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Parents at work: Men and women participating in the labour force

Short statistical report No.2

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Parents at work: Men and women participating in the labor force

Short Statistical Report No. 2

Céline Miani, Stijn Hoorens

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Preface

In this statistical paper, we focus on the relationship between parenthood and employment. We look into various related aspects and for each of those aspects we contrast men and women to investigate gender differences. The main aspects analysed include: employment rate differences between parents and non-parents; working hours among parents and non-parents; gender inequalities with regard to work interruption and parental leave; and attitudes towards parental involvement in work and care.

This short statistical report is part of a series of reports on gender equality in the work force and reconciliation of work, family and private life. These reports have been commissioned by the Justice Directorate General of the European Commission. The study was jointly undertaken by RAND Europe and the University of Groningen. These reports should be of relevance to policy makers and academics with an interest in improving gender equality in the work force and improving the compatibility of having a career in combination with a family and private life.

RAND Europe is an independent not-for-profit policy research organisation that aims to improve policy and decision-making in the public interest, through research and analysis. The research group led by Professor Melinda Mills at the University of Groningen focuses on research in the area of cross-national comparative research, gender equality, work-family reconciliation and advanced statistical analysis.

This report has been peer-reviewed in accordance with RAND's quality assurance standards. We are grateful to reviewers Dr Sunil Patil and Dr Marco Hafner for their feedback and comments on earlier drafts of this report. For more information about RAND Europe or this study, please contact Stijn Hoorens (hoorens@rand.org).

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Abbreviations

	Country	ISO Code
<i>EU 27 Member States</i>	Belgium	BE
	Bulgaria	BG
	Czech Republic	CZ
	Denmark	DK
	Germany	DE
	Estonia	EE
	Ireland	IE
	Greece	EL
	Spain	ES
	France	FR
	Italy	IT
	Cyprus	CY
	Latvia	LV
	Lithuania	LT
	Luxembourg	LU
	Hungary	HU
	Malta	MT
	Netherlands	NL
	Austria	AT
	Poland	PL
	Portugal	PT
	Romania	RO
	Slovenia	SI
	Slovakia	SK
	Finland	FI
	Sweden	SE
	United Kingdom	UK
<i>Acceding state</i>	Croatia	HR

1. Introduction

In many countries of the European Union female employment rates have almost doubled in the past five decades. This massive entry of women into the labour market across many European countries has brought new challenges for combining paid employment with family responsibilities (Adema & Whiteford 2007). In fact, the proportion of women between the ages 25-54 in the European Union who are in paid employment has continued to increase over the past 15 years before consolidating just above 70 per cent since 2007 (Eurostat 2013). However, this is still substantially lower than the 85 per cent of men of those age groups who are in paid employment (see for example: Pissarides et al. 2005).

As part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Commission (2010b) has set a target of 75% overall employment rates for the 20-64 age group. In order to achieve this target, female labour force participation and employment will need to continue to rise in the coming years. However, for a number of Member States motherhood and employment inactivity seem to be closely related and the lack of affordable and high quality childcare facilities is seen as an important barrier to female employment (OECD 2012). Consequently, the Barcelona targets were adopted to improve and increase childcare provision for young children in the EU. These targets have been hard to achieve for many Member States, and inequalities between female and male parents with regard to employment remain high (Mills et al. 2013). This raises the potential dilemma for many parents on how to reconcile paid employment with family responsibilities (Kok 2004; Kohler et al. 2006).

In this statistical paper, we focus on the relationship between parenthood and employment. We look into various related aspects and for each of those aspects we contrast men and women to investigate gender differences. The main aspects analysed include: employment rate differences between parents and non-parents; working hours among parents and non-parents; gender inequalities with regard to work interruption and parental leave; and attitudes towards parental involvement in work and care.

The main data source for analysis is the European Union Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2010 in combination with the LFS 2010 ad hoc module on “Reconciliation between work and family life”, both designed and managed by Eurostat.

The data analysis focuses on the population under age 20 to 49 in all 28 EU Member States. We limited the population to this age range in order to focus on individuals who are likely to work and to be parents of relatively young children. The analysis uses sample weights as provided by Eurostat.

The analysis consists of descriptive statistics based on cross-tabulations extracted from the two above mentioned datasets by Eurostat. In Appendix A we provide a list and corresponding details of the

variables used in the analysis. Micro-data from these sources were examined in conjunction with the Comparative Family Policy Database¹ and the relevant published literature.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents comparative cross-country statistics about the employment gender gap, and work hours (full- versus part-time) for parents and non-parents. Section 3 focuses on the flexibility of working hours and changes made to the number of hours worked, in relation to parenthood, and motherhood in particular. Section 4 considers parental leave and its potential impact on labour force participation. Section 5 summarises the central conclusions and offers policy recommendations. This paper is merely descriptive and mainly provides the background for more detailed analysis that will be available in other papers on single parents and employment (Ruggeri & Bird 2014), household earning structures (Tsang et al. 2014), flexible working hours (Mills & Präg 2014), and childcare (Mills et al. 2014).

When interpreting and using the data presented in this paper, it is important to take into account some caveats and limitations:

- Some variables are used as proxies. For example, due the limitations in the use of variables for parental status (parents/non-parents) in the LFS, we have used a variable for household composition as a proxy (see Appendix A). The parent status has been derived from the HHCHILDR variable, which distinguishes between persons whose child(ren) is in the same household, and persons whose child(ren) is not in the same household. This might constitute a strong limitation to the interpretation of the data, especially in the definition of fatherhood, as a father who does not live in the same household as (mother and) child would be defined as non-parent. Furthermore, we derived the professional status of respondents indirectly by assuming that those not in employment would answer this question as “not applicable” (see Appendix A).
- Variations in sampling and data collection across countries imply that some variables are missing for some Member States.
- Variations in sampling and data collection across countries imply that some results are based on a small number of observations.
- The analysis in itself has some limitations: we used descriptive statistics only. The analysis does not account for possible confounders and does not use control variables. We also did not test for statistical significance of the results. As stated above, the goal of this paper was to provide a background picture that would highlight some of the main labour force characteristics for men and women in the EU. More complex and detailed analyses are presented in the other short statistical papers of this series.

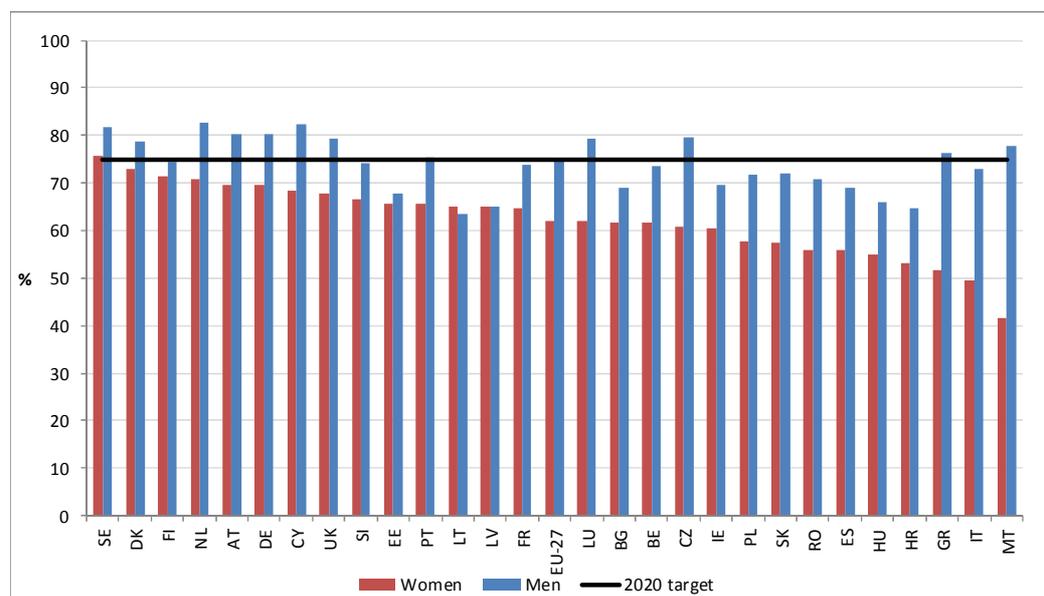
¹ Available at: <http://www.demogr.mpg.de/cgi-bin/databases/FamPolDB/index.plx>. Last accessed May 2013.

2. Gender gap with regard to employment: parents and non-parents

2.1. Labour force participation: the gender gap between parents and non-parents

Female employment rates have increased substantially over the past 10 years in Europe (European Commission, 2010a) but alongside countries like Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, only one Member State (Sweden) has already reached the 2020 employment rate target of 75%² for both women and men between 20 and 64 year old (Figure 1).³

Figure 1 Employment rates,⁴ by gender, individuals aged 20 to 64



Source: Eurostat (2010)

² “The employment rate of the population aged 20-64 should increase from the current 69% to at least 75%, including through the greater involvement of women, older workers and the better integration of migrants in the work force.”, in European Commission (2010).

³ Please note that Figure 1 is the only figure presenting data for the 20 to 64 population and is used as a background for the main analysis. This figure has been created directly from the Eurostat online data tool, which is based on EU-LFS micro data (Eurostat 2013)

⁴ Please note that we do not use full-time equivalent (fte) rates in this report.

Considerable variations in employment rates exist across European countries, and the situation is even more diverse when we look at female employment in particular, and the difference between the employment rates of parents and non-parents. For the EU-27 as a whole, the difference between the employment rate for women with and without children under twelve is greater than 10 percentage points. However, the relation between parenthood and employment is not clear cut. Empirical studies and theory from the literature (for example: Apps & Rees 2004; Cigno 1991; Del Boca & Sauer 2009; Francesconi 2002; Hotz and Miller 1988) acknowledge “the intrinsic dynamic character of fertility and labour supply choices, placing the household's welfare maximization problem in a lifecycle framework” (Del Boca et al. 2009). These studies conclude that labour force participation and employment on the one hand and fertility decision-making on the other are linked not only at a point in time but also over time. Moreover, the direction of causality may also reverse over time.

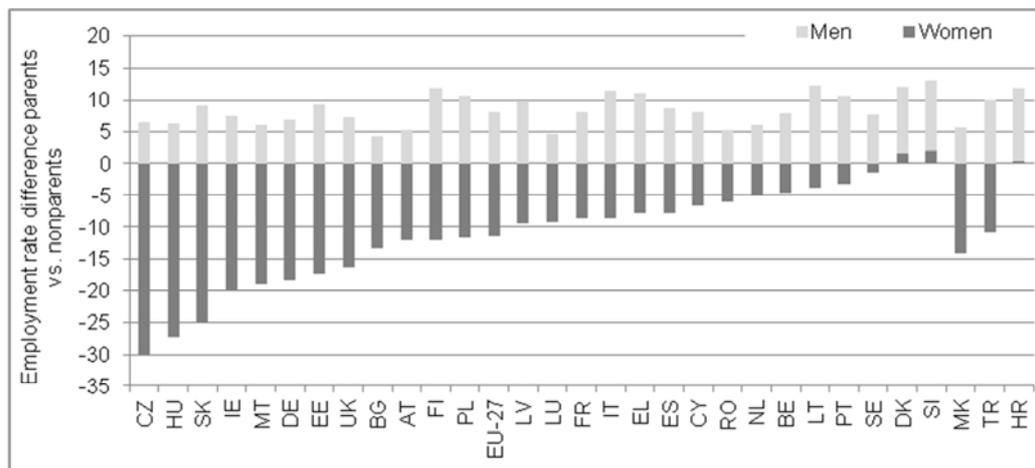
Figure 2 illustrates the potential link between parenthood and employment for persons aged 25-49 years *with at least one child below the age of 12* minus the employment rate of *persons without any children under the age of 12*. The figure demonstrates a substantial gender divide of parenthood, with men with children under the age of 12 having higher rates of employment compared to those without any children. It also illustrates that mothers have lower employment rates in the vast majority of EU Member States, with sizeable differences for some. In the Czech Republic and Hungary, for instance, the employment rate for women with children below the age of twelve is more than 29.9 and 27.4 percentage points lower than their counterparts without children, respectively.

Geyer and Steiner (2007) confirm that in Germany and the UK childbirth has a negative short-term effect on employment. They show that, in the long-term, mothers' employment rates in both countries tend to adjust towards the levels attained before childbirth, although in Germany mothers' employment rates remain substantially below its previous level until the child has reached school age. However, the opposite can be observed for countries such as Hungary, Slovenia and Portugal. There may be a variety of explanations for these different phenomena. Some differences may be explained by the varying degrees of welfare state support for working mothers and the role of policies in reducing the incompatibility between motherhood and careers (Gornick et al. 1998; Engelhardt & Prskawetz 2004). Examples may include childcare availability and quality, the availability and quality of part-time work; the prevalence of single-mothers households (in which mothers are more likely to work; Abrams & Goldscheider 2002) and the availability of policies or incentives to stimulate gender equality in the workforce, to encourage dual-earner households, and to keep mothers in employment (Tavora 2012).⁵

For men, the trend is much clearer: parenthood is positively associated with employment. Figure 2 shows that in all countries fathers are more likely to be employed than non-fathers. Employment rates for fathers are also systematically above the 75% 2020 target.

⁵ Issues related to the composition of households will be further explored in SSR3 and SSR5.

Figure 2: Difference between employment rate with and without children under 12, men and women 25–49 years old, 2010



Source: Eurostat EU-LFS data 2010, own calculations.

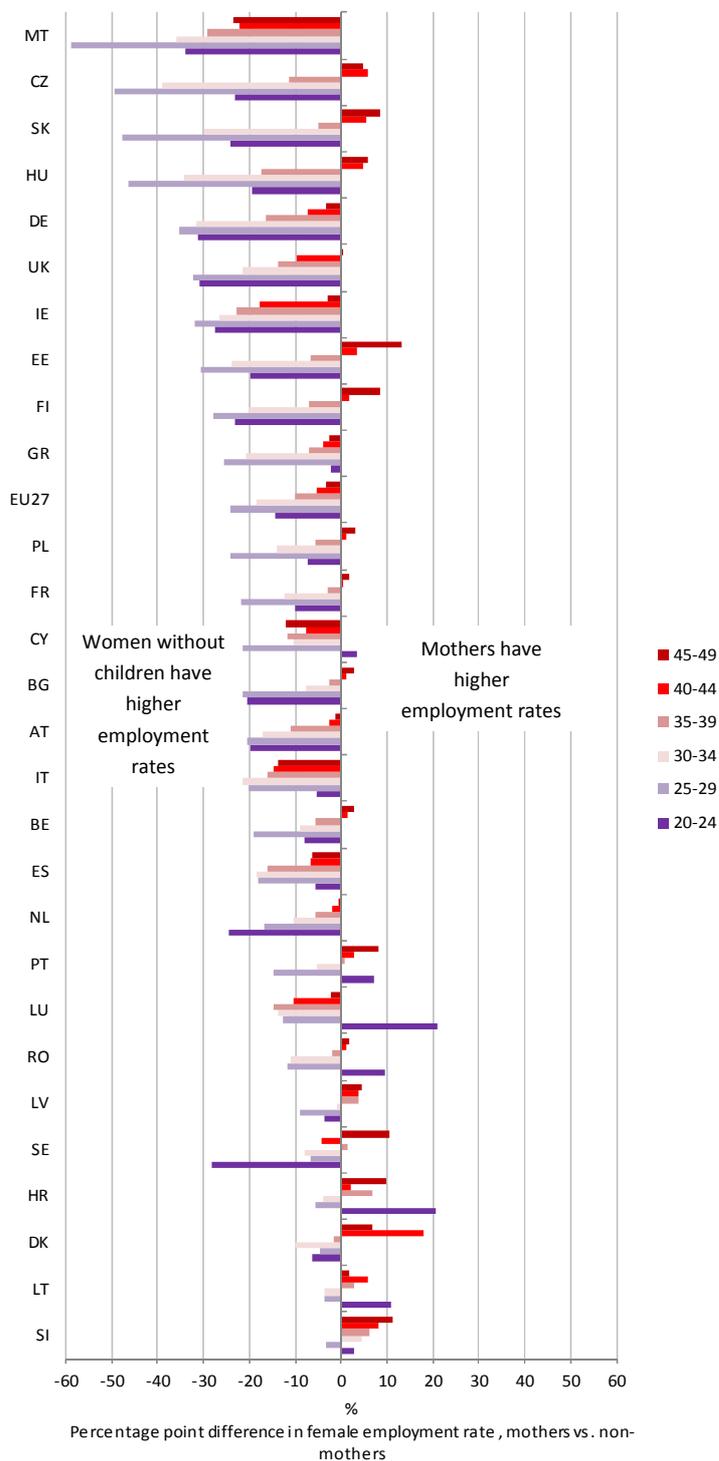
There is more than a 10 percentage point difference in employment rates between fathers and male non-parents in Finland, Poland, Italy, Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia and Croatia. One possible explanation could be that some men in these countries demonstrate substantial efforts to gain employment to support the household when approaching fatherhood status (Astone et al. 2010). But the causal relation may also be in the opposite direction: a secure employment situation may be an important condition for men before embarking on parenthood.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 show the difference in employment rates for men and women with and without children in different age groups. For the EU as a whole, mothers in all age groups have lower employment rates than their counterpart without children. Moreover, among younger women, i.e. those under 35 years of age, it appears that there is a negative relationship between motherhood and employment across almost all countries. Particularly, younger mothers are less likely to be employed than non-mothers of the same age in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Malta, Slovakia and the UK. The negative association seems to be smaller for women over 35 in general, and becomes even positive in many countries for women over 40 years old. Indeed, among the women of 40 years and older, we can distinguish between two clusters of countries. On the one hand, in Eastern European and Baltic countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia), as well as in Portugal, Denmark and Croatia, older mothers (40-49) seem to work more likely than older women without children. This might suggest that at least in some of those countries the lower employment rate of younger mothers, compared to that of women of the same age without children, might be influenced by the presence of younger children and the need to care for them.⁶

⁶ This is consistent with empirical research findings from the US and Canada, where after first childbirth, female labour supply tends to rise with the birth order. Nakamura and Nakamura (1994) suggest that this positive effect may be explained by child maturation and family completion: women may want to postpone return to the labour market until they feel their families have been completed and their youngest children are grown up.

On the other hand, the situation appears to be different in a number of Southern European countries (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain) as well as in Germany, Ireland and Luxembourg, where older mothers seem to work less than their counterparts without children. In those countries, motherhood at all ages (including older age) tends to be associated with lower employment rates than those of women without children. In addition to the low participation of women in the labour market, characteristics such as the low incidence of cohabitation, the low proportion of births outside the wedlock, the low divorce rate, more extended families and fewer lone parent families may allow these countries to be labelled as 'more traditional' (Fernández-Cordon & Sgritta 2000). In some countries this could reflect the persistence of social, religious or institutional rigidities (see Del Boca, 2002 on Italy) which favour the model of the stay-at-home mother.

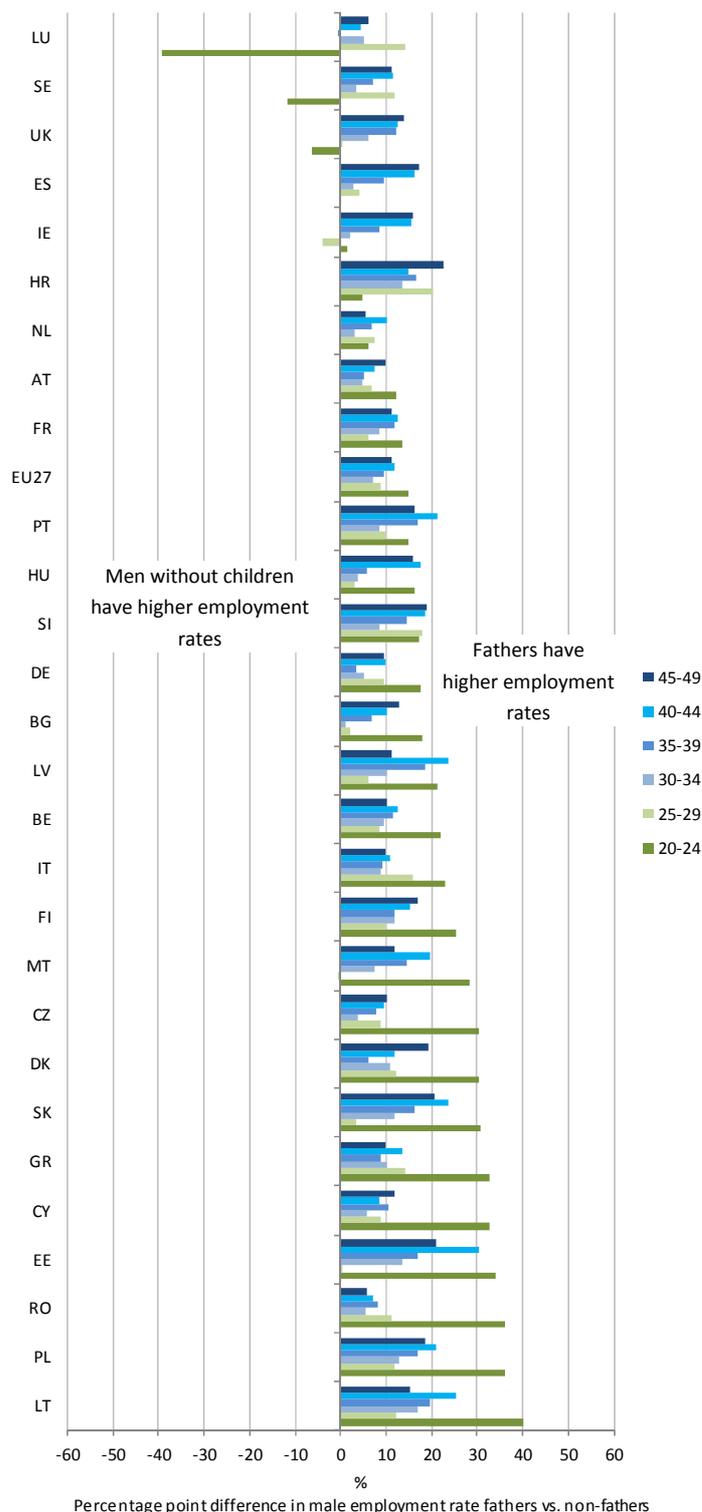
Figure 3: Difference in women’s employment rates with and without children, across age groups



Source: LFS main dataset (2010)

Note: Considering the age breakdown, some categories include a very small number of observations only. The following categories represent less than 1000 individuals: Mothers, 20-24, employed and unemployed in Luxembourg and Malta. Non-mothers, non-employed, 30-34 for Estonia, Luxembourg and Malta. Non-mothers, non-employed, 35-39 for Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta. Non-mothers, non-employed, 40-44, for Luxembourg and Malta. Non-mothers, non-employed, 45-49 for Malta. Non-mothers, employed, 45-49 for Malta.

Figure 4: Difference in men’s employment rates with and without children, across age groups



Source: LFS main dataset (2010)

Note: Considering the age breakdown, some categories include a very small number of observations only. The following categories represent less than 1000 individuals: Fathers, non-employed, 20-24 for Cyprus, Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia. Fathers, non-employed, 25-29, for Cyprus, Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia. Fathers, non-employed, 30-34, for Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta. Fathers, non-employed, 35-39, 40-44 and 45-49 for Luxembourg and Malta. Fathers, employed, 20-24, for Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia. Fathers, employed, 25-29, for Malta. Non-fathers, non-employed, 30-34, for Luxembourg. Non-fathers, non-employed, 35-39, for Luxembourg, Malta. Non-fathers, non-employed, 40-44, for Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta. Non-fathers, non-employed, 45-49, for Luxembourg, Malta.

Fatherhood remains to be positively associated with employment across all age categories. This might either imply that men tend to consider employment to be a prerequisite for parenthood or that it is relatively easy for working men to combine parenthood with employment. The main exceptions relate to the 20-24 age group in Luxembourg, Sweden and the UK: younger fathers in those three countries seem to be less likely to work than their counterparts without children. The sample size for Luxembourg is too small to draw any definitive conclusions, but research from the UK suggests that young fathers tend to be from low socio-economic backgrounds, experience lower educational attainment and fewer employment opportunities than their childless peers (Bunting & McAuley 2004).

Differences between age groups may be due to variations in education and career patterns and work opportunities for men and women in Europe and the possibility for them to combine parenthood and employment at different times in their life. These may depend on, among other factors, the availability and quality of affordable childcare and (pre-)schooling, flexibility of working hours and salary levels. The availability and use of part-time work may also explain some of this variability.

2.2. Parents working part-time: strong variations across Europe

Employment rates provide an indication of the differences between parents and non-parents to the extent to which they engage in paid employment. However, employment rates alone are not sufficient to fully understand the diversity of the population in terms of employment. When looking at parenthood and employment, it is important also to distinguish between full-time and part-time work.

Figure 5 and Figure 6 present the proportion of men and women employed full-time and part-time, comparing for each the differences between parents and non-parents.

Figure 3: Proportion of female parents and non-parents employed part-time and full-time, individuals aged 20 to 49



Source: LFS main dataset (2010)

Figure 4: Proportion of male parents and non-parents employed part-time and full-time, individuals aged 20 to 49



Source: LFS main dataset (2010)

In all countries, male part-time workers represent only a small share of employed men. Denmark and the Netherlands are the countries with the highest proportion of male part-time workers (with 16.7% and 24.6% of part-time workers, respectively). Moreover, for men we do not observe large differences in part-time working rates between parents and non-parents, although fathers are more likely to work full-time than men without children.

Among female non-parents, the proportion of part-time workers is much higher than for their male counterpart, and the proportion of part-time workers tends to be even bigger among female parents. In the Netherlands, almost all employed mothers work part-time, and a majority of mothers work part-time in Austria, Germany and the UK. It is noteworthy that in the Netherlands, part-time jobs are widely available, partly because employers are legally obliged to offer part-time contracts on the employee's request (Wielers & Raven 2013). There also seems to be a strong preference for working part-time among women, and particularly among mothers who are in partnerships (Booth & Van Ours 2010). In some countries, such as Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal and Romania, rates of part-time work are low and the difference between mothers and non-mothers is small.

These findings do not shed light on the question whether young mothers reduce their working hours due to child birth and subsequently 'get stuck' in part-time employment. Booth and Van Ours (2010) try to untangle the 'part-time puzzle' and show – among other things – that women with young children (between 0 and 4 years of age) would prefer to reduce their working hours, whilst mothers children aged between 4 and 12 are generally more satisfied with the number of hours they work. But Buddelmeyer et al. (2005) show that it is generally difficult to return to full-time employment, once individuals have experienced a period of part-time work.

There are several potential explanations for the differences in the extent of part-time work between Member States. They may be related to cultural values and behaviours, and to family and work policies. For instance, in Denmark, there is a long tradition of facilitating workers' engagement in both paid employment and family life (Gash 2008), while in Italy, such institutional responses to the work-family balance challenge hardly exist (Del Boca 2002). Also, high part-time employment rates can result from strong economic pressure and the lack of affordable childcare: in the UK, part-time work is often perceived as a constraint, and tends to be available for lower skilled jobs, especially for women with low and middle income (Alakeson 2012). Economic pressure can also have the opposite effect: Tomev (2009) argues that in Bulgaria, for instance, part-time work is considered not profitable enough due to a lower hourly wage than in other EU countries. In sum, children seem to play an important role in decisions to work part-time. However, various studies show that the impact of motherhood on female labour participation is mitigated by a higher level of education, the level of earnings and better the working conditions for women (e.g. OECD 2002).

While the transition from full-time to part-time work is valued by some mothers who want to spend less time at work and more time caring for their family (Del Boca et al. 2009), it also comes with some perverse economic and professional effects in the short and medium term. As shown in Blackwell (2001), when returning to work in a part-time job, most mothers have to accept positions that require less skill than their pre-motherhood full-time job. This may happen because high-skilled jobs are less available on a part-time basis, which would increase professional segregation between men and women. This is

confirmed by Gregory and Connolly (2008) who also emphasise the negative effect of the “pay penalty” that comes with part-time work.

The gender wage gap also raises women’s poverty risk, both at the age of raising children and at the age of retirement (Letablier 2007). The average share of those people living in households at risk of poverty (income below the threshold set at 60% of the median income) was significantly higher for women than for men in the EU 25 (25% vs. 16%) (European Commission 2008). In 2005, the risk of poverty for women was 2 percentage points higher than for men, both before and after transfers (Pascall 2008). The risk is exacerbated once children arrive, particularly for lone mothers (see: Ruggeri & Bird 2014) and mothers of three or more children.

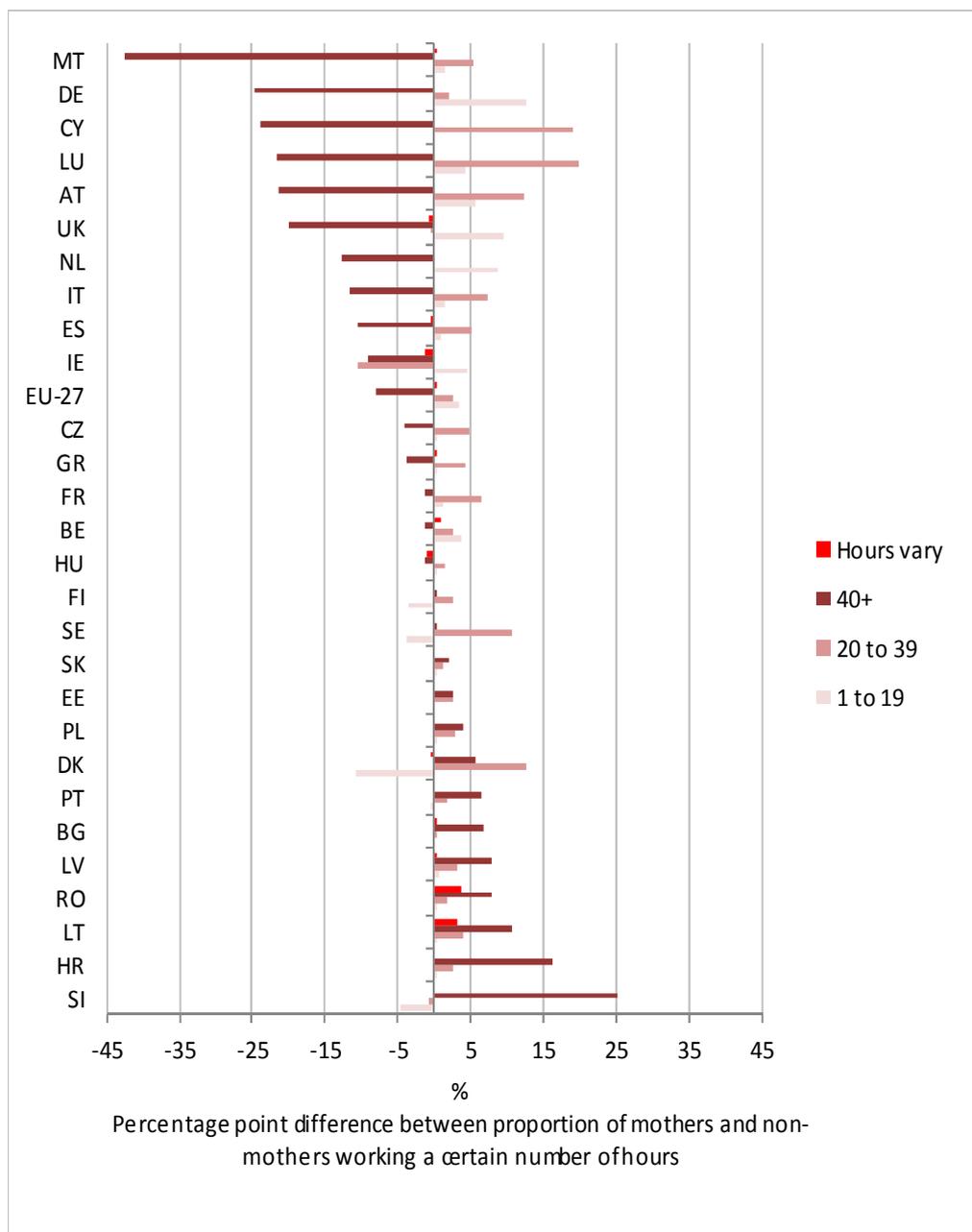
In addition to this child penalty on wages, there may be a longer term effect of motherhood. While generally earning less over their lifetime than men due to the pay gap, part-time work and career interruptions, women, including mothers, generally live longer. They are likely to receive lower pension benefits as a consequence of the lower contributions. The impact of children on mothers’ pensions has also been stressed in several studies, especially in France (Bonnet et al. 2007a; 2007b; 2006, cited in: Letablier et al. 2009, 100).

