

## **A qualitative analysis of the child penalty in the Netherlands.**

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### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** There is a considerable gap in worked hours between men and women in the Netherlands. Women work on average 28 hours per week where men work on average 39 hours per week. Research has shown that child birth can explain 80-90% of this gap. Women reduce their work hours with 48% after the birth of their first child, while men continue their work hours. This thesis aims to explain why child birth has such a different impact on men and women. The factors that influence the impact of childbirth are identified.

**Methods:** A qualitative study has been performed where 18 participants have been interviewed in-depth. To identify the factors of importance, the capabilities framework of Hobson is implemented.

**Results:** The results show five main factors: workplace resistance for fathers, accommodating workplace for mothers, arrangement of maternity period, gender beliefs and finances.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** The results of this study provide a clear insight in the factors that influence the work hours of women and men after child birth in the Netherlands. This could serve as a starting point for future in-depth research or policy interventions.

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## 1. Introduction

This thesis is aimed at finding out the factors that influence the hours worked by women and men after childbirth in the Netherlands. A qualitative study has been performed where 18 participants have been interviewed in-depth. To identify the factors of importance, the capabilities framework of Hobson is implemented. The results show five main factors: workplace resistance for fathers, accommodating workplace for mothers, arrangement of maternity period, gender beliefs and finances.

In the past, labour market participation of men was high while women were rarely participating in paid labour. In recent decennia this has shifted and the participation of women and men has converged significantly (Cipollone, Patacchini, and Vallanti 2012). However, the gap in labour market participation between women and men is still considerably large and closing at a slow pace. Data from the Netherlands supports this worldwide trend. Women were working 26 hours a week in 2007 and this was increased to 28 hours in 2017. Men were working 40 hours a week in 2007 and decreased this to 38 hours a week in 2017 (Portegijs 2018). These unequal work hours of men and women in the Netherlands are apparent in the so called “one-and-half-income” household model. The Netherlands has the highest percentage of women working part-time in Europe. 74% of employed women are working part time comparing to 23% of employed men (Eurostat 2020).

The labour market participation gap has a direct impact on both the individual level and the societal level. It impacts individual women since little work hours means less income and more financial uncertainty and dependency on their partners. Furthermore, it appears to impact children too. Children’s mental health is impacted by the presence of their father (Flouri and Buchanan 2003). Most men in the Netherlands report that they would prefer a more equal division of paid labour between them and their partner (Portegijs 2018). Evidently, men, women and children could potentially benefit from a narrowing of the labour market participation gap. However, not only the lives of individuals are impacted by the gap. The gap has direct economic consequences that impact the society at large. Many studies found that an unequal division of paid labour reduces economic growth. A variety of explanations for this reduction in economic growth can be found in the literature (Klasen and Lamanna 2009). First, if women are not participating, the pool of talent that employers can draw from is limited. This reduces the availability of workforce and has a negative impact on economic growth. Second, the level of labour market participation influences the fertility level. The demographic consequences of the fertility hinder economic growth. Third, women’s labour is, on average, cheaper than men’s labour. Cheap women’s labour has proven to be a driving factor in the economic growth of developing countries. Fourth, women tend to spend more money on children and long-term investments than men. It is suggested that if a women’s share in the household income grows, this could have a positive long-term impact on the economy.

The reasons for the gap between men and women in labour market outcomes like employment and work hours have been researched thoroughly. Previous literature suggested that the explanation can be found in differences between men and women regarding level of education, work experience, discrimination and segregation in occupations and industries. Current research reveals the declining importance of education level and work experience, while the impact of differences in occupation and industry remain significant (Blau and Kahn 2017).

Regardless of differences in occupations and industry, recent research emphasizes the major impact of child birth. The impact of the birth of children is considered the major driving force of the gap nowadays. 80% to 90% of the income gap can be explained by the birth of children (Kleven, Landais, and Sogaard 2019; Gibb et al. 2014). The impact of child birth on labour market outcomes of women is called the “child penalty”. Kleven et al. (2019) have showed that the impact of parenthood is the most significant driver of the gap in European countries and the United State of America. Recent research shows that, in the Netherlands, women reduce their work hours with 48% after the birth of their first child. Fathers did not significantly reduce their work hours after the birth of their first child (Adema, Rabaté, and Rellstab 2020). The reduction in work hours is less for women who are highly educated, have a same-sex partner or work in the public sector. The reduction in average work hours is partly due to a portion of women leaving the labour market altogether but mostly to women maintaining employment but reducing their hours. Paradoxically, 75% of part time working women in the Netherlands would prefer to work more under certain conditions, such as affordable childcare or flexible work hours (Portegijs 2018). It may appear that the child penalty is mainly impacting women, since they are reducing their work hours. However, one should not forget that the other side of the medal is that fathers are continuing their work hours after child birth. Research shows that fathers would like to play a larger role in childcare (Portegijs 2018). Continued work demands after child birth could prevent fathers from taking leave or reducing their hours and spending time with their children.

The increased importance of childbirth on the labour market outcomes of men and women has recently initiated research into the dynamics that are at play. There is currently no study that researches why childbirth has such a different impact on women and men in the Netherlands. However, there is a limited number of studies from abroad that could shed a light on this matter. Most studies highlight the importance of workplace characteristics. A study in Germany found that fathers refrain from reducing their work hours due to fear of professional repercussions and a lack of replacement at work (Samtleben et al. 2019). Liebig and Oechsle (2017) also confirm that workplace characteristics are crucial to the hours worked after child birth. A father’s leave is regarded as a holiday and fathers assume that taking more time off would be problematic. At the same time the workplace reckons that women may become pregnant and that they must be (partially) replaced. More

research supports that workplace support for combining work and childcare is perceived different by men and women (Kaufman 2018; Kaufman and Almqvist 2017). Workplaces, on average, appear to be more accommodating towards women reducing their work hours after childbirth than they are towards men. Furthermore, finances are indicated to be influencing the hours worked after childbirth. Parents are less likely to take up leave when the leave is unpaid (Reimer 2020). When the fathers earn more than the mother, couples tend to follow a traditional division of paid labour (Kaufman 2018). Finally, gender beliefs are often stated as causing the mothers to reduce work hours while fathers continue working. Both fathers and mothers assume that gender differences cause women to reduce their hours. Parents state that they value maternal bonding over paternal bonding (Kaufman 2018). Other research also finds stereotypical thinking about gender to be influential in the decision that couples make regarding work hours and care for children (Liebig and Oechsle 2017). Many other factors are found to be of significance regarding the child penalty. These will be discussed more in detail in the literature review.

This thesis will be the first qualitative research into the factors that mediate the child penalty for men and women. The Netherlands is an interesting context due to the high number of women working part-time. This is the highest of Europe. Research can provide insight in what causes the high number women working part-time. The Netherlands has a different culture and policy context than previous countries that are studied. The dynamics at play differ from countries that are previously investigated. The results of this thesis can add to our understanding of the child penalty and its mediating factors.

This thesis uses a qualitative method with in-depth interviews of 18 participants. 10 different sex couples were interviewed. However, in 2 couples the father was not available to be interviewed and could not be included in the study. The number of participants is based on the number of participants in similar qualitative studies. Numbers of participants can range from 11 or 22 to 32 (Byun and Won 2020; Kaufman 2018; Liebig and Oechsle 2017). More participants would have been preferred but this thesis was constrained by time. The participants were interviewed about their opportunities and constraints regarding their work hours after childbirth.

Scholars have used the agency and capabilities approach of Hobson to analyse the interplay of factors (Hobson 2015; Reimer 2020). This approach uses a multi-dimensional model of factors to explain how childbirth impacts men and women. These factors, on firm level, household level and societal level shape the possibilities for work-life balance (Hobson 2018). The capabilities approach of Hobson serves as a theoretical framework to analyse the results.

The results of this study show that 5 factors are most influential regarding the work hours of women and men after child birth. These 5 factors are: workplace resistance for fathers, accommodating

workplace for mothers, arrangement of maternity period, finances, and gender beliefs. Workplace characteristics are a factor of great importance since this defines whether parents feel that they have the opportunity to reduce their work hours or whether they should continue their work hours. Various characteristics at the workplace play a role, namely, the initial response to pregnancy, replacement during leave, job characteristics, assumptions regarding work hours after childbirth, managers attitude, peer examples and work culture. These factors are perceived to be influential by both fathers and mothers. It is important to realize that this study focuses on the experience lived by fathers and mothers and does not verify whether the workplace really is resistant or accommodating. Furthermore, the arrangement of the maternity period appears to be the starting point for the unequal division of paid labour between a couple. Parents suggest that the mother's physical recovery, breast feeding and unequal leave for fathers and mothers causes an initially more prominent role for the mother in child care and this is carried on in future decisions regarding child care and work hours. Next, finances are often said to be determining in parents' work hours after child birth. In many couples, the income of the father is higher than the mothers income and this makes it less costly for the mother to reduce her hours than for the father. Finally, gender beliefs at a societal level and at a personal level are reported to have an impact on the work hours too. Fathers feel like they expected to work full time and their environment demands an explanation when they don't. Mothers experience the exact opposite, they feel that they are expected to reduce their work hours. One couple said that their decisions regarding work hours were based on their religion that preferred traditional gender roles.

The results of this study provide a clear insight in the factors that influence the work hours of women and men after child birth in the Netherlands. This could serve as a starting point for future in-depth research regarding the individual factors that are at play or how these factors dynamically interact with each other. Furthermore, it serves as a guideline for possible policy interventions. Given the current heightened attention for gender equality this thesis can be relevant for everyone interested in this topic.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The impact of childbirth on labour participation of women and men has been subject of elaborate theorizing. It is a multi-faceted topic which cannot be easily explained. Many theories can be found in the literature, each with their own perspective on the child penalty. The most prominent explanation used to be a neo-classical economic perspective (Lippe and Siegers 1994). Partners try to maximize their utility either as individuals or as a household and therefore the mother reduces her work hours since she usually gets paid less than the father. However, recent literature has moved away from this perspective. Even in households where the mother is the breadwinner, the father is not more likely to reduce his hours after childbirth (Marynissen et al. 2019). Today's perspective has shifted towards sociological theories that emphasize the role of gender ideologies. Gender ideologies influence parents at the household, organizational and societal level. The theory of gendered organizations describes that organizations expect mothers to reduce their work hours whereas fathers are expected to continue their work hours (Acker 1990). This theory provides us with insight how gender impacts a parent both at work and at home. Nevertheless, gender is not sufficient to explain the differences we see among mothers and among fathers. Lower educated women are more affected by the child penalty than higher educated women (Budig and Hodges 2010). Apparently, gender does not tell us the whole story. A theory that provides us with a holistic approach to this topic, and that this thesis will build on, is the Capabilities theory of Sen and the continuation of this work by Hobson. Sen's theory focuses on the individual's capabilities to achieve certain goals (Sen 1985). The opportunity to choose what kind of life an individual wants to live are considered as one's capabilities. These capabilities can be constrained by factors such as government oppression, lack of finances and ignorance. It is important to distinguish between what individuals choose and the choice they would make if they had the capabilities. Hobson has built on Sen's work and elaborated the gendered dimensions (Hobson 2018). This thesis takes the capabilities framework as proposed by Hobson as it's theoretical foundation. The current chapter will continue with discussing neo-classical theory and the theory of gendered organizations and why those are not sufficient to explain the child penalty. Next, Sen's capability theory will be elaborately described. Then Hobson's contribution to the capability theory will be discussed. The chapter will end with a description of how Hobson's framework could explain the child penalty.

### **Resource theory**

From a neo-classical economic perspective, two theories have been influential in the discussion about the division of paid labour and unpaid labour between men and women. Those are the Resource theory by Blood and Wolfe (1960) and New home economics by Becker (1981); (Becker 1965). They both approach the division of labour from a perspective of utility maximization. Blood and Wolfe regard the individual as striving for utility maximization, whereas Becker regards the household as an economic unit where partners work together in maximizing their utility as a household.

Blood and Wolfe (1960) argue that the differences in resources of partners are the main factor in the division of labour. The partner with more resources, like education and income, has a greater bargaining power in the household. This line of thought is continued in the household bargaining theory (Bittman et al. 2003; Brines 1993) It is assumed that more individual utility is derived from paid labour than unpaid labour, since reduction of paid labour could have a career disadvantages and generate less income. Therefore, the partner with more power will continue their work hours after child birth. The partner with less resources, has less bargaining power and will reduce their work hours and contribute more unpaid labour. Research on this theory has been inconsistent, some research confirms the link between resources and paid labour whereas other research does not find a significant effect (Lippe and Siegers 1994). Research by Bittman shows that in households where the woman earns more money, the opposite of what Blood and Wolfe predict happens. Bittman found that in households where women earn more, women also increase their unpaid labour in the household (Bittman et al. 2003). Nevertheless, it's reasonable to assume that individual resources shape the relations between partners in a household and therefore their participation in both paid and unpaid labour. However, resource theory only considers a limited number of resources to be of importance and resource theory does not provide a rationale for the a-priori unequal division of resources between men and women. Furthermore, the utility that a parent derives from spending time with their child and building a strong family bond is neglected. Research by Gregory and Milner (2008) has found that fathers want to spend time with their children and want to be involved in child care.

### **New home economics**

Similar to the Resource theory, Becker build his New home economics on the neo-classical assumption of utility maximization (Becker 1981, 1965). In contrast to Resource theory, Becker regards the household as an economic unit. The partners in a household work harmoniously together and pool their time and resources (Becker 1965). Partners divide their paid and unpaid labour in such a way that it is most efficient. One partner specializes in unpaid labour while the other one specializes in paid labour. Individuals are assumed to make rational decisions and money is most important in dividing paid and unpaid labour among partners. Thus, the partner with the lower salary is likely to reduce their hours and take up the unpaid labour at home. Therefore, the partner with the higher income can continue their career. This strategy is aimed at maximizing the joint utility of the parents. The mechanism in New home economics is very similar to the mechanism in Blood and Wolfe (1960) Resource theory, although they consider joint versus individual utility maximization. Becker continues to argue that if the division of labour is most efficient if the mother takes care of the unpaid labour at home while the father continues paid labour. Becker believes that there are biological differences between mothers and fathers where mothers have a biological advantage in caring for children (Becker 1981). This is nowadays regarded as an outdated view on the abilities of both fathers and mothers. There is no current research that proves evidence for a biological (dis)advantage of

either parent. The only exception is breast feeding, this is an ability only women possess. In contrast, current research shows that involvement of both mother and fathers is associated with positive child outcomes (Flouri and Buchanan 2003; Lamb 2004). Furthermore, it is doubtful if there is always a complete harmony of interests between partners. Individuals may not be willing to sacrifice their own utility for the joint utility of the household. Nevertheless, it is likely that there is some cooperation between partners in dividing their time between paid and unpaid labour.

### **Doing gender**

Both theories discussed above take a neo-classical perspective and were posed over 50 years ago. These neo-classical models have not been effective in explaining the gap in paid labour between mothers and fathers (Sullivan 2018). Much progress has been made since. Literature has moved away from a purely neo-classical perspective which assumes that paid employment is prominent in determining the division of paid labour. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, West and Zimmerman (1987) published their classic article “Doing gender” which suggested that gender-role ideologies are the important driver in the behavioural differences between women and men. Their perspective describes those women and men continuously perform gender activities in their daily live according to existing gender-role ideas. Women produce gender by doing household work and caring for children, men produce gender by providing an income. The gender performance theory states that paid and unpaid labour are both activities that have important cultural meanings that depend on gender. Women and men are expected to behave in a certain way, and this shapes their behaviour. They conform to social expectations regarding their gender (West and Zimmerman 2009). When they do not conform, they are not understood by other people (England and Folbre 2005). The gender performance theory explains that doing paid or unpaid labour is not a gender-neutral activity that is divided in a household through bargaining or an economic rational. The division in labour is embedded in social norms regarding gender and could either serve as a resource the construct femininity of masculinity or as a threat to femininity of masculinity (Schneider 2011).

This gender perspective can be found in many other theories. Another theory that is worth mentioning is the theory of Gendered organisations by Acker (1990). This theory builds on the idea that social structure and social processes are gendered. It explains that organizations are not gender-neutral but are gendered. Gender is an integral part of the processes in an organization. It means that “assumptions about gender underlie the documents and contracts used to construct organizations and to provide the common sense round for theorizing about them”(Acker 1990). For example, the assumption that men are the main breadwinner and the women are responsible for child care is reflected in not only official company policy but also in daily practice, expectations and norms (Samtleben et al. 2019).

The gender performance theory and the theory of gendered organisations have a similar foundation. Both describe that the behaviour of women and men is shaped by social norms that depend on gender. They explain why there is a significant gap in paid labour between women and men after childbirth. Social norms expect fathers to provide an income, whereas they expect mothers to care for the household and children. The gender perspective adds another important layer to our understanding of the unequal division of paid labour between women and men. The gender perspective and the neo-classical perspective are not necessarily opposing, but merely add to each other in explaining different contingencies of interactions at the household level (Sullivan 2018).

Near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, again a shift in research occurred. Feminist scholars emphasized the connection between the household level and other levels in society, like the institutional level (Sullivan 2018). During this time, multi-level frameworks were developed. In line with this trend, Hobson has proposed a multi-dimensional model to analyse the factors shaping the possibilities for work-life balance. This model is an adaption of the Capability Approach of Sen in such a way that it can be applied to empirical research (Hobson 2018). This thesis will build on Hobson's multi-dimensional model. Before elaborating on her model, Sen's Capability Approach will be discussed since it is foundational to Hobson's model.

### **The Capability approach**

The Capability Approach was developed by the Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen in the 1980's. Sen's most formal articulation of the Capability Approach can be found in "Commodities and Capabilities" (Sen 1985). The Capability Approach focuses on the capability of the individual to lead the kind of life they have reason to value (Wells 2021). Capabilities can be explained as the opportunity or freedom to choose the kind of life an individual wants to live. Capabilities are the opportunities that are available to the individual. Sen calls this set of capabilities "doings and beings", like being in good health or getting married. If these capabilities are being realized, they are conversed to "functionings".

The Capability Approach has been used and adapted by many (Robeyns and Byskov 2020). This has sparked a discussion about the use of the Capability Approach. Robeyns and Byskov (2020) distinguish three applications. First, the evaluation of individual well-being. Second, the evaluation and assessment of social phenomena. Third, the development of policies that are aimed at social change in society. In this thesis the Capability Approach will be used to explain the social phenomenon of the division of (un)paid labour between men and women. The Capability Approach is operationalized to measure capabilities through qualitative research. This approach will be used to evaluate what capabilities men and women have and how these can explain the current division of (un)paid labour. Women may have more opportunities to choose for childcare since their employer

expects them to do so. But this could also limit their opportunity to pursue a career. The Capability Approach considers the individual's real freedom to choose instead of their formal rights.

This focus on capabilities is significantly different from traditional economic models, like utilitarianism and resourcism, that focus on subjective well-being or resources and goods. Sen developed his Capability Approach in response to these traditional economic models. He has several concerns regarding traditional models (Wells 2021). First, the traditional focus on means neglects the individual's possibilities to use those means. If both an abled and a disabled person receive a bicycle, they may have the same resource, but they differ in their ability to convert this into a valuable functioning. A disabled person may need an adapted bicycle and has no use for a regular bicycle. For an abled or disabled person to achieve mobility, they will need a different bicycle. Traditional models that only focus on means instead of what individuals can do with those means are therefore insufficient. Second, a model that focuses on the individual's perception of their life are insufficient since the individual is biased by their own experiences. People can adapt their desires to the current constraints in their life. This is called "adaptive preferences". For example, a father may experience great joy from caring for his children, but since he does not have this opportunity, he may believe that he prefers his career over childcare. Third, Sen emphasizes that the freedom to choose is important. Regardless of what people choose in their life, the fact that they have the option to choose is important. For example, if both a father and a mother take care of the household, they end up with the same life. But the mother may not have had the opportunity to choose for a full-time career, while the father did have the opportunity. Even though the achievement is the same, what matters is that the father had the freedom to choose where the mother did not. Sen's model considers both the actual achievements, called "functionings", and the real freedom, called "capability" (Wells 2021).

At the core of the Capability Approach is the assessment of what the individual is actually able to be and to do. This is analysed in terms of "functionings" and "capabilities". Figure 1 illustrates the relationships in the Capability Approach (Wells 2021). An individual has access to certain resources. Depending on interpersonal differences, these resources have a certain value to the individual. This value depends on the individual's capability to convert these resources to functionings. For example, a father has a formal right to parental leave. However, due to constraint arising from the firm that he is working, he does not have the actual possibility (capability) to take up this parental leave (functioning). It is important to emphasize that capabilities are not merely a form freedom but are considered real freedoms. These capabilities should not be restricted by any potential constraints. Functionings are capabilities that have been achieved either by choice or by chance.

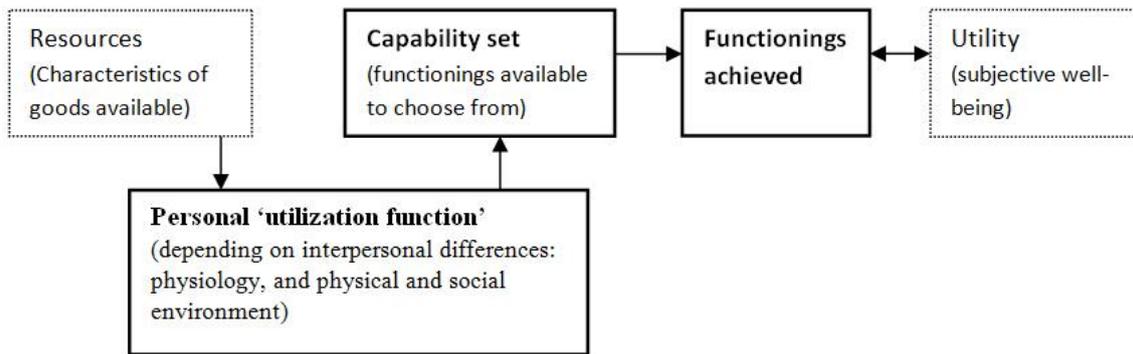


Figure 1. Representation of the relationships in the Capability Approach (Wells 2021).

The capability of the individual to achieve certain functionings is depending on “conversion factors” (Robeyns and Byskov 2020). For example, a disabled person may have a very low conversion factor for a regular bicycle. If they can not ride a regular bicycle, they cannot transform this resource into a functioning like mobility. This relation between a resource and the achievement is called the conversion factor. There are three different types of conversion factors distinguished. The first type are personal conversion factors. These are internal to an individual, like intelligence, sex of physical condition. If an individual is in bad physical shape this may impair them to use a bicycle. The second type of conversion factors are social conversion factors like gender norms. These conversion factors orite from the society in which the individual lives. Public policies or societal arrangements shape an individual’s capabilities. Social norms may prevent a mother from pursuing a full-time career after childbirth. The third type of conversion factors are environmental conversion factors like climate, the proximity of a sea or fertile grounds and the existence of roads and bridges. These factors are determined by the physical and built environment of the individual. If there are not proper roads close to an individual, then a bicycle will not add much to the mobility of an individual. These conversion factors illustrate that traditional economic models who only consider resources are not sufficient. It is necessary to assess the individual’s characteristics and their circumstances. Sen’s capability does not refer to the individual’s abilities but to their opportunities considering the constraints that are posed by conversion factors.

The concept of conversion factors shows that the Capability Approach builds on the means-ends distinction. It holds that it is important to focus on the means instead of the ends. Since people differ in their ability to transform means into valuable ends (funtionings) or real opportunities (capabilities). The conditions that an individual is faced with determine whether they can pursue their true desires. The Capability Approach stresses the importance of human diversity. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach. Not only each individual opportunity by themselves is important

but moreover the combination of opportunities determines whether an individual can achieve certain functionings.

The application of the Capability Approach has been much debated. Sen stresses the importance of capabilities, but critics have posed that it is not feasible to measure and observe capabilities. It is obviously much easier to observe functionings than to observe capabilities. Furthermore, there has been a debate about which capabilities are relevant and how they should be weighted (Robeyns and Byskov 2020). Sen has not provided a clear-cut answer to these questions. He seems to imply that each group should select and weigh the capabilities by themselves.

### **Hobson's Capability Framework**

To operationalize the work of Sen and to apply it to the division of (un)paid between men and women, the multi-dimensional model of Hobson is used. She first proposes her model in her article "The Agency Gap in Work-Life Balance: Applying Sen's Capabilities Framework Within European Context" from 2011, and later continues in her article "Gendered Dimensions and Capabilities: Opportunities, Dilemmas and Challenges" from 2018 (Hobson 2011, 2018). Hobson acknowledges that operationalizing Sen's capabilities into empirically grounded research is challenging (Hobson 2018).

Hobson uses the Capability Approach to analyse the agency gap in work-life balance in a European context (Hobson 2011). Work-life balance describes the opportunity for individuals to be both earners and carers. Research reveals that both men and women find work-life balance of importance. Furthermore, a majority of European men would like to work less hours. However, this desire is not reflected in the numbers of hours worked by men and women. This gap between the ideal and the real is the focus of Hobson's work. She operationalized Sen's Capability Approach to analyse this gap in attitudes and practice regarding work-life balance. This thesis too investigates the work-life balance for men and women but focuses specifically on the impact of child birth.

Central to the Capability Approach are choice and agency. The capabilities of the individual to achieve work-life balance are constrained by multiple factors like, policy about parental leave and gender hierarchies. These constraints limit the individual's freedom to choose the way they want to live their life. Even though fathers may be eligible to parental leave, they may feel constrained in taking up this leave due to expectations from society or more specific their employer.

Hobson has developed a model of a capability set consisting of three categories, see Figure 2. Those categories are; institutional factors, individual factors and societal factors. Individual factors are for example gender, age and income. Institutional factors are public policies and laws. Societal factors capture normative structures in society.

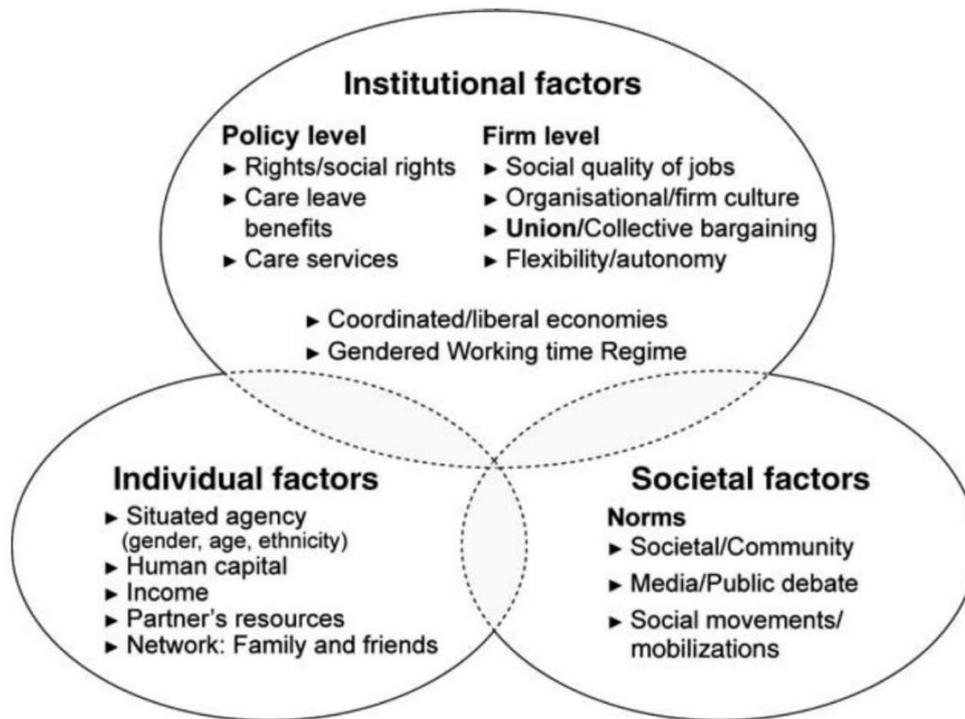


Figure 2. Capability set (Hobson 2011)

Hobson emphasizes the importance of gender and situated agency as individual factors. The framework includes a partner's income but does not focus on household strategies but on the individual's agency. A father's capability to choose for a reduction of hours may be impacted by his partner's income. The framework focuses on the capabilities of the individual parent rather than on the complete household. Gender may not matter if we consider household strategy, but it does impact an individual parent through societal norms.

In her article "Gendered Dimensions and Capabilities: Opportunities, Dilemmas and Challenges" of 2018, Hobson continues to elaborate on her multi-dimensional framework (Hobson 2018). She adds two more mechanisms; "the sense of entitlement to make claims and the perceived scope of alternatives in exercising rights". This is illustrated in Figure 3. The adjustment of her framework results in a new framework which is illustrated in Figure 4. Her framework illustrates that an individual's sense of entitlement and their perception of their scope alternatives influences their ability to transform resources into achievements. A mother may be formally entitled to return to work but she may not feel entitled to it due to societal norms. Or she may not even consider a return to work as a viable alternative to caring for her children at home. This explains that even when parents are formally entitled to leave or a reduction in working hours, this may not necessarily translate in more opportunities for them. Conversion factors like work culture and societal norms impact a parents capabilities.

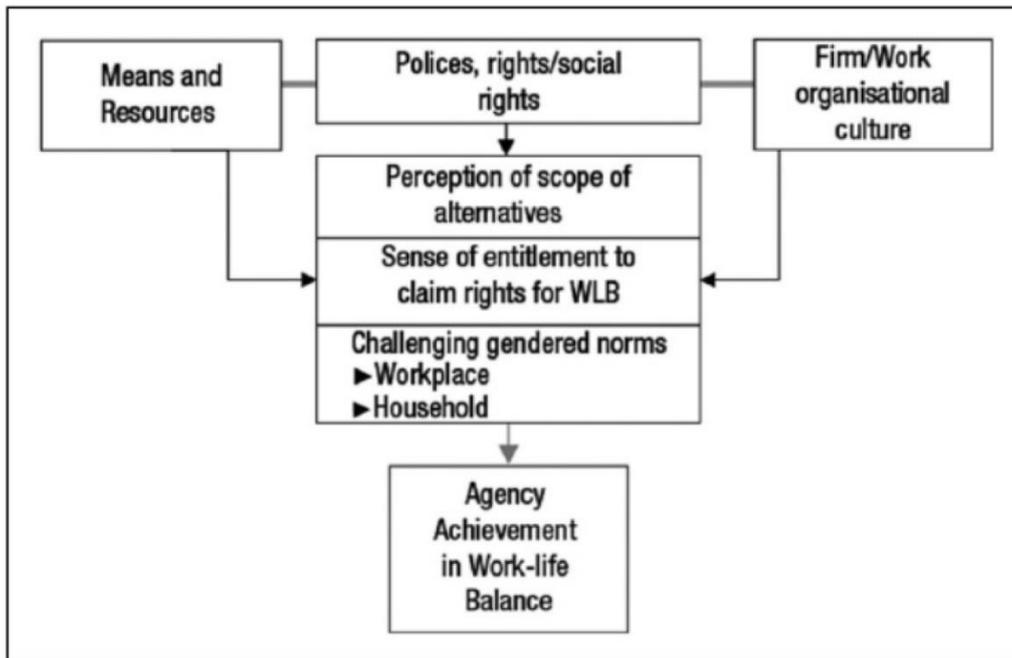


Figure 3. Conversion of entitlements into a sense of entitlement (Hobson 2018).

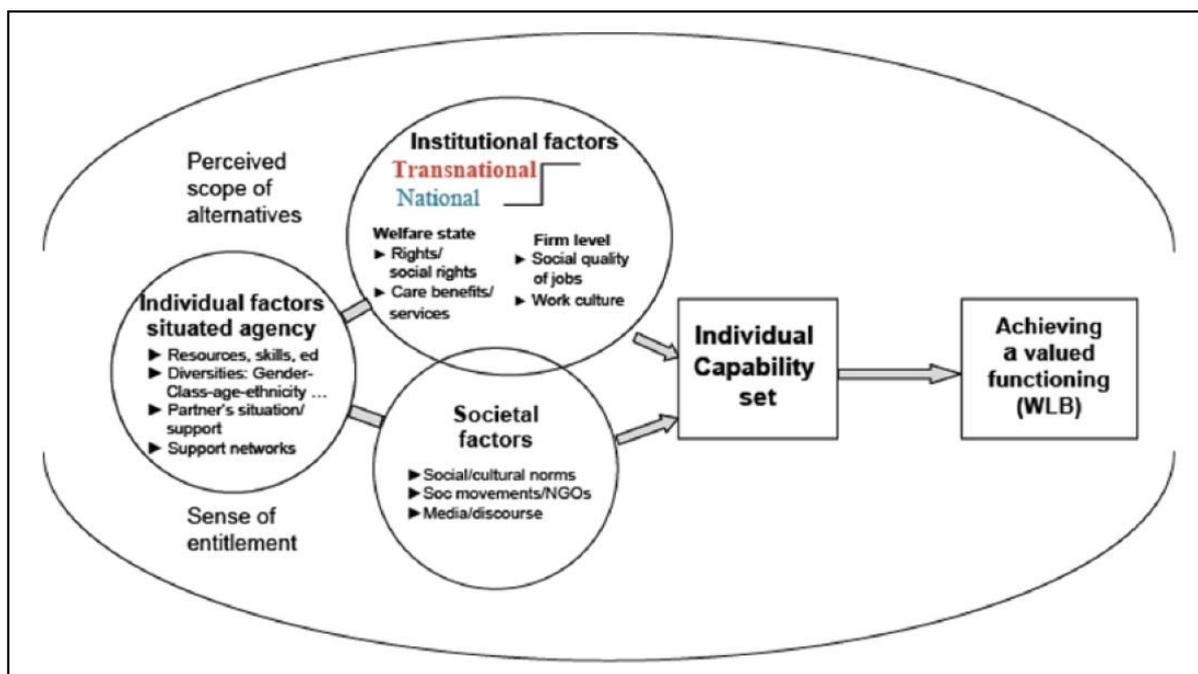


Figure 4. Capability set including sense of entitlement and perceived scope of alternatives (Hobson 2018)

### **Application of the Capability Framework**

Hobson's capability framework will be used to analyse and provide possible explanations for the child penalty in the Netherlands. The framework and its variety of factors provides us with a tool for reviewing each potentially influential factor. Analysis may reveal how these factors differently impact mothers versus fathers and therefore are fundamental to the existence of the child penalty. The constraints and capabilities for women and men may differ. For example, women are entitled to a longer birth leave than fathers. This may cause women to take up more leave and consequently reduce their hours. Fathers have only a few days of birth leave. Therefore, their employer may not be inclined to organise a replacement and expect the father to return to work full time. It can be expected that the different factors interact with each other. If gender-role ideologies exist as a societal factor, this could impact the leave policy as an institutional factor.

The literature review in the next chapter will discuss more in detail the variety of factors that exist and how they may impact the child penalty.

### **3. Literature Review**

Labour market participation of men and women has converged in recent decennia (Cipollone, Patacchini, and Vallanti 2012). However, there is still a significant gap in hours worked by men and women. In the Netherlands, 74% of employed women are working part time comparing to 23% of employed men. This percentage of women working part time is the highest percentage in Europe (Eurostat 2020). These numbers illustrate the gendered division of paid labour in the Netherlands.

One of the effects of this difference in hours worked between men and women is a considerable wage gap. Despite narrowing of the gender income gap, a considerable amount of the gender income gap persists over time (Blau and Kahn 2000). This gap in income between men and women results in more financial dependency of women on their partner. Research shows that this gender wage gap has a significant impact on the mental health of women. Women are more likely to develop a major depressive disorder or a generalized anxiety disorder when their income is less than their male partner. This risk is significantly reduced in couples where the woman earns more than the man (Platt et al. 2016). The gender wage gap is an important factor in explaining the gender disparity in mental health.

#### **Gender inequality and economic performance**

From an ethical perspective, these gender inequalities in income are problematic. They reduce women's well-being and are regarded as a form of injustice (Klasen and Wink 2003). The moralities of gender inequality will not be discussed in detail since this is an economic thesis. Nevertheless, these moralities and the concept of equity and justice regarding gender inequality are a major argument for the importance of this research.

For this thesis it is more relevant to discuss how unequal gender participation in paid labour impacts the economy. Many empirical studies have found that unequal labour market participation considerably reduces economic growth (Klasen and Lamanna 2009; Blackden et al. 2006; Stotsky 2006). The literature suggests a variety of explanations for this negative impact of gender inequality on the economy. First, the unequal employment of men and women distorts the economy. The pool of talent that employers can draw from is reduced and this reduces the availability of the workforce (Esteve-Volart 2004). These distortions do not only impact the dependent employed but also impact the self-employed. Women are less likely to be self-employed, for example in agriculture, and therefore these sectors miss out on resources. This could impact the productivity of these sectors and therefore reduce economic growth (Blackden et al. 2006). Second, unequal labour market participation has a significant impact on a country's demographic, which in turn can negatively impact economic growth. Research by (Cavalcanti and Tavares 2016) argues that unequal labour market participation is linked to higher fertility levels and higher fertility levels are known to reduce

economic growth. Third, women's labour is relatively cheap, and this could prove to be advantageous for a country on the international market. If women are not employed, this loss of cheap labour could negatively impact the international competitiveness of a country. Women's labour is important if the growth strategy of a country is export oriented (Seguino 2000a, 2000b). The fourth argument regards the direct impact that women's employment has on their household finances. Literature suggests that women who are employed have a greater bargaining power in their household (Klasen and Wink 2003). This greater bargaining power of women can positively affect the finances of the household. For example, women are more likely to do productive investments and repay their credit (Stotsky 2006). Furthermore, women invest more in healthcare and education of their children (Thomas 2000). This investment increases the human capital of the next generation, and this will increase economic growth (King and Mason 2001). The fifth argument suggests that women, on average, are less likely to commit fraud and nepotism than men (King and Mason 2001). More women in employment could therefore improve governance, and this can spur economic performance. Finally, empirical research has showed that when women enter the workforce, wages for both men and women increase (Weinstein 2018). All these arguments explain why employment of women can stimulate economic growth and this illustrates that an unequal labour market participation is relevant to the economy. As a critical sidenote, it should be mentioned that it appears that the impact of women entering the workforce is dependent on the level of economic development (Mammen and Paxson 2000).

### **The impact of child birth**

As discussed above, employment of both men and women is relevant for the economy and society. Much progress had been made in narrowing the gender gap in employment and other labour market outcomes in recent decennia. The current shift towards more equality can be explained by a reduction in discrimination, family-friendly policies and the disappearance of the education gap (Olivetti and Petrongolo 2016). However a considerable amount of the gender gap persists over time (Blau and Kahn 2000). The remaining gaps in income and employment can be partly explained by the impact of the birth of the first child. Childbirth is associated with decreased employment, less working hours, and lower wage rates of women. These labour market outcomes impact the income of mothers in a significant negative way. Recent research by Kleven, Landais, and Sogaard (2019) and Gibb et al. (2014) shows that 80% to 90% of the current gender income gap can be attributed to the effect of child birth. The impact of children on the labour market outcomes of women is called the "child penalty".

A growing body of knowledge about the child penalty has emerged in recent years. Data shows that women reduce their hours to facilitate child care in Europe (Eurostat 2019). Event studies about the significance of the child penalty in a country are performed in mostly Scandinavian countries, like Denmark, Norway and Finland (Eckhoff Andresen 2019; Kleven, Landais, and Sogaard 2019; Sieppi and Pehkonen 2019). Kleven et al. (2019) have also researched other countries in Europe and put them together to analyse the impact of gender norms. Their figure provides us with information about the impact of childbirth across different countries. See Figure 5 for the results of their research.

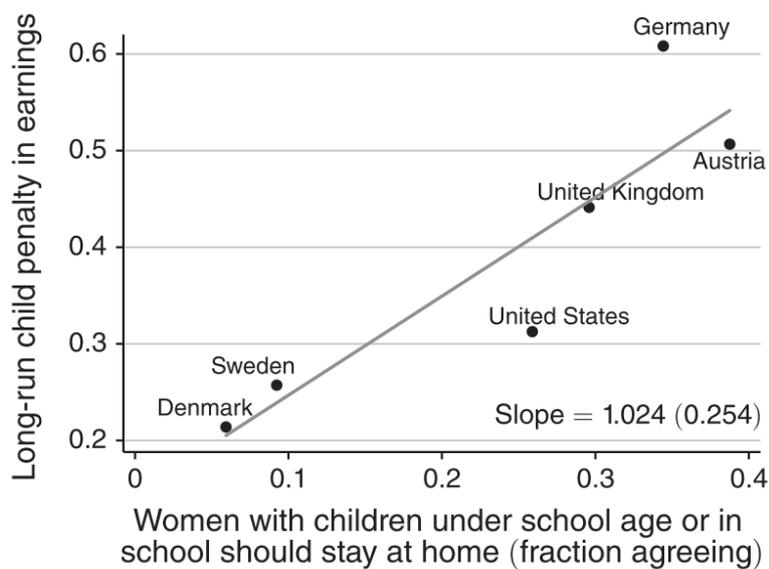


Figure 5. Child penalties versus elicit gender norms (Kleven et al. 2019).

Research has found a significant impact of childbirth in the Netherlands too. Women reduce their hours with 48% (Adema, Rabaté, and Rellstab 2020). The hours of men are only slightly impacted, see Figure 6. The child penalty in the Netherlands has resulted in a unequal division of paid labour between men and women. This is the driving factor behind the dominant one-and-a-half-income model for Dutch households. Data shows that in 2017 women worked, on average 28 hours and men worked, on average, 39 hours (Portegijs 2018). This number has only slightly converged in the last 10 years. In 2007, women work only a little bit less with 26 hours and men only a little bit more with 40 hours. Paradoxically, most women that are working part-time would like to work more and many men would like to spend more time with their children (Portegijs 2018). Somehow this wish is not translated into action. The impact of children seems to be difficult to tackle.

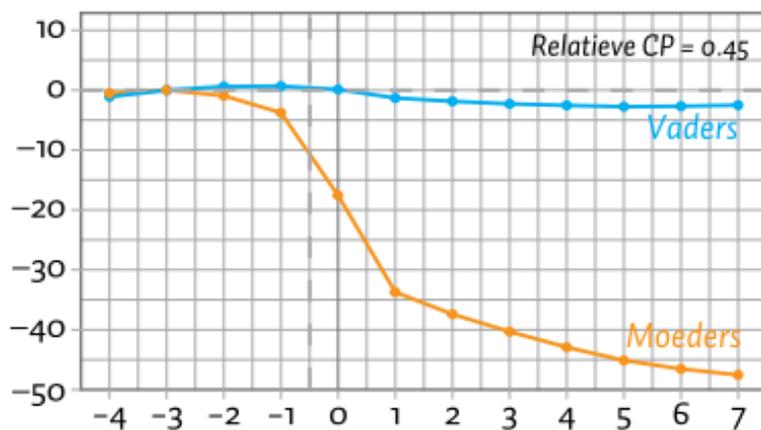


Figure 6. Child penalty in the Netherlands. X-axis: years since childbirth. Y-axis: working hours in percentage relative to working hours before childbirth. (Adema, Rabaté, and Rellstab 2020)

Recent research has identified children as the major driver of inequality in labour market outcomes for women and men. But why has the birth of children such a significantly different impact on women and men? Why are men, on average, continuing their employment and working hours? Why are women, on average reducing the employment and working hours? Which underlying mechanisms are at play behind the child penalty? These research questions will be explored using the Capabilities Framework as proposed by Hobson (Hobson 2018). Next, current literature will be discussed following the categorization of factors of the Capabilities Approach by Hobson. First, the factors at policy level are discussed, second the factors at firm level, third the factors at a societal level and last the factors at the individual level.

### Policy level factors

State policy regarding maternal leave, paternal leave and child care subsidies have a direct impact on the opportunities that parents have to combine having children with a professional career. Leave provides parents with the opportunity to reduce their work hours and spend time caring for their children. Each country has their own specific leave policy, that may differ for mothers and fathers. Furthermore, child care subsidy has proven to be an important factor in mediating the impact of having children on a parents professional career. State subsidy for child care provides parents with the opportunity to outsource caring for their children, at least partly. First, both the impact of maternal leave, paternal leave and parental leave will be discussed and finally the impact of child care subsidy will be discussed.

Countries worldwide differ greatly in their leave policies for parents. Almost all countries that are a member of the Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have some form of paid parental leave policy. The only exception is the USA, they have no country level policy mandating paid parental leave (Nandi et al. 2018). The intent of parental leave policy is to provide parents with the

opportunity to take care of their child after child birth without risking job loss. The availability of parental leave is of extra importance for women since they would otherwise be forced to quit their job to go through pregnancy, labour, recovery after giving birth and caring for young children (Waldfogel 1998). Research has indicated that paid parental leave increases employment of mothers and decreases the impact of child birth on labour market outcomes for mothers. For fathers, an opposite impact occurs, where paid parental leave increases the leave uptake by fathers after child birth. This impact of parental leave on mothers' employment and father's leave taking is determined by the specifics of the leave. Parental leave can be applicable to both parents individually or to both parents together where they can share the leave among themselves. Another option is a gender specific leave that is aimed at either the mother or the father, these are called maternal respectively paternal leave. A great body of literature reveals that the impact of a leave policy is dependent on the duration of the leave, whether the leave is paid or not and whether the leave is mandated for the mother, the father, or both (Nandi et al. 2018; Baker and Milligan 2005; Kalb 2018; Han, Ruhn, and Waldfogel 2009; Hallden, Levanon, and Kricheli-Katz 2016; Kaufman 2018; O'Brien 2009).

A systematic review of empirical literature by Nandi et al. (2018) concluded that unpaid parental leave has no significant positive impact on women's' employment after childbirth. On the contrary, it may even have a negative impact on the labour market outcomes of women. The only studies that showed a positive impact on labour market outcome, suggested that the positive outcomes were only occurring among socio-economic advantaged women. This indicates that unpaid parental leave may lead to more inequality among women, since unpaid parental leave seems only beneficial for mothers with enough financial resources. Providing unpaid leave for fathers has no impact on their uptake of parental leave (Han and Waldfogel 2003). Overall, the impact of unpaid leave both on mothers and fathers seems to be minimal.

The systematic review by Nandi et al. (2018) shows that generous paid parental leave increases employment of mothers but the returns diminishes with a longer duration of leave. Much research has shown that paid parental leave is important for job retention among women (Ruhm 1996; Del Boca, Pasqua, and Pronzato 2009). The current literature seems to indicate that there is an optimal duration of paid parental leave. Akgunduz and Plantenga (2013) studied leave policies in 16 European countries and concluded that paid leave positively impacted women's employment rate. This positive effect was significant with leave duration up to 45 weeks. The optimal leave duration was 28 weeks.

In the past, the provision of gender-neutral parental leave has not caused an increase in uptake of parental leave by fathers (Nandi et al. 2018). Research suggests that parental leave especially reserved for fathers will stimulate leave uptake. Leave uptake by fathers is greatest when it is paid, at least 50% of their income, and has a duration of at least 14 days (O'Brien 2009).

In Sweden steps have been taken to get fathers more involved at home by reserving months of parental leave only for fathers (Ma et al. 2020). Research from Germany provides evidence that parental leave by fathers increases their involvement in child care and enables mothers to combine children and work (Schober 2014).

Furthermore, accessible child care has proven to be effective in positively impacting women's labor market outcomes. (Mahringer and Zulehner 2015). In the Netherlands, child care is subsidized but still regarded as quite expensive (BK 2019). For mothers without a high income, it may not be logical to continue working after childbirth since their income is just sufficient to pay for child care. In that case, working has no financial benefits. Therefore, more affordable childcare could prove to be an efficient intervention to increase labour market participation among Dutch women. Research has shown that in other countries, childcare support appears to be the most effective policy to increase mothers employment (OECD 2012).

### **Firm level factors**

Organizational structures play an important role in the impact of children on the employment of parents. Organizations can influence the parental leave uptake by fathers or continuation of employment by mothers. Of importance are the fundamental structure of the organization, the culture within the organisation and its reigning norms and values. These factors impact its employees and therefore the mothers and fathers that are involved in the organisation.

Acker (1990) argue that an organizational structure is not gender neutral. The structure of an organization is built on assumptions about gender, and this is reflected in the documents and contracts that construct the organization. It appears that the organization assumes a "disembodied and universal worker", but this is in fact reasoned from a male worker. In the organization, a male body and a male reproductive system are assumed. This has an impact on the organizational process and adds to the marlization of women in organizations. For example, research from Anderson, Binder, and Krause (2003) shows that the child penalty for mothers is mediated by the work-schedule flexibility. Mothers who have a job with greater flexibility have a lower child penalty than mother with less flexibility (Chung and van der Horst 2018). Strict work hours appear to negatively impact women's work hours more than men's work hours after child birth. An explanation can be found in physical difference between men and women. A mother's body can provide her child with breast milk and breast feeding a young child is challenging to combine with strict work hours.

The ideal worker norm is an often-used concept to describe the norms in an organization that dictate what a worker should do and be (Carney 2009; Wolf-Wendel, Ward, and Kulp 2016; Byun and Won 2020). The ideal worker norm dictates that an employee should be fully committed to their job and

not distracted by non-job-related things like family and home. Men have been the standard for the “ideal worker”, since they were available for labour and their female counterpart took care of household duties. Simultaneously, social norms dictate that mothers should be dedicated to their children. Mothers need to take up pregnancy leave and may feel obliged to take care of the children after birth. Both a career break due to pregnancy and taking time off to care for children are not consistent with the “ideal worker norm”. The ideal work norm disadvantages mothers since they can not live up to these expectations given the physical impact of pregnancy and labour and the simultaneous expectations regarding child care. Research shows that mothers who take career breaks for children are discriminated against (Arun, Arun, and Borooah 2004). Mothers have the best career possibilities in organizations that facilitate giving birth and raising children. Research shows that mothers tend to move to organizations in the public sector and workplaces with a female manager with children (Kleven, Landais, and Sogaard 2019).

However, men are also constrained by the ideal worker norm. The traditional norm for men is to be focused on career and take responsibility for the household income (Halrynjo 2009). Research from Korea illustrates the significant impact of the ideal worker norm. Even when fathers are taking up paternal leave they utilize it for work purposes, like study. Even during paternal leave, employees are committed to work (Byun and Won 2020). In Europe, workplace factors also significantly impact father’s decisions regarding leave taking. The attitude of the employer hinders fathers in their idea that they have a right to parental leave (Haas, Allard, and Hwang 2002). Other workplace characteristics like the size of the organizations, whether it operates in the public or private sector, whether it is male or female dominated and what the frequency is of leave uptake by their other male colleagues impact the decision of fathers to take up leave. Fathers who work in a large female dominated organizations in the public sector are most likely to take up parental leave. An environment where other fathers also take up parental leave adds to the likelihood of taking up leave (Bygren and Duvander 2006). Fathers often feel that their workplace does not support uptake of parental leave and this prevents them from choosing for parental leave (Kaufman 2018).

### **Societal factors**

Social cultural norms in society have a direct impact on all other factors. They influence policy, organizations, and individuals in society. Social cultural norms that impact the employment of fathers and mothers after childbirth are the “ideal worker norm” as discussed above and gender norms. This section will discuss what these gender norms entail and how they influence the employment of both men and women after child birth.

Gender norms have a direct impact on employment of fathers and mothers because they influence a parents view on their own responsibilities. These cultural ideas are incorporated by individuals and

influences their choices. Women have internalised the cultural idea that they should care for the children, where men have internalised the idea that they should be the main breadwinner. The “choices” of men and women are constrained by the gender norms in society (Baker 2010). This is in contradiction with the neoclassical view that individual choices are based on economic rationality. Duncan and Edwards (1997) argue that gender norms dictate what is morally right and socially acceptable. They introduce the term “gender moral rationalities”. These gender moral rationalities drive individual economic decisions making.

Qualitative research reveals that beliefs about “good mothering” hinder women in pursuing a professional career after the birth of their first child (Baker 2010). Also men are affected by these gender norms. Kaufman (2018) finds that gendered expectations for fathers hinder parental leave uptake by fathers. Fathers indicate that they do not take up parental leave because they feel it is not socially acceptable or “right”.

Research comparing lesbian and heterosexual couples further illustrates the impact of gender norms. If the gap in employment between fathers and mothers was purely a consequence of the biological differences between men and women, lesbian women would experience the same decrease in employment as heterosexual women do. However, lesbian women only decrease their employment in the year right after the birth of the first child and their employment levels are recovered within 5 years after childbirth. This is evidence that in heterosexual couples gender norms could play a significant role in the division of paid labour (Eckhoff Andresen 2019).

Gender norms do not only impact the decision making of individuals but also have an indirect impact on an individual’s choices. For example, they shape parental leave policy, which is traditionally more aimed to facilitate mothers to take care of the children.

### **Individual factors**

Various individual factors are discussed in the literature that have an impact on the employment of mothers and fathers. This section will discuss the most researched factors namely, the role of the partner, education level, individual finances, finances of the partner, religion, and division of household labour.

Kaufman and Almqvist (2017) have researched the influence of partners on fathers’ decisions to take up parental leave. They find that mothers have a great influence on their partners decision. Both mothers and fathers indicated that the mother was taking the lead in these decisions around parental leave uptake of both the mother and the father. However, there is evidence that women adapt their opinions according to their partners opinion. Zipp, Prohaska, and Bemiller (2004) find that agreement

between partners on issues increases when they first hear their partners response. Where women are more likely than men to agree with their partner after hearing their response.

If a parent has a partner from the opposite sex, they are likely to have gendered expectations from one another (Kaufman 2018). Parents expect that mothers are “natural” experts, whereas fathers are expected to be less prepared. This dynamic where the mother is decisive in the decision about parental leave uptake and the influence of gendered expectations is not found in same sex couples (Eckhoff Andresen 2019).

There is mixed evidence on the influence of educational level on the impact of child birth on employment. Anderson, Binder, and Krause (2002) find a higher child penalty for highly educated mothers. Research from the Netherlands suggests a lower child penalty for highly educated mothers (Adema, Rabaté, and Rellstab 2020). And other research argues that we do not observe the impact of educational level but of the job characteristics that highly educated women have. Highly educated women tend to have more flexible work hours and therefore may be more able to combine child birth and employment (Anderson, Binder, and Krause 2003).

Qualitative research shows that parents perceive finances as an important factor determining their decisions in parental leave and employment (Kaufman 2018). Men have on average a higher income than their partner and this drives the decision for men to continue working while women reduce their work hours to care for children (Angelov, Johansson, and Lindahl 2016). This makes sense from a purely economic perspective and is echoed by parents. However, there is evidence that gender stereotypes may trump financial factors (Bittman et al. 2003). If we review the absolute income of women, the largest child penalty is observed for women with a low income (Budig and Hodges 2010). The child penalty for women with a high income has significantly decreased over recent decennia (Glauber 2018).

Research from the Netherlands shows that the impact of childbirth on work hours for women is much more profound if the parents are religious (Adema, Rabaté, and Rellstab 2020). Research from Glass and Nath (2006) argues that religious institutions impact family life and work hours through the promotion of traditional gender roles.

Lastly, the gendered division of unpaid labour places a significant burden on mothers rather than on fathers and this can hinder them in their opportunities for employment. Mothers perform more unpaid labour than fathers like, caring for children, household chores and responsibilities outside the house like care for elderly. Research from (Guppy, Sakumoto, and Wilkes 2019) indicates that the division of household labour is linked to women’s employment. One could theorize that as gender norms

around the division of unpaid labour change and women spend less time on household chores, this frees up time to spend on paid labour. This gendered division of household labour is not observed in same-sex couples. Lesbian and gay male couples share household tasks more equally than different sex couples (Goldberg, Smith, and Perry-Jenkins 2012). Women bear not only the majority of household labour but also take responsibility for elderly and other family member outside the household (Eurostat 2019). Many countries in Europe have implemented medical leave policies for personal or family illness. There is not sufficient research to conclude whether this has an impact on the employment of fathers and mothers (Nandi et al. 2018).

#### **4. Method**

In recent years, there has been a rise in qualitative research about the decisions that parents take regarding their employment after the birth of their first child (Halrynjo 2009; Kaufman 2018; Kaufman and Almqvist 2017; Baker 2010). Most research has been performed in the Scandinavian countries, but there are also publications from the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States and South-Korea (Byun and Won 2020). It appears that there has not been performed such a qualitative research in the Netherlands. These previous publications either use grounded theory or Hobson's capability Framework to analyse the results. This thesis build on the qualitative research that uses Hobson's capability Framework.

To unveil how factors of Hobsons's Capability Framework influence the impact of child birth on the employment of fathers and mothers, this study uses a qualitative approach. 18 in-depth interviews were taken with Dutch fathers and mothers. A qualitative research is appropriate given the dynamic interplay of factors that could influence the impact of child birth and the absence of previous research regarding this specific topic in the Netherlands. A quantitative analysis is not sufficient since it is challenging to capture the gender dynamics that are in play. Quantitative data would not allow for the analysis of the complex relations that are of importance in the Netherlands. Furthermore, individuals are not always aware of what shapes their preferences and decisions in life. An in-depth interview provides the parents with the opportunity to construct their idiosyncratic experiences and feelings (Byun and Won 2020).

The participants of the interviews are mothers and fathers with children of under 10 years old. Preferably both partners of a couple are interviewed. Participants should be born in the Netherlands and living in the Netherlands. The main motivation for selecting this sample is that the thesis specifically aims to research the Dutch context and therefore requires participants to be born and living in the Netherlands. Furthermore, interviewing both partners of a couple provides more information about the decision making process regarding employment and child care of the parents. The first child should not be born more than 10 years ago since the Dutch society and its policies is ever changing and this thesis researches the recent decennium.

In general, collecting willing participants has proven to be difficult. Since participants are working parents with young children, time is sparse. These interviews were taken during the Covid pandemic in the Netherlands which has put an extra burden on young parents because child care facilities were periodically closed. To find participants, an appeal was written and advertised in multiple online channels. This approach resulted in 8 different sex couples where both the mother and the father were interviewed. Furthermore, there were 2 different sex couples where only the mother could be interviewed because the father ultimately was not willing or had insufficient time to partake in an

interview. Interviews were carried out in May and June 2021. Due to the covid pandemic, alle interviews were carried out online through a video call. The interviews were recorded after consent of the participants. Each participant was interviewed separate from their partner. The interviews took on average 45 minutes each. The interviewer followed an interview protocol that consisted of questions on basic demographic information, individual factors, firm factors, policy factors and societal factors. It was explicitly explored whether participants would have made other choices if they had the opportunity. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Analysis was started with the set of main factors that are derived from Hobson’s capability framework. These main factors were the basis of a hierarchal system of main categories and subcategories. The oril main categories were: individual factors, firm factors, policy factors and societal factors. The subcategories were constructed inductively and deductively. The subcategories were deducted from Hobson’s capability framework and previous research. They were extended or elaborated if the interviews revealed factors that were not yet included. From each interview the main factors that influenced the work hours of men and women were extracted.

<b>Nr</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Age children</b>	<b>Religious</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Relation</b>	<b>Hours pre</b>	<b>Hours post</b>
1.	35	F	WO	3, 5	Catholic	Dutch	Married	40	28
2.	37	M	HBO	5, 3	Catholic	Dutch	Married	40	40
3.	32	F	HBO	2, 5, 8, 10	Protestant	Dutch	Married	32	24
4.	35	M	WO	2, 5, 8, 10	Protestant	Dutch	Married	38	36
5.	40	F	MBO	2	No	Dutch	Living together	40	32
6.	36	M	WO	2	No	Dutch	Living together	40	40
7.	34	F	WO	2	No	Dutch	Living together	36	32
8.	35	M	WO	2	No	Dutch	Living together	40	40
9	35	F	HBO	2	No	Dutch	Living together	26	24
10.	40	M	MBO	2	No	Dutch	Living together	36	36
11.	35	F	WO	5, 7	No	Dutch	Married	40	24
12.	45	M	WO	5, 7	No	Dutch	Married	32	24
13.	33	F	WO	1, 3	No	Dutch	Living together	36	32
14.	34	M	WO	1, 3	No	Dutch	Living together	40	40
15.	32	F	WO	2, 4	No	Dutch	Living together	40	24
16.	32	M	WO	2, 4	No	Dutch	Living together	40	36
17.	33	F	HBO	3, 5	Catholic	Dutch	Married	40	24
18.	29	F	WO	2	No	Dutch	Living apart	20	36

Table 1. Participant information.

## **5. Results**

This study focuses on the factors that mediate the impact of the birth of the first child on working hours for women and men. 5 factors have been identified as the most prevalent and most impactful factors. These are: workplace resistance for fathers, accommodating workplace for mothers, arrangement of maternity period, gender beliefs and finances.

Often parents started out with stating that their current working hours were solely based on their own personal preference but during the interview it became clear that their opportunities were constrained by external factors like workplace and finances. However, most parents still felt they had agency over their own life and could make their own preferred arrangements. Not all constraints that were mentioned by parents are clear-cut. Some constraints, like the duration of policy are based on facts. However, whether the employer truly expects a father to continue working full-time can not be checked whether this is valid. That does not make these perceived constraints any less important though. Whether a constraint is true or not, it is perceived to be real by the individual and therefore impacts their decision making in life. Whether a certain job is truly incompatible with working less than 5 days is less important than how the individual perceives the job demands. When the individual truly believes that the job mandates them to work 5 days a week, they will arrange their life around that mandate. If a mother perceives that she is expected to work less after child birth, this will impact her decision taking. She feels that she does not have the opportunity to continue her work hours since she believes that she is responsible for child care. Whether her environment actually thinks she should work less hours and whether she indeed has the main responsibility for child care remains uncertain. But nevertheless, this perceived constraint impacts her opportunities and therefore her real life achievements.

However, if asked how they would arrange their life if there were no external constraints. Nearly all parents, both fathers and mothers indicated that they would like for the father to work less and spend more time with his children. This is in line with Sen's capabilities approach and adapted preferences.

Below we discuss the factors that are different for mothers and fathers and that are indicated to have been crucial in their decisions regarding work hours. Hobsons has provided the general framework for categorizing factors and from that framework the 5 most important factors have been identified. This chapter closes with a short discussion of the indicated preferences of fathers and mothers if there were no constraints.

### **Workplace resistance for fathers**

The most prevalent mentioned reason for fathers and mothers to opt for a traditional division of paid labour was the workplace resistance that fathers experienced. Fathers said that it would be impossible

to reduce their work hours due to their job. Mothers also mentioned often that they reduced their work hours since their partner did not have the opportunity to do so. Fathers perceive a workplace resistance in a variety of ways. Fathers receive a different initial response to their announcement that their partner is pregnant than their partner. They are not replaced during their birth leave and after the birth of their child, the workplace expects them to continue their work hours. Furthermore, fathers tend to think that the characteristics of their job mandates them to work full time and they fear that their employer is not willing to adapt these characteristics or the workload. Also, fathers tend to have male colleagues that continue to work full time after childbirth. Fathers have less peer examples that reduce their hours than mothers. Finally, fathers indicate a different attitude of their manager than mothers. They believe their manager is either not interested in their private life or expects them to hold work in a higher regard than private life. This spills over in a work culture where employees regularly work overtime and feel hesitant to take a day off to take care of their sick child. All these aspects of this (perceived) workplace resistance for fathers will be discussed shortly with a few examples from the interviews. More examples can be found in Appendix A.

Fathers tend to receive a different response than mothers once they announce at work that their partner is pregnant. They indicate that they receive congratulations but there is no expectation expressed regarding the impact that child birth could have on their work. Mothers are approached regarding their wishes for pregnancy leave and their preferred work hours after pregnancy. It appears that child birth is expected to have the same impact as a holiday for fathers.

Table 2.

Theme	Quotes
Initial response to pregnancy	“At work people hardly responded to my announcement that my partner was pregnant. I have received some congratulations and that was all. (male participant)
	“They were happy about the pregnancy. I can not remember anyone asking about parental leave or my working hours after child birth.” (male participant)

None of the fathers mentioned that their employer hired a replacement for them during birth leave or parental leave. It appears that fathers are not replaced when they take up leave regarding childbirth. Their work is either not being done while they are away, or colleagues are supposed to take over. This puts an extra burden on fathers. They feel guilty towards their colleagues that must pick up their work and they know that they have a high workload when they return to work since they must catch up. This is a sharp contrast to mothers who take leave for a longer period and tend to be replaced by hiring a new employee.

Table 3.

Theme	Quotes
Replacement during leave	“My birth leave was regarded in the same way as a holiday. My work remains undone, only stuff that is really urgent is taken over by someone else”. (male participant)
	“My work remained untouched during the two weeks that I stayed home after my partners pregnancy”. (male participant)

Almost all fathers have mentioned that they believe that it is at least challenging to reduce their work hours given their job. Fathers say that their manager expects that they continue their work hours as before the pregnancy. And when employers would agree with a reduction of work hours, the actual workload would not be reduced. The employer would still have the same expectations regarding productivity, and this would force fathers to put in the hours anyway.

Table 4.

Theme	Quotes
Work hours after childbirth	“If I go to my boss and tell him I am going to work three days. His first question is; how do you think that you are going to organise that? If my partner asks her boss, then the automatic response is; Sure, let’s arrange that.” (male participant)
	“The problem with reducing your hours or taking up leave is that they do not change your function. So everything you usually do in 40 hours, you then have to do in 32 hours. So that will have negative consequences for me, I won’t be able to do that.” (male participant)
	“The expectation was clear, my manager expected me to continue with 40 hours a week.” (male participant)

Fathers often indicate that the nature of their job mandates them to work full time. They mention a variety of job characteristics that they feel do not allow them to reduce their work hours. Also, mothers mention that the job characteristics of their partners job are a reason for fathers to continue to work full time. Fathers mention that they work abroad or travel a lot and that it is therefore necessary to work full time. Another father says that he manages large projects and that the people involved in the project need him to be available 5 days a week. A few fathers mention that they have a manager’s position and that they must be full time present at work to be a good manager.

Table 5.

Theme	Quotes
Job characteristics	That I have reduced my work hours is partly due to man/woman expectations. They will not ask me about my reduction in work hours while they will ask my partner about it. That does happen. Also, I knew that with my job it is easier to work 3 days then with his job. He has a managerial position and so it is more difficult. I think that makes a difference, but also the man/woman expectations. They won't ask him why he is still working full time. Unconsciously that does have an impact. (female participant)
	My choice for working full time is work related because it is difficult on our work schedule to work 4 days. For example, I am going on a work trip for 3 weeks. That is just a difficult combination. It is just easier to work full time. The jobs are designed for working full time, that is the expectation, everyone works full time. (male participant)

Fathers state more often than mothers that they work in places where most of the employees are male. They say that nearly all their male colleagues continue to work full time. A lot of fathers do not have a male example in their work environment who reduces their hours after the child birth.

Table 6.

Theme	Quotes
Peer examples	My colleagues all work more than their female partner. The man is not totally absent when it comes to childcare but he does have a significantly smaller role. (male participant)
	If I look at my colleagues, they all work 5 days a week. I do not know any colleagues that have adapted their work schedule to 3 or 4 days. I only have 2 female colleagues and they both work part time. They full fil one position together. But they are women, if do not any examples of men doing that. (male participant)

A few fathers mention that their manager either has no children or otherwise does not understand the situation or is not interested. Fathers perceive less understanding from their manager for their private life than mothers.

Table 7.

Theme	Quotes
Manager's attitude	In theory management does care about your private life. However, in real life this is not so much. They stimulate you to return to work as soon as possible. (male participant)

Fathers mention more often than mothers that working overtime is expected or necessary to get the work done. They feel that their manager and colleagues expect them to prioritize work over their private life. Also, mothers mention that their male partners are expected to work overtime.

Table 8.

Theme	Quotes
Work culture	My partner is working a lot over overtime. (female participant)
	Yes, working many hours over time is usual. It is expected that you place work over your private life. (male participant)

### **Accommodating workplace for mothers**

In contrast to the workplace resistance that fathers experience, mothers tend to experience the opposite impact. Rather than assuming that they will continue their hours mothers are expected to reduce their hours after child birth. When mothers announce that they are pregnant, the topic of hours is already brought up by their manager, HR or colleagues. During pregnancy leave all women are replaced. The employer hire a new employee and often this employee continues to work for the employer and takes over the hours that the mother reduces after pregnancy. A few women mention that their contract was terminated during their pregnancy and that this caused them to stay home with the baby rather than their partner. None of the fathers have mentioned that their contract was terminated around the time of child birth. Employers tend to be accommodating if a mother suggests that she wants to work less hours. Some employers voiced that they preferred the mother to continue her work hours but regardless they were accommodating and even expecting a reduction in work hours. Mothers did not mention often that their job characteristics limited them in their opportunities to work less hours. One mother mentioned the opposite, that her colleagues expected her to do less over time or work outside work hours after she had her first child. Where fathers have many male colleagues that continue to work full time, mothers have many female colleagues that work part time. Some women mention that they have to explain to colleagues that they continue working. Mothers perceive sometimes that they have to defend themselves if they work a certain amount of hours when having small children.

The announcement of women that they are pregnant is met with joy and not much surprise. Mothers mention that their manager already expected them to become pregnant at some point. Multiple women state that when they announce that they are pregnant, the conversation regarding work hours starts. This is opposite to what fathers experience. They are not asked how childbirth may impact their work hours. It appears that the workplace is geared to women becoming pregnant and that this may impact their work hours.

Table 9.

Theme	Quotes
Response to pregnancy	The response to my pregnancy was fine, I cannot say there was anything special about it. It was not mentioned how this would impact my work. My direct colleague did however ask me how many hours I would work after the pregnancy. And the HR department did let me know that I should tell them how many hours I would want to work after pregnancy and whether I wanted to take up parental leave. (female participant)
	During the job application procedure, I already told them that I was pregnant. They were fine with it. They did ask how that would impact my working hours. They told me, if we cannot hire you due to your pregnancy, we cannot hire any women anymore. I work in a sector where a lot of women work. (female participant)

All of the mothers state that their employer hired an extra employee to cover their work while they took up their pregnancy leave. No mother mentioned that their leave was regarded as a holiday and that their work was left open. A few mothers mentioned that some parts of their work were not covered by the extra hire, but most of their work was taken over. Furthermore, mothers stated that the extra hire often continued to work for the company and covered the hours that the mother reduced after her pregnancy.

Table 10.

Theme	Quotes
Replacement during leave	When I left for my pregnancy leave, they organized someone to completely replace me. When I reduced my working hours, that person remained with the company for two days in the week. (female participant)
	My work was covered during my pregnancy leave, someone was hired for that. Someone replaced me and he stayed in my position after my pregnancy leave. (female participant)

Mothers indicate that their workplace is accommodating to reducing their work hours after child birth. Almost all mothers mention that their employer, manager, or colleagues expect or even assume that they will reduce their hours. A few mothers say that their employer would have preferred them to continue their hours but this is not more than a preference and the employer accommodated a reduction in work hours nonetheless. This is a very different perception of the opportunity to reduce working hours compared to the perception that is expressed by fathers.

Table 11.

Theme	Quotes
Work hours after childbirth	The employer is much more attuned to the mother working less hours. Actually, they are happy when you decide to keep working for 4 days and not decide to work even less. (female participant)
	When I said that I would continue to work less hours, they said that they already expected that. That tells you that they think that that suits a woman more than a man. I think they would have been very surprised if I would continue to work full time. (female participant)
	I worked as a teacher and they found someone else for the courses that I was teaching, when I stated that I wanted to work less. (female participant)

Mothers are on average more positive about their manager's attitude towards their private life than fathers. They mention that their manager also has children and that the managers has a flexible attitude towards combining work with family responsibilities.

Table 12.

Theme	Quotes
Manager's attitude	I remember telling my manager: I want to work 1 day less and take up parental leave if you are fine with that. He said: it does not matter whether I am fine with it or not, it is your right to take up parental leave. I think that he would have preferred me to not work less, but he knew that his opinion did not matter in the end. (female participant)
	My manager is great when it comes to my private life because he also has 2 children. He is very flexible when something comes up with my child. (female participant)

Where fathers often state that the nature of their job is not compatible with working less hours, mothers perceive their job to be compatible with working than full time. None of the mothers mentioned that they wanted to reduce their 40-hour work week but could not due to the specific demand of their job. A few mothers however did mention that reducing their work from 4 days to 3 days or from 3 days to 2 days would not have been possible. Some mothers even mentioned that their colleagues expected less productivity from them outside work hours since they had children.

Table 13.

Theme	Quotes
Job characteristics	I used to work often in the weekend or evening. I have noticed that people do not expect that anymore. They somehow expect less of me because I have children. (female participant)
	Working less hours is not practical, 24 hours is a bit too little if you want to provide continuity of care for the patients. It is better to work 4 days. (female participant)

Multiple women indicate that they work in sectors that employ a lot of women. They have many female colleagues that have children and are working part time. Mothers feel supported in reducing their work hours after child birth. However, a mother also indicated that she saw that a female colleague who continued to work 4 days a week was repeatedly asked to explain why she worked so many hours when she had a small child.

Table 14.

Theme	Quotes
Peer examples	It is quite nice when your direct colleagues have children too and that they have reduced their work hours consequently. That may sound odd, but it does help. If I did not have those colleagues, I would feel more guilty about reducing my hours. It does help with the acceptance at the workplace. (female participant)
	I have a colleague that is now pregnant with her second child, and she works 4 days a week. She is constantly asked; are you going to work 3 days? But she is fine with working 4 days and her partner works less. But nevertheless, she is expected to reduce her hours after her pregnancy. As a woman you must defend yourself for working 4 days while having children. If you focus on your career as a woman, you apparently deprive your children. That is something you hear everywhere. (female participant)

On average, women report more often than men that they do not work overtime often. Also, most mothers do not feel that their workplace expects them to prioritize work over family life. On average they indicate to work less over time than fathers. However, some women do indicate that their manager expects them to prioritize work over family life.

Table 15.

Theme	Quotes
Work culture	A lot of women work here, in general a lot of women work in this sector. They are all really relaxed and nice when it comes to family life. A colleague of mine also has a child and our colleagues said; well if you have to bring him to child care and you arrive a bit later at work, that is fine". So it has never been a problem. (female participant)
	It is fine to go home once you have worked your hours. Almost no one works overtime at our department. (female participant)
	I do think that our director thinks that work should be prioritized over family time. If you want to grow to the next level, you must show that when your child is ill you can manage that and that you show up at work anyway. (female participant)

### **Arrangement of maternity period**

The period surrounding the birth of the child is significantly different for women and men and this has a direct impact on their work hours. Women are, in contrast to men, 9 months pregnant and will eventually give birth to the child. After childbirth, mothers need time to physically recover, and they may want to breast feed their child which also takes a lot of time each day. During their pregnancy and after child birth women have a significantly longer leave than men. Adding to that, mothers find it challenging to start full time working after child birth if they want to breast feed their child. Both fathers and mothers indicate that during this period the care for their child is unevenly shared. Also, the hours worked are unequal due to the difference in leave policy for mothers and fathers and the time that mothers need for recovery and breast feeding. Parents indicate that this period is the starting point for the uneven division in work hours and child care later on. Finally, a few women said that their employment contract was terminated during their pregnancy. Finding a new job while being pregnant proved to be difficult. Since they stayed at home without a job, they took care of their child and their partner continued working.

In the Netherlands, the mother receives a 16 week fully paid leave, where 6 weeks are taken up before labour and the remaining 10 weeks after labour. A father used to receive 2 days fully paid leave and 3 days of unpaid leave surrounding the birth of his child. In 2019 this leave was changed to a fully paid leave of 5 days. Since July 2020 an additional partner leave is possible of 5 weeks where the partner receives at most 70% of their usual pay. None of the participants in this study were able to take up this additional partner leave since it was not available at the time of the birth of their child.

Fathers said that they only received the legal minimum of 2 or 5 days of leave and had to use their holidays if they wanted to extend their leave. Mothers received the 16 week leave and two mothers mentioned that they received an additional leave. One mother's employer provided all mothers with an extra 4 weeks of paid leave, which was not available to fathers. Another mother mentioned that her parental leave was paid for by the employer. It appears that the both the public policy and firm specific policy is more aimed towards facilitating women during pregnancy and labour than men. Both fathers and mothers mentioned that the uneven leave policy steered them into a traditional division of child care and working hours.

Table 16.

Theme	Quotes
Pregnancy and leave	I think the public policy also has an impact. It is much easier for women to reduce their work hours and take care of the child. They receive pregnancy leave and this creates a distance between them and their work. So they are being steered in that direction. (male participant)
	It starts at the beginning, when the woman has a right to leave and the man does not. This cause the woman to do much more with the child than the man and that is where it starts. In some way it is logical that as a woman I have a longer leave, since I have to breast feed and physically recover. (female participant)
	Many men told me; go work those first weeks after child birth. Looking back, I am very happy that I did not do that. But I still hear it every now and then. (male participant)
	So I received 2 days of paid leave and I had to extend them with holidays. (male participant)

Both fathers and mothers mention that it is difficult for the mother to work full time after labour. The mother needs time to recover from labour and one mother said that it took her months to recover due to back pain following labour. Furthermore, parents said that breast feeding is not compatible with working full time. Physical recovery and breast feeding causes a significant time constraint for mothers which limits their opportunity to work full time. Fathers do not experience these time constraints.

Table 17.

Theme	Quotes
Physical recovery and breast feeding	When I child is born, at first it is more dependent on its mother And the mother needs some time to recover. That's part of it, you can not change that. If you choose to breasfeed, working is inconvenient. (male participant)
	I did breastfeed both my children till they were 6 or 8 months. And then, the woman is doing more of the care for the children, just because you are the one feeding them. Especially in those early years, if I had worked full time, I could not have done it. I am happy I had sufficient time for breastfeeding, it would not

	have been possible if I worked full time. During that time, I had a different role than my partner. (female participant)
	At first I was on pregnancy leave and then I went on sick leave for 6 months due to back pains after the pregnancy. Only recently I returned to work. (female participant)

A few women mention that their employment contract was terminated during their pregnancy. One of them said that this probably was due to her pregnancy. When their contract was terminated, it was difficult to find a new job while being pregnant. Since they were already out of employment, this resulted in these mothers staying at home after the child was born. Furthermore, one mother indicated that this had a negative impact on her wage since she had to start over in a new field of work. None of the fathers said that they had their contract terminated during the time of the birth of their child.

Table 18.

Theme	Quotes
Career break during pregnancy	I think that men, they have always continued working, they have been working longer at the same workplace and therefore they earn more. I have just started in a new field with a new job. So for me it takes a while to catch up. Those career breaks did have an impact. (female participant)
	My partner's employment contract was terminated during her pregnancy. So it was not her own decision to stop working. To find a job while being very pregnant is quite difficult. (male participant)
	My employment contract was terminated, so that solved the problem of who should take care of our child. It was not hard to determine who should stay at home. (female participant)
	When I was pregnant, my employment contract was terminated. I was pregnant, I told them I was pregnant, and I was supposed to have a meeting about the continuation of my employment in a couple of weeks. And suddenly the contract was not continued. The official reason was that my position became redundant. I think it did have something to do with me being pregnant, but they never said so of course. (female participant)

## Gender beliefs

Beliefs about how individuals are supposed to behave due to their gender are widespread in our society and differ among social groups. All fathers and mothers mentioned that they experienced the impact of gender role ideologies related to working and having children. They all mentioned being aware of certain stereotypes or expectations from their environment. Many of the parents had been directly questioned by someone in their environment about their role in child care or their work hours. However, most couples said that they themselves did not believe in any gender role ideologies. Only one couple explicitly expressed that they themselves had beliefs regarding the role of the father and mother in child care and work. They were a member of the Dutch Protestant Church and based their gender role ideology on their explanation of the bible.

Table 19.

Theme	Quotes
Societal beliefs	At our church people would frown a bit if me and my partner both would work 40 hours a week and take the children to child care. It is preferred that the mother reduces her work hours. While, if I, being the man, would choose to work less, then I owe them an explanation. (male participant)
	I think in general, it is more accepted for men to work 5 days a week than it is for women. I work 4 days a week and sometimes people tell me that is a lot. I do not think they tell my partner the same while he is working 5 days a week. (female participant)
	Many people tell me; Oh, you have two small children and you are working 4 days, that is quite a lot. But I always think, well what if you do not work, that is actually much more difficult. It is very hectic being at home with the children. That is much more stressful. (female participant)
	I think that our society believes that a man should work more than the woman when they have children. It is accepted when the mother reduces her work hours, but when a father does so, people find it odd. It felt that way when I reduced my work hours. I feel like I had to explain more since I am a man. (male participant)
Personal beliefs	I do think it is self-evident that my partner is the breadwinner of the family. That is mainly his responsibility. My main responsibility is taking care of the children and the household. (female participant)

	I do believe that man and woman are different. That is the way God meant it to be. That does not mean that they are unequal, it just means that they are not the same. A woman is much more empathetic than a man. A man has a greater physical strength. There are mental and physical differences. That is the way God made mankind. That is expressed in the different roles for men and women. Men and women have different characteristics and are therefore more suitable for a specific role. I feel responsible for our income and that it is a stable income. (male participant)
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### Finances

Not all, but many parents said that finances were important in making decisions regarding their work hours. Both mothers and fathers indicated that the mother's wage was lower than the father's wage and that this was reason for the mother to reduce her work hours rather than the father. Parents said that they had to pay the mortgage and other fixed costs which allowed for little flexibility.

Furthermore, a few parents mentioned that only the mother received pay during her parental leave and therefore it was financially more attractive when she reduced her work hours. Fathers said that they would have liked to take up parental leave if it was paid. Some parents mentioned that the costs for child care had an impact on their decisions regarding work hours. One mother said that paying for child care was so costly that it was financially more attractive to stay at home than work.

Finally, multiple parents said that finances did not play any role in their decisions regarding their work hours. Either they did think that both parents spending time with the family was more important than earning more money or both parents had a similar income.

Fathers and mothers say that the height of their individual income was influential in their decision regarding their work hours. None of the parents said that the father's income was lower and that he therefore reduced his hours. However, multiple parents said that the mother's income was lower and that she therefore reduced her hours. Parents state that they already took out a mortgage and that they could not afford to lose the income of the father.

Table 20.

Theme	Quotes
Low wage of mother	Well, I do not rule out that I will ever work less hours but I think that finances play a role in that decision. It is a fact that I earn much more than my partner. If we both had the same income, maybe I would reduce my hours. (male participant)

	It would not be possible for me to work less and for my partner to work more. It would not be possible to pay the mortgage, we took that mortgage based on our combined incomes. If we would switch roles, we would not be able to afford it. (male participant)
	At the end it is important to earn money. If my partner earns 300 euros where I earn 100 euros, then it is not a difficult choice. You have to pay your bills, children are expensive and you want to be able to participate in everything. So at the end, money is maybe to most important factor and that is what drives your decisions. I would like to work 40 hours because I love to work. We something talk about that. But at the bottom line, that would cut our income in half. Then it is not a difficult decision, money is important. (female participant)

In the Netherlands, parents have a right to parental leave after their child is born. This allows them to reduce their work hours but also cuts their income since this leave is not paid. This unpaid leave impacts fathers and mothers in two ways. First, fathers say that they do not take up parental leave because it would have too much of an impact on the household income. Many fathers mentioned that they would have like to take up the parental if it was paid. Second, two mothers said that their employer partially paid for their parental leave. One employer fully paid 4 additional weeks of leave only for mothers. Another employer paid 80% for all employees who would take up parental leave. I

Table 21.

Theme	Quotes
Unpaid parental leave	During the birth of my first child, parental leave was unpaid, nowadays 80% is paid for. That is quite a difference of course. So finances certainly played a role. Now I can afford to work less. (male participant)
	I did not take up parental leave, that is due to the fact that your income decreases when you take up parental leave. You have to tell the mortgage lender and this would mean that would mean a significant drop in our mortgage. So, it is really not attractive if you want to buy a house. This is the main reason why I did not reduce my hours. (male participant)
	Our earnings are similar but my parental leave was paid for and his was not. (female participant)

A few parents said that the high cost for child care was a reason for them to reduce their work hours. Child care is regarded as quite expensive in the Netherlands, regardless the option to receive subsidies from the government.

Table 22.

Theme	Quotes
Cost of child care	We noticed that our fixed costs dropped because we have to spend less on childcare. Therefore, it was financially possible for us to work less. (female participant)

Quite some parents mentioned that finances did not play a significant role in their decisions regarding work hours after the birth of their child. In these couples, mother and father had a similar income.

Table 23.

Theme	Quotes
Not important	Finances did not play a role in our decision. If I would have worked full time, I would have made the same amount of money as my partner. He does not have a higher income than I do. (female participant)
	Finances were not the reason I reduced my hours because I made a bit more per hour than my partner at that time. (female participant)

### Preferences in ideal setting

During the interviews parents were asked if their work hours had changed following the birth of their child. Next, they explained how they and their partner decided on their work hours. They elaborated which factors were influential on their work hours. Many parents indicated that they were content with the current division of paid labour between them and their partner. This is in line with the concept of “adapted preferences”. Parents manage their expectations based on the opportunities that are available to them. The capability approach incorporates this concept and explains that an individual’s opportunities are limited by constraints like money or societal pressure. To distinguish between an individual’s preferences and their opportunities, participants were asked what hours they would work in an ideal setting. If money, workplace characteristics and other constraints were not existent, what decisions would they make regarding work hours? Nearly all parents said that they would prefer the father to work less hours. The only couple that did not mention this was the couple

where the father worked 3 days a week. In general, parents indicated that they were content with the work hours of the mother. Only few mothers mentioned that they might have liked to work even less.

Table 24.

Theme	Quotes
Preferences in ideal setting	I would like it if my partner would also work 4 days, provided that that is compatible with his work. I would not want him to be all stressed and continuously on the phone, that would not make him happy. I think it would be beneficial for the bond between our child and my partner. (female participant)
	In an ideal setting I would divide all child care and household labour 50-50. I would prefer that. If money was not an issue, I would have liked us to both take one day off each week. (female participant)
	I personally would prefer to work part time. I do not mind working but I would like to spend more time with our child. (male participant)
	I find it positive that fathers are more present in their family life. I think it is important to pick them up from school and things like that. I want to get to know my children and know who they are hanging out with. The government extending the possibilities for fathers to take up leave when their child is born, is great. However, I do not see it a lot in my environment, that men are, like me, more present in their family life. (male participant)

## 6. Discussion

This thesis aims to research the factors that mediate the impact of child birth on the work hours of women and men. The Capability Framework of Hobson is used to analyse the factors and dynamics that are at play (Hobson 2018). Hobson grouped the factors into three categories: societal factors, institutional factors and individual factors. These factors together determine an individual's capability set. An individual's opportunities in life are impacted by constraints present in these factors. All factors of the Capability Framework were incorporated in the guideline for the interviews with the participants. The Capabilities Framework of Hobson served as a guideline for researching the factors that influence the impact of childbirth. During the interview the impact of factors was discussed. The identified factors were discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Some factors appeared to be more influential than others and the factors interact in a dynamic way with one another. The factors that were identified are listed and summarized in Table 25. These factors can be subdivided into the groups of factors that are identified by Hobson. For example, the factors "unpaid parental leave", "cost of childcare" and "pregnancy and leave" are all part of Hobson's group "institutional factors". The factors which are grouped under "workplace resistance for fathers" and "accommodating workplace for mothers" also belong to the group of "institutional factors". More specifically to the factors at firm level, whereas the previously mentioned factors are at the policy level.

However, just grouping the factors would not do justice to their dynamic interaction. Factors do not only have a direct impact on men and women but also impact other factors. For example, societal beliefs are likely to influence parental leave policies since policies are designed by policy makers that are part of society. Societal beliefs also impact personal beliefs and personal beliefs themselves impact societal beliefs. Most important, and fundamental to our research is the impact of gender. It appears that women and men have a very different experience in the workplace, in the arrangement of the maternity period and finances. This is partly due to physical characteristics like pregnancy and breastfeeding but also due to the expectations of their environment regarding their gender. For example, societal beliefs may be the origin of a long maternal leave and a very limited paternal leave. This causes mothers to take up much longer leaves than fathers. Therefore, mothers need to be replaced with an extra hire, while fathers are not replaced. Once the parents return to work, for mothers it may be easier to reduce their work hours since there is already someone available to replace them. There is not someone readily available to replace the fathers' hours.

All factors that are identified in this thesis can be found in previous research regarding labour market participation, children, and gender inequality. This is however the first time that these factors are identified with a qualitative research in the Netherlands. This provides a unique insight in the factors at play in the Netherlands. This could serve as a guideline for future interventions toward gender equality.

Table 25.

Theme	Factor	Explanation
1. Workplace resistance for fathers	Initial response to pregnancy	When fathers announce that their partner is pregnant, the employer tends to expect that this will not have an impact on the father's work hours or take up of leave. The employer does not approach the father regarding his work hours.
	Replacement during leave	Fathers are not replaced when they take up leave. It is regarded as a holiday.
	Work hours after childbirth	Employers tend to assume that fathers continue their work hours after childbirth. Some employers explicitly state this expectation to the father.
	Job characteristics	Fathers tend to think that their job is not compatible with working less hours. They state that the nature of their job hinders them.
	Peer examples	Many fathers report that they mainly have male colleagues and do not see many colleagues reducing their work hours after childbirth.
	Work culture	Fathers report often that working overtime is expected and that work should be prioritized over family time.
2. Accommodating workplace for mothers	Initial response to pregnancy	When mothers announce that they are pregnant, the employer tends to expect that this will have an impact on their work hours and take up of leave. The employer approaches the mother regarding her work hours.
	Replacement during leave	Nearly all mothers are replaced by their employer by hiring a new employee.
	Work hours after childbirth	Employers tend to expect mothers to reduce their hours after childbirth. Often the replacement that was hired during their

		pregnancy leave will take up the hours that the mother drops.
	Job characteristics	Mothers tend to think that their job is compatible with working less hours.
	Peer examples	Many mothers report that they mainly have female colleagues and do not see many colleagues continuing their work hours after childbirth.
	Work culture	Only few mothers report that working overtime is expected and that work should be prioritized over family time.
3. Arrangement of maternity period	Pregnancy and leave	
	Physical recovery and breast feeding	
	Career break during pregnancy	
4. Gender beliefs	Societal beliefs	
	Personal beliefs	
5. Finances	Low wage of mother	
	Unpaid parental leave	
	Cost of childcare	
	Not important	

The disadvantage of this study is in the sample of participants and the analysis of the interviews. One could argue that a larger or a less diverse sample could provide more insight. However, the diversity of the sample is already limited. Nearly all parents are highly educated and have a Dutch background. There is some diversity regarding the number of children and religion. The results from this thesis can only be representative for highly education parents with a Dutch background. More research should be done into how individual characteristics like religion and low education impact the child penalty. One could also argue that this thesis needs a larger sample size before drawing any conclusions. However, similar research by Byun and Won (2020) and Kaufman (2018) also uses samples around this size. Furthermore, the interviews are coded by one researcher. Similar research uses two researchers to code the interviews and verify each other's work. However, this was unfortunately not feasible for this thesis.

## **7. Conclusion**

This research illustrates that a variety of factors influences the impact of child birth on work hours of women and men. Most frequently mentioned are the (perceived) resistance at the workplace by fathers and the (perceived) accommodating workplace for mothers. Furthermore, the arrangement of the maternity period appears to be the first moment where the experiences of men and women differ and the impact on their work hours deviate. Finally, many parents also mention gender beliefs and finances as influential factors for their decisions regarding work hours after child birth.

Nearly all parents indicate that they would have liked the father to work less and spend more time with his family. Mothers would also prefer the father to spend more time with his family and some mothers indicate that they would have like the opportunity to work more. If the Dutch society would like to achieve more equality or at least provide mothers and fathers with more equal opportunities, the results of this thesis could be a good starting point. Possible interventions could be aimed at more affordable child care, equal period of leave for both parents and a more accepting workplace for fathers and mothers to choose freely what they would prefer.

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## 9. Appendix A: Interview quotes

### 9.1 Workplace resistance for fathers

Theme	Quotes
<b>Response to pregnancy</b>	Op het werk werd er nauwelijks gereageerd toen ik vertelde dat zwanger was. Je krijgt felicitaties en dat is het. (male participant)
	Ik kreeg blije reacties. Ik heb niets gemerkt van bepaalde verwachtingen omtrent werkuren.
	Op het werk reageerde ze heel positief, de zwangerschap vonden ze heel leuk. Dat was alleen maar leuk. Ik zat in een team met heel veel vrouwen en die vonden het leuk dat er weer een kleintje kwam.
	De zwangerschap vonden ze ontzettend leuk. Ik kan mij niet herinneren dat iemand heeft gesproken over verloven of wat het met mijn werkuren zou doen.
	Toen ik vertelde dat mijn partner zwanger was werd er op het werk gereageerd met; Ja, met sterkte, succes. Het zijn allemaal mannen onder elkaar. Het was natuurlijk wel proficiat maar voor de rest ja. Er wordt niet zo heel veel over gezegd.
<b>Work hours after child birth</b>	Dat is ook het manco van ouderschapsverlof opnemen, je functie verandert niet. Dus wat je normaal in 40 uur doet, moet je dan in 32 uur gaan doen. Dat zal met name voor mijzelf consequenties hebben, dat het steeds slechter bol te werken is.
	Mijn partner kon niet minder gaan werken, hij had zijn papa dag al en anders zeggen ze daar ook van; dit werkt niet.
	Wat betreft aantal uren is er bij mijn werk een beetje een cultuur dat als je iets wil dan moet je dat aan geven. Ik heb destijds niets aan gegeven. We hebben eigenlijk niet over een lange termijn planning gepraat. Voor de man is het toch anders dan voor de vrouw. Na mijn verlof was het het eigenlijk voor iedereen duidelijk dat ik weer zou gaan werken.
	Als ik bij mijn baas aan kloep en ik zeg dat ik drie dagen ga werken. Dan is wel het eerste antwoord; hoe denk je dat allemaal te gaan regelen? En als mijn partner dat doet, dan is het automatisch; dan gaan we dat regelen.
	Als ik nu mijn contract zou laten aanpassen naar 32 uur dan zou ik alsnog door werken, dat weet ik. Ik ken mijn werk. Dat vind ik dan zonde. Dat ligt ook wel aan de functie die ik heb, misschien als mensen er gewend aan raken dat het dan wel goed zou gaan. Maar in het begin zou ik alsnog meer werken. Dat is lastig, ik doe best grote projecten. Mensen verwachten dan toch dat je beschikbaar bent omdat het een belangrijk project is. Ik ken mezelf, ik zou dan toch door werken en dan krijg ik er niet voor betaald. Mijn collega's werken ook vrijwel allemaal 40 uur. Ik zou wel minder kunnen gaan werken als ik andere projecten zou gaan doen maar dat zou echt wel een stap terug zijn voor mij. Dat is minder uitdagend en minder prestigieus. Je krijgt betere, grotere projecten als je 5 dagen werkt. Als ik 4 dagen zou werken dan doe je minder snel iets er bij en krijg je minder grote projecten, dus dat zou echt effect hebben.
	Ik wilde niet minder werken omdat ik dan hetzelfde werk zou verrichten maar minder betaald krijg.
	Geboorteverlof is gangbaar, maar minder gaan werken is niet gebruikelijk. Ouderschapsverlof doen ook de meeste mensen niet.
	Opzich zou ik er wel voor zijn dat mijn partner ook 4 dagen gaat werken maar hij zegt dat dat niet gaat met zijn werk. Want hij krijgt niet minder

	werk als hij naar 4 dagen gaat want hij moet projecten managen en hij heeft nu al dat hij veel in de avonden en weekenden zit te werken. Dus eigenlijk doe je dan hetzelfde werk voor minder geld. Daarom doet hij dat niet.
	Nee het is niet gangbaar dat de vader ouderschapsverlof op neemt. Terwijl voor vrouwen dat wel gangbaar is, ik denk niet dat er veel vrouwen zijn die 5 dagen blijven werken.
	ik heb altijd al meteen gezegd, ik ga part time werken en dat blijf ik ook doen. Dat is ook nog steeds de norm bij mijn werk. Heel veel mensen werken part time, zeker met kinderen. En ook wat ouderen die dicht tegen hun pensioen aan zitten, gaan wat minder werken. Dus dat is meer de norm dan uitzondering. Ik heb geen enkel moment gedacht dat het negatief zou uit pakken voor mijn carrière.
	En het werd ook heel erg gestimuleerd vanuit mijn werk om 4 keer 9 uur te werken. Dus die mogelijkheid was er heel expliciet om dat te doen.
	De verwachting was wel, in ieder geval vanuit mijn leidinggevende, dat ik weer 40 uur zou gaan werken.
	Mensen vragen bijvoorbeeld eerder of mijn partner na de geboorte minder is gaan werken dan dat ze dat aan mij vragen. Terwijl iedereen het redelijk normaal vind dat ik 40 uur ben blijven werken en dat ze het bijzonder vinden dat ik bij ons tweede kind ouderschapsverlof op neem. Als ik vertel dat mijn partner 32 uur werkt dan vinden ze dat heel veel terwijl ik nog steeds meer werk dan dat. Mensen krijgen dat van huis uit mee en blijven hangen in allerlei stereotypen, dat is wel typisch.
	Mijn partner had ook wel minder kunnen gaan werken maar in zijn functie is dat wel lastiger dan in mijn functie. Als ik full time had gewerkt dan had hij ook full time gewerkt.
	Dat ik minder ben gaan werken en hij niet heeft misschien toch ergens ook met het man/vrouw te maken. Dat ze bij mij niet zo snel zullen vragen, en bij hem wel als hij minder zou gaan werken. Dat zit er ergens echt wel in. Omdat ik ook al wist in mijn functie dat het makkelijker was om 3 dagen te werken dan in zijn functie. Hij heeft een leidinggevende functie dus dan is dat lastiger. Dat denk ik vooral. Maar ook wel een stukje man/vrouw. Ze zullen het aan hem niet vragen als hij nog full time werkt. Dat speelt onbewust wel mee.
	Bij mijn sector is 70 tot 80 procent vrouw, bij zijn sector is 95 procent man. En zo worden die functie omschrijvingen ook geschreven. Hij was toen leidinggevende voor een groep van 35 man. En die mannen werkten allemaal full time. Dus als hij dan maar 2,5 dag in de week bereikbaar is. Dan is die functie niet te vervullen. Ze hebben van die functie omschrijvingen en die vervul je dan. Daar is het niet zo makkelijk. En ik denk ook voor zijn carrière is het goed geweest dat hij die functie full time heeft kunnen doen.
	Als dat makkelijker had gekund binnen zijn functie, was hij wel minder gaan werken, dat denk ik wel. Nu met corona is hij meer thuis, dat vindt hij echt hartstikke leuk en hartstikke fijn. Hij zegt, ik vind het zo fijn om meer van de kinderen mee te krijgen.
	Mijn partner wordt wel eens gepolst of hij meer wil werken want ze hebben een ernstig te kort aan mensen met zijn opleiding op zijn werk.
	Ik weet bijvoorbeeld van een mannelijke collega dat hij niet minder mag werken, dat kan niet omdat iedereen zo veel werkt. Hij werkt in een andere afdeling en daar heb je weinig te kiezen. Dus de mannen hebben niet altijd de mogelijkheid om minder te gaan werken.
	Mijn partner kan niet een dag minder werken omdat mijn partner een leidinggevende functie heeft en ik niet. Dus ik denk dat dat ook aan het type

	werk ligt. Hoewel ik ook twee leidinggevendenden heb gehad die beide een papa dag hadden en dat ging prima.
	Ik had het idee dat men dat jammer vond op het werk maar dat ze het wel begrepen. Ze hadden liever gehad dat ik 32 uur zou blijven werken.
	Nee het is niet gebruikelijk dat de vader minder gaat werken of ouderschapsverlof opneemt. Voor de moeder is dat wel gebruikelijk. Ik denk dat dat verschil cultuur gebonden is vanuit de maatschappij en wij hadden eerst een directeur die er ook zo over dacht.
	Ik denk toch dat van de man minder wordt geaccepteerd op het werk als hij minder gaat werken. Dat dat zijn carrière eerder zal schade dan bij de vrouw.
	Mijn partner kan niet naar minder uur. Want we hebben het er wel eens over gehad maar dat gaat dus niet.
	Het is voor mijn partner lastig om een part time baan te vinden. Hij heeft alleen de mavo gedaan en daarom liggen voor hem de banen niet voor het oprapen. Dus die baan die die nu heeft, zonder opleiding, hij kan niet zo maar ergens anders aan het werk.
	Mijn functie is 36 uur en daar valt niets aan te doen. Die functie is 36 uur en dat is nou eenmaal zo. We hebben wel na de geboorte geregeld dat er andere werktijden kwamen zodat ik meer thuis kon zijn bij ons kind. Dus dat ik 4 dagen wat eerder begin en wat later naar huis ga zodat ik een andere dag vrij heb.
	Ik ben de enige binnen het ziekenhuis die die functie heeft en ze zijn niet bereid daar nog een tweede voor aan te nemen, daarom kan ik niet minder werken. Ik ben de enige die dat doet.
	Mijn medewerkers zijn allemaal 50 plus en dus ook wat traditioneler in het denken dus die vragen vaak waarom überhaupt is blijven werken. Waarom werkt zij nog en is zij niet voor haar kind gaan zorgen zoals zij zelf dat toen dertijd ook hebben gedaan? Als man hebben ze het daar gewoon niet over. Dan gaan ze er gewoon vanuit dat je 40 uur blijft werken.
<b>Job characteristics</b>	Maar ik weet dat het met het werk niet kan om minder te gaan werken. Met bepaalde projecten moet je een bepaalde betrokkenheid hebben, daar voel ik me ook verantwoordelijk voor. De huidige verdeling is met mijn huidige functie het beste.
	En het is ook wel een beetje werk gerelateerd hoor omdat het in de planning ook moeilijk past om 4 dagen in de week te werken. Ik ben bijvoorbeeld 3 weken op dienstreis, dan schuift dat allemaal weer door naar achteren. Dat is ook gewoon lastig natuurlijk. