

CIVIL COMPANY AND FAMILY – WORK HARMONIZATION

***Abstract:** The problem of family-work harmonization is increasingly being debated at political, social, economic level because it is strategic for the future of both family and company. In fact from working conditions depends the ability to provide adequate household income, along with a good quality of life for all its members (even though family economic well-being is not very often associated to family happiness).*

The benefits of happy families are reflected in turn also on the growth of a given territory, because families (primary social capital) contribute to collective social capital (secondary social capital), which is strategical for the development of an area.

Then it is important that companies undertake, in a way consistent with their own financial and organizational resources, the creation of corporate welfare, serving as a bridge between business and family and helping the harmonization of the two spheres and the recomposition of their complicated relationship.

Keywords: family-work harmonization, corporate welfare, civil company.

1. The family-work harmonization policies as policies of common good

The problem of family-work harmonization is increasingly being debated at political, social, economic level because it is strategic for the future of both family and company. In fact from working conditions depends the ability to provide adequate household income, along with a good quality of life for all its members (even though family economic well-being is not very often associated to family happiness). Working conditions should, in theory, put family's social capital in condition to be generated and re-created and to be able to feed the social capital of the other communities of reference (especially since the family is one of the places of apprenticeship of values, of respect for difference and diversity, of intergenerational solidarity, of ethos of citizenship). But it is equally true that from serene and balanced family relations springs, in part, a company's competitiveness and the competitive advantage of a local economic system. A cohesive family's social capital has in fact a positive effect on the economy at micro, meso and macro economic level. People happy and pleased with themselves and with their family ménage are indeed more motivated, more productive, more collaborative, more faithful in the company². The benefits of happy families are reflected in turn also on the growth of a given territory, because families (primary social capital) contribute to collective

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² See Melascèche, Montesi and Terenziani (2010).

social capital (secondary social capital), which is strategical for the development of an area.

Then it is important that companies undertake, in a way consistent with their own financial and organizational resources, the creation of *corporate welfare*, serving as a bridge between business and family and helping the harmonization of the two spheres and the recomposition of their complicated relationship³.

Many studies have long emphasized the benefits (some of which are not always accurately quantifiable as they fall within the so-called *intangibles*) of corporate welfare for both companies and workers. These studies, however, seem more obsessed by the need of the demonstration of a plausible *instrumental* use of corporate welfare by enterprises, rather than driven by the analysis of its *intrinsic* value (at least according to the so-called *Civil companies*⁴). For workers corporate welfare means a reduction of stress and fatigue, a decrease of family's renouncement due to work, liberation of time, the recovery of a greater ability to listen to children together with more diligence of behaviour towards them, the recovery of quantity/quality of time to spend with spouse/husband or with a partner⁵. For companies, in general, corporate welfare reduces absenteeism, limits employees' turnover, attracts the best workers by acquiring a good reputation, facilitates the procedures for personnel's selection and hiring, increases workers' productivity, improves organizational climate, can get public facilities of different kinds. On one side corporate welfare, through the trust and mutual loyalty between employer and employees which normally originates from it, cures the typical market failures reported by the economic theory of organizations (opportunism, hidden action, hidden information), but on the other side corporate welfare causes not only direct costs (such as start-up costs and costs of application of family-work conciliation

³ Five main models can describe the relationship between work and family. The *spill-over theory* tells us that what a person lives at work is then poured on the family; the *compensation theory* tells us that people seek/offset in an area what is not located in, or is not in balance in the other area; the *segmentation theory* argues that family and work are two completely separate compartments: the first is the place of affections, relations and cooperation, the second is the place of impersonality, individualism and competition; the *instrumental theory* states that an area is the tool to achieve results even in the other; the *conflict theory* advocates that the successes achieved in one area can only be achieved at the expense of the other. See Faldetta (2008), p. 25.

⁴ The results of these studies, yet quantitatively limited, are not all univocal. They depend also on the *person who was interviewed* by the researcher (if the manager or the employee), on the *variety of business environments and cultures*, on the *macroeconomic context* (increasing the benefits of reconciliation policies when unemployment is low), on *management's time horizon* (if the assessment of these policies takes place in the short term or in the medium term). See Faldetta (2008), pp. 37–38.

⁵ The belief in the goodness of work-family harmonization policies and in the opportunities they offer is more pronounced at entrepreneurs/managers level rather than at workers' level. The latter fear in fact, through their use, bad impact on career, conflicts with colleagues who have to bear higher workloads, the acquisition of the label of being less productive workers and the acquisition of a bad reputation. All these caveats suggest that these policies should be illuminated by the principle of *fairness* among workers.

measures), but also indirect costs (such as, for instance, the loss of control on the effective work's hours performed in a telework scheme, etc.).

