# *Chapter 5*

# How partners in couples share unpaid work

*This chapter examines how equally, or unequally, couples share unpaid work – i.e. housework and parenting. The chapter uses micro data from time use surveys in 11 countries to better understand how couples share unpaid work and can do so more equally. It begins by introducing the issues to hand, then lists the chapter's main findings before looking at couples' work, both paid and unpaid. It finds that, in many but not all countries, women do more work on aggregate. It also explores how couples of different ages share unpaid work and concludes that the gender gap in unpaid work is widest in older couples. It examines couples in which both partners do paid work and finds that, in general, they share unpaid work more equally than those where only one partner works. On the whole, though, the chapter finds that women do more work, paid and unpaid, as men. Section 4 looks at the factors that affect and shape the sharing of unpaid work and observes that with parenthood couples share paid and unpaid work the traditional way. The same section also considers child care and finds that, while mothers nurture young children, the gap in parenting between fathers and mothers decreases once children start school. Indeed, a high proportion of fathers' time with their children is quality time. Section 5 gives consideration of care for other adults in the household and finds that in most countries partnered men are less likely to be involved in care than partnered women.*

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

## 1. Introduction and main findings

Equal sharing in partnerships should mean that both parents do the same amount of paid and unpaid work. Yet, as the previous chapter shows, men do a lot more paid work than women on average. This chapter draws on time use data to demonstrate that, when it comes to unpaid work, women – particularly mothers – do considerably more time than men and fathers. In many countries, the gender gap in unpaid work mirrors the gender gap in paid work (OECD, 2012).

The reasons why women spend much more time on unpaid work are manifold. Some women actually prefer fewer hours of paid work and even no work at all, particularly when they have young children. However, many do want paid work and/or more paid hours. They struggle to reconcile work and family life because of constraints like access to affordable, good-quality child care facilities and flexible working-time arrangements. How partners share unpaid work is also influenced by factors closely related to the family such as its size, partners' levels of educational attainment, their relative earnings (potential), and the ways in which they are able to organise their paid working hours.

Equal sharing at home has many benefits for both partners. If men do more unpaid housework and parenting work, they free up more time for their partners in the labour market. Sharing more equally at home enables fathers to take a more active part in their children's upbringing and strengthens father-child bonding, so improving the well-being of the whole family.

This chapter analyses how couples share unpaid work. To that end, it uses micro data from harmonised time use surveys in 11 countries. It examines how couples of different ages share differently and whether couples in which both partners do paid work share unpaid work more equally than those where only one partner works (generally the man). A comparison of young couples with and without children shows how parenthood affects sharing. The last section analyses in more detail the time that parents spend caring for children and which partner cares for other adults in the household.

### *Main findings*

- In selected OECD countries, female partners in couple families spend, on average, twice as much time on unpaid work at home as their male partners.[1] Even if both partners are in paid work on a full-time basis, they do not share unpaid work equally. Nevertheless, the unpaid work gender gap is narrower in such couples than in those where the man is the sole breadwinner.
- High-income and highly educated couples share unpaid work more equitably. Partners in such couples are also more likely both to be in full-time work.
- Of the 11 countries for which micro-data were analysed – Austria, Canada, Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Korea, Norway, South Africa, Spain and the United States – Norwegian couples are those which share paid and unpaid work most equally, even among parents with very young children. In countries with high female employment rates, more gender-equal attitudes and good-quality formal child care (e.g. Norway, Finland and France), partners in couples share more equally.
- Parenthood proves critical for sharing in couples with very young children, where parents follow more traditional gender roles compared to couples of the same age without children. Well-designed parental leave policies that explicitly encourage the father's involvement can play an important role in encouraging a couple to

sustain a more equally balanced division of paid and unpaid work throughout the time that they transition into parenthood.

- In couple families, fathers spend less time with the children than mothers do, but the gap is smaller on weekends and narrows as children grow older. Fathers spend more of their child care time in interactive parenting, also referred to as "quality time", reading to, playing with, talking to, and teaching the children. Mothers, for their part, devote a relatively larger share of their parenting time to physical care and supervision. And, while mothers spend more minutes of quality time with young children in most countries than fathers do, the gap shrinks, or even disappears, when the children are of school age.
- The literature shows that, over time and in all countries, women have gradually reduced the time they spend on unpaid work, while men still do roughly the same amount of unpaid work. While technology can help ease the unpaid workload, raising awareness of the still uneven distribution of unpaid work between men and women may help foster more equal sharing.

## 2. Sharing among couples

### *Overall men work less than women if paid and unpaid work are added together*

Throughout the OECD, men do more paid work than women, while women contribute more to unpaid work (Figure 5.1). Overall, however, men work less than women. Traditionally, they are the main (or only) breadwinners, while women are mainly responsible for unpaid work, which includes housework, i.e. cleaning, cooking, caring for children and other tasks besides (Miranda, 2011). As illustrated in Chapter 4, however, many couples are now dual earners and share hours of paid work in different ways.

**Figure 5.1. Women do more unpaid work than men in all countries**

Female minus male total of paid and unpaid working time in minutes per day


*Reading note:* In Germany, women do 100.73 less minutes of paid work on average per day than men (dark bars) and 105.4 more minutes of unpaid work than men (light bars). The sum total of women's paid and unpaid work is 4.31 more minutes per day on average than men's (black diamonds).

Data for Australia are for the over 15 year-olds, for Hungary 15-74 year-olds, and for Sweden 25-64 year-olds.

Reference years vary from country to country: Australia, 2006; Austria, 2008-09; Belgium, 2005; Canada, 2010; China, 2008; Denmark, 2001; Estonia, 2009-10; Finland, 2009-10; France, 2009; Germany, 2001-02; Hungary, 1999-2000; India, 1999; Italy, 2008-09; Ireland, 2005; Japan, 2011; Korea, 2009; Mexico, 2009; the Netherlands, 2005-06; New Zealand, 2009-10; Norway, 2010; Poland, 2003-04; Portugal, 1999; Slovenia, 2000-01; South Africa, 2010; Spain, 2009-10; Sweden, 2010; Turkey, 2006; the United Kingdom, 2005; the United States, 2014.

*Source*: OECD Gender Data Portal, http://www.oecd.org/gender/data.

### Box 5.1. Time use surveys: A window into people's lives

Time use surveys are the main source of information on how individuals allot their time day-to-day. Generally, people are asked to keep a diary for one or two days of a certain week, often a week-day and a day on the weekend. In the diary, they note what they did in ten-minute time slots from a prescribed list of activities. They might also state who was with them, where they were, and what else they were doing (secondary activity). National statistics agencies and associated bodies then code the activities the respondent has written down. A fully completed diary thus accounts for a person's activities over 24 hours (or 144 times 10 minutes).

The entries in the diaries may then be grouped into broader categories of activity – such as personal care (sleeping, getting dressed, etc.), employment, education and unpaid work like housework, care and voluntary work, leisure (e.g. sports, media consumption, meeting friends) and other activities (religious activities or keeping the diary). See Miranda (2011) for a detailed outline of the applied methodology.

For the purpose of this analysis the unpaid work category was disaggregated into housework, parenting, and care for household adults. Parenting was further broken down into different sub-categories: physical care and looking after children; teaching, reading, playing and talking with them; accompanying them, and/or other/non-specified. Caring for adults living in the household and helping non-household members is recorded in all countries, but at different levels of detail. Cross-country harmonisation, particularly of information on helping non-household members is challenging, though, as some surveys offer detail on the activities that caring entails (physical care vs. support like letter-writing). Others, however, do not distinguish types of activity or who exactly benefited from the support offered.

Three main time use variables are typically extracted from time use data. In child care activities, for example, the variables are:

1. Participation rate in child care activities: the share of people that recorded a child care activity at least once over the course of the day.
2. Average minutes per day spent on child care activities: the average number of minutes spent on child care regardless of whether respondents participated at all in child care activities; the 0 minutes of those respondents not reporting any child care activity are thus also included in the average.
3. Average minutes per day spent with child care by carers/child care participants: the average time in minutes spent on child care by those that engaged at least once in child care activity during the day that the dairy was kept.

As an alternative measure of couples' interaction with children, this report uses "time spent in the presence of household children" regardless of the activity carried out in the presence of household children, where "household children" are defined as children under 18 residing in the same household as the couple in question, regardless of their biological relationship – in other words, no distinction is made between biological, adoptive and stepparents. Children who live outside their biological parents' home are not considered.

This report includes cross-sectional micro-data on time use in the following countries and years: Austria (2009); Canada (2010); Finland (2009/10); Germany (2012/13); France (2009-10); Italy (2008/09); Korea (2009); Norway (2010); South Africa (2010); Spain (2009/10) and the United States (2010). Time use surveys are not usually conducted on a yearly basis and of the waves available, the ones closest to the years 2009 and 2010 were chosen. The time use surveys are nationally representative (Annex Table 5.A.1 summarises the main features of each survey).

Despite efforts to harmonise time use surveys from one country to another, cross-national results should be interpreted with caution. For example, some countries were at different stages in the economic cycle at the time of their surveys – e.g. Spain in 2010 and Germany in 2012-13.

### *The gender gap in overall work for partnered men and women is widest among older couples*

At different stages in their lives together, partners decide how much time to allot to paid and unpaid work and, by the same token, how to share paid and unpaid work between them. Time use data show that, in all cohorts and countries, partnered women do more work on aggregate than partnered men. The sole exceptions are the youngest cohort, 18 to 24 years old, and Norway (Figure 5.2, Panel A). In cohorts, the gender gap in overall work is widest among the over-65s everywhere except Norway. While older men often do less or no paid work at all at that age, the amount of unpaid work done by women is no lower in the oldest cohort than in younger generations.

Yet the size and shape of gender gaps[2] in paid and unpaid work are not the same from one country and cohort to another. In couple households everywhere at all ages, men do more paid work (the blue, positive bars in Figure 5.2, Panel B) whilst women do more unpaid work (white, negative bars in Panel B). On average, partnered women devote twice as much time to unpaid work as partnered men, although the imbalance varies greatly: Korean partnered men spend 19% of the time on unpaid work that Korean partnered women do, whereas in Norway the ratio is 82%.

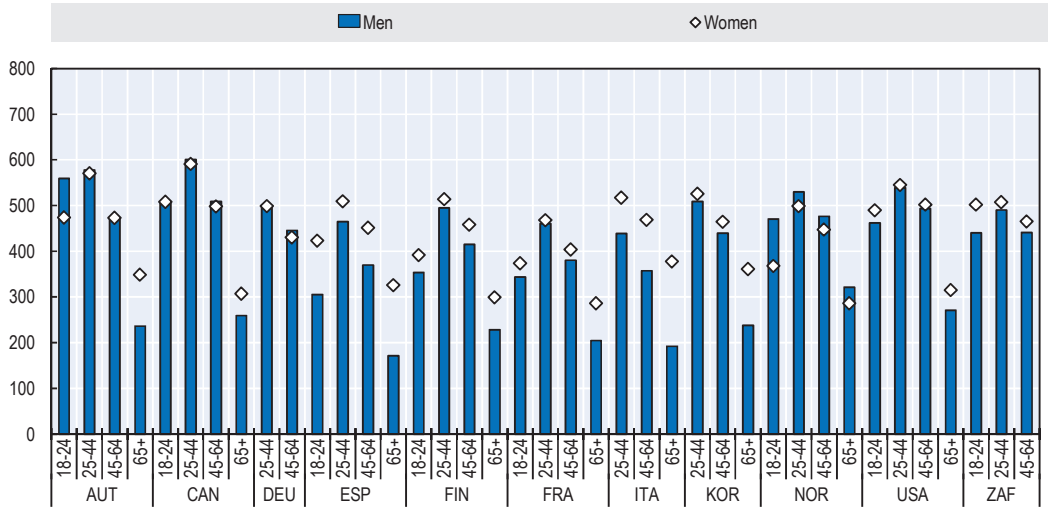
Norway stands out on several fronts. It is the only country where, on aggregate, partnered men in all cohorts devote more time to work and where paid and unpaid work is shared most equally in all age groups. The results are confirmed by Aasve et al. (2014) who show that, in a sample of ten countries, couples in Norway share housework most equally.[3]