2.3. Number of hours worked: mothers tend to work less

Distinguishing between part-time and full-time work does not provide the full picture however: the degree of part-time work may vary in terms of the number of hours worked. And the same holds true for full-time work: a job requiring 36 or 80 hours per week can both be considered full-time. Therefore, it is useful to consider the number of hours worked per week across countries, age groups and gender in explaining variations in employment status between Member States. For instance in the Netherlands, many men working part-time will still work at least four days a week, while women (and mothers in particular) who work part-time are more likely to work less than 30 hours a week (Cousins & Tang 2004).

Figure 7 and Figure 8 illustrate the number of hours worked by mothers, fathers and female and male non-parents across Member States.

Figure 5: Percentage point difference in number of hours worked between female parents and non-parents, individuals aged 20 to 49

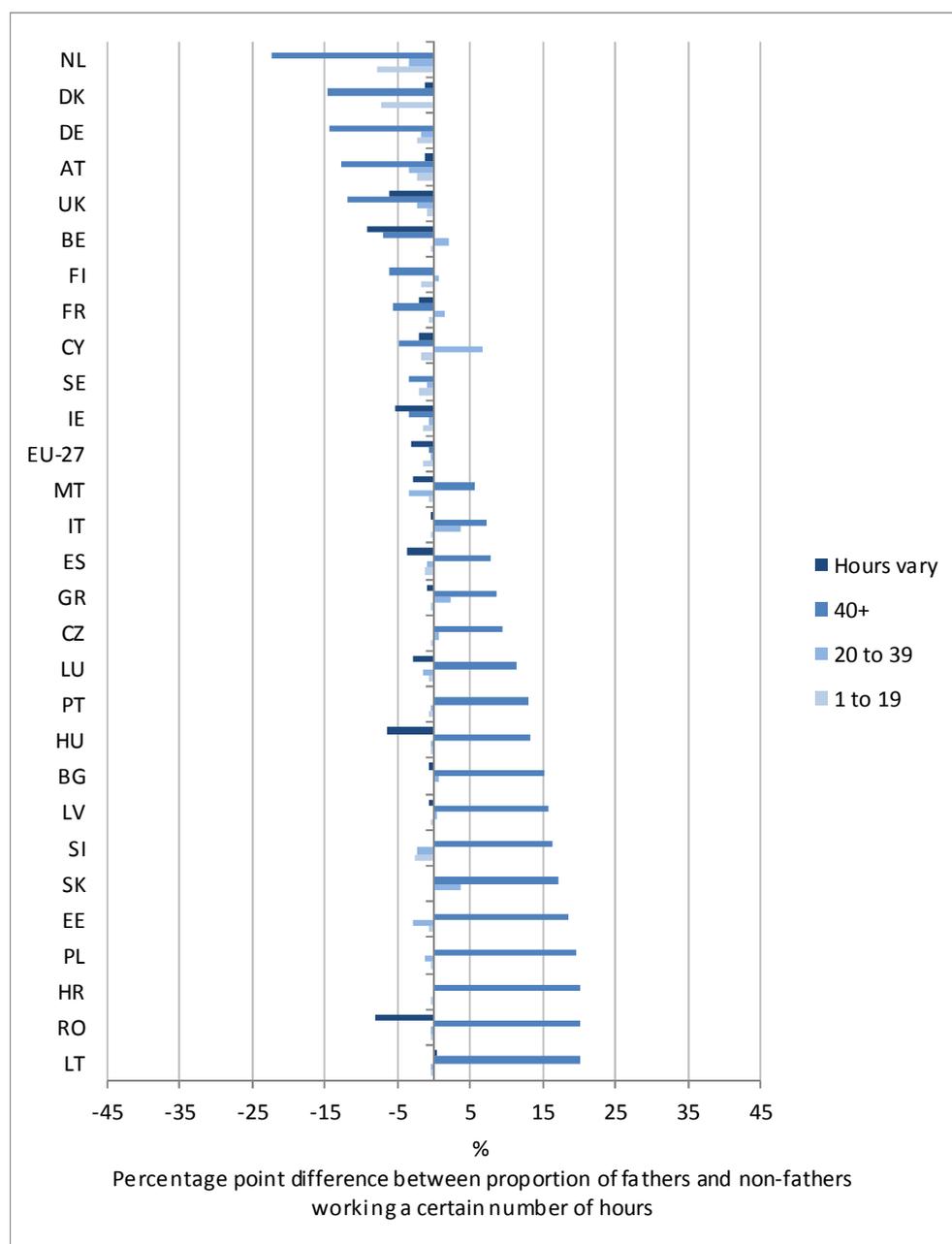


Source: IFS main dataset (2010)

For women, the situation varies substantially across countries. In about half of the Member States, motherhood is clearly associated with a decrease in the likelihood of working 40 or more hours a week, whereas it is positively associated with working between 20 and 39 hours a week, or less than 19 hours a week. The shift from full-time work (40h+) to part-time work (less than 19h) is particularly strong in Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands and the UK. Using panel data from the the European Community Household Panel (ECHP), Uunk et al. (2005) confirm these findings for the UK, the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. At the other end of the spectrum, Slovenia, Croatia, Lithuania,

Romania, Latvia, Portugal, and Denmark stand out as countries where mothers are more likely to work more than 40 hours a week than non-mothers (with a between 25 and 5 percentage points increase). In France, mothers seem to reduce their worked hours to a lesser extent, which could be explained by the relatively good availability of childcare before mandatory school age.

Figure 6: Percentage point difference in proportion of hours worked between male parents and non-parents, aged 20 to 49



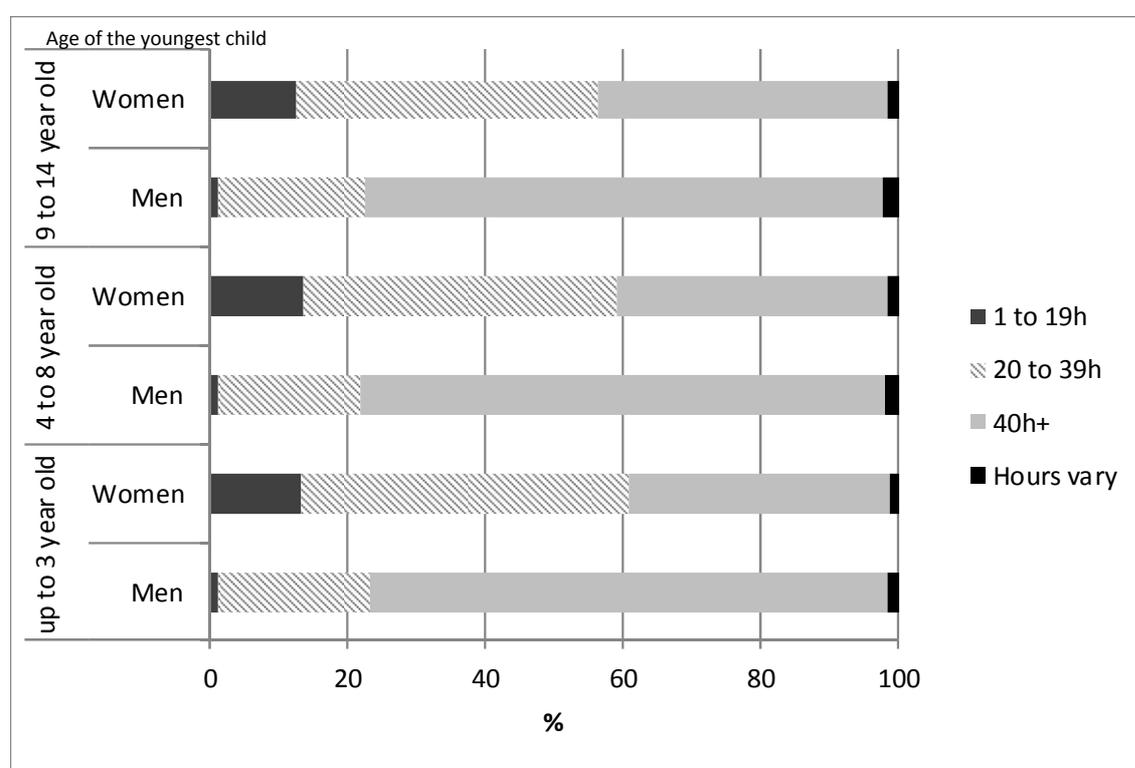
Source: IFS main dataset (2010)

For men, the situation across European countries presents two main patterns, although the association between fatherhood and hours worked is generally weaker than for women. In Northern European

countries, including the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Austria, and the UK, there is a more than 10 percentage points difference in the 40+ hours category: this may indicate that fathers choose to work fewer hours when they become parents. In Baltic and Eastern European countries, there is greater tendency among fathers to work more than 40 hours per week than among men without children. A combination of cultural parameters and economic context could be contributing to shaping those patterns.

