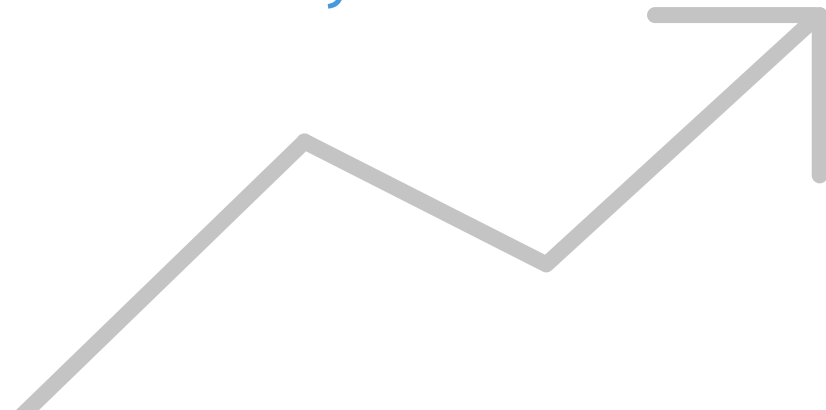# Measuring the distribution work of couples with household survey data

New approaches and findings from the German Microcensus

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Group of Experts on Gender Statistics,
Geneva, 10-12 May 2023

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Overview

» Distribution of (paid and unpaid) work in couples – a key indicator for gender equality

» Conceptual considerations

  » Employment

  » Full/part-time job

  » Family and household

» Indicators and findings

  » Average difference of hours usually worked in couples

  » Employment constellations in couples

  » Cross-classifying the hours usually worked in (employed) couples

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Distribution of (paid and unpaid) work in couples

A key indicator for gender equality

Impacts of (paid and unpaid) working time distribution in couples, e.g.

» Access to managerial positions
» Pay gap
» Pension gap

Issues particularly striking in **couples with children** (40-50% earnings „child penalty" for women; Bönke et al. 2020)

Distribution of paid work as a **proxy for the distribution of unpaid work**

"The unequal sharing of unpaid work, with women bearing the brunt of housework and childcare, is one of the main drivers of gender inequality" (Gimenez-Nadal/Molina 2022)

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Conceptual issues – employment (1)

Labour Force Concept of the International Labour Organization (ILO 2013)

» Extensive defnition of employment, one hour criterion

» Persons absent from their job are considered employed provided they have a job attachment

» Persons on annual leave, sick leave, partental leave, maternity leave often continue to be counted as employed

Risk of over-estimating the employment of mothers (in particular of young children)

Concept of "realised employment" developed by the FSO Germany (Hochgürtel 2018)

» Persons employed according to the Labour Force Concept of the ILO

» Provided that they were not absent form their job due to maternity leave or parental leave

Conceptual issues – employment (2)

Employment vs. realised employment of mothers and fathers (Germany, 2021)

