Federación de Asociaciones de Padres y Madres de Alumnos de Euskadi / Euskadiko Ikasleen Guraso Elkarteen Federazioa (FAPAE/EIGEF)
Karel Phlips	International Federation for Family Development (IFFD)
Chiara Pronzato	University of Turin and Collegio Carlo Alberto
Rudolf Richter	University of Vienna
Jitka Rychtarikova	Charles University, Prague
Eszter Salamon	European Parents’ Association
Gustavo De Santis	University of Florence
Helmut Sax	Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights
Giulia Scaravelli	Istituto Superiore di Sanità
Sarah Grace See	Collegio Carlo Alberto
Vladimir Solodnikov	Russian State University for Humanities
Daniele Spizzichino	Health expert, Italian National Institute of Statistics
Maria Letizia Tanturri	University of Padova
Giorgio Tarassi	Associazione OEFFE
Janusz Wardak	Akademia Familijna, Poland
Robert Whiston	Men’s Aid

Appendix IV: Additional results of the expert questionnaire study

First, Figure A.9 presents results regarding four different statements included in the expert questionnaire that were not discussed in the main body of the present report because they are only indirectly linked to vulnerability. Nevertheless, these findings are of interest of their own. Second, in the main text we gave average ratings for developments of drivers in three different tables, each time linked to expectations regarding one of three dimensions of vulnerability. Table A.4 summarises all available information (ratings) – i.e. irrespective of the dimension of vulnerability chosen by respondents.

Figure A.9: Experts' opinions on four additional issues



Note: N=175. Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

Table A.4: Mean ratings for the future development of drivers of vulnerability

Forces and corresponding drivers of future vulnerability (share of vulnerable families in 2050)	Development of driver (-3 to +3)			
	m	(*sd*)	*median*	*minimum / maximum*
Economic development				
Real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita	.16	(1.15)	1	-3 / 2
Unemployment	.24	(1.09)	0	-2 / 3
Inequality in earnings	.93	(1.16)	1	-2 / 3
Cultural change				
Acceptance of the pluralism of family forms	1.21	(.92)	1	-2 / 3
Strength of personal relationships	-.31	(.91)	0	-3 / 2
Demands of parenting (i.e. the effort expected of a good parent to make children grow up safe and happy)	1.11	(.93)	1	-2 / 3
Gender roles				
Female labour force participation	1.03	(.92)	1	-3 / 3
Share of men engaged in childcare	1.05	(.70)	1	-1 / 3
Frequency of arrangements of shared physical custody (with alternating residence) of a child after divorce	1.24	(.82)	1	-2 / 3
Employment factors affecting the reconciliation of family and work				
Job demands (in terms of longer working hours and more work commitment)	.81	(1.06)	1	-2 / 3
Frequency of flexible working arrangements (such as telecommuting, working from home, flexi-time etc.)	1.30	(.80)	1	-3 / 3
Work-related geographical mobility of parents	1.01	(.75)	1	-1 / 3
Family policies				
Financial support to families (provided by national or regional governments)	-.38	(1.12)	0	-3 / 3
Access to childcare provided by the government	.35	(1.06)	1	-3 / 3
Government support for fathers and mothers to reorganise their workload when they want to dedicate time to parenting (reduce worktime or temporarily quit their job)	.45	(.92)	1	-3 / 3

Note: N = 176. Experts assessed whether the driver will strongly decrease (-3), moderately decrease (-2), slightly decrease (-1), stay roughly the same (0), slightly increase (+1), moderately increase (+2) or strongly increase (+3). The table presents the mean (m) and the corresponding standard deviation (sd) of ratings, the median and the minimum as well as the maximum value chosen by respondents. Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Expert Survey, authors' own computations.

Appendix V: The family questionnaire

The family questionnaire was implemented in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish. Data collection was organised by IFFD and ELFAC. The English version of the invitation is given below.

Dear Madam or Sir,

Our study asks for the participation of parents. We would like to invite you to take part in this study on families in Europe. In the *FamiliesAndSocieties* project, we contact experts for families to find out their views on the present and future of families in Europe. Since you as a parent are part of a family, you are an expert that we need! Therefore, we hope you will find the time to participate in this important study. Filling out the survey will take about 15 minutes.

We want to know more about your situation and opinions to find out what factors might influence the future of families. You as a participant will remain anonymous. The assessments of all contributors will be compiled and analysed in aggregated form by researchers of the *FamiliesAndSocieties* project. The results of the study will be used for a scientific report to be submitted to the European Commission. A working paper presenting the most important results will also be available at www.familiesandsocieties.eu.

To answer the questionnaire, please follow this link: http://bit.ly/ffesrvyXenX

The VID/ÖAW, IFFD and ELFAC would very much appreciate your participation!

For further information, please feel free to contact
Bernhard.Riederer@oeaw.ac.at
Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital (IIASA, VID/ÖAW, WU)
Vienna Institute of Demography / Austrian Academy of Sciences
Welthandelsplatz 2 / Level 2, A-1020 Vienna / Austria

About the project *FamiliesAndSocieties* (www.familiesandsocieties.eu)
The project is financed by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme and coordinated by the Stockholm University. The project consortium consists of 25 partners from 15 European countries and three transnational civil society actors. The general aim is to investigate the increasing diversity of family forms in Europe and to assess the compatibility of existing policies with family changes. This questionnaire is a part of a Work Package 10 on the future of families that is coordinated by the Vienna Institute of Demography (Austrian Academy of Sciences). Both, IFFD and ELFAC participate in this work package.

The family questionnaire was structured as follows: on the welcome screen (see Figure A.10), respondents could choose to answer the questionnaire in one of six languages (English, French, German, Italian, Polish or Spanish).[42] Next, parents were requested to inform us about the number of children and the age of their youngest child before entering the main parts of the questionnaire. The *first main part* of the questionnaire included questions about the situation of families in general in the participant's country (four items), the situation of the

[42] Respondents should usually be presented with the correct language version of the questionnaire from the beginning as we prepared six versions of the invitation including the respective link.

participant as a parent (four items) and whether certain policy measures would help to improve the reconciliation of work and family (five items). The *second main part* of the questionnaire focused on the future of children. It consisted of three items regarding worries about the future of respondents' own children (only asked if they stated that they had children below age 25) and three statements about the situation of children in general.

Figure A.10: Screenshot of the Welcome screen of the family questionnaire

The next parts of the questionnaire were directly related to the main topic(s) of the expert questionnaire. In the *third main part* of the family questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate how important they think the five forces (identified in focus group discussions) were for the future of families in Europe. Unlike in the expert questionnaire, respondents were not requested to rate the impact of each single driver or give relative weights to the five forces. Participants in the family questionnaire rather used seven-point rating scales ranging from "will not be important at all" to "will be very important for families" (see Figure A.11). The *fourth main part* of the family questionnaire basically copied the question about *policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability within families* on page 22 of the expert questionnaire (see above). Though the list of policy measures was the same, the wording of the question itself as well as the rating scale had to be modified to meet the requirements of the family questionnaire (i.e. avoiding technical terms, see Figure A.12).

The *next part* of the family questionnaire consisted of statements reflecting general opinions with regard to several different aspects of policy matters and family life (six items) and offered an opportunity to comment on the questionnaire, add opinions or suggest additional topics not covered by the existing questionnaire. The *final part* asked for personal and demographic information (age, country of residence, partner status, main activity etc.).

Figure A.11: Screenshot of Page 7 of the family questionnaire

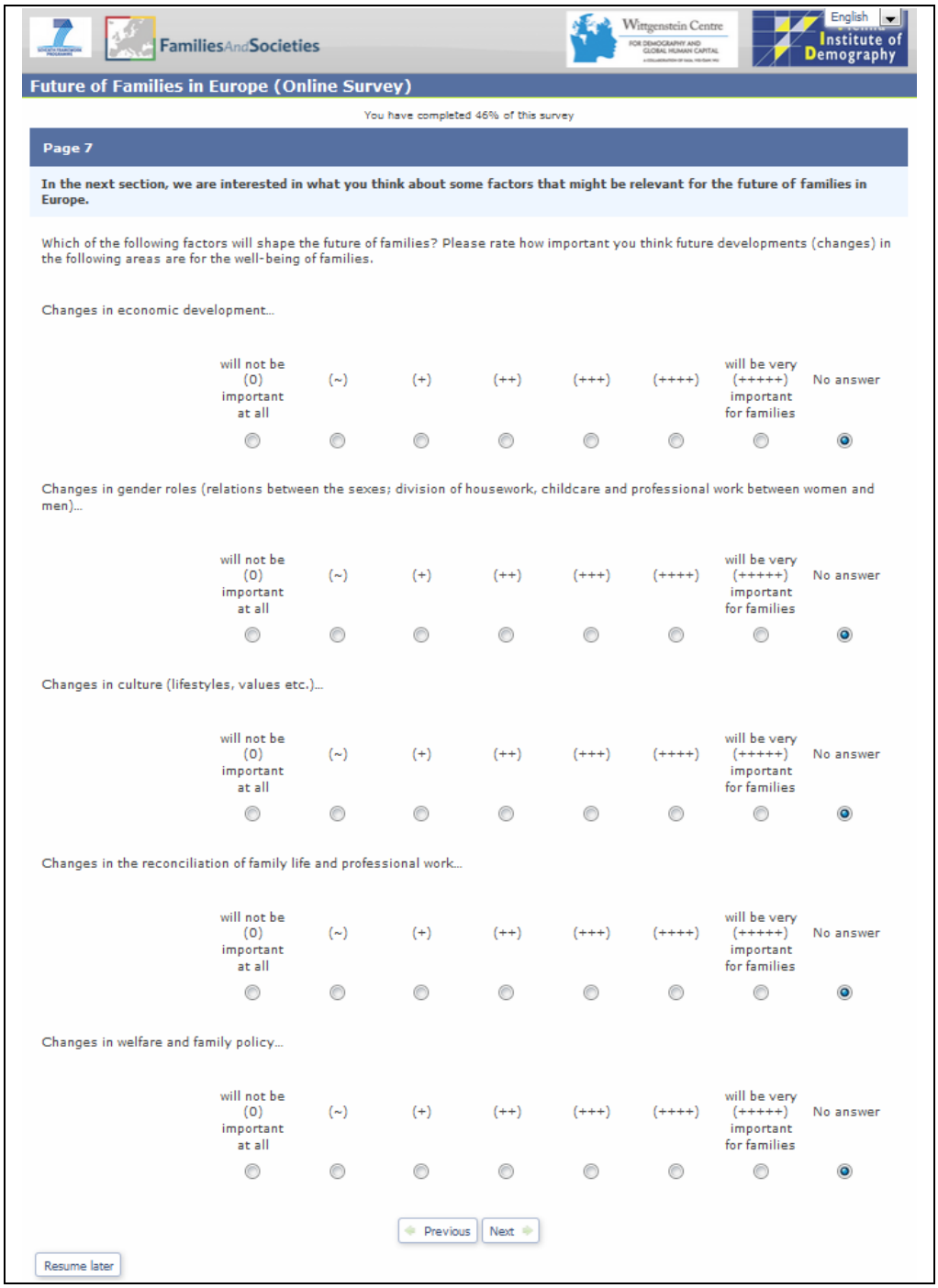
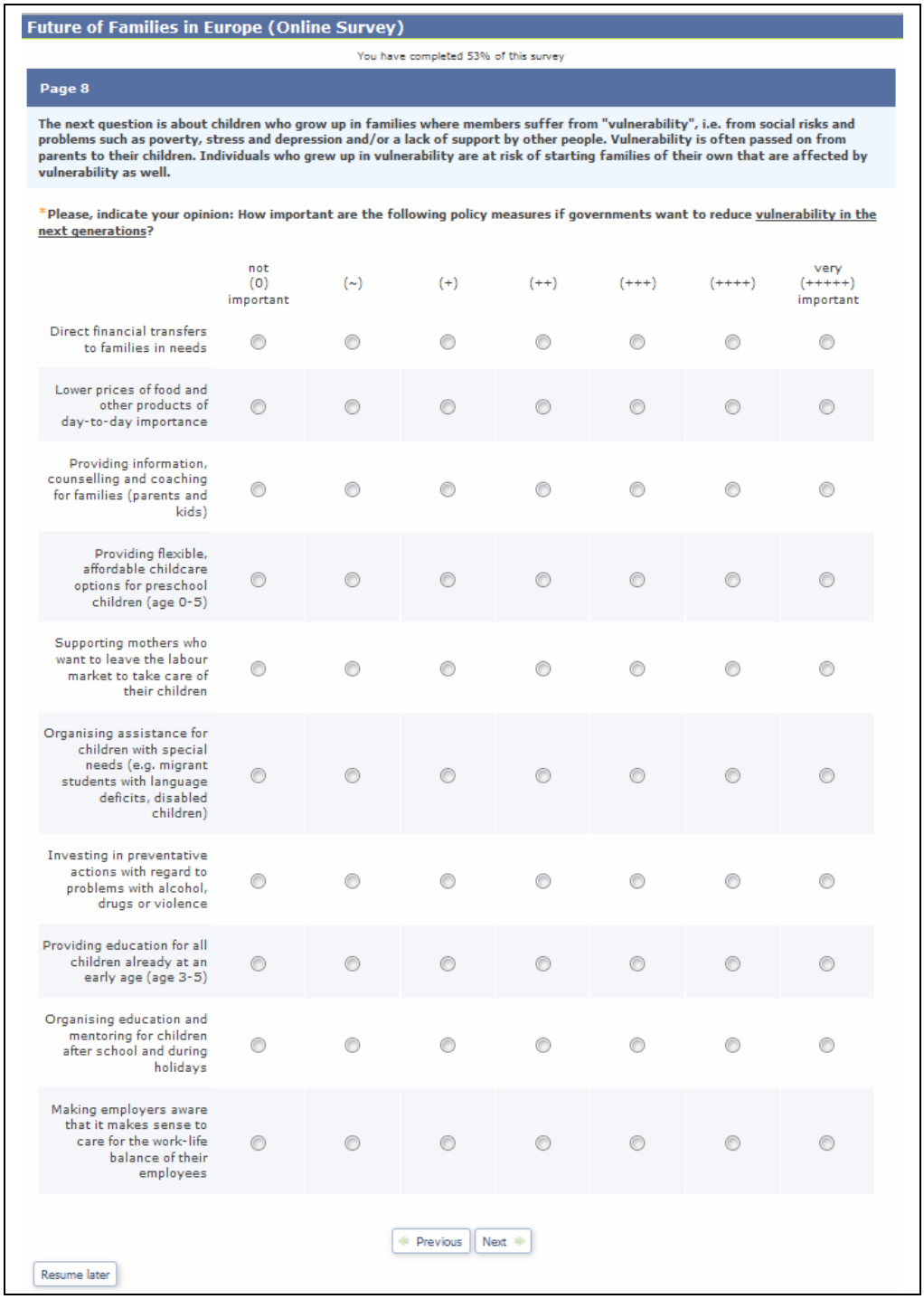