Among the other ten countries in Figure 5.2, three patterns seem to emerge:

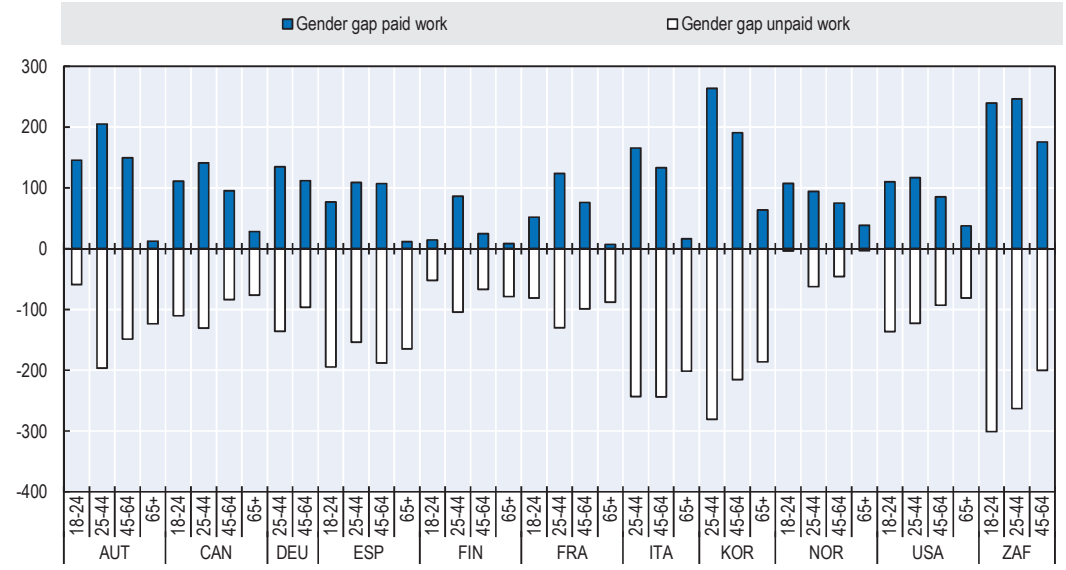
1. In Finland, France and the United States partnered women devote slightly more time to aggregate work than partnered men. Yet they share paid and unpaid work more equally with their partners than in the other countries, with the exception of Norway (see Chapter 4 for further detail on the division of paid working hours between partners in couple families).
2. In Austria, Canada and Germany, men's and women's overall workloads are similar in most age groups. However, partnered women devote significantly more time than partnered men to unpaid work.
3. In Italy, Spain, Korea and South Africa the gender gap in aggregate work persists at all ages, driven largely by traditional gendered patterns in the allocation of time to paid and unpaid work.

**Figure 5.2. Overall, partnered women work more than partnered men across different age groups**

Panel A. Total (paid and unpaid) work done by partnered individuals, in minutes per day[1]




Panel B. Male-female gender gap in the paid and unpaid work of partnered people, in minutes per day[2]




1. Time use data for partnered men and women aged 18 years or above who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabitating partner (married or not). Paid work includes time devoted to education. Too few time use diaries were kept by 18-to-24 year-old men and women living in partnership in Italy and Korea and those aged 65 or more in South Africa.

2. The gender gap in paid and unpaid work is calculated as the number of minutes per day that partnered men spend on paid and unpaid work minus the minutes per day that partnered women spend on paid and unpaid work.

*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

### *Micro and macro level factors are associated with more equal sharing*

Many factors – like partners' earnings potential, preferences and policies – may explain how couples share their overall workload and allocate time to paid and unpaid work. As outlined in Chapter 2, theoretical models of the division of paid and unpaid work in families include considerations that relate to:

- the specialised skills and comparative advantage of partners in couples,
- bargaining between partners – prompted by, for example, relative earnings and/or wishing to avoid undesirable housework,
- meeting gender norms or "doing gender".

Empirical studies associate various micro- and macro-level factors with couples sharing more equally. They are more likely to share unpaid work (more) equally, for example, if they are unmarried, have higher education qualifications, or if they come from post-communist countries (Box 5.2). Literature highlights parenthood as a critical phase, as it is a time which determines couples' future sharing patterns in paid and unpaid work (Baxter, 2008; Schober, 2013; Barnes, 2015). As Chapter 3 explains, poor public provisions (e.g. lack of child care infrastructure) and family-unfriendly workplace practices (like rigid working hours) may discourage or prevent couples from sharing throughout their lives together, while others – such as the daddy months in parental leave schemes – may encourage it.

The literature also illustrates how macro-level variables – such as gender inequality in the public sphere, societal attitudes, policies, and female employment rates – are associated with different degrees of sharing from country to country. Fuwa (2004) and Hook (2006) show that higher female employment rates are associated with men more active in unpaid work. Hook also points out that the time that single men spend on unpaid work increases with women's employment rates. She discusses gender norms or improving one's chances on the marriage market as possible explanations. Geist (2005) considered micro and macro factors simultaneously. While relative income, time availability and gender ideology shape patterns within couples, female labour force participation and the welfare regime both matter on the macro level. Men's equal gender attitudes (micro level) are important for the division of household chores particularly in countries with traditionally social-democratic regimes, such as Norway and Sweden, but less so in conservative countries like Japan, Italy and Austria (macro level). Although statistical analyses cannot establish a clear causal link between structural and institutional conditions on one hand and individual behaviour on the other, "structural effects exist in addition to the individual level process" (Geist, 2005, p. 37).

### Box 5.2. What makes equal-sharers share (more) equally?

The literature has identified a number of distinguishing attributes in couple families that share (more) equally. While some studies draw on time use surveys, a large body of literature relies on surveys in which respondents (often only one partner and not both) are asked who usually performs how much of the couple's unpaid and household work. Most studies focus on housework as a traditionally female task, while some also or only focus on child care. The most commonly identified characteristics of couples who share (more) equally in the literature include:

- *Cohabitation*. Unmarried cohabitating couples share more equally than married couples (Baxter, 2005; Deding, 2006; Baxter, 2008; Dominguez-Folgueras, 2012). Married couples who first cohabitated also share more equally.
- *Partner's employment*. The more time the woman in dual-earner couples spends in paid work, the more equally such couples share housework (Gershuny et al., 2005; Grunow, 2012; Aassve et al., 2014). The pattern is driven mostly by women reducing their unpaid work, as men's unpaid work hours vary little, if at all, with women's paid work hours.
- *The relative earnings of the female partner*. Higher relative income of the female partner is associated with more equally shared household work. The relationship between relative earnings and the sharing of household work is not proportional, though, and there is evidence that in couples where the woman earns more than the man, she still does a greater share of housework (Bittman, 2003; Deding, 2006; Ponthieux et al., 2006; Procher et al., 2014; Bertrand et al., 2015; also see Box 2.3).
- *High educational attainment*. Highly educated couples exhibit less traditional norms and share housework and/or parenting more equally (Berkel and de Graaf, 1999; Davis and Greenstein, 2004; Goñi-Legaz, 2010; Sullivan, 2010; Garcia, 2014).
- *Children and parenthood*. Several studies have analysed how children and the transition into parenthood affect the sharing of unpaid household and child care work (Pfahl, 2014; Baxter, 2008; Kühhirt, 2012; Grunow et al., 2012; Schober, 2013; Schober, 2014a; Barnes, 2015). The arrival of children is found to be one of the biggest contributory factors in unequal sharing – childless couples share considerably more equally than couples with children. With parenthood many couples slip (often involuntarily) into a (more) traditional division of paid and unpaid work.
- *Post-communist countries*. Voicu et al. (2008) and Davis and Greenstein (2004) find that housework is more equally shared in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe.
- *Gender-egalitarian attitudes*. Couples with more gender-equal attitudes are more likely to share unpaid work equally (see Chapter 2).

The characteristics listed above all refer to heterosexual couples. Analyses of same-sex couples find that they do on average not fall within traditional heterosexual gender norms. Several studies, mainly in the United States, have looked at gay and lesbian couples, mostly based on surveys that ask about partners' participation in housework and parenting. Although it draws on relatively small samples and case studies, the emerging literature seems to suggest that same-sex couples, particularly lesbian couples, tend to share housework more equally than heterosexual couples (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983; Dunne, 2000; Ciano-Boyce and Shelley-Sireci, 2002; Solomon et. al, 2005; Kurdek, 2007; Perlesz et al., 2010).

## 3. Sharing among couples of working age

### *Men in dual-earner couples do more housework than breadwinner men, but are far from equal sharers*

"Equal" sharing in partnerships means that both sexes should both spend equal amounts of time on paid and unpaid work. Young parents (or parents with very young children) particularly report that they struggle to balancing work and (family) life, as

they are building careers and families – the so-called "rush hour of life" (Bittman and Wajcman, 2000). Consequently, the ensuing analysis focuses on couples where the woman is of child-bearing age, 25 to 45 years old (and their partners of any age). All inactive, unemployed, employed and self-employed respondents living in partnership in the same household (married or not) are considered. Students and pensioners are excluded to restrict the analysis to the working-age population available to the labour market.

In all OECD countries, partnered women aged between 25 and 45 years old spend more time on unpaid work than partnered men – even if only men and women who work similar paid hours are compared (Figure 5.3). In Italy, for example, partnered women devote twice as much time as partnered men to unpaid work, regardless of their hours in paid work. In Canada, France, Italy and South Africa, unemployed or inactive partnered men spend less time on unpaid work than their female partners who are in paid employment and work between 30 and 34 hours.

Inactive or unemployed partnered women do more unpaid work than women in paid employment everywhere except Norway (Figure 5.3, Panel B). And while partnered women spend less time in unpaid work the more paid work they do, their unpaid work hours are not proportionally lower according to the length of their working week. In comparison to partnered women, partnered men's unpaid work hours, which are generally lower, vary far less widely with the length of their working week.

**Figure 5.3. For similar hours of paid work, partnered women do more unpaid work than partnered men**

Panel A. Men's unpaid work, in minutes per day, by length of working week, in hours

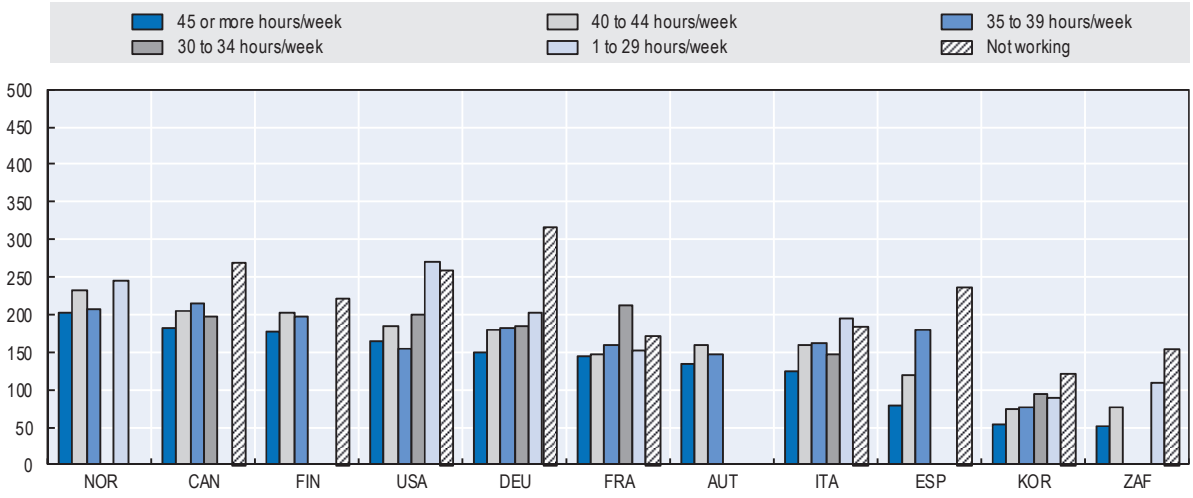
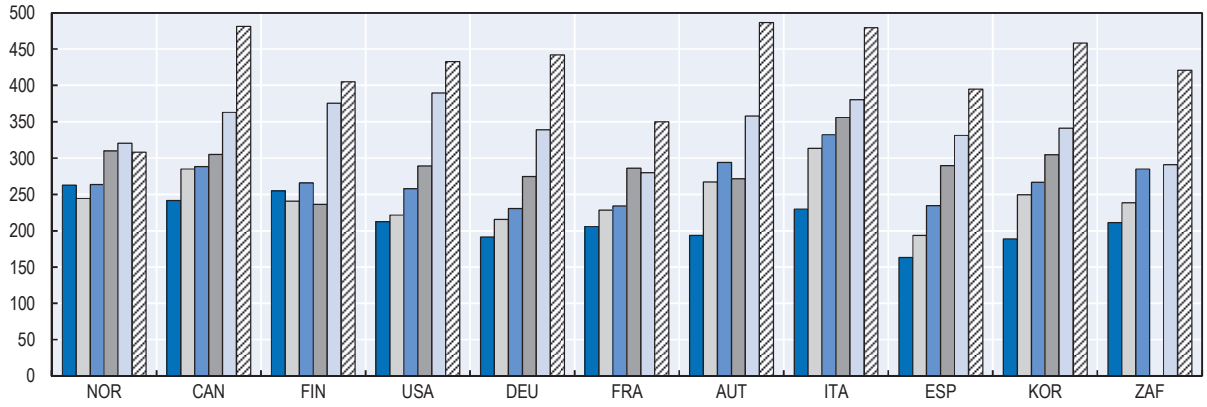