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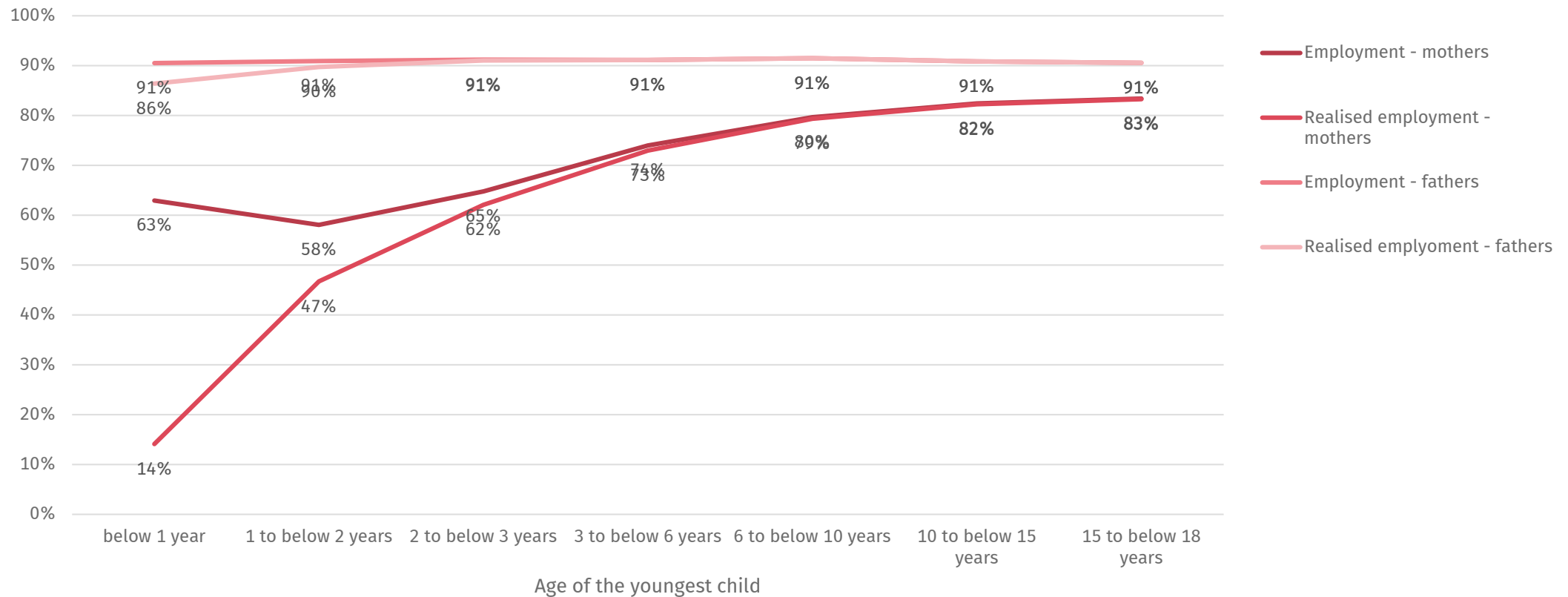
Conceptual issues – part-time jobs

Definition of the ILO (2008)

» Part-time job: Hours worked less than those of comparable full-time job

» Depending on national labour markets part-time jobs are a highly heterogeneous group

» Part-time jobs held by women may sytematically differ from those held by men

» Further differences in operationalisation

Relying solely on the full-time/part-time distinction risks to over-estimate female employment participation

Hours usually worked should be analysed in addition

Hours usually worked in realised part-time employment (Germany, 2022)
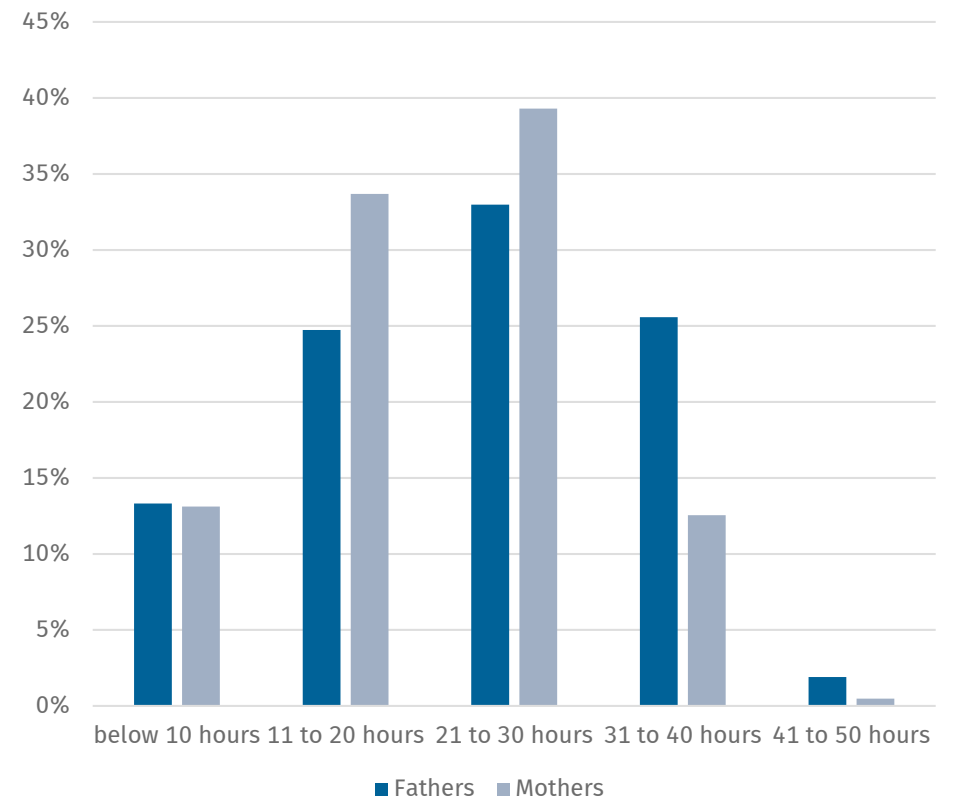
Conceptual issues – households and families