Figure A.12: Screenshot of Page 8 of the family questionnaire



Future of Families in Europe (Online Survey)

You have completed 53% of this survey

Page 8

The next question is about children who grow up in families where members suffer from "vulnerability", i.e. from social risks and problems such as poverty, stress and depression and/or a lack of support by other people. Vulnerability is often passed on from parents to their children. Individuals who grew up in vulnerability are at risk of starting families of their own that are affected by vulnerability as well.

***Please, indicate your opinion: How important are the following policy measures if governments want to reduce vulnerability in the next generations?**

	not (0) important	(~)	(+)	(++)	(+++)	(++++)	very (+++++) important
Direct financial transfers to families in needs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing information, counselling and coaching for families (parents and kids)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing flexible, affordable childcare options for preschool children (age 0-5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Supporting mothers who want to leave the labour market to take care of their children	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Organising assistance for children with special needs (e.g. migrant students with language deficits, disabled children)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Investing in preventative actions with regard to problems with alcohol, drugs or violence	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing education for all children already at an early age (age 3-5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Organising education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work-life balance of their employees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Previous Next

Resume later

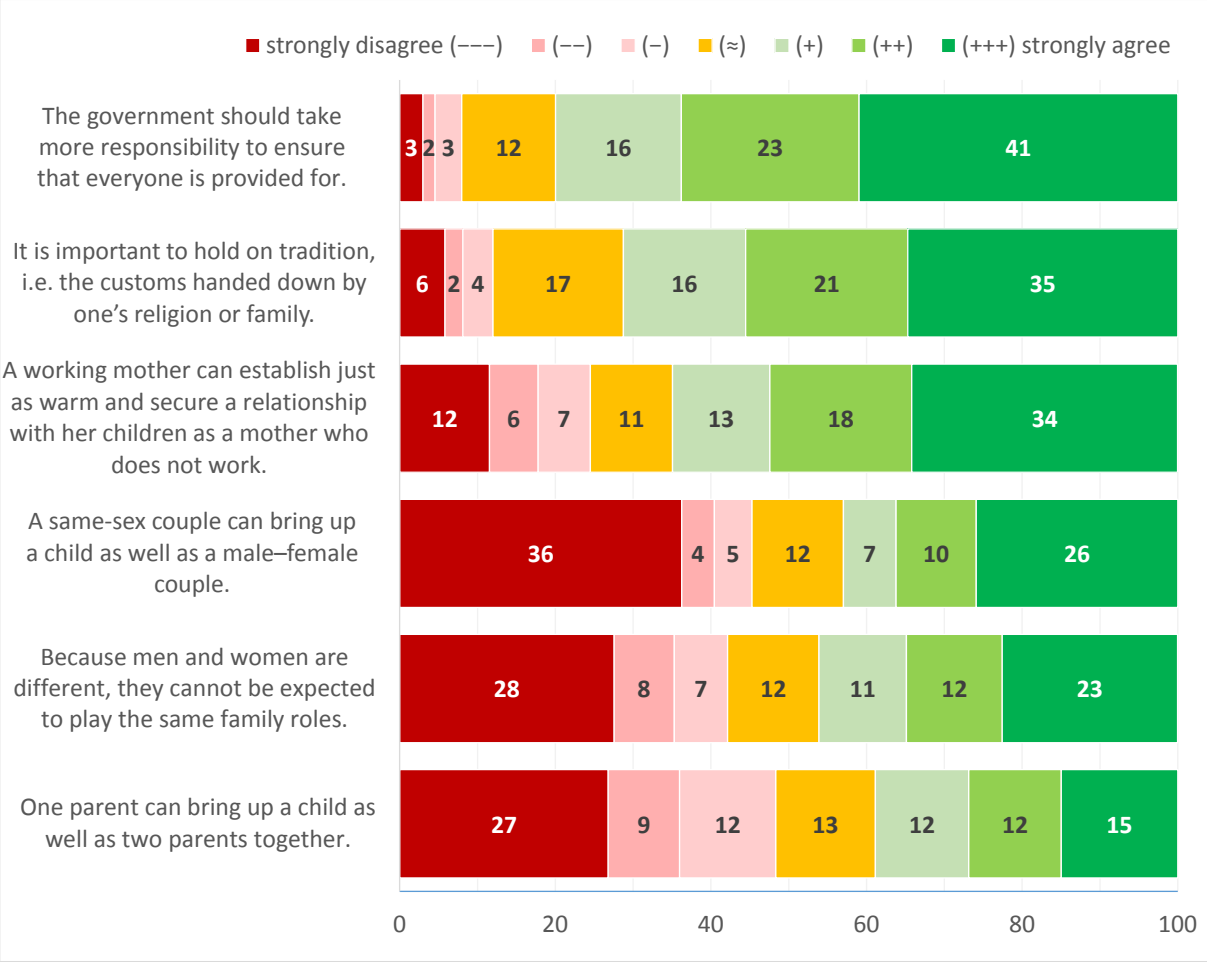
If readers want to look into the family questionnaire, demo versions of the questionnaire are available online:

English:	https://survey.econ.tuwien.ac.at/limesurvey/index.php/974141?lang=en
French:	https://survey.econ.tuwien.ac.at/limesurvey/index.php/974141?lang=fr
German:	https://survey.econ.tuwien.ac.at/limesurvey/index.php/974141?lang=de
Italian:	https://survey.econ.tuwien.ac.at/limesurvey/index.php/974141?lang=it
Polish:	https://survey.econ.tuwien.ac.at/limesurvey/index.php/974141?lang=pl
Spanish:	https://survey.econ.tuwien.ac.at/limesurvey/index.php/974141?lang=es

Appendix VI: Additional results of the family questionnaire study

Figure A.13 gives the opinions of participating parents on several issues that can be compared to views of experts shown in Figure A.9. Tables A.5 and A.6 allow for comparisons across regions using the categories also applied in the analyses of expert questionnaire data. The final tables (A.7 and A.8) present some detailed results already discussed in the main body of this working paper (cf. Section 6.3.2).

Figure A.13: Parents' opinions on additional issues



Note: N = 1,343. Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors' own computations.

Table A.5: Drivers affecting vulnerability of families with children

Drivers of future vulnerability	Central western Europe		German-speaking part of Europe		Western Europe		Northern Europe		Southern Europe		Eastern Europe		Europe (total)	
	m	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)
Economic development	4.75	(1.67)	5.38	(1.50)	5.00	(2.83)	5.57	(.98)	5.88	(1.32)	5.76	(1.48)	5.72	(1.41)
Gender roles	4.81	(1.69)	4.73	(2.03)	5.80	(1.10)	4.43	(2.15)	5.24	(1.76)	4.12	(1.89)	5.05	(1.86)
Cultural change	5.84	(1.27)	5.04	(1.72)	5.60	(1.34)	5.29	(1.38)	5.56	(1.49)	5.42	(1.58)	5.44	(1.56)
Employment factors affecting the reconciliation of family and work	5.90	(1.24)	5.36	(1.69)	5.80	(1.64)	5.57	(1.13)	6.26	(1.15)	5.25	(1.32)	5.97	(1.38)
Family policies	5.84	(1.19)	5.94	(1.36)	6.20	(1.30)	5.00	(2.08)	6.11	(1.24)	5.15	(1.56)	6.00	(1.31)
N (min-max)	30-32		260-276		4-5		7		751-790		59-61		1,124-1,170	

Note: The original scale ranges from 1 “will not be important at all” to 7 “will be very important for families”. Shown are means (m) and standard deviations (sd).
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors’ own computations.