**Figure 5.3. For similar hours of paid work, partnered women do more unpaid work than partnered men** *(cont.)*

Panel B. Women's unpaid work, in minutes per day, by length of working week, in hours




*Note*: Time use data for partnered men and women who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabitating partner (married or not), women's age restricted to the 25-to-45 year-old age bracket. Pensioners and students are excluded.

Missing data points for subgroups where less than 30 time use diaries were kept.

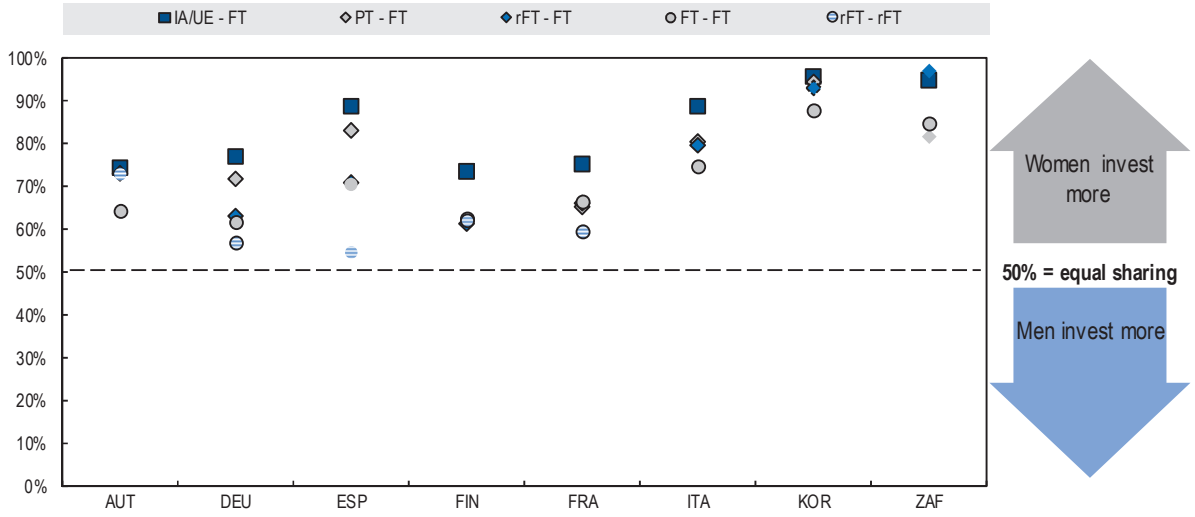
*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

The time that partners devote to unpaid work is naturally determined by their own paid working hours. However, it also depends on their partner's paid working hours, as the couple has to invest at least some amount of unpaid work in the household. Chapter 4 analyses couples' paid working arrangements and shows that patterns differ by region. In the Nordic countries plus France, more couples work reduced hours, whereas men in German-speaking countries tend to work long hours and women part-time hours that are comparatively low (below 20 per week).

Figure 5.4 shows how housework is distributed in couples according to their paid work arrangements in countries where information on both partners' paid and unpaid working hours is available. If the housework asymmetry indicator is 50% partners share chores equally. An indicator above 50% shows that the woman spends more time on housework than her partner.

**Figure 5.4. Even dual-earner couples with similar paid hours do not share housework equally**

Percentage of housework done by the female partner, aged 25 to 45




*Note*: The indicators are acronyms that denote first the woman's and then the man's employment status. IA/UE-FT (blue square) thus denotes a couple where she is inactive/unemployed and he works 40 hours or more – the male breadwinner couple; PT-FT (grey diamond) denotes couples where she does up to 30 hours paid work per week and he works full-time; rFT-FT (blue diamond) denotes a couple where she is in paid work for 31 to 39 hours per week and he works full-time; FT-FT (grey circle) denotes couples where both partners do 40 or more hours of paid work per week; rFT-rFT (light blue-striped circle) denotes couples where both partners usually spend between 31 and 39 hours per week at work.

No indicators are shown if less than 30 time use diaries were kept for a specific paid work arrangement. Symbols without black marker lines indicate that there were more than 30 but less than 50 diary entries for the paid work arrangement concerned – PT-FT, rFT-FT for South Africa and rFT-rFT for Austria and Spain.

The figure shows only those countries where the time use of both partners living in the same household is recorded. Female partners must be between 25 and 45 years old. Pensioners and students are excluded.

Housework comprises tasks such as cooking, cleaning, doing the laundry and gardening. It does not include shopping and care for other household members (children and adults).

*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

Male-breadwinner couples (IA/UE–FT) adhere to a traditional division of all work in both the public and private spheres. Women in such couples specialise in unpaid work and their share of the total time that couples devote to housework ranges between 73% (Finland) to 95% (Korea). German male-breadwinner couples perform similarly to French and Austrian couples.

In dual-earner couples, male partners take on a bigger share of housework than in single-earner households. If the woman works reduced full-time and her partner full-time (rFT-FT), or both work full-time (FT-FT) or reduced full-time (rFT-rFT), she does a smaller share of the housework than in single-earner couples (IA/UE-FT) in European countries. In Korea and South Africa, housework is predominantly done by the woman, although male partners do a little more housework in full-time dual-earner couples.

In none of the 8 countries is the partnered woman's share of unpaid work proportionally lower in couples which work similar paid hours. While full-time dual-earner couples (FT-FT) share housework more equally, they are still far short of a

fair 50-50 split. The female share of housework ranges from 88% in Korea to 62% in Germany. Housework is shared most equally in France, Spain and Germany when both partners work between 31 to 40 hours per week (rFT-rFT). In Spain and Germany, the degree of asymmetry in housework varies most sharply according to couples' paid work arrangements.

Dual full-time couples share housework more equally than part-time plus full-time couples except in France and South Africa. In all other countries the difference in housework asymmetry is significant between these two work arrangements. The difference in housework asymmetry between part-time plus full-time couples and couples where both work reduced full-time is significant in Spain. In the other countries this difference is not significant, possibly due to low case numbers (particularly among couples in which men do not work full-time).[4]

If women have a higher income than their partners, they do not do less unpaid work (Figure 5.5). The finding contradicts economic theories that consider partners' income and/or earnings potential as the decisive factor in sharing paid and unpaid work (see Chapter 2, Box 5.2 and "Micro and macro level factors are associated with more equal sharing" in Section 2 above). Gender theories, by contrast, stress the role of gender attitudes and norms. Data limitations in the time use surveys make it possible to compare the intensity of unpaid work on the basis of partners' relative incomes in only a few countries – Germany, Finland, France, Korea, Spain and South Africa. While in Finland, France, Germany and, to some extent, Spain, the gender gap in unpaid work is narrow in couples where she earns more than he does, the gap is still wide in such couples in Korea and South Africa.

The above results on the distribution of unpaid work in couples thus only partly confirm economic theories which claim that the partner with the higher earnings or greater paid workload should be doing less unpaid work. Male partners engage more in unpaid work:

- in dual-earner couples than in male-breadwinner couples (Figure 5.4),
- if the female partner earns more work income than the male partner (Figure 5.5).

However, in most of the countries analysed, men in full-time dual-earner couples are far from doing 50% of unpaid household work (taking working hours as an approximation of earnings and the paid workload). And in couples where the woman earns more than the man, women do more unpaid work on average. Neither of the two square with the predictions of economic theory, although do lend support to the "doing gender" contention that men and women seek to conform with social norms on gender, with women performing traditionally female tasks, like housework and parenting, and men doing the traditionally male thing, i.e. paid work (see "Micro and macro level factors are associated with more equal sharing" in Section 2 above).

**Figure 5.5. Unpaid work is unbalanced even in couples where the woman earns the higher income**

Gender gaps in unpaid work, in minutes per day, according to women's income relative to their partner's income


*Note*: Time use data for partnered men and women who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabitating partner (married or not), women's age restricted to the 25 to 45 year-old age bracket. Pensioners and students are excluded.

Income refers to respondents' monthly net income from employed or self-employed work in Germany, Spain (categorical income variable) and France (continuous variable). Income denotes respondents' individual income subject to state taxation in Finland and the respondents' gross monthly income in Korea. In South Africa, income denotes employed respondents' weekly earnings (the self-employed are not included).

*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

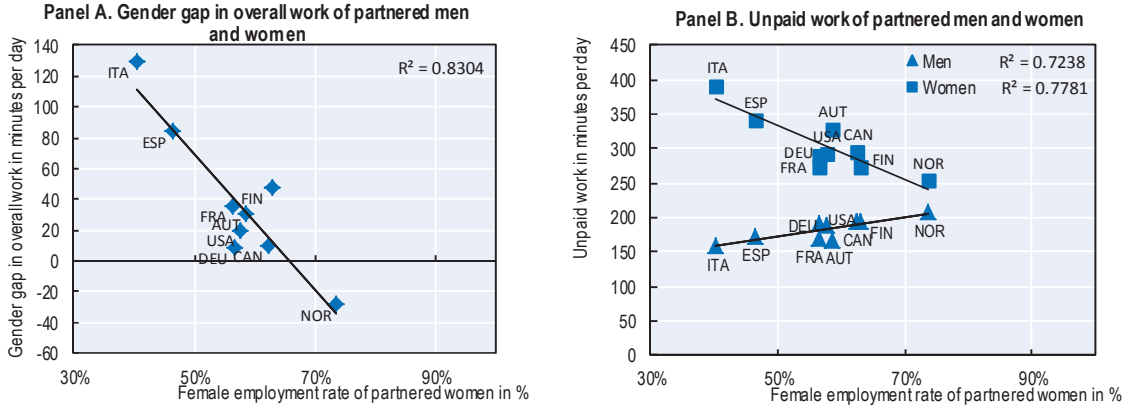
### *In countries with higher female employment rates partnered men do slightly more unpaid work*

In Norway, Finland and France, partnered men and women share paid and unpaid work (more) equally than in the other eight countries analysed (Figure 5.2). All three countries boast broad sets of public policies conducive to sharing, such as parental leave schemes and/or good child care provision (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion). They also have more gender-equal attitudes on, for example, whether mothers should work (Chapter 2) and high female employment rates (see section on "Micro and macro level factors are associated with more equal sharing").

Where female employment rates are higher, as in Germany, Canada, France and the United States, partnered women do more work overall than men – albeit to a considerably smaller degree than in Italy and Spain. In Norway, which boasts the highest female employment rate, partnered men actually do more work overall than partnered women (Figure 5.6, Panel A). Broadly speaking, patterns are related to the behaviour of both sexes: partnered men devote more time to unpaid work in countries with the highest rates of female labour market participation and, at the same time and to a larger extent, partnered women spend less time on unpaid work. Overall, as female employment rates increase, the intensity of their unpaid work falls faster than the man's contribution rises (Figure 5.6, Panel B).

**Figure 5.6. Couples share more evenly in countries with higher female employment rates**

Gender gaps in overall work and unpaid work in minutes per day among partnered men and women aged 20 and over, and female employment rates of partnered women




*Note*: Time use data for partnered men and women aged 20 and more who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabiting partner (married or not).

Employment rates for partnered women aged 20 or more and above who live in the same private household as a spouse or cohabiting partner (married or not). Employment rates in Norway refer to partnered women between 15 and 75 years old.

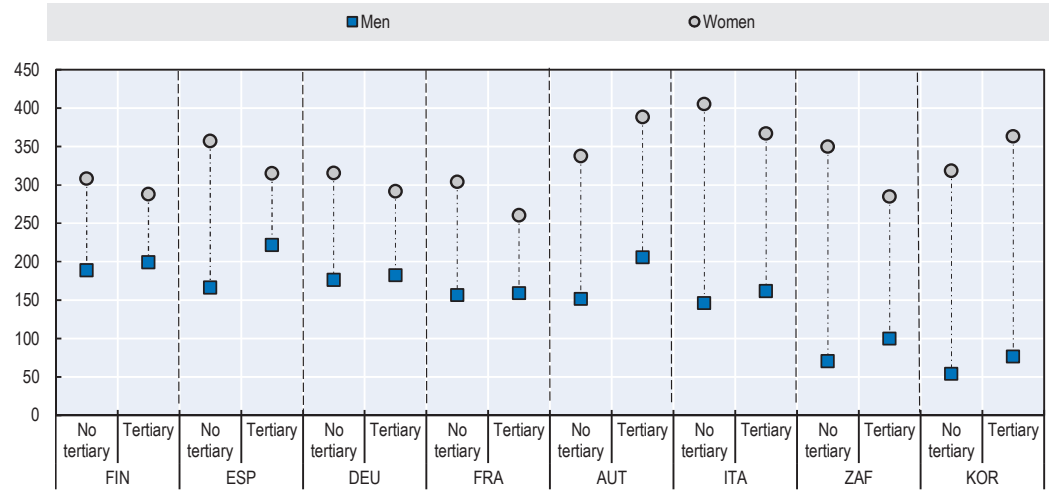
*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015); OECD Secretariat estimates of female employment rates; employment rates for Norway supplied by Statistics Norway.

## *Couples with higher household income and higher education share more equally*

Beyond societal attitudes, national socio-economic characteristics and policies, empirical studies have found that couples who share (more) equally are likely to be better educated and have higher household incomes (Box 5.2). Figure 5.7 shows that, in 8 countries save Austria and Korea, the gender gap in unpaid work is narrower in couples where both partners have a university-level degree than in couples with no such qualification degrees. Women in highly educated couples do less unpaid work – and men do a little more – than women in couples where partners do not hold higher education qualifications. Although, in Austria and Korea, men in more highly educated couples do participate more in unpaid work, their female partners devote even more time to unpaid work. As a result, the gender gap in unpaid work is similar to or even wider among well-educated couples in both countries.

**Figure 5.7. Highly educated couples share unpaid work more equally in most countries**

Gender gap in unpaid work, in minutes per day, in couples according to partners' combined educational status




*Note*: Time use data for partnered men and women who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabitating partner (married or not), women's age restricted to the 25 to 45 year-old age bracket. Pensioners and students are excluded.

From left to right, countries are in ascending order of the gender gap in unpaid work among highly educated couples.

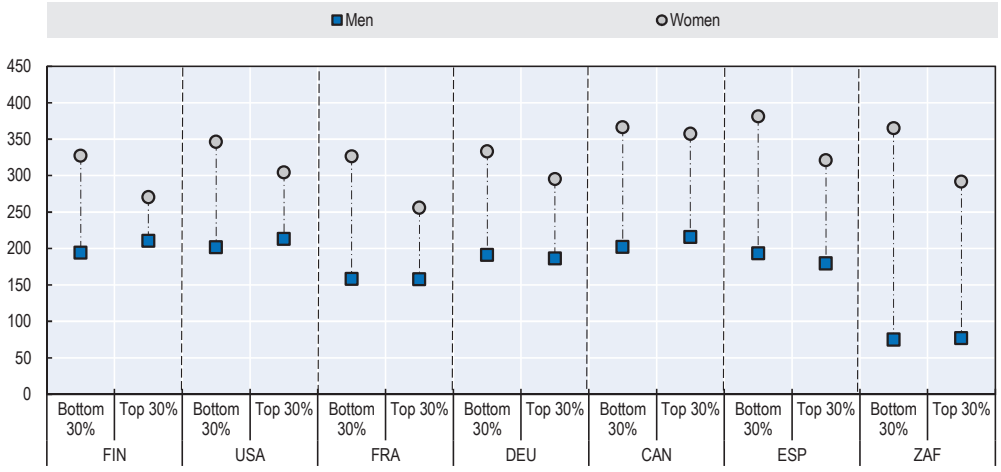
*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

Education may be considered as an important vehicle of attitudinal and behavioural changes – the highly educated often set the trend for such changes before they are absorbed by the rest of society (Bianchi et al., 2000; Anderson and Kohler, 2015). Highly educated couples are more likely to have gender-equal attitudes (Chapter 2). Finland is a case in point. The country's relatively narrow gender gap in unpaid work in couples who are both highly educated but also a relatively small gender gap in couples with both partners without tertiary education (Figure 5.7) coincides with relatively more gender-egalitarian attitudes (Chapter 2) and a larger share of full-time dual-earner couples (Chapter 2, and Känsälä and Oinas, 2015). By contrast, in France and Spain and, to a lesser extent in Germany, the gender gap in unpaid work varies more widely from one education level to another. Although gender-equal behaviour in France and Spain may be similar to that among highly educated couples in Finland, it has not been emulated by the rest of society as in Finland. The unequal division of unpaid work in Austria and Korea, both countries with traditional attitudes (Chapter 2), spans all education levels.

Household income is usually closely correlated with education status. In the countries where household income data are available (all countries except Italy, Austria and Korea), the gender gap in unpaid work is narrower among partnered men and women with higher household incomes (Figure 5.8). Partnered women from the top 30% of the household income distribution do less unpaid work than their peers from the less well-off households in the bottom 30% of the household income distribution. Partnered men in couples in high household income brackets do more or the same amount of unpaid work as in lower-income households. As is to be expected, couples with higher household incomes in all countries are more likely to be highly educated and dual earners couple, so spending more hours in paid work than low-income couples.

**Figure 5.8. Couples with higher household income share unpaid work more equally**

Unpaid work in couples by low and high household income, in minutes per day




*Note*: Time use data for partnered men and women who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabiting partner (married or not), women's age restricted to the 25 to 45 year-old age bracket. Pensioners and students are excluded.

For Finland and France, the declared income of all household members is available as a continuous variable. For Canada and the United States, the categories refer to annual gross income; for Germany, Spain and South Africa the categories refer to gross monthly income. Time spent on unpaid work is shown for the households in the bottom and top 30% of the household income distribution of partnered households. If household income is a categorical variable, the categories are grouped by approximation.

From left to right, countries are arranged in ascending order of gender gap for the top 30% of the household income distribution.

*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

Couples situated in the top 30% of the household income distribution of partnered couples (woman aged 25 to 45) in their country devote altogether less time to unpaid work than couples in the bottom 30% of the household income distribution. They may outsource household chores and/or employ others to do them (they may use dry-cleaning services, home helps and nannies) and/or buy more time-saving electronic appliances. Heisig (2011), for example, shows that richer households in 33 countries devote less time to housework and argues that the automation of domestic work plays a particularly important role in reducing time spent on housework.

## 4. Sharing among parents

### *The presence of young children leads to more traditional task sharing among men and women*

A critical moment that may determine women's future labour market attachment and the sharing of housework is when couples have their first child (see Box 5.3 on the rise of part-time employment amongst mothers in the Netherlands). The evidence suggests that couples generally change markedly their sharing practices when they become parents, often reverting to (more) traditional gender roles (Pfahl, 2014; Baxter, 2008; Barnes, 2015). Figure 5.11 shows the correlation of the gender gaps in aggregate and unpaid work with the female employment rate of partnered women between 25 and 44 years of age in couples with and without children separately in order to capture the effect of parenthood on sharing.[5]

When it comes to young working-age partners without children in the household the gender gap in aggregate work and men's unpaid work is not closely associated with the female employment rate (Figure 5.11, Panel A). While young partnered women without children devote more time to unpaid work than men, they do so less in countries with higher female labour market attachment (Figure 5.11, Panel B).

The picture is quite different when it comes to couples with child care responsibilities. In Austria, Canada and Germany, fathers do more work than mothers on aggregate, while in Finland, Norway, and the United States mothers and fathers do much the same amount (Figure 5.11, Panel C). Altogether higher female labour market attachment is associated with narrower gender gaps in aggregate work among young parents. Panel D in Figure 5.11 breaks down the gender gap in unpaid work and shows that fathers in countries with higher maternal employment rates spend more time on unpaid work. Like women without children, mothers devote more time to unpaid work than men, though even more so in countries with lower female employment rates.

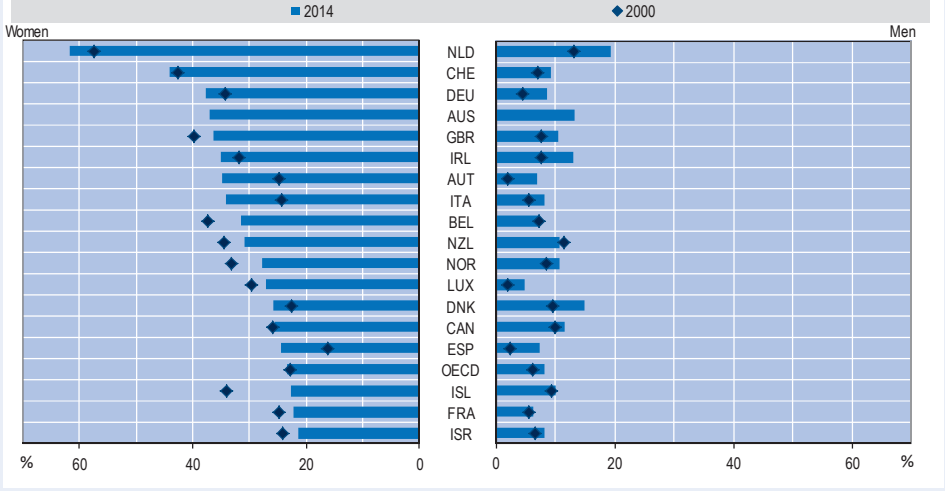
### Box 5.3. Mothers' part-time work and unpaid work in the Netherlands over time

Female labour force participation in the Netherlands was, at 30%, low by international standards until the 1970s (Visser et al., 2004). However, between 1975 and 2010, it climbed from 30% to 70%. The bulk of the rise went to part-time work, while the employment rate of women who work full-time has oscillated around 21% since the early 1990s (Dijkgraaf en Portegijs, 2008).

Part-time employment started to expand in response to the recession in the early 1970s, which caused a steep rise in unemployment and social spending (de Beer and Luttikhuizen, 1998; Visser and Hemerijck, 1998). To curb expenditure spending and fight youth unemployment, public policy during the 1970s and 1980s provided subsidies to employers who split existing full-time jobs into two part-time jobs. In turn, employers made use of part-time work to get around union demands for collective reductions in the standard working week to less than 38 hours.

**Figure 5.9. The Netherlands have high proportions of women and men in part-time work compared to other OECD countries**

Percentages of men and women in part-time employment, selected OECD countries, 2000 and 2014




*Note*: From top to bottom, countries are arranged in descending order of the proportion of women working part-time. Data on countries with less than 20% of employed women working part-time are not presented here.