Housekeeping vs. household dwelling concept both limit household members to the dwelling

» In most surveys, also families are restricted to the persons living in one dwelling

» Not in line with family constellations beyond the traditional core family

  » „Single" parents

  » Blended families including biological as well as foster children

» Frequently incomplete data regarding the actual split of care responsibilities

Age boundary for children

» Children living in a household with their parents might be over 18 years old

» Breakdown by the age of the youngest child is highly useful for analysis
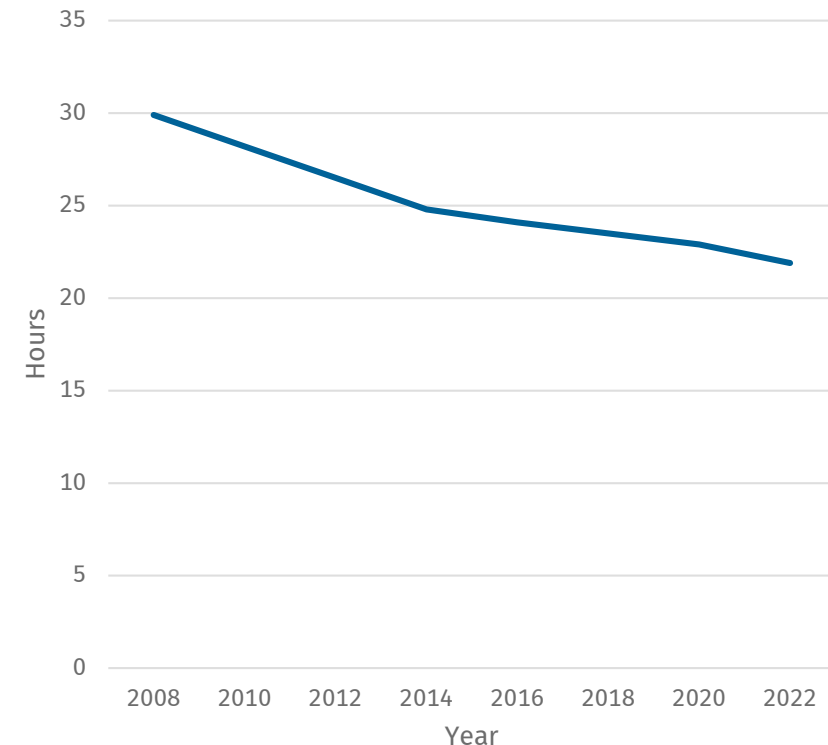
Proposed indicators – Working time difference

