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**Executive design of the qualitative study on work-life balance to be carried
out at the two participating institutes of UPD**

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Executive design of the qualitative study on work-life balance to be carried out at the two participating institutes of UPD

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This study is part of Task 4.2 which aims to promote a better balance between paid work and private life (work-life balance). Under this task, a qualitative study based on interviews with staff of Physics Research and Training Unit and Jacques Monod Institute, will be carried out to identify critical issues and promote internal discussion in the two participating organizations (4.2.1). This will lead to a new approach of the situation at UPD and subsequently to recommendations to improve it. A series of new measures for work-life balance will therefore be promoted. A new rule will be established giving priority to women in the award of a sabbatical within the first two years after a maternity leave; sabbaticals in France are awarded to selected assistant professors and full professors for six months to one year every three years (4.2.2). Working from home will be supported by the promotion of video-conference meetings and other homeworking tools (4.2.3). Also, will be discussed in University councils and with the Human Resources service a proposal for coverage of part of family care costs for women attending a congress or an important research meeting, or faced with their partner attending a congress or an important research meeting if in a period when the partner is usually involved in family care (4.2.4). A student baby-sitters' network will be established within the University (4.2.5). These measures must be adjusted according survey results.

Study Context

There has been growing concern over professional equality between men and women over the last decades. The awareness about unequal earnings and career development has led to increased interest by public authorities who have implemented different measures, some of which recommend work-life balance. Western societies face both the massive commitment of women from all social classes in paid employment and a still huge imbalance between men and women in the sharing of domestic and family responsibilities. At the same time, work pressure has been intensifying due to advances in information technology. Seeking a balance between work and personal life could be a good way to both reduce workers' stress and improve the sexual division of labour, involving men in household chores.

University

Higher education academic jobs have often been considered as non-pressure jobs, given the flexibility and the autonomy granted to professors in their research and the low number of annual teaching hours, thus leading to the view that they have an enviable workload, particularly favourable to a better work-life balance. But the accumulation of tasks, linked to the supervision of students (particularly master's and PhD students), the planning and preparation of lectures and seminars, the assessment of work, the administrative tasks necessary to ensure effective functioning of the department, and the long hours devoted to research projects draw a much harsher reality. This observation combined with the increase in the level of competition between universities, brought on by annual university rankings, French university autonomy and the subsequent necessity to raise funds for research, have imposed new challenges based on performance indicators. How do these work constraints impact the balance between professional and private spheres?

Moreover, male and female job distribution in higher education is still marked by various inequalities. In a classical pattern of vertical segregation at university Paris Diderot female assistant professors account for 47.4% of the total, while female full professors only represent 26.3%. How could in-depth strategic analysis of work-life balance improve this situation?

Study's Target

UFR de Physique (Physics Research and Training Unit): In this UFR, the proportion of female professors barely reaches 12.5%. It is one of the university's fields of research with the lowest proportion of women. Altogether, there are 139 assistants or full professors.

Institut Jacques Monod (JM Institute): It is a life sciences institute for basic research in biology, jointly funded by CNRS and UPD. In biology, women represent 63% of "maîtres de conférence" (assistant professors) and only 33% of "professeurs" (full professors). This field is also an interesting one to study because of the large pool of women at the bottom of the ladder and their decreasing numbers as they try to climb it. It is worth noting too that there are both lecturers and researchers in this institute (in French universities most researchers are also lecturers). There are 32 lecturers/researchers and 51 researchers.

In order to provide as representative a model as possible, we would like to compare the two participating institutes covered by the project (physics and biology departments) with a Human sciences department to appreciate possible differences between the representations they have of the place of women in research. We cannot ignore that these fields imply different forms of work involvement as it is necessary to be present only in scientific laboratories requiring an experimental approach. How are frontiers between work and private life to be defined when in human sciences the major part of the workload is done at home since in some cases the university fails to provide adequate work space? How are researchers to combine the need for frequent professional travels (due to participation in symposiums, thesis juries or expert committees) with family duties? What is the impact of the obligation to transfer to a university which may sometimes be remote from home? Various points of view may emerge depending on whether interviewed people are lecturers or only researchers (as is the case at IJM).

Goals of the study

The aim of this study is first to understand how researchers consider time distribution between their work and their private life. Given that subjective perceptions of balance are central to any analysis of this issue (since imbalance for one person might be the right balance for another) and taking the specificities of the role of researchers into account, we need to define first what the right work-life balance for them might be. Is the definition the same for both men and women? Is it different depending on the field of research? How does the representation change between people who are single or married with or without children?

This overview will allow us to define the right work-life balance for most researchers.

Secondly, we will try to assess the impact of work-life balance on women's careers. Is imbalance perceived as an obstacle for women's careers? How can this subject be approached without the risk of making things worse for women, limiting them to traditional roles? How are men to be involved in the sphere outside work so that the whole community acknowledges the importance of this dimension of life in the well-being of everyone? What can be done to make this a shared concern?

Finally, we will try to find out what could be improved to allow a better balance between these two worlds. According to researchers' wishes, we will apply new measures to

assess work distribution in each field. How can working-time be measured? How could working from home and new technologies improve the situation? Could the university finance part of child care costs?

Method

To carry out this study, we will proceed in two stages. First, we will send an online questionnaire to all members of the two science institutes as well as the human science department selected. Then we will carry out qualitative interviews with around twenty researchers, both men and women, to deepen the analysis of the data collected thanks to the questionnaire. An observation in laboratories to assess the constraints attached to each field of research and the distribution of time between different activities may also be considered.

Online questionnaire:

This questionnaire will be sent to the researchers of the two institutes involved (around 200 people) and on the human science or literature department selected (around 50-100 people). It will be conceived on Limesurvey and sent with the help of heads of departments. It will allow us to collect data about time distribution of researchers' activities according to their personal situation. It will also give a rough idea of their satisfaction at work and in private life. This will offer us the possibility to have a first contact with lecturers/researchers and to suggest a further interview for volunteers. We would like to obtain a response rate of 20% and will send follow-up emails if necessary.

Qualitative interview:

This part of the study will be conducted with around 20 volunteer researchers (among those who answered the online questionnaire) chosen according to their field of research, their sex and their family situation. The aim of these interviews is to carry out an in-depth analysis and find out how women's careers could be improved by altering their work-life balance.

Provisional timetable

Bibliographic research (actualization)	April/ May 2014 (November2014)
Draw executive design	May 2014
Preparation of the online questionnaire	October/November 2014
Testing of the questionnaire	December 2014
Sending out of the questionnaire (3 departments)	January 2015
Collecting data and first analysis	February 2015
Preparation of a semi-directive interview guide	March 2015
Interviews/ Observation	April/ May 2015
Global analysis	June → October 2015
Drafting of the report (D4.2.)	November/ December 2015

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