Part-time employment refers main jobs of less than 30 hours per week.

*Source*: *OECD Employment Database*, www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm.

### Box 5.3. Mothers' part-time work and unpaid work in the Netherlands over time *(cont.)*

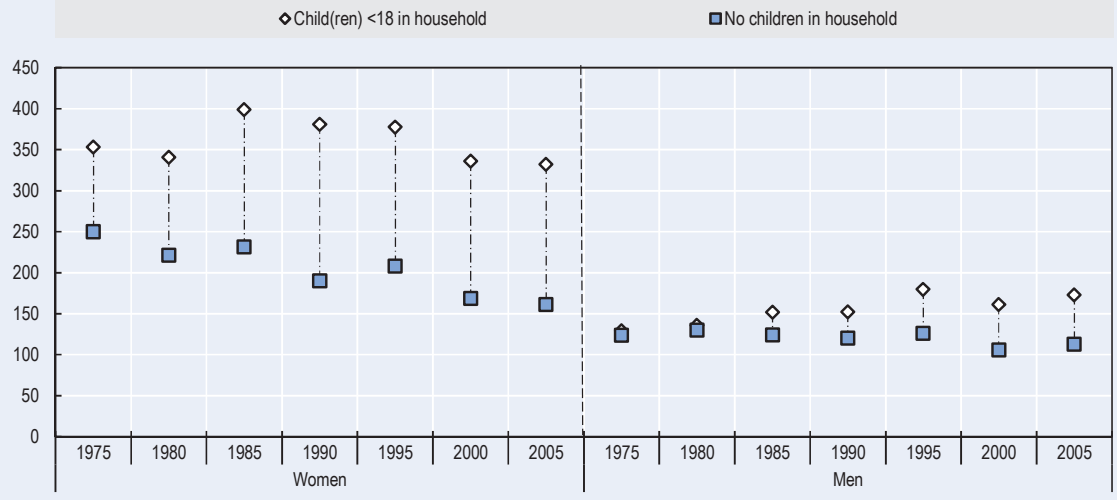
#### Rise in part-time work attributable to change in attitudes

However, part-time work really took off in the Netherlands not because of a redistribution of work among younger or older workers, but because women, particularly mothers, wanted to be in and stay in work. That perception was related to a sea-change in attitudes. In 2005, about three-quarters of women had no issue with mothers who had young children being in paid work and using care facilities, three times more than in 1970. However, because of the constraints of child care and out-of-school-hours care, women have widely chosen to work part- rather than full-time (Ribberink, 1998). In all, only one in ten mothers with a child not yet ten years of age was in paid work in the Netherlands in 1971. A quarter of a century later that proportion had increased to over 50%. The "normalisation" of part-time work in the Netherlands has been formalised in a range of legislative measures, such as laws that stipulate equal pay per working hour regardless of weekly working hours, employees' right to request changes in weekly working hours, and the entitlement to request parental leave on a part-time basis (Visser et al., 2004).

The change in women's employment patterns since the 1970s in the Netherlands has contributed to change in the sharing of unpaid work (Hook, 2006; Kan et al., 2011). Overall, the time that women devote to unpaid work has fallen, especially among those in employment (data not shown here), and increased moderately among men. Nevertheless, although employed 25-to-45 year-old women living with a partner have gradually come to spend less time on unpaid work, the fall has been more pronounced among childless women (white diamond vs. light blue square in Figure 5.10). It is related to a general trend increase in time devoted to child care activities by parents and a falling trend in other unpaid housework. By contrast, partnered employed men without children have been doing marginally less unpaid work over time. Partnered fathers, for their part, are doing more unpaid work, mainly because of their greater involvement in parenting, but also because they actually do more unpaid housework (white diamond Figure 5.10). All these factors have contributed to a narrowing gender gap in unpaid work in the Netherlands.

**Figure 5.10. The time that women in the Netherlands spend on unpaid work has fallen, but the gender gap persists when children are present in the household**

Unpaid work in minutes per day, 1975 to 2005

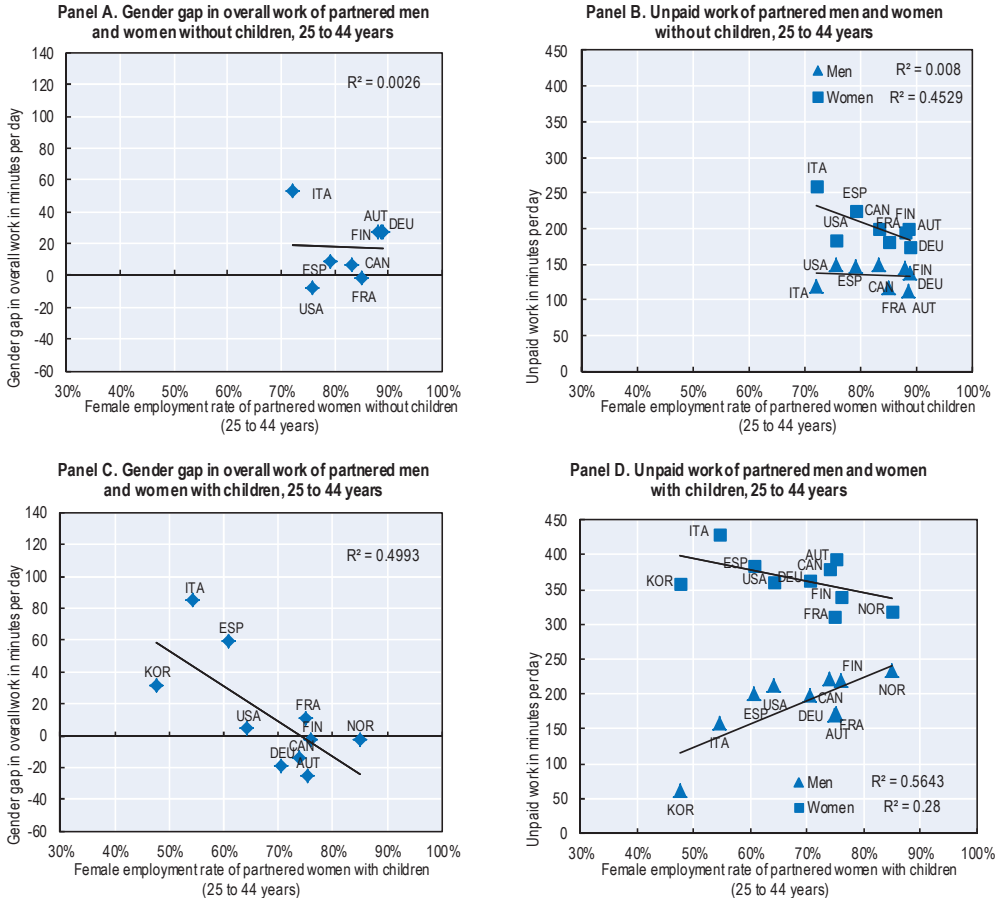



*Note*: Employed men and women living in partnership in the Netherlands, aged 25 to 45 years old, with or without dependent children under 18 in the household.

*Source*: Secretariat estimate based on data from the Multinational Time Use Study (MTUS, 2015) for the Netherlands.

**Figure 5.11. Young, working-age partners share aggregate work and unpaid work less equally, particularly in countries with lower female employment rates, when they have children**

Gender gaps in aggregate work and unpaid work, in minutes per day, of partnered men and women aged 20 or above and female employment rates of partnered women, with and without children




*Note*: Time use for men and women living in the same household with their partner. Pensioners and students excluded. Households with children are defined as households where a household member below the age of 18 is identified as the couple's child.

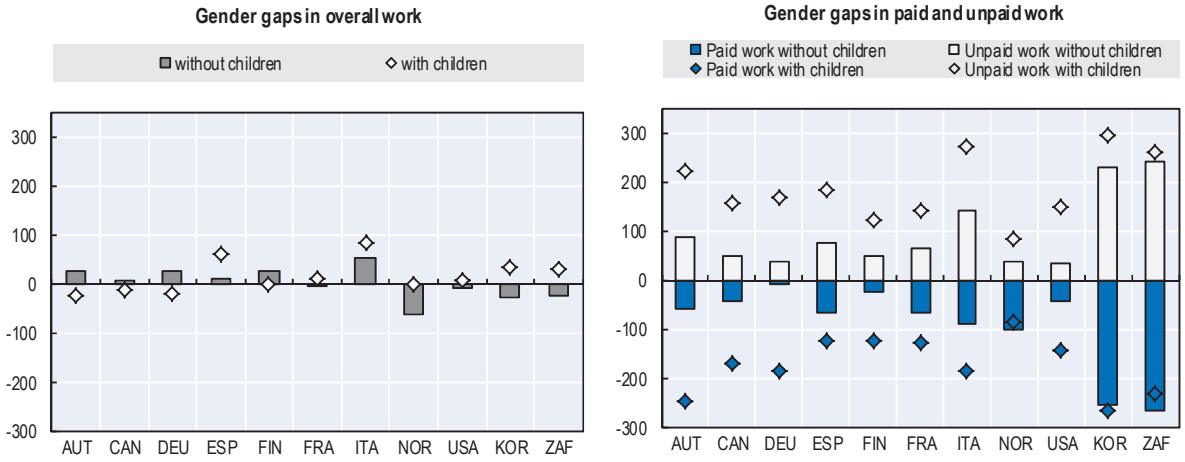
For the employment rate estimates, children are defined as between 0 and 14 years old inclusive (0 and 17 inclusive in the United States) who live in the same household as and are identified as the child of the respondent. Maternal employment rates for Korea for 2013 for mothers of children below 15 years.

*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015); OECD Secretariat estimates of female employment rates.

Across countries the gender gap in aggregate work is not uniformly larger or smaller in couples with children than in couples without children (Figure 5.12, left-hand panel). The aggregate gap disguises considerable differences in gender gaps in paid and unpaid work taken separately (Figure 5.12, right-hand panel). The presence of young children increases the polarisation of paid and unpaid work, with gender gaps in both yawning wider. Fathers do relatively more paid work (except in Norway, Korea and South Africa) and mothers do relatively more unpaid work than men and women in childless couples.

**Figure 5.12. Young working-age parents share paid and unpaid work more traditionally than their childless peers**

Gender gaps in paid, unpaid and aggregate work, in minutes per day, among 25-to-44 year-old partnered men and women with and without children




*Note:* Time use data for partnered men and women who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabiting partner (married or not), women's age restricted to the 25-to-45 year-old age bracket. Pensioners and students are excluded. Households with children are defined as households where at least one household member under 18 is identified as the couple's child.

*Reading note for left hand panel*: In Germany, partnered childless women aged 25 to 44 do 27.68 more minutes of work on aggregate (paid plus unpaid work) than childless partnered men (dark grey bar). On average, partnered women aged 25 to 44 with children do 18.69 minutes less work on aggregate (paid and unpaid work) per day than partnered men with children (white diamond).

*Reading note for right hand panel*: This panel decomposes the overall gender gap into the paid and unpaid work gender gaps. In Germany, partnered childless women aged 25 to 44 do 10.22 minutes less paid work (dark blue bar) and 37.9 minutes more unpaid work (white bar) than childless partnered men. Partnered women aged 25 to 44 with children do 185.3 minutes less paid work (dark blue diamond) and 166.51 minutes more unpaid work than partnered men with children (white diamond).

*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

Partnered fathers spend between 8 and 28 minutes per day more in paid work than partnered men without children, except in Austria, Korea, Norway and South Africa. Among partnered women the difference in paid work time is considerably wider, with mothers often withdrawing fully or partly from the labour market. The greatest differences between partnered women with and without children come in Austria and Germany (respectively 203 and 135 minutes per day), whereas in Norway the difference is only 15 minutes per day.

The findings demonstrate that the transition to parenthood is a critical time that determines whether couples will go on sharing paid and unpaid work. As discussed in Chapter 3 and Box 5.4, parental leave, particularly the months for the exclusive use of fathers, is an important policy lever for encouraging young couples to keep up egalitarian sharing patterns when they become parents. Tax and benefit systems are also important financial incentives for parents to remain dual-earner couples and not to revert to traditional male-breadwinner models.