Indicator definition

» Difference weekly hours usually worked

» Population: couples, whose youngest child is less than three years old

» Partners not in realised employment count for „0" hours

Pros & cons

» Simplicty, reduction of complexity

» Covers all couples, wheter employed or not

» Suitable as a performance indicator, but not for differentiated analysis

Difference of hours usually worked in couples (Germany)
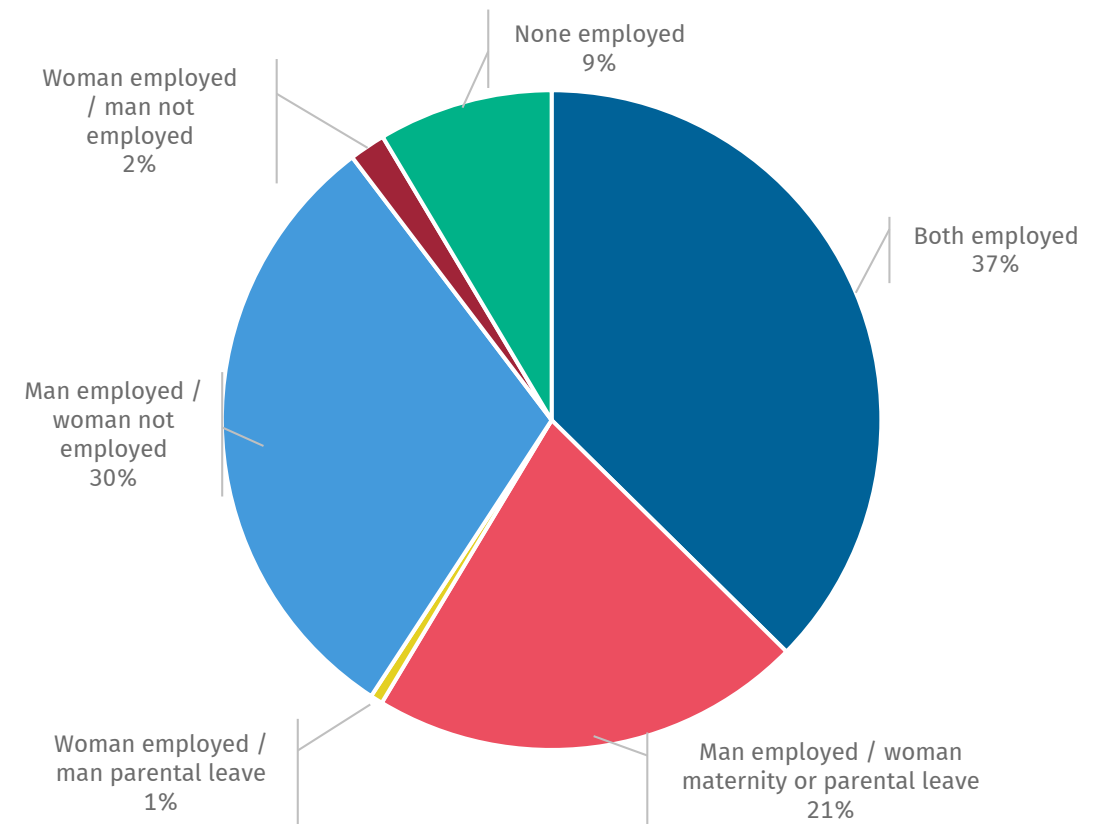
Proposed indicators – Employment constellations

Indicator definition

» Cross-tabulation of (realised) employment status of both partners of a couple

» Population: couples, whose youngest child is less than three years old

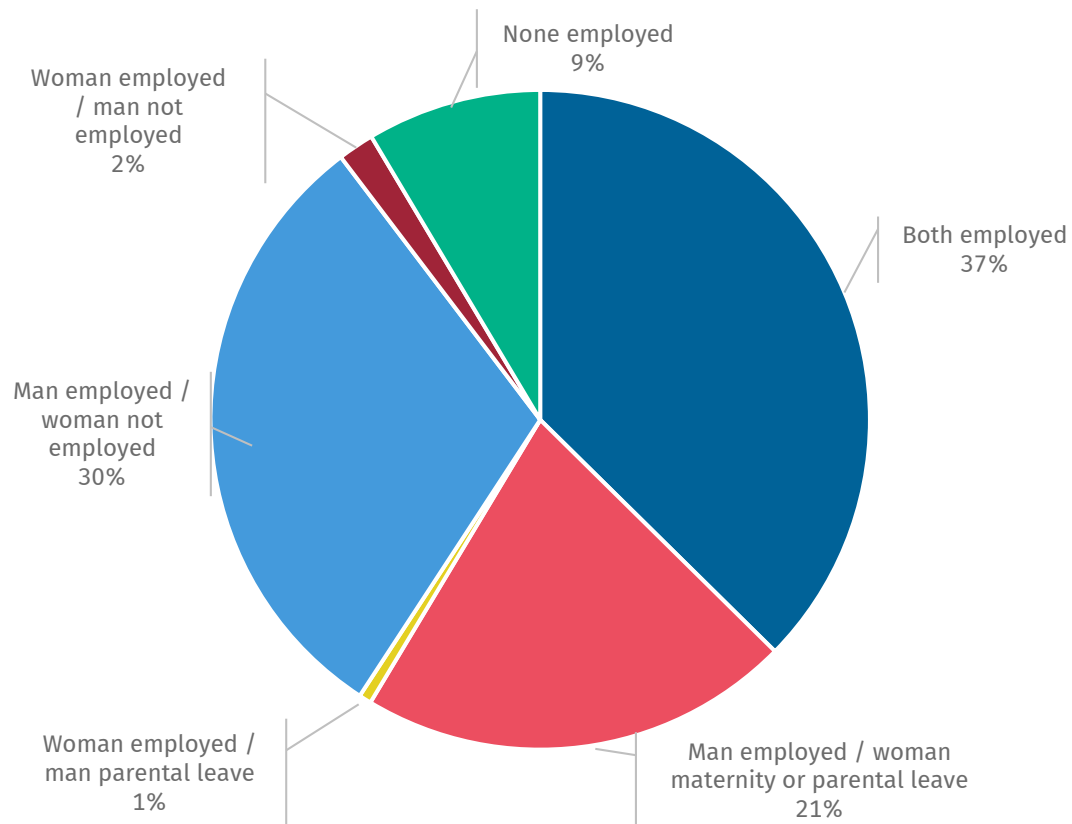» Possible extension to full-time/part-time work

Pros & cons

» Covers all couples, wheter employed or not

» Included in UNECE Gender Statistics questionnaiore

» Differentiation of employment situation of the mother and the father

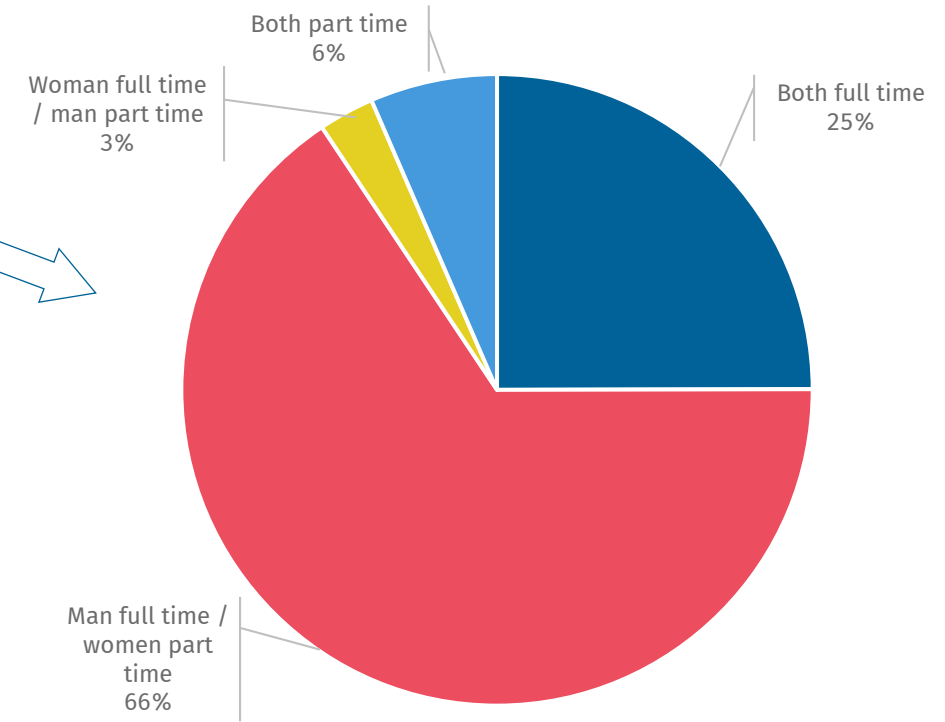**Employment constellations of couples (Germany, 2021)**

None employed 9%

Woman employed / man not employed 2%

Both employed 37%

Man employed / woman not employed 30%

Man employed / woman maternity or parental leave 21%

Woman employed / man parental leave 1%

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Proposed indicators – Employment constellations (2)

Employment constellations of couples (Germany, 2021)

- None employed 9%
- Woman employed / man not employed 2%
- Both employed 37%
- Man employed / woman not employed 30%
- Woman employed / man parental leave 1%
- Man employed / woman maternity or parental leave 21%

FT/PT-Employment constellations of couples (Germany, 2021)

- Both part time 6%
- Woman full time / man part time 3%
- Both full time 25%
- Man full time / women part time 66%

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Proposed indicators – Hours worked (1)
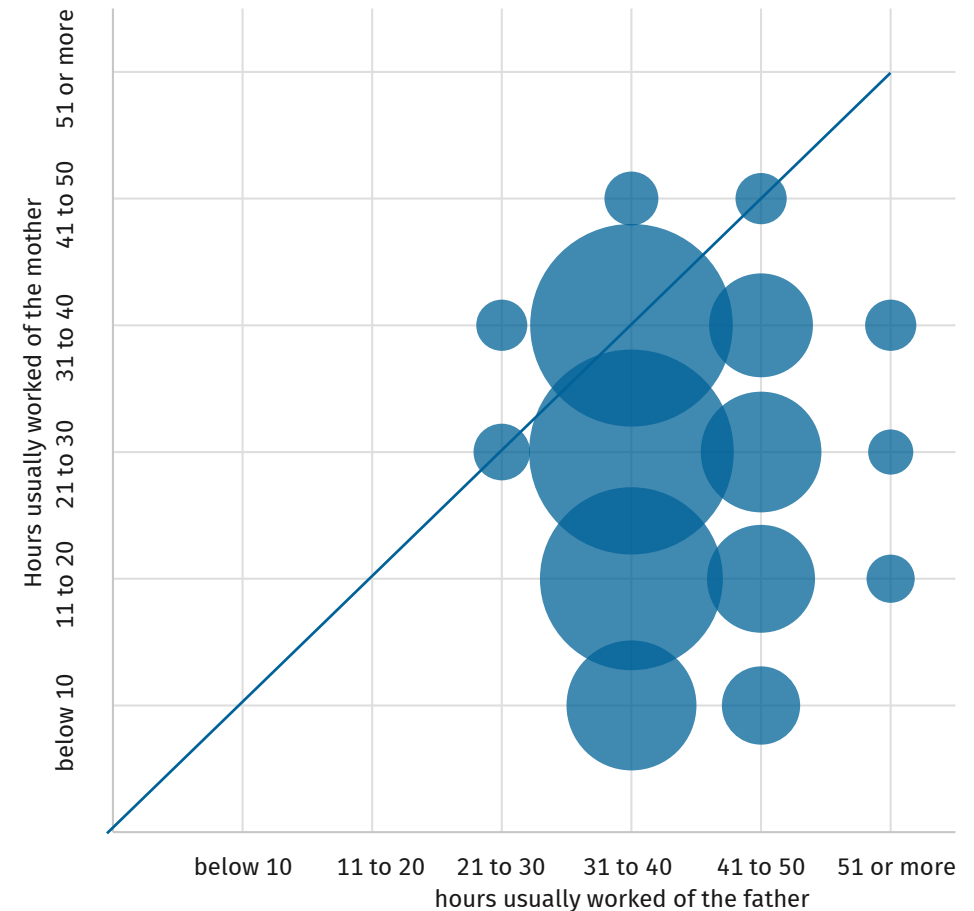
Indicator definition

» Cross-tabulation of hours usually worked of couples in (realised) employment

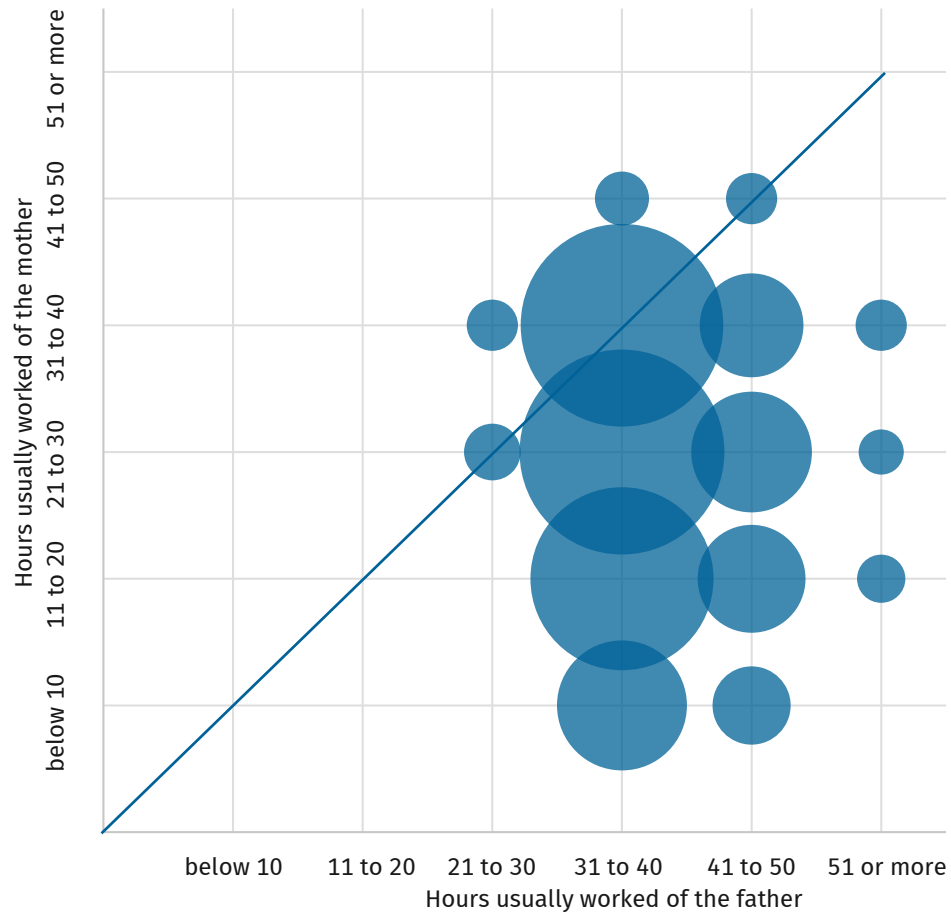» Population: employed couples, whose youngest child is less than three years old

