

# WORK, FAMILY & POLICY

**Gender and migrant-native differentials in work-family trajectories around parenthood**

This dissertation provides new insights into the determinants of the gender division of work and migrant-native differentials in labour force attachment over the process of family formation. The first paper adopts a cross-sectional comparative perspective investigating how national context, life course stage and individual characteristics influence the gender division of housework in Europe (chapter 2). Given the limitations of a cross-sectional approach, the subsequent three papers use longitudinal data for Belgium to study the gender division of paid work (chapter 3) and migrant-native differentials in mothers' employment (chapter 4) and parental leave uptake (chapter 5) following the transition to parenthood. Results show that parents of young children better succeed in translating progressive gender ideas into a gender equal division of housework in more progressive gender contexts. With regard to mothers' employment and parental leave uptake, results show that socio-economic differences between women of migrant origin and natives are reproduced and accentuated over the transition to parenthood. This volume is of interest to family, gender and labour sociologists, social demographers, migration researchers, policy makers and anyone interested in work-family trajectories following the transition to parenthood.

**TINE KIL** conducted this research project under supervision of Karel Neels at the Centre for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies at the University of Antwerp.



Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het behalen van de graad van Doctor in de Sociale Wetenschappen: Sociologie aan de Universiteit Antwerpen

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Faculty of Social Sciences  
Department of Sociology  
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**Tine Kil**

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Antwerp, 2017

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## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

What are the determinants of the division of housework and change in labour force attachment following the transition to parenthood? This central question drives the study that is outlined in this book. In this introductory chapter, I first discuss the societal relevance of this study (1.1.), then I discuss the life course perspective in relation to work-family trajectories (1.2.), outline the four main research questions (1.3.), describe the data used (1.4.), and provide an overview of the main results (1.5.).

### 1.1. Setting the scene

One of the major social and economic changes of the past 50 years is the stark increase in female employment. While the male breadwinner/female carer model underpinned institutions in most Western European countries after the second world war, dual earning has become the most common model in the 2000s (Aliaga, 2005; Cory & Stirling, 2015; Kotowska, 2008). Since the 1970s female participation in higher education and the labour market has risen and the division of paid work has become more equal between partners (Crompton, 1999). These evolutions accommodate an increasing demand for female labour as well as supply of female labour (Thévenon, 2013). The switch from primary to service economies, the growth of part-time work and the rise in public sector employment has contributed to the growing demand for female workers, while increasing educational attainment and earning potential of women have increased female labour supply. Also, institutional support to help working parents cope with family responsibilities such as formal childcare and paid parental leave contribute to increasing female employment levels. In addition, labour market globalization and flexibilization eroded the conventional stable male life course that was characterized by continuous full-time employment at working age (Esping-Andersen, 2002). In a context of increasing labour market uncertainty and declining real wages for men, strong reliance on the male-breadwinner model may be a particularly risky and inflexible family strategy (Mills & Blossfeld, 2003; Oppenheimer, 1997). Dual earning is increasingly necessary for families in order to make ends meet or maintain living standards (Corluy & Vandenbroucke, 2013; Cory & Stirling, 2015; Saint-Martin, 2009).

Although dual earner families have become common, gender differences in employment persist. Male participation exceeds female participation, a relatively large share of female employment is part-time and women are overrepresented in temporary employment and underrepresented in management functions (OECD, 2011). In addition, the more equal division of paid work is only partly compensated by a more equal division of housework (Altintas, 2009; Lachance-

Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). In Europe and the USA, the overall time spent on housework has decreased over the past decades (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Gershuny, 2000) due to technological changes, a decrease of the mean household size and growing possibilities to outsource housework to the public sector and the market (Anxo, Bosch, & Rubery, 2010; Dex, 2010; Raz-Yurovich, 2014). In tandem, gender convergence in time spent on housework has increased, but this mainly reflects a decrease in housework time for women rather than a substantial increase of the contribution of men (Gershuny, 2000).

The persistence of traditional gender divisions is partly driven by the process of family formation (Grunow & Evertsson, 2016); especially the transition to parenthood encourages gender inequality by producing and strengthening a gender division of housework as well as paid work for couples (Baxter, Hewitt, & Haynes, 2008; Grunow, Schulz, & Blossfeld, 2012; Lundberg & Rose, 1999; Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). Compared to older cohorts, young couples today divide paid and unpaid work more equally during early life course stages (Buhmann, Elcheroth, & Tettamanti, 2010; Fuwa & Cohen, 2007). But these initial egalitarian divisions are followed by a traditionalization of gender roles over the course of family formation (Evertsson & Nermo, 2007; Grunow et al., 2012; Kuhhirt, 2012; Schober, 2013) and the patterns of labour division established upon entering parenthood usually persist during later stages of the life course (Grunow et al., 2012). Hence, the transition to parenthood is a major driver of gender inequality.

Apart from rising gender equality in the labour market and the family in recent decades, most Western European countries have witnessed increasing immigration streams and ethnic heterogeneity in their populations (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2013). The Belgian context is a primary example of this evolution. The post-war recruitment of guest workers from Southern Europe, Turkey and Morocco, followed by family reunification and marriage migration of Turkish and Moroccan migrant groups and more recent migration from Eastern Europe and non-European refugees have given rise to large ethnic minority groups from both European and non-European origins. In Europe and Belgium in particular, the socio-economic position of non-Western migrants is unfavourable characterized by high inactivity, unemployment, and poverty rates and a particularly vulnerable position for women of migrant origin (Rubin et al., 2008). For ethnic minority women, non-participation not only threatens their economic independence, it also jeopardizes their social and cultural integration into the host society (Khoudja & Fleischmann, 2015b). Given evidence on the persistence of traditional views on gender roles in certain migrant groups (Bernhardt & Goldscheider, 2007; de Valk, 2008; F. Goldscheider, Goldscheider, & Bernhardt, 2011; Huschek, de Valk, &

Liefbroer, 2011b; Merens, Keuzenkamp, & Das, 2006) and traditional practices such as young ages at family formation and marriage homogamy (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Timmerman, 2006), it is unclear whether trajectories of family formation and labour participation among women of migrant origin converge to trajectories of natives, or whether differential dynamics of labour force participation and family formation are at play.

Given these societal changes, this thesis adopts a life course perspective and focusses on the following question: What are the determinants of the division of housework and of change in labour force attachment over the transition to parenthood? It adopts a European comparative cross-sectional perspective investigating (i) the gender division of housework, as well as a single-country longitudinal approach assessing (ii) the gender division of paid work and migrant-native differences in (iii) mothers' employment and (iv) mothers' parental leave use in Belgium.

## **1.2. A life course perspective on work-family trajectories**

In this section, a life course perspective will be adopted to discuss relevant mechanisms that shape decisions regarding paid and unpaid work on the individual, household and institutional level over the course of family formation. Over the last four decades the life course perspective has become an important and fruitful approach in the social sciences (Elder, 1985; Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003; Levy & Buhmann, 2016; Wiggins, de Valk, Windzio, & Aybek, 2011). It is on the crossroads of multiple disciplines, including sociology, social and developmental psychology, demography, history, economics and others (Levy & Buhmann, 2016). The sociological life course perspective approaches the life course as “a social structurally embedded sequence of age-related status configurations which refer to an individual's societal participations” (Wiggins et al., 2011). Others have defined it as “a sequence of profiles of the social location of individual actors” (Levy & Buhmann, 2016). It focusses on the complex interplay between biographical actors (agency) and the institutional arrangements (structure) by which societies structure life courses. Changing societal structures and conditions affect, via institutional regulations, life-course patterns and biographical plans, and – in turn – changing life courses affect the economic, political, social and cultural situation and the institutional regime of a society. This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant for the study of work-family trajectories following the transition to parenthood. Institutional (e.g. formal childcare, parental leave) and cultural (e.g. parenthood norms, workplace culture) forces as well as individual assets (e.g. educational field and level, work experience, preferences) and the couples' relative position (e.g. relative resources,

economic dependency) affect parents' work-family trajectories. The life course perspective can be captured by five key principles that will be applied to the link between the transition to parenthood and work-family trajectories: (i) life-course cumulation; (ii) agency; (iii) time and space; (iv) timing of events and (v) linked lives.

### **1.2.1. Life course cumulation**

The first principle originally referred to life-span development which captured the fact that "human development and aging are life-long processes" (Elder et al., 2003). However, a more sociological version of this principle is called life course cumulation and stresses that life must be viewed as a cumulative process (Levy & Buhmann, 2016). The interdependence of the life course is attributed to the complex "interlocking nature of trajectories and transitions, within and across life stages" (Elder, 1985). The cumulative (dis)advantage hypothesis (Dannefer, 2003) is a concrete form of this cumulation. It postulates that advantages or disadvantages cumulate over the whole life but also acknowledges the possibility of compensation and reduction of these (dis)advantages. These (dis)advantages do not occur randomly during a life-time, but according to a logic of path-dependence that usually starts with early (dis)advantages, brought about by people's social origins (Levy & Buhmann, 2016). In general, these early (dis)advantages condition later ones that tend to have the same direction. Cumulation can concern experiences, attainments or failures, acquired social labels, education, wages, health as well as job positions. These approaches highlight the fact that prior life course experiences (such as unemployment at labour market entry) may influence trajectories (such as unstable employment patterns) in later life. In similar vein, the employment trajectories following the transition to parenthood are determined by the (dis)advantages in terms of education, work experience, employment regime, wages that cumulated before this transition (Gutierrez-Domenech, 2005; Saurel-Cubizolles et al., 1999; Shapiro & Mott, 1994). Also, when parents – in most cases mothers – interrupt their employment trajectory following childbearing, this may have consequences for their later career (Kreyenfeld, 2015). The longer the interruption, the more difficult re-entry will be (Evertsson & Duvander, 2011) and when they re-enter, it will imply downward mobility in a lot of cases (Aisenbrey, Evertsson, & Grunow, 2009).

### **1.2.2. Agency (versus structure)**

The principle of agency stresses that "individuals construct their own life course through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints

of history and social circumstances” (Elder et al., 2003). The process of individualization, accelerated social change and the uncertainties of modern risk society (Beck, 1992) have made status passages increasingly conditional, imposing individual responsibility upon people (Liefbroer, 2007). Individuals do not merely follow institutionally pre-scheduled pathways, but they actively participate in societal fields like education, labour market, and family (Wingens et al., 2011). The life course concept of agency refers to “biographical actors” (Heinz, 1996) whose decisions and actions are shaped by biographical experiences as well as an individual’s personal life plans. People actively shape their life course by making choices, but socio-economic background, education, networks, institutions et cetera also influence the capacities and skills people have to master their own life course.

Stressing the importance of agency in relation to work-family trajectories, preference theory of Hakim (2000) argues that personal preferences and goals determine maternal employment patterns in Western-European countries. According to Hakim, this new scenario results from two revolutions and three changes: the contraceptive revolution, the equal-opportunities revolution, the expansion of white-collar occupations (which are more attractive to women than blue-collar jobs), the creation of jobs for secondary earners (part-time work) and the increasing importance of attitudes, values and preferences in lifestyle choices. If these conditions are fulfilled, women will hold three divergent work-lifestyle preferences, which can be given in three different models of the ideal family: work-centred preferences (priority given to work), adaptive preference (aim to combine work and care) and home-centred preferences (priority given to private and family life). Regarding the role of policy, home-centred women are only susceptible to welfare policies in deciding how many children they want, while work-centred women are susceptible to equal-opportunity policies regarding their work-related decisions. The critical majority of women that hold adaptive preferences, however, are responsive to both social policy and labour market opportunities. The majority of European women is thus receptive to tax and benefit structures as well as to the existence of childcare services<sup>1</sup>.

Hakim’s preference theory has sparked a lively debate. One of the main criticisms has been that preference theory does not elaborate on the evolution of preferences, and disregards that preferences and employment patterns may be adjusted over the life course (Berrington, Hu, Smith, & Sturgis, 2008; Kan, 2007). An example of the limits of preferences can be found in a three-wave panel study

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<sup>1</sup> This however sits oddly with the main claim of Hakim’s theory that in the new European scenario women have little constraints and follow their own preferences (Kremer, 2007).

in Switzerland (Girardin, Bühlmann, Hanappi, Le Goff, & Valarino, 2016) that asked couples during pregnancy, shortly after birth and a year later about their intentions concerning an egalitarian gendered distribution of family tasks and their practices. The study shows that most couples lived in a consistently egalitarian situation before they became parents, but moved to an inconsistent one after childbirth, maintaining egalitarian intentions while practicing an inegalitarian division of paid and unpaid work. In the third wave, their intentions were modified towards factual traditionalism, both their intentions and the division had become traditional. Hence, this evolution reveals a process of familial traditionalisation that happens despite parents' initial preferences for an egalitarian division.

### **1.2.3. Time and place**

The principle of time and place stresses that “the life course of individuals is embedded and shaped by the historical times and places they experience over their lifetime”(Elder et al., 2003). Historical “time” refers to the institutional and cultural environment which is subject to historical change while “place” refers to the geographical, social and institutional position of people through the life course (Levy & Buhlmann, 2016). As already highlighted in the introduction (section 1.1.), the stark increase in female and maternal employment is one of the major social and economic changes of the past 50 years for most Western-European countries. This increase is linked to historical economic changes (e.g. rising service industry and public sector, the institutionalisation of part-time working regimes, increasing labour market insecurity for men) as well as to cultural change (e.g. shifting attitudes about maternal employment and men's engagement in housework and childcare) and growing institutional support for combining work and children (e.g. formal childcare services, parental leave schemes).

To translate the idea of time and place into empirical practice, life course studies frequently entail international comparisons. With regard to work-family trajectories, such studies include typologies of welfare state regimes that link the regimes to variation in the extent to which social policies “free” women from care obligations (de-familialization), such as those proposed by Esping-Andersen (1999). Alternative models were advanced by feminist sociologists, taking gender relations and care work in families as the starting point for comparative welfare state analysis (e.g. Lewis, 1992, 2002; Sainsbury, 1994). Other international comparisons have focused on employment systems and identified country differences in working-time regimes and work–family reconciliation measures as important explanations for differences in work-family trajectories (e.g. Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Rubery, Smith, & Fagan, 1998). On the other hand, cultural

approaches highlight the role of societal norms in understanding work-family trajectories of mothers and fathers. Some scholars such as Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds, and Alldred (2003) have argued that economic constraints and social policy regulations are subordinate to culture for understanding behaviour. Others, such as Pfau-Effinger (2010) and Kremer (2007) stress the interplay between social policies and cultural contexts.

In accordance with the idea that work-family trajectories following the transition to parenthood are influenced by the constraints and opportunities of specific institutional configurations and cultural forces, a qualitative study on couples' transition to parenthood in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic and Poland (Grunow & Evertsson, 2016) indicates that women's and men's plans for how long to stay at home with their child following birth are highly influenced by the family leave policies and the availability of childcare. Several other studies have quantitatively assessed the effect of family policy on mothers' employment, indicating positive effects of separate taxation systems (Gutierrez-Domenech, 2005) and formal childcare (De Wachter & Neels, 2014; Stone, 2007). Also, parental leave has been found to facilitate women to keep a foothold in the labour force following the transition to parenthood (C. D. Pronzato, 2009). However, parental leave also delays women's return to work (Matysiak & Szalma, 2014) and especially long periods of leave hamper the return to work (Fagnani, 1999).

#### **1.2.4. Timing**

The principle of timing states that "the developmental antecedents and consequences of life transitions, events and behavioural patterns vary according to their timing in a person's life" (Elder et al., 2003). The relation of life courses to timing schedules is socially constructed to a large extent, and institutions play an important role in this construction (Levy & Buhmann, 2016). The correspondence of actual life courses to life-course norms (about timing and sequencing) results from norm-conforming action as well as direct institutional influence (Brückner & Mayer, 2005). In countries where the male-breadwinner model or one-and-a-half-breadwinner model is the norm, young parents may face difficulties to combine their family and occupational engagement due to a lack of supportive institutions, sufficient parental leave, employers' acceptance and work-compatible school hours. Although they did not plan to conform to this norm and have wanted to stay attached to the labour force, the lack of institutional support may induce one partner to reduce working hours and focus on childcare instead, confirming to the work-family trajectory norm. In addition, the same events or experiences may affect individuals in different ways depending on when they

occur in the life course (Elder et al., 2003). For example, getting a first child at a younger age than what's normatively expected (e.g. when still in education) may have a larger negative effect on subsequent employment careers in comparison to when a first child is born in a later life course stage (e.g. when being firmly established in the labour market).

### **1.2.5. Linked lives**

Another key notion of life course research is the idea of linked lives: "Lives are lived interdependently and socio-historical influences are expressed through this network of shared relationships". This principle stresses that life course events are embedded in social relationships (Elder et al., 2003). The principle of linked lives has been mainly studied in the case of partners living together, or parents and their offspring (Levy & Buhmann, 2016). Family life ties together the life courses of the family members in such a way that they cannot be fully understood as individual trajectories only. The transition to parenthood is in most cases experienced by couples, and how parents shape their subsequent work-family trajectories partly depends on their partner's socio-economic position, preferences, trajectories et cetera.

Acknowledging the lives are linked, micro-economic theory of the family of Becker (1991), bargaining and economic dependency theories have illustrated the importance of relative socio-economic positions for parents' decision on how to divide work and family responsibilities. Becker (1991) assumes that individuals in a household will pool their resources to achieve joint utility maximization. To reach an efficient task division, each household member typically specializes in paid or domestic work, depending on the comparative advantages (e.g. earning potential, experience) of the partners. Bargaining and relative resource theories on the other hand assume that partners will try to maximize their individual utilities (Lundberg & Pollak, 1996). Housework is considered an unpleasant task and negotiation over the division of household tasks takes the form of a power struggle (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Brines, 1993). The partner who has the best negotiation position – based on relative resources such as educational credentials, occupational status or income – will bargain for less involvement in household chores, which indirectly implies that he or she takes up a larger role in paid work. Hence, both micro-economic and bargaining theories predict that the partner with the highest pre-birth earnings will take up a larger role in paid work following the transition to parenthood, while the other partner will perform relatively more housework. In similar vein, economic dependency theory (Brines, 1993; Layte, 1999) approaches the family as a social system in which bargaining leads to a social exchange where housework is exchanged for economical support

(Delphy & Leonard, 1986). In contrast to micro-economic household theory and bargaining approaches, economic dependency theory is not gender neutral as it stresses that structural processes as well as discrimination explain that dependency is more apparent among women.

However, also normative expectations about how fathers and mothers ought to behave might lead couples to adopt a gender division of work after becoming parents as a means to display their cultural identity as men and women. Interactionist approaches of “gender display” and “doing gender” stress that gender is produced and reproduced in interactions (Berk, 1985; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Accordingly, American research (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003; Brines, 1993; Greenstein, 2000) shows that in counter-normative situations – for example when the female partner earns more than the male partner – women will ‘do gender’ by engaging in more stereotypically female activities while men will do gender by engaging in more stereotypically male work and avoiding typically female activities.

These micro-level economic, bargaining, dependency and interactionist theories have been complemented by gender stratification theory of Blumberg (1984) who stresses that women's economic power, used in negotiation with their partners, is a function of individual resources and macro-level male dominance in economic, political, and ideological areas. Women may possess high income relative to their partners, but their power to be used in actual bargaining may be reduced or “discounted” by patriarchy at the macro-level. This idea has been supported by international research showing that macro-level gender inequality tends to dampen the positive effects of individual-level factors on gender equality in the division of labour (Fuwa, 2004; Knudsen & Waerness, 2008).

### **1.3. Research questions and previous studies**

In this section, results of previous studies on gender inequality and migrant-native differences in work-family trajectories are discussed and the four research questions are outlined. Each of the four questions focus on one aspect or principle of the life course perspective. The first paper addresses the interplay between life course stage, national context and individual characteristics in the analysis of the division of housework, referring to the agency-structure discussion as well as to the importance of time and place and timing. The second paper addresses the principle of linked lives, looking into the effect of pre-birth relative earnings of partners on the gender division of paid work following parenthood. The principle of life course cumulation of (dis)advantages is illustrated in the third and fourth paper which are geared toward migrant-native differences in mothers' employment and parental leave use. In addition, the fourth paper elaborates on

the role of institutions in the reproduction of (dis)advantages.

### **1.3.1. The gender division of housework and paid work**

#### ***The interplay between life course stage, institutional context and individual characteristics***

The first paper of this thesis focusses on the **gender division of housework** over the life course in different European countries. Regarding this matter, former research shows that the form and extent of gender inequality varies throughout the life course. A study by Anxo et al. (2011) on the household division of labour by age in France, Italy, Sweden and the United States based on cross-sectional data has shown that gender differences in paid work, housework, childcare and leisure are smaller at younger and older ages, while they are largest at working age. According to a longitudinal study for West-Germany by Grunow et al. (2012), many couples try to distribute housework evenly in the beginning of their relationship. But after this initial stage the distribution gets more traditional and a routine is created. Longitudinal studies covering different national contexts such as the USA (Lundberg & Rose, 1999; Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003), Australia (Baxter et al., 2008), the UK (Schober, 2013) and Germany (Kuhhirt, 2012) have shown that especially the transition to parenthood is associated with an increase in gender inequality in the division of housework. Buhlmann et al. (2010) suggest that the magnitude to which parenthood induces a traditional division of housework depends on the social context in which a couple resides. According to their study, the birth of a child signifies a more unequal division of labour, care and housework in all European countries in the short term, but the ability to return to a more equal distribution of work and care depends on the institutional context. In countries where policy supports a dual earner model, it is easier to re-establish a more equal division of labour and care. In countries where institutions support a male breadwinner model or where family policy remains limited, the egalitarian distribution often does not recover.

The micro factors affecting the distribution of housework have been studied extensively in recent decades, identifying time availability, relative resources and gender ideology as most important factors (Altintas, 2009; Coltrane, 2000; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). Research into the effect of (national) context emerged more recently and shows inconsistent and small effects (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). However, multiple country studies focussing on the effect of national context on the division of housework have rarely adopted a life course perspective, which may explain the lack of clear results. An exception is the study by Anxo et al. (2011) on the household division of labour by age in France,

Italy, Sweden and the United States. However, they did not distinguish between housework and childcare whereas previous research has shown that these are conceptually different (Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992). Furthermore the results of their study are limited to countries which were analysed separately. Hence, adopting a life course perspective and multi-level approach, I aim to extend the knowledge base on the interplay between life course stage, national context, individual characteristics and the division of housework. The following research question guides the analysis:

- (1) “Is the gender division of housework differentially affected by individual, household and contextual characteristics over different stages of the family life course?”

### ***Partners’ linked lives***

The second paper looks into **the gender division of paid work** over the transition to parenthood in Belgium. Just as the presence of children in the household increases gender inequality in the division of housework between couples, the transition to parenthood is also associated with increased gender inequality in paid work. In accordance with micro-economic theory on households specialization, bargaining approaches and economic dependency stressing the interdependence of partners’ employment decisions (see section 1.2.5), former research has shown that larger relative resources for the female partner in comparison to the male partner diminish the negative effect of parenthood on gender equality in work-family trajectories (Begall & Grunow, 2015; Herrarte, Moral-Carcedo, & Saez, 2012; Kanji, 2011; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; Schober, 2013). However, only a limited body of research has looked into the aggregate-level implications of changing relative resources for gender inequality in couples’ employment (Kuhhirt, 2012), while this could inform us on the extent to which increasing relative earnings of women can alter gendered responses to family formation. In addition, former studies have considered the USA (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997), the UK (Kanji, 2011; Schober, 2013), the Netherlands (Begall & Grunow, 2015) and Germany (Kuhhirt, 2012) which are characterized by high employment gaps between mothers and non-mothers (Boeckmann, Misra, & Budig, 2015) as well as limited family policies (USA and UK) or policies indirectly supporting women to reduce employment after childbearing (Germany and the Netherlands). The Belgian setting provides an interesting case as it is known for low employment gaps between mothers and non-mothers (Cukrowska-Torzewska, 2016). The widespread availability of part-time work, childcare, subsidized service vouchers to outsource housework and parental leave measures in Belgium ease the reconciliation of working and caring for parents and mothers in particular

(Maron & O'Dorchai, 2008; Ray, Gornick, & Schmitt, 2010) (see section 3.2.2). However, gender gaps in the Belgian labour market remain considerable. The uptake of reconciliation measures is highly gendered as women are overrepresented in parental leave and part-time employment in comparison to men (Eurostat, 2016; RVA, 2012). Also, gender segregation by educational field, sector and occupation is large the Belgian labour market. Considering the Belgian context, the following research question is assessed:

- (2) “Is the effect of parenthood on gender inequality in employment moderated in couples where women were the main income providers before the onset of family formation?”

### **1.3.2. Migrant-native differences in mothers' employment and parental leave use**

#### ***The cumulation of labour market (dis)advantages over the transition to parenthood***

The third research paper focuses on **migrant-native differences in mothers' employment** following the transition to parenthood in Belgium. Belgium has a substantial and diverse migrant population. Between as well as within migrant groups a large amount of diversity exists depending on the period in which they migrated and the countries and regions where they migrated from. After the Second World War, the Belgian government recruited guest workers from Italy (starting in 1946), Greece, Portugal (1955), Morocco and Turkey (1964) for industrial jobs (Phalet, 2007). The economic crises of the early 1970s led to a migration stop in 1974 and corresponding socio-economic restructuring (e.g. closing coalmines) disproportionately affected migrant workers, leading to massive and long-term unemployment or withdrawal from the labour force (Lesthaeghe, 2000). This evolution did, however, not cause a turning point in migration as family reunification became the main reason for migration in subsequent years. The permanent settlement of migrant families in the 1980s and 1990s and the birth of migrant children gave rise to large Southern European (mainly Italian), Moroccan and Turkish communities. A substantial share of second-generation Moroccan and Turkish migrants continue to marry partners from their parents' country of origin (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009). This close link between family formation and migration is largely absent in the older migrant groups from Southern Europe (e.g. Italian migration) as well as the more recent migration from Eastern Europe (e.g. Polish migration) that started in the late 1990s. Migration from Eastern and Southern Europe continues up to the present and is largely driven by economic reasons, employment opportunities and the free movement opportunities within the European Union. In addition, a large

proportion of European migrants in Belgium originate from neighbouring countries, facilitated by common languages. Regarding non-European immigration, post-colonial migration from Congo as well as migration flows of asylum seekers have also contributed to Belgium's ethnic diversity.

When a person migrates, his or her life course and biographical continuity (that were provided by institutions of the origin country) becomes fragile or even disintegrated and (s)he has to reframe her life and biography under conditions of the societal structures and institutional regime of the destination country, which can be difficult to handle (Levy & Buhmann, 2016; Wingens et al., 2011). For example, a person that occupies an intermediate or high social position and gained high qualifications in his/her origin country, may experience difficulties to get hired into a suitable job in the receiving country. With respect to the labour market, migrant women in Belgium are characterized by relatively low employment and income levels and they are generally overrepresented in unstable job positions. Apart from individual (e.g. qualifications and language skills) and community (e.g. community human capital) resources (Pichler, 2011; van Tubergen, Maas, & Flap, 2004), segmented labour markets (Ballarino & Panichella, 2013), discrimination in education and the labour market (Hermansen, 2013; Safi, 2010) and a lack of social capital or institutional knowledge (Verhaeghe, Li, & Van de Putte, 2013) have been identified as important explanations for the weak labour market position of first as well as second-generation migrants in Europe.

The labour market attachment of migrant women is, however, also linked to their specific migration history. As migrants of Turkish and Moroccan descent in Europe often originate from rural regions where roles of men and women are more separated in the private and the public sphere, they generally have more traditional views on the gender division of care and domestic work versus paid work (Bernhardt & Goldscheider, 2007; de Valk, 2008; F. Goldscheider et al., 2011; Huschek et al., 2011b; Merens et al., 2006). In addition, the experience of migration itself may also result in the accentuation of these values that are regarded as central components of identity (Dion & Dion, 2001). The second generation finds itself in an intermediate position, having to negotiate potentially contradictory expectations from a more egalitarian host society and a more traditionally oriented family of origin (de Valk & Milewski, 2011).

In addition, economic migration is commonly initiated by men, which makes their partners 'tied migrants' and is associated with reduced employment and earnings among women (Bielby & Bielby, 1992; Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree, & Smith, 1999; Boyle, Feng, & Gayle, 2009; Cooke, 2008). For Turkish and Moroccan women

family reunification and marriage remain the main official motives for migration to Europe (Eurostat, 2011). A sizeable share of the Turkish and Moroccan women who recently migrated to Europe married a co-ethnic who migrated earlier or was born in the destination country (Huschek, de Valk, & Liefbroer, 2011a; Lodewijckx, 2010). Women that grew up in Turkey or Morocco and marry second-generation men residing in Europe frequently originate from rural areas and have low levels of educational qualifications (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Lievens, 1999; Timmerman, 2006). In contrast to second-generation women of Turkish and Moroccan origin that grew up in Belgium, for marriage migrants it is more evident that their husband is the head of the household and takes full economic responsibility.

Partly due to their specific migration history, women of Turkish and Moroccan origin are characterized by relatively young ages at marriage and childbearing (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Kleinepier & de Valk, 2014). Women from these groups may face a difficult entry into the labour market in combination with an early start of family formation, which potentially implies that these women enter family formation before being firmly established in the labour market. This may have a long lasting effect as previous research has shown that periods of non-employment at the start of a work career negatively affect employment opportunities in later life (Brandt & Hank, 2014; Luijkx & Wolbers, 2009), resulting in a disadvantage that cumulates over the life course (see section 1.2.1). In similar vein, research of Neels, De Wachter, and Peeters (2017) shows that the more adverse position of migrant women in the Belgian labour market has clear implications for the income protection these groups can expect upon retirement. Hence, the fact that women of migrant origin face difficulties when entering the labour market not only has consequences for their immediate socio-economic position, but also for the position they can expect to occupy in later stage of their life course such as retirement and possibly also during parenthood.

While studies for majority populations have shown that women's labour market position is strongly related to the transition to parenthood (Gutierrez-Domenech, 2005; Jeon, 2008; Kil, Wood, et al., 2015; Shapiro & Mott, 1994), little is known about the link between motherhood and employment among women of migrant origin. The limited existing research on family formation and female labour force participation in migrant populations has mainly adopted a cross-sectional approach and reports contradictory results (See section 4.3.2. for an overview of the results of the studies of Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2006, 2012; Dale, Lindley, & Dex, 2006; Holland & de Valk, 2017; Rendall, Tsang, Rubin, Rabinovich, & Janta, 2010). Only a limited number of studies have adopted a longitudinal approach to analyse the impact of childbearing on the labour market position of

migrant women. Results indicate that labour market entries and exits of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in the UK are less sensitive to childbearing compared to other women (Khouidja & Platt, 2016), while having young children increases the risk of exiting employment to a greater extent for black women compared to other groups with and without migration background in the USA (Taniguchi & Rosenfeld, 2002). Although using longitudinal data, these studies do not explicitly control for pre-birth labour market positions, taking into account women that get children during the observation period as well as women that already have entered parenthood and childless women.

Studying migrant-native differences in employment trajectories following the transition to parenthood while controlling for initial labour market positions, the research aim of the third paper is to gain knowledge on processes of cumulative disadvantage in employment trajectories over the course of family formation among migrant women. Focussing on the Belgian context, this paper is geared toward the following question:

- (3) Is the labour force attachment of migrant women differentially influenced by the transition to parenthood compared to natives? To what extent can differences in maternal employment be accounted for in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and precarious labour market positions held prior to parenthood?

### ***The reproduction of labour market (dis)advantages by family policy***

In accordance with the third research paper, the fourth focuses on how pre-birth (dis)advantages are related to **migrant-native differences in parental leave use** following the transition to parenthood. In Belgium, parental leave is an individual entitlement that is only available to fathers and mothers with a stable employment position; working for their current employer for 12 out of 15 months prior to the application. Working mothers and fathers that meet this condition have the right to take three months of full-time parental leave for every child under the age of 12 (at a flat-rate benefit of 727 euro per month) (Moss, 2015). Apart from full-time parental leave, women can also opt for a part-time reduction of working hours by 50 or 20% for a longer period and a smaller benefit (Anxo, Fagan, Smith, Letablier, & Perraudin, 2007a; Desmet & Glorieux, 2007) (see section 5.2.1. for more information on Belgian parental leave legislation and use).

Previous research on the effects of parental leave on labour force attachment and fertility is inconclusive. With respect to fertility, literature reviews identify the insufficient acknowledgement of population differences in the uptake of parental leave as a major source of bias (Neyer & Andersson, 2008). Recent research has

identified various determinants of parental leave use at different levels (e.g. individual, couple, company) ranging from economic determinants (e.g. eligibility, income) to attitudinal factors (e.g. preferences concerning work-family combination) (M. Bygren & A. Z. Duvander, 2006; Geisler & Kreyenfeld, 2011; T. Lappegård, 2008; Lapuerta, Baizan, & Gonzalez, 2011). However, our understanding of differential uptake patterns in migrant groups is limited. Previous studies on parental leave uptake in migrant groups indicate small differences in uptake levels in Sweden, which is related to universal eligibility (Mussino & Duvander, 2016). In contrast, the assessment of migrant-native differences in the uptake of parental leave for countries in which eligibility is connected to labour force participation (e.g. the Netherlands, Spain) indicates lower uptake for migrant groups (Lapuerta et al., 2011; Merens et al., 2006).

Considering the Belgian context where eligibility is connected to labour force participation, this study contributes to the literature by assessing whether migrant-native differences in parental leave use mirror migrant-native differences found in pre-birth employment positions. In addition, I analyse how having a migration background relates to differential parental leave strategies by distinguishing full-time from part-time leave and assessing whether women return to the labour force following leave uptake. The fourth research question of this dissertation is:

- (4) Are there differences in parental leave use between mothers of migrant origin and natives? To what degree are differences explained by employment characteristics and eligibility criteria?

## **1.4. Data**

To answer the research questions of this dissertation, two different datasets were used: the European Social Survey of 2010 and the Belgian Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel covering the period 1999 to 2010. In this part, the features of these datasets are discussed.

### **1.4.1. European Social Survey**

The European Social Survey is a standardized, cross-sectional, repeated survey that documents the living conditions and political attitudes of European inhabitants. The ESS is funded by the European Commission, the European Science Foundation (ESF) and national funding councils in the participating countries. It was established in 2001 and since then, every two years, face-to-face interviews have been conducted with newly selected, cross-sectional samples. The survey is administered by each participating country within its own territory in accordance with common methodological guidelines set by the central ESS team

so as to ensure international data comparability. The national samples are checked by an expert group in order to ensure that each sample is as representative as possible of the population. The sampling plan is based on strict random probability methods, and all respondents are interviewed face-to-face in their homes and in the national languages. The questionnaire comprises two main parts, namely: a core module administered in every round of the survey and a second part made up of two “rotating” thematic modules that vary with each round of the ESS. The core module covers a wide range of socio-demographic characteristics of individual respondents and, in a “supplementary questionnaire”, also collects information on their behaviour and beliefs, such as their use of the media, their attitude to politics, their subjective well-being, or sense of national identity.

For this research, data of round 5 were used as it includes a module on ‘Work, Family and Wellbeing’ that provides data on housework. The interviews of round 5 were conducted in 2010, 2011 and 2012. The sample includes 27 countries (of which 24 countries were used in our analysis, the ones that were not used are indicated with an “x”): Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Croatia(x), Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel(x), Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine(x) and the United Kingdom. The total number of respondents was 52,458, ranging from 1506 (Switzerland) to 3031 (Germany).

Although the first research question focusses on differential effects of micro- and macro-level factors on gender inequality through the life course, cross-sectional data are relied on by necessity. When adopting a life course perspective while using cross-sectional data, the analytical framework is usually based on the classical family life-cycle concept (Glick 1947; 1977) that assumes that families pass a sequence of typical life stages on normatively defined ages, distinguishing “marriage”, “child bearing”, “children leaving home” and “dissolution of the family”. The implicit assumption of this model is that what happens to different women in various phases of the family cycle at one point in time is similar to the pattern that women would experience when they make these transitions in their life course over time. Although the cross-sectional approach can contribute to the identification of cross-national differences in the gender division of unpaid work through the life course as a heuristic instrument, several problems arise from this approach: First, entries and exits from labour market and family states are highly variable over time. Due to difficulties of disentangling age, cohort and period effects, it is not possible to control for selection and past history (Anxo et al., 2011). Second, individuals often fail to conform to the assumption of progression

through stages in a predetermined order as (i) the chronology of events may vary, (ii) maybe not all stages are reached and (iii) the full set of stages may be truncated due to death or separation (Blossfeld & Drobnic, 2001). The use of longitudinal panel data provides an answer to these problems.

#### **1.4.2. The Belgian Administrative Panel 1999-2010**

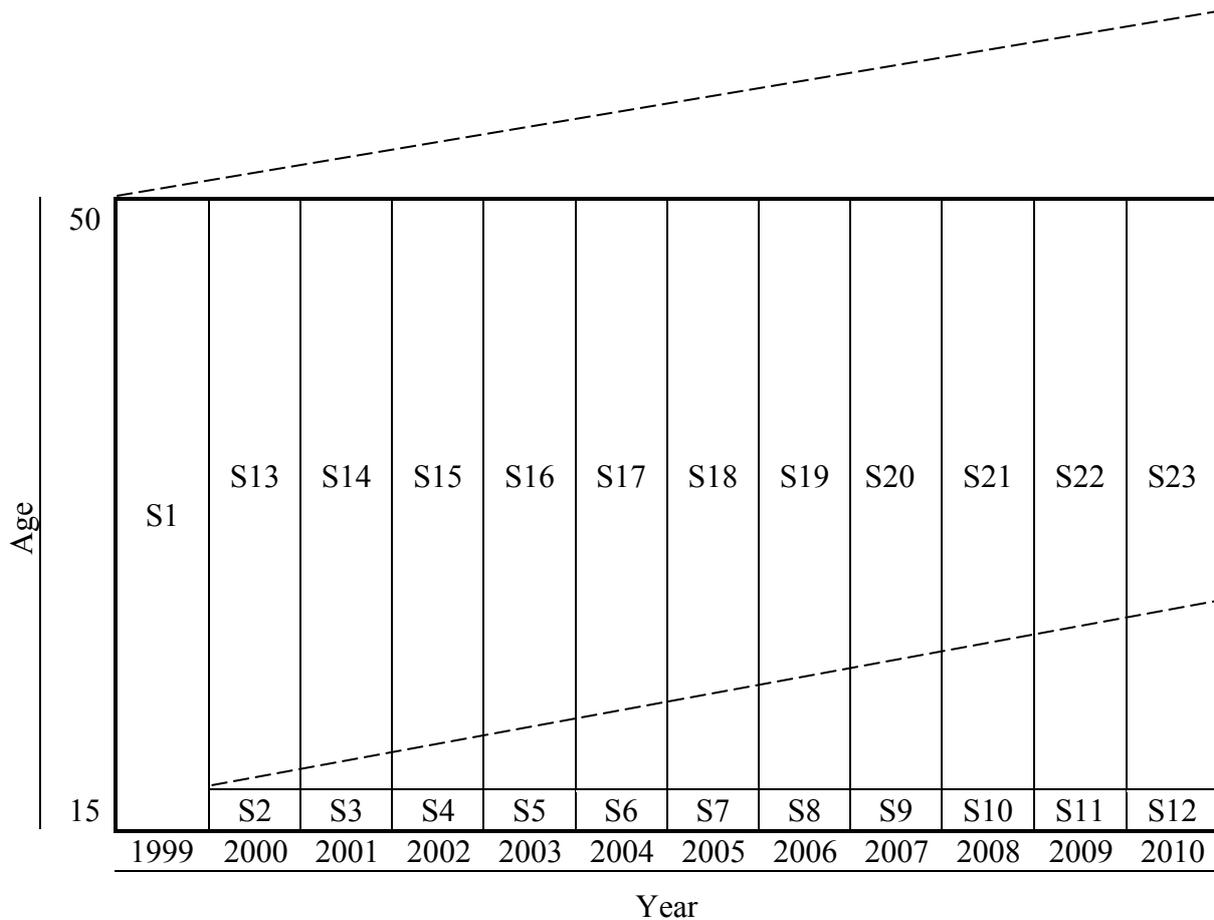
To address the shortcomings of cross-sectional data, administrative panel data of the Belgian Crossroads Bank of Social Security and the national register were integrated in the context of the research project that lead to this dissertation. In this part I discuss (1) how the BASD Panel is constructed from the available register data in Belgium and (2) the new opportunities that this data infrastructure provides for demographic research and population studies compared to alternative data sources.

The BASD Panel combines longitudinal microdata drawn retrospectively from the National Register, with current status information on individuals and their household members, drawn from the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (CBSS). The data from the CBSS provide information on socio-demographic characteristics of women and their household members, as well as information on socio-economic position. Demographic variables include age, sex and civil status of all household members, the type of household and the relation of all persons to the reference person in the household on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year during the observation period. In addition, the panel provides information on nationality and country of birth (both of sampled women and their household members), as well as information on nationality and country of birth of parents and grandparents, allowing to identify second generation migrants. The detailed information on socio-economic position provides quarterly data on activity status and unemployment, sector of activity, number of hours worked, income, replacement incomes (unemployment, invalidity,...), means-tested benefits, maternity and parental leaves, and family allowances. For each of the sampled women in the BASD Panel, data from the National Register provide retrospective information on number of children born and date of birth of each child (maternity history), as well as retrospective data on civil status.

The BASD Panel provides information on a representative sample of women aged 15-50 years on 31 December 1999 who are followed between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2010 (Simard & Franklin, 2005). To safeguard the cross-sectional representativeness throughout the observation period, the initial sample is supplemented by additional annual samples of 15-year old women as well as supplementary annual samples of women who settled in Belgium in the preceding year (figure 1.1). Apart from women aged 15-50 years who constitute the primary

sampling units (N=103 808), the BASD Panel also includes the household members of sampled women on January 1<sup>st</sup> in each year of the observation period (N=337 934) (tables 1.1 & 1.2). This combination allows to draw up a detailed picture of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of households. Both the initial sample and supplementary samples of women and their household members are disproportionately stratified by nationality, consistently using a sampling fraction of 1/40 for Belgian women compared to a sampling fraction of 1/20 for foreign women. Hence, while the ratio of sample size to population size for women of Belgian nationality holds 2.5%, the same ratio for women of foreign nationality holds 5.0%. The overrepresentation of migrant groups – together with information on country of birth for sampled individuals and their parents – provides unique opportunities to analyse patterns of union and family formation of the migrant population in Belgium.