Table A.6: Policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability

Policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability within families	Central western Europe		German-speaking part of Europe		Western Europe		Northern Europe		Southern Europe		Eastern Europe		Europe (total)	
	m	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)	*m*	(*sd*)
1. direct financial transfers to families in need	4.84	(1.76)	5.17	(1.81)	5.67	(1.21)	4.14	(1.95)	5.51	(1.65)	4.63	(1.95)	5.38	(1.72)
2. lower prices of food and other products of day-to-day importance	4.16	(1.82)	4.86	(1.91)	6.17	(1.17)	4.14	(1.95)	5.87	(1.39)	5.30	(1.84)	5.58	(1.63)
3. providing information, counselling and coaching for families (parents and kids)	5.28	(1.49)	5.57	(1.61)	6.60	(.84)	5.71	(1.80)	5.67	(1.46)	5.32	(1.64)	5.63	(1.51)
4. providing flexible, affordable childcare options for preschool children (age 0–5)	5.16	(1.42)	4.90	(1.93)	6.17	(1.17)	5.43	(2.07)	5.98	(1.32)	5.19	(1.87)	5.69	(1.57)
5. supporting mothers who want to leave the labour market to take care of their children	6.41	(1.10)	5.88	(1.65)	6.83	(.41)	5.43	(2.07)	6.26	(1.26)	6.32	(1.27)	6.18	(1.36)
6. organising assistance for children with special needs (e.g. migrant students with language deficits, disabled children)	5.75	(1.39)	5.67	(1.53)	6.00	(1.55)	6.14	(.90)	6.22	(1.18)	5.63	(1.58)	6.06	(1.31)
7. investing in preventative actions with regard to problems with alcohol, drugs or violence	5.66	(1.36)	5.42	(1.71)	5.83	(2.40)	6.00	(1.15)	5.94	(1.28)	5.87	(1.21)	5.82	(1.40)
8. providing education for all children already at an early age (age 3–5)	4.41	(2.00)	3.96	(2.14)	4.50	(2.07)	4.14	(2.04)	5.75	(1.54)	4.65	(1.93)	5.26	(1.88)
9. organising education and mentoring for children after school and during holidays	4.28	(1.80)	4.38	(1.96)	4.83	(1.72)	4.57	(1.62)	5.29	(1.62)	4.81	(1.70)	5.04	(1.75)
10. making employers aware that it makes sense to care for the work–life balance of their employees	6.28	(1.05)	5.96	(1.54)	5.67	(1.86)	5.43	(1.72)	6.43	(.99)	6.13	(1.07)	6.30	(1.16)
N	32		290		6		7		945		63		1,343	

Note: The original scale ranges from 1 “will not be important at all” to 7 “will be very important for families”. Shown are means (m) and standard deviations (sd).
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors’ own computations.

Table A.7: Policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability

Covariates	Financial benefits measures				Educational policy measures			
	b	(*se*)	*beta*	p	*b*	(*se*)	*beta*	p
Country of residence: Germany	.00				.00			
Portugal	.43	(.09)	.17	***	1.16	(.10)	.43	***
Spain	.78	(.09)	.30	***	.96	(.10)	.34	***
Other European country	.29	(.13)	.07	*	.60	(.14)	.13	***
Gender: male	.00				.00			
female	.33	(.07)	.13	***	.52	(.07)	.19	***
Age: below 35 years	.00				.00			
36-40 years	.15	(.10)	.06		.21	(.11)	.07	*
41-45 years	.15	(.11)	.05		.13	(.12)	.04	
46-50 years	-.02	(.14)	-.01		.09	(.15)	.03	
51 years or older	-.07	(.18)	-.02		.05	(.19)	.01	
Youngest child: below 3 years	.00				.00			
3-5 years	-.04	(.09)	-.01		-.03	(.09)	-.01	
6-9 years	.00	(.11)	.00		-.06	(.11)	-.02	
10-15 years	.34	(.14)	.10	*	.27	(.15)	.07	(*)
16-30 years	.29	(.30)	.06		.08	(.32)	.02	
Number of children: 1 or 2 children	.00				.00			
3 children	.08	(.12)	.03		.09	(.13)	.03	
4 children	.23	(.14)	.08	(*)	.11	(.14)	.04	
5 or more children	.19	(.14)	.06		-.26	(.15)	-.08	(*)
Household composition:								
partner (no/yes)	.03	(.13)	.01		-.01	(.14)	.00	
child below 15 years (no/yes)	-.28	(.26)	-.06		-.41	(.28)	-.08	
older child (no/yes)	-.09	(.09)	-.03		-.12	(.10)	-.04	
grandparents (no/yes)	.23	(.11)	.05	*	.04	(.12)	.01	
Education:								
tertiary education (no/yes)	-.25	(.08)	-.09	**	-.21	(.08)	-.07	*
Financial situation: make ends meet								
with difficulty	.00				.00			
some difficulty	-.21	(.08)	-.08	*	-.21	(.09)	-.07	*
fairly easily	-.52	(.09)	-.17	***	-.31	(.10)	-.10	**
easily	-.67	(.10)	-.22	***	-.32	(.11)	-.09	**
Migration background (no/yes)	.00	(.01)	-.01		.00	(.01)	.02	
$R^2_{adj.}$	.15				.19			

Note: N=1,293. The scale ranges from 1 “will not be important at all” to 7 “will be very important for families”. Shown are both unstandardised and standardised regression coefficients (b and beta, respectively) and standard errors (se).
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors’ own computations.