Since preschool is not until three or four years of age in most countries,⁷ the age of the child may also have an influence on the number of hours worked. Therefore, we examined the numbers of hours worked in relation with the age of the child as illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 7: Hours worked for parents, break down by age of the youngest child, aged 20 to 49

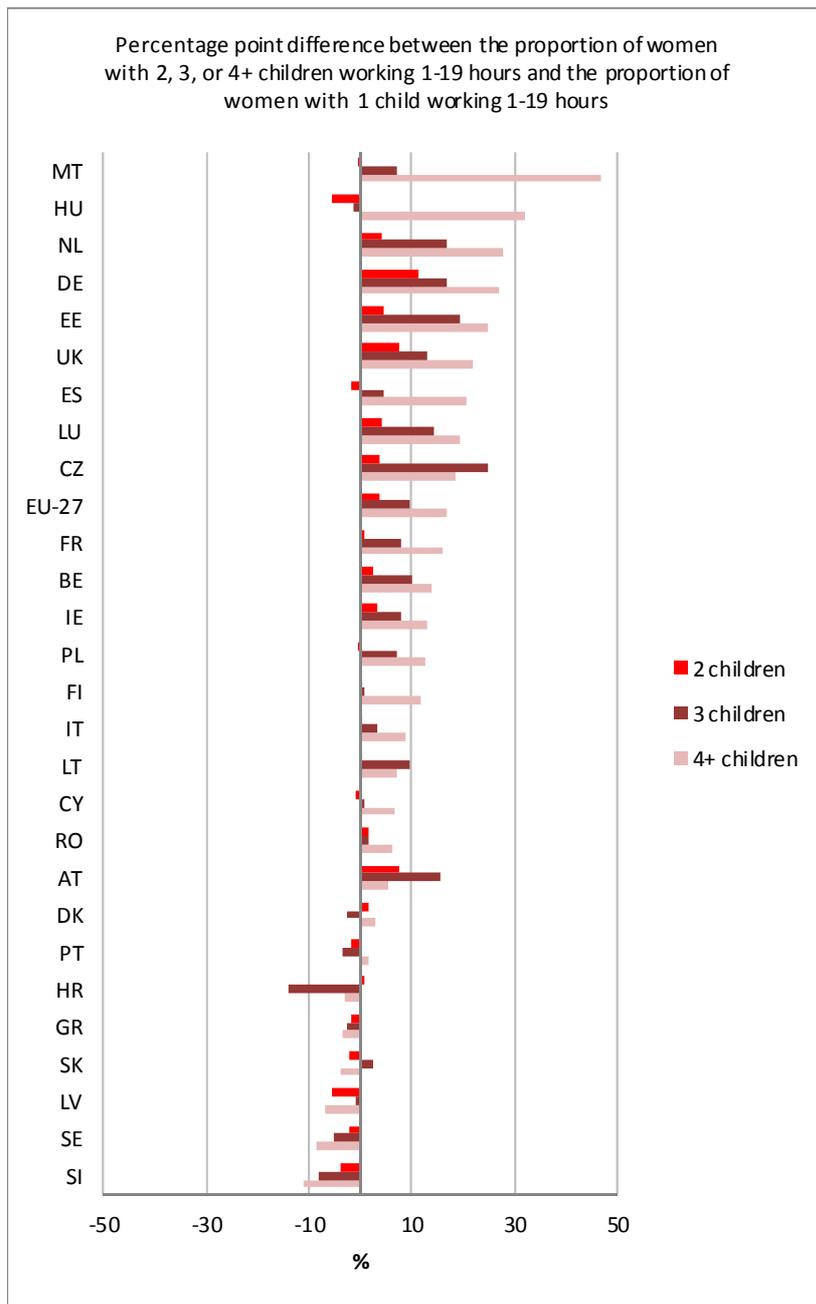


Source: LFS main dataset (2010)

The pattern of working hours seems to be quite stable across child-age bands, although we do see that the proportion of mothers working more than 40 hours a week tends to increase slightly with the age of the child – which is consistent with the availability of childcare before and after 3 years of age in Europe. This suggests that the number of hours worked is not dependent on the age of the youngest child. However, it might be interesting to see if the number of hours worked is related to the number of children in the household, as the literature suggest different work behaviours depending on the parameters (see for example, Misra et al. 2011). Figure 10 illustrates this matter.

⁷ See : http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Education_statistics#Pre-primary_education

Figure 8: Impact of having more than 1 child on hours worked, individuals aged 20 to 49



Source: LFS main dataset (2010)

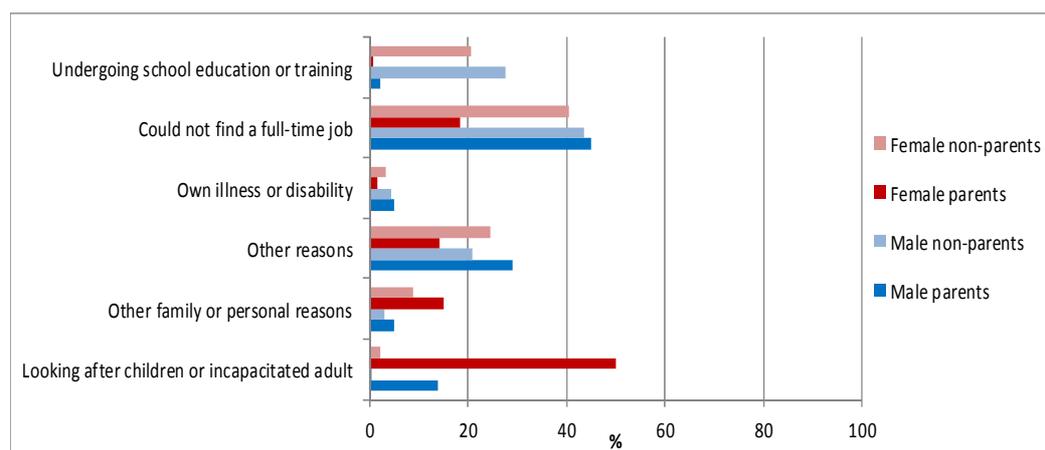
Figure 10 shows that in the majority of countries, having more children is associated with working fewer hours, as the proportion of women working 1-19 hours among women in employment is increasing with the number of children. This is clearly the case in the EU27, and in the following countries: the Netherlands, Germany, Estonia, the UK, Luxembourg, France, Belgium and Ireland. In other countries, the situation is less clear. For instance in Greece, Slovakia, Latvia, Sweden and Slovenia, mothers of several children seem to work more hours than mothers of one child. The relationship between number of children and hours worked, and its variation across countries, could potentially be explained by the availability of affordable formal or informal child care, the opportunity cost of (not) working for every additional child and the availability of part-time jobs.

3. Part-time working and flexible working: the role of parenthood

3.1. Reasons for working part-time

The previous sections discussed the relation association between motherhood and working part-time. Figure 11 provides further indication that there is indeed a positive association between these variables by presenting the reasons for working part-time reported by male and female workers.

Figure 91: Reason for working part-time for men and women, parent vs. non parents, individuals aged 20 to 49, all countries aggregated



Source: LFS main dataset (2010)

When asked about the reason that motivated part-time working, 45% of mothers declared it was to take care of children or incapacitated adults. Because only 2% of female non-parents mentioned this reason, it seems fair to say that this category is probably driven by “looking after children” rather than “looking after incapacitated adults”. It is also noteworthy that over 40% of female non-parents mention issues of finding a full-time job, while less than 20% of mothers refer to such difficulties. This large difference raises the question of perceived versus actual work opportunities for mothers, as one would expect that finding a full-time job should be equally difficult for mothers, if not more difficult. Because of the high percentage of mothers who are looking after children or incapacitated adults, a proportion of mothers may not be looking for a full time job. The proportion of part-time working fathers and men without children who report that they cannot find a full-time job is also close to 40%.

For men, the reasons for working part-time are dominated by the inability to find a full-time job, among other reasons. Proportions reporting these reasons are similar for both fathers and men without children.

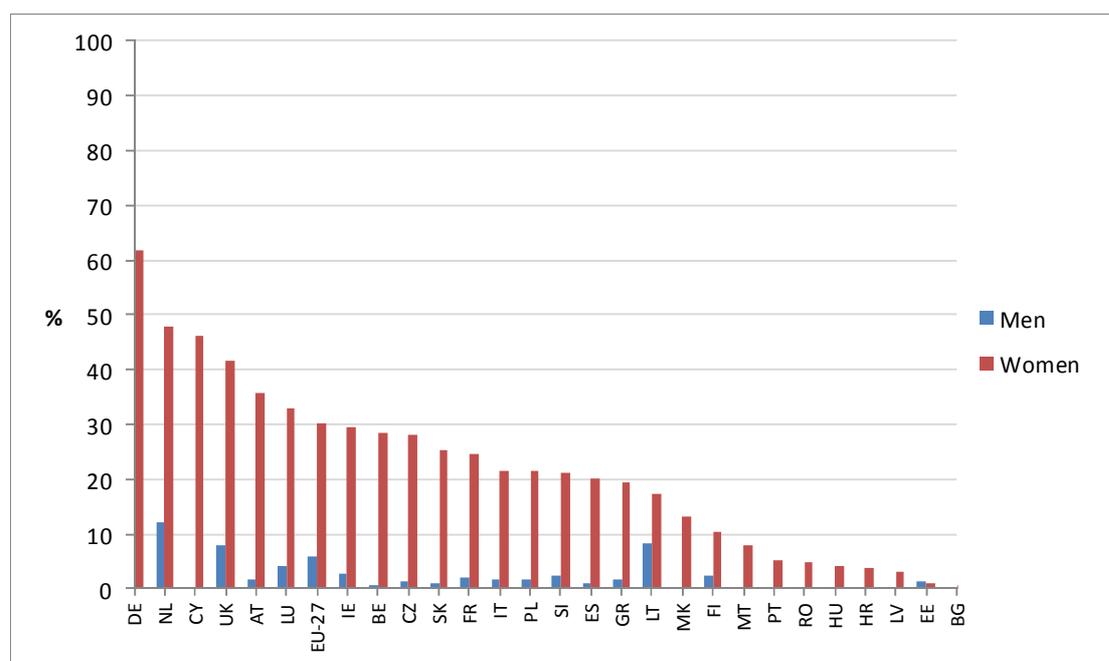
Only 14% of part-time working fathers report that they are doing so to look after children or incapacitated adults. Other reasons, particularly the inability to find a full-time job, seem to be more important for men working part-time.

These findings could benefit from complementary analysis looking at the household composition (for example, couples versus single parents). Such issues are explored in two other papers of this series: “Single parents at work” (Ruggeri & Bird 2014) and “Emerging trends in earning structures of couples in Europe” (Tsang et al. 2014).