**Figure 1.1:** Lexis-diagram of the initial sample of 15 to 50 year old women (S1, 31/12/1999) and additional samples of 15 year old women (S2-S12, 31/12/2000-2010) and 16 to 50 year old women that settled in Belgium in the preceding year (S13-S23, 31/12/2000-2010) by age



Source: Visualised by authors

**Table 1.1:** Distribution of sampled women by age and year of observation, Belgian and foreign women aged 15-50, Belgium

Age	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
15	1518	1489	1520	1534	1575	1593	1675	1698	1691	1645	1590	1611
16	1577	1533	1502	1555	1555	1600	1647	1695	1719	1704	1655	1616
17	1513	1590	1553	1523	1580	1568	1659	1669	1715	1740	1730	1697
18	1590	1546	1603	1586	1575	1606	1637	1700	1700	1737	1779	1784
19	1676	1617	1555	1611	1613	1602	1700	1682	1746	1750	1782	1835
20	1584	1696	1641	1590	1652	1660	1711	1744	1734	1793	1794	1885
21	1706	1610	1719	1671	1623	1678	1753	1786	1816	1819	1870	1910
22	1656	1725	1647	1748	1702	1674	1819	1793	1861	1888	1898	1980
23	1619	1675	1759	1678	1805	1751	1799	1890	1873	1925	1954	1989
24	1678	1641	1720	1795	1713	1841	1897	1859	1937	1962	1990	2032
25	1757	1703	1664	1750	1849	1745	1960	1937	1930	2025	2035	2069
26	1794	1778	1732	1698	1794	1881	1867	2040	1986	1998	2073	2147
27	1939	1807	1803	1753	1733	1817	1992	1921	2092	2050	2056	2141
28	1923	1941	1834	1824	1784	1759	1930	2053	1974	2166	2115	2127
29	1932	1934	1978	1863	1852	1818	1875	1959	2128	2034	2198	2217
30	1930	1938	1943	2000	1888	1886	1957	1908	2014	2180	2098	2292
31	1950	1940	1963	1976	2037	1927	2019	2005	1952	2059	2240	2140
32	1966	1969	1962	1994	2013	2069	2043	2063	2025	2008	2105	2316
33	2058	1975	1986	1987	2024	2006	2185	2071	2104	2061	2042	2165
34	2082	2063	1996	1985	2014	2049	2123	2200	2104	2147	2074	2103
35	2176	2076	2086	2005	2012	2038	2177	2138	2226	2131	2188	2120
36	2260	2178	2090	2110	2035	2024	2148	2202	2177	2246	2151	2232
37	2020	2261	2178	2107	2140	2040	2137	2163	2235	2217	2264	2193
38	2119	2022	2272	2182	2140	2151	2146	2167	2179	2266	2243	2310
39	2121	2126	2032	2272	2205	2148	2260	2165	2196	2204	2284	2275
40	2124	2129	2133	2048	2308	2219	2256	2264	2186	2209	2225	2313
41	1955	2135	2146	2138	2066	2307	2312	2255	2267	2206	2242	2262
42	2035	1954	2137	2151	2174	2073	2421	2334	2276	2284	2221	2281
43	1991	2030	1965	2144	2171	2175	2176	2422	2355	2294	2303	2228
44	1956	1995	2035	1966	2163	2171	2262	2177	2424	2351	2300	2315
45	1948	1962	2014	2034	1982	2180	2267	2266	2183	2436	2371	2317
46	1877	1952	1947	2007	2059	1994	2252	2268	2259	2191	2453	2401
47	1775	1877	1942	1948	2036	2063	2068	2252	2271	2274	2209	2480
48	1702	1769	1872	1941	1978	2035	2146	2073	2251	2274	2283	2236
49	1777	1690	1768	1860	1967	1976	2100	2146	2065	2252	2280	2301
50	1707	1766	1686	1763	1890	1953	2033	2104	2148	2066	2259	2295
Total	66991	67092	67383	67797	68707	69077	72409	73069	73799	74592	75354	76615

Source: Belgian Socio-demographic Administrative Panel, Calculations by authors

**Table 1.2:** Initial longitudinal sample (31/12/1999) and additional samples of 15 year old women (31/12/2000-2010) and settlers in preceding year (31/12/2000-2010) by age, Belgian and foreign women aged 15-50 years, Belgium

Age	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
15	1518	1489	1520	1534	1575	1593	1675	1698	1691	1645	1590	1611
16	1577	23	22	43	31	30	61	33	32	29	23	42
17	1513	27	33	28	39	27	66	31	35	36	39	53
18	1590	46	34	52	62	44	86	51	50	41	55	70
19	1676	59	33	35	49	46	110	68	68	79	71	81
20	1584	43	56	48	59	65	124	66	77	70	72	124
21	1706	48	46	58	56	57	113	96	95	110	116	135
22	1656	47	66	59	62	70	155	74	105	105	127	151
23	1619	42	60	70	90	75	147	110	107	123	117	145
24	1678	58	70	66	77	77	171	102	94	140	123	147
25	1757	55	59	62	82	72	155	99	114	142	135	136
26	1794	61	69	71	77	68	148	124	104	127	106	176
27	1939	53	65	67	68	63	137	97	119	110	115	140
28	1923	54	61	58	71	63	137	94	96	123	125	120
29	1932	53	66	58	59	65	142	76	103	105	84	148
30	1930	38	56	57	56	69	168	71	93	98	104	140
31	1950	41	57	62	67	64	153	91	84	88	106	88
32	1966	48	46	56	69	56	138	87	60	96	83	116
33	2058	42	52	51	63	33	136	62	77	74	77	99
34	2082	40	51	32	54	55	137	55	65	81	53	96
35	2176	22	45	35	48	45	138	55	61	67	72	83
36	2260	30	32	47	60	42	122	60	63	59	56	82
37	2020	31	24	44	52	31	129	43	58	64	45	72
38	2119	32	33	31	52	39	122	57	41	58	55	74
39	2121	26	30	25	48	29	125	33	59	51	53	62
40	2124	30	29	33	46	32	121	44	37	49	51	62
41	1955	28	35	23	36	27	107	32	36	43	60	64
42	2035	19	28	21	50	21	124	38	44	47	36	64
43	1991	21	28	33	41	19	113	27	40	45	44	41
44	1956	17	28	21	39	21	100	24	35	25	30	39
45	1948	19	31	22	29	28	111	31	26	31	39	44
46	1877	28	16	24	39	25	86	26	18	28	34	40
47	1775	25	27	19	41	24	85	21	30	26	37	45
48	1702	19	20	19	42	20	96	22	25	24	31	44
49	1777	15	24	11	40	20	76	16	12	25	25	33
50	1707	26	19	15	44	10	74	22	24	23	24	37
Total	66991	2755	2971	2990	3473	3125	5888	3736	3878	4087	4013	4704

Source: Belgian Socio-demographic Administrative Panel, Calculations by authors

The BASD Panel has several innovative features over existing research infrastructures. First, the prospective character of the administrative socio-demographic panel allows to gauge the impact of (relative) socio-economic position (e.g. income, labour market position, job type, ...) on subsequent demographic transitions made by individuals and households over a 10-year period. The scale of the BASD panel compares favourably to data sources that provide vaguely similar possibilities such as the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). As SILC is a small-scale rotating panel, only a small share of the 10.000 respondents are followed longitudinally over a 3-year period. The larger sample size and the longer observation period of the BASP Panel allows to observe a larger number of family transitions.

Second, until recently, research on socio-economic differences in the uptake of parental leave arrangements has been largely based on data from surveys such as the Generations & Gender Survey (GGS) and the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). As the Crossroads Bank for Social Security provides longitudinal information on labour force participation of individuals over the life-course, the BASD panel offers more detailed and larger-scale data than GGS or SILC to study socioeconomic differences in the uptake of family policies. Moreover, causal relations can be established using register data as the labour market position of individuals and differential uptake of policies can be studied, controlling for the socio-economic position of individuals before parenthood, whereas data from the GGS and SILC are mainly cross-sectional.

Third, compared to the ESS, the GGS and the SILC, the administrative panel provides unique data to study patterns of family formation in migrant populations in Belgium. In the ESS, GGS and SILC the number of immigrants is too low to allow separate analyses by immigrant group: this is due to the smaller sample-size of the surveys and the higher non-response among immigrant populations. Self-evidently, issues of sample size and non-response are less prevalent in the case of large-scale register data.

### **1.5. Outline of the study**

The research questions formulated in section 1.3 are addressed in four empirical chapters addressing the gender division of (1) housework and (2) employment and migrant-native differences in (3) mothers' employment and (4) parental leave uptake.

The **second chapter** addresses the research question "Is the gender distribution of housework differentially affected by individual, household and contextual characteristics over different stages of the family life course?". Using data from

the fifth round (2010) of the European Social Survey a sample of 24045 heterosexual couples from 24 different countries was selected. Using multilevel analysis, I examine how the distribution of domestic work over the life course is affected by (1) time availability, relative resources and gender ideology and (2) the cultural and institutional context and (3) whether cross-level-interactions play a role. Results show that the level of gender inequality as well as the extent to which individual, household and contextual characteristics relate to this gender inequality differ between life course stages. The most interesting results are observed for young couples with children: A progressive gender ideology has a small positive influence on gender equality for couples with young children in comparison to the same effect in other life course groups. But this effect depends on the societal context as cross-level-interactions suggest that young parents better succeed in implementing their progressive ideas in a country with a progressive national gender culture and more full-time child care. In this way contextual variables play a role in reducing traditional gender roles following the birth of a child.

The other three chapters focus on determinants of labour force attachment following the transition to parenthood, using data of the Belgian-Administrative panel covering the period 1999-2010. Heterosexual couples and women residing in Belgium are followed from one year before parenthood until three to five years following the transition to parenthood.

The second research question “Is the effect of parenthood on gender inequality in employment moderated in couples where women were the main income providers before the onset of family formation?” is answered in the **third chapter**. Taking into account the pre-birth relative earnings in dual full-time working couples, logit models assess whether the female partner reduces her working hours, whether the father reduces his working hours or whether an equal employment division is maintained. Results indicate that having a female main earner positively relates to the conservation of an equal employment division following childbirth and the reduction of working hours by the father rather than the mother. Although the pre-birth relative earnings affect the magnitude of the negative relationship between parenthood and gender equality in paid work, a reversed gender specialization where fathers rather than mothers reduce working hours is still not found for female main earner couples. Hence, variation in pre-birth relative earnings cannot fully account for the rise in gender inequality in employment following the transition to parenthood, suggesting that cultural as well as structural constraints limit the ability of parents to opt for an equal employment division.

The subsequent chapters look into migrant-native differences in mothers' employment and parental leave use following the transition to parenthood. **Chapter 4** is geared towards the third research question: "Is the labour force attachment of migrant women differentially influenced by the transition to parenthood compared to natives? To what extent can differences in maternal employment be accounted for in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and precarious labour market positions held prior to parenthood?". Using panel regression models for binary outcomes, levels of activity (versus inactivity), employment (versus unemployment) and full-time employment (versus part-time employment) are compared between natives and first- and second-generation women of Southern European, Eastern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin. Results indicate that activity and employment levels decrease to a larger extent following the transition to parenthood among women of migrant origin than among natives. With respect to activity levels, differences between second-generation migrant women and natives are largely explained by socio-demographic and pre-birth employment characteristics, while differences between first-generation women and natives are not, suggesting that other factors such as tied migration patterns determine labour market attachment among first-generation mothers. With respect to employment levels, unemployment is increasing more among women of migrant origin of both generations than among natives, also when controlling for background characteristics, which signals differential access to stable job positions as well as to family policies. Hence, pre-birth labour market disadvantages are largely reproduced over the transition to parenthood and in addition, migrant women that are not attached to the labour market face more difficulties to enter employment following parenthood in comparison to natives. The results draw attention to the role of labour market entry and early career disadvantages for migrant women and the challenge that parenthood creates for migrant mothers in terms of gaining employment.

The **fifth chapter** addresses the last research question "Are there differences in parental leave use between mothers of migrant origin and natives in Belgium? And to which degree are differences explained by pre-birth employment characteristics and eligibility?". Mixed effects logit models of leave uptake, full-time versus part-time leave uptake and employment position following leave are estimated for 10,976 mothers that entered parenthood between 2004 and 2010. Results indicate that mothers of migrant origin exhibit lower uptake of parental leave, since they fail to meet the eligibility criteria as a result of being overrepresented in unstable employment positions. Whereas differential leave uptake can be accounted for by non-universal eligibility and precarious employment trajectories, migrant-native differences in part-time uptake and employment position following leave persist when controlling for pre-birth

employment characteristics. The differential patterns of leave uptake among first-generation women in particular are difficult to account for in terms of pre-birth employment characteristics, as mothers of all origin groups remain overrepresented in full-time leave, and first-generation mothers of non-European origin more frequently retreat from the labour force following leave. To conclude, the combination of difficult access to stable employment and non-universal eligibility is a major factor explaining migrant-native differences in parental leave use. As such, Belgian parental leave policy perpetuates labour market disadvantages by limiting support for work-family reconciliation to those already established in the labour force.

In **chapter 6** the main findings and their implications for academic research and policy are discussed. Finally, the limitations of this research and avenues for future research are reflected on.



## **CHAPTER 2: Gender inequality in the division of housework over the life course: a European comparative perspective**

### **Abstract**

Over the last 50 years the gendered division of paid work in European households has become more equal. The evolution is only partly compensated by a more equal distribution of unpaid work. Therefore this study aims to examine how gender inequality in the division of housework varies across different stages of the life course and across different cultural and institutional contexts. Using data from the fifth round (2010) of the European Social Survey a sample of 24 045 heterosexual couples from 24 different countries was selected. Using multilevel analysis we examined how the distribution of domestic work over the life course is affected by (1) time availability, relative resources and gender ideology and (2) the cultural and institutional context and (3) whether cross-level-interactions play a role. Results show that a progressive gender ideology has a relatively small positive influence on gender equality for couples with young children. But this effect depends on the societal context as cross-level-interactions suggest that parents better succeed in implementing their progressive ideas in a country with a progressive national gender culture and more full-time child care. In this way contextual variables play a role in reducing traditional gender roles following the birth of a child.

An earlier version of this paper was awarded first place in the ‘Pierre Francois Verhulst’-prize 2013 of the ‘Vereniging voor Demografie’ (VVD) and the ‘Société Démographique Francophone de Belgique’ (SDFB).

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## 2.1. Introduction

Historically the ‘male breadwinner/female carer’-model - characterized by a gendered division of paid and domestic work - has been a key assumption underlying the development of welfare states in post-war Western Europe (Pascall & Lewis, 2004). In recent decades, however, various institutions in society have shifted from the male breadwinner model towards a gender equity model where gender is no longer a determinant of who is responsible for carrying out paid work, housework or childcare in a household (McDonald, 2000b). This shift has occurred at different speeds in different domains of society. Gender inequity has partly disappeared from institutions such as education and employment. Over the last 50 years, female participation in higher education and the labour market increased significantly and the distribution of paid work between partners has become more equal on average (Crompton, 1999). In contrast, gender roles in the family and parenting have adjusted slowly (McDonald, 2000a). The more equal distribution of paid work is only partly compensated by a more equal distribution of housework and childcare (Altintas, 2009; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). According to Goldscheider the revolution towards gender equality therefore runs in two stages (F. K. Goldscheider, 2000; F. K. Goldscheider, Olah, & Puur, 2010). The first part of the gender revolution in which women enter the public sphere of education, employment and politics has partly been accomplished (Bernhardt, Noack, & Lyngstad, 2008). The second part of the revolution, however, in which men join the private sphere and take up their part of the responsibility for housework and childcare has lagged behind.

The gendered division of housework implies that working women face a “double shift” with paid work on the one hand and housework and childcare on the other (Hochschild & Machung, 1989). Empirical work on the gender division of housework suggests that there is not so much a double workload (as the total amount of time spent on paid work, housework and childcare of men and women is, on average, rather equal) but rather a dual responsibility (Elchardus & Glorieux, 1994; Glorieux, Koelet, Mestdag, & Minnen, 2006). Women are forced to combine various roles to a greater extent, which can lead to role nuisance, role conflicts, increased planning burden and time pressure. An unequal household division of labour further limits the ability of women to participate in public life and fully realize their role in the professional, social and political spheres (Poeschl in Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). An unequal distribution of domestic work also increases the risk of dissatisfaction about it, which in turn is related to a low psychological well-being, less perceived social support and reduced family stability (Claffey & Manning, 2010). Similarly, the incompatibility between women’s roles in the public and private sphere has been suggested as a major cause of low fertility in developed countries (Mc Donald 2006).

The micro factors affecting the distribution of domestic work have been studied extensively in recent decades. Research into the effect of (national) context emerged more recently. Studies that specifically focus on the influence of national context on the gendered division of domestic work from a life course perspective are rather limited. An exception is the work by Anxo et al. (2011), but they did not distinguish between housework and childcare whereas previous research has shown that these are conceptually different (Ishii-Kuntz & Coltrane, 1992). Furthermore the results of their study are limited to countries which were analysed separately. Our study focuses specifically on housework and contributes to the literature by documenting how gender inequality in the division of housework changes over the life-course and different stages of family formation, and by showing how the gender division of domestic work depends on the institutional and social context in which couples live. Drawing on data from Round 5 of the European Social Survey (ESS) and using multilevel analysis we first document how the gender distribution of domestic work over the life course is affected by individual and household characteristics (time availability, relative resources and gender ideology), as well as the cultural and policy context (gender culture, full-time childcare, availability of parental leave for men and neutrality of the tax system). Subsequently, we show how the effect of individual characteristics on the gender distribution of domestic work depends on the cultural and policy context in which couples live.

## **2.2. Theoretical background and research questions**

### **2.2.1. Individual determinants of the division of housework**

In recent decades several studies have looked into factors at the individual and household level that affect the distribution of domestic work. The available literature has identified three major factors: i) time availability, ii) relative resources and iii) gender ideology.

*Time availability* - Becker (1991) explains the division of housework from a rational economic perspective. He argues that families seek to maximize utility by distributing tasks as efficiently as possible. Each member must therefore specialize in what (s)he does best, paid or domestic work. Productivity depends on biological factors, different experiences and investment in human capital over the life course. This makes that men better engage in paid work and women in domestic work. A recent application of this theoretical framework is the perspective of time availability in which the distribution of housework depends on the time available to partners. The partner who spends less time on other activities such as labour force participation will have more time available to take up a larger share of the housework.

*Relative resources* - The second approach emphasizes the importance of relative resources that partners contribute to the household. Housework is considered an annoying task whose distribution is achieved as a result of negotiation. Negotiation takes the form of a power struggle: the partner who has the best negotiating position - based on material resources - may limit his or her share of the housework (Brines, 1993).

*Gender ideology* - The last perspective looks into the distribution of domestic work as the result of gender ideology. From this respect, women with attitudes conforming to the 'male-breadwinner/female carer'-ideal will perform a larger share of the household chores. Gender ideology is viewed as the result of socialization in the role that is associated with the gender category to which one belongs. An alternative theory is the 'gender construction/doing gender'-perspective. From this perspective, domestic work is a process through which individuals define their gender identity. West and Zimmerman (1987) view gender as a set of routines that are embedded in everyday interaction which must be constantly exercised and confirmed in interaction with others.

A review of the literature of Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard (2010) suggests that the gender division of housework is a complex process that is best explained by a combination of the aforementioned factors. The **first research question** therefore looks into *the effects of time availability, relative resources and gender ideology on the gender distribution of housework*.

### **2.2.2. A life course approach of the gendered division of housework**

The life course will be approached from the classical idea of the 'family cycle' of Glick (in Buhmann et al., 2010). He argues that families go through a sequence of typical life stages at normatively defined ages. He distinguishes 'marriage', 'childbearing', 'children leaving home' and 'dissolution of the family'. Later on, categories were added that vary depending on age and institutional place of the children, ranging from 'families with preschool children' to 'empty nest families'.

The form and extent of gender inequality vary throughout the life span (Anxo et al., 2010). Research by Anxo et al. (2011) on the household division of labor by age in France, Italy, Sweden and the United States based on cross-sectional data shows that gender differences in paid work, housework, childcare and leisure are smaller at younger and older ages. At working age they are largest, especially when children are present in the family (Buhmann et al., 2010). Grunow et al. (2012) show (based on longitudinal data for West-Germany) that many couples try to distribute housework evenly in the beginning of their relationship. But after this initial stage the distribution gets more traditional and a routine is created.

Research by Lundberg and Rose (1999) based on longitudinal data from the American Panel Study of Income Dynamics shows that especially parenthood is often accompanied by a specialization of gender roles in paid and unpaid work. Specialization patterns apply better to the older birth cohorts suggesting that gender roles have changed over time. Also Martinengo, Jacob, and Hill (2010) found (based on cross-sectional data) that parenting entails a more gendered division of work and family life. In their interpretation, the current generation is mainly egalitarian, but the general image about parenting that manifests itself when becoming a parent has a greater impact than other cultural norms such as gender egalitarianism. Studies based on longitudinal data from Australia (Baxter et al., 2008) and the United States (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003) show that every birth significantly increases the time spent on housework for women. For fathers, the birth of a first child triggers no change in the time spent on housework and the second birth even reduces the time spent on housework (Baxter et al., 2008). Similarly an American study with longitudinal data (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997) shows that the transition to a second or subsequent child is accompanied by a slight increase in the working hours of the father. These findings show that children imply more housework and that mainly mothers take up these extra tasks.

The second part of the **first research question (1b)** therefore is: *Do the effects of time availability, relative resources and gender ideology differ over the life course?*

### **2.2.3. The influence of national context**

Decision making on the distribution of domestic work in the family is embedded in a social context and is influenced by norms, values and the prevailing culture in a particular society (Trude Lappegård, Kjeldstad, & Skarøhamar, 2012). Numerous studies have recently looked into the relationship between the household division of labour and macro-indicators (Batalova & Cohen, 2002; Fuwa, 2004; Fuwa & Cohen, 2007; Geist, 2005; J. L. Hook, 2010; Knudsen & Waerness, 2008; Trude Lappegård et al., 2012; van der Lippe, de Ruijter, de Ruijter, & Raub, 2011).

Several researchers have investigated the influence of *gender equality in the public sphere*. This research is often based on the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) of the UN (Batalova & Cohen, 2002; Fuwa, 2004) and female labour market participation (Fuwa, 2004; J. L. Hook, 2006, 2010). The findings largely confirm that the visibility of women in positions of public authority and prestige affects the standards on gender distribution of work (Batalova & Cohen, 2002).

The presence of women in the public sphere has a positive impact on gender equality in the private sphere of the family.

The impact of social *policies* on gender equality has also been considered. Geist (2005) notes that couples in conservative countries divide housework less equal than couples in social-democratic countries. The regimes of conservative welfare states actively encourage traditional gender roles, while social democratic regimes encourage gender equality. Liberal regimes are more heterogeneous and take an intermediate position. Also family policies are taken into account. Public childcare can limit the female caregiver/homemaker role through its influence on female employment and financial independence (J. L. Hook, 2006). On the other hand it hardly affects the role of the father in the household. The state takes over some parts of the 'female' tasks, but does not encourage the man to become more involved in childcare and domestic work. Hence cross-national analysis finds no significant effects of public childcare on the division of housework (J. L. Hook, 2006, 2010). In contrast, research by van der Lippe et al. (2011) shows that public spending on childcare is negatively related with the time spent by women on housework if children are present.

Parental leave is suggested to have the opposite effect. Since it is used predominantly by mothers, it can discourage a more egalitarian division of household labour participation because it reinforces the 'male breadwinner/female homemaker'-model, affecting financial resources and long term employment opportunities for women. In contrast to this hypothesis Fuwa and Cohen (2007) found a positive relationship between the length of parental leave and equality of the household division of labour. J. L. Hook (2006) nuanced this finding, suggesting that the argument would only apply in countries where fathers can take up parental leave as parental leave available to both partners discourages specialization and the persistence of traditional gender roles. In countries where fathers are not entitled to parental leave, there exists a negative relationship between the length of parental leave and gender equality in the household division of labour.

In sum, there is some evidence that gender and policy context have an effect on the division of housework in the households but results are inconsistent and the effects are usually small (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). It is stated that since household tasks take place in the private sphere of family life, it is difficult for policies to affect them. Welfare state policy is primarily focused on the organization of care and less on the organization of housework. Therefore the effect on housework is rather indirect and caused by the relatively strong relationship between care and housework for parents of young children. But family policies also contribute to the division of housework via the normative and

symbolic construction of families. Policy measures induce the institutionalization of a dominant and normative family structure (Bourdieu, 1996). Private gender equality is therefore more common in a society where gender equity is accepted as the dominant cultural value and where institutions support it.

Buhmann et al. (2010) suggest that the magnitude to which parenthood induces a traditional division of housework depends on the social context in which a couple resides. The birth of a child would signify a more unequal division of labour, care and housework in all countries. But the ability to return to a more equal distribution of work and care would depend on the institutional context. In countries where policy supports a dual earner model, it is easier to re-establish a more equal division of labour and care. In countries where institutions support a male breadwinner model or where family policy remains limited, the pattern of an egalitarian distribution often does not recover.

The **second research question** looks into the influence of contextual elements on private gender inequality: *What is the importance of policy and culture for the gendered division of housework (2a) and do the effects of such contextual factors vary over the life course (2b)?*

To assess the interplay between social contexts and individual characteristics on the division of housework, the **third research question** concerns the cross-level interaction effects between micro-level and macro-level variables: *Are the effects of the individual-level variables influenced by the country-level variables in the different life course stages?*

## 2.3. Data and methods

### 2.3.1. Data

The data used are from ESS Round 5. This is a standardized, cross-sectional, repeated survey that questions the living conditions and political attitudes of European inhabitants. The interviews were conducted in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Round 5 includes a module on 'Work, Family and Wellbeing' that provides data about housework. The sample includes 24 countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Because this research investigates gender equality within families, the sample was restricted to respondents in heterosexual couples. The total number of sampled respondents was 24045, ranging from 655 (Lithuania) to 1722 (Germany).

Because this study uses a life course perspective, different groups are examined separately. For the classification we used a variant of the family cycle approach developed by Glick (Buhmann et al., 2010). This typology reflects the life events and life stages of a large part of the population, such as the birth of a child, the transition to retirement, etc. (Anxo et al., 2011). We distinguished between couples who are in different life stages, based on the age of women, the presence of children in the household and the age of the youngest resident child. We distinguished six different groups: i) young couples (<45y.) without children, ii) couples (<60y.) with young children (<6y.), iii) couples (<60y.) with children aged 6 to 15 years, iv) couples (<60y.) with teenage children from 16 to 25 years, v) midlife "empty nest" couples (45-59y.) without resident children and vi) older couples (>59y.).

The age of the respondents ranges from 16 to 94 years with the average age being 50 years. Looking at the sample distribution over the life stages, 28.6% of women in the sample is older than 60 years. But there are also big differences between countries. Almost half (45.1%) of Portuguese couples are in the oldest life stage (>60 y.) while this group is limited to 19.6% in the Polish sample (see **Table 2.1**).

**Table 2.1:** Sample distribution by country and life course stage, respondents in a heterosexual couple aged 16 – 94 years

	<45y. no child	<60y. child <6y.	<60y. child 6- 15y.	<60y. child 16- 25y.	45-59y. no child	>59y.	<b>Total</b> %	<b>N</b>
Belgium	9.1%	20.7%	15.1%	13.1%	14.0%	28.0%	100.0%	992
Bulgaria	5.0%	13.9%	16.0%	12.2%	16.9%	36.0%	100.0%	1076
Czech Republic	11.6%	18.5%	14.8%	14.2%	13.0%	27.8%	100.0%	859
Cyprus	9.4%	18.1%	13.5%	16.1%	9.9%	33.0%	100.0%	554
Switzerland	10.4%	18.2%	15.2%	14.8%	17.2%	24.3%	100.0%	1023
Germany	11.2%	15.8%	14.3%	9.4%	19.4%	29.9%	100.0%	1662
Denmark	8.5%	16.0%	19.7%	8.6%	17.3%	30.0%	100.0%	978
Estonia	6.4%	21.7%	14.7%	13.6%	14.4%	29.2%	100.0%	890
Spain	13.0%	21.6%	17.4%	15.4%	9.0%	23.6%	100.0%	1026
Finland	12.2%	20.6%	11.6%	7.6%	17.0%	30.9%	100.0%	1087
France	10.4%	22.4%	14.6%	8.0%	14.6%	29.9%	100.0%	915
United Kingdom	12.0%	22.9%	12.7%	7.3%	16.0%	29.2%	100.0%	1168
Greece	12.0%	20.0%	17.2%	11.3%	10.7%	28.8%	100.0%	1359
Hungary	8.0%	20.2%	16.8%	15.2%	14.6%	25.2%	100.0%	822
Ireland	14.7%	26.9%	14.5%	7.4%	12.0%	24.4%	100.0%	1089
Lithuania	17.8%	18.1%	10.8%	12.4%	20.0%	30.9%	100.0%	619
Netherlands	12.8%	19.4%	15.4%	8.8%	16.2%	27.4%	100.0%	1072
Norway	11.2%	24.0%	15.8%	7.6%	16.3%	25.2%	100.0%	976
Poland	10.1%	27.8%	16.1%	15.5%	11.0%	19.6%	100.0%	864
Portugal	6.4%	11.7%	15.2%	8.4%	13.2%	45.1%	100.0%	891
Russia	14.6%	20.0%	15.9%	14.3%	16.1%	19.0%	100.0%	861
Sweden	12.2%	19.8%	13.0%	8.2%	15.8%	31.0%	100.0%	882
Slovenia	6.1%	19.2%	16.0%	18.9%	9.8%	29.9%	100.0%	692
Slovakia	5.9%	14.4%	16.6%	19.1%	14.6%	29.4%	100.0%	881
<i>Total</i>	<i>10.3%</i>	<i>19.6%</i>	<i>15.2%</i>	<i>11.6%</i>	<i>14.7%</i>	<i>28.6%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>23238</i>

Source: ESS Round 5 (2010)

### 2.3.2. Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the *relative division of housework*. We look at the proportion of household tasks for which the female partner is responsible. The possible values of the indicator range from 0 to 100, where 0 refers to a distribution where the male partner performs all tasks and 100 to a distribution where the female partner performs all tasks. As housework and childcare are conceptually different (Ishikuntz & Coltrane, 1992) and the meaning and delineation of childcare is more complex (Altintas, 2009; Pfau-Effinger, 2010), we focus on housework. In ESS Round 5 two questions are included that measure how many hours per week the respondent and his partner spend in total on housework, which is restricted to cooking, washing, cleaning, shopping and maintenance tasks. The first four tasks are typically female and more routine, non-discrete and time consuming while maintenance tasks are rather ‘male’, interrupted, occasionally, flexible and less time consuming. Recent studies (Batalova & Cohen, 2002; Fuwa, 2004) focused on the distribution of typically

female tasks. However, this may underestimate the actual contribution of the male partner whereas it seems useful to consider both.

The measure for time spent on housework is based on answers to survey questions. Comparisons of estimates of time spent on housework by questionnaires and time diaries show that the reported hours people spend on domestic labour are much higher in questionnaires (Bianchi et al., 2000). This problem is especially present when household tasks are questioned separately and the time is then added up, as simultaneous activities are double counted (Coltrane, 2000). This distortion can be partially avoided by the more general question ("how many hours do you spend weekly on housework in total?") that ESS5 uses. In addition the dependent variable is relative thus the estimation of the absolute contribution is less important.

### 2.3.3. Independent variables

#### ***Micro-level variables***

*Time availability* is operationalized as the total number of hours that the female partner on average spends on paid work per week.

*Relative resources* is operationalized as the proportion of household income for which the female partner is responsible. There are seven categories: 0) none, 1) very small, 2) under a half, 3) about half, 4) over a half, 5) very large and 6) all.

For the operationalization of *gender ideology* two items were used that estimate the extent to which one agrees with the assumptions of the male breadwinner model. The statements are "When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to work than women" and "A women should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family". The responses to these items were measured using a five-point scale ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly". The correlation (Pearson) between the two items was 0.49 ( $p < 0.001$ ). The scores on the two scales were added together and divided by two to form an indicator of gender ideology. They are coded so that 0 is equivalent to a gender ideology that corresponds to the male breadwinner model and 4 is equivalent to a gender ideology that rejects these ideas.

We also added some control variables. The *average number of working hours per week of the man* and the *household size* fit within the time availability perspective. We also controlled for the *education of both partners* and whether the couple is *married*. A higher level of education and unmarried cohabitation are usually associated with more progressive values such as gender egalitarianism.

Furthermore also *age* and *sex* of the respondent were entered as control variables. We take into account gender as earlier research (Kamo, 2000; Lee & Waite, 2005) shows that men and women estimate their own and their partners time spent on housework differently.

### ***Macro-level variables***

The contextual variables reflect policies that address gender equity in family-oriented institutions (Saraceno & Keck, 2011) and gender culture. All contextual variables were standardized.

The first policy variable considers the use of *full-time formal childcare*, which is operationalized as the percentage of children between 0 and 2 years old that spend more than 30 hours per week in formal childcare. Next to representing the full-time provision of childcare, it is an indicator for the extent to which parents are able to combine full-time employment with young children. Formal childcare includes all types of organized care by a public or private structure. It draws on data from Eurostat (2010a).

The second indicator considers *availability of parental leave for men*, where we used the number of months of parental leave that is exclusively reserved for the parents together or that is explicitly reserved for fathers in 2009 (Multilinks Database, 2011). In most countries, parents can decide who receives the leave and how the effective parental care period is divided between father and mother. This indicator only considers the regulation that creates additional rights when both parents share the time (Keck & Saraceno, 2011).

The third variable concerns the *fiscal support for dual earner couples* or the neutrality of the tax system. Tax systems are neutral when they do not influence the distribution of paid work between couples and create equal work incentives for both partners (OECD, 2012a). It is operationalized as the extent to which a one earner couple has to pay more or less taxes than a two earner couple with the same income (200% of the median income) and the same family form. A negative value indicates that a one-earner family pays less taxes than a similar two-earner family and a positive value indicates the reverse. We used data for 2010 from OECD (2012b).

Besides the policy variables, we used an indicator of *progressive gender culture* and support for the dual worker/dual carer model. To construct the cultural variable we used data from the 2008 European Value Study (EVS 2011). The survey consists of approximately 1500 respondents per country and contains mostly countries that also participated in ESS Round 5. The survey examines the

specific support of sharing roles within the household, while ESS Round 5 does not contain these claims. A factor analysis was performed on eight items that measure the extent to which respondents agree with the male breadwinner model and a gendered division of housework and childcare. The factor we use examines the egalitarian ideas of gender roles within the family. Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax Rotation showed that following statements load the strongest on the factor: "In general, fathers are as well suited to look after their children as mothers" (0.55), "Men should take as much responsibility as women for the home and children" (0.54), "A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work." (0.49) and "A pre-school child is like to suffer if his or her mother works" (-0.42). The possible answers consisted of a Likert scale with four points that went from totally agree (1) to totally disagree (4). The factor scores on the scales are weighted, aggregated by person, standardized and aggregated by country. The scale is reversed so that a higher value means a more progressive gender culture.

### ***Analysis***

We used multilevel analysis where individuals (level 1) are nested in countries (level 2). Multilevel regression creates the possibility to test the combined effects of individual-level variables and country-level variables. For each life course stage ten models were estimated.

$$(1) \quad Y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \mu_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

In the first model only the dependent variable together with a constant at the individual-level and the country-level is included, where  $Y_{ij}$  reflects the proportion of the housework that the female partner is responsible for in couple  $i$  in country  $j$ ;  $\gamma_{00}$  is the intercept at the individual level;  $r_{ij}$  is the error term on the individual level en  $\mu_{0j}$  is the error term at the country level (random intercept).

$$(2) \quad Y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10}TA_{ij} + \gamma_{20}RR_{ij} + \gamma_{30}GI_{ij} + \sum\gamma_{k0}X_{ikj} + \mu_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

In the second model the three most important individual-level variables and the control variables are included where  $TA_{ij}$  stands for time availability;  $RR_{ij}$  for relative resources en  $GI_{ij}$  for gender ideology.  $X_{ikj}$  are the control variables. The  $\gamma_{i0}$ -terms refer to the slopes of the independent individual level variables. The remaining terms have the same signification as in the former model.

$$(3-6) \quad Y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10}TA_{ij} + \gamma_{20}RA_{ij} + \gamma_{30}GI_{ij} + \sum\gamma_{kj}X_{ikj} + \gamma_{01}Z_j + \mu_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

In the third, fourth, fifth and sixth model the macro-level variables were separately added.  $\gamma_{0j}Z_j$  refers to the slopes of the independent macro-variables.

$$(7-10) \quad Y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10}TA_{ij} + \gamma_{20}RA_{ij} + \gamma_{30}GI_{ij} + \sum \gamma_{kj}X_{ikj} + \gamma_{0j}Z_j + \gamma_{1j}TA_{ij}Z_j + \gamma_{2j}RA_{ij}Z_j + \gamma_{3j}GI_{ij}Z_j + \mu_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

In the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth model the interaction effects between the three key individual level variables and national variables were separately inserted.  $\gamma_{1j}TA_{ij}Z_j$ ,  $\gamma_{2j}RA_{ij}Z_j$  and  $\gamma_{3j}GI_{ij}Z_j$  refer to the slopes of the cross-level interaction effects.

The random slopes of the models have also been tested but were rarely significant. Therefore they have not been included in the above equations.

## 2.4. Results

### 2.4.1. The null model

In the first model (**Table 2.2**) the value of the intercept reflects the average division of housework in the various life stages. In the average European couple the woman is responsible for more than half of the housework, but gender inequality varies over life stages. As expected, the inequality in terms of housework is largest when children are present. For couples with resident children, women perform 71 to 72% of the housework. The gender inequality is lowest (64%) among young couples without children. Further the variance components show that the variance at the country level varies between 7.5% (stage 6) and 9.3% (stage 3) and that the between-country variation is significant.

**Table 2.2:** The empty multilevel models for the distribution of housework in different life course stages, respondents in a heterosexual couple aged 16 – 94 years

	<i>Life course stage</i>					
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
Intercept	64.26***	71.40***	71.75***	72.13***	68.50***	70.17***
Variance						
<i>Intercept</i>	31.91***	26.31***	34.27***	31.47***	34.35***	34.71***
<i>Residual level 1</i>	347.09***	321.82***	33.56***	349.23***	374.53***	429.57***
ICC	8.42%	7.56%	9.32%	8.26%	8.40%	7.48%
AIC	21392.90	39794.20	30982.60	23487.10	30341.20	55944.40
N	2455	4613	3575	2695	3455	6614

*Note :* Life course stages: 1 = woman <45y, no resident child; 2 = woman <60y, resident child <6y; 3 = woman <60y, resident child 6 – 15y; 4 = woman <60y, resident child 16 – 24y; 5 = woman 45 – 59y, no resident child; 6 = woman >59y; ICC = Intra class correlation coefficient

Significance levels: \*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Source: ESS Round 5 (2010)

### 2.4.2. Individual-level covariates

In **Table 2.3** the individual-level variables are added. Time availability (the average number of working hours per week of the female partner), relative resources (the proportion of household income that the woman is responsible for) and gender ideology (the extent to which progressive values regarding gendered roles are supported) are negatively related to the proportion of the housework that the woman is responsible for. The effects are significant at every life stage. Only for couples with children between 16 and 24 years old a progressive gender ideology has no significant effect.

Standardization of the effects (**Table 2.4**) indicates that the average number of working hours of women and men is most strongly related to the division of housework in each life stage. If the average number of hours a woman spends on paid work increases with one standard deviation, the average proportion of the housework that the woman is responsible for decreases with approximately 0.20 standard deviations. Only for retired couples the effect of time availability is less strong (-0.11), but this may be due to the fact that these people simply spend less time on paid work.

The effects of relative resources and gender ideology are smaller than those of time availability but differ strongly across life stages. The effect of relative resources is relatively small for young couples without children, but almost three times as high among couples with young children. The older the youngest child, the smaller this effect. This may be due to the risk that the combination of young children and economic dependence implies. The financially dependent spouse has in this case twice as much to lose at the event of separation: financial security for itself as well as for their children. This may give the financially stronger partner more bargaining power to reduce his/her share in housework. As a result the relative income power of young parents may play a larger role in the negotiation of the division of housework in comparison to that of people in other life course stages.

Gender ideology appears to have a big impact for young and older couples without children. Especially when children are present the effect of gender ideology is relatively weak. The practical need for domestic work associated with children and the cultural meaning of parenthood may partially outweigh the effect of gender ideology.

Furthermore it is striking that for the elderly couples less variance is explained than in the other groups. This is probably due to the physical capabilities which account for a large fraction of the distribution of domestic work and/or the fact that housework habits are formed in previous life stages and persist in later life

stages.

**Table 2.3:** Multilevel models including individual determinants of the distribution of housework in different life course stages, respondents in a heterosexual couple aged 16 – 94 years

	<i>Life course stage</i>					
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
Intercept	68.39***	73.67***	73.65***	64.14***	55.18***	72.64***
Time availability (work hours woman)	-0.20***	-0.21***	-0.20***	-0.22***	-0.21***	-0.21***
Relative resour- ces (income w/m, 0 – 6)	-0.73**	-1.93***	-1.82***	-1.18***	-1.55***	-1.31***
Gender ideology (0 – 4)	-2.91***	-2.38***	-2.19***	-0.74	-2.06***	-1.88***
Work hours man	0.22***	0.230***	0.23***	0.18***	0.24***	0.14***
Educational level m	-0.06	-0.31***	-0.37***	-0.29**	-0.28**	-0.06
Educational level w	-0.77***	-0.54***	-0.49***	-0.53***	-0.37***	-0.03
Married	1.51	-0.56	0.28	2.05	1.75*	4.76***
Household members	0.72**	1.56***	0.45	0.60	2.31*	0.96***
Age woman	0.05	-0.06	0.07	0.18**	0.27***	-0.06
Sex respondent (m=0, w=1)	3.04	1.44	2.51*	3.23*	3.92**	2.05*
Sex resp. * GI	0.66	1.47***	0.82	0.14	-0.32	0.60
Variance						
<i>Intercept</i>	21.36***	13.62***	273.08***	15.55***	20.54***	30.92***
<i>Residual level 1</i>	294.38***	250.56***	17.38***	306.72***	307.69***	410.90***
ICC	6.76%	5.15%	5.98%	4.83%	6.26%	6.99 %
R <sup>2</sup> Level 2	31.48%	46.79%	47.51%	47.43%	38.78%	10.67%
AIC	187973.20	35130.00	27002.80	20138.20	27148.80	55833.50
N	2220	4193	3189	2346	3162	6295

*Note :* Life course stages: 1 = woman <45y, no resident child; 2 = woman <60y, resident child <6y; 3 = woman <60y, resident child 6 – 15y; 4 = woman <60y, resident child 16 – 24y; 5 = woman 45 – 59y, no resident child; 6 = woman >59y; ICC = Intra class correlation coefficient

Significance levels: \*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Source: ESS Round 5 (2010)

**Table 2.4:** Standardized values for the effects of the individual variables on the distribution of housework (table 2.3) in different life course stages, respondents in a heterosexual couple aged 16 – 94 years

	<i>Life course stage</i>					
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
Distribution of housework	(19.50)	(18.64)	(19.11)	(19.58)	(20.19)	(21.66)
Time availability (work hours woman)	-0.20 (19.22)	-0.21 (19.28)	-0.20 (19.03)	-0.22 (19.74)	-0.21 (19.74)	-0.11 (11.93)
Relative resources (income w/m, 0 – 6)	-0.05 (1.39)	-0.15 (1.40)	-0.13 (1.41)	-0.09 (1.42)	-0.11 (1.39)	-0.08 (1.27)
Gender ideology (0 – 4)	-0.13 (1.01)	-0.09 (1.02)	-0.10 (1.05)	-0.03 (1.03)	-0.11 (1.02)	-0.07 (1.01)
Work hours man	0.20 (18.11)	0.22 (17.57)	0.22 (18.26)	0.19 (20.42)	0.27 (22.48)	0.10 (15.51)
Educational level man	-0.01 (3.26)	-0.04 (2.40)	-0.05 (2.52)	-0.04 (3.03)	-0.04 (2.72)	-0.01 (3.55)
Educational level woman	-0.10 (2.40)	-0.07 (2.60)	-0.07 (2.79)	-0.06 (2.17)	-0.05 (2.81)	0.00 (3.38)
Married	0.04 (0.49)	-0.01 (0.43)	0.01 (0.35)	0.03 (0.27)	0.03 (0.34)	0.05 (0.22)
Household members	0.03 (0.71)	0.09 (1.08)	0.02 (0.90)	0.02 (0.80)	0.03 (0.29)	0.03 (0.73)
Age woman	0.02 (6.93)	-0.02 (6.71)	0.02 (5.97)	0.05 (5.44)	0.05 (3.99)	-0.02 (6.49)
Sex respondent (man=0 woman=1)	0.10 (0.50)	0.13 (0.50)	0.11 (0.50)	0.09 (0.50)	0.08 (0.50)	0.07 (0.50)
Sex resp. * GI	0.02 (0.50)	0.04 (0.51)	0.02 (0.52)	0.00 (0.51)	-0.01 (0.51)	0.01 (0.51)

*Note :* The standard errors are presented between the parentheses.

*Life course stages:* 1 = woman <45y, no resident child; 2 = woman <60y, resident child <6y; 3 = woman <60y, resident child 6 – 15y; 4 = woman <60y, resident child 16 – 24y; 5 = woman 45 – 59y, no resident child; 6 = woman >59y; ICC = Intra class correlation coefficient

*Source:* ESS Round 5

### **2.4.3. Contextual factors**

In **Table 2.5** the four macro-level variables are included. The effects of the individual variables are not shown, since they hardly change when adding the macro-level variables.

For almost all couples - except among couples with a child aged 6 – 15 years (life stage 3) and older couples (life stage 6) - the progressivity of the overall gender culture has a significant positive effect on gender equality in the division of housework. For young couples without children, a standard deviation increase in the progressivity of the national gender culture decreases the share of housework for which women are responsible by 8.46%. The variance components show that the gender culture explains 18.35% of the variance at country level. In the other life stages gender culture still explains about 10% of the variance at the country level. This is quite small, since the variance at the country level was not higher than 10% in the null model (**Table 2.2**).

The three policy variables show no significant effects and only explain a small proportion of the variance. Only for older couples (life stage 6) the availability of parental leave for men has a significant negative effect on gender equality, which is contra intuitive.

**Table 2.5:** Multilevel models of the macro determinants for the distribution of housework for different life course stages, controlling for the individual determinants, respondents in a heterosexual couple aged 16 – 94 years

	<i>Life course stage</i>					
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
Intercept	68.66***	73.63***	73.45***	63.66***	55.10***	72.66***
Gender culture	-8.46**	-7.17***	-4.75	-6.16**	-7.45**	-2.88
Variance						
<i>Intercept</i>	14.93***	9.49***	16.10***	13.04***	16.50***	31.58***
<i>Residual level 1</i>	294.49***	250.56***	273.09***	306.73***	307.68***	410.91***
ICC	4.82%	3.65%	5.57%	4.08%	5.09%	7.14%
R <sup>2</sup> Level 2	49.83%	61.61%	51.03%	54.77%	49.76%	8.83%
AIC	18962.40	35118.20	26996.30	20130.00	27139.20	55828.40
N	2220	4193	3189	2346	3162	6295
Intercept	68.80***	73.63***	74.02***	63.57***	52.97***	71.24***
Full time childcare	-0.91	-1.23	-0.32	-0.85	-0.63	1.01
Variance						
<i>Intercept</i>	22.43***	12.40***	18.21***	15.70***	21.92***	30.19***
<i>Residual level 1</i>	291.63***	246.12***	269.76***	301.83***	306.18***	408.86***
ICC	7.14%	4.79%	6.32%	4.94%	6.68%	6.80%
R <sup>2</sup> Level 2	28.49%	51.24%	45.29%	47.11%	35.05%	13.82%
AIC	17550.70	332521.60	25702.60	19027.30	25724.50	53848.10
N	2056	4010	3040	2221	2998	6075
Intercept	68.69***	73.71***	74.08***	65.13***	52.74***	72.29***
Parental leave men	0.99	0.23	1.18	0.05	1.02	2.41**
Variance						
<i>Intercept</i>	23.38***	15.11***	17.06***	17.66***	21.624***	27.59***
<i>Residual level 1</i>	291.50***	250.88***	270.02***	299.22***	302.43***	406.99***
ICC	7.42%	5.68%	5.94%	5.57%	6.67%	6.35%
R <sup>2</sup> Level 2	25.77%	41.44%	48.44%	41.46%	35.91%	19.94%
AIC	17610.40	33543.00	25619.70	18873.60	25816.20	53181.10
N	2063	4003	3030	2205	3013	6003
Intercept	68.35***	73.15***	73.98***	63.76***	53.20***	72.08***
Neutrality tax system	-0.37	-0.69	0.15	0.61	0.28	1.79
Variance						
<i>Intercept</i>	14.33***	11.92***	18.00***	16.47***	20.02***	26.98***
<i>Residual level 1</i>	294.65***	254.42***	267.22***	298.61***	306.18***	401.56***
ICC	7.30%	4.63%	6.31%	5.23%	6.14%	6.30%
R <sup>2</sup> Level 2	28.46%	52.96%	45.90%	44.94%	40.20%	21.65%
AIC	17151.10	32923.70	25183.10	18379.30	25292.90	52205.80
N	2014	3940	2982	2148	2948	5902

Note: The coefficients for the micro variables are not shown.

The macro-data for some countries are missing, so these countries are not included in the analysis. Full time childcare: Russia, Parental leave men: Czech Republic, Neutrality tax system: Switzerland and Russia.

Life course stages: 1 = woman <45y, no resident child; 2 = woman <60y, resident child <6y; 3 = woman <60y, resident child 6 – 15y; 4 = woman <60y, resident child 16 – 24y; 5 = woman 45 – 59y, no resident child; 6 = woman >59y; ICC = Intra class correlation coefficient

Significance levels: \*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Sources: ESS Round 5 (2010), EVS2008, Multilinks database 2009, Eurostat 2008, OECD family database 2010

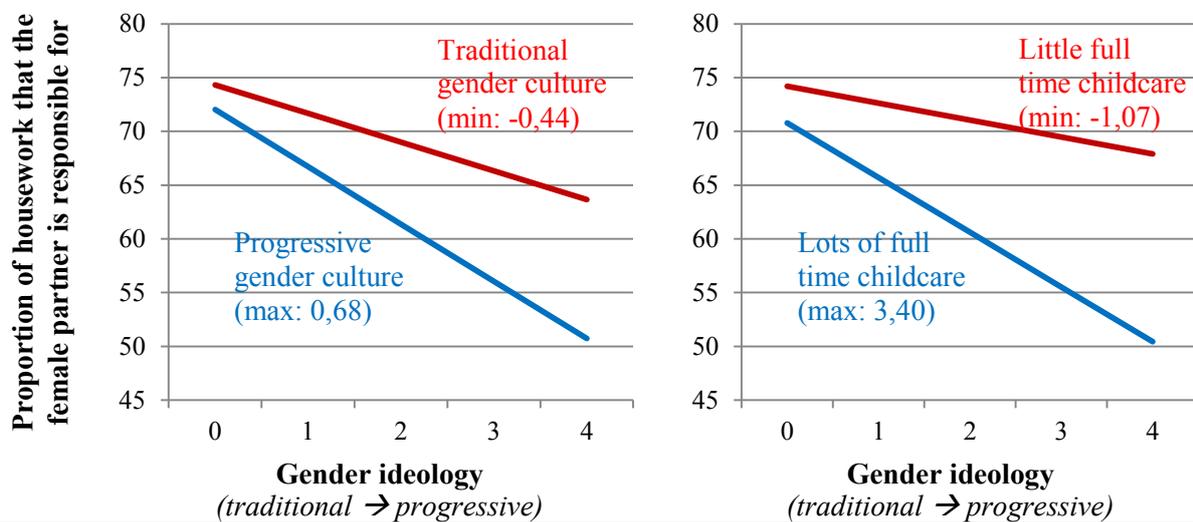
#### 2.4.4. Cross-level interactions

**Table 2.6** examines the interaction effects between the three main micro-level variables and the four macro-level variables which shows a number of interesting results, particularly for couples with young children.

For *young couples without children* (life stage 1) there are no significant interaction effects between gender culture and the micro-level variables. But it is notable that the main effect of gender culture has increased ( $b=-13.933$ ) compared to the latter model. The other interaction terms do not contribute to the model fit.

For *couples with young children* (life stage 2) there is a significant interaction between gender culture and full-time childcare at the aggregate level and gender ideology at the individual level. **Figure 2.1** gives a visual representation of this effect. The negative effect of gender ideology on the proportion of housework that the woman performs is more articulated in settings characterized by a progressive national gender culture and a higher full-time use of childcare. For couples with a strong traditional gender ideology (0) the national gender context hardly plays a role in the division of housework, while it does for couples with progressive gender values (4).

**Figure 2.1:** The effect of gender ideology on the division of housework, conditional on gender culture and the usage of full time childcare for young couples (<60y.) with young children (<6y.)



Note: The values for the division of housework are calculated based on the highest and lowest value for the macro variables. The effects of the other micro-variables are held constant on the value of zero.

Sources: ESS Round 5 (2010), EVS2008, Eurostat 2008

**Table 2.6:** Multi level models of the most important individual determinants, macro determinants and cross level interactions for the distribution of housework in different life course stages, controlling for other individual determinants, respondents in a heterosexual couple aged 16 – 94 years

	Life course stage					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Intercept	68.718***	73.474***	73.584***	64.313***	55.455***	72.640***
Time Availability	-0.204***	-0.203***	-0.199***	-0.219***	-0.211***	-0.187***
* GC	0.076	0.004	-0.60	-0.086	0.006	-0.312***
Relative resources	-0.701**	-1.932***	-1.850***	-1.175***	-1.591***	-1.304***
* GC	0.427	0.544	-0.312	0.320	-2.299**	-0.184
Gender Ideology	-2.739***	-3.657***	-2.171***	-0.690	-2.001***	-1.850**
* GC	0.914	-2.459**	-1.592	-2.459	0.259	1.335
GC	-13.933**	-2.140	1.923	2.085	-2.892	-3.224
AIC	18959.00+	35112.70+	26992.10+	20124.20-	27132.20+	55805.10+
Intercept	68.867***	73.374***	74.233***	64.472***	53.143***	71.128***
Time Availability	-0.208***	-0.206***	-0.197***	-0.215***	-0.213***	-0.188***
* FTCC	0.042*	-0.020	-0.010	-0.020	-0.006	-0.075***
Relative resources	-0.713**	-1.706***	-1.684***	-1.210***	-1.505***	-1.222***
* FTCC	-0.015	0.976***	0.226	-0.106	0.044	0.153
Gender Ideology	-2.916***	-2.416***	-2.442***	-0.772	-2.115***	-1.834***
* FTCC	0.146	-0.786**	-0.739**	-0.797*	-0.365	0.176
FTCC	-2.376	-0.761	1.484	1.909	-0.423	0.650
AIC	17552.40-	33508.40+	25704.60-	19028.00-	25730.50-	53841.00+
Intercept	68.585***	73.744***	74.233***	65.574***	52.384***	72.695***
Time Availability	-0.201***	-0.202***	-0.197***	-0.211***	-0.212***	-0.196***
* APLM	0.021	-0.011	-0.010	-0.025	-0.043	-0.051**
Relative resources	-0.796**	-1.757***	-1.684***	-1.116***	-1.518***	-1.242***
* APLM	0.012	0.081	0.226	1.073***	-0.235	0.036
Gender Ideology	-2.934***	-2.432***	-2.442***	-1.085*	-2.062***	-1.845***
* APLM	-0.348	-0.404	-0.739**	-0.972**	-0.518	-0.453
APLM	1.367	1.361	1.484	0.981	4.037**	3.745**
AIC	17615.00-	33548.60-	25623.50-	18866.20+	25810.60+	53178.10+
Intercept	68.567***	73.129***	74.038***	63.754***	53.532***	72.378***
Time Availability	-0.216***	-0.204***	-0.196***	-0.205***	-0.213***	-0.209***
* NTS	0.043**	-0.013	0.014	-0.004	0.006	-0.056***
Relative resources	-0.564*	-1.942***	-1.805***	-1.334***	-1.611***	-1.404***
* NTS	-0.462	0.022	-0.036	0.351	-0.288	0.077
Gender Ideology	-2.985***	-2.402***	-2.315***	-0.962*	-2.229***	-1.914***
* NTS	0.070	-0.652**	-0.525	0.094	-0.853**	-0.454
NTS	-0.592	1.116	1.111	-0.264	2.801*	2.812*
AIC	17152.60-	32925.50-	25187.90-	18383.90-	25292.30+	52203.70+

Note : The coefficients for the micro variables are not shown.

The macro-data for some countries are missing, so these countries aren't included in the analysis. Full time childcare: Russia, Parental leave men: Czech Republic, Neutrality tax system: Switzerland and Russia.

Life course stages: 1 = woman <45y, no resident child; 2 = woman <60y, resident child <6y; 3 = woman <60y, resident child 6 – 15y; 4 = woman <60y, resident child 16 – 24y; 5 = woman 45 – 59y, no resident child; 6 = woman >59y;

Contextual variables: GC = gender culture; FTCC = % 0-2 year olds in childcare (>30h/week); APLM = quotes parental leave for men; NTS = neutrality tax system.

AIC: + AIC is smaller than in former model (improvement) - AIC is bigger than in the former model (deterioration)

Significance levels: \*  $p < .1$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Sources: ESS Round 5 (2010), EVS2008, Multilinks database 2009, Eurostat 2008, OECD family database 2010

**Table 2.3** showed that gender values at the individual level play a less important role for couples with children, but the cross-level interaction shows that the effect of progressive gender values is larger in countries with a gender egalitarian culture and policy context. The national gender context therefore seems of great importance in avoiding traditional gender roles to come into place after the transition to parenthood. In an environment that confirms gender egalitarian ideas it is easier to convert these ideas effectively into behaviour.

For *couples with children between 6 and 15 years* (life stage 3) and *couples with children between 16 and 24 years* (life stage 4) most models including cross-level interactions do not improve the model fit.

For *couples between 45 and 59 years old without resident children* (life stage 5) gender culture has a significant effect in its interaction with relative resources, the negative effect is enlarged. We also see that the neutrality of the tax system has a slightly positive effect on gender inequality for couples where the woman does not work and contributes no income and the respondent has a traditional gender ideology.

For *older couples* (life stage 6) the macro-level variables have a strong effect in their interaction with time availability. In countries with a progressive gender culture, a high fulltime use of childcare, where parental leave is available for fathers and tax systems are rather neutral, the negative effect of time availability is more articulated. A closer look into the distribution of the respondents shows that about 85% of women aged 60 years and older in the sample do not work whereas couples who do work are rather exceptional. It is not useful to draw conclusions around this cases. The gendered division of domestic work is probably more difficult to grasp in these households as they have less contact with childcare and parental leave and their habits on the division of housework are formed much earlier in the life course.

## **2.5. Discussion and conclusion**

The aim of this study was to examine how individual and contextual characteristics affect the gendered division of domestic work through different stages over the life course. This approach is innovative as it looks into the influence of contextual variables on private gender equality from a life course perspective. The results showed that on average women are responsible for the bulk of the housework in all countries at all life stages. However, the gender disparity is lowest among young couples without children and greatest among couples with children, confirming results of longitudinal studies (Baxter et al.,

2008; Lundberg & Rose, 1999; Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997).

At all phases of the life course, gender equality is higher as working hours of women rise, as the proportion of household income for which a woman is responsible is larger and as the progressivity of the gender values is stronger. Across the phases of the life course the impact of time availability seems to be rather similar. The relative proportion of time spent on unpaid work is most strongly related to the proportion of time spent on paid work compared to the other variables. The effect of relative resources on gender inequality is smallest among young couples without children and largest among couples with young children. The combination of young children and economic dependence may give the financially stronger partner more bargaining power to reduce his/her share in housework. As a result the relative income power of young parents may play a larger role in the negotiation of the division of housework in comparison to that of people in other life course stages.

The effect of gender ideology is again strongest among young couples without children and smaller among couples with children living at home. Ideas about gender roles have a relatively large impact on the division of housework in the childless life stages. Gender egalitarian ideas are thus more easily translated into reality when couples are in life stages without children. The results suggest that when couples make the transition to parenthood, the effect of gender values is partly outweighed by the culturally dominant ideas related to parenting. This interpretation supports the argument of Martinengo et al. (2010) that cultural ideas about parenting are stronger than cultural ideas about gender equality.

In general national gender culture plays a significant role in the distribution of domestic work (except for households with children between 6 and 15 years and older couples). A more progressive national gender culture is significantly related to a larger private gender equality. The decision on the division of housework in the family is thus embedded in a cultural context and gender culture is found to have an influence on the behaviour of individuals, regardless of personal beliefs.

For couples with young children and progressive gender values, the gender culture also matters in a different way. These households are more capable of converting their egalitarian values into reality in a country with a progressive gender culture and where childcare is frequently used full-time. For couples with a progressive gender ideology the national gender context is thus of great importance in this key moment of the life course. Although gender values play a relatively minor role in couples with young children, the effects of progressive gender values at the individual level are greater in countries where the childcare

policy and cultural context support gender equality. A progressive gender context in terms of culture and formal childcare seems to be crucial for these couples to convert progressive ideas and values into reality. Possibly, this effect may be underestimated as people adjust their ideas to their behaviour to resolve cognitive dissonance (Buhmann et al., 2010).

A similar conclusion was made by Buhmann et al. (2010) about value-practice configurations in gender equality in paid work. Context has an effect on the extent to which gender values can be translated into reality in paid and unpaid work. Couples seem to divide work quite equal in the beginning of their relationship but the extent to which they can keep up this equal division after childbirth depends on support of the context. Young families therefore benefit from a progressive value context and policies encouraging spouses to divide work more equal and averting the domination of emerging parenting practices and ideas over gender ideology.

While the effect of gender culture was clear and reasonably strong, the effects of the policy variables and their cross-level interactions were not. The uncertainty about the effects of policy can be the result of different elements. Policy on gender equality often has to be present some time before it can affect the ideals and actual behaviour of individuals (Bernhardt et al., 2008) and there may be discrepancies between cultural ideas and policy measure that lead to unwanted or unexpected effects (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). Furthermore, the policy context is often complex and it is difficult to isolate the effect of a policy measure since in many countries the policy package is not homogeneous and inconsistent in certain areas (Anxo et al., 2010).

This study was conducted using data from ESS Round 5 (2010) for 24 European countries. An advantage of the data is that characteristics of both the respondent and his or her partner were available for certain sections of the questionnaire. However, there are limitations associated with the use of survey data. First, the sample is limited (an average 1002 people per country), especially since the sample was further divided into 6 life stage categories. Furthermore, the survey was designed to determine only the total time spent on a whole set of household chores per week. It was therefore not possible to make a distinction between typically male and typically female tasks. However, this also has advantages since the overestimation of the time spent by duplication of tasks was reduced and the unequal distribution of domestic work is not overrated (which is likely to occur when one ignores typically male jobs). A third potential problem is that the data are cross-sectional. The different life stages therefore also relate to different generations, it is not possible to distinguish between age, period and cohort effects. To determine how the division of labour varies throughout the life span

longitudinal data with a longitudinal measurement of the division of labour are required.

### **CHAPTER 3: Do pre-birth relative earnings moderate the parenthood effect on gender inequality in couples' employment?**

#### **Abstract**

Although young couples increasingly divide paid and unpaid work equally, the transition to parenthood is associated with the production of gender inequality. Given the rising prevalence of female breadwinner households in Europe, this paper assesses whether the parenthood effect on gender inequality in employment is counteracted in couples where women were the main income providers before the onset of family formation. Using longitudinal micro-data (1999-2010) from the Belgian Crossroads Bank for Social Security and the National Register, logit models assess the effect of pre-birth relative earnings on the division of paid work following the transition to parenthood. Results indicate that a female main earner constellation positively relates to the conservation of an equal employment division and the reduction of working hours by the father rather than the mother following parenthood. Although pre-birth relative earnings affect the magnitude of the negative relationship between parenthood and gender inequality in paid work, a reversed gender specialization where fathers rather than mothers cut back in paid work is not found among female main earner couples. Hence, variation in pre-birth relative earnings cannot fully offset the rise in gender inequality in employment following the transition to parenthood, suggesting that cultural as well as structural constraints limit parents' ability to opt for an equal employment division.

This chapter is currently under review (Advances in Life Course Research).

### 3.1. Introduction

For the first time in European history, there are more highly educated women than men reaching the reproductive ages (Klesment & Van Bavel, 2015; Van Bavel, 2012). Due to this changing educational balance as well as the rise in unemployment in male dominated employment sectors, the prevalence of work-family constellations with female main earners has increased (Vitali & Mendola, 2014)<sup>2</sup>. In line with micro-economic theories (Becker, 1991) and bargaining theories (Lundberg & Pollak, 1996), increasing female education and relative earnings are expected to reduce gender specialization within households. In practice, however, gender equality within the family has not materialized as women continue to perform most housework and less paid work in comparison to their partners (Altintas, 2009; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010), suggesting that cultural and structural constraints discount the bargaining power of women (Blumberg, 1984).

Former research has shown that especially the transition to parenthood encourages gender inequality by producing and strengthening a gendered division of housework and childcare as well as paid work (Baxter et al., 2008; Grunow et al., 2012; Lundberg & Rose, 1999; Nitsche & Grunow, 2016; Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). As childbirth increases the demand for housework and childcare, it is associated with another round of bargaining within couples about the division of the additional housework and former paid work responsibilities. This paper aims to enhance our understanding of the mechanisms of gender specialization around the transition to parenthood, looking into the effect of pre-birth relative earnings on gender equality in couples' employment. Using longitudinal register data on Belgium for the period 1999–2010, we analyse varying impacts of the transition to parenthood on couples' division of paid work between households where men were the main income providers before the onset of family formation and households where women fulfil this role.

Our study extends the literature in four ways. First, we explore whether pre-birth relative earnings in favour of women can counteract the emergence of a traditional gendered division of work following the transition to parenthood. Former research has shown that women's larger relative resources diminish the parenthood effect on gender inequality (Begall & Grunow, 2015; Herrarte et al., 2012; Kanji, 2011; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; Schober, 2013), but only a limited body of research has looked into the aggregate-level impact of pre-birth relative

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<sup>2</sup> Yet, because of the persisting gender pay gap – which is related to gender segregation in educational field, sector and occupation - women's educational advantage does not automatically translate into a relative earnings advantage.

earnings on gender inequality in couples' employment (Kuhhirt, 2012). Second, former research has predominantly considered the USA (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997), the UK (Kanji, 2011; Schober, 2013), the Netherlands (Begall & Grunow, 2015) and Germany (Kuhhirt, 2012) which are characterized by high employment gaps between mothers and non-mothers (Boeckmann et al., 2015) as well as limited family policies (USA and UK) or policies indirectly supporting women to reduce employment after childbearing (Germany and the Netherlands). The Belgian setting provides an interesting case as it is known for low employment gaps between mothers and non-mothers and a well-developed formal childcare sector, supporting parents' - and in particular mothers' - employment (Cukrowska-Torzewska, 2016). The relatively little structural barriers on mothers' employment could lead to larger positive effects of relative resources on gender equality in couples' employment in comparison to the other contexts. Third, the use of administrative panel data allows to analyse the effect of relative resources for larger sample sizes and longer periods with smaller time interruptions, in comparison to former longitudinal studies using panel survey data (British Household Panel Survey 1992-2007, German Socio-Economic Panel 1987-2008, National Survey of Families and Households 1987-1994, Millenium Cohort Survey 2000-2005, Family Survey of the Dutch Population 1998-2009). While there are considerable time interruptions between survey waves (starting from a year), our administrative panel more closely approximates continuous time measurement with quarterly observations, Fourth, earlier studies on the parenthood effect on gender inequality in the division of paid work assessed the impact of relative resources on labour market attachment of men and women separately (Begall & Grunow, 2015; Herrarte et al., 2012; Kanji, 2011; Kuhhirt, 2012; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; Schober, 2013). In contrast, our focus on the employment distribution within couples fully acknowledges the household as a unit in the outcome variable.

### **3.2. Theoretical background and hypotheses**

When dual earner couples become parents, they may continue to work in the same employment regime or they can choose to adapt their working hours by reducing or increasing them (Grunow et al., 2012). To derive expectations about the effect of pre-birth relative resources on change in the division of paid work following the transition to parenthood, we draw on theories of family economics and household bargaining on the one hand, and perspectives focusing on cultural and structural factors on the other hand (Blossfeld & Drobnic, 2001; Buhlmann et al., 2010; Schober, 2013).

### 3.2.1. Family economics & household bargaining

*Micro-economic theories* of the family assume that individuals in a household will pool their resources to achieve joint utility maximization (Becker, 1991). To reach an efficient task division, each household member typically specializes in paid or domestic work, depending on the comparative advantages of the partners. With respect to relative resources, the partner with the lowest earning potential within a couple is more likely to disinvest in his or her labour market career in order to increase productivity in household production activities such as housework and child rearing. *Bargaining theories* on the other hand assume that partners will try to maximize their individual utilities (Lundberg & Pollak, 1996). Housework is considered an unpleasant task and negotiation over the division of household tasks takes the form of a power struggle (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Brines, 1993). The partner who has the best negotiation position – based on relative resources such as educational credentials, occupational status or income – will bargain for less involvement in household chores, which indirectly implies that he or she takes up a larger role in paid work. Hence, both micro-economic and bargaining theories predict that the partner with the highest pre-birth earnings will take up a larger role in paid work following the transition to parenthood, because of joint utility maximization on the one hand and individual negotiation positions on the other (Jacob & Kleinert, 2014).

Only a limited number of longitudinal studies using survey data looked into the effect of relative resources on the division of paid work over the transition to parenthood. Results considering the US (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997), UK (Kanji, 2011), Germany (Kuhhirt, 2012) and the Netherlands (Begall & Grunow, 2015) indicate that pre-birth relative resources positively relate to labour force attachment following parenthood. Research by Sanchez and Thomson (1997) shows that among married couples where the wife was economically dependent on her husband before childbirth, the husband is more likely to increase his working hours following the transition to parenthood, while no effect is found on the wife's working hours. Results of a study by Kanji (2011) indicate that mothers who are the main earners in the household are much more likely to continue in full-time employment compared to mothers that have equal or lower earnings relative to their partner. Research by Kuhhirt (2012) also found that women who earned the same or more than their partner before childbirth were less likely to decrease working hours following childbirth. Accordingly, results of a study by Begall and Grunow (2015) indicate that new mothers with an occupational status at least as high as that of their male partner (1 year before birth) were less likely to reduce their working hours. As far as we know, solely the study of Schober (2013) - considering change in paid working hours among men and women after childbirth for the UK - did not find significant effects of pre-birth relative wages.

Following the assumptions of family economics and household bargaining, we expect that male main earner couples will be more likely to adopt an employment constellation where the father works more than the mother following parenthood in comparison to equal earner households, while female main earner households will be more likely to adopt a constellation where the mother works more than the father (*hypothesis 1*).

### **3.2.2. Cultural and structural constraints**

Although most studies find positive effects of women's relative resources on their labour market position after the transition to parenthood, research looking into the aggregate-level implications for the gendered division of paid work (Kuhhirt, 2012) finds that pre-birth relative resources cannot counteract the shift to a traditional division of paid work following the transition to parenthood. Possibly, structural and cultural factors limit the impact of relative resources (See Schober, 2013 for a similar perspective). First, concerning culture, the persistence of traditional gender norms potentially "discounts" women's bargaining power connected to relative socio-economic positions (Blumberg, 1984). While women must trade-off between occupational and familial roles, contemporary normative expectations for the male and father roles still do not include fully shared responsibility and involvement in household child-care activities (Bielby & Bielby, 1989; Vinkenburg, van Engen, Coffeng, & Dijkers, 2012). Normative expectations about how fathers and mothers ought to behave might lead couples to adopt a gendered division of work after becoming parents as a means to display their cultural identity as men and women (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Accordingly, research of Brines (1993) shows that in counter-normative situations – for example when the female partner earns more than the male partner – women will 'do gender' by engaging in more stereotypically female activities while men will do gender by engaging in more stereotypically male work and avoiding typically female activities. In a similar vein, men who deviate from the socially expected role of family breadwinner may retain their full-time employment position following the transition to parenthood, even if this does not increase utility.

Second, structural constraints and opportunities shape the context in which couples make decisions (Barnes, 2015). The widespread availability of part-time work, childcare, subsidized service vouchers to outsource housework and parental leave measures in Belgium ease the reconciliation of working and caring for parents. Belgium is known for a high provision of formal childcare services with a 36% enrolment for children aged 0 to 3 and a 99% enrolment for children aged 3 to 5 (Eurostat, 2010a). It is also a forerunner country with respect to the subsidized outsourcing of household work (e.g. service vouchers) (Marx &

Vandelannoote, 2014; Raz-Yurovich, 2014). The availability of subsidized childcare services and service vouchers positively affects gender equality in paid work through its positive effect on female labour supply (Del Boca, 2002; Kornstad & Thoresen, 2007; Lokshin, 2004; Whrolich, 2011). With respect to the parental leave system, both mothers and fathers have the right to reduce their labour by 100% for three months, by 50% for six months or by 20% up to 15 months while receiving a relatively low flat rate benefit. The parental leave right is individual and not transferable from one parent to the other, which is identified as an essential feature of parental leave regulation in the promotion of gender equality (Farre, 2016). In addition, the 20% labour reduction is the most popular one which indicates that work and family are considered as two spheres of life which can be combined (Desmet & Glorieux, 2007; Ray, Gornick, & Schmitt, 2008).

However, the uptake of these reconciliation measures is highly gendered. While 61% of working mothers is employed part-time in Belgium, only 5% of working fathers is employed part-time (Data for 2010, Eurostat, 2016). Congruently, mothers are entitled to longer periods of maternity leave (15 weeks) compared to fathers' paternity leave (10 days). In addition, while both parents have the right to take parental leave, only 25% of all parental leave is used by fathers in Belgium (RVA, 2012). Consequently, it are mainly mothers who take up childcare responsibilities during the first months after birth, which tends to create or strengthen a gendered task division between parents in the following years (Kotsadam & Finseraas, 2011). Hence, these policy constellations and gendered uptake reflect normative assumptions of mothers as the main carer, and of fathers as the main breadwinner.

Also, gender segregation by sector and occupation in the Belgian labour market perpetuates gender inequality in paid work. A high share of women is employed in sectors – such as health and social services, education or the public sector in general – characterized by work-family combinability as a result of school matching or flexible working hours and higher access to parental leave (M. Bygren & A.-Z. Duvander, 2006; Geisler & Kreyenfeld, 2011; Haas, Allard, & Hwang, 2002). In comparison to male-dominated sectors, female-dominated sectors are more likely to have arrangements in place in order to facilitate work-family combination (M. Bygren & A.-Z. Duvander, 2006; A.-Z. Duvander, 2014). As part-time work as well as parental leave use is less institutionalized in male-dominated sectors (European Commission, 2009), the – temporary – change from full-time to part-time working hours is less common.

Following these cultural and structural considerations, we expect that couples will be more likely to adopt an employment constellation where the father works more

hours than the mother in comparison to a division where the mother works more than the father, regardless of their pre-birth relative resources (*hypothesis 2*).

### **3.3. Data & Method**

#### **3.3.1. Data**

We use data from the Belgian Administrative Socio-Demographic panel (ASD Panel) that was constructed using longitudinal microdata from the National Register and the Crossroads Bank for Social Security. The ASD Panel covers the period 1999-2010 and is representative of the female population aged 15 to 50 years that legally resides in Belgium between 1 January 1999 and 31 December 2010. To maintain the cross-sectional representativeness of the panel throughout the observation period, annual top-up samples of 15 year olds were drawn to guarantee the presence of the youngest age group in the sample. Similarly, supplementary annual samples were drawn of women aged 16 to 50 years who settled in Belgium in the preceding year. Apart from the sampled women, the ASD Panel also includes all individuals officially being part of the household of a sampled individual on 1 January in each year. The panel provides detailed annual information on the household composition of sampled women, as well as detailed information on labour market positions and earnings of sampled individuals and household members on a quarterly basis. In comparison to former longitudinal studies using survey panel data (Begall & Grunow, 2015; Kanji, 2011; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; Schober, 2013), the use of administrative panel data allows to analyse the effect of pre-birth relative resources for larger sample sizes and for longer periods with smaller time interruptions.

The analyses document couples' employment division across 4 619 heterosexual couples that had their first birth between the first quarter of 2000 and the fourth quarter of 2010 and were both full-time employed one year before birth. We observe these couples i) until one quarter before their second child is born, ii) until their first child reaches the age of 5, iii) until the couple separates, iv) until death or emigration or v) until the end of the observation window in 2010. When only selecting couples for whom none of the covariates are missing, we end up with 4 509 couples.

In our dataset, the working hours regime is measured as the percentage of working hours of a standard full-time job in the relevant employment sector. When several jobs are combined and the working percentages cumulate to 100 or more, we also define this as full-time employment. However, we truncate all percentages at 100 as we have no information on the exact working percentage of

full-time workers (it is possible that they also work more than 100%) or on overwork hours.

By selecting couples that were full-time employed before childbearing, we focus our analysis on the move from a gender equal employment distribution to an unequal distribution. Working regime and earnings are highly correlated: in the majority of couples with different employment regimes the partner working full-time is the main earner while the part-time working partner is the secondary earner. As the BASD-panel does not provide information on hourly wages and we aim to look into the effect of relative earnings, focussing on full-time employed couples is the most logical choice. One year before the transition to parenthood, dual full-time working couples are the most prevalent group among the dual earner households. In 73% of dual earner couples, both partners work full-time<sup>3</sup>.

### 3.3.2. Analysis

In the multivariate analysis we estimate the effect of relative earnings before the onset of family formation on the employment division following the transition to parenthood. The analysis aims to investigate under what preconditions parents adopt an unequal employment division with more working hours for the father or the mother or maintain an equal employment division. We put out two logit analyses comparing (i) the probability that the mother reduces her working hours while the father does not or to a smaller extent to the probability that both parents remain full-time employed or reduce their working hours to the same extent and (ii) the probability that the father reduces his working hours while the mother does not or to a smaller extent to the probability that both parents remain full-time employed or reduce their working hours to the same extent. As in more than 60% of cases a gender equal employment division is maintained following the transition to parenthood, we use this group as the base category. A gender equal division implies a retention of full-time employment for both parents in 59% of cases, while in 1% of parents both reduce their hours to the same extent.

The estimations are based on population averaged logit models where standard errors are adjusted for the clustering of couple quarters (N: 40,431) in couples (N: 4 509). Instead of assuming independent residuals (which is done in a standard logistic model), these models assume exchangeable residuals, meaning that every pair of residuals that are clustered in a couple has the same correlation in the working correlation matrix (Szmaragd, Clarke, & Steele, 2013). We chose to

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<sup>3</sup> The remaining 27% mainly consists of couples where the male partner works full-time while the female partner works part-time (20%). In 5% of cases the female partner works full-time while the male partner works part-time. In the other 2% of cases, both work part-time.

estimate two different logit models instead of one multinomial logit model as it is not possible to estimate multinomial multilevel logit models with 4509 clusters using stata or mlwin. However, the estimations of the same model using a non-clustered logit model and a multinomial logit model hardly differ, suggesting that the choice for multilevel logit models rather than multinomial multilevel logit models will not distort our results.

Based on the results of the two logit models, we estimate the aggregate-level impact of the pre-birth relative earnings on the gendered employment division following parenthood by calculating predicted probabilities for the different pre-birth relative earnings categories while holding constant all characteristics at their means or most prevalent category. This way we aim to assess whether the impact of pre-birth relative earnings is strong enough to significantly alter the gendered response to childbearing.

The main independent variable of interest in this study is pre-birth relative earnings, which is operationalized using salary four quarters before parenthood. Taking into account the year prior to becoming parents instead of using a lagged time varying measure of relative earnings might lead to false identification of the main earner following the transition to parenthood because of short-term fluctuations in the resource constellation. However, pre-birth observations of the resource constellation are used because the income share following parenthood is highly dependent on how couples divide paid work after becoming parents and thus has to be considered endogenous (Kuhhirt, 2012). We look at the percentage of the total earnings that the female partner contributes. The possible values of the indicator range from 0 to 100, where 0 refers to a situation in which the male partner earns the total household salary and 100 to a distribution where the female partner earns the total household salary. Three categories are distinguished: (1) couples in which the male partner earns more (0-44), (2) couples in which both partners have equal earnings (45-54) and (3) couples in which the female partner earns more (55-100). Table 3.1 provides an overview of the distribution of the covariates and sample sizes. While 43% of full-time working couples earn about the same before parenthood, in almost as many couples (39%) the male partner earned more than the female partner. The proportion of female main earner couples is substantially smaller, with only 17% of couples in which she earns substantially more than him. We performed tests using a categorical variable of pre-birth relative earnings with five categories (additionally distinguishing couples in which the male/female partner earned 1 to 24 % of the income from couples in which the male/female partner earned 25 to 44 %) but this did not affect the results.

In addition to pre-birth relative resources, we take into account several other socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Regarding the socio-demographic characteristics, we control for the age of the first child, marital status, region of residence and age and migrant origin of the mother as well as the father. Apart from migrant origin, all socio-demographic covariates are time-varying. Due to maternity and parental leave legislation the largest drop in female labour market participation occurs during the first quarters following childbirth (Kil, Neels, Van den Berg, & de Valk, 2015; Kil, Wood, et al., 2015). We therefore take into account a dummy variable for the *first quarter following birth*, as well as a linear and squared term of the *age of the child in quarters*. Assuming that couples that become parents at an older age may adopt a less traditional division of employment, we also take into account a linear and squared term of the *age of the father* (centred around 33) and the *mother* (centred around 31) in years. In addition, we distinguish married from unmarried cohabiting couples by controlling for *marital status*. Unmarried cohabitation is associated with progressive values such as gender egalitarianism and, hence, it may positively relate to gender equality in employment. As the economic structure and family policy legislation and coverage slightly differs between Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels<sup>4</sup>, the analyses also control for *region* of residence. Furthermore, we take into account the *origin* group to which the male and female partner belong, distinguishing origin region (Belgium versus Europe versus non-Europe) and generation (first and second) groups. Former research has shown that the labour market position of migrant women is disproportionately affected by childbirth (Kil, Neels, et al., 2015). Men and women are identified as migrants when he/she (first generation) or one of his/her parents (second generation) is not born in Belgium. When both parents are born in different countries, the most distant country is considered as the country of origin.