### Box 5.4. "Daddy months" or how fathers' parental leave affects sharing and involvement with children

Mothers may be the main users of child-related leave provisions, but there is growing debate on leave arrangements that target or are available only to fathers. As well as affording fathers the opportunity to support the mother and child directly after child birth, father-specific leaves are likely to encourage them to engage in parenting and, to some degree at least, promote male unpaid work within the household. Moreover, father-specific leave is likely to reduce grounds for leave-associated employer discrimination against female employees: As long as mothers remain the main, almost exclusive, users of leave, there is a risk of employers not hiring young women on permanent or regular employment contracts and investing less in their career opportunities and training than in men's. That risk could be tempered by large numbers of young fathers taking up child-related leave not just for one or two days, but for months at a time (Levtov et al., 2015 on the "state of the world's fathers").

Evidence from across the OECD suggests that the provision of father-specific leave may also affect fathers' involvement in parenting and/or housework, their working hours, their own well-being, and the well-being of their children.

Across the OECD, fathers' take-up of leave is associated with their involvement in child care activities and at least some redistribution of unpaid work (Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel, 2007; Tanaka and Waldfogel, 2007; Huerta et al., 2013; Schober, 2013; Almqvist and Duvander, 2014; Schober 2014a). Using data from the United Kingdom, for example, Tanaka and Waldfogel (2007) found that fathers who took paternity or parental leave were more likely to engage in child-related tasks such as changing diapers, feeding the child and/or getting up to care for the child at night. Huerta et al. (2013) corroborated some of those findings in a study of four OECD countries (Australia, Denmark, the United Kingdom and the United States), where it emerged that they were most likely to materialise when fathers took leave for two weeks or more.

Importantly, such benefits usually last: fathers who engage early are more likely to remain involved as their children grow (Baxter and Smart, 2010; Brandth and Gislason, 2012). In a study on Sweden, which introduced a so-called "daddy-month" of paid parental leave for the exclusive use of fathers in 1995, Almqvist and Duvander (2014) found that when fathers took long leave, parents shared both household tasks and parenting more equally. Fifteen years after Norway introduced its four-week paternity leave in 1993, Kotsadam and Finseraas (2011) found that eligible fathers were more likely to share housework in a gender-equal manner with their partner. However, evidence on the impact of paternity leave on fathers' labour market involvement is mixed. Cools et al. (2015) found no effect on fathers' working hours, whereas Rege and Solli (2013) found a negative effect on father's earnings which, they suggest, stems from reduced working hours. As for Sweden, Duvander and Jans (2009) found that long paternity leave has a negative impact on fathers' working hours, whereas Ekberg et al. (2013) found no substantial effect on parents' long-term wages or employment.

Fathers' well-being may also benefit from increased involvement around the home. Fathers who contribute more to unpaid work are less prone to divorce than less involved fathers (Sigle-Rushton, 2010), while fathers who engage more with their children report greater life satisfaction and better physical and mental health (Eggebeen and Knoester, 2001; WHO, 2007).

Greater paternal involvement in parenting and family life is also associated with positive cognitive and emotional outcomes for their children (Cabrera et al., 2007; Lamb, 2010; OECD, 2012; Huerta et al., 2013; Schober, 2015). Children's physical health also benefits (WHO, 2007). Similarly, Lamb (2012) found that fathers spend a greater share of their child care time with more interactive, "quality activities" (such as playing) than mothers. In sum, greater paternal involvement in parenting not only has advantages for female labour force participation, it is good for children, too.

#### Leave for fathers in Germany

With its reform of parental leave in 2007, Germany introduced earnings-related compensation for parents on leave and two bonus months reserved for their partner (read "the father"). The reform increased fathers' involvement in parenting according to most studies (Wrohlich et al., 2012; Lauber et al., 2014; Schober, 2014b; Bünning, 2015; Pfahl et al., 2014), although one study that focuses on the immediate effects in the child's first year found no effects (Kluve and Tamm, 2013).

**Box 5.4. "Daddy months" or how fathers' parental leave affects sharing and involvement with children** *(cont.)*

In line with international evidence, fathers' parenting involvement increases with the length of leave taken and when the father takes leave at a different time than his partner ("solo leave"). Bünning (2015) also showed that fathers' working hours fall when they take parental leave, and that their participation in housework increases if they took more than two months parental leave or "solo leave".

Pfahl et al. (2014) used in-depth interviews and an online survey to analyse the lingering medium-term effect on German couples, particularly fathers, of parental leave even after it ends. The survey and interviews took place in 2012-13 and questioned fathers who took parental leave between 2007 and 2013. Results suggest that, in couples who share parental leave months more equally, fathers are more likely to work part-time during and after parental leave. Fathers who take three months or more of leave tend to share housework more equally. They also reported a greater intensity in their relationships with their children which has outlasted the parental leave period itself. However, fathers who took leave for three months or more – particularly those who reduced their working hours after the parental leave period – reported that they believed that their careers had suffered or were likely to suffer as a result.

### *Partnered mothers are more involved in child care than partnered fathers but the gap closes at weekends and once the youngest child enters school*

Parenthood ushers in much extra unpaid work for parents that includes more housework and such child-related tasks as physical care, playing and reading. While parents spend a considerable part of their day with children present, what they do is not always exclusively child-related – like having a family dinner as opposed to reading to the children. In time use surveys, respondents may record a primary activity, such as cooking, and also note a secondary activity, like listening to the radio while cooking. In most countries, respondents also indicate who was with them while they were doing what they were doing. They might not therefore record a child-related activity as primary (or secondary), even though they might still be with the children – for example, cooking while listening to the radio and supervising a child in the household who is doing his or her homework.

Two different indicators measure these different dimensions of interaction with the children (Box 5.1):

- time spent in the presence of household children, which sums up the total time spent in the presence of children in the household,
- participation rates in child care that show the percentage of mothers (fathers) out of all mothers (fathers) who recorded any type of child care as a primary activity during a day.

These indicators must be interpreted with caution, however, as not all countries use the same age thresholds to record the presence of children (see notes to Figure 5.13).

Women spend a lot more time than men with children regardless of their primary and secondary activity (Figure 5.13, Panel A). The gender gap also prevails in rates of participation in child care as a primary activity (Panel B). Outright child care like reading, playing and physical care make up the smaller share of the total time that either parent spends with the children. In families with children under school age, partnered mothers in Finland spend a comparatively large share of their time with children in pure child care, as do Finnish fathers – respectively 65% and 60% of total time spent with children. In Italy, child care accounts for 25% of the time that

partnered mothers with their children, and 18% of the partnered fathers time. However, caution should once again be exercised in interpreting the results, as Finnish parents seem to spend considerably less time in the presence of their children than Italian parents. In all 11 countries, the time spent on child care as a primary activity lessens as children go to school. Box 5.5 illustrates the time that Australian parents and children spend together – but from the children's perspective.

### Box 5.5. Time spent with parents from children's perspective in Australia

The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) collects data on how young children spend their day. It complements parents' information collected in the regular time use surveys with data from children's perspective. A nationally representative study of Australian children, the LSAC is a unique opportunity to examine how children's time with fathers and mothers varies with their paid working hours – and how it varies over the early years, as the LSAC follows children over time (longitudinal data).

The LSAC commenced in 2004 and collects data every two years. The youngest LSAC cohort data from which this report draws time use data relates to the age groups 0 to 1, 2 to 3 and 4 to 5 years old. Information collected on who was with the child ("Who else was in the same room or, if outside, nearby to the child?" with answer options "mother" and/or "father") is used to estimate how much time children spend per day:

- with both father and mother at the same time
- with only the father
- with only the mother.

For night-time hours (8 pm to 6 am), only the times when parents were present and children were awake were considered. The accounts in adult time use diaries of how children spend their time in couple families make it possible to relate children's time more closely to each parent's paid working hours.

While children are young fathers generally work long full-time hours, while mothers work part-time. Gendered patterns of paid and unpaid work time, which include child care, are thus apparent in Australian studies of parents' time use (Craig and Mullan, 2010) and in the LSAC:

- Based on parents' time use data, Craig, Powell, and Smyth (2014) report that Australian mothers spent more than 10 hours (617 minutes) per seven-day week on average with their children (0 to 14 years old), and fathers over 6 hours (401 minutes) per day in 2006.
- The child-based LSAC produce comparable estimates: children in the age groups 0 to 1, 2 to 3 and 4 to 5 years old spend an overall average of 572 minutes per day with their mothers and 313 minutes with their fathers. As parent-based estimates reflect parents' time with any number of children in the household, estimates of parental time from a single child's perspective (like those of the LSAC) are likely to be lower than those captured from adult time use diaries.

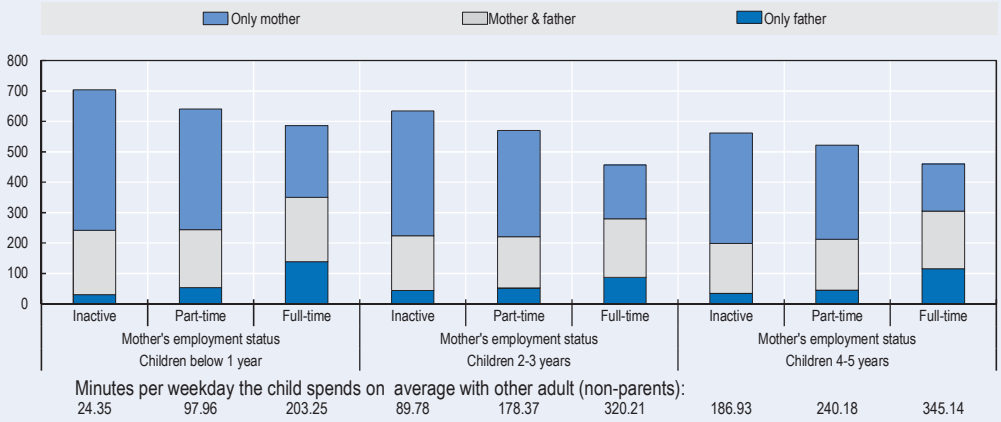
Figure 5.13 shows how children's time with parents in couple families differs according to the mother's employment status – denoted by the height of the bar. Children spend less time with parents in total on weekdays as mothers' paid working hours increase, which reflects the time spent in the care of non-parental adults (see "Average number of minutes children spend with other adults [not their parents]" at the bottom of the figure). As mothers' paid working hours lengthen, children's solo time with mothers falls, while with their fathers it increases. Multivariate methods, which take into account the longitudinal nature of the data, confirm these findings (Baxter, 2015). Yet both the total and solo time that children spend with the fathers declines as fathers' paid working week grows longer. And while associations between parental paid work hours and children's time use are weaker for weekends, the children of fathers who work long hours (55 hours or more per week) have the shortest weekend time with their father.

Finally, Baxter (2015) showed that children's time with parents correlates over time. Children who had more solo or total time with either parent at a very young age are likely to enjoy more such parental time at somewhat older ages. Policies that seek to enable parents, particularly fathers, to spend time with their young children may thus play an important role in greater father involvement as children grow older.

**Box 5.5. Time spent with parents from children's perspective in Australia** *(cont.)*

**Figure 5.13. Children spend similar amounts of time with fathers and mothers when the mother works full-time**

Children's weekday time with parents in couple families at the ages of 0-1, 2-3 and 4-5 years old, in minutes per weekday




*Note*: Only children in couple families with diary data at three waves are included (N = 1 719).

*Source*: Baxter, J. (2015), "Children's Time With Fathers and Mothers Over the Pre-School Years: A Longitudinal Time-Use Study of Couple Families in Australia", *Family Science*, Vol. 6, No. 1.