The main types of corporate welfare instruments are: *tools that reduce or otherwise articulate working time* (part-time, company's hours-bank, flexibility of working hours, paid or unpaid leave for family's emergencies, etc.); *tools that free time* (leave of various kinds: parental or maternal, etc.); *tools which support care work or domestic work* (company's kindergarten, care vouchers, household services, etc.); *tools that form a different culture of time* (information on the opportunities offered by company's work-family conciliation policies, training on time-management, personal or family counselling, etc.); *tools for professional support* (training and retraining after a maternal or parental leave, etc.); *tools that give extra-wage benefits* (various allowances related to the family)⁶. The diffusion and the typologies of corporate welfare are different according to political, economic, social and cultural contexts of each country, which can create a more or less favourable environment to them⁷. The corporate welfare systems may vary depending on company's size, on transnational or national character of the firm, on the legal nature of the firm, being more frequent, differentiated and rich in resources among large enterprises, among multinational corporations, among quoted companies. Small and medium-sized enterprises certainly have more financial, structural, cultural constraints in adopting work-family conciliation policies⁸. But beyond all their possible articulation and differentiation, one of the most important qualitative characteristic is that *family-work conciliation policies are policies of Common Good in a double sense: because they are not corporative neither labouristic. In fact they are not directed only to women, but to the whole community* (the company's community and the community that resides in the territory where the company is located), and *they are not aimed to increase or guard only women's employment*. Their purpose is to twist work and life for a *full development of the person* (who is not a monad, but an individual who is always in relation to others within the familiar and professional context). They are intended to pursue *a good life for all*⁹: a life in which the scarcest resource we have today, time¹⁰, can be used in a balanced way between different spheres of life and of activities of persons *for the well-being of everybody and of each individual, alias for the Common Good*. The work-family conciliation policies, particularly when they are arranged at *territorial scale* involving so many different policy makers (far more numerous than when they are implemented within a single enterprise), *are policies of the Common Good for another motivation. They satisfy most of the requirements that characterize*

⁶ See Donati (2009a), pp. 33–41.

⁷ See Faldetta (2008), pp. 27–35.

⁸ See Macchioni (2009).

⁹ “To live a good life” can be considered a *substantial* meaning of *common good*, beyond the many meanings to which one can arrive through a dialogic and democratic process (not only representative, but also deliberative). See Montesi (2010a), p. 140.

¹⁰ See Zimbaro and Boyd (2009).

a policy of *Common Good*¹¹. Some good practices¹², which are already in act in some Italian regions¹³ and in some enterprises of our country (multinational¹⁴, large¹⁵, small and medium-sized¹⁶), if analyzed in their modalities of construction and mode of governance, can be carried as proof of this, but they also reflect the fact that work-family harmonization policies are *policies which are built together and enjoyed together*.

2. Work-family harmonization policies as policies of civil companies

Work-family conciliation policies are generally adopted primarily by *Civil companies*¹⁷ or, more generally, by all those companies that are able to “*build a corporate citizenship without destroying the social tissue within which the company operates*”¹⁸.

The Civil company can be conceived as a *social community* because its work is the result of *cooperative* activities between people inside and outside the company (employees, customers, suppliers, etc.), which should operate in accordance with other communities that are outside its boundaries: the families of its employees and the local community. From this particular conception of the company follows that *company’s good does not exhaust itself only in profit* (which anyway still requires unity of purpose between employer and employees and so forth *cooperative and trustful social relationships* that cement, through all those *virtues that promote sociability*¹⁹ and through *relational gifts* made in the name of reciprocity²⁰, the

¹¹ These requirements can be summarized as: *multidimensional attention to the individual; integration, sharing of objectives, coordination among policy makers; subsidiarity (horizontal, vertical, circular); relational rationality; regulation geared primarily to the paradigm of reciprocity; coexistence of different principles of regulation; production of relational goods; coexistence of different ethics (ethics of intentions, ethics of responsibility, ethics of care, ethics of virtue)*. See Grasselli (2009), pp. 34–35 and Montesi (2010a), pp. 142–150.

¹² A good practice is “an intervention that reaches a certain goal better than the existing interventions. The concept of “better” can be operationalized in various ways, with regard to parameters of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, or other” (Donati, 2009a, pp. 28–29).

¹³ See for example in Italy the experience of the Province of Bologna, the Province of Modena, the Province of Pisa, the Province of Mantua, the Autonomous Province of Trento, in the implementation of the National Law 53/2000 (Article 9). See Department for Family Affairs (2008).

¹⁴ See, for example, the case-study of Nokia in Italy. See Bordoni (2007).

¹⁵ See for example the experience of the pharmaceutical company Bracco in Italy.

¹⁶ Cfr. Macchioni (2009).

¹⁷ On *Civil Economics* see Bruni and Zamagni (2004), Bruni and Zamagni (2009), Bruni (2009), Bruni (2010).

¹⁸ See Montesi (2009b), p. 122.

¹⁹ All those giving virtues (such as the virtues of hospitality, brotherhood, kindness, friendship, integrity, honesty, gentleness) are essential to *civil life* within the community, but reinforce also working relationships, teamwork, and the civil market. See Montesi (2009b), pp. 122–127.

²⁰ On the role of gifts in the enterprise that are at work within its human, organizational, relational capital, affecting also the competitive advantage of the company see Montesi (2008), pp. 95–99.

business community), but includes the well-being of its employees which can only be achieved through the recomposition of the artificial separation between business and society. *Company's good (conceived in a more holistic way) is then not separated from common good.*

So it is easy to understand why the conciliation policies are particularly preferred by Civil companies, alias by those companies that are oriented to *Common Good*²¹, before being addicted to profit. Civil companies are oriented to a *civil responsibility*, a mission that goes beyond enterprise's *social responsibility*, enterprise's *paternalism*, enterprise's *mercantilism*, enterprise's *philanthropy*. For Civil companies profit is not the end of the business itself, but it is only the constraint that firms must respect to continue to stay in market and to conduct their industrial activity, which is instead the real purpose of the company, allowing all those who are (directly or indirectly) involved in it, to live a good life²². *So is civil the company that carries out an industrial project, under the constraints of efficiency, without separating economic life from civil life (led in the family and society).* If there is no gap between economy and society, *company's responsibility towards others* (alias to take care of the needs of civil society and to take into account the interests of other company's stakeholders) is therefore closely linked to industrial activity and then *it is an end in itself*. If there is no dichotomy, gift and reciprocity (that characterize the functioning of family and society), pervade also the functioning of the market, making economics become *civil*²³. Reciprocity and gift then must operate within the normal activity of the market, neither in its lateral side (as in the case of non-profit sector which is considered like an exception to the market), nor later in time (downstream of the creation of wealth by the market to correct, through *philanthropy*, inequalities together with the redistributive action of the Welfare State)²⁴. This is a very different perspective from the view of neoclassical economics, which advocates that profit is the true end of business (business activity is merely a tool to achieve it), that profit should be pursued in the market (which is an area *clearly separated from the company* characterized by self-interest and anonymous relations²⁵), that it must be sought regardless of ethical

²¹ Among Civil companies can be included not only non-profit companies (social cooperatives) and cooperative enterprises that, given their peculiar institutional nature, do not pursue their goals through the principle of exchange of equivalents, but through a series of participatory principles and mechanisms of reciprocity and democracy, but also all the *profit* companies with an attitude for the common good. Among the civil companies is worth remembering, as particularly emblematic for their attempt to humanize the economy, the *Economy of Communion* enterprises and *Fair Trade* companies.

²² See Bruni (2009), pp. 123–128.

²³ See Montesi (2008), pp. 90–95.

²⁴ See Montesi (2010b) and Montesi (2010c).

²⁵ It should be said that the existence in the market of *contractual* relations which are impersonal, anaffective and weak, but also free and equal respect to community's contexts (such as clan, slave, feudal, rural societies), where *social* strong relations are in act, full of identity and of feelings of benevolence, but with the characteristic of not being freely chosen by individuals, of being

considerations (profit is therefore independent from the Common Good that is involuntary and unknowable a priori²⁶) or it must be achieved under the constraint of compliance with minimum social standards and ethical principles, which are observed with impatience by the company because they are experienced only as a source of costs. In this context *company's social responsibility is only a constraint to the achievement of profit*.

But there is another difference between civil and corporate social responsibility. Civil responsibility is based on *mutual acknowledgment between company and stakeholders*. On one side the company recognizes that without the contribution of individuals, their families, the local community, it can neither exist nor flourish, on the other side individuals and families are aware of the role played by the company as an employer, promoter of the development of the territory, a midwife of their capabilities. The relation is now bi-directional and is tinged with the ethical aspect of *mutual acknowledgment of the Other*, who not only has his own intrinsic value, but is also essential for the very existence of the subject and the construction of his identity. The relation turns into ethics also for the *mutual attention to the good of the Other* (the Other is to feel good because one can flourish). *Social responsibility* of enterprise, according to some interpretations, is instead based on a *social contract* concluded, like in Rawls' view, under a "veil of ignorance", between company and various stakeholders (primarily shareholders and employees and then other stakeholder such as customers, suppliers, local community, etc.)²⁷. The company incorporates, through this *contract*, in its strategy the interests and concerns of others throwing, in this way, a bridge to society²⁸, but this assumption is not due so much to the acknowledgment of the intrinsic value of the Other and of its indispensability to the relationship (alias in a *relational perspective*)²⁹, but is due to compliance with laws or to external pressure coming from the "voice" of

usually biased in favor of a party, and from which you can not easily get out because of loyalty's constraints in force, however, represent an achievement of civilization in order to meet people's needs. See Bruni (2007), p. 63 and Montesi (2010b).

²⁶ "In this theoretical framework the common good is reduced to be the unintended result of individual actions, each aimed at achieving the best for themselves (the "invisible hand" of Adam Smith). The common good is not known, is the result of the action of competition seen as a *discovery procedures*" (Montesi, 2009b, pp. 118–119).

²⁷ See Sacconi (2005).

²⁸ In this sense social responsibility becomes a *enlarged model of governance* of company, under which those who govern the company have responsibilities that extend from the observance of fiduciary duties in respect of the property to similar fiduciary duties with respect, in general, of *all stakeholders* (see Sacconi, 2005, p. 112, emphasis added). With the *social contract* à la Rawls, a *typical instrument of the market*, the company comes to terms, on a basis of equality, with many stakeholders, but *without any gain of sociability*. Contract remains impersonal with the advantage to anesthetize the pain that can come from the *personal relationships* with others which are so blessed, but which can also hurt, given the fragility of relational goods. See Bruni (2007), p. 72.

²⁹ In this sense the Other is both an end in itself and a means of entrepreneurial activity.

responsible consumers or to economic convenience or to marketing and reputation reasons³⁰ (in a view that remains *individualistic* –company does not create *personal* relation because the *contractual* relationship is anonymous, anaffective and based on *self-interest* because it is only instrumental). The harmonization between business and society is only an illusion, actually the company remains impermeable to the relationship with the Other, as in the neoclassical view that depicts it as a “black box”. So companies that embrace *social responsibility* are very different from those who practice the *civil responsibility*, but they are all preferable to *irresponsible* companies³¹. But civil and social responsibility companies are also different from *paternalistic* or *philanthropic companies*. These last two kind of companies are not taking care of Others on the basis of intrinsic motivation that contaminates the market (like in the case of “civil companies”) or on the basis of a social contract (like in the case of “social responsibility companies”), but according to *individual ethics* of the entrepreneur, which can only be practised out of the business (alias in the *social* field, which remains the only place of possible exercise of virtue) and only after the business has produced wealth (to redistribute benevolently a part of it), being the market and the society considered as two separate spheres and having the entrepreneur only the worry of making profits in the market. It can therefore be drawn up, based on some variables, a distinction between different business archetypes³² (*paternalistic, mercantilistic, civil, philanthropist*), with their more or less marked tendency to be familiar responsible, through different policies of family-work harmonization (Fig. 1).