Pros & cons

» Focus on employed couples (37% of the population)

» Needs to be combined with employment constellations

» Very differentiated picture

» Definiton of hour bands may affect the results
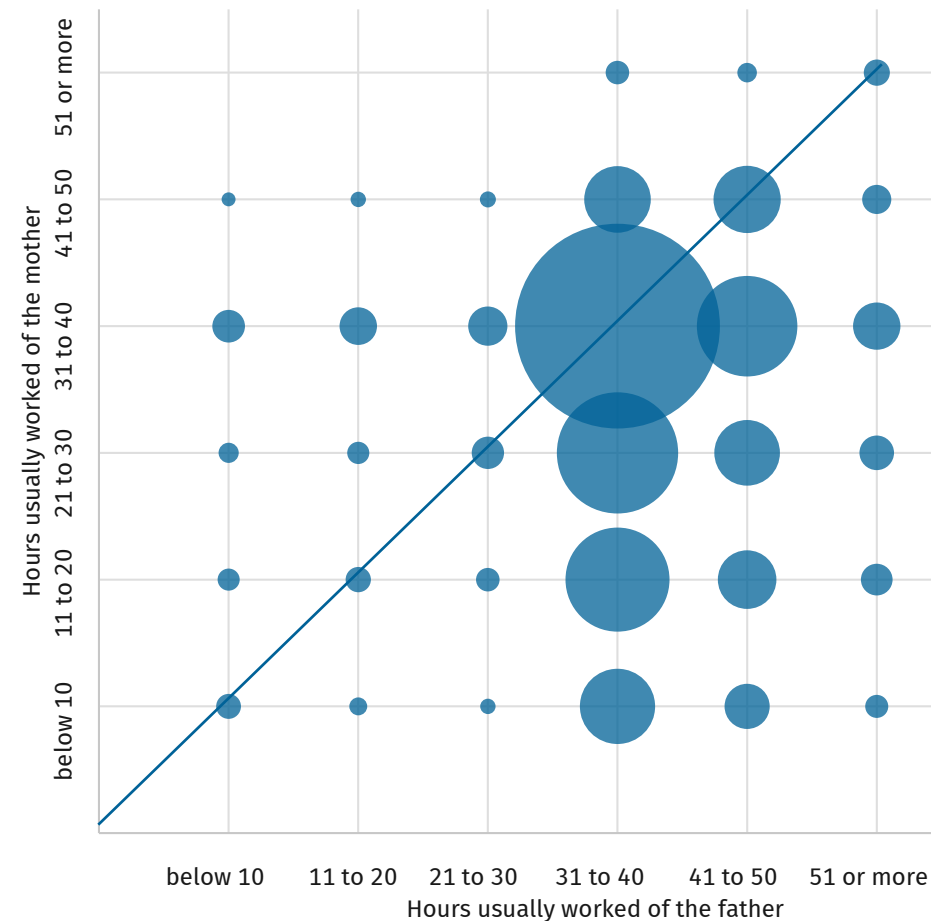
Working time constellations of couples

Hours usually worked of the mother (y-axis): below 10, 11 to 20, 21 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, 51 or more

hours usually worked of the father (x-axis): below 10, 11 to 20, 21 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, 51 or more

Proposed indicators – Hours worked (2)

Couples with children below 3 years

Couples without children

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Conclusions

Indicators on paid work of couples can be used as a proxy for the distribution of unpaid work

» No perfect correlation of paid / unpaid work: time use survey data still need

» Labour Force Surveys based on household samples provide a rich and frequently available data source

Conceptual decisions need to be taken with care

» Employment vs. realised employment

» Pros & cons of working with breakdowns by full-time or part-time work

» Issues of analyses of „single" parents and blended families

Different indicators complement one another

» No indicator alone shows the full picture

» Selection of indicator(s) depends on the specific reasearch context

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