To assess the extent to which varying patterns of couples' employment by pre-birth relative earning group can be explained by socio-economic positions at earlier stages in the life course, we subsequently control for employment characteristics of both partners one year before the birth of their first child. The socio-economic characteristics of the couple that we take into account are the total household earnings, the number of jobs of the male and female partner and the

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<sup>4</sup> In Flanders formal childcare coverage is largest with 38 places per 100 children from 0 to 2 year old, in comparison to 15 places per 100 children in Wallonia and 25 places per 100 children in Brussels (own calculations based on data of CKG & ONE, 2010). Parental leave is a federal responsibility and thus applicable to the entire Belgian population. However, the Flemish community government provides an additional benefit for people living in Flanders, making an additional effort to encourage leave uptake (Merla & Deven, 2010).

sector of employment of both partners. All these covariates are time-constant as they refer to one year before the first child is born. As financial resources affect a couple's ability to outsource domestic work as well as childcare and represent opportunity costs of cutting back on paid work following childbirth, we control for the *total household earnings before birth* (Kuhhirt, 2012; Schober, 2013). The total household earnings are operationalized by cumulating the quarterly earnings of both partners. Based on this sum, we calculated the percentiles per year. The indicator thus ranges from 0 to 100 and is centred around 50. Regarding the number of jobs, a dummy variable identifies mothers and fathers that combined more than one job before parenthood. We also take into account the *sector* in which the female and the male partner worked. The variable *sector* is categorised in 10 groups: (1) agriculture and industry, (2) wholesale and retail, (3) logistics and energy distribution, (4) education, (5) public administration and extraterritorial organisations, (6) health care and social services, (7) recreation and other services, (8) finance and estate, (9) administration, support services and IT, and (10) hotel and catering.

**Table 3.1:** Summary statistics

	<i>Couples</i> <i>(1 year before birth)</i>		<i>Couple-quarters</i> <i>(following birth)</i>	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Division of work</b>				
<i>both work 100%</i>	4509	100.00	24,026	59.42
<i>both work &lt;100%</i>	0	0.00	906	2.24
<i>both 0%</i>	0	0.00	186	0.46
<i>father works 100%, mother &lt;100%</i>	0	0.00	10,637	26.31
<i>father works 100%, mother 0%</i>	0	0.00	3,084	7.63
<i>mother works 100%, father &lt;100%</i>	0	0.00	962	2.38
<i>mother works 100%, father 0%</i>	0	0.00	630	1.56
<b>Relative earnings before parenthood</b>				
<i>father earned more</i>	1750	38.81	16,069	39.74
<i>equal earnings</i>	1954	43.34	17,410	43.06
<i>mother earned more</i>	805	17.85	6,952	17.19
<b>Household salary before parenthood</b>				
<i>pct 1</i>	481	10.67	4,261	10.54
<i>pct 2</i>	448	9.94	4,219	10.44
<i>pct 3</i>	458	10.16	4,412	10.91
<i>pct 4</i>	453	10.05	4,130	10.21
<i>pct 5</i>	435	9.65	3,896	9.64
<i>pct 6</i>	458	10.16	4,102	10.15
<i>pct 7</i>	450	9.98	4,022	9.95
<i>pct 8</i>	446	9.89	4,069	10.06
<i>pct 9</i>	455	10.09	3,825	9.46
<i>pct 10</i>	425	9.43	3,495	8.64
<b>Age mother</b>				
<i>19-25</i>	1407	31.20	3,952	9.77
<i>26-30</i>	2255	50.01	18,864	46.66
<i>31-35</i>	726	16.10	13,377	33.09
<i>36-40</i>	116	2.57	3,627	8.97
<i>41-50</i>	5	0.11	611	1.51
<b>Age father</b>				
<i>19-25</i>	659	14.62	1,347	3.33
<i>26-30</i>	2165	48.02	13,216	32.69
<i>31-35</i>	1168	25.90	15,811	39.11
<i>36-40</i>	394	8.74	7,172	17.74
<i>41-65</i>	123	2.73	2,885	7.14
<b>Marital status</b>				
<i>not married</i>	1984	44.00	14,697	36.35
<i>married</i>	2525	56.00	25,734	63.65
<i>total</i>	4509	100.00	40,431	100.00

*Note: The sample is restricted to one-child parents that both worked 100% 4 quarters before childbirth, 1999-2010, Belgium. Source: BASD Panel 1999-2010, calculations by authors*

**Table 3.1:** Summary statistics (continued)

	<i>Couples (1 year before birth)</i>		<i>Couple-quarters (following birth)</i>	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Origin mother</b>				
<i>Belgium</i>	3662	81.22	32,651	80.76
<i>Neighbouring countries, generation 1</i>	96	2.13	821	2.03
<i>Neighbouring countries, generation 2</i>	132	2.93	1,248	3.09
<i>Other EU-countries, generation 1</i>	93	2.06	790	1.95
<i>Other EU-countries, generation 2</i>	204	4.52	2,159	5.34
<i>Turkey or Morocco, generation 1</i>	35	0.78	287	0.71
<i>Turkey or Morocco, generation 2</i>	85	1.89	698	1.73
<i>Other non-EU-countries, generation 1</i>	111	2.46	991	2.45
<i>Other non-EU-countries, generation 2</i>	91	2.02	786	1.94
<b>Origin father</b>				
<i>Belgium</i>	3761	83.41	33,737	83.44
<i>Neighbouring countries, generation 1</i>	83	1.84	667	1.65
<i>Neighbouring countries, generation 2</i>	144	3.19	1,299	3.21
<i>Other EU-countries, generation 1</i>	63	1.40	565	1.40
<i>Other EU-countries, generation 2</i>	180	3.99	1,801	4.45
<i>Turkey or Morocco, generation 1</i>	79	1.75	738	1.83
<i>Turkey or Morocco, generation 2</i>	51	1.13	357	0.88
<i>Other non-EU-countries, generation 1</i>	71	1.57	625	1.55
<i>Other non-EU-countries, generation 2</i>	77	1.71	642	1.59
<b>Employment sector mother before parenthood</b>				
<i>agriculture, industry</i>	576	12.77	5,661	14.00
<i>logistics, storage, distribution</i>	671	14.88	6,168	15.26
<i>education</i>	256	5.68	2,478	6.13
<i>public administration, extraterr. org.</i>	570	12.64	4,836	11.96
<i>health services, social care</i>	533	11.82	4,885	12.08
<i>art, recreation, other services</i>	846	18.76	7,198	17.80
<i>finances, estate</i>	141	3.13	1,225	3.03
<i>administration, support services and IT</i>	297	6.59	2,704	6.69
<i>hotel, catering</i>	532	11.80	4,470	11.06
<i>agriculture, industry</i>	87	1.93	806	1.99
<b>Employment sector father before parenthood</b>				
<i>agriculture, industry</i>	1541	34.18	14,337	35.46
<i>logistics, storage, distribution</i>	703	15.59	6,300	15.58
<i>education</i>	431	9.56	3,909	9.67
<i>public administration, extraterr. org.</i>	207	4.59	1,688	4.18
<i>health services, social care</i>	446	9.89	4,238	10.48
<i>art, recreation, other services</i>	180	3.99	1,543	3.82
<i>finances, estate</i>	106	2.35	969	2.40
<i>administration, support services and IT</i>	234	5.19	2,119	5.24
<i>hotel, catering</i>	584	12.95	4,704	11.63
<i>agriculture, industry</i>	77	1.71	624	1.54
<i>total</i>	<i>4509</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>40,431</i>	<i>100.00</i>

Note: The sample is restricted to one-child parents that both worked 100% 4 quarters before childbirth, 1999-2010, Belgium. Source: BASD Panel 1999-2010, calculations by authors

## 3.4. Results

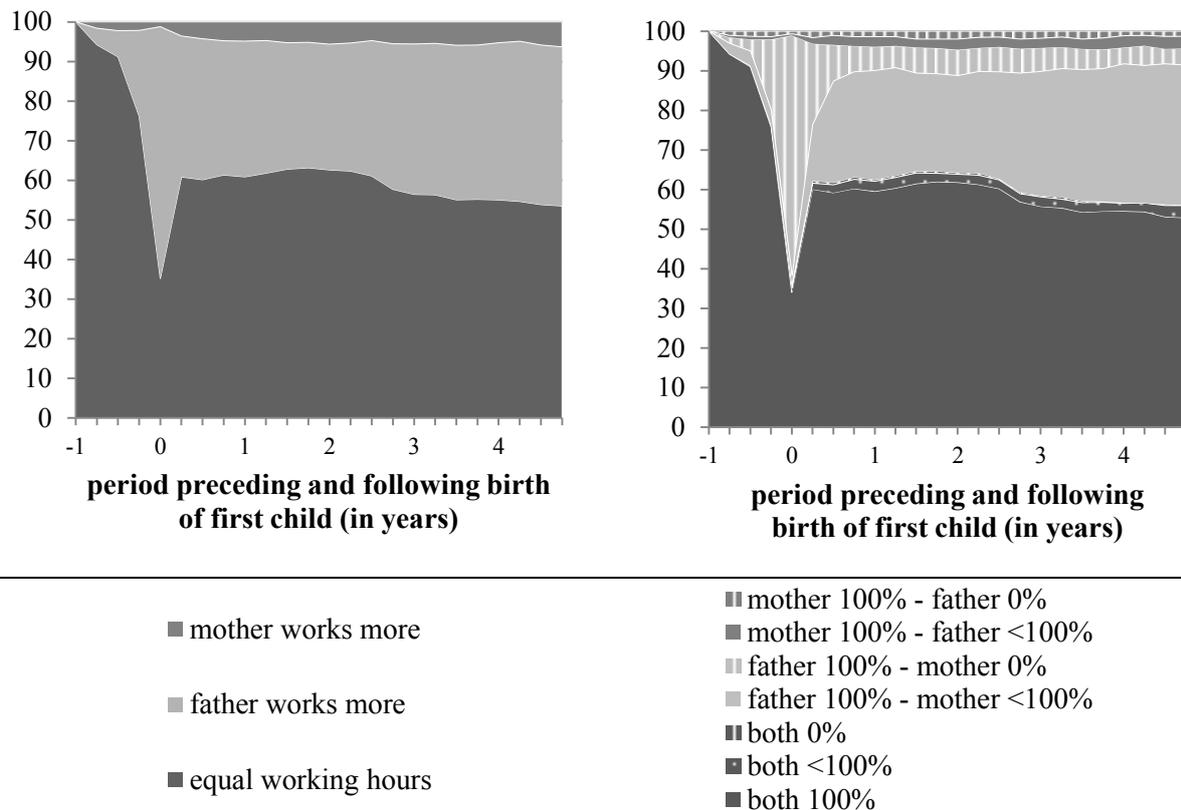
### 3.4.1. Descriptive results

Before turning to the multivariate results, figure 3.1 shows the change in the division of paid work in the period ranging from one year before the birth of the first child until 4 years following the first birth. The quarter in which the first child is born is denoted as '0' in the figure. As our sample consists of couples working full-time four quarters before childbearing, all couples have equal working hours at the start of the observation. In the following quarters the proportion of couples with equal working hours gets smaller until it reaches its lowest point during the quarter of childbearing: only 36% of couples have equal working hours at this moment. In the quarters following the transition to parenthood, the proportion of couples with equal working hours rises and stabilizes at 63%. When the child's age approximates three years, the proportion of couples with equal working hours slightly diminishes again.

The decreased proportion of couples with equal working hours is mirrored by an increase in the proportion of couples with unequal working hours. In line with maternity leave and paternity leave legislation, the father is the sole worker in 61% of cases during the quarter of childbearing. One year following the transition to parenthood, the father works full-time while the mother has decreased her working hours in 34% of cases, while in merely 5% of cases the opposite situation occurs. In the following years the percentage of couples where the mother works full-time while the father works part-time or is not employed stays constant at 4 to 5%, while the percentage of parents where the father works more than the mother rises to 39%.

In summary, for 40 to 45% of dual full-time working couples the transition to parenthood is followed by the emergence of gender inequality in employment. Among the parents that changed to an unequal division of working hours, 85 to 90% adopts a division in which the father works more hours than the mother. Hence, while a lot of dual full-time working couples retain their equal employment division following the transition parenthood, a large share adopts an unequal employment division where the mother takes up the role of secondary breadwinner.

**Figure 3.1:** Division of paid work 1 year before childbirth until 4 years after the birth of a first child



Note: The sample is restricted to one-child parents that both worked full-time 4 quarters before childbirth  
 Source: Belgian Socio-Demographic Panel 1999 - 2010

### 3.4.2. Multivariate results

To assess whether the rise in gender inequality over the transition to parenthood can be explained by differences in pre-birth relative earnings, we estimate population-averaged logit models that distinguish couples that adopt an unequal employment constellation with more working hours for the father, couples that adopt an unequal constellation with more working hours for the mother and couples that retain an equal employment division, while controlling for several socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the couple. A situation in which the father works more implies a part-time working mother in 77% of cases and in the other 33% of cases the mother is unemployed or inactive. In contrast, a situation in which the mother works more implies father's part-time employment in 54% of cases and fathers' unemployment or inactivity in 46% of cases.

In the first analysis (model 1, table 3.2) we compare the odds that the mother reduces her working hours while the father does not (N=13,721, 33.94%) or to a smaller extent (N=291, 0.72%) to the odds that both parents remain full-time employed (N=24,026, 59.42%) or reduce their working hours to the same extent

( $N=409$ , 1.01%). In order to simplify the discussion of the results, we will talk about the odds that couples adopt an employment constellation where the father works relatively more versus the odds that parents retain an equal employment constellation. In line with the descriptive figures, results indicate that the odds that couples adopt an employment constellation where the father works more than the mother are 51.7% smaller in comparison to the odds that couples retain an equal employment constellation ( $OR=0.489^{***}$ , model 1b), when holding constant socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the couple at their means or most prevalent category.

With respect to pre-birth relative earnings, results indicate that the odds that the father works more hours than the mother are significantly larger among couples where the father was the main earner before entering parenthood. The odds-ratio of the adoption of relatively more working hours by the father versus a retention of equal working hours is 36.7% higher for couples where the father was the main earner before childbearing than for couples that had equal earnings before childbearing. In contrast, the probability that the father works more hours than the mother does not differ significantly between female main earner couples and equal earner couples ( $OR=0.904$ ). Hence, higher relative earnings for the male partner are positively associated with the production of gender inequality in employment following the transition to parenthood. These results confirm our first hypothesis: Male main earner households have a significantly higher chance to adopt an unequal employment division with relatively less working hours for the mother following the transition to parenthood in comparison to equal earner and female main earner households.

The coefficients of the socio-demographic covariates show that the age of the mother as well as the age of the father positively relates to the adoption of a constellation with relatively more working hours for the father. In addition, when the first child grows older, the odds of an unequal employment constellation with relatively more working hours for the father become smaller but rise again after the age of three. Regarding region, marital status and origin, results of the analysis indicate larger (but insignificant) odds for inhabitants of Flanders, significantly smaller odds for married couples and significantly larger odds to adopt an unequal division with more working hours for the father among couples with a female partner belonging to the first-generation migrant group originating from Europe.

Focussing on the effects of the socio-economic covariates, we observe a negative effect of the total household salary before childbirth. A higher household income before parenthood negatively affects the probability that the father works more hours than the mother following the transition to parenthood. With every

percentile that the household income is higher, the odds to adopt unequal working hours with more hours for the father versus the odds to retain equal working hours significantly decrease with 0.8%. Also, the number of combined jobs of the female partner in the quarter one year before childbearing is found to positively affect the odds that the father works more than the mother. These odds are 41.6% ( $p < 0.05$ ) larger among couples where the mother combined 2 or more jobs. In contrast, the amount of jobs that the male partner combined, negatively affects the same odds, but this effect is not significant. Hence, when a women combines several part-time jobs that cumulate to a full-time working regime before the transition to parenthood, the probability is large that she quits one of these jobs following parenthood, while this probability does not relate to the number of jobs that her partner combines.

The second analysis (model 2, table 3.2) compares the probability that the father reduces his working hours while the mother does not ( $N=1592$ , 3.94%) or to a smaller extent ( $N=392$ , 0.97%) to the probability that both parents remain full-time employed ( $N=24,026$ , 59.42%) or reduce their working hours to the same extent ( $N=409$ , 1.01%). In order to simplify the discussion of the results, we will talk about the odds that parents adopt an unequal employment constellation where the mother works relatively more versus the odds that parents retain an equal employment constellation. In line with the descriptive results, the odds that the mother works more than the father are 92.4% smaller in comparison to the odds that parents retain equal working hours ( $OR=0.076^{***}$ , model 2b), when holding constant socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the couple at their means or most prevalent category.

Complementary to the previous analysis, pre-birth relative earnings determine whether parents adopt an unequal employment constellation with relatively more working hours for the mother: The odds that the mother works more hours than the father rather than to retain equal working hours are 61.7% larger ( $OR = 1.617^{***}$ ) for female main earner households in comparison to the same odds for equal earner households. In contrast, the odds that the mother works relatively more hours are 11.4% smaller in male main earner households ( $OR = 0.886$ ), but the difference is not significant. Hence, these results confirm the first hypothesis: female main earner couples are more likely to adopt an employment constellation with relatively more working hours for the mother following the transition to parenthood in comparison to equal and male main earner households (hypothesis 1).

With respect to the socio-demographic characteristics of the couple, the age of the mother negatively affects the odds that the mother works relatively more hours, while the age of the father has a positive effect. Hence, the age of the mother as

well as the age of the father positively relates to the probability that they reduce their working hours while their partner does not. The odds that the mother works more hours than the father is relatively small during the first quarter following birth. After this first quarter, the older the first child, the larger the odds that parents adopt an employment division with relatively more working hours for the mother. In addition, results indicate that region of residence, marital status and origin of the mother are not significantly related to the odds to adopt this unequal division. In contrast, a foreign origin of the father is positively associated to the odds that the mother works more hours than the father, which possibly relates to the unstable labour market position of migrants in Belgium.

Regarding the socio-economic characteristics of the couple, we find a significantly negative effect of the total household salary on the odds to adopt a division with relatively more working hours for the mother. The number of jobs that the female partner combines as well as the number of jobs that the male partner combines is negatively associated with the odds that the mother works more hours than the father, but both odds-ratios are insignificant.

**Table 3.2:** Logit models of couples' employment following the transition to parenthood (in odds-ratios)

	<i>Father works more hours (1) – equal working hours (0)</i>				<i>Mother works more hours (1) – equal working hours (0)</i>			
	Model 1a		Model 1b		Model 2a		Model 2b	
	OR	sig.	OR	sig.	OR	sig.	OR	sig.
Constant	0.493	***	0.489	***	0.078	***	0.076	***
Relative earnings before childbirth (ref. equal earnings)								
<i>Father earned more</i>	1.367	***	1.450	***	0.840		0.886	
<i>Mother earned more</i>	0.970		0.904		1.738	***	1.617	***
Age mother (centered 31)								
<i>Linear</i>	0.988		1.013		0.965	*	0.988	
<i>Squared</i>	1.005	**	1.005	**	0.999		0.999	
Age father (centered 33)								
<i>Linear</i>	0.998		1.004		1.012		1.016	
<i>Squared</i>	1.001		1.001		1.003	*	1.002	*
Quarters following childbirth								
<i>Quarter 1</i>	0.968		0.966		0.825	*	0.824	*
<i>Quarters 2-19 (centred 6), linear</i>	1.003		0.995		1.045	***	1.038	**
<i>Quarters 2-19 (centred 6), squared</i>	1.002	**	1.002	**	1.000		1.000	
Region (ref. Flanders)								
<i>Wallonia</i>	0.932		0.915		0.991		0.960	
<i>Brussels</i>	0.819	*	0.838		1.040		1.004	
Marital status								
<i>Married</i>	0.824	**	0.856	*	0.875		0.898	
Origin mother (ref. Belgium)								
<i>Europe, first generation</i>	1.519	**	1.556	**	1.052		1.056	
<i>Europe, second generation</i>	1.075		1.006		0.735		0.712	
<i>Non-Europe, first generation</i>	1.105		1.039		0.729		0.682	
<i>Non-Europe, second generation</i>	0.841		0.796		1.299		1.278	
Origin father (ref. Belgium)								
<i>Europe, first generation</i>	0.991		1.058		2.519	***	2.497	***
<i>Europe, second generation</i>	0.936		0.927		1.161		1.143	
<i>Non-Europe, first generation</i>	1.104		1.054		2.703	***	2.352	***
<i>Non-Europe, second generation</i>	1.021		1.000		1.554		1.547	
Total household salary before childbirth (in percentiles, centred 50)								
<i>linear</i>			0.992	***			0.993	**
<i>squared</i>			1.000	*			1.000	
N couple-quarters	38,447		38,447		15,996		15,996	
N couples	4464		4464		2977		2977	

Note: The sample is restricted to one-child parents that both worked full-time 4 quarters before childbirth, 1999-2010, Belgium

Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Source: BASD Panel 1999-2010, calculations by authors

**Table 3.2:** Logit models of couples' employment following the transition to parenthood (in odds-ratios, continued)

	<i>Father works more hours (1)</i> – <i>equal working hours (0)</i>		<i>Mother works more hours (1)</i> – <i>equal working hours (0)</i>					
	Model 1a		Model 1b		Model 2a		Model 2b	
	OR	sig.	OR	sig.	OR	sig.	OR	sig.
Sector before childbirth mother (ref. wholesale)								
<i>agriculture, industry</i>			1.008				0.777	
<i>logistics, storage, distribution</i>			1.432	**			0.930	
<i>education</i>			0.770	*			0.827	
<i>public administration, extraterr. org.</i>			0.917				0.996	
<i>health services, social care</i>			1.104				0.908	
<i>art, recreation, other services</i>			1.076				1.273	
<i>finances, estate</i>			1.328	*			1.138	
<i>administration, support services, IT</i>			1.140				0.953	
<i>hotel, catering</i>			0.984				0.950	
Sector before childbirth father (ref. wholesale)								
<i>agriculture, industry</i>			1.033				1.124	
<i>logistics, storage, distribution</i>			1.166				1.204	
<i>education</i>			1.048				2.242	**
<i>public administration, extraterr. org.</i>			1.043				0.756	
<i>health services, social care</i>			0.986				1.817	*
<i>art, recreation, other services</i>			1.168				1.326	
<i>finances, estate</i>			0.881				0.563	
<i>administration, support services, IT</i>			1.006				1.273	
<i>hotel, catering</i>			0.678				1.243	
N jobs before childbirth mother (ref. 1 job)								
<i>&gt;1 job</i>			1.416	*			0.964	
N jobs before childbirth father (ref. 1 job)								
<i>&gt;1 job</i>			0.810				0.943	
N couple-quarters	38,447		38,447		15,996		15,996	
N couples	4464		4464		2977		2977	

Note: The sample is restricted to one-child parents that both worked full-time 4 quarters before childbirth, 1999-2010, Belgium

Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Source: BASD Panel 1999-2010, calculations by authors

Based on the results of the logit models, we calculated predicted probabilities for the different pre-birth relative earning categories in the five years following the transition to parenthood in order to assess the aggregate-level impact of pre-birth relative earnings on the division of paid work after parenthood among couples that both worked full-time before parenthood (figure 3.2). The predicted probabilities apply to couples where the mother is aged 31 and the father 33, that live in Flanders, are unmarried, where both partners originate from Belgium and both had one job, worked in wholesale and had mean total household earnings one year before the birth of their first child.

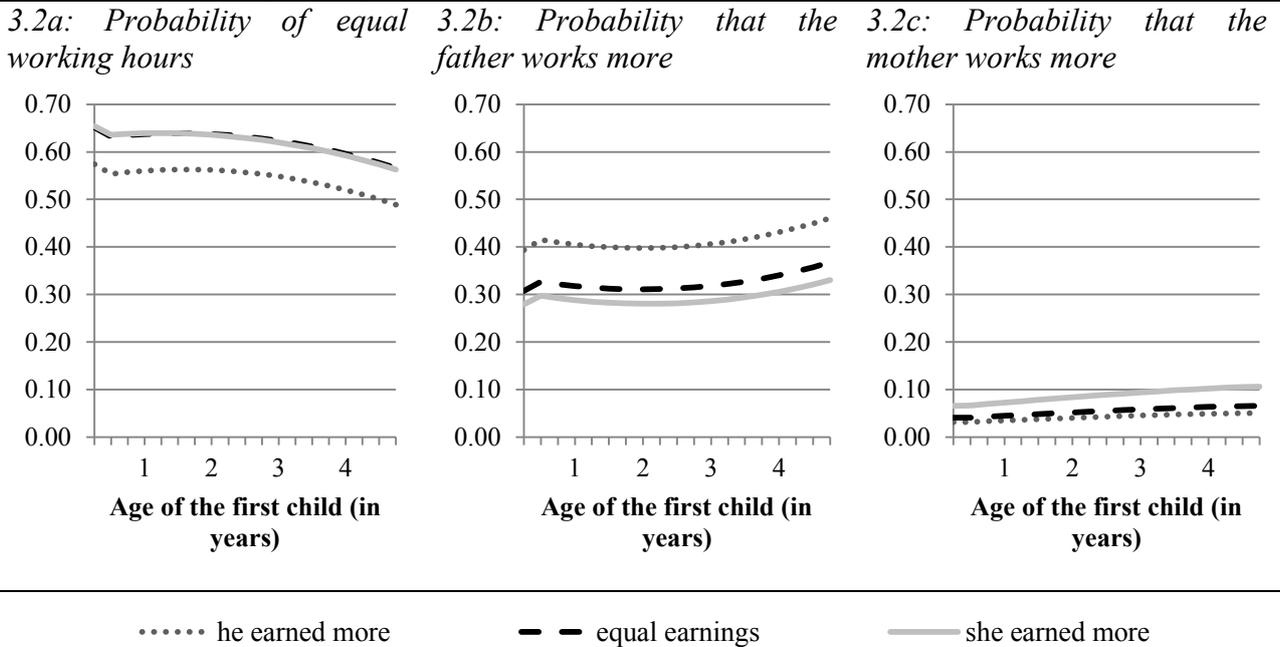
Figure 3.2a shows the predicted probabilities of equal working hours following the transition to parenthood for couples that both worked full-time before the transition to parenthood. The probability to conserve an equal division of paid work differs between couples where the father earned more on the one hand and couples with equal earnings or where the mother earned more on the other hand. While male main earner couples have a 58% probability to conserve an equal employment constellation following the transition to parenthood, female main earner and equal earner couples have a 66% probability to conserve equality in the employment division. These probabilities remain constant at the same level until the child has reached the age of 3 years. Afterwards, the probabilities slightly decline again.

For all three pre-birth relative earning categories, the probability that the father works more than the mother is relatively large (figure 3.2b). Where in the second quarter following the transition to parenthood the probability that the father works relatively more hours amounts to 41% among male main earner households, it amounts to 32% and 29% in equal earner and female main earner households. These probabilities stay relatively constant at first but rise again when the child has reached the age of three. When the child reaches the age of 5, the probabilities respectively amount to 46%, 37% and 33%.

The probability that the mother works more than the father is much smaller than the probability that the father works more than the mother, independently of pre-birth relative earnings (figure 3.2c). While the probability to adopt a constellation in which the mother works relatively more amounts to 3% for couples where the father earned more before childbearing, the same probability amounts to respectively 4% and 7% for equal earner and female main earner couples. As the first child grows older, the probability to adopt an employment constellation where the mother works relatively more rises and stabilizes when the child has reached the age of three. At that moment, the probability amounts to 10%, 6% and 5% among female main earner, equal earner and male main earner couples respectively.

Hence, among full-time working couples the probability to adopt an equal employment division following the transition to parenthood, is relatively large. The probability ranges from 49% to 65% depending on the pre-birth earning constellation and the age of the child. However, among couples adopting an unequal employment division, the probability that the father works more is larger than the probability that the mother does, independent of pre-birth relative earnings. This confirms the second hypothesis: although pre-birth relative earnings influence the employment constellation following parenthood, the probability that the mother starts working less hours than the father is larger for couples working full-time before childbearing in all pre-birth relative earning categories.

**Figure 3.2:** Predicted probabilities of (2a) an unequal division where the father works more hours than the mother, (2b) an unequal division where the mother works more hours than the father and (2c) an equal employment division by pre-birth resource constellation



*Note: The sample is restricted to one-child parents that both worked full-time 4 quarters before childbirth, 1999-2010, Belgium. The predicted probabilities apply to couples where the mother is aged 31 and the father 33, that live in Flanders, are unmarried, where both originate from Belgium and where both had one job, worked in wholesale and had mean total household earnings before childbirth.*

*Source: Belgian Socio-Demographic Panel 1999 - 2010*

### **Sensitivity analysis: educational level**

As information on educational level of both partners is available for 28% of the sampled couples, we included relative educational level as a control variable for this subset. In accordance with the effect of pre-birth relative earnings, a higher educational level of the female partner positively affects the probability that the

mother works more hours than the father following the transition to parenthood. In contrast, a higher educational level of the male partner negatively affects the probability that the father works more hours than the mother following parenthood, which is not in line with the effect of pre-birth relative earnings. However, when controlling for relative educational level, the effect of pre-birth relative earnings remains substantial and significant in both analyses.

### **3.5. Discussion and conclusion**

Young couples increasingly divide paid and unpaid work equally (Grunow & Evertsson, 2016; Kil, Neels, & Vergauwen, 2016). However, over the process of family formation, gender roles are traditionalized and these patterns of labour division persist during later stages of the life course (Grunow et al., 2012; Kuhhirt, 2012; Langner, 2015). Given the rising prevalence of dual earner households and – more recently – female breadwinner households in Europe (Vitali & Arpino, 2016), this paper assesses whether pre-birth relative earnings are able to counteract a shift towards gender inequality when dual earner couples become parents. It engages with a small but growing number of longitudinal studies that found evidence of the effect of relative resources on gender inequality following the transition to parenthood but which have predominantly researched countries with minimal policy support for parents' employment and relied on survey data. Using administrative panel data for Belgium – characterized by a small motherhood employment gap and a well-developed formal childcare sector – we compare the probability that couples retain an equal employment division following the transition to parenthood in dual earner households where men or women were the main income providers before the onset of family formation.

In accordance with studies for the USA (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997), the UK (Kanji, 2011), Germany (Kuhhirt, 2012) and the Netherlands (Begall & Grunow, 2015), our results show that pre-birth relative earnings significantly moderate the parenthood effect on gender inequality for dual full-time working couples living in Belgium. In comparison to female main earner and equal earner couples, male main earner couples have a significantly larger probability to adopt an employment constellation in which the father works more than the mother following the birth of their first child. Conversely, in comparison to male main earner and equal earner couples, female main earner couples have a significantly larger probability to move to an employment constellation in which the mother works more than the father. These associations persist when controlling for socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Hence, pre-birth relative earnings partially determine whether gender equality is maintained over the

course of family formation, as well as who cuts back in paid work when an equal employment division is not retained.

Although relative resources affect the magnitude of the negative relationship between parenthood and gender inequality in paid work, a reversed gender specialization where predominantly fathers rather than mothers cut back in paid work is not even found for female main earner couples (Kuhhirt, 2012). Hence, variation in pre-birth relative earnings cannot fully offset the rise in gender inequality in employment following the transition parenthood. Consistent with earlier studies (Kuhhirt, 2012), we show that pre-birth relative resources moderate but do not counteract the move to a gendered division of work. The limited effect of pre-birth relative earnings suggests that cultural as well as structural constraints limit the ability of parents to opt for an equal employment division (Schober, 2013). Despite the widespread availability of childcare, subsidized service vouchers and flexible parental leave possibilities in Belgium that support mothers as well as fathers to combine a job and children, paternity leave is limited and the use of parental leave is highly gendered. These policy constellations and the gendered use of them reflect normative assumptions of mothers as the main carer, and of fathers as the main breadwinner. However, although we assume that cultural and structural factors explain the remaining variance in gender inequality in parents' employment, our data did not provide the possibility to test this assumption. The creation of longitudinal data-infrastructure with direct measures of norms and preferences, while at the same time covering multiple countries with different policy, economic and cultural constellations should be encouraged.

To conclude, this study revealed that even couples that are – from a rational economic perspective – well positioned to retain an equal division of work frequently adopt a 'male breadwinner/female secondary earner'-constellation following the transition to parenthood, indicating that "gender trumps money" (Bittman et al., 2003; Kan, 2008). In similar vein, although women have outpaced men in higher education among the younger cohorts, male main earner households are still much more widespread than female main earner households (Vitali & Arpino, 2016), suggesting that a changing gender balance in educational attainment not automatically translates in a changing gender balance in earnings. Hence, the fact that equal educational levels do not automatically translate in equal earnings and that equal earnings do not automatically translate in equal employment patterns following the transition to parenthood suggests that change towards gender equality is a slow and gradual process (McDonald, 2000b). An increasing number of researchers (Daly, 2011; England, 2010; Saraceno, 2015) argue that the adult worker policy model that replaces the male breadwinner model and encourages full-time employment for everyone regardless of gender, is

responsible for this as it implicitly devaluates care and relational work. Men have little incentives to move into traditionally female activities such as homemaking or female-dominated occupations because they are culturally and institutionally devaluated (England, 2010). Hence, gender gaps in the household and employment are maintained. As long as the transition to parenthood remains a critical juncture in the development of a gender gap in employment and deviating from the full-time worker norm is penalized in terms of economic independence and social security, it remains crucial to identify determinants of the parenthood effect on gender inequality.



## **CHAPTER 4: Employment after parenthood: women of migrant origin and natives compared**

### **Abstract**

Motherhood negatively affects female employment in majority populations across Europe. Although employment levels are particularly low among women of migrant origin, little is known about the motherhood-employment link in migrant populations. This paper investigates whether family formation differentially affects the labour market position of migrant women and their descendants compared to natives. Using longitudinal microdata from the Belgian social security registers 12,167 women are followed from 12 months before until 48 months after the birth of their first child for the period 1999-2010. Levels of activity (versus inactivity), employment (versus unemployment) and full-time employment (versus part-time employment) are compared between natives and first- and second-generation women of Southern European, Eastern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin. We find that activity and employment levels decrease to a larger extent following the transition to parenthood among women of migrant origin than among natives. With respect to activity levels, differences between second-generation women and natives are largely explained by socio-demographic and pre-birth job characteristics, while differences between first-generation women and natives are not, suggesting that other factors such as tied migration patterns determine labour market attachment among first-generation mothers. With respect to employment levels, unemployment is increasing more among women of migrant origin of both generations than among natives, also when controlling for background characteristics, which signals differential access to stable job positions as well as to family policies. In sum, the results draw attention to the challenge that parenthood creates for mothers of migrant origin in terms of retaining and gaining employment, but also to the role of labour market entry and early career positions.

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Kil, T., Neels, K. & De Wachter, D. (2014). Taux d'emploi des femmes et structure familiale parmi les migrants en Belgique. In: Centre Fédéral Migration (2014). *Migration, Rapport Annual 2013*. Bruxelles: Centre Fédéral Migration.

#### **4.1. Introduction**

Understanding the factors responsible for the low employment rates of migrant women has become paramount in view of the Europe 2020 target aiming at 75 per cent employment in the population aged 20-64 (European Commission, 2010). While studies for majority populations have shown that women's labour market position is strongly related to the transition to parenthood (Gutierrez-Domenech, 2005; Jeon, 2008; Kil, Wood, et al., 2015; Shapiro & Mott, 1994), little is known about the link between motherhood and employment among women of migrant origin. Low employment among migrant mothers may reflect general factors adversely affecting migrant's labour market position such as a lack of country specific human capital (Heath, Rethon, & Kilpi, 2008; Phalet, Deboosere, & Bastiaenssen, 2007), limited social capital or institutional knowledge (Verhaeghe et al., 2013) as well as discrimination in the labour market (Hermansen, 2013; Safi, 2010). The combination of work and parenthood, however, is additionally influenced by the availability and affordability of childcare, the accessibility of flexible work arrangements, as well as gender roles within households with respect to the division of paid work and care responsibilities following parenthood (Mussino & Duvander, 2016; J. Wood, Kil, & Neels, 2015).

Research specifically focussing on the labour force participation of migrant mothers is limited, however, and frequently based on cross-sectional data (Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2006, 2012; Dale et al., 2006; Holland & de Valk, 2017; Rubin et al., 2008). In cross-sectional studies women having children are compared to women who have not yet had children as well as women who will never enter parenthood, making it complicated to distinguish the effect of family formation from selection effects and the effects of structural factors that already determine employment positions (e.g. wages and sector of employment) prior to parenthood (Khoudja & Platt, 2016). Using longitudinal microdata from the Belgian social security registers this paper aims to fill this gap in knowledge by investigating whether labour market attachment (distinguishing activity, employment and full-time employment) of women of migrant origin is differentially affected by parenthood compared to natives. Furthermore, we analyse whether and to what extent differences in maternal employment between women of migrant and Belgian origin can be accounted for in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and precarious labour market positions held prior to parenthood. To this end, we compare levels of activity and (full-time) employment before and after the birth of a first child among first and second-generation migrant mothers to levels found among natives. The Belgian case is particularly relevant because the country has a substantial and diverse migrant population - like many European countries - while at the same time having the largest employment rate gap between migrants and natives in Europe, making insights

into the processes leading to this gap relevant for theory and policy alike (Corluy, 2014).

Our study adds to the literature in two ways. First, we adopt a life course perspective on the employment gap between women of migrant and native origin which allows to distinguish the differential impact of family formation on women's employment trajectories from variation in labour market positions that already existed before the onset of family formation. Second, whereas previous studies have frequently focused on a single indicator of labour market position (Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2012; Dale et al., 2006; Holland & de Valk, 2017; Khoudja & Platt, 2016), our study considers different indicators of labour market position as well as women of diverse origin groups and migrant generations. This approach allows to test whether early career disadvantages invariably shape maternal employment patterns, and whether distinctive patterns emerge for different aspects of labour market attachment.

## **4.2. The Belgian context**

### **4.2.1. Migration**

As a result of active recruitment of migrant workers after the second world war and the further diversification of immigration flows in recent decades, Belgium has become an immigration country characterised by a large diversity in terms of origin countries, backgrounds and migration histories (Centrum voor gelijkheid van kansen en racismebestrijding, 2013; Corluy, 2014). After the Second World War, the Belgian government recruited guest workers for industrial jobs from Italy (starting in 1946), Greece, Portugal (1955), as well as Morocco and Turkey (1964) (Phalet, 2007). Following the economic recession in the early 1970s, the Belgian government stopped all immigration of new guest workers in 1974. The closure of the coalmines in the following years and the rapid shrinkage of industrial labour in the Southern part of the country marked a transition to a post-industrial economy. This socio-economic restructuring has disproportionately affected migrant workers, leading to massive and long-term unemployment or withdrawal from the labour force (Lesthaeghe, 2000). The migration stop and the economic crisis, however, did not cause migration to halt and family reunification became the main reason for migration in subsequent years. The permanent settlement of migrant families in the 1980s and 1990s and their children born in Belgium (the second generation) increased the Southern European (mainly Italian), Moroccan and Turkish communities.

In contrast to second-generation women from European origin, a substantial share of the Turkish and Moroccan second-generation continue to marry partners

from their parents' country of birth (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009). This close link between family formation and migration is largely absent in the older migrant groups from Southern Europe as well as the more recent migration from Eastern Europe that started since the late 1990s.

#### **4.2.2. Labour market and family policies**

The Belgian economy is mostly service based and characterised by a well-established public sector (Van Dooren, Struyven, & Coomans, 2014). Belgian employment rates for men and women are overall rather low from a European perspective, reflecting high unemployment rates among the migrant population, young adults, the low qualified as well as the elderly, and a labour market that is segmented between workers with permanent contracts and those without (Høj, 2013; Van Dooren et al., 2014).

The Belgian social security system is characterized by a relatively generous unemployment insurance. Unemployment benefits depend on former wages and current household position. Although the unemployment benefit decreases over time, the entitlement period is unrestricted in time (Rogowski, 2008). As a result, the share of long-term unemployed in Belgium is among the highest in Europe (Di Domenico & Spattini, 2008). In 2004, the share of the unemployed who had been unemployed for more than one year amounted 49.6 %. As controls on active job search are limited and the lowest unemployment benefits (applied after a period of maximum four years in unemployment) approach social assistance benefits, unemployment sometimes conceals inactivity.

With respect to family policies, Belgium is characterized by a widespread availability of childcare and a relatively flexible parental leave system (Maron & O'Dorchai, 2008; Ray et al., 2010). When working women expect a child, they are entitled to 15 weeks of maternity leave (with a benefit covering 75 to 82 % of their previous income), as well as three months of full-time parental leave until their child reaches the age of 12 (at a flat-rate benefit of 727 euro per month) (Moss, 2015). While the right to maternity leave is universal, parental leave is only available to mothers with a stable employment position; working for their current employer for 12 out of 15 months prior to the application. Apart from full-time parental leave, women can also opt for a part-time reduction of working hours by 50 or 20 % for a longer period and a smaller benefit (Anxo et al., 2007a; Desmet & Glorieux, 2007).

Between ages 2.5 and 5 years, children have universal and free access to publicly provided pre-school arrangements, with an enrolment rate of almost 100 % among three year old children (Eurostat, 2010a). For younger children, subsidized

child care services are widely available with fees that are income-related and tax deductible.

In addition to family policies, the availability of part-time work facilitates the reconciliation of work and care responsibilities, with 61 % of working mothers in Belgium being employed part-time (Data for 2010, Eurostat, 2016). This high proportion is supported by the parental leave system ('time credit') and supplementary social security benefits for involuntary part-time workers (Anxo, Fagan, Smith, Letablier, & Perraudin, 2007b).

### **4.3. Theoretical background and hypotheses**

#### **4.3.1. Labour market attachment of women of migrant origin**

The labour market situation of migrant populations in Europe is generally worse than that of the native born population. Using data from the Labour Force Survey, Corluy (2014) shows that migrants have lower employment levels and that they are overrepresented at the lower end of the income distribution. In a similar vein, Rubin et al. (2008) find that non-European first-generation migrant women in several European countries are more frequently employed part-time involuntarily compared to both native women and migrant men. Although the labour market position of second-generation women is generally better than that of first-generation women, they also face more difficulties in finding a job compared to natives across Europe (Heath et al., 2008; Phalet, 2007; Phalet et al., 2007; Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, & Crul, 2003).

First-generation migrants often lack language skills and country specific human capital (e.g. equivalent qualifications and/or experience in the local labour market), which can explain their lower participation. Although the children of immigrants have grown up in the host country, they are still in a disadvantaged position (Heath et al., 2008). Regardless of their individual qualifications, the children of labour migrants generally have a working class background and belong to ethnic communities that have limited human capital. Previous research has shown that the benefits of high human capital at the individual level are discounted as a result of low human capital at the community level (Portes, 1998). Apart from individual and community resources (Pichler, 2011; van Tubergen et al., 2004), segmented labour markets (Ballarino & Panichella, 2013), discrimination in education and the labour market (Hermansen, 2013; Safi, 2010) and a lack of social capital or institutional knowledge (Verhaeghe et al., 2013) have been identified as important explanations for the weak labour market position of first as well as second-generation migrants in Europe.

Labour market attachment of migrant origin women is also linked to their specific migration history. As migrants of Turkish and Moroccan descent in Europe often originate from rural regions where roles of men and women are more separated in the private and the public sphere, they generally have more traditional views on the gendered division of care and domestic work versus paid work (Bernhardt & Goldscheider, 2007; de Valk, 2008; F. Goldscheider et al., 2011; Huschek et al., 2011b; Merens et al., 2006). In addition, the experience of migration itself may also result in the accentuation of these values (Dion & Dion, 2001). As values about family relationships and family traditions are often regarded as central components of identity, they are perceived as threatened in a new social environment. The second generation finds itself in an intermediate position, having to negotiate potentially contradictory expectations from a more egalitarian host society and a more traditionally oriented family of origin (de Valk & Milewski, 2011).

In addition, research has shown that economic migration is commonly initiated by men, which makes their partners 'tied migrants' and is associated with reduced employment and earnings among women (Bielby & Bielby, 1992; Boyle et al., 1999; Boyle et al., 2009; Cooke, 2008). For Turkish and Moroccan women family reunification and marriage remain the main official motives for migration to Europe (Eurostat, 2011). A sizeable share of the Turkish and Moroccan women who recently migrated to Europe married a co-ethnic who migrated earlier or was born in the destination country (Huschek et al., 2011a; Lodewijckx, 2010). For second-generation women the choice to marry a Turkish or Moroccan partner may frequently be considered progressive. When women marry someone from the country of origin, they manage to avoid the traditional habit of moving in with their husbands' parents in this way maintaining their own household. Also, given that their recently arrived husbands do not know the country and therefore rely more on their partner, women may manage to modify the traditional gendered power relations. The choice to marry a Turkish or Moroccan partner is in contrast considered as more traditional for second-generation men (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Lievens, 1999; Timmerman, 2006). The women chosen by these male partners residing in Europe frequently originate from rural areas and have low levels of educational qualifications. For these women it is more evident that their husband is the head of the household and takes full economic responsibility. This close link between family formation and migration is however typical for the Turkish and Moroccan group and largely absent in Eastern and Southern European migrant groups. The latter are considered to be less selective in terms of socio-economic position and gender role attitudes.

Partly due to their specific migration history, women of Turkish and Moroccan origin are characterized by relatively young ages at marriage and childbearing (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009; Kleinepier & de Valk, 2014). Women from these groups may thus face a difficult entry into the labour market in combination with an early start of family formation, which potentially implies that these women enter family formation before being firmly established in the labour market. This may have a long lasting effect as previous research has shown that periods of non-employment at the start of a work career negatively affect employment opportunities in later life (Brandt & Hank, 2014; Luijkx & Wolbers, 2009).

#### **4.3.2. The link between family formation and labour market attachment of women of migrant origin**

The limited existing research on family formation and female labour force participation in migrant populations has mainly adopted a cross-sectional approach and reports contradictory results. Holland and de Valk (2017) find that employment of second-generation women of Turkish origin in Germany, the Netherlands, France and Sweden is lower compared to natives. Differences between Turkish origin mothers and non-mothers are similar to differences between native mothers and non-mothers, suggesting that the transition to motherhood has the same effect on employment for both groups. Cross-sectional research on first- and second-generation women of Turkish and Moroccan origin in the Netherlands (Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2006, 2012) finds that the negative link between the presence of children in the household and employment is even smaller for women of migrant origin compared to native Dutch women. Also in the United Kingdom, the difference in economic activity between first-generation women with and without children has been found to be smaller among migrants of African, Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi origin (Dale et al., 2006). In contrast, research on first-generation non-European migrants in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Austria, Greece, Spain and Portugal suggests that the difference in labour force participation rates between women in general and women with a child younger than five years old is larger for migrant women (Rendall et al., 2010).

Only a limited number of studies have adopted a longitudinal approach to analyse the impact of childbearing on the labour market position of migrant women. Research for the UK shows that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's labour market entries and exits are less sensitive to childbearing events compared to other women's (Khoudja & Platt, 2016). Using data for the USA, Taniguchi and Rosenfeld (2002) show that having young children increases the risk of exiting employment to a greater extent for black women compared to other groups with and without migration background. Although using longitudinal data, these

studies do not explicitly control for pre-birth labour market positions, taking into account women that get children during the observation period as well as women that already have entered parenthood and childless women.

There are however abundant studies on the majority group population showing that women, unlike men, experience systematic career disadvantages when entering parenthood, which are often referred to as a motherhood penalty (Koelet, de Valk, Glorieux, Laurijssen, & Willaert, 2015). Many women decide to work part-time or stay at home full-time after the birth of a child (Gutierrez-Domenech, 2005; Shapiro & Mott, 1994). This leads to reduced financial independence, a devaluation of human capital and a reduction of future opportunities in the labour market. Micro-economic theories (Becker, 1991) predict that when couples become parents, the parent with the lowest earning potential within a couple typically disinvests in his or her labour market career in order to increase productivity in household production activities such as child rearing. Due to differential experiences, differential investments in human capital as well as biological factors, mothers typically specialize in these tasks (Becker, 1991). In addition, culturally reproduced gender roles stimulate women to take responsibility for household and childrearing tasks (Coltrane, 2000; Pfau-Effinger, 2004). However, the rise in female participation in education and labour force participation has increased the opportunity costs of cutting back on paid work after childbearing and the dual breadwinner model has become increasingly standard. In addition, the availability of subsidized formal childcare and paid parental leave have reduced the opportunity costs linked to the combination of work and children (Rindfuss, Brewster, & Kavee, 1996; van der Lippe & van Dijk, 2002).

Although it is frequently assumed that women adapt their labour market position after entering motherhood, women who want children may also anticipate the event by reducing their employment hours or changing jobs before children are born (Bass, 2014). Socially constructed expectations surrounding motherhood, parenthood aspirations and the anticipation of family responsibilities may already constrain women's preferences for specific professional paths before actually entering parenthood.

For women of migrant origin, additional conflicts may arise between family formation and labour market activity (Andersson & Scott, 2005). First, in a situation where migrants have severe problems in establishing themselves in the labour market, family formation may further reduce the practical and financial feasibility of work to such an extent that it is more favourable to stop working after a child is born.

Second, migrant origin families are often found to have limited access to family policies such as formal childcare and parental leave that help to reduce the work-family conflict and the financial costs related to this combination (Kil, Neels, et al., 2015; Merens et al., 2006; Mussino & Duvander, 2016). This is partially due to the unstable labour market position of women of migrant origin in the first place, but limited language skills and lack of institutional knowledge may also play a role (Merens et al., 2006; J. Wood et al., 2015).

Third, social and family networks that take up a part of the caring responsibilities can be crucial for combining a job and children. Women who recently immigrated usually lack extended networks in the destination country (Wall & Jose, 2004). Consequently they have less friends and family to rely on and may therefore withdraw from the labour market (Raijman & Semyonov, 1997).

Fourth, for women with a low initial income and limited labour market prospects, family formation might be seen as an alternative to a career (Friedman, Hechter, & Kanazawa, 1994). Disadvantaged groups may choose full-time parenthood as a strategy to structure their otherwise uncertain life courses (Kreyenfeld, 2010).

Fifth, traditional gender norms may give rise to more 'conservative' patterns of behaviour, in which women who are more oriented towards family responsibilities reduce employment after the transition to parenthood (de Valk, 2008; Hakim, 2000; Khoudja & Fleischmann, 2015a). Although De Valk (2008) finds little evidence for differences in work and family plans between Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Antillean and Dutch adolescents in the Netherlands, it is unclear whether gender differences in work and family plans would also translate into less emancipated behaviour of women.

Based on these considerations, we expect *a larger rise in inactivity and unemployment following parenthood among women of migrant origin compared to native women (Hypothesis 1)*. For women in unstable labour market positions, family formation may further increase the practical difficulties (e.g. arranging childcare on a short term) and financial costs (e.g. transport and formal childcare) associated with employment. Since women of migrant origin are overrepresented in weak labour market positions, we expect that activity and employment following the transition to parenthood can largely be explained by differential pre-birth positions and job characteristics.

We expect additional barriers to activity and employment for first-generation mothers and mothers of Turkish and Moroccan origin. First-generation migrants may face (i) limited access to social and family networks supporting the combination of work and childcare, and (ii) language and social barriers may entail a lack of institutional knowledge of regulations aimed at easing the work-

family combination (e.g. subsidized childcare and parental leave). We expect these factors to result in *larger inactivity and unemployment levels for first-generation women of all origins following the transition to parenthood than is the case for natives and second-generation women (Hypothesis 2)*. Linked to selective migration, we expect that traditional norms on gender roles and motherhood may *increase the prevalence of inactivity after the transition to parenthood to a larger extent among first-generation Turkish and Moroccan origin mothers than among mothers of other origins and natives (Hypothesis 3)*. Since part-time employment can result from preferences but could just as well be related to bargaining power and the ability to reconcile a job and children, we do not formulate specific hypotheses on hours worked but just explore differences in our analyses.

#### **4.4. Data & Methods**

##### **4.4.1. Data**

The paper uses data from the Administrative Socio-Demographic panel (ASD Panel) that was constructed using longitudinal microdata from the Belgian social security registers (Crossroads Bank for Social Security) and the National Register. The ASD Panel covers the period 1999-2010 and is representative of the female population aged 15 to 50 legally residing in Belgium between 1 January 1999 and 31 December 2010. To maintain the cross-sectional representativeness of the panel throughout the observation period, annual top-up samples of 15 year olds were drawn to guarantee the presence of the youngest age group in the sample. Similarly, annual supplementary samples were drawn of women aged 16 to 50 years who settled in Belgium in the preceding year. Apart from the sampled women, the ASD Panel includes all individuals officially being household members of sampled women on 1 January of each year. The panel thus provides detailed annual information on the household composition of women, as well as detailed information on labour market positions and earnings of all household members on a quarterly basis.

The analysis of maternal employment is based on data for 12,167 women aged 18 to 50 years old who had their first child between 2000 and 2010. We observe these women until i) a second child is born, or ii) the first child reaches the age of 7, or iii) censoring as a result of death, emigration or reaching the end of the observation period on 31 December 2010. We only selected women for whom the labour market position was known one year before childbirth.

All samples constituting the ASD Panel are disproportionately stratified by nationality (with sampling fractions of 1/40 for Belgian women and 1/20 for

foreign women respectively). In addition, the Crossroads Bank for Social Security provides data on country of birth of both women and their (grand)parents, allowing us to identify women of second and later generations. Our analyses include 9,216 women of Belgian origin, 907 of Southern European origin (239 first-generation and 666 second-generation), 315 of Eastern European origin (only first-generation), 517 of Turkish origin (313 first- and 204 second-generation) as well as 1,214 of Moroccan origin (831 first- and 383 second-generation).

#### 4.4.2. Analysis

Hierarchical regression models for binary outcomes were estimated to consider different dimensions of maternal employment, distinguishing i) the probability of being active in the labour market (i.e. employed or unemployed) versus inactive, ii) the probability of being employed versus unemployed for those being active in the labour market, and finally iii) the probability of working full-time versus part-time for employed women. To distinguish part-time from full-time employment we consider 80 % of the standard number of work hours for a full time position in the activity sector as a cut-off point. For most sectors this is equivalent to a work regime of four weekdays out of five. Since former research has shown that labour force attachment before parenthood is an important determinant of labour force attachment after childbearing (Kil, Wood, et al., 2015), the analyses are stratified by work status one year before birth. We consider four groups of women: (1) working full-time, (2) working part-time, (3) being unemployed and (4) being inactive one year before the birth of their first child. Since self-employment is rare in our migrant sample, we exclude these from our analyses (Table 4.1). While 7 % of women of Belgian origin are self-employed one year before birth, only 3, 6, 2 and 1 % of first-generation women of respectively Southern-European, Eastern-European, Turkish and Moroccan origin and 4, 1 and 1 % of second-generation women of respectively Southern-European, Turkish and Moroccan origin were self-employed one year before birth.

The covariates considered in the analysis include origin group, migrant generation and pre-birth job characteristics (salary and activity sector). We also control for exposure since first birth, age at first birth (centred around 18 years, quadratic specification), living arrangement and partner characteristics. With respect to *origin*, a woman is considered to be of migrant origin when she herself (first generation) or one of her parents (second generation) was not born in Belgium. When both parents are foreign-born, origin reflects the country of birth of the mother. Pre-birth job characteristics refer to *pre-birth salary* and *pre-birth sector of employment*. Concerning salary, we take into account the salary one year before birth, which is collapsed in quintiles. Pre-birth sector of employment is

categorized in 11 categories: (1) agriculture and industry, (2) wholesale and retail, (3) logistics and energy distribution, (4) education, (5) public administration, (6) health services and social care, (7) recreation and other services, (8) finances and estate, (9) administration, support services, technical activities and IT, (10) hotel and catering and (11) extraterritorial organisations.

We control for *exposure since first birth* that measures the number of quarters since the birth of the first child. The three quarters immediately following the quarter in which the first child is born, are considered separately, whereas subsequent quarters are grouped into 4-quarter intervals, i.e. quarters 4 – 7, quarters 8 – 11 and quarters 12 – 15. We also control for living arrangement (*LIPRO-position*), which is based on the categories of the LIPRO-typology (Imhoff & Keilman, 1991). We distinguish (1) women without a partner (single), (2) women who live with their parents (child), (3) married women, (4) unmarried cohabiting women and (5) other types. Because economic circumstances are subject to regional variation we control for the three main *regions* of settlement in Belgium: Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels. We furthermore control for a number of partner characteristics (partners' origin and pre-birth labour market position) (Matysiak & Vignoli, 2008). Six origin groups are distinguished regarding partner's origin: (1) no partner or unknown origin, (2) Belgian origin, (3) first-generation European origin, (4) second-generation European origin, (5) first-generation non-European origin, and (6) second-generation non-European origin. The partner's pre-birth labour market position distinguishes five categories: (1) no partner or unknown position, (2) inactive, (3) unemployed, (4) part-time employed and (5) full-time employed. The distribution of covariates and sample sizes is provided in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

**Table 4.1:** Distribution over key independent variables by origin and generation (in %)

	<i>Origin and generation*</i>								
	<i>BE</i>	<i>SEU1</i>	<i>SEU2</i>	<i>EEU1</i>	<i>TU1</i>	<i>TU2</i>	<i>MO1</i>	<i>MO2</i>	<i>Total</i>
Age at first birth (mean)	27.80	30.58	28.05	28.96	24.19	24.09	27.48	25.21	27.63
LIPRO- position**									
Child	9.96	5.44	12.76	3.49	3.83	14.22	3.49	8.09	9.27
Single	9.30	20.08	12.31	13.97	4.79	8.33	11.07	11.75	9.86
Married	40.81	47.28	43.54	62.22	58.47	64.71	73.29	71.02	45.66
Unmarried	37.01	22.18	28.08	13.97	1.92	2.94	3.61	6.27	30.91
Other	2.92	5.02	3.30	6.35	30.99	9.80	8.54	2.87	4.29
<i>total</i>	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Region**									
Flanders	64.87	19.25	15.77	41.90	48.56	50.98	28.40	37.60	56.69
Wallonia	30.13	25.10	71.02	15.24	27.16	26.47	18.89	10.97	30.38
Brussels	5.00	55.65	13.21	42.86	24.28	22.55	52.71	51.44	12.94
<i>total</i>	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Pre-birth labour market position									
Full-time empl.	63.37	37.66	51.35	22.54	8.31	33.82	12.15	35.77	54.87
Part-time empl.	16.06	17.99	19.52	13.02	5.43	14.22	9.39	15.67	15.44
Unemployed	5.95	9.21	13.81	3.17	12.14	35.29	9.15	29.77	7.99
Inactive	8.13	31.80	11.56	55.24	71.88	15.20	68.71	17.75	16.20
Self-employed	6.50	3.35	3.75	6.03	2.24	1.47	0.60	1.04	5.51
<i>total</i>	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	9,216	239	666	315	313	204	831	383	12,167

*Note:* \* *BE* = Belgium, *SEU1* = Southern-European, first generation, *SEU2* = Southern-European, second generation, *EEU1* = Eastern-European, first generation, *TU1* = Turkey, first generation, *TU2* = Turkey, second generation, *MO1* = Morocco, first generation, *MO2* = Morocco, second generation; \*\* As LIPRO-position and region are time varying, we looked into them 4 quarters before first childbirth  
*Source:* Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999-2010, calculations by authors

**Table 4.2:** Distribution over key independent variables by origin and generation, women that worked before birth (in %, self-employed excluded)

	<i>Origin and generation*</i>								
	<i>BE</i>	<i>SEU1</i>	<i>SEU2</i>	<i>EEU1</i>	<i>TU1</i>	<i>TU2</i>	<i>MO1</i>	<i>MO2</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pre-birth salary									
quintile 1	17.48	31.58	30.43	38.39	34.88	38.78	50.84	32.99	20.09
quintile 2	19.48	24.81	25.11	16.96	34.88	25.51	27.37	25.89	20.31
quintile 3	20.85	18.80	18.51	19.64	20.93	20.41	16.20	19.29	20.53
quintile 4	20.85	7.52	14.68	9.82	4.65	11.22	2.79	12.18	19.38
quintile 5	21.34	17.29	11.28	15.18	4.65	4.08	2.79	9.64	19.69
<i>total</i>	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Pre-birth sector of employment									
agriculture, industry	10.26	9.02	8.72	11.61	11.63	12.24	3.35	4.57	9.93
wholesale, retail	15.78	20.30	22.55	13.39	11.63	19.39	9.50	17.77	16.13
logistics, storage, distribution	4.76	0.00	4.89	4.46	2.33	6.12	2.79	3.05	4.61
education	14.58	5.26	8.09	2.68	4.65	4.08	6.15	5.58	13.36
public admin.	11.78	6.02	10.21	3.57	9.30	13.27	8.38	11.17	11.42
health services, social care	20.61	8.27	17.66	19.64	16.28	14.29	17.88	18.78	20.05
art, recreation, other services	3.19	11.28	6.17	4.46	2.33	8.16	4.47	3.55	3.58
finances, estate administration, support services, technical act., IT	10.62	18.80	12.34	31.25	32.56	18.37	34.64	23.86	12.13
hotel, catering	2.79	10.53	4.47	7.14	9.30	4.08	10.61	4.57	3.31
extraterritorial organisations	0.30	3.76	0.64	0.89	0.00	0.00	0.56	0.00	0.38
<i>total</i>	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	7,248	133	470	112	43	98	179	197	8,480

Note: \* *BE* = Belgium, *SEU1* = Southern-European, first generation, *SEU2* = Southern-European, second generation, *EEU1* = Eastern-European, first generation, *TU1* = Turkey, first generation, *TU2* = Turkey, second generation, *MO1* = Morocco, first generation, *MO2* = Morocco, second generation  
Source: Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel 1999-2010, calculations by authors

Three models were estimated to compare maternal employment between native women and women from different origin groups and migrant generations. Model 1 compares different origin groups and migrant generations to natives only controlling for exposure since first birth. Model 2 additionally controls for age at first birth (quadratic specification), household composition, region of residence, partner's origin, partner's pre-birth labour market position, pre-birth salary and sector of employment. Finally, as a sensitivity analysis, person-quarters were nested in women in Model 3 (Table 4.6 in Appendix) to include a (normally distributed) individual-level random frailty term, additionally controlling for time-constant covariates that affect maternal employment across women's person quarters (Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal, 2008; Wienke, 2003; Wooldridge, 2010). To control for selective entry into pre-birth employment positions - women with childbearing intentions may already adjust their employment position before a child is expected or born - additional sensitivity analyses were performed to control for educational attainment which is available for a subset of the sample (Bass, 2014).

All models use a complementary log-log link function which is more appropriate than a logit link to estimate differentials between migrant and natives given the high levels of activity and employment among native women (Hosmer, Lemeshow, & Sturdivant, 2013). To facilitate the interpretation of the multivariate analyses, we report average marginal effects which represent the average change in the probability of activity or (full-time) employment associated with a unit change in a covariate averaged across all (combinations of) values of the other covariates included in the models (and in case of Model 3 assuming a value of zero for the random frailty term) (StataCorp, 2015). In addition to the average marginal effects, Tables 4.4 and 4.5 (in Appendix) report the exponentiated parameter estimates for Model 2 (which can be interpreted as hazard ratios) and provide information on model fit and sample sizes included in the analysis.

## **4.5. Results**

### **4.5.1. Descriptive analysis**

For women having a first child between 2000 and 2010, Figures 4.1a to 4.1h show the labour market position in the period from two years before up to three years after the birth of the first child by country of origin and migrant generation. We first discuss differences in initial labour market positions. Subsequently, we address the evolution of labour market attachment following the transition to parenthood.

***Differences in pre-birth labour market positions***

In all origin groups, the labour market position is relatively stable two to one years before parenthood, suggesting that women do not anticipate childbirth by reducing their employment during this period. Among the Belgian origin group 92 % is active in the labour market one year before the birth of their first child, while this percentage is much lower among first-generation migrant women of Southern European (68 %), Eastern European (45 %) and – especially – Turkish (28 %) and Moroccan origin (31 %). Activity levels of second-generation women approximate those of natives more closely with 88, 85 and 82 % of second-generation women of respectively Southern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin being active in the labour market one year before parenthood.

Large differences by origin group and migrant generation emerge when comparing unemployment rates among active women. While only 6 % of the active women of Belgian origin are unemployed one year before birth, this percentage amounts to 13, 16 and 7 % of first- and second-generation Southern European and first-generation Eastern European origin groups respectively. Unemployment levels are extremely high among active women of Turkish and Moroccan descent, ranging from 43 to 42 % among the Turkish first and second generation, and 29 to 36 % among the Moroccan first and second generation respectively.

With respect to part-time employment, we find that part-time work is more prevalent among women of migrant origin, being limited to approximately 20 % among natives, 32, 37, 40 and 43 % of employed first-generation women of Southern European, Eastern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin work part-time respectively. The level of part-time work among second-generation women approaches that of natives with respectively 28, 30 and 30 % of employed second-generation women of Southern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin working part-time.

Hence, women of migrant origin show lower attachment to the labour market in terms of activity and employment before parenthood than women of Belgian origin. With respect to inactivity and part-time employment, first-generation women typically have the weakest labour market attachment, while Turkish and Moroccan women show the highest levels of unemployment, irrespective of generation. Given the small numbers involved, migrant-native differences in self-employment are less clear, with first-generation Eastern European and Turkish women showing somewhat higher levels of self-employment.

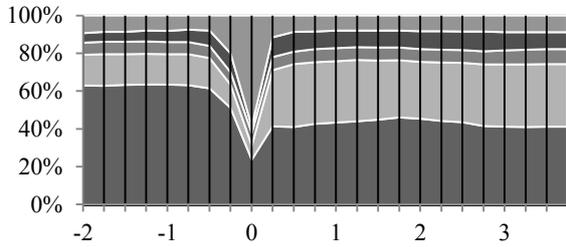
***Differential change in labour market positions following parenthood***

Among women of Belgian origin, activity levels decrease during the quarter before birth, but recover to 92 % in the second quarter after birth. Although native mothers stay strongly attached to the labour market, the character of their activity changes. Whereas 6 % of the women were unemployed one year before birth, this increases to 10 % one year after the birth of their first child. The transition to parenthood has the largest effect, however, on full-time versus part-time employment. While 63 % of women worked full-time before birth, this proportion decreases to 43 % one year after birth. In contrast, part-time participation increases from 16 to 33 %.

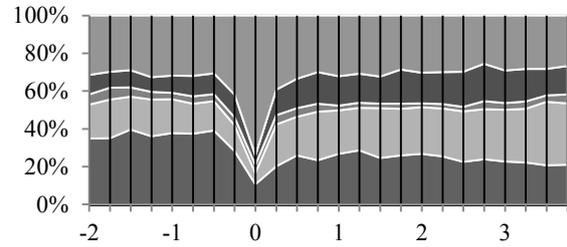
Migrant origin groups generally show changes in employment around the birth of their first child similar to those observed among native women: activity and self-employment levels do not change substantially, whereas full-time employment decreases, giving rise to increasing unemployment levels and part-time employment. The increase in unemployment levels is slightly larger among the considered migrant groups in comparison to natives, while the increase in part-time employment levels is generally smaller.

**Figure 4.1:** Labour market position 2 years before childbirth until 3 years after childbirth of first- and second-generation women of Belgian, Southern European, Eastern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin who had their first child between 2000 and 2010

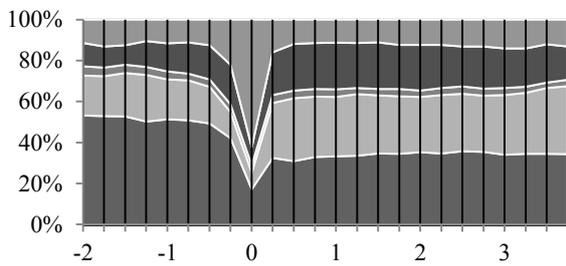
*Figure 4.1a: Belgian women (n = 9,216 persons)*



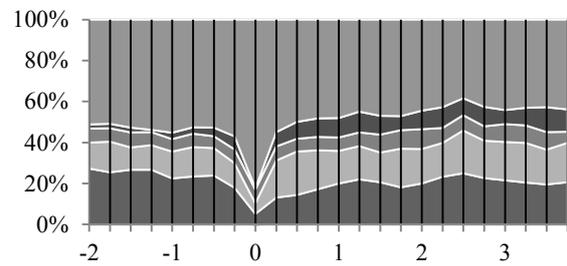
*Figure 4.1b: first-generation women of Southern European origin (n = 239 persons)*



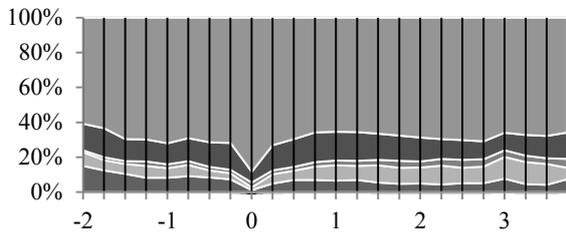
*Figure 4.1c: second-generation women of Southern European origin (n = 666 persons)*



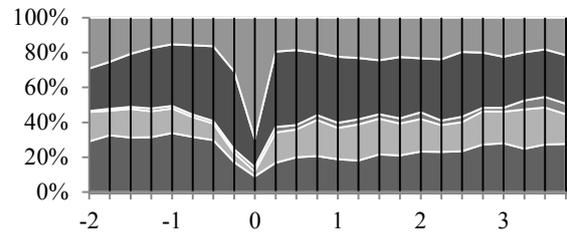
*Figure 4.1d: first-generation women of Eastern European origin (n = 315 persons)*



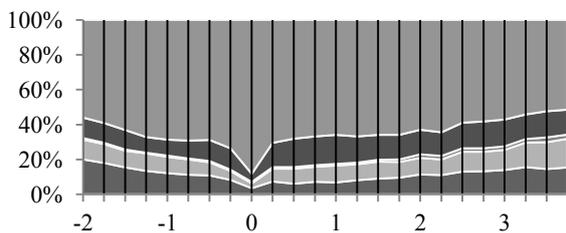
*Figure 4.1e: first-generation women of Turkish origin (n = 313 persons)*



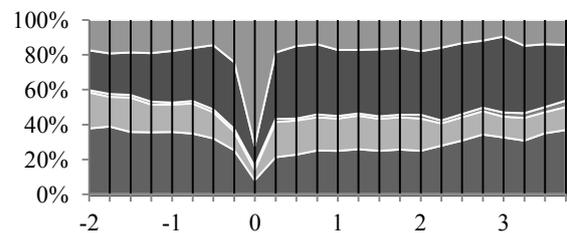
*Figure 4.1f: second-generation women of Turkish origin (n = 204 persons)*



*Figure 4.1g: first-generation women of Moroccan origin (n = 831 persons)*



*Figure 4.1h: second-generation women of Moroccan origin (n = 338 persons)*



■ Inactive   ■ Unemployed   ■ Self-employed   ■ Part-time employed   ■ Full-time employed

Source: Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999 – 2010, calculations by authors

#### **4.5.2. Multivariate analysis**

As the descriptive findings do not control for confounding factors, hierarchical complementary log-log models are estimated to assess differences in maternal employment by origin group and migrant generation, controlling for age at first birth, household structure, region, pre-birth job characteristics and partner characteristics. The analyses are performed separately by pre-birth labour market position.

##### ***Change in activity following the transition to parenthood***

First we will discuss the differential change in activity levels following the transition to parenthood (Left pane, Table 4.3). Among mothers who worked full-time before the birth of their first child, all migrant origin groups show lower activity levels after birth compared to Belgian mothers (Panel 4.3a, Model 1). On average, the probability of being active is 10.0, 12.9, 10.6 and 5.8 % lower for first-generation women of Southern European, Eastern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin respectively compared to women of Belgian origin. Differences between natives and second-generation women of Southern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin are smaller, amounting to 1.0, 6.5 and 1.7 % respectively.

Controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, pre-birth job characteristics and partner characteristics (Model 2), effects diminish and are no longer significantly different from natives for second-generation women of Southern European and Moroccan origin. The differential retreat from the labour market between women of migrant origin and natives is largely explained by age at first birth for second-generation women of Turkish and Moroccan origin and by pre-birth job characteristics for the other origin groups. Differences between natives and first-generation women, however, remain substantial when controlling for socio-demographic, pre-birth job and partner characteristics.

Also for women who worked part-time before the birth of their first child, the decline in activity rates after parenthood is more apparent among mothers of migrant origin compared to natives (Model 1, Panel 4.3b). Controlling for socio-demographic, pre-birth job and partner characteristics (Model 2), differences decrease but remain substantial for second-generation women of Southern European origin and first-generation women of Eastern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin.

Among mothers who were unemployed before parenthood activity rates following parenthood are significantly lower compared to natives for first-generation Southern European and Turkish women and second-generation women of Moroccan origin (Panel 4.3c). Controlling for socio-demographic and partner

characteristics (Model 2), differences diminish for most groups, but substantially increase for women of Moroccan origin.

Among women who were already inactive before the birth of their first child (Panel 4.3d), the probability of remaining inactive following parenthood is substantially larger for first-generation women of all considered origins. Probabilities to remain inactive are larger among first-generation mothers of Turkish (ame = -0.427) and Moroccan (-0.455) origin than among first-generation mothers of Southern-European (-0.272) and Eastern-European (-0.275) origin. For second-generation women of Moroccan origin, the probability of escaping inactivity is larger than for natives. When controlling for socio-demographic and partner characteristics (Model 2), these differences diminish but remain substantial and significant.

Hence, in line with our first hypothesis, a larger increase in inactivity was observed among women of migrant origin in comparison to natives among those who were employed as well as unemployed or inactive before parenthood. In comparison to natives and second-generation women, first-generation women generally face a larger risk to become or remain inactive after parenthood, which confirms our second hypothesis. While differences between second-generation migrants and natives are largely explained by socio-demographic characteristics and pre-birth salary and sector, differences between first-generation migrants and natives remain substantial and significant. Finally, our results partly confirm the third hypothesis: where first-generation women of Turkish and Moroccan origin that were inactive before parenthood have a larger chance to remain inactive following parenthood in comparison to natives and other origin groups, we do not observe this pattern among the other pre-birth labour market positions. However, since approximately 70 % of first-generation mothers of Turkish and Moroccan origin is inactive before the transition to parenthood, this disproportionate effect applies to the majority of these women .

### ***Change in employment following the transition to parenthood***

For women who remain active after parenthood, the probability to be employed rather than unemployed differs markedly between migrant origin women and natives. Among those that were employed full-time before parenthood, all migrant origin groups show lower employment levels following parenthood. The differentials range from a 4.6 % difference for the Southern European second generation to a 25.3 % difference for the Moroccan first generation (middle pane, Panel 4.3a). When controlling for age at first birth, household structure and predominantly pre-birth job characteristics, differences diminish to a large extent

but remain substantial. Additionally, controlling for partner characteristics (Model 2) has limited impact on the differentials in most origin groups.

For women who were employed part-time before parenthood and remain active following parenthood, the probability of employment is found to be particularly low among mothers of Turkish and Moroccan origin compared to natives (Panel 4.3b). When taking into account socio-demographic, pre-birth job and partner characteristics differences diminish, but remain substantial and significant. In all origin groups, women who were unemployed before parenthood have a significantly higher chance than natives to remain unemployed following the transition to parenthood, with differentials amounting to 25.8, 15.0, 30.8, 13.8, 28.5 and 23.2 % for first- and second-generation women of Southern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin respectively (Model 1, Panel 4.3c). It thus seems that natives experience a greater mobility out of unemployment around parenthood compared to mothers of migrant origin. There is some heterogeneity, however, between generations: first-generation women generally perform worse compared to the second generation. Controlling for socio-demographic and pre-birth job characteristics (Model 2) does not substantially change these differences.

Also for mothers who were inactive before childbirth but entered the labour market following the birth of their first child, employment chances are significantly lower among second-generation Southern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin mothers (Panel 4.3d). In contrast, employment chances are significantly higher among first-generation mothers of Southern European, Eastern European and Moroccan origin that became active following parenthood compared to natives.

Hence, a larger rise in unemployment following the transition to parenthood was found for women of migrant origin compared to natives, confirming our first hypothesis. Among the pre-birth employed as well as the non-employed groups, women of migrant origin have a larger chance to end up in unemployment after the birth of their first child. Particularly among women who were unemployed before parenthood, the lower probability of escaping unemployment compared to natives stands out. The second hypothesis that predicted a larger rise in unemployment for first-generation women in comparison to second-generation women is partially confirmed. In comparison to natives and second-generation women, first-generation women generally face additional barriers to retain employment after parenthood when full-time employed or to gain employment when previously unemployed in comparison to second-generation women and natives. For women who were part-time employed and inactive before parenthood, differences between first- and second-generation women in terms of

employment probabilities do not follow the same pattern.

### ***Change in full-time employment following the transition to parenthood***

Finally, probabilities of full-time versus part-time employment between natives and women from different origin groups and migrant generations that remain or become employed following parenthood are compared. Results show that first-generation women of Eastern European origin, second-generation women of Turkish origin and women from Moroccan origin of both generations remain employed full-time after parenthood to a significantly larger extent than natives (Panel 4.3a). For women from other origin groups and migrant generations, the probability is similar to natives (Model 1). Differentials in full-time employment persist when controlling for socio-demographic, pre-birth job and partner characteristics (Model 2).

Among mothers who already worked part-time before the birth of their first child, first-generation women of Southern European origin have a significantly larger chance of increasing their working hours to full-time employment, while women of Turkish origin and first-generation women of Moroccan origin have a significantly larger chance to remain employed part-time (Panel 4.3b). For those unemployed or inactive before parenthood, the results regarding the probability of full-time versus part-time employment should be interpreted with caution, as only a limited number of observations are included in these groups. After controlling for socio-demographic, socio-economic and partner characteristics, the probability of full-time employment is significantly lower for first-generation women originating from Southern Europe and Morocco that were unemployed before parenthood (Panel 4.3c). Among those that were inactive before parenthood but started working afterwards, the probability of working full-time is significantly smaller for second-generation women of Southern European origin and significantly larger for second-generation women of Moroccan origin and women of Turkish origin of both generations (Panel 4.3d).

Hence, differentials in the probability of being full-time rather than part-time employed between migrant mothers and natives are rather unclear as they do not follow a distinctive pattern across generations and origin groups. However, results of the random-effects models indicate that unobserved time-constant characteristics of women account for the largest part of variation in full-time employment (Table 4.6 in Appendix).

**Table 4.3:** Average marginal effects (ame) of origin group on the probability of being employed and full-time employed after the transition to parenthood, hierarchical complementary log-log models, women aged 15-50 having a first child between 2000 and 2010

<i>Activity (vs. inactivity)</i>				<i>Employment (vs. unemployment)</i>				<i>Full-time employment (vs. part-time employment)</i>			
Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
ame	sig.	ame	sig.	ame	sig.	ame	sig.	ame	sig.	ame	sig.
<i>4.3a: women that worked full-time before birth (ref. BE)</i>											
SEU1	-0.100 ***	-0.064 ***		-0.136 ***		-0.059 ***		0.037		-0.003	
SEU2	-0.010 **	-0.006		-0.046 ***		-0.011 **		-0.012		-0.035 ***	
EEU1	-0.129 ***	-0.121 ***		-0.116 ***		-0.091 ***		0.095 ***		0.064 **	
TU1	-0.106 ***	-0.078 ***		-0.144 ***		-0.057 **		-0.017		-0.016	
TU2	-0.065 ***	-0.026 *		-0.149 ***		-0.044 ***		0.048 *		0.055 *	
MO1	-0.058 ***	-0.029 **		-0.253 ***		-0.093 ***		0.070 ***		0.074 ***	
MO2	-0.017 *	-0.008		-0.141 ***		-0.060 ***		0.058 ***		0.043 *	
<i>4.3b: women that worked part-time before birth (ref. BE)</i>											
SEU1	-0.031 *	-0.013		-0.014		0.002		0.067 **		0.102 **	
SEU2	-0.028 ***	-0.019 *		-0.111 ***		-0.032 ***		-0.022		0.015	
EEU1	-0.114 ***	-0.055 **		-0.017		-0.006		0.008		0.049	
TU1	-0.133 ***	-0.071 *		-0.117 **		-0.030		-0.123 ***		-0.151 ***	
TU2	-0.073 ***	-0.009		-0.273 ***		-0.128 ***		-0.020		-0.092 ***	
MO1	-0.088 ***	-0.053 **		-0.349 ***		-0.182 ***		-0.017		-0.070 **	
MO2	-0.029 *	0.007		-0.246 ***		-0.127 ***		0.086 **		-0.004	
<i>4.3c: women that were unemployed before birth (ref. BE)</i>											
SEU1	-0.080 **	-0.058		-0.258 ***		-0.240 ***		-0.354 ***		-0.416 ***	
SEU2	-0.030 *	-0.044 **		-0.150 ***		-0.093 ***		0.009		-0.034	
EEU1	-0.003	-0.013		-0.190 ***		-0.175 ***		-0.036		-0.111	
TU1	-0.071 **	-0.108 ***		-0.308 ***		-0.295 ***		-0.046		-0.054	
TU2	-0.056	-0.081 ***		-0.138 ***		-0.126 ***		0.083		-0.008	
MO1	-0.010	-0.111 ***		-0.285 ***		-0.253 ***		0.002		-0.177 ***	
MO2	-0.012 ***	-0.083 ***		-0.232 ***		-0.209 ***		0.157 **		0.082	
<i>4.3d: women that were inactive before birth (ref. BE)</i>											
SEU1	-0.272 ***	-0.209 ***		0.160 ***		0.080 **		-0.030		-0.002	
SEU2	0.019	0.025		-0.191 ***		-0.136 ***		-0.136 ***		-0.159 ***	
EEU1	-0.275 ***	-0.247 ***		0.311 ***		0.176 ***		-0.048		-0.040	
TU1	-0.427 ***	-0.380 ***		0.065 *		0.045		-0.071		0.106 *	
TU2	0.023	0.037		-0.167 ***		-0.125 ***		0.056		0.229 ***	
MO1	-0.455 ***	-0.407 ***		0.156 ***		0.147 ***		-0.059 *		0.038	
MO2	0.112 ***	0.139 ***		-0.196 ***		-0.151 ***		0.201 ***		0.318 ***	

Note: BE = Belgium, SEU1 = Southern-Europe, first generation, SEU2 = Southern-Europe, second generation, EEU1 = Eastern-Europe, first generation, TU1 = Turkey, first generation, TU2 = Turkey, second generation, MO1 = Morocco, first generation, MO2 = Morocco, second generation; Model 1 controls for duration since first birth. Model 2 additionally controls for age at birth (quadratic specification), LIPRO-position, region, pre-birth salary, pre-birth sector of employment, partner's origin and partner's pre-birth labour market position.

Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Source: Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999 – 2010, calculations by authors

***Sensitivity analysis: educational level***

As information on educational level is available for 71 % of the sample, we carried out additional analyses with educational level as a covariate in the multivariate analyses to control for selective entry into pre-birth employment positions. As expected, educational level positively affects women's labour market attachment. However, as the multivariate analyses already control for pre-birth job characteristics, we find that differences between natives and women of migrant origin only decrease slightly when additionally controlling for educational level, but results by and large remain similar to those reported.

**4.6. Discussion and conclusion**

This paper assessed whether the labour market positions of first- and second-generation women of diverse origins are differentially affected by family formation compared to women of Belgian origin. Earlier studies have shown that motherhood and employment are negatively associated in majority populations across Europe (Gutierrez-Domenech, 2005; Kil, Wood, et al., 2015), but only a limited number of papers have addressed the effect of parenthood on women's employment in migrant populations, frequently based on cross-sectional data. We add to this body of literature by using longitudinal microdata from the Belgian social security registers and adopting a double comparative perspective taking both different origin groups and migrant generations into account. Belgium provides a relevant context to study this issue given its diverse migrant population and the large employment gap between natives and migrants.

To study maternal employment, we consider three indicators of the labour market position: i) activity (versus inactivity), ii) employment (versus unemployment) and iii) full-time employment (versus part-time employment). Before parenthood, migrant groups are less attached to the labour market in comparison to natives: both inactivity and unemployment are more prevalent among women of migrant origin. First-generation women typically show the highest inactivity levels, while women of Turkish and Moroccan origin show the highest levels of unemployment, irrespective of generation. Former research has identified a lack of country specific human capital (Heath et al., 2008; Phalet et al., 2007), limited social capital or institutional knowledge (Verhaeghe et al., 2013) as well as discrimination in the labour market (Capéau, Eeman, Groenez, & Lamberts, 2011; Hermansen, 2013; Safi, 2010) as important explanations for these differences. As migrants have severe problems in establishing themselves in the labour market, this study performed separate analyses of maternal employment for those that were employed full-time, employed part-time, unemployed and inactive before parenthood.

Looking into the parenthood effect on activity, we find that women of migrant origin who were active on the labour market prior to the birth of their first child have a lower probability than natives to continue labour market participation after parenthood. For second-generation mothers, the larger increase in inactivity after parenthood can be mainly accounted for in terms of socio-demographic, pre-birth job and partner characteristics. This suggests that differences in activity levels between second-generation mothers and mothers of Belgian origin primarily reflect the socio-demographic profile and early career disadvantages of second-generation women. These results corroborate earlier findings of Holland and de Valk (2013) who reached similar conclusions for the Turkish second-generation based on cross-sectional data.

In contrast to the second-generation, activity levels of first-generation women remain lower after parenthood than those of natives when controlling for socio-demographic, pre-birth job and partner characteristics. This indicates that the labour market position of the first generation is differentially affected by parenthood compared to natives and second-generation women. Especially among Turkish and Moroccan first-generation women that already were inactive before parenthood, probabilities to remain inactive are large in comparison to natives and other origin groups with similar pre-birth profiles. This may be linked to patterns of marriage migration. In the Moroccan and Turkish groups, “imported brides” have been shown to hold more traditional views on gender roles, stipulating that women assume the care responsibility for the household and children (Bernhardt, Goldscheider, & Goldscheider, 2007; F. Goldscheider et al., 2011; Huschek et al., 2011b; Lievens, 1999; Timmerman, 2006). In contrast, imported grooms often hold more progressive views on female employment and family formation compared to second-generation Turkish and Moroccan men, which may favourably impact the labour market participation of Turkish and Moroccan second-generation women. In our study we are unable, however, to further distinguish between different migration motives of women, specific (e.g. rural) origins or gender roles in the couple.

The strong link between migration and family formation found among women of Turkish and Moroccan origin is largely absent among women of Southern and Eastern European origin who enjoy legal residence across Europe regardless of partner choice and marital status. Nevertheless, parenthood also disproportionately affects activity levels of first-generation women of Southern and Eastern European origin in comparison to natives and second-generation women. This could hint to patterns of tied family migration that are associated with low activity and employment for female partners (Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree, & Smith, 2003; Cooke, 2008). In addition, for first-generation women having limited prospects in the labour market due to language barriers or discriminatory

processes, being a full-time mother may be a more rewarding role (Friedman et al., 1994).

As a next indicator (*un*)employment levels were considered. Women of migrant origin are more likely to end up in unemployment after the transition to parenthood, and differentials with natives are larger among the first generation than is the case for the second generation. Moreover, the higher increase in unemployment among migrant women persists when controlling for socio-demographic, previous job and partner characteristics. Other mechanisms related to the combination of a job and children may be responsible for these patterns. First, uptake of family policies (e.g. subsidized childcare, parental leave) in Belgium is subject to a strong gradient in terms of household income. This reflects a lower demand for, but also a lower access to family policies among low-income households as eligibility criteria and services fail to match the unstable employment positions and irregular working hours of this group (Cantillon, Ghysels, Spiessens, & Vercammen, 2010; Ghysels & Van Lancker, 2009, 2011; J. Wood et al., 2015). This may encourage them to quit their job and search for employment that allows combining work and family. Second, in similar vein, particularly first-generation women lack social and family networks capable of assuming part of the care responsibilities to allow the combination of work and family (Raijman & Semyonov, 1997; Wall & Jose, 2004). Third, a precarious labour market position in terms of job security and work schedules may lead to more unemployment spells in general and may create an unemployment trap where unemployment is more advantageous than continued labour force participation.

Finally, the third indicator considers *full-time versus part-time employment*. Overall, results indicate that the impact of parenthood on full-time versus part-time employment is rather similar among women from different origin groups and migrant generations compared to natives, suggesting that differences between origin groups are mainly driven by the choice to stay in the labour market or not rather than by the choice to reduce working hours.

Although the Belgian social security registers provide unique longitudinal microdata on the labour market position of women with and without migration background, still data limitations remain. First and most importantly, we could not fully control for endogeneity of childbearing decisions and employment trajectories. Taking different pre-birth positions into account and controlling for unobserved time-constant characteristics, we attempt to adjust for this issue, but it may not fully address the fact that women may opt into particular labour market positions because they anticipate having children (Bass, 2014). However, two elements may indicate that bias is limited. First, descriptive analyses show that

the labour market position is relatively stable two to one year before childbearing, suggesting that women do not anticipate childbirth by reducing their employment hours during this period.

Second, additionally controlling for educational level for a subset of the sample – which may be assumed to capture selective entry into pre-birth employment positions – did not substantially affect our results. A second limitation concerns the lack of information on date of immigration which is particularly relevant for first-generation women as labour market positions improve with duration of residence (Kil, Neels, & De Wachter, 2014). The labour market position of first-generation women with a long duration of residence is likely to increasingly resemble that of second-generation women.

Third, register data do not provide information on gender role attitudes, informal networks and temporary employment contracts. Although socio-demographic characteristics and pre-birth salary and sector can explain the differential impact of parenthood on the employment position of migrant women compared to natives to a considerable extent, information on these three factors is likely to explain additional variation in the differential link between motherhood and employment among migrant women and natives. Finally, the scope of this study was limited to first births and employment positions up to four years following the birth of the first child. However, migrant-native differences in the effect of second and third births on maternal employment may differ from the migrant-native differences in the effect of first births. Also long-term effects of family formation on maternal employment may differ between origin groups. As a result, longitudinal analyses considering pre-birth job characteristics as well as employment trajectories and family formation over an extended part of the life course, in tandem with information on time since migration, gender role attitudes, informal networks and temporary employment contracts, may provide a worthwhile strategy to fully explain the employment rate gap between migrant women and natives.

Despite these limitations, our longitudinal analyses of the link between parenthood and employment among women of diverse origins and generations in Belgium clearly showed that parenthood disproportionately affects inactivity and unemployment levels of women of migrant origin. For Belgium, characterized by one of the largest employment rate gaps between migrants and natives in Europe, the results firmly draw attention to the importance of labour market entry and early career positions. Future longitudinal research should attempt to pinpoint these factors more precisely in order to unravel the sources of cumulative disadvantage in the employment trajectories of migrant women.

## 4.7. Appendix

**Table 4.4:** Hierarchical complementary log-log model of activity, employment and full-time employment of women who had a first child between 2000 – 2010 and were employed before birth (in hazard-ratios)

	Full-time employed before birth					Part-time employed before birth						
	Activity		Employment		Full-time employment	Activity		Employment		Full-time employment		
	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.		
<b>Origin (ref. Belgium)</b>												
<i>South EU, gen1</i>	0.693	***	0.677	***	0.993		0.930		1.009		1.577	***
<i>South EU, gen2</i>	0.958		0.910	**	0.906	***	0.902	*	0.850	***	1.080	
<i>East EU, gen1</i>	0.553	***	0.582	***	1.205	**	0.764	**	0.970		1.263	
<i>Turkey, gen1</i>	0.652	***	0.683	***	0.956		0.715	**	0.859		0.306	***
<i>Turkey, gen2</i>	0.838	**	0.732	***	1.172	*	0.950		0.580	***	0.559	**
<i>Morocco, gen1</i>	0.822	***	0.577	***	1.243	**	0.770	***	0.482	***	0.657	**
<i>Morocco, gen2</i>	0.941		0.674	***	1.131	*	1.045		0.581	***	0.979	
<b>Time since birth (ref. quarter 1)</b>												
<i>Quarter 2</i>	1.238	***	0.995		0.739	***	1.161	**	1.092		0.978	
<i>Quarter 3</i>	1.262	***	1.037		0.726	***	1.145	**	1.129	*	1.173	
<i>Quarter 4 - 7</i>	1.183	***	1.046		0.765	***	1.128	**	1.166	***	1.340	***
<i>Quarter 8 - 11</i>	1.079	**	1.084	*	0.785	***	1.091	*	1.196	***	1.574	***
<i>Quarter 12 - 15</i>	1.099	***	1.171	***	0.720	***	1.091	*	1.276	***	1.583	***
<b>Age at birth (in quarters)</b>												
<i>Linear</i>	1.081	***	1.108	***	1.021	**	1.048	***	1.082	***	0.943	***
<i>Quadratic</i>	0.997	***	0.996	***	0.999	***	0.999	**	0.998	***	1.001	
<b>LIPRO-position (ref. single)</b>												
<i>Child</i>	0.935		1.834	***	1.245	***	0.957		1.669	***	0.784	*
<i>Married cohab</i>	0.786	*	1.677	***	1.247	*	1.202		5.016	***	1.876	
<i>Unmarried</i>												
<i>cohab</i>	0.844		1.678	***	1.179		1.300		4.977	***	1.814	
<i>Other</i>	0.988		1.876	***	0.989		1.057		2.492	***	0.882	
<b>Region (ref. Flanders)</b>												
<i>Wallonia</i>	0.982		0.759	***	1.142	***	1.073	**	0.717	***	0.905	*
<i>Brussels</i>	0.995		0.810	***	1.383	***	1.071		0.868	**	1.267	**
<b>Salary before birth (ref. quintile 1)</b>												
<i>Quintile 2</i>	1.125	***	1.290	***	1.159	***	1.276	***	1.159	***	0.862	*
<i>Quintile 3</i>	1.252	***	1.527	***	1.129	***	1.361	***	1.404	***	0.857	*
<i>Quintile 4</i>	1.233	***	1.623	***	1.198	***	1.468	***	1.582	***	1.271	***
<i>Quintile 5</i>	1.141	***	1.997	***	1.408	***	1.747	***	1.963	***	1.315	***
<b>Sector (ref. education)</b>												
<i>agriculture,</i>												
<i>industry</i>	0.938	*	0.837	***	0.915	***	0.862	**	0.667	***	0.479	***
<i>wholesale, retail</i>	0.968		0.943	*	0.879	***	1.083		1.032		0.684	***
<i>logistics, storage,</i>												
<i>distribution</i>	0.901	**	0.835	***	0.745	***	1.066		0.831		0.198	***
<i>public admini-</i>												
<i>stration</i>	1.004		1.133	***	0.787	***	0.936		1.075		0.552	***
<i>health services,</i>												
<i>social care</i>	0.921	**	1.188	***	0.657	***	1.002		1.422	***	0.413	***
<i>art, recreation,</i>												
<i>other services</i>	0.901	**	1.014		0.796	***	0.966		1.081		0.593	***
<i>finances, estate</i>	0.953		1.086	*	0.779	***	0.824		1.039		0.219	***
<i>administration,</i>												
<i>support services,</i>												
<i>technical act, IT</i>	0.885	***	0.876	***	0.798	***	0.950		0.838	***	0.796	**
<i>hotel, catering</i>	0.825	***	1.004		0.984		0.931		0.776	***	0.756	**
<i>extraterritorial</i>												
<i>organisations</i>	0.350	***	0.885		0.937		0.690	*	0.554	***	0.099	*

Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ 

Source: Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999 – 2010, calculations by authors

**Table 4.4:** Complementary log-log model of activity, employment and full-time employment of women who had a first child between 2000 – 2010 and were employed before birth (in hazard-ratios), continued

	Full-time employed before birth			Part-time employed before birth		
	Activity	Employment	Full-time employment	Activity	Employment	Full-time employment
	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.
<b>Partner origin</b>						
<i>No partner/</i>						
<i>origin unknown</i>	0.836		1.040		1.257	2.598 **
<i>EU gen1</i>	0.933		0.950	1.090 *	0.724 ***	0.997
<i>EU gen2</i>	1.070 *		1.036	1.023	0.932	1.107 *
<i>nEU gen1</i>	1.089 *		0.845 ***	0.954	1.012	0.801 **
<i>nEU gen2</i>	0.937		0.969	0.984	0.781 ***	1.040
<b>Partner labour market position before birth (ref. full-time employed)</b>						
<i>No partner/</i>						
<i>position unknown</i>	0.917 ***		0.827 ***	0.953 **	0.912 **	0.845 ***
<i>Inactive</i>	0.873 ***		0.812 ***	0.940	0.911	1.079
<i>Unemployed</i>	0.887 *		0.793 ***	1.092	0.931	0.797 **
<i>Part-time</i>						
<i>employed</i>	0.993		0.884 **	0.912 *	1.112	1.010
<i>Self-employed</i>	0.961		0.903 ***	0.925 ***	0.911 *	1.055
<b>Constant</b>	2.163 ***		0.955	1.182	1.190	0.251 ***
<i>Log Likelihood</i>	21226.574		19328.034	64836.166	8863.678	9987.305
<i>n persons</i>	6 557		6 502	6 253	1 881	1 842
<i>n observations</i>	62,165		59,373	53,707	18,145	16,785
<i>Belgium</i>	54,108		51,969	47,788	14,128	13,238
<i>SEU gen1</i>	841		723	542	491	444
<i>SEU gen2</i>	3 725		3 537	3 120	1 422	1 292
<i>EEU gen1</i>	555		462	345	316	260
<i>Turkey gen1</i>	242		207	138	179	144
<i>Turkey gen2</i>	626		560	401	315	272
<i>Morocco gen1</i>	865		780	494	687	584
<i>Morocco gen2</i>	1 203		1 135	879	607	551

Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Source: Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999 – 2010, calculations by authors

**Table 4.5:** Complementary log-log model of activity, employment and full-time employment of women who had a first child between 2000 – 2010 and were not employed before birth (in hazard-ratios)

	Unemployed before birth						Inactive before birth					
	Activity		Employment		Full-time employment		Activity		Employment		Full-time employment	
	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.	exp(b)	sig.
<b>Origin (ref. Belgium)</b>												
<i>South EU, gen1</i>	0.829		0.303	***	0.020	***	0.510	***	1.303	**	0.995	
<i>South EU, gen2</i>	0.865	**	0.686	***	0.889		1.075		0.634	***	0.591	***
<i>East EU, gen1</i>	0.957		0.457	**	0.662		0.442	***	1.832	***	0.885	
<i>Turkey, gen1</i>	0.712	***	0.186	***	0.826		0.227	***	1.160		1.362	*
<i>Turkey, gen2</i>	0.773	***	0.588	***	0.974		1.114		0.659	***	1.951	***
<i>Morocco, gen1</i>	0.707	***	0.275	***	0.494	**	0.187	***	1.645	***	1.118	
<i>Morocco, gen2</i>	0.769	***	0.375	***	1.307		1.497	***	0.602	***	2.604	***
<b>Time since birth (ref. quarter 1)</b>												
<i>Quarter 2</i>	1.202	**	1.300	*	1.041		1.201	*	1.153		0.860	
<i>Quarter 3</i>	1.147	*	1.646	***	1.076		1.314	***	1.374	***	0.883	
<i>Quarter 4 - 7</i>	1.056		2.405	***	1.117		1.429	***	1.661	***	0.894	
<i>Quarter 8 - 11</i>	1.006		3.253	***	1.033		1.695	***	1.988	***	0.940	
<i>Quarter 12 - 15</i>	1.001		3.710	***	0.938		1.882	***	2.490	***	0.925	
<b>Age at birth (in quarters)</b>												
<i>Linear</i>	1.032	**	1.068	***	1.061	*	1.032	***	1.125	***	1.143	***
<i>Quadratic</i>	0.999	**	0.997	***	0.999		0.996	***	0.995	***	0.994	***
<b>LIPRO-position (ref. single)</b>												
<i>Child</i>	0.608	***	2.247	***	1.695	**	0.607	***	2.090	***	0.881	
<i>Married cohab</i>	1.029		2.039	**	0.554		0.521	**	1.337		0.813	
<i>Unmarried cohab</i>	0.963		1.512		0.579		0.594	**	1.347		0.910	
<i>Other</i>	0.925		2.222	***	2.410	***	0.544	***	2.040	***	0.512	
<b>Region (ref. Flanders)</b>												
<i>Wallonia</i>	1.202	***	0.412	***	0.883		0.938	*	0.494	***	1.154	**
<i>Brussels</i>	1.582	***	0.530	***	2.557	***	0.958		0.700	***	1.037	
<b>Partner origin (ref. Belgium)</b>												
<i>No partner/</i>												
<i>origin unknown</i>	1.511	**	0.727		0.410		0.720		0.558		0.932	
<i>EU gen1</i>	0.599	***	0.647	**	1.080		1.025		0.908		0.712	**
<i>EU gen2</i>	0.892	*	1.158		2.126	***	0.957		0.923		1.034	
<i>nEU gen1</i>	1.092		0.650	***	1.049		1.030		0.607	***	0.637	***
<i>nEU gen2</i>	1.039		1.097		0.887		0.706	***	0.963		0.710	**
<b>Partner labour position before birth (ref. full-time employed)</b>												
<i>No partner/</i>												
<i>position unknown</i>	1.088	*	0.875	*	0.884		1.036		0.948		1.095	
<i>Inactive</i>	1.199	***	0.657	***	1.304	*	0.903	*	0.664	***	1.239	*
<i>Unemployed</i>	0.941		1.070		0.471	***	0.822	***	0.843	*	0.626	***
<i>Part-time empl</i>	1.242	**	1.175		1.025		0.936		0.754	**	1.627	***
<i>Self-employed</i>	0.953		1.253	*	0.738		1.215	***	1.214	**	1.124	
<b>Constant</b>	0.986		0.239	***	0.611		1.151		0.493	*	0.543	
<i>Log Likelihood</i>	9726.315		7841.691		2881.659		23092.378		9402.443		5769.510	
<i>n persons</i>	956		900		397		2 241		1 154		749	
<i>n observations</i>	9 722		7 586		2 304		2 1042		8 548		4 338	
<i>Belgium</i>	5 502		4 371		1 710		9 385		5 518		2 804	
<i>SEU gen1</i>	237		169		20		709		221		147	
<i>SEU gen2</i>	1 131		863		229		937		572		211	
<i>EEU gen1</i>	111		88		20		1,452		444		330	
<i>Turkey gen1</i>	368		266		25		2,356		369		154	
<i>Turkey gen2</i>	684		505		120		375		227		78	
<i>Morocco gen1</i>	648		509		61		5,018		633		427	
<i>Morocco gen2</i>	1,041		815		119		810		564		187	

Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ 

Source: Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999 – 2010, calculations by authors

**Table 4.6:** Average marginal effects (ame) of origin group on the probability of being active, employed and full-time employed after the transition to parenthood, hierarchical random-effects complementary log-log models, women aged 15-50 having a first child between 2000 and 2010.

	<i>Activity (vs. inactivity)</i>		<i>Employment (vs. unemployment)</i>		<i>Full-time employment (vs. part-time employment)</i>	
	<i>Model 3</i>		<i>Model 3</i>		<i>Model 3</i>	
	<i>ame</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>ame</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>ame</i>	<i>sig.</i>
<i>4.6a: women that worked full-time before birth (ref. BE)</i>						
SEU1	-0.032	*	-0.003		0.009	
SEU2	-0.002		0.000		-0.024	
EEU1	-0.078	**	-0.010		0.007	
TU1	-0.057		-0.011		-0.036	
TU2	-0.012		-0.005		0.043	
MO1	-0.014		-0.024	*	0.059	***
MO2	-0.009		-0.008	*	0.038	*
<i>Rho</i>	<i>0.273</i>		<i>0.763</i>		<i>0.825</i>	
<i>4.6b: women that worked part-time before birth (ref. BE)</i>						
SEU1	-0.012		0.009		0.128	
SEU2	-0.014		-0.039	**	-0.002	
EEU1	-0.018		0.001		0.014	
TU1	-0.056		-0.008		-0.018	
TU2	0.009		-0.088	**	-0.022	
MO1	-0.026		-0.160	**	0.003	
MO2	0.001		-0.067	*	0.009	
<i>Rho</i>	<i>0.410</i>		<i>0.762</i>		<i>0.873</i>	
<i>4.6c: women that were unemployed before birth (ref. BE)</i>						
SEU1	-0.106		-0.251	***	-0.242	***
SEU2	-0.027		-0.130	**	-0.075	
EEU1	-0.013		-0.159		-0.129	
TU1	-0.058		-0.243	***	0.072	
TU2	-0.045		-0.129	*	-0.015	
MO1	-0.046		-0.241	***	-0.090	
MO2	-0.052		-0.225	***	0.062	
<i>Rho</i>	<i>0.547</i>		<i>0.805</i>		<i>0.903</i>	
<i>4.6d: women that were inactive before birth (ref. BE)</i>						
SEU1	-0.445	***	0.083		0.010	
SEU2	0.145		-0.205	*	-0.223	**
EEU1	-0.508	***	0.337	***	-0.175	
TU1	-0.574	***	0.238	***	0.391	**
TU2	-0.025		-0.239		0.057	
MO1	-0.576	***	0.313	***	0.121	
MO2	0.257	**	-0.281	**	0.468	***
<i>Rho</i>	<i>0.846</i>		<i>0.835</i>		<i>0.878</i>	

*Note:* BE = Belgium, SEU1 = Southern-Europe, first generation, SEU2 = Southern-Europe, second generation, EEU1 = Eastern-Europe, first generation, TU1 = Turkey, first generation, TU2 = Turkey, second generation, MO1 = Morocco, first generation, MO2 = Morocco, second generation; Model 3 controls for duration since first birth, age at birth (quadratic specification), LIPRO-position, region, pre-birth salary, pre-birth sector of employment, partner's origin and partner's pre-birth labour market position. In addition it includes a random effect controlling for unobserved time constant characteristics.

*Significance levels:* \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

*Source:* Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999 – 2010, calculations by authors

## **CHAPTER 5: Parental leave uptake among migrant and native mothers: Can precarious employment trajectories account for the difference?**

### **Abstract**

Family policies such as parental leave schemes increasingly support the work-family balance. Low maternal employment in migrant populations raises questions on family policy uptake among mothers of migrant origin. This study documents differences in parental leave uptake between native and migrant mothers of different origin groups and generations, and assesses the extent to which precarious employment trajectories can account for these differentials. Using longitudinal data from Belgian social security registers, mixed effects logit models of leave uptake, full-time or part-time leave uptake and the labour market position following leave are estimated for 10,976 mothers who entered parenthood between 2004 and 2010. Results indicate that uptake of parental leave is lower among mothers of migrant origin, since they fail to meet the eligibility criteria as a result of being overrepresented in unstable labour market positions. Whereas differential leave uptake can be accounted for by non-universal eligibility and precarious labour market trajectories, migrant-native differences in part-time uptake and labour market positions following leave persist when controlling for pre-birth employment characteristics. The differential pattern of leave uptake among first-generation migrant women in particular is not explained by pre-birth employment characteristics, as they remain overrepresented in full-time leave, and first-generation mothers of non-European origin more frequently retreat from the labour force following leave. We conclude that difficult access to stable employment and non-universal eligibility are major factors explaining migrant-native differences in parental leave use. As such, Belgian parental leave policies perpetuate labour market disadvantages by limiting support for work-family reconciliation to those already established in the labour force.

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## **5.1. Introduction**

In response to declining fertility levels and rising female labour force participation, Western European governments have increasingly developed family policies geared towards the reconciliation of labour force participation and family formation (Rindfuss & Brewster, 1996; Thevenon, 2008). In addition to family policies such as family allowances established earlier, the availability of formal childcare and parental leave schemes has increased considerably since the 1980s (Klusener, Neels, & Kreyenfeld, 2013; RVA, 2012, 2013). The rising popularity of such policies, in tandem with increased maternal employment and the changing relation between female labour force participation and fertility (Ahn & Mira, 2002) suggest that family policy meets the needs of a growing number of dual earner couples. Although labour force participation among mothers in majority populations has increased in recent decades, maternal employment levels (Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2012; Holland & de Valk, 2017; Kil, Neels, et al., 2015; Rubin et al., 2008) as well as uptake of family policies (Kil, Wood, et al., 2015; Lapuerta et al., 2011; Merens et al., 2006; Neels & Wood, 2016) remain low in migrant populations across Europe. This contrast between native and migrant groups raises questions on the determinants of migrants' uptake of family policies. This paper documents differences in parental leave use between mothers with and without a migration background, distinguishing different origin groups and generations, but also assesses to which degree differential patterns of leave use can be explained by employment characteristics and eligibility criteria governing access to these schemes. We draw on longitudinal register data (1999 – 2010) for Belgium, a country characterized by a relatively flexible parental leave system (Maron & O'Dorchai, 2008; Ray et al., 2010). In addition, Belgium has the largest employment rate gap between migrants and natives in Europe, making insights into the processes leading to this gap essential for theory and policy alike (Corluy 2014).

Although parental leave schemes were introduced to enhance work-family compatibility, previous research on the effects of parental leave on labour force attachment and family formation is inconclusive. Despite the fact that parental leave supports mothers to keep a foothold in the labour force (Chiara Daniela Pronzato, 2009; Pylkkänen & Smith, 2004), leave can also delay mothers' return to work (Matysiak & Szalma, 2014) and long periods of leave in particular may hamper future employment (Fagnani, 1999; Lalive & Zweimuller, 2009). With respect to fertility, reported effects are typically small, although failure to acknowledge population heterogeneity in the uptake of parental leave has been a major source of bias in the literature assessing such effects (Neyer & Andersson, 2008). Recent research has identified various determinants of parental leave use at different levels (e.g. individual, couple, company) ranging from economic

determinants (e.g. eligibility, income) to attitudinal factors (e.g. preferences concerning work-family combination) (M. Bygren & A. Z. Duvander, 2006; Geisler & Kreyenfeld, 2011; T. Lappegård, 2008; Lapuerta et al., 2011). Our understanding of differential uptake by migrant groups, however, is limited. Previous studies on parental leave uptake in migrant populations show small differences in Sweden, which is characterized by universal eligibility (Mussino & Duvander, 2016). In contrast, uptake by migrant groups is typically lower in countries (e.g. the Netherlands, Spain) where eligibility is related to labour force participation (Lapuerta et al., 2011; Merens et al., 2006). Whereas former studies have concentrated on the Swedish policy context (Mussino & Duvander, 2016), have focussed on descriptive analysis (Merens et al., 2006), or have identified migrants only using an indicator on foreign nationality (Lapuerta et al., 2011), our study is the first to analyse determinants of parental leave use among migrant groups of different origins and generations for a country where eligibility is conditional upon labour force attachment. Furthermore, this contribution yields detailed insight into differential parental leave strategies by distinguishing full-time from part-time leave and assessing whether women return to the labour force following leave uptake.

Results indicate that lower uptake of parental leave among mothers of migrant origin is largely explained by the interaction between precarious employment trajectories and eligibility criteria governing access to parental leave schemes, suggesting that parental leave perpetuates labour market disadvantages by reserving work-family reconciliation to those already firmly established in the labour force. Among mothers using parental leave, we find that full-time leave use is more prevalent among first-generation women, whereas employment following leave uptake is lower among non-European first-generation mothers. These differences persist when taking pre-birth employment characteristics into account, suggesting unobserved heterogeneity with respect to employment characteristics, work-family preferences, knowledge of leave regulations or migrant-specific characteristics. We conclude that the exclusive character of current eligibility criteria as well as the accumulation of labour market disadvantages over the transition to parenthood need to be acknowledged in order to extend the inclusive character of the parental leave system.

## **5.2. The Belgian context**

### **5.2.1. Parental leave policy**

Although parental leave schemes exist in all European Union Member States, large differences occur between countries. The design of parental leave arrangements varies in terms of eligibility criteria, maximum length of leave,

generosity of benefits and employment protection (Anxo et al., 2007a; Moss, 2015; Ray et al., 2010). In Belgium, parental leave is an individual entitlement and the right is not transferable from one parent to the other (ACLVB, 2013). To be entitled to parental leave, an employee needs to have worked for the current employer for 12 out of 15 months prior to the application<sup>5</sup> and have a child younger than 12<sup>6</sup>. Parents on parental leave receive a flat-rate benefit, which was 727 euro per month for full-time leave in 2010<sup>7</sup> (Merla & Deven, 2010). This benefit approximates 30% of the median gross income from employment in Belgium<sup>8</sup>. Three degrees of labour reduction occur: (i) a 100% reduction for maximum three months, (ii) a 50% reduction for up to six months, or (iii) a 20% reduction of working hours limited to 15 months. The last two options are only permitted for full-time workers, with some exceptions in the public or education sector. Parents are allowed to split up the leave period depending on the sector of employment and previous work history (Desmet & Glorieux, 2007; Merla & Deven, 2013; Morel, 2007; Ray, 2008; RVA, 2012). Given that parental leave can be used until the child is 12 years old, that periods can be split up, that varying degrees of labour reduction are available and that the 20% labour reduction is most popular (Anxo et al., 2007a; Desmet & Glorieux, 2007; Plantenga & Remery, 2005), the Belgian parental leave system is relatively flexible (Maron & O'Dorchain, 2008; Ray et al., 2008). On the other hand, eligibility criteria imply that only workers with a stable labour market position can take up parental leave and the income replacement level is low.

From a European perspective, the rate of parental leave uptake in Belgium is low, with only 7% of all eligible parents using parental leave (Anxo et al., 2007a; Plantenga & Remery, 2005). Moreover, parental leave uptake is strongly gendered. Results from the 2007 Labour Force Survey show that 20% of employed mothers with a child under age one take leave, while the proportion of employed fathers taking leave is close to zero (OECD, 2010b).

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<sup>5</sup> To be eligible for parental leave, civil servants do not have to meet the condition of having worked 12 out of 15 months for the same employer at the time of application. Apart from this condition, the parental leave regulation for civil servants is identical to that for private sector employees.

<sup>6</sup> In the early 2000s, parents were only entitled to leave for children younger than 4 years. This age limit was raised to 6 years in 2005 and subsequently to 12 years in 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Parents using 50% or 20% reductions of labour force participation receive a flat-rate benefit proportional to the rate of reduction (Merla & Deven, 2013). Parents that worked part-time at time of the application receive a benefit proportional to their employment regime. The Flemish community government provides an additional benefit for people living in Flanders, thus further encouraging leave uptake. In 2010 the additional benefit was approximately €160 per month for a full-time leave.

<sup>8</sup> With a median gross income of €2621, €2460 and €2130 for respectively Belgian-born, EU-born and non-EU born inhabitants of Belgium, the benefit replaces respectively 28%, 30% and 34% of the median income.

### 5.2.2. Migration

As a result of active recruitment of migrant workers after the Second World War and post-colonial migration, Belgium is an old immigration country. More recently, free movement of people within the European Union, the gradual enlargement of the European Union and migration flows of asylum seekers have contributed to Belgium's ethnic diversity (Corluy, 2014). Since the 2000s, Belgium has been characterized by large minority groups with European as well as non-European origins.

With respect to European migrant groups, Belgium recruited guest workers in Southern European countries such as Italy, Greece and Portugal to perform industrial labour after World War II (Phalet, 2007). The economic downturn associated with the oil crisis led to a migration stop in 1974 and labour market opportunities deteriorating disproportionately for previously migrated groups (Lesthaeghe, 2000). Despite the official migration stop, migration from Southern Europe continued via family reunification in subsequent years. Also, as the free movement of persons took effect under the gradual extension of the Schengen agreement in the 1990s (European Commission, 2011), and as labour migration was gradually facilitated, Belgium increasingly received Eastern European migrants. In addition to migration from Southern and Eastern Europe, a large proportion of migrants in Belgium originate from neighbouring countries, facilitated by common languages.

Concerning non-European migration, Moroccan and Turkish workers were actively recruited for industrial labour in the 1960s. Notwithstanding the migration stop and economic crisis that followed in the 1970s, the reunification of migrant families in the 1980s and 1990s gave rise to growing Turkish and Moroccan communities. In contrast to European migrant groups, a substantial share of second-generation Moroccan and Turkish migrants continue to marry partners from their parents' country of origin (Corijn & Lodewijckx, 2009). Post-colonial migration has additionally given rise to a substantial Congolese minority group. Finally, Belgium has increasingly received refugees from outside of Europe since the late 1990s, further elevating its degree of ethnic diversity (Centrum voor gelijkheid van kansen en racismebestrijding, 2013).

### 5.3. Theoretical background

Literature shows that leave uptake typically relates to factors at the individual, household, employer and institutional level. First and foremost, uptake is only possible by parents eligible for parental leave. The eligibility criteria in Belgium imply that a relatively stable labour market position is a prerequisite to take up parental leave. Research shows that migrant women are less attached to the

labour force than native women (Kil, Neels, et al., 2015; Kil, Wood, et al., 2015). The difficult access to stable employment for migrant women has been linked to strategies of becoming a parent as an alternative to developing a career (Friedman et al., 1994; McDonald, 2000a; Jonas Wood & Neels, 2016), which in turn reduces the probability of meeting the eligibility criteria to parental leave.

Second, parental leave is not automatically granted to eligible parents in Belgium, so knowledge of parental leave arrangements is also a precondition for parental leave use. Women of migrant origin – particularly shortly after arrival in Belgium – may face language problems and social barriers leading to a lack of institutional knowledge of parental leave regulations (Merens et al., 2006). Qualitative research regarding the labour force participation of Moroccan and Turkish origin women in Flanders confirms the lack of knowledge on parental leave legislation among these women (Van Hal, 2016). In similar vein, a qualitative study by Wall and Jose (2004) points to a lack of knowledge on formal child care services among migrant families in Europe.

Third, as the parental leave benefit in Belgium is limited, affordability is an important factor in the decision to take up leave. Research on Sweden has shown a positive association between the mother's as well as the father's earnings and father's parental leave uptake (M. Bygren & A. Z. Duvander, 2006; T. Lappegård, 2008). Since migrant workers and their partners are overrepresented in low-income groups (Corluy, 2014), limited affordability may hamper migrants' parental leave use.

Fourth, with respect to work environment, parents enjoying stronger job protection (e.g. permanent contracts, higher seniority and jobs in the public sector) and parents working in companies where procedures of leave uptake are institutionalized and socially accepted are more likely to take up leave (Anxo et al., 2007a; M. Bygren & A. Z. Duvander, 2006; Geisler & Kreyenfeld, 2011; Lapuerta et al., 2011). Migrant women, however, are generally overrepresented in temporary, unstable and low skilled jobs (Rubin et al., 2008) which possibly hampers their use of parental leave.

Fifth, the opportunity costs of taking parental leave in terms of foregone career opportunities are larger for parents with high human capital. For example, parental leave use may signal lower work commitment to the employer, which potentially has consequences for parents in otherwise rewarding career tracks (Evertsson & Breen, 2008; Evertsson & Duvander, 2011). As migrants are generally overrepresented in low human capital groups (Corluy, 2014) and consequently face lower opportunity costs when taking up leave, migrants may thus be more likely to take leave. In contrast, Swedish and Spanish research

indicates that education is positively associated with parental leave uptake (M. Bygren & A. Z. Duvander, 2006; Lapuerta et al., 2011), suggesting that other factors associated with education (higher income, job stability and job protection) outweigh higher opportunity costs of leave uptake.

Sixth, individual preferences (Hakim, 2000) as well as social norms regarding childrearing matter for the decision to take up parental leave (Pfau-Effinger, 1998). Mother's leave length is found to be positively associated with a stronger orientation toward family in Sweden (A. Z. Duvander, 2014) and Germany (Rahim, 2014). As particularly Turkish and some of the Moroccan migrant families in Belgium come from rural regions where roles of men and women are strongly divided in the private and the public sphere, they generally foster more traditional views on the division of care and domestic work (Bernhardt et al., 2007; F. Goldscheider et al., 2011; Huschek et al., 2011b; Merens et al., 2006). This may stimulate parental leave uptake among women of non-European migrant origin.

Finally, kin networks that take up a part of the caring responsibilities can be crucial for an efficient combination of a job and children. Women who recently immigrated usually lack extended networks in the destination country (Raijman & Semyonov, 1997; Wall & Jose, 2004). Consequently they have less family and kin to rely on (Raijman & Semyonov, 1997) and may be more likely to rely on parental leave.

Considering the factors that influence parental leave uptake in majority populations, it is largely unknown to what extent these mechanisms also apply to parental leave uptake in migrant populations. Only a limited number of studies have addressed migrants' parental leave uptake, generally finding that uptake is lower compared to natives.

Previous research on parental leave use among migrants has mainly focused on Sweden where all mothers are entitled to parental leave, independent of previous labour force participation (Mussino & Duvander, 2016; Vikman, 2013). For example, research by Mussino and Duvander (2016) shows that migrant mothers in Sweden more frequently use leave immediately following childbirth, whereas Swedish-born mothers exploit the flexibility of the parental leave system to a larger extent. In migrant populations continuous leave uptake in the first year following childbirth is related to a higher prevalence of inactivity and unemployment before parenthood. The Swedish context differs considerably, however, from the situation in many other European countries where eligibility is tied to labour force attachment. Research by Merens et al. (2006) on the Netherlands indicates that Moroccan, Turkish and Antillean working women

exhibit lower leave uptake, which is partially related to a lack of knowledge of regulations. Similarly, Lapuerta et al. (2011) find that parents of foreign nationality in Spain are less likely to take up parental leave than Spanish natives. Indicators of employment position (working regime, contract type, income position, seniority) and work environment (sector, firm size) explain the disproportional non-uptake of leave among these women (Lapuerta et al., 2011). Hence, both in countries where parental leave eligibility is universal and countries where entitlements are tied to labour force attachment, differential parental leave strategies among migrants are related to precarious employment trajectories. With former studies concentrating on the Swedish context (Mussino & Duvander, 2016), focusing on descriptive findings (Merens et al., 2006) or restricting migrants to women holding a foreign nationality (Lapuerta et al., 2011), our study is the first to analyse determinants of parental leave use for different migrant groups and generations in Belgium, a country where eligibility is conditional on labour force attachment.

## **5.4. Data & Methods**

### **5.4.1. Data**

We use data from the Belgian Administrative Socio-Demographic panel (ASD Panel) that draws longitudinal microdata from the National Register and the Crossroads Bank for Social Security. The ASD Panel is representative of the female population aged 15 to 50 years legally residing in Belgium between 1 January 1999 and 31 December 2010. To maintain the cross-sectional representativeness of the panel throughout the observation period, annual top-up samples of 15 year olds were drawn to guarantee the presence of the youngest age-group in the sample. Similarly, supplementary annual samples were drawn of women aged 16 to 50 years who had settled in Belgium in the preceding year. Apart from the sampled women, the ASD Panel also includes all individuals officially being part of the household of sampled women on 31 December in each year. The panel provides detailed annual information on the household composition of sampled women, as well as detailed information on labour market positions, earnings and social security benefits of sampled women and their household members on a quarterly basis. All samples of the ASD Panel are disproportionately stratified by nationality, using sampling fractions of 1/40 for Belgian women and 1/20 for foreign women respectively. In addition, the Crossroads Bank for Social Security provides data on country of birth of both women and their parents, allowing us to identify women of the second generation. Given the extensive information on household composition and labour market

position and the oversampling of migrant populations, these data are well-suited for the analysis of leave uptake among migrant groups in Belgium.

The analyses document leave strategies across origin groups for 10,976 women that entered parenthood between the first quarter of 2004 and the fourth quarter of 2010. We observe these women until the end of the observation window in 2010 or until death or emigration. As we aim to link the socio-economic position before parenthood to parental leave uptake after childbearing, we only select mothers that are observed one year before their first child is born (N: 11,043). Removing women with missing values for origin group, results in a sample of 10,976 women for the descriptive analysis. For the multivariate analysis, only mothers eligible for parental leave<sup>9</sup> and employed one year before the first birth are taken into account (N: 6501).

Although this paper focusses on parental leave uptake, the information available in the ASD Panel does not allow to distinguish between parental leave and other leave types embedded in the Belgian ‘Time Credit’ system. Therefore the uptake of leave refers to all types of Belgian ‘Time Credit’ leave schemes<sup>10</sup>. However, previous research (Desmet & Glorieux, 2007) shows that spending more time with their children is the main motivation for Belgian women to take up leave. As our analyses focus on leave uptake among new mothers, we assume that most leave is used to take care of infants and young children.

#### 5.4.2. Analysis

Nesting mothers in pre-birth employers, three types of analysis are executed. First, mixed effects logit models of leave use (table 5.3) are estimated to assess migrant-native differentials in leave uptake. The indicator on leave uptake reflects whether a mother has ever used parental leave in the observation period following the birth of the first child. Second, mixed effects logit models are estimated distinguishing full-time from part-time leave use (table 5.4) to shed light on the way parental leave is used by mothers in different origin groups. Given that only a limited number of mothers combine part-time and full-time spells of uptake<sup>11</sup>, we estimate the odds of full-time leave use (100%) versus part-time uptake (50 or

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<sup>9</sup> A parent is eligible for parental leave when (s)he has been working with the same employer for 12 out of the 15 months prior to the application. This condition does not apply to civil servants. As civil servants are not perfectly identifiable in our data, we apply the eligibility criterion of 12 months to all women, regardless their sector of employment.

<sup>10</sup> Parental leave schemes are embedded in a broader leave system called Time Credit. Within the Time Credit system, three more specific leave legislations exist: (i) leave in order to provide palliative care, (ii) leave to care for seriously ill relatives and (iii) parental leave schedules.

<sup>11</sup> The number of women combining full-time and part-time leave is limited to 17%, whereas 34% exclusively used full-time leave and 50% exclusively relied on part-time leave..

20%). In this model we study the probability of taking full-time leave at least one moment in the observation period versus the probability of exclusively taking part-time leave. Finally, mixed effects logit models of the employment status immediately following leave use (table 5.6) are estimated to assess the migrant-native differentials in labour force participation following leave uptake. Two separate models are estimated (i) comparing the probability of being unemployed or inactive to the probability of being employed (whether part-time or full-time) and (ii) comparing the probability of being employed part-time (less than 100%) to the probability of being employed full-time. While mothers constitute the units of observation for the analyses of leave uptake and full-time leave uptake, the analysis of maternal employment considers the labour market position in the quarter immediately following each spell of leave use. As the birth of additional children results in additional parental leave entitlements and parents have the possibility to split up leave in different periods, 25% of the sampled mothers are in multiple leave spells.