The ideal type for the grade and quality of assumption of family responsibility is certainly the civil entrepreneur followed by the paternalistic, while both the philanthropist and the mercantilist avoid entirely work-family conciliation.

The family-work harmonization policies are usually included in social responsibility practices that, as noted above, is different from *civil* responsibility. They are generally certified by Social Balance or may even have their own certification system³³ or they can simply be acted without adopting an official statement. With regard to this latter mode it can be interesting to investigate the problems and the potentialities that even small and medium-sized enterprises may face in the areas of harmonization, from a survey made on a consortium of metalmechanical firms in the province of Terni (District of Umbria-Italy).

³⁰ So in companies which practise social responsibility there is not uniformity, but there are different groups of firms that have *very different motivations* at the basis of their practices. From these motivations depend the initiatives (more or less spontaneous) to take, the way in which they are conducted, the persistence of same practices. See Bruni (2006), pp. 69–72.

³¹ See Grasselli (2005), pp. 119–132.

³² The delineation of this comparison was inspired, albeit with different nuances and introducing other elements of classification, by the division's in three business profiles (*paternal, civic, mercantilist*) developed by Martignani (2009), pp. 180–194.

³³ There are infact special certification like the Audit “Family and Work”. See Tarroni (2007).

Figure 1

Business Archetypes and Corporate Responsibility

Business Archetypes	Paternalistic Entrepreneur	Mercantilist Entrepreneur	Civil Entrepreneur	Philanthropist Entrepreneur
<i>Mission: profit versus common good?</i>	The business end is profit under the constraint of assuming a responsibility which, however, is very limited because it is addressed primarily to the workers	The business end is corporate's profits regardless of any responsibility to anyone	The business end is conducting a certain industrial or service activity, under the constraint of the pursuit of profit, without separating the economic activity from life	The business end is profit under the constraint of assuming a wider responsibility to various stakeholders, also outside the enterprise, which takes the guise of philanthropy
<i>Type of responsibility acted by the company</i>	<i>Individual Ethical Responsibility</i> in addition to the observance of economic and legal responsibility	<i>Economic Responsibility</i> (Be profitable); <i>Legal Responsibility</i> (To be law-observant)	<i>Civil Responsibility</i>	<i>Individual Ethical Responsibility</i> in addition to the observance of economic and legal responsibility
<i>Business ethic most ingrained in entrepreneurial profile</i>	Intentions ethics of Kantian matrix	Ethics of the consequences of Utilitarian matrix	Ethics of virtue of Aristotelian matrix	Ethics of the consequences of Utilitarian matrix
<i>Consideration of employees from the entrepreneur's point of view based on the business ethic that most characterizes him</i>	Employees are an end in themselves, they must be respected in their dignity, they are treated by the entrepreneur as children in a relationship of authority, based on the exemplary nature of his role and his strong sense of duty	Employees are only a means to achieve the profit	Employees are both end and means of industrial activity	Employees are only a means to achieve the profit; only the others, the anonymous outside the company, are an end in themselves; the "categories" of philanthropy's recipients are chosen arbitrarily by the entrepreneur
<i>Entrepreneur's attitude towards conciling family and work which can be deduced by the attitude shown towards employees</i>	Familiarly responsible	Familiarly irresponsible	Familiarly responsible	Familiarly irresponsible
<i>Types of work-family conciliation policies adopted</i>	Extemporaneous and informal measures, granted ad personam by the entrepreneur in a discretionary, flexible, customized form to the emergence of individual need	No measurement. If adopted, it is only to comply with the dictates of the law or in an instrumental horizon, because they are cost-effective, generating more profit	Structured and codified measures that give a good reputation and consolidate trust relation	No measurement. If adopted, it is only to comply with the dictates of the law or to act in an instrumental horizon, because they are cost-effective, generating more profit

Figure 1 (continued)

Business Archetypes	Paternalistic Entrepreneur	Mercantilist Entrepreneur	Civil Entrepreneur	Philanthropist Entrepreneur
<i>Virtue more characteristic of the entrepreneurial profile</i>	Magnanimity: the entrepreneur makes <i>unilateral</i> gifts to employees, or <i>personal</i> gift to those who are close to him and in confidence with him	Parsimony, Justice (commutative and distributive), Prudence	Generosity: the entrepreneur makes <i>relational</i> gifts that, due to reciprocity, strengthen social and personal ties within and outside the company; Justice (commutative and distributive); Other cooperatives virtues: Brotherhood	Charity: the entrepreneur makes <i>unilateral</i> gifts to strangers
<i>Vices at increased risk of event in the entrepreneurial profile</i>	Pride	Greed	Communitarianism	Vanity
<i>Time orientation of the entrepreneur</i>	Oriented to the past, linked to the respect for traditional values	Present-oriented, short-termism which consists in short-term profit maximization	Future-oriented, research of long-term economic, social, environmental sustainability and of inter-generational equity	Present-oriented in terms of production (short-termism), future-oriented in terms of personal fame (need to be remembered by posterity for the charity carried out)
<i>Type of welfare compatible with the entrepreneurial profile</i>	Welfare State: state intervention to remedy the distortions present in the market after the market has produced wealth	Welfare State: state intervention to remedy the distortions present in the market after the market has produced wealth	Plural, Communitarian, Subsidiary Welfare: State, market companies, households, civil society, non profit sector, work together in a synergic, balanced and integrated way for the well-being of people	No Welfare: philanthropy replaces completely state intervention or joins to Welfare State in a complementary manner in the redistributive function
<i>Relationship with the territory</i>	The company makes more community inside than with the territory	The company is separate from the territory	The company builds citizenship and is rooted in the territory	The company makes things for the territory, but not with the territory
<i>Type of rationality</i>	Instrumental rationality tempered by rationality according to values	Instrumental rationality	Relational rationality	Instrumental rationality