3.2. Parents reducing worked hours

As parenthood (and motherhood in particular) has an impact on the probability of working part-time, it seems likely that there will also be a gender gap with regard to the proportion of mothers and fathers who have reduced the time spent at work for family reasons. Figure 12 shows there is indeed a striking difference between the proportion of fathers and mothers who declared having reduced their working time to take care of a young child. Mothers are much more likely to have reduced their working hours compared to fathers. This is particularly the case in Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and Austria, all countries where part-time employment rates among women are high. Geyer and Steiner (2007) confirm these findings for Denmark and the UK. They observe strong negative short-term effects of childbirth on mothers’ employment and working hours. In the UK and especially in Germany mothers reduce their working hours substantially in the year of childbirth and also work significantly shorter hours in the long term.

Figure 10: Percentage of men and women who have reduced their working hours to take care of the youngest child in the household (up to 8 years old), individuals aged 20 to 49



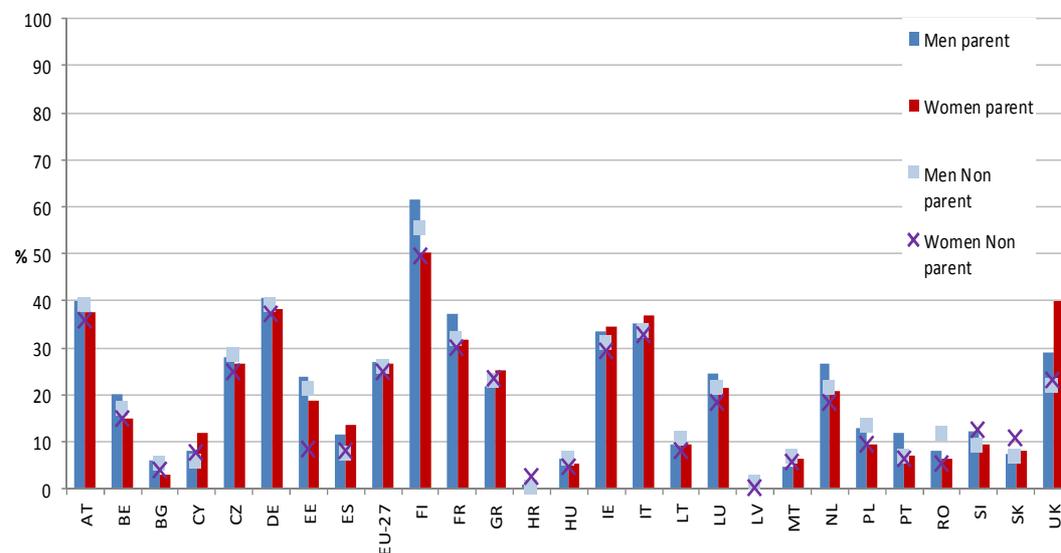
Source: IFS 2010 Ad hoc module

The consequences of reducing one's working hours may vary by country and by firm-specific work environment characteristics. When looking at the working-time adjustments in Europe and their reversibility, Fagan and Walthery (2011) distinguish between firms with full reversibility (i.e. all employees being able to request a change in working hours from part-time to full-time and vice-versa) and firms with more limited forms of reversibility (e.g. change from part-time to full-time only, or for skilled employees only). Full reversibility organisations tend to be large public sector or private service organisations with high proportions of women and low-skilled employees, and the presence of a trade union. The authors also notice some differences at the country level: employers in the Netherlands and Germany are more likely to offer full reversibility to skilled employees, and less likely to offer the same advantages to the whole workforce than employers in Sweden and Belgium.

3.3. Flexible working time as an alternative?

Having the opportunity to arrange one's working time flexibly could be considered as an alternative to reducing working time as it would allow the workers to organise working hours around family responsibilities. Indeed, if the employee has the possibility to arrive later or leave work early, or to work from home when needed, working might be more compatible with parenthood. Figure 13 illustrates the self-reported flexibility of the work schedule for men and women, distinguishing between parents and non-parents.

Figure 11: Flexible working time, by parenthood status and gender, individuals aged 20 to 49



Source: IFS 2010 Ad hoc module

It appears that parents tend to have slightly more flexibility in their working hours than non-parents in most countries. Moreover, men report having more flexible working time in almost all the countries compared to women (including mothers). These inequalities could be due to differences in the need to arrange hours more flexibly: women may have a greater demand for flexible hours than men and therefore they may perceive that they may be less able to arrange their working day around this need. Such a

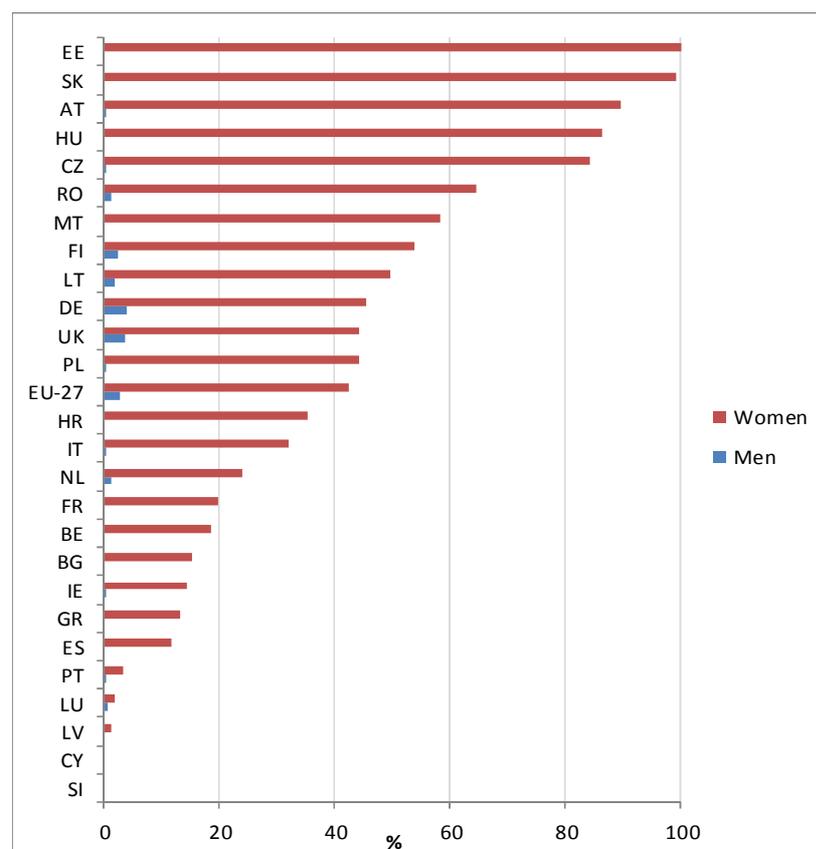
disparity in perception may also explain why mothers reduce their working time to a greater extent than fathers. Furthermore, a study conducted in the UK, where differences in flexibility of work arrangements between parents and non-parents is rather high, highlights the gender inequalities underlying flexible working time arrangements. Smithson et al. (2004) suggest that for men, flexible working time arrangements are more likely to occur at a later stage of their career, while for women, they reflect the need to combine work and caring commitments at younger ages. The UK however stands out as one of the only countries where mothers benefit substantially from more flexibility than fathers and than non-parents. Finally, inequality between men and women with regard to flexibility may be due to gender segregation in the labour market as some sectors or job types allow more flexibility than others. These issues are further explored by Mills and Präg (2014) in their paper on “Family-related working schedule flexibility across Europe.”

4. Parents temporarily out of work: work interruption and leave

4.1. Work interruption

In most circumstances, parenthood may not only lead to a reduction of work time, but also to periods of work interruption of more than one month.⁸ Perhaps unsurprisingly, compared to men, women are much more likely to experience work interruption to take care of the youngest child in the household, as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Proportion of parents who stopped working in order to take care of the youngest child in the household for at least one month (excluding maternity and paternity leave), men and women aged 20 to 49



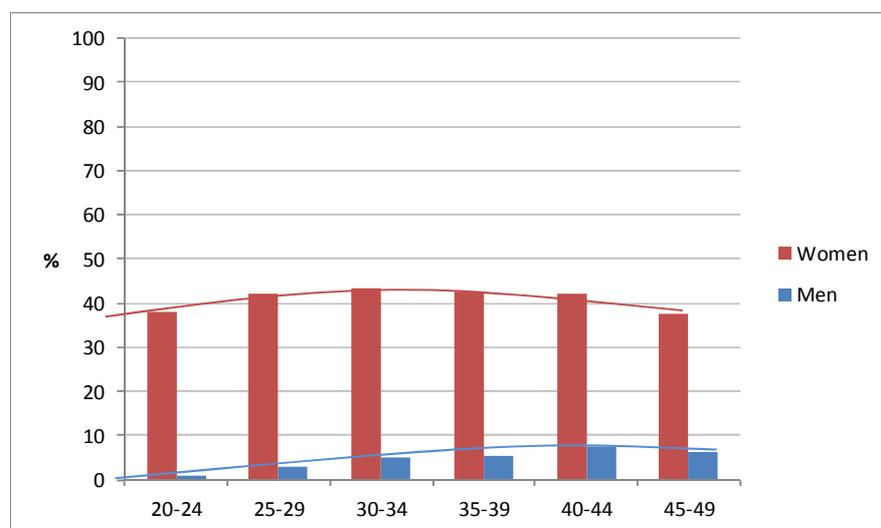
Source: LFS 2010 Ad hoc module

⁸ Please note that work interruption includes parental leave but excludes maternity and paternity leaves.

On average, more than 40% of mothers in the EU-27 report that in addition to maternity leave they stopped working to take care of their youngest child for at least one month. In contrast, only 2% of fathers declare they did so. Considering that longer work interruption seems to have a negative impact on the probability of being employed (Dustmann & Schönberg 2011), this career interruption is likely to increase gender inequality and therefore widen the gender wage gap (Davies & Pierre, 2005). However, additional evidence suggests that the length of parental leave alone does not necessarily have a negative impact on employment perspectives but should be considered in the wider institutional and cultural framework of labour opportunities and constraints (Keck & Saraceno 2013). In fact, Pronzato (2009) found that longer periods of job-protection increase the probability of women returning to work after childbirth.

Figure 15 displays the proportion of male and female parents of different age groups who stopped working to take care of the youngest child in EU-27. The figures suggest that women are slightly more likely to stop working between 25 and 44 than women younger than 25 or older than 45, while for men the likelihood to stop working increases with age.

Figure 12: Proportion of parents in the EU-27 who stopped working to take care of the youngest child in the household for at least one month excluding maternity leave, men and women aged 20 to 49, age breakdown



Source: IFS 2010 Ad hoc module
 Note: EU-27 aggregated data.