In most families with young children, both parents report some kind of child care activity during the day. Such "dual child carer" families constitute 78% of families with at least one school-aged child in Spain and 62% in France, with other countries ranking in between (results not shown here). Families where only the mother reports at least one child care activity and the father none are the next largest group – "mother main carer" families, which account for 28% of families with at least one school-aged child in France, for example, and 17% in Spain. Among families with older children – as less outright child care is required and overall time with children lessens – the share of "dual child carer" families falls and that of "mother main carer" families rises.

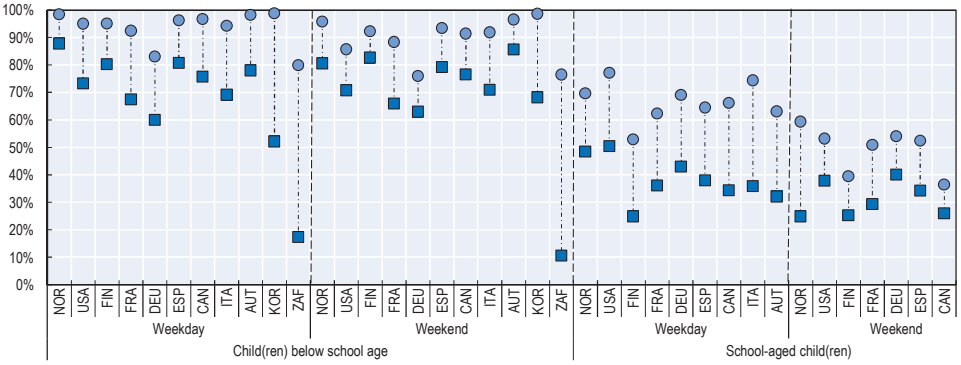
Korea (57%) and South Africa (14%) have the lowest proportions of "dual carer" families of all 11 countries and mothers are more likely to be the only carer. However, in both countries the activity list restricts child care mainly to physical care and supervision and/or is geared mainly towards interaction with young children (Box 5.1). Various child care-related activities which the other countries have coded – such as talking to and teaching children – are not picked up to the same extent by the activity lists in Korea and South Africa.[6]

The gender gap in child care is narrower on weekends and closes once children are enrolled in school. And parents share participation in child care activities and time with the children more equally on weekends and when the children are older (Figure 5.14). At the weekend, parents of school-aged children in France, Finland and the United States spend nearly equal lengths of time in the presence of their children.[7] Hook and Wolfe (2012) confirm that, for the United States, Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom, fathers spend more time in interactive care and alone with children on weekends. But only Norwegian fathers increase both their rates of participation in child care and the time spent on physical care.

**Figure 5.14. Partnered fathers are less involved than mothers with young children, but the gender gap seem smaller during weekends and when children start school**

Panel A. Time spent in presence of children by youngest child's age and type of day, in minutes per day[1]


Panel B. Participation rates in child care by youngest child's age and type of day, in percentage[2]




*Note*: Time use data for partnered men and women who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabitating partner (married or not), women's age restricted to the 25-to-45 year-old age bracket. Pensioners and students are excluded.

1. Minutes spent in the presence of children living in the household are recorded for all children under 18 in Italy, France, the United States (striped symbols), children under 15 in Canada (dotted symbols), children under 10 in Austria, Finland, Germany, and Spain (symbols without patterns). South Africa and Korea are not included because the presence of household children is not recorded at all in South Africa and in Korea only the presence of any other household member aged 10 or older is recorded.

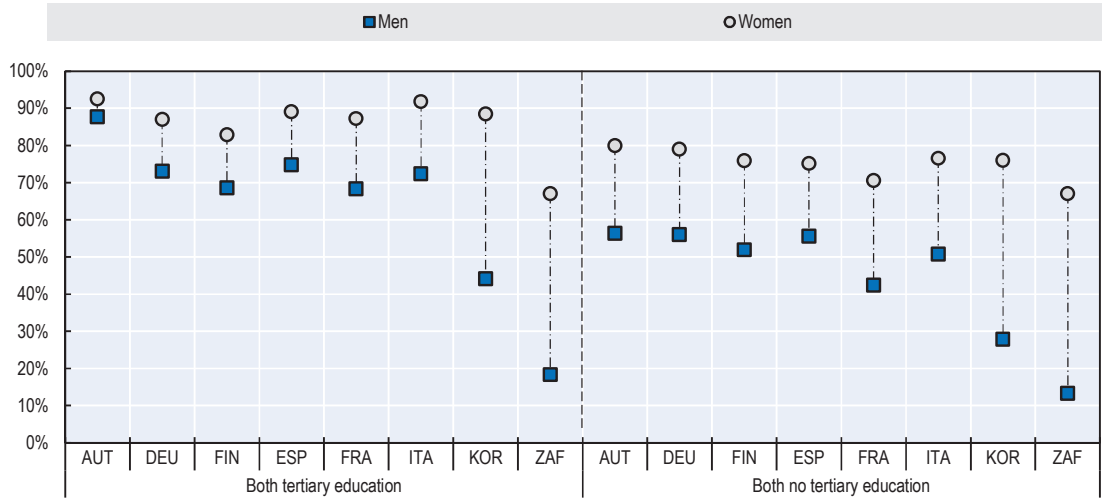
2. Participation rates in child care capture the percentage of fathers or mothers that have recorded at least one child care activity (physical care, supervision, teaching, or reading, playing, and talking with the child) as a primary activity over the course of day entered in the diary. Participation rates are not shown for school-aged children in Korea and South Africa, as the child care activity list refers to activities with small children (see Box 5.1 for further details).

*Source: OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

Highly educated couples are more likely to share more equally in many respects, including child care. The gender gap in child care participation between parents with higher education degrees is narrower than between parents with no such qualifications in all eight countries for which the education level of both parents is available (Figure 5.15). However, when it comes to time spent with children, highly educated couples are not significantly different from couples who have no university-level degree (results not shown here).

**Figure 5.15. Highly educated couples participate more equally in child care activities**

Gender gap in participation rates in child care by education level, in percentage




*Note*: Time use data for partnered men and women who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabitating partner (married or not), women's age restricted to the 25-to-45 year-old age bracket. Pensioners and students are excluded.

Participation rates in child care activities capture the percentage of fathers or mothers that have recorded at least one child care activity (physical care, supervision, teaching, reading, playing, and talking with the child) as a primary activity over the course of the diary day. Participation rates are not shown for school-aged children in Korea and South Africa due to the child care activity list referring to activities with small children (see Box 5.1 for further details).

*Source: OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

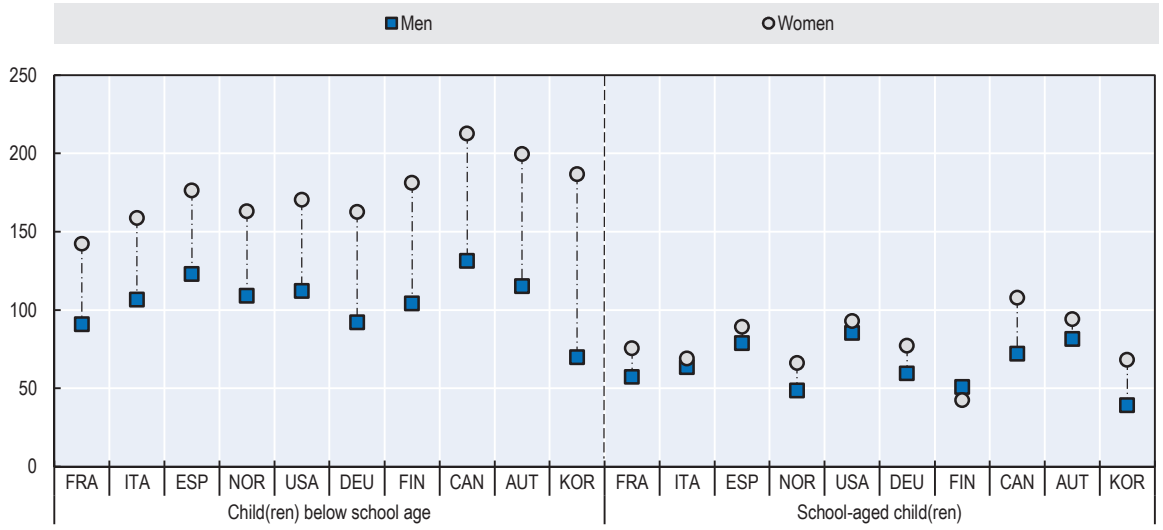
### *Mothers have more hours of quality time with their children, but fathers have a higher proportion*

In couple families where both parents are "carers" (see Box 5.1 for a definition) – i.e. participate in child care activities – mothers invest more time in child care activities than fathers (Figure 5.16, Panel A). However, the gender gap is narrower, or disappears, when the youngest child is enrolled in school. In families whose youngest child is under the compulsory school age, the gender gap between "carer parents" in time spent on child care varies from 51 minutes (in France) to 118 (in Korea). In Finnish families with school-aged children, "carer" fathers actually record more time in child care activities than "carer" mothers (see notes to Figure 5.16).

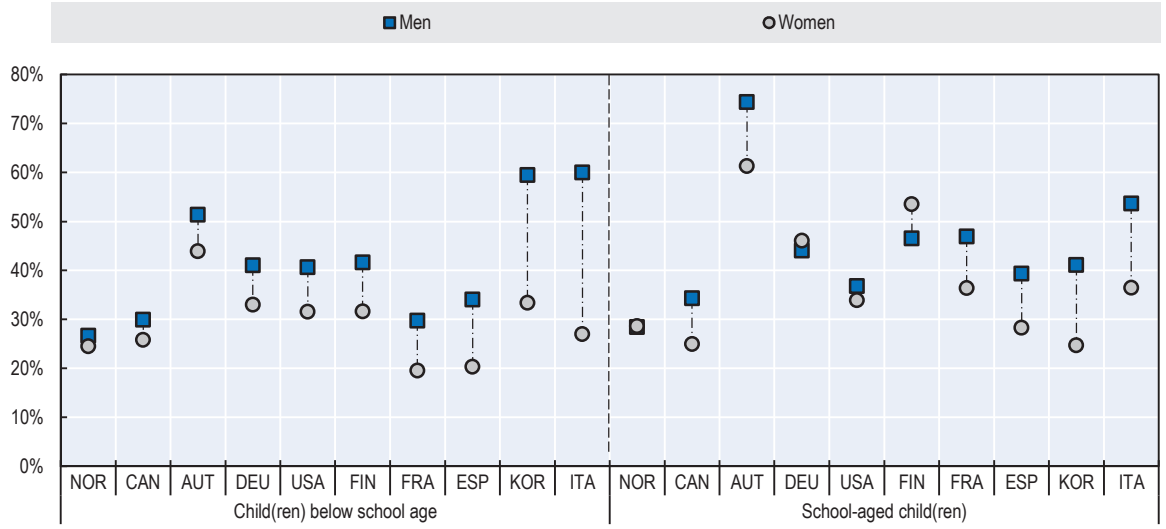
No agreed definition exists as to which child care activities should be considered as "quality time". Nevertheless, parents not only carry out routine care-giving tasks. They also interact educationally and creatively with their children in activities that are also likely to be associated with leisure. In that respect reading, playing, talking, teaching and taking children outdoors may be come under the heading of "quality time" or "quality activities".[8] Time spent on physical care, supervision, fetching children and non-specified child care is not considered "quality time" (Figure 5.16, Panel B).

**Figure 5.16. Although fathers spend less time with young children, a greater share of that time is "quality time"**

Panel A. The time that carer parents spend on child care activities, by youngest child's age, in minutes per day[1]




Panel B. The percentage of "quality time" in the total time that carer parents devote to child care activities by the youngest child's age[2]




*Note*: Time use data for partnered men and women who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabitating partner (married or not), women's age restricted to the 25-to-45 year-old age bracket. Pensioners and students are excluded.

1. Data restricted to "carers", i.e. mothers and fathers who are engaged in at least one child care activity during the diary day (for detail see Box 5.1).

2. "Quality time" includes reading, playing, talking with children, taking them outdoors, teaching them. Physical care-giving, taking and fetching children and other unspecified child care activities are not considered quality time.

*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

Fathers in couple families spend a larger proportion of their child care time in quality child care activities than mothers in all countries – with the exception of Norway and Finland and not if it comes to school-aged children (Figure 5.16, Panel B). Mothers, particularly those with infants, are often more engaged than fathers in physical child care activities, like changing diapers and breast-feeding, that are not considered quality activities here. In absolute terms, with around one hour per day, Italian, Austrian and American fathers spend the most quality time with their young children, while Italian and Spanish partnered fathers, again in absolute terms, devote more time to quality activities than partnered mothers.

### *Partnered men are less likely to care for adults in the household, but there seems not to be a gender gap*

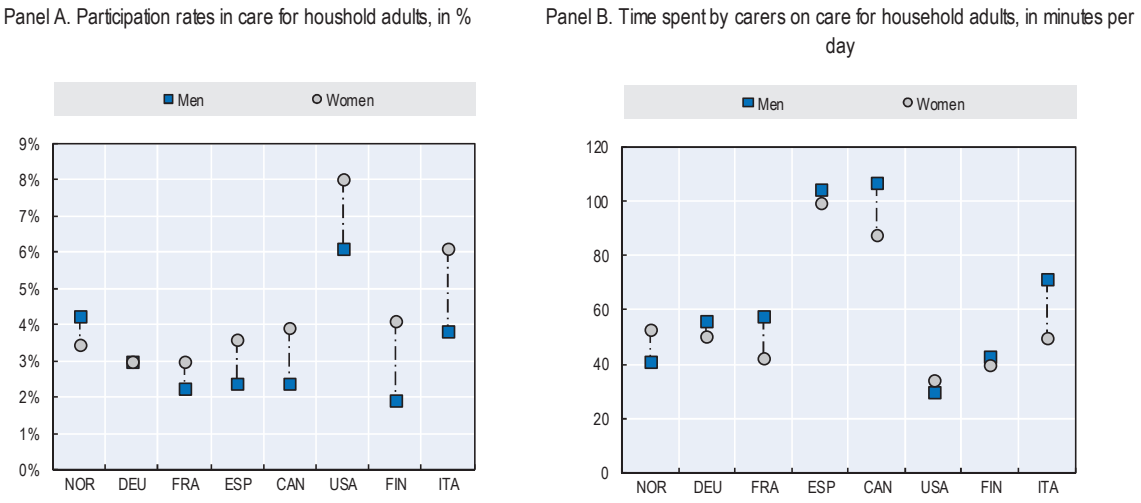
In 2010, about 15% of people aged 50 and over in 18 OECD countries reported being an informal carer for an adult in their household (OECD, 2013, p. 181) and informal care is particularly prevalent in countries with relatively few paid care workers (OECD, 2013). Some two-thirds of those carers were women. "Care participation rates" based on time use data indicate that in all countries, except Norway, partnered men are less likely to care for another adult in the household than partnered women living in a couple households (Figure 5.17, Panel A). The over-50s account for the bulk of carers.[9]

Countries report care for household adults at very different levels of detail in time use surveys. The United States time use survey records care for adult household members with the greatest level of detail. By contrast, some countries only record one category to cover all types of (physical) care and help for adult household members, which warrants caution in cross-country comparisons of care for adult household members.

Out of those partnered men and women that report at least one episode of care for an adult household member in their diary, partnered men spend at least as much time – if not more – on caring and helping than partnered women, except in Norway and the United States (Figure 5.17, Panel B). When one adult in a household cares for another one, it is most likely to be his or her partner or spouse.

The indicators in Figure 5.17 shed light on only one dimension of care work for the elderly and/or disabled. A considerable part of eldercare work takes place outside the household (US BLS, 2013). Yet identifying informal care for adults outside the household in time use data and harmonising care activities across countries is challenging to the point of being nearly impossible. Many countries record care for non-household adults separately, but lump together informal help for adults in other households and help for other households in a single category. A clear, consistent, cross-national identification of informal care for adults is beyond the scope of this analysis.[10]

**Figure 5.17. Partnered men are less likely to care for adult household members than partnered women in first place, but once they are involved in care giving they devote similar amounts of time**




*Note*: Time use data for partnered men and women aged 18 or more.

Care for household adults" includes all care and help activities recorded. The indicator is not reported if less than 30 respondents participated in the activity.

Both indicators on care for adults in other households not reported for Finland and Spain because the activities with regard to care for an adult household member are lumped together with other activities.

*Source*: *OECD Time Use Database* (see Annex Table 5.A1.1 for more information); data for Germany as provided by the German Statistical Office based on the German Time Use Survey 2012-13 (Destatis, 2015).

## 5. Concluding remarks

Although women participate increasingly in paid employment, they widely work shorter weekly hours than their male partners. And even if they do work the same number of hours, couples do not yet share unpaid work equally.

Female partners spend twice as much time in unpaid work at home as their partners, although the gender gap in that respect is narrower in countries with higher female employment rates. In couples where women participate more in the labour market, couples share unpaid work more equally. The main reason, however, is that partnered women and dual-earner couples do less unpaid work overall, not because partnered men do more unpaid work. Education is an important contributory factor in more equally shared paid and unpaid work in most of the 11 countries for which time use data were analysed. Highly educated couples are more likely to be dual earners, and they generally share unpaid work more equally than couples who have no higher education qualifications.

Parenthood marks a turning point in the sharing behaviour of many couples. When they have a child, they often revert (albeit involuntarily) to more traditional gender roles than young couples with no children, who continue to share unpaid work more equally.

Mothers may spend more quality time with their children than fathers, but a larger proportion of fathers' child care time is quality time that comprises interactive activities such as reading, playing and talking with the children. Fathers in highly educated couples are also generally more involved in child care activities than fathers in less well educated couples.

# Notes

1. "Parent", "mother" or "father" refers to the mother or father residing in a household where at least one child under 18 lives together with a couple (married or cohabitating) identified as his/her parents.

2. The term "gender gap" in this chapter refers to the difference in an indicator between women relative to men, e.g. the average time that women devote to unpaid time less the average time that men devote to the same task.

3. Using data from the Gender and Generations Programme, Aasve et al. (2014) show that couples in Norway share housework more equally than couples in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, and the Russian Federation. The sharing variable is constructed from responses by one partner to questions on the intensity with which his or her partner usually takes on "standard" household tasks.

4. Respondents in the German Time Use Survey were selected through so-called "quota sampling": the target population is divided into several subgroups (e.g. by sex, age and geographic location), and respondents from those subgroups are then selected in a non-random procedure. The advantage of this approach is that it is less time-intensive and hence less costly than random sampling, and that the resulting response rates can be considerably higher. Survey results are not, however, necessarily representative of the entire population and "statistical inference" (including the construction of confidence intervals) therefore not possible (see Maier, 2014 for further details). Due to very low case numbers on the PT-FT combination in Finland and the rFT-rFT combination in Korea and South Africa, these combinations are not considered for these countries.

5. As the data do not distinguish between older couples who never had children and older couples whose children have already moved out of the household, the analysis is restricted to younger couples.

6. The South African activity list includes physical care, supervision, teaching and accompanying children but not reading, playing or talking with children. The South Korean activity list does not include talking to children or reading or playing with school-aged children.

7. Travel related to child care activities is not considered as child care in Figure 5.14. Yet child care-related travel can take up considerable time. However, defining travel related to child care as an additional child care activity does not change the patterns illustrated in Figure 5.14.

8. When defining "quality" time more narrowly as reading, playing, talking and taking the child outdoors only (not including teaching as a "quality" activity), fathers still spend a greater share of their time on quality child care activities than mothers.

9. The care participation rates based on daily time use presented in Figure 5.14 are systematically lower than the statistics on informal carers cited above as 1) age is

not restricted to the over-50s, 2) they are a result of limiting the analysis to household adults, and 3) in time use surveys people report their activities on one (or two) randomly picked days. In such a survey, anyone giving care informally, but not on a daily basis, has a lower chance of being recorded as involved in informal care than in response to a survey which asks whether he/she did any informal care work in the previous week.

10. In 2011 a series of elder care questions were added to the American Time Use Survey. Together with a detailed activity list, the expanded survey allows for a greater understanding of elder care in general and how elder care work is divided in couples. Surveys with a focus on ageing (like the 2007 General Social Survey of Canada, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA), English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) in England, and the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) in European Union countries) usually ask about how frequently care was provided (daily, weekly or monthly) and sometimes how many hours of care were provided per week. They do not, however, allow full mapping of the carer's (or his or her spouse's) day.

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# *Annex 5.A1*

## Overview of the time use surveys analysed

Table 5.A1.1 shows the main features of the time use surveys used in this chapter. Methodological differences may affect the comparability of certain indicators across countries. The following lists the most important limitations for the indicators presented in this Chapter:

- Canada, Norway and the United States do not record both partners' time use in the household. Therefore, how a couple shares unpaid work is, cannot be computed. As for Finland and Spain, all household members ten years or older fill out the diary but people living in partnership within the same household cannot be identified through a personal identifier. So similar ages are used to identify partners.
- Austria, Finland, Germany Spain provide no information on time spent in the presence of household children unless they are young (below ten years), Canada only for household children under 15, Korea asks only whether a preschool-age child was present. South Africa does not ask who was present at all.
- Some countries define child care activities more narrowly. In Korea parents can record physical care, teaching, visiting the school and other activities with their school-age children. However, it lists reading and playing as separate activities only for pre-school age children. South Africa does not record reading, playing or talking with children as activities.
- The analysis is restricted to primary activities and does not take into account secondary activities [like watching TV (primary activity) while ironing (secondary activity)], because different countries record them quite differently. While in some countries, time use diaries include columns especially for secondary activities, the time use interviewers in countries like the United States do not ask specifically about simultaneous activities.
- Surveys that use self-written diaries usually record activities in much greater detail than retrospective interviews (used in Canada and the United States).
- Not all countries sample all year round. Some the field phase at a specific time of year – e.g. March and April 2009 in Austria, March and September in Korea, and October through December 2010 in South Africa.
- For South Africa subsistence farming and activities like selling fruit in the street are counted towards time in paid work.

## Table 5.A1.1. Main features of the time use surveys

| | Austria | Canada | Germany | Finland | France | Italy | Korea | Norway | Spain | United States | South Africa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year of survey | 2008-2009 | 2010 | 2012-2013 | 2009 | 2009-2010 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2009-2010 | 2010 | 2010 |
| Season of survey | End March 2009 to April 2009 | Jan. to Dec. 2010 | 1st Oct. 2009 to 30 Sept. 2010 | April 2009 to May 2010 | 0 | 1st Feb. 2008 to 31 Jan. 2009 | March and Sept. | 15 Feb. 2010 to 14 Feb. 2011 | 1 Oct. 2009 to 30 Sept 2010 | Around the year | Oct. to Dec. 2010 |
| Approximate number of individuals surveyed | 8 200 | 15 390 | 11 000 | 3 500 | 20 000 | 40 000 | 20 000 | 3 100 | 20 000 | 10 000 | 40 000 |
| Time use diary filled out by respondent him/herself? | Yes | No, Retrospective interview | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No, Retrospective interview | Yes |
| Secondary activity recorded? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Partially asked and coded | No |
| Other household members surveyed? | Yes, everyone age 10 or older | No | Yes, everyone age 10 or older | Yes, everyone age 10 or older | Yes, everyone age 10 or older | Yes, everyone age 10 or older | Yes, everyone age 10 or older | No | Yes, everyone age 10 or older | No | Yes, one other household member |
| Time-use of spouse documented? | Yes | No, but some basic information on time at w ork | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes, for some spouses |
| Approximate number of couples surveyed, w here female betw een 25 and 44 | 900 | n.a. | 3 400 | 800 | 3 350 | 3 650 | 3 900 | n.a. | 2 200 | n.a. | 1 150 |
| Respondents document time spent in the presence of household children? | Yes, presence of children <10 years | Yes, presence of children < 15 years | Yes, presence of children <10 years | Yes, presence of children <10 years | Yes | Presence of son or daughter | Presence of pre-school age children | Yes | Yes, presence of children <10 years | Yes | No |