3. The practices of family-work conciliation in a group of manufacturing companies in the province of Terni (Italy)

3.1. *Premise*

In order to substantiate the existence of major constraints to the implementation of family-work conciliation policies, especially by small and medium-sized enterprises, a special investigation was conducted on a group of companies in the province of Terni, in Umbria district of Italy, which exactly belong to that category. This group is in fact composed by 25 artisan companies operating in the field of engineering, mechanics, carpentry and installations, electrical and electronics, industrial automation, assembly, service and maintenance mechanics, non destructive testing on various materials, belonging to the consortium Con. Ar. T. (Ternana Artisans Consortium), a consortium founded in 2004 with limited liability³⁴. The consortium aims to design, construction, installation, testing, maintenance of equipment for various industries. Although in most of these companies, because of their membership to capital-intensive, high technology and knowledge-based sectors, female employment is low relative to the total number of employees³⁵ and mainly concentrated in white-collar functions claiming shifts less rigid than tradesmen (characteristics that would seem to assume that the problem of *work-life balance* is less urgent within these companies), it was decided to investigate them all the same for several reasons.

First, because they belong to metalmechanical sector that, even today, is one of the branches of marked specialization of the industry in the province of Terni, in continuity with the glorious industrial history of the area³⁶. For this reason the “best practices” of family-work harmonization that are already in act within them or that could be undertaken voluntarily as a result of the research, could more easily spread all over the manufacturing environment.

Secondly, the sector of metalmechanics in the province of Terni shows, as ever, a strong attitude to cooperation between enterprises in various forms (agreements, consortia, subcontracting, business networks, etc.).³⁷ This means an overcoming of

³⁴ The 22 companies that have actively participated in the research were the following: Bisonni F.lli srl, Bottaro snc Canalicchio F.lli spa, CISIA Ltd, CO.I.MONT snc, COS. MI Ltd., Electro Marine Ltd, Erresse Construction Ltd, Itec Ltd, Le.Al., Mascio Engineering Ltd, mythical Ltd., M.M.C. srl, Monza snc Mov.mat Ltd, Nannini & C. snc PREXISO spa, Rosati F.lli snc, Rossi Brothers Ltd, SET Ltd., R.U.M.I.L. snc, Ternana Impianti srl. For a more detailed overview of the consortium see www.consortioconart.it.

³⁵ For a brief overview of the theories of horizontal segregation of women’s work see Montesi (2005), pp. 18-25 and Montesi (2009a), pp. 51–54.

³⁶ “At the time of birth (March 10, 1884) of the Company SAFFAT (Society of blast furnaces, foundries and steelworks Terni), Terni could indeed already proudly boast a tradition of production not only in the steel industry, but also in other sectors” (Montesi, 2002a, p. 209). For a discussion about the signs of the presence in Terni of an *endogenous* steel industry development prior to the emergence of a *polarized* and *exogenous* development driven by the large steel industry that still affects the economic, social and environmental fate of the area, see Montesi (2002a).

³⁷ See Montesi (2002b).

self-interested and individualistic perspective (instrumental rationality) for a more relational approach (team rationality), and thus is a guarantee of a greater sensitivity and openness to the common good.

Third, the metalmechanical industry has always been in Italy an outpost of advanced industrial relations even after rough and tight negotiations between unions (more or less open to change) and business representatives (more or less enlightened). So this sector has enriched national and decentralized bargaining of economic and social innovation and has always been the pioneer industry of new ways of organizing work and of advanced forms of share economy³⁸. From all these elements, at least according to what has been observed in the past, this sector can show a greater receptivity of the problem of conciliating family and work. This sector has been historically an expression of many *Civil* entrepreneurs³⁹ (think of Adriano Olivetti, who, in the case of reconciling family and work, was ahead of his times⁴⁰). So the membership of the companies to the metalmechanical field, though this sector has not a high density of working women, has for the reasons above illustrated stimulated scientific curiosity, in addition to the character of *artisan* companies which make them more open to Common Good and therefore to the introduction of family-work conciliation policies that are, as discussed above, policies of Common Good. The craftsmen in fact do not work exclusively for profit (extrinsic motivation), but also for the pleasure of doing their jobs well and running it well *for others* (intrinsic motivation)⁴¹. And *work as an expression of love for others* is another of the requirements of the so-called *Civil companies*⁴².

Finally, although women are underrepresented in the companies considered, it should be noted that the problem of conciliation involves all (men and women), and attempts at its resolution can contribute to the humanization of life and work of both genders.

3.2. *The methodology of the research*

The research was carried out on almost all the companies of the consortium Con. Ar. T. (22 out of 25) through a questionnaire (to the entrepreneur or to human

³⁸ Cfr. Montesi (1993) and Molesti (2006).

³⁹ For the definition of *civil* enterprise see Bruni (2009).

⁴⁰ We recall in this respect the steps taken by Adriano Olivetti in favour of motherhood and childhood. They began in 1934 with the establishment, inside his factory, of a nursery and of a children health service. Since 1941 comes into force in the factory a new regulation: the “Female Employment Assistance Olivetti” through which pregnant employees are entitled to enjoy a salary even higher than the salary required by the current laws (almost full salary payment for nine months). The corporate kindergarten, designed with functional and aesthetic criteria of efficiency, it was not just a “baby parking”, but an educational organization run by properly trained and highly qualified teachers. See Gallino (2001).

⁴¹ On intrinsic motivation see Frey (2005). As regards the possible conciliation of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in market’s activity see Bruni (2010), pp. 189–197.

⁴² See Bruni (2009), p. 152.

resources' manager) that allows to evaluate how much the company is a family responsible company (according to IFR model)⁴³.

The model is based on four different, but interdependent, elements: 1) *conciliation policies*; 2) *facilitators of these policies*; 3) *conciliation culture* (restraints/ impulses); 4) *results*.

Conciliation policies can in turn articulate in: *policies for working flexibility*; *professional support policies*; *policies of family services*, *policies that provide extra-wage benefits*.

Facilitators may arise in relation to four areas: a) *freedom climate, understanding and confidence conducive to conciliation*, b) *strategy*, c) *responsibility*, d) *communication*.

Culture refers to maturation of beliefs or practices already established in the company about *time, career mode, assessment of personal* more or less favourable to conciliation⁴⁴.

Results are the amalgam of the three items above and allow the assessment of the status quo with regard to family-oriented business style and permit to outline possible paths of development.

The model aims to achieve the following objectives for each of the four elements mentioned (conciliation policies, facilitators, culture, results).

<i>Element</i>	<i>Objective</i>
<i>Conciliation policies</i>	Establish the existence in the company of work-family conciliation policies in four areas related to: flexible working, professional support, family services, extra-wage benefits;
<i>Facilitators</i>	Identify how the management / entrepreneur and the trade-union (if any) put into practice or intend to adopt conciliation policies: 1) creating a climate of freedom, understanding and confidence conducive to them (UNDERSTANDING and TRUST); 2) incorporating, in a structured and codified way, in the company's mission the strategy of conciliation (STRATEGY); 3) making all the staff be responsible for the conciliation strategy (RESPONSIBILITY); 4) communicating inside and outside the company the strategy of conciliation (COMMUNICATION);
<i>Culture</i>	Attest the presence of beliefs or business practices that hinder or encourage the strategy of conciliation;
<i>Results</i>	Measure the impact of the three elements deducing from them the existing corporate style respect to conciliation and the possible evolutionary trajectories.

Source: Sorrenti (2009).

⁴³ The IFR model has been developed since 1999 by IESE (International Center of Work and Family) of the Business School in Barcelona. For the purposes of this survey, the basic version that has given Sorrenti (2009) was used, making, however, some additions/modifications in an original review of the method.

⁴⁴ A corporate culture of long working hours, of physical "presence", of internal competitiveness does not favour the adoption of these policies.

3.3. Results of the Research

About the finding of conciliation policies implemented by firms, the survey found that all companies in the group investigated, at least, apply to some measures, but the overwhelming majority of them behave in a sudden, uncodified, unplanned manner in spite of companies' complain about the *difficulties in finding professionals for key roles* (70%), about the *lack of initiative of employees* (20%), the *difficulties in balancing work and family* (10%), the *absenteeism* (10%), the *lack of employee engagement* (10%). These are problems that could find solution through conciliation policies that, in building a corporate reputation, could improve firm's ability to attract and retain the best professional talents, and that rise, with the improvement of family's happiness, productivity and employees' morale and decrease absenteeism. Compared to the wide range of possible policies, companies prefer those that are inherent the *working flexibility* (90%), followed by the *extra-wage benefits* (60%), by *family services* (40%), by *support to professional development* (30%). The strong preference for working flexibility is due to lower cost of the measures of this area with respect to the higher costs of services of other areas. As part of the extra-wage benefits companies focus mainly only on one instrument: the *meal coupons* (60%)⁴⁵. In the area of family services policies are a bit more different, but of modest extent (20%), considering only two tools: *information about school and about after-school activities* and *prevention plan for family health*⁴⁶. Similarly in the case of the support for professional development, where the policies are concentrated only on *training on time management* (30%) and on *career counselling* (20%)⁴⁷. Very articulated is the use, in the area of working flexibility, of a number of instruments that are in order: *leave in case of family emergencies* (90%), *flexible holiday program* (70%), *part-time* (70%), *maintenance of the same benefits after long absence from work* (60%), *flexible working hours* (60%), *effort to reintegrate staff after long absence* (40%), *replacement of staff in case of prolonged absence* (40%), *maternity leave beyond statutory minimum* (20%), *possibility of working at home* (20%), *reduced working hours* (20%)⁴⁸.

The exam of the role of facilitators reveals that there was not trade union support (because of the dimensional constraints of companies). As for the contribution offered by the entrepreneur or by the management (if any) to the creation of a business-friendly climate of conciliation policies, 60% declared to be *sensitive to the problem of finding*

⁴⁵ No trace of the following benefits that could be added, in a complementary way, to Welfare State protection: *life insurance, accident insurance, retirement plan, outplacement services*.

⁴⁶ Entirely absent *corporate nursery, the availability of support services, the information about facilities for the elderly and for the handicapped*.

⁴⁷ No actions of *personal/familiar counselling, no training on familiar topics, on different working styles between men and women, on possible methods for the conciliation work and private life*.

⁴⁸ Almost all of the flexible working options have been exploited by companies. Only these following measures have not been chosen at all: *temporary retirement beyond the legal minimum, leave to cure relatives, half-day off in exchange of a longer working hours in the remaining days of the week*. The non-recourse to the parental leave by fathers is perfectly in line with its low prevalence in Italy.

a balance between work and private life, starting from himself (60% said that he is a good example of work-family balanced conduct).

With regard to the formulation of a codified “strategy” of conciliation⁴⁹, this has started in only 20% of the companies, with the prevision only by 10% of them of an appropriate budget, of a responsible person of the function of work-family balance and of a plan for internal and external communication of the policies.

Corporate culture (beliefs and practices consolidated) seems more open to conciliation in the short than in the medium term. The career of the employee, which is built in an extended time horizon, seems to be affected by the family conditioning occurred. Only a small proportion of companies (30%) states that: “denial of a promotion or of a transfer by an employee for family reasons does not affect people’s careers”. In the short term however, companies are more elastic, they do not make claims that clash with the needs of family members (50% of them say: “employees are encouraged to go home after a certain time” and assert that “employees are not expected to bring work home”). Corporate culture, as regards the assessment of efforts made by the employees, reveals that 70% of companies “understand when employees give priority to their families”, while only 20% of firms seems to develop a prejudice considering “little involved in company’s destiny an employee who, for family reasons, has obtained a leave or a reduction of working hours”.

So companies have made various actions of conciliation, mainly in the direction of more working flexibility, which is the area where the instruments of conciliation are more differentiated, though not yet in a strategic horizon. Entrepreneurs seem to be aware of the importance of the problem and willing to face it in a less episodic and more rational way. Only in a minority of companies this awareness has already converted in “strategy” (because of the dimensions of the companies that put constraints, in general, to the introduction also of instruments of corporate social responsibility⁵⁰), strategy that could culminate with the acquisition of a certificate

⁴⁹ The strategy should articulate in different next steps: involvement of top management; establishment of an interdepartmental coordination committee composed of directors and employees and places of confrontation between unions and company; determination of needs through a questionnaire administered to employees; processing a strategy that includes policies to be adopted and the tasks of the facilitators (also with allocation of financial resources, accountability and provision of training); development of the manual for the implementation of policies; internal and external application of policies; monitoring, evaluation, improving of the policies according to the results obtained and to the new emergencies.

⁵⁰ See Lucchini and Molteni (2004), pp. 89–91. The small size is infact related to the lack of financial resources to invest, the inability to devote staff with specific expertise in corporate social responsibility, the scarcity of time due to the total absorption by the operative management, the regime of subcontracting which does not give an immediate external visibility and therefore does not motivate companies to have social engagement, the bureaucratic burden required by the introduction of formal instruments of social certification in familiar contexts characterized by a low degree of formalization and structuring of activities, the coincidence between ownership and management that makes it difficult to distinguish between individual ethics and company’s ethics with the risk that the actions are more the result of *paternalism* or *philanthropy* rather than the result of a conscious strategic choice of the enterprise.

(through the Audit “Family & Work”). The corporate culture has, however, still some small margin of ambiguity, which can act as a brake especially for career development that is perceived in trade-off with a balanced life.

Leading to synthesis all the findings that emerged from the amount, type and degree of differentiation of conciliation policies adopted; from the state of progress, degree of formalization and organizational and financial support given to a more structured “strategy” of conciliation; from the corporate culture stratified in the company more or less inclined to encourage conciliation, four styles of corporate conciliation management can be found.

One can define:

- Style *familiarly irresponsible* the company that fails to take, even occasionally, conciliation policies in any of the possible areas of intervention (flexible working, non-wage benefits, family services, support and career development), where no facilitator is at work, where the culture company is hostile to conciliation;
- Style *familiarly aware* the company that adopts, in large measure, but in extemporary way, conciliation policies, predominantly in one area (working flexibility), with the use in this area of many instruments, where the facilitators show openness and play their role effectively even if limited to a generic promotion of conciliation, where corporate culture is oriented, in principle, to conciliation with a little margin of residual resilience;
- Style *familiarly responsible at embryonic level* the company that is at start-up phase of adoption, in a codified and structured way, of a “strategy”, consisting of a variety of conciliation policies in several areas of intervention with the use of numerous instruments, and where, thanks to the facilitators, conciliation is embedded in the corporate mission and corporate culture;
- Style *familiarly responsible mature* the company that has been adopting for a long time a “strategy” of conciliation, with the characteristics described above, which is certified, firmly institutionalized and deeply rooted in the company.

According to this classification we see that 80% of companies can be linked to the style *familiarly aware* and the remaining 20% to the style *familiarly responsible at embryonic level*. No company is part of the style *familiarly irresponsible*. Yet no company is in style *familiarly responsible mature*. The physiological development should see the gradual shift of 80% of companies from the “aware” familiar style to the “responsible at embryonic level” and the transit of 20% of “embryonic” style companies to the “responsible mature” style. This migration may be accompanied and supported financially by public institutions. It should be noted, however, that only 5% of companies are aware of national or regional measures of work-family conciliation.

This evolutionary hypothesis becomes more credible if we look at the responses of the firms, those not yet involved in codified practices, which stated,

with a percentage of 30%, that they want in the future to introduce a “strategy” of conciliation (while 70% said that they are still thinking). Factors that may hinder this intention are in order: excessive financial investments (50%), resistance to organizational change (25%), difficulty of assessing the return on investment (20%), other (5%). These worries so concentrated on money aspects reveal that companies brood an utilitarianistic interpretation of corporate welfare.

Since companies widely use tools concerning working flexibility (which could be reconfirmed in the future “strategy”), it is important to investigate the companies’ orientation about the implementation of family services and, more specifically, the realization of childhood services, which are usually more in the heart of employees because they are the most difficult to be found in the territory, but they are also the more expensive to be implemented and run by companies even at inter-corporation scale⁵¹.

In this regard, only a quarter of businesses are in favour (25%). Companies that are positively oriented think they could create a kindergarten through an agreement made by the consortium (95%) for the purchase of these services by a non-profit service organization (95%) rather than by a private organization (5%). The companies refuse the possibility of creating the nursery on their own and exclude the possibility of providing a care voucher to their employees.

The form chosen allows to overtake the difficulties and the costs of a direct management of a kindergarten. The governance chosen (an agreement between the consortium and a non-profit) is in line with a pluralistic and subsidiary welfare. In this project, the companies expect more help from: industrial associations (70%), municipality (20%), province (5%), region (5%). From these indication transpires some difficulties in dialogue with public institutions, but they are fundamental.

3.4. Conclusions

Conciliation, as keenly realized by the companies interviewed in their request for a strong collaboration among private, public and non profit sector to create childcare services, requires the integration, through practices of concertation, of a *great number of complex systems*: the *companies* that regulate timing, intensity and forms of work organization; the *families* within which time, forms and procedures of housework and childcare-sharing are agreed; the *central government* that, in addition to the implementation of family policies and adoption of laws that reduce or otherwise articulate the working time (part-time) or allow people to have more free time devoted to work (maternal and parental leave), can transpose EU directives on conciliation, provide funding for the promotion of conciliation measures⁵², promote social responsibility and certification systems of family’s

⁵¹ See Landuzzi (2007).

⁵² See Italian Act No. 53 of 2000, Article 9.

responsibility⁵³, grant benefits to certified companies; the *local government* in its various articulation which sets times, forms, rates, diffusion of social services⁵⁴ and of other services⁵⁵ and has the function of promoting, supporting, regulating social protagonism in the direction of conciliation; the *trade-unions* and *industrial associations* which, together with enterprises, may arrange territorial or company bargaining with innovative social contents (like for instance the “relational contracts”⁵⁶); the *non profit sector* and the *private operators* who can offer, for various reasons, services (including innovative initiatives) to people; the *social networks* (associations for families or associations of groups of families, time-banks, mutual aid associations, consumers’ associations, neighborhood organizations, etc.) that can support families in care services. Only a *systemic* action carried out with a *relational rationality*, in the perspective of *Common Good*, is likely to have significant effects as the German experience of Local Alliances for the family shows us⁵⁷. The experiences of good practice in Italy are still numerically small, geographically concentrated to the Northern and Central Italy, limited to the conciliation of subordinate work in “normal” families rather than oriented to the conciliation of atypical work or autonomous work⁵⁸ in “troubled” families⁵⁹. The best examples are confined only in certain worlds, moreover separated from each other (in the private corporate welfare or in the public organizations’ welfare or in the non-profit company’s welfare marked by practices of dialogue that anyway take place more *intra moenia* than *extra moenia*), aimed predominantly at women, with the almost exclusive use of labouristic instruments (like part-time) rather than of genuine conciliation instruments. Even with these limitations, however, these practices are encouraging signs that, if reconfigured in a more airy perspective of

⁵³ For an illustration of German and Austrian *Audit Beruf & Familie* and its spread even in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano cfr. Tarroni (2007), pp. 228–242.

⁵⁴ For the growing importance of *local* welfare see Maretta (2008) and Montesi and Menegon (2011).

⁵⁵ Local government can act in the reorganization of the city (think of the times of entry and the opening of kindergartens, schools, public offices, public services, etc.) or in the improvement of public transport services especially at certain times or in the rationalization of the traffic to avoid congestion or in changes in zoning. For the consultation of shop opening hours is also essential to the contribution of *Chambers of Commerce* and of the *Associations of entrepreneurs*.

⁵⁶ The idea of *relational contracts* is to include, in contracts of employment, the variable “family time”. These contracts include everything related to the problem of time, from the perspective of conciliation of family-time and work-time, with the possibility of switching money for time to devote to family or for real services supplied by the company to the family. See Donati (2009b), pp. 317–318.

⁵⁷ See Tarroni (2007), pp. 230–231.

⁵⁸ “The self-employed is characterized by longer working hours and more difficult to be absent, the dependent worker is characterized by more rigid working hours and greater uncertainties about the professional placement and the career’s development” (see Pruna 2009, p. 117).

⁵⁹ The problem of conciliation is actually more acute for women workers with unstable jobs, for female-headed single parent families due to separation, divorce, bereavement, and for migrant women who can not rely on chains of intergenerational solidarity.

territory, they can go in the direction of a more harmonious development of local communities under the banner of a relational economy inspired to Common Good⁶⁰.

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⁶⁰ See Zamagni (2007).

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