Table A.8: Policy measures to stop the reproduction of vulnerability

Covariates	Financial benefits measures				Educational policy measures			
	b	(*se*)	*beta*	p	*b*	(*se*)	*beta*	p
Country of residence: Germany	.00				.00			
Portugal	.32	(.09)	.13	***	1.08	(.10)	.40	***
Spain	.50	(.09)	.19	***	.75	(.10)	.27	***
Other European country	.23	(.13)	.06	(*)	.56	(.14)	.12	***
Gender: male	.00				.00			
female	.26	(.07)	.10	***	.47	(.07)	.17	***
Age: below 35 years	.00				.00			
36-40 years	.13	(.09)	.05		.19	(.10)	.07	(*)
41-45 years	.14	(.11)	.05		.11	(.12)	.04	
46-50 years	-.03	(.14)	-.01		.08	(.15)	.02	
51 years or older	-.09	(.17)	-.03		.03	(.18)	.01	
Youngest child: below 3 years	.00				.00			
3-5 years	-.07	(.08)	-.03		-.05	(.09)	-.01	
6-9 years	-.05	(.10)	-.02		-.09	(.11)	-.03	
10-15 years	.27	(.13)	.08	*	.23	(.15)	.06	
16-30 years	.19	(.28)	.04		.02	(.31)	.00	
Number of children: 1 or 2 children	.00				.00			
3 children	.05	(.12)	.02		.07	(.13)	.03	
4 children	.17	(.13)	.06		.10	(.14)	.03	
5 or more children	.12	(.13)	.04		-.27	(.15)	-.08	(*)
Household composition:								
partner (no/yes)	.02	(.13)	.00		.01	(.14)	.00	
child below 15 years (no/yes)	-.24	(.25)	-.05		-.41	(.27)	-.08	
older child (no/yes)	-.08	(.09)	-.03		-.12	(.10)	-.04	
grandparents (no/yes)	.17	(.11)	.04		.00	(.12)	.00	
Education:								
tertiary education (no/yes)	-.18	(.07)	-.06	*	-.15	(.08)	-.05	(*)
Financial situation: make ends meet								
with difficulty	.00				.00			
some difficulty	-.14	(.08)	-.06	(*)	-.17	(.09)	-.06	(*)
fairly easily	-.38	(.09)	-.13	***	-.21	(.10)	-.07	*
easily	-.45	(.10)	-.14	***	-.17	(.11)	-.05	
Migration background (no/yes)	.00	(.00)	-.02		.00	(.01)	.01	
Opinions and attitudes:								
government should take more responsibility								
very strong agreement	.00				.00			
strong agreement	-.45	(.08)	-.16	***	-.32	(.09)	-.10	***
agreement	-.83	(.09)	-.25	***	-.48	(.10)	-.13	***
neither agreement/nor disagreement	-1.00	(.10)	-.27	***	-.72	(.11)	-.18	***
disagreement	-1.01	(.12)	-.22	***	-.80	(.13)	-.16	***
important to hold on to tradition								
very strong agreement	.00				.00			
strong agreement	-.13	(.08)	-.04		-.02	(.09)	-.01	
agreement	-.23	(.09)	-.07	*	-.03	(.10)	-.01	
neither agreement/nor disagreement	-.18	(.09)	-.05	*	.03	(.10)	.01	
disagreement	-.06	(.10)	-.02		.13	(.11)	.03	
$R^2_{adj.}$	.25				.22			

Note: N=1,293. The scale ranges from 1 “will not be important at all” to 7 “will be very important for families”. Shown are both unstandardised and standardised regression coefficients (b and beta, respectively) and standard errors (se).
Source: *FamiliesAndSocieties* Family Survey, authors’ own computations.

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