4.2. Parental leave

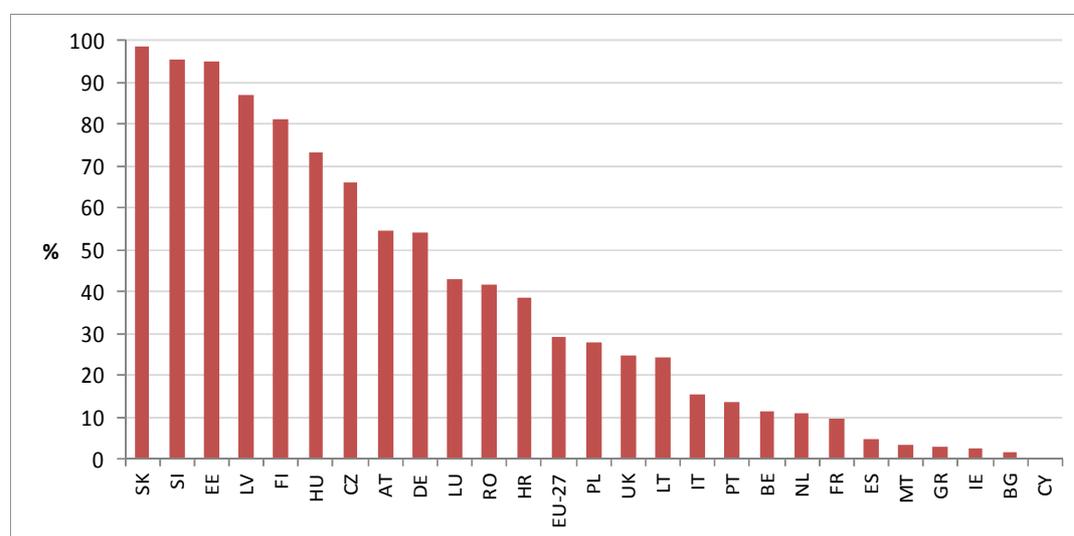
Parental leave⁹ is the period following maternity leave, which also allows fathers to take periods of leave (Torremocha 2002). Parental leave provisions vary from country to country regarding the duration and

⁹ Parental leave in this document is understood as full-time leave used to take care of a child, excluding paternity and maternity leave. Parental leave arrangements vary across countries in terms of length and benefits. In 1996, the EC issued a Directive (EC/34/EC) requiring Member States to offer at least three months (following the birth of a child) of parental leave to all employees.

amount of benefits associated, and have theoretically an ambiguous effect on fertility: they could reduce the indirect costs of having and rearing children (which would increase fertility), but also they could undermine mothers' career prospects and financial security (Hoorens et al. 2011). The data in Figure 16 on uptake of parental leave in the EU presented in the following figures seem to confirm that there are differences between men and women with regard to work interruption and parenthood. Recent amendments to the Framework Agreement on parental leave¹⁰ at the EU level may contribute to reducing those inequalities in the future.

Figure 16 shows the proportion of eligible women who have at some point taken full-time parental leave to take care of the youngest child in the household. As there are missing values in a number of countries, we have excluded the figures for men from this graph. The full table is available in Appendix B.¹¹

Figure 136: Proportion of eligible women who have taken full-time parental leave (excluding maternity leave) for at least one month to take care of the youngest child in the household



Source: IFS 2010 Ad hoc module

In Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Austria and Germany the majority of eligible mothers declare they have taken such a leave. As parental leave does not include maternity leave, some trends in Figure 16 can be explained by the structure of maternity leave in different countries (i.e. length and associated benefits): if the maternity leave is long, a small proportion of mothers taking parental leave does not necessarily implies that most mothers are going back to work soon after childbirth. The benefits associated with parental leave are also likely to influence uptake figures. For

¹⁰ Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC (Text with EEA relevance) extends the period of parental leave to four months for each parent. It applies to all workers and to all types of employment. See: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32010L0018:EN:NOT>. Last accessed: April 2013.

¹¹ However, the data suggests that there might be a gender asymmetry with regard to parental leave, in the same way as there is an asymmetry with regard to work interruption.

instance, in the Czech Republic, mothers are entitled to up to 28 weeks of paid maternity leave, and to up to 3 years of parental leave (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 2013). Having access to such relatively “generous” leave conditions / policies may explain the high uptake for additional parental leave. Similarly, paternity leave offer men the opportunity to take job-protected leave, typically after childbirth. Paternity leave provisions are considerably shorter and less generous than maternity leave. However, there are considerable differences in the EU, which may explain some of the differences in employment status between men with and without children. A table summarising the maternity and parental leave allowances in Europe is presented in Appendix C.

4.3. The role of leave policies

In many countries, parental leave policies are considered important tools to maintain the attachment of women to the labour force, stimulate female labour market participation and encourage return to the labour market after a work interruption related to childbirth and childrearing. Altering the length, the benefits, and the flexibility associated with parental leave is likely to have an impact on work opportunities of mothers, and caring engagement of fathers (Pronzato 2009).

Indeed cultural differences and individual preferences alone cannot explain all of the cross-country differences. As demonstrated by Pronzato (2009) and Jaumotte (2003), the different institutional and policy contexts explain part of the differences in the proportion of mothers who return to work after a birth across Europe. These empirical cross-country comparison studies suggest a relatively strong correspondence between the generosity of maternity and parental leave and women's employment profiles. In addition, Akgunduz and Plantenga (2012) find that parental leave impacts the number of hours worked, wages (for high skilled women) and increases occupational segregation, as employees in skilled sectors may be more prone to experience / face loss of human capital from leave take-up. Ruhm (1998) reports a positive association between paid parental leave in the nine OECD countries studied and employment rates. However, generous and lengthy parental leave may have a unintended negative effect on mothers' skills sets. Rønsen and Sundström (2002) show that the length of parental leave of women is negatively correlated with likelihood of achieving career advancement after returning to work (e.g. Edin and Gustavsson, 2001, cited in: Jaumotte 2003). And some evidence suggests that very long parental leaves make it more difficult for women to return to the labour market (e.g. Ondrich et al. 1998, cited in: Jaumotte 2003).

Furthermore, Ciccio and Verloo (2012) show that despite efforts towards an universal carer model where men and women share childcare (and of which the Nordic countries are a good illustration) across Europe, in the dominant family model male is the main bread-winner. The persistence of such a model may be reinforced by the fact that employers can discriminate against women who have stopped working (or are likely to do so) for a while to take care of children (as this was the case in Finland, according to OECD 2005), and by the fact that mothers themselves, under certain circumstances, may not be attracted by the perspective of resuming work after maternity (Gauthier 2012).

4.4. Alternative policy instruments

Disparities in family friendly policies may explain differences in parental employment in the EU. The OECD reports “Babies and Bosses research” and “Doing Better for Families”, for instance, link employment of mothers to policy measures, such as tax benefit, public childcare related policies and work place practices, emphasizing the differences between countries in parental family and labour market outcomes (OECD 2007; 2011). These alternative policy measures, targeted at reconciling parenthood and employment, may reduce the work interruption following motherhood and can be developed as a complement to leave policy.

As part of this series of short statistical reports, we provide an elaborate assessment of the extent of childcare enrolment in the EU and its role in reconciling work and family life (Mills et al. 2013). Various studies confirm the positive correlation between the availability of childcare and the probability of working in mothers (Gustaffson & Stafford 1992; Del Boca et al. 2008; Del Boca & Pasqua 2005; Freeman & Schettkat 2005). Uunk et al. (2005), Stier and Lewin-Epstein (2001) and Van der Lippe (2001) also report a strong significant effect of the nature of childcare on mothers’ working hours: in countries with more generous public childcare, the reduction in working hours after first childbirth is lower than in countries with less generous public childcare. An interesting finding of the study by Uunk et al. (2005) is that economic affluence suppresses the effect of public childcare. This means that among countries with equal levels of public childcare, a higher level of affluence leads women to reduce working hours more after childbirth.

Another factor that may contribute to discourage dual earnership of parents, is a high tax rate on the income of the second-earner, such as is the case in Germany (see for example: Steiner & Wrohlich 2004). Most EU countries have individualised tax systems, as non-individual tax systems form a barrier for the non-breadwinner to enter paid employment. Nearly all countries have some form of tax relief either for non-employed spouses or for children. But according to Letablier et al. (2009, 111), these arrangements do not produce strong incentives to work for the second potential earner, especially when the effective marginal tax rate of the second earner is close to that of the primary earner (Périver 2003, cited in: Letablier et al. 2009). However, it remains difficult to draw specific conclusions about the effects of the various tax regimes on female employment (Van der Lippe & Van Dijk 2001). Nonetheless, household taxation, which may include joint taxation submissions and tax breaks for married couples, could be considered as one of the levers, which, in combination with others, can influence return to work or time spent at work (Dingeldey 2001). For example, Figari (2011) estimated the potential effects of in-work benefits, i.e. benefits that are means-tested transfers given to individuals conditional on their employment status, such as the UK Working Tax credit, in Italy. Indeed individual in-work benefits may have the potential to motivate women (and in particular women with lower wages) to go back to work by making work financially more attractive. The results of Figari (2011) show that the abolition of the existing tax credit for dependent adults and the introduction of a new family in-work benefit lead to an average increase of female labour supply of 3 percentage points. Policies focusing on the availability and flexibility of part-time work could also contribute to higher rates of labour participation among mothers. Gutiérrez-Domènech (2005) finds that if mothers were offered more opportunities to combine work and family life

through flexible part-time work, more mothers would be moving into part-time employment instead of moving into inactivity after parental leave.

In addition to the policy context, measures taken at the firm level can also have an influence on full-time and part-time working uptake. Using Eurofound's European Establishment Survey on Working Time, Fagan and Walthery (2011) find that the characteristics of a firm (such as sector and size) and its organisation of working-time practices and culture (such as the relevance of the employee's needs for the management) have an influence on whether employees are permitted individualised working-time adjustments that are compatible with work and family life reconciliation. The authors also suggest that those firm level parameters can to a certain extent be shaped by public policy.

5. Conclusions

Male and female employment rates have increased substantially over the past 10 years in Europe (European Commission 2010a) but most Member States have still a long way to go before the EU reaches the aggregated 2020 employment rate target of 75%. Female employment rates systematically lag behind their male counterpart, despite the relative decrease of male employment since the crisis, with an EU-27 average rate just above 60%. Among women, mothers are even more likely not to be employed compared to those without children and compared to men, whether they are parents or not. Indeed, the relationship between employment and parenthood is different for men and women: overall fathers are more likely to be employed while for mothers the situation is more varied even if in most cases mothers are less likely to be employed. At the EU-27 level, mothers have lower employment rates than non-mothers; however, this is not the case in all countries, and in some of them family policies or economic parameters may make it easier or more necessary to work. However, employment rates alone are not sufficient to fully understand the heterogeneity of the population in employment, and do not necessarily highlight the dynamics around part-time work and differences in working hours.

Across Europe the proportion of part-time workers among non-parents is much higher for women than for men, and this proportion tends to be even bigger among mothers. It is also useful to look at the extent to which people are working part-time, because part-time work definitions may vary across countries and that not all part-time jobs have the same number of working hours. In terms of number of hours worked, for women the situation is similar across countries. Motherhood is clearly associated with a decrease in the likelihood of working 40 or more hours a week; whereas it is positively associated with working between 20 and 39 hours a week, or less than 19 hours a week. For men, the situation across European countries is more varied, although the association between fatherhood and hours worked is generally weaker than for women.

The gender inequalities with regard to employment rates and the number of days and hours worked is reinforced by gender inequalities with regard to work interruption and parental leave. On average in the EU-27, more than 40% of mothers report that in addition to maternity leave they stopped working to take care of their youngest child for at least one month across the EU-27. In contrast, only 2% of fathers declare they did so. As for full-time parental leave, only 1% of fathers have taken parental leave, versus 24% for mothers. Considering that longer work interruptions can potentially be associated with lower probabilities to return to work, and to lower wages once back at work, the discrepancy between fathers and mothers with regard to work interruption is likely to increase even more gender inequalities at work.

The heterogeneity across countries of employment rates, work schedules and parental leave uptake highlights the importance of country-specific cultural factors, but also the role that work and family policies may play in influencing behaviours. Work regulations (such as in-work benefits, contract types, etc.) and leave policies (such as job protection, flexibility to share the leave between the father and mother, associated benefits, or duration) can indeed constitute important levers that allow to create more balance between work and family for both men and women.

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Appendix A. Data description

This appendix provides a list of the variables in EU-LFS and the 2010 Ad Hoc Module that were used in the analysis. We relied on Eurostat best knowledge of the data to for the choice of variables and definitions.

EU LFS 2010, main dataset (Eurostat 2010):

- The parent status has been derived from the HHCHILDR variable, which distinguishes between persons whose child(ren) is in the same household, and persons whose child(ren) is not in the same household,
- Employment rates have been calculated from the STAPRO variable, (PROfessional STATus), assuming that respondents who answered “not applicable” were currently not in employment. Employment rates used in the paper are not full-time equivalent (FTE) employment rates. An individual is considered as employed as long as he works at least one hour per week,
- The distinction between part-time and full-time work is based on the FTPT variable. There is no specific definition of part-time work implied in this variable,
- The number of hours per week usually worked in the main job, collected in the HWUSUAL variable, have been categorised into four groups: from 1 to 19h, from 20 to 39h, 40h and over, and “hours vary”,
- The flexible working time variable has been derived from the VARHOURS variable. Workers are considered as having access to flexible working time if they have answered that they have “flexitime/Working time banking”, “daily number of hours fixed, but some flexibility within the day” or they “determine own work schedule”.

LFS 2010 ad hoc module (Eurostat 2009):

- Variables REDWORK and STOPWORK from the ad hoc module respectively identify the persons who reduced working hours or stopped working to take care of the youngest child in the household for at least one month (excluding maternity leave). A filter was applied within the data collection to those variables, including only individuals with at least one own/spouse's child up to the 8th birthday living in the household,
- The parental leave variable (PARLEAVE, Ad hoc Module) identifies parents who take a full-time parental leave of at least one month to take care of the youngest child in the household (excluding maternity leave). A filter was applied within the data collection to this variable, including only individuals with at least one own/spouse's child up to the 8th birthday living in the household.

Appendix B. Annex to Figure 16

Table 1: Number (thousands) of eligible men and women who take full-time parental leave (excluding maternity leave) for at least one month

Country	No full-time parental leave for at least one month		Parental leave between 1 and 3 months		Parental leave between 3 and 6 months		Parental leave between 6 months and 1 year		Parental leave > 1 year	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
AT	348.253	140.5577						4.95522		164.4401
BE	452.1771	357.7141		43.43088		3.58732				
BG	220.5878	190.0328						3.27799		
CY	40.63591	38.68088								
CZ	603.2636	132.4146						1.10937		257.1352
DE	2,241.93	558.6061	74.11152	37.99027		5.10446		191.3726		421.6607
EE	59.2954	2.16868								41.8118

RAND Europe

Country	No full-time parental leave for at least one month		Parental leave between 1 and 3 months		Parental leave between 3 and 6 months		Parental leave between 6 months and 1 year		Parental leave > 1 year		
ES	2,792.67	2,251.88			16.53582		21.49096		54.48807		23.3589
EU-27	23,114.30	15,794.40	400.5828	1,054.62	24.43	924.2484	20.77	1,406.74	31.99279		3,124.91
FI	203.8034	27.70999			6.2331		0.788	4.36156		35.93541	80.77078
FR	2,878.60	2,555.23									273.015
GR	562.0909	544.4299			10.32443				5.4754		
HR	73.6634	25.80316					16.1127				
HU	421.4089	61.65704			0.98234				3.60766		162.3918
IE	172.4379	137.0175			3.5075						
IT	3,080.55	2,741.71	6.6596	183.5382		148.4733		144.911			16.5716
LT	127.6047	86.99066	1.4021					3.07106			24.78598
LU	23.69643	13.34646				9.13449		0.93019			
LV	76.94536	7.7813						7.7112			44.41914
MT	11.741	9.221					0.312				
NL	843.6264	806.2428	1.14007	82.59465		18.0966		0.47585			

Parents at work: men and women participating in the labour force

Country	No full-time parental leave for at least one month		Parental leave between 1 and 3 months		Parental leave between 3 and 6 months	Parental leave between 6 months and 1 year	Parental leave > 1 year	
PL	2,311.05	1,452.83		92.44631	111.3008	97.77119		266.3984
PT	503.9467	421.7483	2.01937	5.39493	61.80964			
RO	922.9859	521.2224				2.86299	5.00238	368.3075
SI	79.16218	3.31675	0.69796			0.58017	66.67909	1.08074
SK	247.4812	1.72162						107.5895
UK	2,823.95	1,775.10	107.6781	147.9938	107.7253	232.745		95.92651

Source: LFS 2010 Ad hoc module

Appendix C. Maternity and parental leave: length and benefits

Table 2: Maternity and parental leave: length and benefits (2009 data)

Country	Length of maternity leave (weeks)	Paid maternity leave	Length of parental leave (months)	Paid parental leave
AT	16	Earning-related (100%); flat rate for self-employed women	22	Flat rate
BE	15	Earning-related (82%) for the first month, then 75%, with ceiling	6	Flat rate
BG	40.5	Earning-related (90%)	25.5	Minimum salary for 13.5 months, then nothing
CH	14	Earning-related (80%), with ceiling	.	.
CY	18	Earning-related (75%), increased to 80%, 90% and 100% for one, two or three dependants respectively	6.5	No payment
CZ	28	Earning-related (69%)	30.5	Flat rate
DE	14	Earning-related (100%)	34	Earning-related (67%) for the first 12 months, then nothing
DK	18	Earning-related (100%), with ceiling	8	Earning-related (100%), with ceiling
EE	20	Earning-related (100%)	31.5	Earnings-related (100% with ceiling) for 14.5 months, then flat rate

Country	Length of maternity leave (weeks)	Paid maternity leave	Length of parental leave (months)	Paid parental leave
ES	16	Earning-related (100%)	32	No payment
FI	15.0	Earning-related (90%) for the first 8 weeks, then 70%, with ceiling	27	Earning -related (70-75%), lower % if higher income for 6 months, then home care allowance
FR	16	Earning-related (100%), with ceiling	33 (if second child)	Flat rate
GR	17	.	7+6	No payment for 7 months, then flat rate for 6 months
HR	31.5 mandatory, then up to 3 years	Earning-related (100%) for the first 6 months, then ceiling	6	Earnings-related (100%), with minimum
HU	24	Benefit payment	30	Earning-related (70%), with ceiling for the first 18 months, then flat rate
IE	42	Earning-related (80%), with ceiling and minimum	7	No payment
IS	13.5	Earning-related (80%)	6	Earning-related (80%), with ceiling
IT	20.0	Earning-related (80%)	10	Earning-related (30%)
LT	18	Earning-related (100%)	22	Earning-related (100%) for 10 months, then 85%
LU	16	Earning-related (100%)	12	Flat rate
LV	16 to 20	Earning-related (100%)	18	Earning-related (70%) for 12 months, then flat rate
MT	14	Earning-related (100%) for the first 13 weeks then no payment	6	No payment

Parents at work: men and women participating in the labour force

Country	Length of maternity leave (weeks)	Paid maternity leave	Length of parental leave (months)	Paid parental leave
NL	16	Earning-related (100%), with ceiling	6.5	No payment
NO	9	Earning-related (80% or 100%)	34.5	Earning-related (80-100%), with ceiling for 10.5 months, then flat rate
PL	18	Earning-related (100%)	36	Flat rate (means tested) for 24 or 36 if > 1 child
PT	17 or 21.5	Earning-related (100% of 17 weeks, 80% if 21.5)	34.5	Earning-related (83%) for 4.5 months, then 25% for 6 months, then no payment
RO	18	Earning-related (85%), with ceiling	21.5	Flat rate
SE	14	Earning-related (80%), with ceiling and minimum	16.0	Earning-related (80%), with ceiling for 11 months, then flat rate for 3 months, then no payment
SI	15	Earning-related (100%), with minimum	9	Earning-related (100%), with ceiling
SK	28	Earning-related (55%)	30.5	Flat rate
UK	52	Earning-related (90%) for the first 6 weeks	6.5	No payment

Sources: This table is based on information retrieved in the Council of Europe Family Policy Database: http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/familypolicy/database/default_en.asp#3.Reconciliation_of_work_and_family_life. Last accessed May 2013.

The Comparative Family Policy Database (2010 data) was also consulted for consistency: <http://www.demogr.mpg.de/cgi-bin/databases/FamPolDB/index.plx>. Last accessed May 2013. Slight variations were noticed between the two databases; mainly due to the fact that benefits are not presented in the same way (the comparative Family Policy database used cash benefits paid during maternity leave as a per cent of female wages in manufacturing).

Note: Since the paper is based on the analysis of 2010 data, presenting 2009/2010 leave allowances seemed the most relevant. For most countries, there haven't been significant changes in leave length and benefits between 2009 and present.