The main independent variable of interest in this study is origin group. We distinguish nine groups: i) mothers originating from Belgium (N: 6433), ii) first-generation migrants originating from neighbouring countries (Germany, France, the Netherlands and Luxemburg, N: 475), iii) second-generation migrants originating from neighbouring countries (N: 337), iv) first-generation migrants originating from other European countries (N: 508), v) second-generation migrants originating from other European countries (N: 443), vi) first-generation migrants originating from Turkey or Morocco (N: 853), vii) second-generation migrants originating from Turkey or Morocco (N: 472), viii) first-generation migrants originating from other non-European countries (N: 1197) and ix) second-generation migrants originating from other non-European countries (N: 258). A woman is identified as a migrant when she (first generation) or one of her parents (second generation) was not born in Belgium. When both parents were born in different countries, the most distant country is considered as the country of origin. Although the administrative panel distinguishes seven different origin regions: (1) neighbouring countries, (2) Southern Europe, (3) Northern Europe, (4) Eastern Europe, (5) Turkey, (6) Morocco and (7) Other non-European countries, we chose to pool migrants originating from Southern, Northern and Eastern European countries in a single category due to small sample sizes for migrants from Northern-Europe and first-generation migrants from Eastern Europe. Similarly, we pool mothers originating from Turkey and Morocco in a single category.

In order to assess the degree to which migrant-native differentials in parental leave strategies can be accounted for by employment characteristics, this study

relies on four nested models. The first model (model *a*) considers, in addition to origin group, the number of children at the end of the observation period, assuming that the need for leave is stronger, the more children one has. Second, both a linear and a quadratic term for age at first birth are included, as previous research on female labour market participation after childbearing shows a positive effect of age at first birth that turns negative after the age of 30 (Kil, Neels, et al., 2015; Kil, Wood, et al., 2015). Third, to control for variability in terms of observation length, we include duration of the observation period (in quarters). Fourth, we control for the year and quarter of first childbirth. As women that enter parenthood in the last quarters of the observation period exhibit particularly low leave uptake, dummy terms for the fourth quarter of 2009 until the fourth quarter of 2010 are included. To control for the gradual increase in parental leave use in tandem with the increasing flexibility of the parental leave system, a linear term of quarter of childbirth is included. As the economic context and parental leave legislation differ slightly between Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels<sup>12</sup>, the analyses also control for region of residence. Furthermore we take into account several household characteristics: household position before parenthood (distinguishing cohabitation with a partner, living in the parental home, single or other), being partnered following the transition of parenthood (for at least one quarter) and having a partner that also takes up parental leave.

To assess the extent to which varying patterns of leave use can be explained by socio-economic positions at earlier stages in the life course, we subsequently control for employment characteristics of women one year before the birth of their first child. In models *b-d* we additionally control for mothers' pre-birth employment regime, amount of jobs (model *b*), salary (model *c*) and sector of employment (model *d*). Employment regime distinguishes five categories, based on the percentage of working hours of a standard full-time job in the sector of employment: i) unknown position, ii) marginal employment (less than 46%), iii) part-time employment (between 46 and 80%), iv) near full-time employment (between 81 and 99%), and v) full-time employment (100% or more). With respect to income, we include salary measured in quintiles for the employment regime considered. As a result, this operationalization of salary does not represent the absolute income, but rather the relative income position compared to others working in the same employment regime. The variable sector is categorized in ten groups: (1) agriculture and industry, (2) wholesale and retail, (3) logistics and energy distribution, (4) education, (5) public administration and extraterritorial

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<sup>12</sup> Belgium is a federal state with six different governments. Parental leave is a federal responsibility and thus applicable to the entire Belgian population. The Flemish community government provides an additional benefit for people living in Flanders (Merla & Deven, 2010).

organisations, (6) health services and social care, (7) recreation and other services, (8) finance and estate, (9) administration, support services and IT, and (10) hotel and catering.

For maternal employment following leave uptake (table 5.5), models *b* and *c* additionally control for the cumulative number of quarters spent in full-time leave use and the cumulative number of quarters spent in part-time leave use, as previous research indicates that longer periods of leave hamper the return to work (Fagnani, 1999; Lalive & Zweimuller, 2009). In addition, instead of the number of children at the end of the observation period, the number of children in the quarter of the observation is taken into account.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide an overview of the distribution of the covariates and sample sizes.

**Table 5.1:** Summary statistics

	<i>Origin group</i>									
	BE	NB G1	NB G2	EU G1	EU G2	TM G1	TM G2	nEU G1	nEU G2	Total
<b>Labour market position before first birth</b>										
inactive	10.87	43.36	19.25	46.17	12.87	68.93	20.34	59.38	20.25	24.71
unemployed	5.60	5.31	8.91	3.93	9.71	9.23	27.67	5.10	8.26	7.02
unknown	1.76	2.65	2.01	1.77	1.58	1.52	4.40	2.38	1.65	1.96
marginal	1.68	1.33	2.01	1.77	1.58	2.22	2.31	2.88	2.07	1.89
part-time	11.07	7.74	10.06	9.43	14.00	5.37	9.43	6.41	9.09	9.87
near full-time	4.24	1.11	5.17	3.73	4.29	1.99	2.94	1.40	1.65	3.52
full-time	58.90	32.96	46.55	28.49	52.82	9.58	31.45	19.24	50.41	46.16
self-employed	5.55	5.31	6.03	4.72	2.93	1.17	0.84	3.21	6.20	4.62
partly self-employed	0.34	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.00	0.63	0.00	0.41	0.26
<i>total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Parity at the end of the observation</b>										
one child	58.06	67.70	62.64	72.69	65.24	54.32	55.77	65.87	52.89	59.93
two children	36.76	28.32	31.03	24.17	32.51	36.21	37.53	28.37	42.15	34.66
three or more children	5.18	3.98	6.32	3.14	2.26	9.46	6.71	5.76	4.96	5.41
<i>total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Region</b>										
Flanders	63.89	42.48	39.94	33.99	20.32	35.75	43.82	46.55	35.95	53.50
Wallonia	31.59	29.42	49.14	15.72	65.46	21.61	16.56	22.86	34.30	30.35
Brussels	4.52	28.10	10.92	50.29	14.22	42.64	39.62	30.59	29.75	16.15
<i>total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Household position before first birth</b>										
parental home	12.75	6.42	16.38	5.11	13.32	4.32	12.58	7.48	17.36	11.12
single	9.30	17.26	15.80	17.49	12.19	10.51	10.06	18.01	13.64	11.52
cohabiting with partner	74.74	70.58	64.08	72.10	71.33	71.85	71.70	65.71	66.12	72.42
other	3.22	5.75	3.74	5.30	3.16	13.32	5.66	8.80	2.89	4.94
<i>total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Mean age at first birth</b>										
<i>(in years)</i>	28.05	29.27	27.66	30.54	28.83	27.02	25.33	28.47	27.47	28.07
<b>Mean duration of observation</b>										
<i>(in quarters)</i>	14.31	12.37	14.77	11.83	14.96	14.17	14.25	12.52	15.22	13.96
<b>Mean birth quarter of first child</b>										
	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007
	q2	q4	q2	q4	q1	q2	q2	q4	q1	q2
<b>Partner that uses leave</b>										
<i>(in percent)</i>	18.59	17.26	22.13	18.86	19.41	11.68	15.51	21.38	18.18	18.32
<b>N total</b>	6433	452	348	509	443	856	477	1,216	242	10,976

*Note:* The sample is restricted to mothers legally residing in Belgium who had their first child between 2004 – 2010. BE = Belgium; NB = neighbouring countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Luxemburg); EU = other European countries; TM = Turkey and Morocco; nEU = other non-European countries; G1 = first generation; G2 = second generation

*Source:* Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999-2010, calculations by authors

**Table 5.2:** Summary statistics

	<i>Origin group</i>									
	BE	NB G1	NB G2	EU G1	EU G2	TM G1	TM G2	nEU G1	nEU G2	Total
<b>Salary before first birth</b>										
quintile 1	18.52	19.55	25.00	21.89	25.66	42.96	30.30	28.78	20.13	20.64
quintile 2	19.06	17.88	22.64	27.36	23.68	24.44	25.25	21.51	20.13	20.07
quintile 3	19.79	10.61	17.92	17.41	20.39	14.07	25.76	16.57	24.83	19.44
quintile 4	21.59	21.79	15.09	9.95	17.43	14.07	10.10	15.70	19.46	19.97
quintile 5	21.03	30.17	19.34	23.38	12.83	4.44	8.59	17.44	15.44	19.87
<i>total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Sector before first birth</b>										
agriculture, industry	9.37	10.61	6.60	6.97	8.22	3.70	7.07	5.81	5.37	8.72
wholesale, retail	14.33	18.44	15.57	13.43	21.05	7.41	17.68	13.08	16.11	14.71
logistics, storage, distribution	4.29	5.59	4.25	1.99	5.26	4.44	3.03	3.20	4.03	4.20
education	15.69	6.70	11.79	3.98	7.89	5.93	5.56	5.81	10.74	13.44
public administration, extraterritorial org.	12.28	2.79	12.26	5.97	12.50	8.89	13.13	7.56	8.72	11.46
health services, social care	21.85	16.76	21.23	13.93	16.12	17.04	19.70	20.93	25.50	21.04
art, recreation, other services	2.91	6.70	8.49	7.46	6.58	2.96	4.04	6.40	8.05	3.85
finances, estate	4.98	2.79	3.77	5.97	3.95	0.74	3.03	4.94	4.03	4.69
administration, support services, technical activities and IT	11.74	22.91	11.79	31.84	15.13	40.00	23.74	19.77	14.77	14.27
hotel, catering	2.55	6.70	4.25	8.46	3.29	8.89	3.03	12.50	2.68	3.61
<i>total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Women with more than 1 job (in %)</b>	3.58	2.23	2.83	2.99	2.30	3.70	4.55	2.03	1.34	3.34
<b>N total</b>	4779	179	212	201	304	135	198	344	149	6501

*Note:* The sample is restricted to mothers legally residing in Belgium who had their first child between 2004 – 2010, who were employed one year before the transition to parenthood and who were eligible for parental leave, Belgium. BE = Belgium; NB = neighbouring countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Luxemburg); EU = other European countries; TM = Turkey and Morocco; nEU = other non-European countries; G1 = first generation; G2 = second generation

*Source:* Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999-2010, calculations by authors

## 5.5. Results

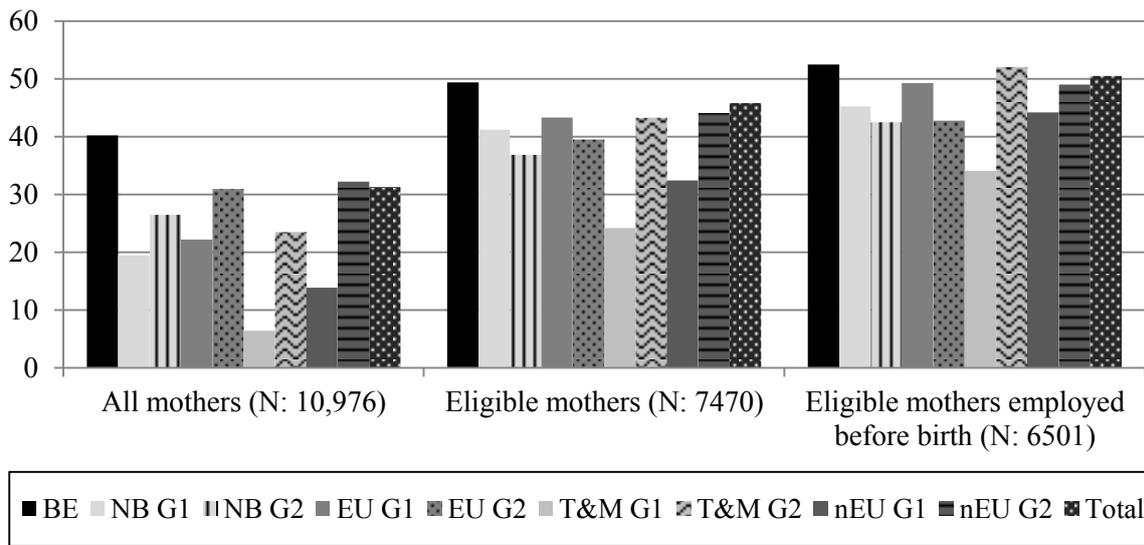
### 5.5.1. Parental leave uptake by origin

Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of mothers by origin group that used parental leave. In line with our expectations and consistent with results for the Netherlands and Spain (Lapuerta et al., 2011; Merens et al., 2006), we find large migrant-native differences in parental leave uptake (left-hand panel of Figure 5.1, N: 10,976). Whereas 40% of native mothers used parental leave following the transition to parenthood, this proportion is limited to 19%, 22%, 6% and 13% among first-generation migrants originating from neighbouring countries, other European countries, Turkey or Morocco and other non-European countries respectively. Although the proportion of mothers taking up leave is considerably higher among second-generation migrants – 26%, 31%, 23% and 32% among mothers originating from neighbouring countries, other European countries, Turkey or Morocco and other non-European countries respectively – uptake levels do not approximate the degree of leave use among native women.

As migrant groups are overrepresented in precarious labour market positions before the start of family formation, the differential uptake of parental leave following parenthood may partially reflect differential eligibility. When only considering mothers who at some point in the observation period were eligible for parental leave (middle panel of Figure 5.1, N: 7470), differences get considerably smaller. Among eligible native mothers, 49% use parental leave, compared to 41%, 43% and 32% among eligible first-generation women originating from neighbouring countries, other European countries and other non-European countries, and 37%, 39%, 43% and 44% among eligible second-generation women originating from neighbouring countries, other European countries, Turkey or Morocco and other non-European countries respectively. First-generation women of Turkish origin, however, continue to show a considerably lower uptake rate of 24%.

Given that parental leave use is extremely low among women who were inactive or unemployed before the transition to parenthood, we additionally selected women who were employed one year before first childbirth (right-hand panel of Figure 5.1, N: 6501). Controlling for pre-birth labour market position and eligibility, migrant-native differences in parental leave use are largely explained. Differences in uptake rates between women of Belgian origin (52%) and first- and second-generation women originating from neighbouring countries (45% and 42%), other European countries (49% and 43%), and other non-European countries (44% and 49%) and second-generation women of Turkish and Moroccan origin (51%) are now very small. The uptake rates of first-generation women of Turkish and Moroccan origin, however, continue to be relatively low (34%).

**Figure 5.1:** Migrant–native differences in parental leave uptake (in %)



*Note:* The sample is restricted to mothers legally residing in Belgium who had their first child between 2004–2010. BE = Belgium; NB = neighbouring countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Luxemburg); EU = other European countries; T&M = Turkey or Morocco; nEU = other non-European countries; G1 = first generation; G2 = second generation

*Source:* Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999–2010, calculations by authors

Focusing further on the 6501 mothers who were eligible for parental leave and employed before the birth of their first child, models 1a-1d (table 5.3) show how the remaining differences in leave uptake change when additionally controlling for pre-birth job characteristics. In line with the descriptive results, first-generation migrants of Turkish and Moroccan origin show significantly lower uptake with odds being 55% lower compared to native women (model 1a). The other covariates show a positive effect of parity, a reversed u-shaped effect of age at first birth, higher leave uptake in Flanders, a positive effect of cohabitation with a partner, and a positive association with the leave use of the partner.

Models 1b to 1d additionally control for pre-birth employment regime, number of jobs, salary and sector of employment. These models show that the differences between first-generation migrants of Turkish and Moroccan origin and native groups decrease but remain significant (OR=0.601\*, model 1d). However, sensitivity analyses show that this is mainly explained by the relatively high unemployment risk of this group<sup>13</sup>. Variation in leave uptake situated at the employer level (rho) decreases from 14% to 9% when incorporating these socio-economic differences, which mainly results from taking the employment sector into account. Model 1d shows moderate positive effects for first-generation

<sup>13</sup> When repeating this analysis for mothers that were eligible for parental leave during at least 85% of the observation period (N: 4 518), we observe an odds-ratio of 0.70 for first-generation mothers of Turkish and Moroccan origin that is no longer significant.

migrants originating from other European countries and second-generation migrants of Turkish and Moroccan origin compared to native women, although the differences are not statistically significant. The inclusion of pre-birth employment characteristics in the model shows that labour force attachment and income are positively associated with leave uptake. The differential socio-economic position before the transition to parenthood thus largely explains migrant-native differences in leave uptake.

**Table 5.3:** Explaining migrant-native differences in parental leave uptake (in odds-ratios)

	leave uptake (1) – no leave uptake (0)							
	<i>Model 1a</i>		<i>Model 1b</i>		<i>Model 1c</i>		<i>Model 1d</i>	
	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>
<i>Individual-level covariates</i>								
<b>Origin group (ref. Belgium)</b>								
<i>Neighbouring countries, gen1</i>	0.841		0.857		0.893		0.924	
<i>Neighbouring countries, gen2</i>	0.761		0.771		0.795		0.810	
<i>Other European countries, gen1</i>	1.100		1.221		1.263		1.325	
<i>Other European countries, gen2</i>	0.878		0.884		0.906		0.925	
<i>Turkey or Morocco, gen1</i>	0.449	***	0.532	**	0.585	*	0.601	*
<i>Turkey or Morocco, gen2</i>	1.159		1.226		1.239		1.248	
<i>Other non-European countries, gen1</i>	0.787		0.883		0.936		0.990	
<i>Other non-European countries, gen2</i>	1.045		1.027		1.009		1.011	
<b>Parity at end of observation (ref. 1 child)</b>								
<i>2 children</i>	2.073	***	2.021	***	2.008	***	1.998	***
<i>3 or more children</i>	3.411	***	3.507	***	3.565	***	3.553	***
<b>Age at first birth</b>								
<i>age at first birth linear</i>	1.474	***	1.347	***	1.242	**	1.228	**
<i>age at first birth square</i>	0.994	***	0.996	***	0.997	*	0.997	*
<b>Region (ref. Flanders)</b>								
<i>Wallonia</i>	0.531	***	0.546	***	0.548	***	0.553	***
<i>Brussels</i>	0.657	***	0.640	***	0.642	***	0.655	***
<b>Quarter of birth of first child</b>								
<i>quarter linear</i>	1.043		1.042		1.041		1.037	
<i>2009Q<sub>4</sub></i>	1.009		0.973		0.947		0.927	
<i>2010Q<sub>1</sub></i>	0.794		0.781		0.767		0.740	
<i>2010Q<sub>2</sub></i>	0.650	**	0.648	**	0.648	**	0.639	**
<i>2010Q<sub>3</sub></i>	0.314	***	0.304	***	0.314	***	0.315	***
<i>2010Q<sub>4</sub></i>	0.021	***	0.021	***	0.021	***	0.021	***

*Note:* The odds-ratio's result from mixed-effects logit models where persons are nested in employers. The sample is restricted to mothers legally residing in Belgium who had their first child between 2004–2010, who were employed one year before the transition to parenthood and who were eligible for parental leave.

*Significance levels:* \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

*Source:* Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999-2010, calculations by authors

**Table 5.3:** Explaining migrant-native differences in parental leave uptake (in odds-ratios), continued.

	leave uptake (1) – no leave uptake (0)							
	<i>Model 1a</i>		<i>Model 1b</i>		<i>Model 1c</i>		<i>Model 1d</i>	
	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>
<i>Individual-level covariates</i>								
<b>Duration of observation</b>								
<i>duration linear</i>	1.056		1.055		1.056		1.050	
<b>Household position before first birth</b> ( <i>ref. cohabiting with partner</i> )								
<i>not cohabiting (parental home)</i>	0.618	***	0.627	***	0.642	***	0.642	***
<i>not cohabiting (single)</i>	0.720	**	0.723	**	0.746	*	0.753	*
<i>not cohabiting (other)</i>	0.789		0.811		0.814		0.811	
<b>Having a partner</b>								
<i>partnered</i>	1.855	***	1.810	***	1.777	***	1.751	***
<b>Leave use by partner</b>								
<i>leave use</i>	2.067	***	1.969	***	1.941	***	1.893	***
<b>Employment regime before first birth</b> ( <i>ref. full-time</i> )								
<i>unknown</i>			0.365	***	0.340	***	0.357	***
<i>marginal</i>			0.327	***	0.320	***	0.356	***
<i>part-time</i>			0.540	***	0.527	***	0.550	***
<i>near full-time</i>			0.633	**	0.620	***	0.633	**
<b>Number of jobs before first birth</b> ( <i>ref. 1 job</i> )								
<i>multiple jobs</i>			0.512	***	0.510	***	0.565	**
<b>Salary before first birth</b> ( <i>ref. first quintile</i> )								
<i>second quintile</i>					1.491	***	1.438	***
<i>third quintile</i>					1.931	***	1.794	***
<i>fourth quintile</i>					1.605	***	1.470	***
<i>fifth quintile</i>					1.327	**	1.231	*
<b>Employment sector before first birth</b> ( <i>ref. health services and social care</i> )								
<i>agriculture, industry</i>							0.788	
<i>wholesale, retail</i>							0.728	**
<i>logistics, storage, distribution</i>							1.150	
<i>education</i>							0.412	***
<i>public administration, extraterritorial organisations</i>							0.667	**
<i>art, recreation, other services</i>							0.653	*
<i>finances, estate</i>							1.107	
<i>administration, support services, academia, it</i>							0.770	*
<i>hotel, catering</i>							0.458	***
<i>Random parameters</i>								
<b>Rho(employer)</b>	0.135	***	0.120	***	0.119	***	0.087	***
<i>Model parameters</i>								
<b>-2LL</b>	7936.166		7819.849		7767.144		7718.477	
<b>N Persons</b>	6501		6501		6501		6501	
<b>N Employers</b>	3643		3643		3643		3643	

Note: The odds-ratio's result from mixed-effects logit models where persons are nested in employers. The sample is restricted to mothers legally residing in Belgium who had their first child between 2004–2010, who were employed one year before the transition to parenthood and who were eligible for parental leave.

Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Source: Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999–2010, calculations by authors

### 5.5.2. Full-time versus part-time leave uptake by origin

For the 3281 women who used parental leave (out of the 6501 eligible mothers who were employed before the birth of their first child) we assess whether full-time or part-time leave was taken. Since in Belgium, part-time leave is not available for people who worked part-time, we only select women who worked full-time the quarter before taking parental leave (2580 women).

Results show that first-generation migrants are much more likely to use full-time leave, particularly non-European migrants (table 5.4). Compared to native women, the odds of full-time leave uptake are 119%, 230%, 203% and 216% higher among first-generation women originating from neighbouring countries, other European countries, Turkey or Morocco and other non-European countries respectively. Second-generation migrants resemble native women more closely, the odds-ratios of full-time versus part-time leave uptake being 0.982, 1.164 and 0.960 for women originating from neighbouring countries, other European countries and other non-European countries respectively. Differences between these second-generation migrant groups and natives are not substantial nor significant. For second-generation women of Turkish and Moroccan origin, however, we do observe significantly larger odds-ratios of full-time leave uptake (OR=2.344\*\*\*, model 2a).

Models 2b to 2d control for women's employment characteristics before the birth of their first child. Although the differentials between migrant women and natives are somewhat attenuated, they do not change considerably when additionally controlling for pre-birth employment regime and number of jobs held (model 2b), salary (model 2c) and sector of employment (model 2d). The results indicate that a higher income position is associated with lower odds of full-time versus part-time leave uptake. Variation at the employer level diminishes from 13% to 9% when taking into account pre-birth employment characteristics. Hence, differences in socio-economic position before childbearing explain only a small part of migrant-native differences in the uptake of full-time versus part-time leave.

**Table 5.4:** Explaining migrant-native differences in full-time parental leave uptake (in odds-ratios)

	full-time leave uptake (1) - part-time leave uptake (0)							
	Model 2a		Model 2b		Model 2c		Model 2d	
	OR	sig.	OR	sig.	OR	sig.	OR	sig.
<i>Individual-level covariates</i>								
<b>Origin group (ref. Belgium)</b>								
<i>Neighbouring countries, gen1</i>	2.194	**	2.228	**	2.229	**	2.279	**
<i>Neighbouring countries, gen2</i>	0.982		0.970		0.945		0.939	
<i>Other European countries, gen1</i>	3.304	***	3.294	***	3.094	***	3.167	***
<i>Other European countries, gen2</i>	1.164		1.173		1.119		1.160	
<i>Turkey or Morocco, gen1</i>	3.025	*	3.099	*	2.753	*	2.450	*
<i>Turkey or Morocco, gen2</i>	2.344	**	2.449	**	2.286	**	2.312	**
<i>Other non-European countries, gen1</i>	3.161	***	3.159	***	3.120	***	2.976	***
<i>Other non-European countries, gen2</i>	0.960		0.955		0.960		0.969	
<b>Parity at end of observation (ref. 1 child)</b>								
<i>2 children</i>	1.144		1.141		1.199		1.187	
<i>3 or more children</i>	2.764	***	2.761	***	2.904	***	2.841	***
<b>Age at first birth</b>								
<i>age at birth linear</i>	0.602	***	0.601	***	0.688	**	0.687	**
<i>age at birth square</i>	1.008	***	1.008	***	1.006	**	1.006	**
<b>Region (ref. Flanders)</b>								
<i>Wallonia</i>	0.495	***	0.491	***	0.475	***	0.476	***
<i>Brussels</i>	0.714		0.710		0.704		0.697	*
<b>Quarter of birth of first child</b>								
<i>quarter linear</i>	0.998		1.014		1.022		1.007	
<i>2009Q<sub>4</sub></i>	0.857		0.869		0.913		0.908	
<i>2010Q<sub>1</sub></i>	1.534		1.562		1.648		1.669	
<i>2010Q<sub>2</sub></i>	1.112		1.102		1.161		1.154	
<i>2010Q<sub>3</sub></i>	2.365		2.378	*	2.242	*	2.269	*
<i>2010Q<sub>4</sub></i>	1.000		1.000		1.000		1.000	
<b>Duration of observation</b>								
<i>duration linear</i>	1.003		1.019		1.021		1.007	
<b>Household position before first birth (ref. cohabiting with partner)</b>								
<i>not cohabiting (parental home)</i>	1.104		1.100		1.082		1.103	
<i>not cohabiting (single)</i>	1.352		1.371		1.293		1.272	
<i>not cohabiting (other)</i>	0.821		0.807		0.808		0.833	
<b>Having a partner</b>								
<i>partnered</i>	0.925		0.922		0.950		0.952	
<b>Leave use by partner</b>								
<i>leave use</i>	0.702		0.710		0.752		0.776	
<b>Employment regime before first birth (ref. full-time)</b>								
<i>unknown</i>			0.492		0.578		0.714	
<i>marginal</i>			1.082		1.084		0.978	
<i>part-time</i>			1.980	**	2.222	**	2.091	**
<i>near full-time</i>			0.898		0.852		0.833	

Note: The odds-ratio's result from mixed-effects logit models where persons are nested in employers. The sample is restricted to mothers legally residing in Belgium who had their first child between 2004–2010, who were employed one year before the transition to parenthood, who subsequently used parental leave and who were full-time employed the quarter before leave use.

Significance levels: \* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01; \*\*\* p < 0.001

Source: Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999–2010, calculations by authors

**Table 5.4:** Explaining migrant-native differences in full-time parental leave uptake (in odds-ratios), continued

	full-time leave uptake (1) - part-time leave uptake (0)							
	<i>Model 2a</i>		<i>Model 2b</i>		<i>Model 2c</i>		<i>Model 2d</i>	
	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>
<i>Individual-level covariates</i>								
<b>Number of jobs before first birth</b> ( <i>ref. 1 job</i> )								
<i>multiple jobs</i>			0.639		0.704		0.655	
<b>Salary before first birth</b> ( <i>ref. first quintile</i> )								
<i>second quintile</i>					0.828		0.849	
<i>third quintile</i>					0.558	***	0.590	**
<i>fourth quintile</i>					0.464	***	0.491	***
<i>fifth quintile</i>					0.586	**	0.634	**
<b>Employment sector before first birth</b> ( <i>ref. health services and social care</i> )								
<i>agriculture, industry</i>							1.038	
<i>wholesale, retail</i>							1.049	
<i>logistics, storage, distribution</i>							0.741	
<i>education</i>							1.868	*
<i>public administration, extraterritorial organisations</i>							1.083	
<i>art, recreation, other services</i>							0.734	
<i>finances, estate</i>							0.972	
<i>administration, support services, academia, it</i>							0.750	
<i>hotel, catering</i>							2.282	*
<i>Random parameters</i>								
<b>Rho(employer)</b>	0.133	***	0.126	***	0.120	***	0.089	***
<i>Model parameters</i>								
<b>-2LL</b>	3304.908		3293.017		3262.853		3243.929	
<b>N Persons</b>	2580		2580		2580		2580	
<b>N Employers</b>	1625		1625		1625		1625	

*Note:* The odds-ratio's result from mixed-effects logit models where persons are nested in employers. The sample is restricted to mothers legally residing in Belgium who had their first child between 2004–2010, who were employed one year before the transition to parenthood and who were eligible for parental leave.

*Significance levels:* \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

*Source:* Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999-2010, calculations by authors

### 5.5.3. Labour market position after leave use by origin

Finally, we assess the labour market position one quarter after leave use for 2640 mothers who used parental leave. Taking into account all leave spells for which activity status in the subsequent quarter is known results in 3319 observations on the labour market position following leave use<sup>14</sup>. In general, the majority of mothers who have used leave return to employment. However, migrants are more likely to be unemployed or inactive in the quarter immediately following leave use. Whereas 4% of the native mothers are out of employment in the quarter following leave uptake, this proportion amounts to 11%, 8%, 7% and 18% among first-generation women originating from neighbouring countries, other European countries, Turkey or Morocco and other non-European countries respectively, and 4%, 7%, 7% and 6% for second-generation mothers originating from neighbouring

<sup>14</sup> The number of leave spells during the observation period ranges from one to four. For 75% of mothers, only one leave spell is observed.

countries, other European countries, Turkey or Morocco and other non-European countries respectively.

When controlling for household characteristics, length of leave uptake and pre-birth employment characteristics, only differences between first-generation mothers originating from neighbouring countries and other non-European countries and native mothers with the same profile remain significant (table 5.5, model 3c). Compared to natives, the odds of being unemployed or inactive are 156% and 278% higher for first-generation women originating from neighbouring countries and other non-European countries respectively. Particularly women born outside of Europe thus face a disproportionately large risk of being out of work after leave uptake.

Self-evidently, the working regime before childbirth is an important predictor of the labour market position after leave uptake. As expected, women working part-time before childbearing have larger odds of continuing part-time work after leave uptake. Furthermore, a higher income before childbearing is negatively associated with unemployment/inactivity and part-time employment after leave uptake, while being positively associated with full-time employment. Employer variation in the odds of unemployment/inactivity after leave uptake decreases from 27% to 16% when taking into account employment characteristics before birth, while the employer variation in the probability of working part-time diminishes from 36% to 27%.

Longer use of full-time leave is associated with a significantly larger risk of dropping out of work. Accumulated periods of full-time as well as part-time leave are positively associated with the probability of working part-time rather than full-time following leave. In general, these results show that women that take leave for shorter periods and combine leave with labour force participation (part-time uptake), have the largest probability of being employed full-time following leave uptake.

**Table 5.5:** Explaining migrant-native differences in the labour market position one quarter following parental leave (in odds-ratios)

	not employed (1) - employed (0)			part-time (1) - full-time employed (0)		
	<i>Model 3a</i>	<i>Model3b</i>	<i>Model 3c</i>	<i>Model 4a</i>	<i>Model4b</i>	<i>Model 4c</i>
	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>
<i>Individual-level covariates</i>						
<b>Origin group (ref. Belgium)</b>						
<i>Neighbouring countries, gen1</i>	2.894 *		3.098 *		2.557 *	
<i>Neighbouring countries, gen2</i>	0.991		1.127		1.227	
<i>Other EU countries, gen1</i>	1.713		1.617		1.464	
<i>Other EU countries, gen2</i>	1.453		1.341		1.220	
<i>Turkey or Morocco, gen1</i>	2.070		1.723		1.101	
<i>Turkey or Morocco, gen2</i>	1.672		1.242		1.072	
<i>Other non-EU countries, gen1</i>	4.434 ***		4.293 ***		3.775 ***	
<i>Other non-EU countries, gen2</i>	1.331		1.347		1.292	
<b>Parity (ref. 1 child)</b>						
<i>2 children</i>	1.111		1.120		1.130	
<i>3 or more children</i>	0.836		0.883		1.056	
<b>Age at first birth</b>						
<i>age at birth linear</i>	0.982		1.115		1.279	
<i>age at birth square</i>	1.000		0.998		0.996	
<b>Region (ref. Flanders)</b>						
<i>Wallonia</i>	0.796		0.817		0.894	
<i>Brussels</i>	0.998		1.046		1.287	
<b>Quarter of birth of first child</b>						
<i>quarter linear</i>	0.795 **		0.791 **		0.799 **	
<b>Duration of observation</b>						
<i>In quarters, linear</i>	0.803 **		0.791 **		0.794 **	
<b>Household position before first birth (ref. cohabiting with partner)</b>						
<i>not cohabiting (parental home)</i>	0.937		0.929		0.988	
<i>not cohabiting (single)</i>	1.329		1.271		1.228	
<i>not cohabiting (other)</i>	0.404		0.393		0.396	
<b>Having a partner</b>						
<i>partnered</i>	0.294 *		0.272 *		0.276 *	
<b>Leave use by partner</b>						
<i>leave use</i>	0.550		0.567		0.606	
<b>Number of quarters spent in leave</b>						
<i>Full-time leave</i>			1.377 ***		1.308 ***	
<i>Part-time leave use</i>			1.051		1.051	
<b>Employment regime before first birth (ref. full-time)</b>						
<i>unknown</i>					0.548	
<i>marginal</i>					0.974	
<i>part-time</i>					0.982	
<i>near full-time</i>					0.231	
<b>Number of jobs before first birth (ref. 1 job)</b>						
<i>multiple jobs</i>					0.231	
<b>Salary before first birth (ref. first quintile)</b>						
<i>second quintile</i>					0.625	
<i>third quintile</i>					0.571 *	
<i>fourth quintile</i>					0.517 *	
<i>fifth quintile</i>					0.313 **	

Note: The odds-ratio's result from two separate logit models where observations are nested in employers. The sample is restricted to mothers legally residing in Belgium who had their first child between 2004 – 2010, who were employed one year before the transition to parenthood and who subsequently used parental leave. Significance levels: \* p< 0.05; \*\* p< 0.01; \*\*\* p< 0.001

Source: Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999-2010, calculations by authors

**Table 5.5:** Explaining migrant-native differences in the labour market position one quarter following parental leave (in odds-ratios), continued

	not employed (1) - employed (0)				part-time (1) - full-time employed (0)							
	<i>Model 3a</i>		<i>Model3b</i>		<i>Model 3c</i>		<i>Model 4a</i>		<i>Model4b</i>		<i>Model 4c</i>	
	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>sig.</i>
<i>Individual-level covariates</i>												
<b>Employment sector before first birth</b> ( <i>ref. health services, social care</i> )												
<i>agriculture, industry</i>					3.003	**					0.702	
<i>wholesale, retail</i>					2.461	**					0.961	
<i>logistics, storage, distribution</i>					2.162						1.047	
<i>education</i>					0.857						0.599	
<i>public administration, extra-territorial organisations</i>					1.040						0.544	**
<i>art, recreation, other services</i>					1.742						1.861	*
<i>finances, estate</i>					0.766						1.313	
<i>administration, support services, academia, it</i>					3.520	***					1.181	
<i>hotel, catering</i>					1.414						0.824	
<i>Random parameters</i>												
<b>Rho(employer)</b>	0.274	***	0.306	***	0.162	***	0.363	***	0.353	***	0.270	***
<i>Model parameters</i>												
<b>-2LL</b>	1297.557		1262.435		1209.548		3760.628		3730.124		3260.743	
<b>N observations</b>	3319		3319		3319		3143		3143		3143	
<b>N employers</b>	1620		1620		1620		1531		1531		1531	

*Note:* The odds-ratio's result from two separate logit models where observations are nested in employers. The sample is restricted to mothers legally residing in Belgium who had their first child between 2004 – 2010, who were employed one year before the transition to parenthood and who subsequently used parental leave. *Significance levels:* \* p< 0.05; \*\* p< 0.01; \*\*\* p< 0.001

*Source:* Administrative Socio-Demographic Panel, 1999-2010, calculations by authors

## 5.6. Discussion and conclusion

Family policies such as parental leave support work-family reconciliation for an increasing number of parents. Although employment remains low among mothers of migrant origin, few studies have addressed population heterogeneity in the uptake of family policies (Neyer & Andersson, 2008). Available research indicates small migrant-native differences in Sweden where all mothers are entitled to parental leave (Mussino & Duvander, 2016), whereas countries where eligibility is connected to labour force participation (e.g. the Netherlands, Spain) typically show larger differentials (Lapuerta et al., 2011; Merens et al., 2006). These findings suggest that eligibility criteria related to previous employment are largely responsible for the differential uptake of parental leave between natives and mothers with a migration background. Using unique longitudinal microdata for Belgium, this study documents migrant-native differences in parental leave uptake, and is among the first to assess the degree to which precarious employment trajectories and eligibility can explain these differences (Lapuerta et al., 2011; Merens et al., 2006; Mussino & Duvander, 2016).

Results show large migrant-native differences in the uptake of parental leave among mothers in Belgium, with particularly low use among first-generation mothers of Turkish and Moroccan origin. This finding corroborates previous research indicating different parental leave strategies in these origin groups

(Merens et al., 2006; Mussino & Duvander, 2016). When controlling for eligibility and pre-birth employment characteristics such as employment regime, salary and sector, however, differences between origin groups largely disappear. Hence, this study identifies the difficult access to stable employment for migrants and non-universal eligibility as major factors explaining migrant-native differentials in parental leave uptake.

Consistent with the increasing flexibility of parental leave legislation, this contribution also provides insight into differential parental leave strategies by distinguishing full-time from part-time leave uptake. This study shows that first-generation mothers of migrant origin exploit this flexibility to a lesser extent than natives and second-generation mothers do. They are more likely to take up leave on a full-time basis, while natives and second-generation women more often use part-time leave. Similarly, Swedish research (Mussino & Duvander, 2016) shows that mothers of migrant origin exhaust their right to parental leave as soon as possible, while natives stay connected to the labour force when taking leave. The pre-birth employment characteristics used in this study cannot explain these differences, suggesting that they are related to other factors such as stronger preferences for childcare in the household context or a lack of knowledge regarding parental leave regulation (Merens et al., 2006; Mussino & Duvander, 2016; Wall & Jose, 2004).

The overwhelming majority of mothers resume labour force participation after leave uptake. Since stable employment is an eligibility criterion for parental leave and mothers enjoy job protection during leave, this observation is not surprising. However, first-generation migrant groups show lower employment following leave use compared to the other origin groups, with particularly low employment among women originating from other non-European countries. The discrepancy between natives and first-generation migrants from neighbouring and other non-European countries persists when controlling for pre-birth employment characteristics as well as the length and type of leave uptake. This is consistent with previous research (Kil, Neels, et al., 2015), indicating that first-generation migrant groups of non-European origin show relatively unstable labour market trajectories around childbearing. A stronger retreat from the labour force for these groups may be related to unobserved employment characteristics, more traditional childrearing attitudes but also to inadequate access to childcare after the exhaustion of parental leave (Neels & Wood, 2016).

To conclude, this paper calls for increased attention to the role of subgroup variation in the study of the triad between social policy, the family and the labour market. Contemporary literature argues that, in contrast to Esping-Andersen's notion of 'politics against markets' and 'decommodification', contemporary

welfare states progressively support labour markets, particularly by stimulating female labour force participation and work-family combination (Cantillon & Buysse, 2016; Iversen & Soskice, 2015). In the context of increasing labour market dualization and unequally distributed labour market uncertainties, questions arise concerning the social distribution of the benefits of state-provided work-family reconciliation policies (Jennifer L. Hook, 2015; Iversen & Soskice, 2015). Adding to the growing body of research on social inequalities in the uptake of work-family reconciliation policies (Ghysels & Van Lancker, 2011; Marx & Vandelannoote, 2014; Van Lancker & Ghysels, 2012), this study indicates that in a context where eligibility is connected to labour force attachment, parental leave reinforces labour market disadvantages by providing work-family reconciliation to those already established in the labour force. In Belgium - a country characterized by a large migrant-native employment gap - this implies that migrants in particular are underrepresented among the beneficiaries of subsidized leave schemes. The finding that migrant-native differentials in the uptake of parental leave largely disappear when controlling for eligibility suggests that individual agency in the use of work-family policy should not be overestimated. In attempts to enhance the inclusiveness and effectivity of social policy, the design features of parental leave entitlements in relation to labour market disadvantages need to be reconsidered.

Finally, we identify three avenues for future research on parental leave uptake among migrant populations. First, given that the organization of work and childcare is likely to be closely related to structural factors such as leave eligibility requirements, but also to individual attitudes and cultural norms, our knowledge of differential work-family strategies would benefit from qualitative studies focussing on women with a migration background. With respect to our finding of unexplained variation in full-time versus part-time leave use and labour market position following leave, the potential explanations in terms of a lack of knowledge regarding regulations or traditional gender roles, remain speculative.

Second, the development of data focussing on work-family behaviour and the oversampling of migrant groups should be encouraged. Small sample sizes for particular origin countries in our data limited the possibility to focus on specific origin groups. Research infrastructure with more specific information on origin and larger sample fractions for migrant groups could overcome this issue.

Third, in line with the growing body of research studying fathers' behaviour or taking a couples perspective in the study of the work-family nexus, we identify the study of fathers' and couples' parental leave use among populations with a migration background as a fruitful path for future research. This paper's individual approach focussing solely on mothers limits the possibility to approach migrant-native differences in parental leave use from a gender perspective.



## CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

Over the past 50 years there has been a strong increase in female employment in Western Europe, which marked a switch from the male breadwinner model to the dual earner model as the ideal household arrangement in most countries. Although female participation in employment has increased, gender differences in employment persist (e.g. segregation by sector and occupation, part-time employment) and the more equal division of paid work within families is only partly compensated by a more equal division of housework. The persistence of traditional gender divisions in employment and – especially – housework is partly driven by the process of family formation, as the transition to parenthood introduces or strengthens a gendered division of work in most cases. At the same time, most Western-European countries witnessed increasing ethnic diversity in their populations, raising questions on whether the course of work-family trajectories among migrants and their descendants converges to work-family trajectories among natives.

Given these societal changes, this dissertation studied gender and migrant-native differences in work-family trajectories over the transition to parenthood. It looked into the determinants of the division of housework and of change in labour force attachment over the process of family formation. Drawing on the principles of the life course perspective, it adopted a European comparative cross-sectional approach investigating (i) the gender division of housework, as well as a single-country longitudinal approach assessing (ii) the gender division of paid work and migrant-native differences in (iii) mothers' employment and (iv) mothers' parental leave use in Belgium. In this part I will discuss the main findings of the four topical papers, the implications for policy and the limitations of the study.

### 6.1. Overview of the main findings

#### 6.1.1. Determinants of the gender division of housework:

##### *The interplay between life course stage, context and individual characteristics*

The first research objective was to examine how individual, household and contextual characteristics affect the gender division of domestic work through different stages of the family life course. Drawing on data from the European Social Survey of 2010 for 24,045 respondents and using multilevel analysis we document how the gendered distribution of housework over the life course is affected by individual and household characteristics (time availability, relative

resources and gender ideology), as well as the cultural and policy context (gender culture, full-time childcare, availability of parental leave for men and neutrality of the tax system). Subsequently, we show how the effect of individual characteristics on the gendered distribution of domestic work depends on the cultural and policy context in which couples live. This approach is innovative as it looks into the influence of contextual variables on private gender equality from a life course perspective. Studies that specifically focus on the influence of national context on the gender division of housework from a life course perspective are limited (Anxo et al., 2011).

The results of the first paper clearly illustrate the interplay between life course stage, national context, individual characteristics and the division of housework. They show that while ideas about gender roles (gender ideology) have a relatively large impact on the division of housework in the childless life stages, gender ideology has a relatively small impact on the division of housework for couples with young children. Gender egalitarian ideas are thus more easily translated into reality when couples are in life stages without children, suggesting that when couples become parents, the effect of gender values is partly outweighed by the culturally dominant ideas and practical necessities related to parenting (Martinengo et al., 2010). However, for couples with young children, the effect of individual gender ideology interacts with the effect of the national gender culture. These households are more capable of converting egalitarian values into egalitarian behaviour in a country with a progressive gender culture and where childcare is frequently used full-time. For parents of pre-school children with a progressive gender ideology the national gender context is thus of great importance. Although gender values play a relatively minor role among couples with young children, the effects of progressive gender values at the individual level are greater in countries where the formal childcare habits and cultural context support gender equality. Hence, for these couples a progressive gender context in terms of culture and formal childcare seems to be crucial to convert progressive ideas and values into reality (Buhlmann et al., 2010).

Our finding of context-contingency of the effect of gender ideology on the division of housework contributes to contemporary research which increasingly highlights the importance of contextual characteristics. Whereas quantitative research of the 1990s focusses on individual level and couple level characteristics (time availability, relative resources and gender ideology), research in the 2000s and 2010s focusses on contextual effects and the interplay between micro- and macro-level mechanisms influencing the division of housework (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). The finding of context-contingency of the effect of gender ideology on the division of housework for young parents corroborates earlier evidence pointing to the interplay between macro-level gender equality, ideology

and welfare state regime on the one hand and individual-level gender ideology on the other (Fuwa, 2004; Geist, 2005). Our finding supplements this evidence by illustrating that macro-level gender culture differentially influences the effect of individual-level gender ideology on the division of housework depending on which life course stage is taken into account.

### **6.1.2. Determinants of labour force attachment following the transition to parenthood**

#### ***Pre-birth relative earnings and gender inequality in parents' employment: linked lives***

The second research objective was to examine to which the extent gender inequality in parents' employment is moderated by pre-birth relative earnings. Using longitudinal register data of the BASD-panel, logit models assess the effect of pre-birth relative earnings on the division of paid work following the transition to parenthood for 4 509 dual full-time working couples. This paper goes beyond previous research in four ways. First, while former research has shown that larger relative resources diminish the parenthood effect on gender inequality (Begall & Grunow, 2015; Herrarte et al., 2012; Kanji, 2011; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; Schober, 2013), we look into the aggregate-level impact of pre-birth relative earnings on gender inequality in couples' employment (Kuhhirt, 2012). Second, former research has predominantly considered the USA (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997), the UK (Kanji, 2011; Schober, 2013), the Netherlands (Begall & Grunow, 2015) and Germany (Kuhhirt, 2012) which are characterized by high employment gaps between mothers and non-mothers (Boeckmann et al., 2015) as well as limited family policies (USA and UK) or policies indirectly supporting women to reduce employment after childbearing (Germany and the Netherlands). Considering the Belgian setting provides an interesting case as it is known for low employment gaps between mothers and non-mothers and a well-developed formal childcare sector, supporting parents' - and in particular mothers' - employment (Cukrowska-Torzewska, 2016). Third, earlier studies of the parenthood effect on gender inequality in the division of labour, looked into the role of relative resources for labour market attachment of men and women separately. In contrast, our focus on within-couple variation in working hours fully acknowledges the household as a unit in the outcome variable and allows to focus on gender inequality within the household context. Fourth, using administrative data, we are able to perform longitudinal analyses for larger sample sizes and longer time periods, more closely approximating continuous time measurement, in comparison to panel survey data.

Consistent with previous research for the USA and some Western-European countries (Begall & Grunow, 2015; Herrarte et al., 2012; Kanji, 2011; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; Schober, 2013), our results show that pre-birth relative earnings significantly moderate the parenthood effect on gender inequality for dual-full-time working couples living in Belgium. Pre-birth relative earnings are one of the factors that determine whether gender equality in paid work is maintained over the course of family formation, as well as who cuts back in paid work when an equal employment division is not retained. Although relative resources affect the magnitude of the negative relationship between parenthood and gender inequality in paid work, a reversed gender specialisation where predominantly fathers rather than mothers cut back in paid work is still not found for female main earner couples (Kuhhirt, 2012). Even couples that are – from a rational economic perspective – well positioned to adopt a reversed gender specialisation, more frequently adopt a ‘male breadwinner/female secondary earner’-constellation than a ‘female breadwinner/male secondary earner’-constellation following the transition to parenthood. The limited effect of pre-birth relative resources suggests that cultural as well as structural constraints limit the ability of parents to opt for an equal employment division (Schober, 2013). On the household level differential attitudes and gendered access to work-family combination measures may be responsible for these gendered patterns, while on the societal level normative expectations about “good motherhood” and “good fatherhood” as well as the devaluation of housework and care in comparison to paid work may matter.

***Pre-birth employment characteristics and migrant-native differences in mother’s employment: the cumulation of labour market (dis)advantages***

The third study looked into migrant-native differences in the motherhood-employment link. We investigated whether family formation differentially affects the labour market position of migrant women in comparison to natives and to what extent socio-demographic and pre-birth job characteristics are responsible for these differentials. Using the BASD-panel for the period 1999 – 2010, 12.167 women are followed from 12 months before until 48 months after the birth of their first child. Estimating complementary log-log models of activity, employment and full-time employment, we compare natives to first- and second-generation women of Southern European, Eastern European, Turkish and Moroccan origin, while controlling for several socio-demographic, pre-birth job and partner characteristics.

This study adds to the literature in two ways. First, whereas previous research specifically focussing on the labour force participation of migrant mothers is

limited and frequently based on cross-sectional data (Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2006, 2012; Dale et al., 2006; Holland & de Valk, 2017; Rubin et al., 2008), we adopt a longitudinal approach on the employment gap between women of migrant origin and natives which allows to distinguish the differential impact of family formation on women's employment trajectories from variation in labour market positions that already existed before the onset of family formation. Second, previous studies have frequently focused on a single indicator of labour market position (Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2012; Dale et al., 2006; Holland & de Valk, 2017; Khoudja & Platt, 2016), while our study considers different indicators of labour market position, which allows to test whether distinctive patterns emerge for different aspects of labour market attachment.

Looking into the parenthood effect on activity, we find that women of migrant origin of both generations are characterised by a larger decrease in activity levels after parenthood compared to natives. For second-generation mothers, the lower activity levels after parenthood compared to natives can be largely explained by relatively young ages at first birth, lower pre-birth wages and the overrepresentation of migrant women in certain sectors. This suggests that differences in activity levels between second-generation mothers and natives primarily reflect the socio-demographic profile and early career disadvantages of second generation women. In contrast to the second-generation, activity levels of first-generation women – and especially those of Turkish and Moroccan origin – remain lower after parenthood than those of natives when controlling for socio-demographic, pre-birth job and partner characteristics. In general, this hints to patterns of tied family migration that are associated with low activity and employment for female partners (Boyle et al., 2003; Cooke, 2008). Among first-generation women of Turkish and Moroccan origin who came to Belgium in the context of marriage migration, “imported brides” have been shown to hold relatively traditional views on gender roles, stipulating that women assume the care responsibility for the household and children (Bernhardt et al., 2007; F. Goldscheider et al., 2011; Huschek et al., 2011b; Lievens, 1999; Timmerman, 2006). In addition, for first-generation women having limited prospects in the labour market due to language barriers or discriminatory processes, being a full-time mother may be a more rewarding role (Friedman et al., 1994).

Regarding (un)employment rates of women who are active in the labour market following the birth of their first child, women of migrant origin are more likely to end up in unemployment following the transition to parenthood. Differentials with natives are larger for the first generation than is the case for the second-generation and for those that were already unemployed before the transition to parenthood. Higher unemployment rates among migrant women persist when

controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, previous job characteristics and partner characteristics. Several mechanisms such as lower access to or less knowledge about family policies, a lack of social and family networks and unstable employment positions, leading to more unemployment spells in general, may explain the larger increase in unemployment levels among women of migrant origin following parenthood compared to natives.

Hence, this study contributes to the limited research strand focussing on family formation and female labour force participation in migrant populations in Western Europe (Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2006, 2012; Dale et al., 2006; Holland & de Valk, 2017; Khoudja & Platt, 2016; Rubin et al., 2008). As former studies have focussed on different countries and migrant origin groups and used differential indicators of labour force attachment, they yield contradictory results and illustrate heterogeneity between as well as within migrant populations and national contexts. Our study as well illustrates a considerable amount of heterogeneity in labour force participation following the transition to parenthood between migrant origin groups and generations depending on the different indicators of labour force attachment that were taken into account.

In addition, consistent with other studies focussing on the effect of early career positions on later-life socio-economic outcomes among migrant groups (Neels et al., 2017), these results draw attention to the importance of labour market entry and early career positions. Our findings illustrate the principle of life course cumulation and cumulative (dis)advantage theory (Dannefer, 2003) that stresses that early socioeconomic differences between individuals are accentuated over time. Pre-birth labour market (dis)advantages are largely reproduced over the transition to parenthood and in addition, migrant women that were not active in the labour force before parenthood face more difficulties to enter employment following parenthood in comparison to natives. Hence, the results draw attention to the role of labour market entry and early career disadvantage and the challenge that parenthood creates for migrant mothers in terms of retaining and gaining employment.

***Pre-birth employment characteristics and migrant-native differences in mothers' parental leave use: the reproduction of labour market (dis)advantages by family policy***

The fourth paper looked into migrant-native differences in parental leave uptake, and assessed the degree to which precarious employment trajectories and eligibility can explain these differences. Using longitudinal register data of the BASD-panel, mixed effects logit models of (i) leave uptake, (ii) full-time versus

part-time leave uptake and (iii) employment position following leave are estimated for 10,976 mothers that entered parenthood between 2004 and 2010.

This study contributes to the knowledge base on population differences in the uptake of parental leave – which is considered a major source of bias in research on the effects of family policy on fertility (Neyer & Andersson, 2008) – as well as to the few available studies that look into parental leave uptake among migrants (Lapuerta et al., 2011; Merens et al., 2006; Mussino & Duvander, 2016). With former studies concentrating on the Swedish policy context (Mussino & Duvander, 2016), focussing on descriptive analysis (Merens et al., 2006), or merely identifying migrants with a single indicator on foreign nationality (Lapuerta et al., 2011), our study is the first to analyse determinants of parental leave use among migrant groups of different origins and generations for Belgium, a country where eligibility is conditional upon labour force attachment. Our results show large migrant-native differences in the uptake of parental leave among mothers in Belgium, with particularly low use among first-generation mothers of Turkish and Moroccan origin. However, these differences are largely explained by eligibility and pre-birth job characteristics such as the employment regime, salary and sector. The combination of difficult access to stable employment for migrant women and non-universal eligibility to parental leave is identified as a major explanation for migrant-native differentials in parental leave use. These results corroborate findings of a similar study performed to the Spanish context (Lapuerta et al., 2011) indicating that the former job characteristics largely explain the lower use of parental leave among migrant groups.

Furthermore, our study entails detailed insight into differential parental leave strategies by distinguishing full-time from part-time leave and assessing whether women return to the labour force afterwards. Regarding the increasingly flexible use of parental leave, first-generation mothers of migrant origin are more likely to take up leave on a full-time basis, while natives and second-generation women more often show part-time leave uptake. First-generation mothers of migrant origin exhaust their right to parental leave as soon as possible, while natives stay connected to the labour force when taking leave, which is consistent with results of the study of Mussino and Duvander (2016) for the Swedish context. With respect to employment following leave use, first-generation migrant groups show lower employment following leave use compared to the other ethnic groups, with particularly low employment among women originating from non-European countries besides Turkey and Morocco. Both discrepancies between natives and first-generation migrants persist when controlling for pre-birth employment characteristics, and in case of the second analysis, the type as well as length of

leave uptake. A considerable amount of variation that remains unexplained is situated at the employer level, indicating that further research on how employer characteristics influence parental leave use among mothers of migrant origin, is necessary (Anxo et al., 2007a). In addition, the remaining differences may be related to job characteristics not yet considered in the analyses, a stronger preference for childcare in the household context or a lack of knowledge regarding parental leave regulation (Merens et al., 2006; Mussino & Duvander, 2016; Wall & Jose, 2004).

Hence, adding to the growing body of research on social inequalities in the uptake of work-family reconciliation policies (Ghysels & Van Lancker, 2011; Marx & Vandelannoote, 2014; Van Lancker & Ghysels, 2012) and research on the link between policy regulation and later-life socio-economic outcomes (Neels et al., 2017), this study indicates that in a context where eligibility is connected to labour force attachment, parental leave reinforces labour market disadvantages by providing work-family reconciliation to those already established in the labour force. In Belgium, a country characterized by a large migrant-native employment gap, this implies that migrants are particularly underrepresented among the beneficiaries of subsidized leave schemes. In this regard, these results illustrate the role of policy in reproducing (dis)advantages in labour market attachment following the transition to parenthood.

## **6.2. Policy implications**

Although this study was not set up to examine the impact of particular policies or policy packages, it entails some relevant implications. First of all, this thesis provides a better understanding of the determinants of gender inequality in housework and employment following the transition to parenthood. The finding that – even among dual full-time working couples and irrespective of pre-birth relative earnings – gender is still the main determinant of who reduces their working hours following the transition to parenthood, illustrates that gender inequality is still an issue in Belgium. Although our data were not able to explain this gender difference, we assume that the Belgian policy constellation plays a role in the creation of gender inequality following the transition to parenthood. For example, mothers are entitled to longer periods of leave (15 weeks maternity leave) compared to fathers (10 days paternity leave) (RVA, 2012). Although a minimum of 10 weeks maternity leave is obligatory, paternity leave is not and 20 per cent of Belgian fathers does not take paternity leave (Instituut voor de Gelijkheid van Vrouwen en Mannen, 2016). Consequently, in most cases mothers take up the main childcare responsibilities during the first months after birth, which tends to create or strengthen a gendered task division between parents in the following years (Kotsadam & Finseraas, 2011). Hence, these policy

constellations implicitly reflect normative assumptions of mothers as the main carer and of fathers as the main breadwinner and perpetuate gender inequality in childcare responsibilities. Investing in the automatic ascription of paternity leave as well as equalizing the duration of paternity leave to that of maternity leave would encourage gender equality in paid work directly following the transition to parenthood.

Second, results of the third and fourth study show that the disadvantaged position in terms of labour market attachment and parental leave use of migrant origin mothers mainly results from an accumulation of disadvantages that are initiated before the onset of family formation. The weak initial labour market positions of women of migrant origin limit the extent to which these women can attain or keep a position in the labour force or use family policy following the transition to parenthood. These women more frequently end up in inactivity or unemployment following the transition to parenthood and they use less parental leave. Path dependency implies that mothers that already are in a strong position in the labour market, will retain this position, while the ones that took a less firm path in the beginning of their career, still struggle to gain or retain a firm position following the transition to parenthood. If policy makers aim to enhance the labour force attachment of mothers of migrant origin, they should primarily focus on supporting labour market integration of women of migrant origin from the early career on. In this respect, for second-generation women of migrant origin and migrants that came to Belgium at young ages, the transition from education to labour market should be particularly targeted. In 2011 in Belgium, the youth unemployment rate of (20-29 year old) non-EU born residents in Belgium was as high as 30.3% compared to 13.5% for natives, which is reported to be one of the largest migrant-native gaps in youth employment in Europe (Eurostat, 2010b). Former research on the Belgian context shows that school-to-work transitions are much more successful for native youth than youth of migrant origin born in Belgium, irrespective of educational attainment or family characteristics (Baert & Cockx, 2013; Neels & Stoop, 2000). The transition from school to work is especially difficult for women of Turkish and Moroccan origin, as their chance to be employed 3 months after leaving school is 60% smaller in comparison to women of Belgian origin (Baert, Heiland, & Korenman, 2016). Not surprisingly, the OECD (2010a) calls ethnic minority youth a target group for intensive assistance.

Third, linked to the former observation, the Belgian parental leave system predominantly supports the combination of employment and family responsibilities through providing support for those already in stable employment positions. In Belgium, parental leave is an individual entitlement that is only

available to working fathers and mothers with a stable employment position. Only those who have worked for their current employer for 12 out of 15 months prior to the application are allowed to use parental leave. These eligibility criteria largely explain why migrant women and lower socio-economic status groups in general are underrepresented among the users of parental leave. If policy makers aim to enhance the inclusiveness and effectivity of this family policy measure, the design features of parental leave entitlements in relation to job requirements need to be reconsidered. Uncoupling the right to parental leave from labour market attachment potentially provides a solution to this issue. However, design features of such a parental leave system can have unintentional consequences. The Swedish parental leave legislation is a primary example of a system providing paid parental leave irrespective of previous employment. Parents residing in Sweden receive 480 days of paid leave per child, of which 390 are paid at 80% of previous earnings and 90 are paid at a flat rate. The system is very flexible in the sense that parents decide by themselves for which days they want to collect paid parental leave, making it possible to extend the days for a very long period. The only restrictions are that the parent is not allowed to work and that the child has to be younger than eight. Parents who did not work (or worked less than eight months) before childbirth receive a relatively low flat-rate parental leave benefit. Parents that migrate to Sweden with children under the age of eight are eligible for the same benefits as those parents whose children are born in Sweden. Although earnings-related benefits and job protection during leave normally serve as an incentive to combine labour market participation and children, the same policy may have a negative impact if labour market integration cannot be achieved (Mussino & Duvander, 2016). For migrants with weak initial labour market attachment in Sweden, this may result in a more disadvantaged situation after an extended period with no attachment to the labour market. Accordingly, results of a study of Vikman (2013) show that labour market entrance is delayed for migrant mothers and that they are less likely to be a part of the labour force for up to seven years after their residence permit if they had access to parental leave benefits when they came to Sweden. Thus, generous benefits to non-working parents may serve as an incentive for mothers to stay out of the labour market altogether (Vikman, 2013). Hence, providing paid parental leave irrespective of previous labour market position has the potential to enhance the inclusiveness of family policy legislation, but attention needs to be paid to the possibility of unintended perverse consequences.

### **6.3. Prospects for future research**

Although this dissertation contributes to a variety of research streams, it is also subject to a number of limitations linked to the data infrastructure used. The first

study on gender inequality in the division of housework was conducted using data from ESS Round 5 (2010) for 24 European countries. The main problem lies in the cross-sectional nature of the data (Nitsche, 2017). We tested the relationship between time spent on housework versus time spent on paid work, relative earnings and gender ideology which are all measured at the same time. The implicit assumption related to this cross-sectional analysis is that couples first decide how to allocate each partner's time in the labour market and then decide how to allocate each partner's time in housework based on the number of hours each spends in paid work (Gough & Killewald, 2011). It is, however, more likely that housework and labour force hours are jointly determined, with gendered expectations about the allocation of housework influencing partners' time in paid labour. Hence, modelling time spent in housework in a way that takes the labour force decision as given may understate the effect of gender and overstate the effect of time availability. In addition, preferences may be adjusted to the prevailing division of housework and paid work over time as research has indicated that the link between gender ideologies and the division of housework is reciprocal (Carlson & Lynch, 2013). The dynamic nature of gender ideologies remains concealed when using cross-sectional data. Research drawing on longitudinal data that focuses on the determinants of the division of housework may provide an answer to this issue, but is scarce due to data limitations (Evertsson & Neramo, 2007; Grunow et al., 2012; Lam, McHale, & Crouter, 2012; Nitsche & Grunow, 2016).

The second study of this dissertation uses longitudinal data to assess gender inequality in couples employment over the transition to parenthood. Results illustrate that the negative effect of parenthood on gender equality in couples' employment perseveres when taking into account pre-birth relative earnings. Although we assume that cultural and structural factors explain the remaining variance in gender inequality in parents' employment, our data did not provide the possibility to test this assumption. Former studies focussing on the interplay between the influence of institutional context on work-family trajectories over transition to parenthood, mainly have adopted a qualitative approach, yielding interesting conclusions of how institutional structures limit possible choices and beliefs about motherhood and fatherhood (Grunow & Evertsson, 2016). Although an increasing amount of single-country studies focussing on the division of housework and employment have used longitudinal data, multiple country studies using longitudinal data and focusing on the effect of contextual characteristics are not yet available. Hence, we identify the pooling of quantitative longitudinal data for multiple countries which allows to test for macro-level effects as a fruitful path for future research on gender inequality in work-family trajectories following the transition to parenthood.

The second, third and fourth study uses data from the Belgian Administrative Panel: a longitudinal dataset that follows a sample of 15 to 50 year old women and their household members between 1999 and 2010 on a quarterly basis. Although the Belgian social security registers provide unique longitudinal microdata on the labour market position of women both with and without migration background, the longitudinal analyses presented in this dissertation are subject to a number of data limitations which should be addressed in future research. First and most importantly, we could not fully control for endogeneity of childbearing decisions and employment trajectories. Taking different pre-birth positions into account and controlling for unobserved time-constant characteristics, we attempt to adjust for this issue, but it may not fully address the fact that women may opt into particular labour market positions because they anticipate having children (Bass, 2014). However, two elements may indicate that bias is limited. First, descriptive analyses show that the labour market position is relatively stable two to one year before childbearing, suggesting that women do not anticipate childbirth by reducing their employment hours during this period. Second, additionally controlling for educational level for a subset of the sample – which may be assumed to capture selective entry into pre-birth employment positions – did not substantially affect our results.

A second limitation concerns the sample of migrants. The sample is disproportionately stratified by nationality, consistently using a sampling fraction of 1/40 for Belgian women compared to a sampling fraction of 1/20 for foreign women. The overrepresentation of migrant groups – together with information on country of birth for sampled individuals and their parents – provides unique opportunities to analyse patterns of family formation of migrant population in Belgium. However, this oversampling by nationality results in particularly large first-generation groups, but has little effect on the sample size of the second generation. Particularly for the analysis of parental leave uptake, relatively small sample sizes of parents of migrant origin that are eligible for parental leave limited the possibility to focus on specific origin groups. An oversampling based on country of birth of women instead of nationality has the potential to overcome this issue. In addition, the lack of information on duration of residence for first generation migrants is an issue. As labour market positions improve with duration of residence, the labour market position of first-generation women with a long duration of residence is likely to increasingly resemble that of second-generation women. Former studies focussing on migrant women's employment (Bevelander & Groeneveld, 2012; Khoudja & Platt, 2016) and parental leave uptake (Mussino & Duvander, 2016) indicate that duration of residence is an important determinant of migrant women's position. In addition to an oversampling based on country of birth, incorporating information on duration of

residence would enrich the study of work-family trajectories among parents of migrant origin.

Third, although this dissertation contributes to the understanding of subgroup variation in work-family trajectories in Belgium, population heterogeneity stretches further than gender and migrant-native differences. Education is also an important determinant of mother's employment levels in Europe (Gutierrez-Domenech, 2005; J. Wood, Neels, De Wachter, & Kil, 2016) as well as family policy uptake (Lapuerta et al., 2011; Mussino & Duvander, 2016; Van Lancker & Ghysels, 2012) and gender inequality in couples' employment (Schober, 2013). Although we were able to control for educational level for a part of the sample, this was a rather selective group. Hence, information on educational attainment for the entire sample may (partly) explain the remaining gender and migrant-native differentials in our analyses. As comprehensive data on educational level lacks in the BASD-panel, the integration of these data should be particularly encouraged.

Fourth, although the theoretical framework argues that the cultural setting and norms affect the choice for certain work-family trajectories, we do not explicitly take these effects into account in our analysis as register data do not provide information on gender role attitudes. Information on differential gender role attitudes is likely to explain additional variation in the parenthood effect on gender inequality as well as in the differential link between motherhood and employment among migrant women and natives. Former research shows that gender role attitudes of women (Khoudja & Fleischmann, 2015a) as well as their partners' (Khoudja & Fleischmann, 2015b) contribute to low levels of labour force participation among women of migrant origin. The linkage of Norwegian register data to GGS survey data could serve as an example (Brunborg, 2007). Hence, we identify the longitudinal measurement of values in combination with register based panel data as a promising avenue for future research.

#### **6.4. In sum**

Adopting a life course perspective, this dissertation studied the determinants of the division of housework and of change in labour force attachment over the process of family formation. Concerning the division of housework, this book illustrates the interplay between life course stage, national context and individual characteristics: in more gender egalitarian contexts, parents of young children better succeed in converting their progressive gender ideas into a gender equal division of housework. Concerning the determinants of labour force attachment following the transition to parenthood, three outcome variables were assessed: parents' division of employment, mother's employment and parental leave uptake.

Focussing on dual full-time working heterosexual couples, results show that pre-birth relative earnings moderate but do not counteract the negative effect of parenthood on gender equality in the employment division. Focussing on the effect of migration background on labour force attachment and parental leave use following the transition to parenthood, results show that pre-birth employment (dis)advantages were reproduced or even cumulated over the course of family formation for women of migrant origin. Parental leave eligibility criteria contribute to the reproduction of this pattern, promoting parental leave use for parents that already occupy a stable employment position.

Hence, this dissertation contributes to further elaboration of the life course perspective on work-family trajectories, providing evidence for the interplay between life course stage, context and agency, and for how initial relative positions of partners and initial labour market (dis)advantages of migrant women determine labour force attachment following the transition to parenthood.

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## **SUMMARY IN DUTCH – Nederlandstalige samenvatting**

### **Inleiding**

De laatste 50 jaar is vrouwelijke tewerkstelling sterk toegenomen en is de heersende gezinsnorm geëvolueerd van het mannelijk kostwinnermodel naar het tweeverdienersmodel. Desondanks blijven genderverschillen op de arbeidsmarkt bestaan (e.g. oververtegenwoordiging van vrouwen in deeltijds werk, gendersegregatie naar sector en beroep) en werd de gelijkere genderverdeling van betaald werk binnen families slechts deels gecompenseerd door een gelijkere verdeling van huishoudelijk werk. Het voortbestaan van genderongelijkheid in betaald en huishoudelijk werk hangt sterk samen met gezinsvorming. De geboorte van een eerste kind brengt vaak een traditionele genderverdeling met zich mee. Terzelfdertijd is de bevolking van West-Europa etnisch diverser geworden, wat vragen oproept over hoe ouders met migratie-achtergrond vorm geven aan de combinatie van werk en gezin.

Gegeven deze maatschappelijke veranderingen, wordt in dit onderzoek nagegaan hoe werk-gezinstrajecten na de geboorte van een eerste kind verschillen naar gender en migratie-achtergrond. Zowel de determinanten van de verdeling van huishoudelijk werk als van arbeidsmarktdeelname doorheen het proces van gezinsvorming worden bestudeerd. Werk-gezinstrajecten worden in deze thesis benaderd vanuit een levensloopperspectief dat de nadruk legt op complexe samenspel tussen individuen (e.g. hun levensloop, plannen, kansen) en instituties (e.g. economie, politiek, cultuur, beleid, sociale netwerken). De eerste onderzoekspaper gaat in op de genderverdeling van huishoudelijk werk vanuit een Europees comparatief cross-sectioneel perspectief. De overige papers maken gebruik van longitudinale data voor België en bestuderen de determinanten van de genderverdeling van betaald werk en van verschillen tussen moeders met en zonder migratie-achtergrond op vlak van tewerkstelling en gebruik van ouderschapsverlof.

## **Determinanten van de genderverdeling van huishoudelijk werk**

De eerste studie richt zich op huishoudelijk werk en gaat in op hoe karakteristieken op individueel, gezins- en nationaal niveau de verdeling van huishoudelijk werk beïnvloeden doorheen verschillende fasen van de levensloop. Aan de hand van data van de European Social Survey 2010 voor 24.045 respondenten wordt bestudeerd hoe de genderverdeling van huishoudelijk werk beïnvloed wordt door individuele en gezinskenmerken (time availability, relative resources, gender ideology) en de culturele en beleidscontext (gendercultuur, voltijds gebruik kinderopvang, mogelijkheid ouderschapsverlof voor mannen en de neutraliteit van het belastingsysteem). Vervolgens tonen we aan hoe het effect van de individuele en gezinskenmerken op de verdeling van huishoudelijk werk afhangt van de (culturele en beleids-) context waarin koppels leven.

De resultaten van deze studie tonen aan dat in alle landen en alle levensloofasen de gemiddelde vrouw verantwoordelijk is voor het grootste deel van het huishoudelijk werk. De genderongelijkheid is echter het grootst bij koppels met inwonende kinderen en het kleinst bij jonge koppels zonder inwonende kinderen. In alle fasen van de levensloop vergroot de gendergelijkheid naarmate de werkuren van de vrouw stijgen ('time availability'), de proportie van het huishoudinkomen waarvoor zij verantwoordelijk is, groter is ('relative resources') en de progressiviteit van de genderwaarden van het koppel versterkt ('gender ideology'). Verder bleek een progressieve gendercultuur op nationaal niveau positief samen te hangen met gendergelijkheid in de verdeling van huishoudelijk werk in alle levensloofasen, terwijl het effect van beleid minder eenduidig was.

Terwijl genderrolattitudes een relatief grote impact hebben op de verdeling van huishoudelijk werk in de kinderloze levensloofasen, hebben genderrol-attitudes een relatief kleine impact op de verdeling van huishoudelijk werk bij koppels met jonge kinderen. Progressieve genderrolattitudes vertalen zich dus vaker in een gelijke verdeling van huishoudelijk werk bij koppels zonder kinderen. Voor koppels met jonge kinderen bleek het effect van genderrolattitudes echter positief te interageren met de gendercultuur en het voltijdse gebruik van kinderopvang op nationaal niveau. Dus hoewel genderrolattitudes op individueel niveau relatief gezien een minder grote rol spelen bij koppels met jonge kinderen, zijn de effecten van progressieve genderrolattitudes wel groter in landen met een meer egalitaire gendercultuur en beleidscontext. Een progressieve gendercontext lijkt voor deze koppels cruciaal om progressieve ideeën en waarden om te zetten in een gelijke verdeling van huishoudelijk werk.

## **Determinanten van arbeidsparticipatie na de transitie naar ouderschap**

De tweede onderzoekspaper focust op genderongelijkheid in de verdeling van betaald werk: In welke mate bepaalt de relatieve inkomenspositie van koppels genderongelijkheid op vlak van werkuren na de transitie naar ouderschap? Met longitudinale data van het Belgisch Administratief Socio-Demografisch Panel (BASD Panel 1999-2010) wordt voor 4509 koppels die beiden voltijds werkten voor de geboorte, het effect van relatieve inkomensposities op genderongelijkheid qua werkpercentage na de geboorte van het eerste kind onderzocht.

De resultaten tonen aan dat de relatieve inkomenspositie van koppels een significant effect heeft op genderongelijkheid in werkuren na de transitie naar ouderschap. In vergelijking met koppels met een gelijk inkomen of koppels waarin de mannelijke partner meer verdiende, hebben koppels waarin de vrouwelijke partner meer verdiende een relatief grotere kans dat de vrouw meer werkuren presteert dan de man na de geboorte van hun eerste kind. Langs de andere kant hebben koppels waarbij de man meer verdiende, een grotere kans dat de vader meer werkuren presteert dan de moeder na de geboorte van hun eerste kind. Relatieve inkomensposities bepalen dus deels of gendergelijkheid wordt behouden doorheen het proces van gezinsvorming en wie zijn werkuren zal verminderen indien nodig.

Ondanks het feit dat relatieve inkomensposities de sterkte van de relatie tussen ouderschap en gendergelijkheid beïnvloeden, is voor alle koppels, de kans op een verdeling waarbij de vader meer uren presteert dan de moeder nog steeds veel groter dan dat de moeder meer uren presteert dan de vader. Het beperkte effect van relatieve inkomensposities suggereert dat culturele en structurele factoren de mogelijkheid om werk gelijk te verdelen, beperken. Op huishoudensniveau zijn differentiële genderrolattitudes en genderverschillen in gebruik van gezinsbeleid mogelijks verantwoordelijk voor deze patronen, terwijl op maatschappelijk niveau normatieve zorgidealen voor vaders en moeders en een devaluatie van huishoudelijk werk en zorg in vergelijking met betaald werk een rol spelen.

De derde studie gaat in op verschillen tussen moeders met en zonder migratieachtergrond op vlak van tewerkstelling. Er werd onderzocht of de transitie naar ouderschap de arbeidsmarktpositie van moeders met migratieachtergrond sterker beïnvloedt dan het geval is bij Belgische vrouwen. Aan de hand van data van het BASD Panel (1999-2010) wordt nagegaan hoe de kans om actief te zijn op de arbeidsmarkt, de kans om werkzaam te zijn en de kans om voltijds eerder dan deeltijds te werken verschilt tussen 12.167 moeders met en zonder migratie-

achtergrond en of de verschillen tussen deze vrouwen verklaard kunnen worden door socio-demografische kenmerken, werkkenmerken en partnerkenmerken.

De resultaten tonen aan dat inactiviteit en werkloosheid na de geboorte van een eerste kind in sterkere mate toeneemt bij vrouwen met migratie-achtergrond. Voor vrouwen van de tweede generatie, worden de lagere activiteitsniveaus in grote mate verklaard door een lagere leeftijd bij de geboorte van een eerste kind, lagere lonen en de oververtegenwoordiging van vrouwen met migratie-achtergrond in bepaalde sectoren. Dit wijst erop dat verschillen tussen tweede generatie vrouwen en vrouwen van Belgische afkomst een specifiek socio-demografisch profiel en zwakke initiële arbeidsmarktposities van de tweede generatie reflecteren. De grotere stijging van de kans op inactiviteit bij de eerste generatie blijft overeind na controle voor socio-demografische en werkkenmerken. Vooral bij Turkse en Marokkaanse vrouwen van de eerste generatie die voor de geboorte reeds inactief waren, is de kans dat ze inactief blijven na de geboorte relatief groot. Patronen van 'tied migration' (waarbij gezinnen migreren omwille van arbeidskansen van de mannelijke partner en de arbeidsparticipatie van de vrouwelijke partner meestal van secundair belang is) vormen mogelijks een verklaring voor de grotere daling in activiteit bij vrouwen van de eerste generatie. Daarnaast hebben eerste-generatie vrouwen door taalbarrières en discriminatie vaak beperkte vooruitzichten op de arbeidsmarkt, waardoor de rol van voltijdse moeder mogelijks een aantrekkelijkere positie vormt in vergelijking met de rol van werkloze of tijdelijke werkkracht.

Op vlak van tewerkstellingskansen zien we dat werkloosheid in sterkere mate toeneemt bij vrouwen met migratie-achtergrond van zowel de eerste als de tweede generatie in vergelijking met vrouwen zonder migratie-achtergrond. Ook na controle voor socio-demografische factoren, werkkenmerken en partnerkarakteristieken, blijven de verschillen groot en significant. Verschillen met Belgische vrouwen zijn het grootst voor vrouwen van de eerste generatie. Dit kan mogelijks verklaard worden door een moeilijke toegang tot stabiele arbeidsmarktposities, gezinsbeleid en een gebrek aan informele netwerken die een deel van de zorg op zich nemen.

Deze studie toont dus aan dat precare arbeidsmarktposities in de vroege loopbaan grotendeels gereproduceerd worden doorheen het proces van gezinsvorming, wat het belang van succesvolle arbeidsmarktintrede voor de verdere loopbaan benadrukt. Hiernaast blijkt dat de transitie naar ouderschap een extra uitdaging betekent voor moeder met migratie-achtergrond in termen van het behouden en vinden van werk. Migranten die niet arbeidsactief waren voor ouderschap ondervinden meer moeilijkheden om na de geboorte van hun eerste kind werk te vinden in vergelijking met autochtone Belgen. Socio-economische

verschillen tussen vrouwen met en zonder migratie-achtergrond worden dus niet alleen gereproduceerd maar ook geaccentueerd na de transitie naar ouderschap.

De vierde paper focust op ouderschapsverlofgebruik bij moeders met en zonder migratie-achtergrond. Dit onderzoek gaat in op hoe het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof verschilt tussen vrouwen met en zonder migratie-achtergrond en in welke mate precare arbeidsmarktposities deze verschillen kunnen verklaren. Met longitudinale data van het BASD Panel (2004-2010), werden de determinanten van het gebruik van ouderschapsverlof onderzocht bij 10.976 vrouwen. En wanneer deze vrouwen ouderschapsverlof gebruikten werd nagegaan of ze dit voltijds of deeltijds deden en welke arbeidsmarktpositie ze invulden na het verlof.

De resultaten wijzen op een relatief laag gebruik van verlofstelsels bij moeders met migratie-achtergrond in België. Vooral Turkse en Marokkaanse migranten van de eerste generatie maken zeer weinig gebruik van deze stelsels. Na controle voor de anciënniteitsvoorwaarde voor ouderschapsverlof en de arbeidsmarktpositie voor de geboorte van het eerste kind, zijn de verschillen naar migratie-achtergrond gevoelig kleiner en niet langer significant. In België is het recht op ouderschapsverlof gekoppeld aan arbeidsmarktparticipatie. Enkel ouders die tijdens de 15 maanden voor de aanvraag minstens 12 maanden voor dezelfde werkgever werkten, hebben recht op ouderschapsverlof. De resultaten van dit onderzoek identificeren de combinatie van het niet-universele recht op ouderschapsverlof en een moeilijke toegang tot stabiele jobs als een belangrijke verklaring voor het lage gebruik van verlofstelsels door migranten.

Verder blijkt dat wanneer moeders met migratie-achtergrond van de eerste generatie ouderschapsverlof gebruiken, ze vaker gebruik maken van het voltijdse regime dan van het deeltijdse regime in vergelijking met moeders zonder migratie-achtergrond en tweede-generatie migranten. En hoewel de grote meerderheid van de moeders terug werkt nadat ze ouderschapsverlof gebruikt hebben, zien we dat eerste-generatie migranten van niet-Europese afkomst een lagere kans hebben om aan het werk te zijn het kwartaal na het verlof. Deze verschillen blijven bestaan na controle voor socio-demografische en socio-economische kenmerken, alsook na controle voor de lengte en het regime van het ouderschapsverlof. Een groot deel van deze onverklaarde variantie situeert zich op het niveau van de werkgever, wat duidt op een noodzaak aan verder onderzoek naar hoe kenmerken van de werkgever ouderschapsverlofgebruik bij migranten beïnvloedt. Verder houden de overgebleven verschillen mogelijks verband met preferenties voor kinderopvang binnen de gezinscontext, een gebrek aan kennis over

de ouderschapsverlof-wetgeving en een inadequate toegang tot kinderopvang nadat het recht op ouderschapsverlof uitgeput is.

De laatste studie toont dus aan dat de ouderschapsverlofwetgeving sociale ongelijkheid bestendigt door de combinatie van arbeid en gezin voornamelijk te ondersteunen voor degenen die reeds een sterke positie op de arbeidsmarkt hebben opgebouwd. In België – een land gekenmerkt door grote tewerkstellingsverschillen tussen vrouwen met en zonder migratieachtergrond – houdt dit in dat migranten sterk ondervertegenwoordigd zijn onder de gebruikers van ouderschapsverlof.

### **Conclusie**

Deze thesis draagt bij tot de verdere ontwikkeling van een levenslopperspectief op werk-gezinstrajecten op drie verschillende manieren. Ten eerste, toont dit boek de verwevenheid van levensloofphasen, nationale context en individuele karakteristieken aan wat betreft de verdeling van huishoudelijk werk. In meer egalitaire gendercontexten, slagen ouders van jonge kinderen er beter in om hun progressieve genderideeën om te zetten in een gendergelijke verdeling van huishoudelijk werk. In de tweede plaats laten de resultaten zien hoe initiële relatieve inkomensposities van partners de arbeidsmarktparticipatie van koppels na de geboorte van eerste kind bepalen. Ten derde toont dit onderzoek aan dat zwakke arbeidsmarktposities bij vrouwen met migratie-achtergrond worden gereproduceerd en geaccentueerd na de transitie naar ouderschap. De Belgische ouderschapsverlofwetgeving draagt bij tot de reproductie van dit patroon doordat ouderschapsverlof enkel beschikbaar is voor ouders die al een stabiele positie innamen op de arbeidsmarkt.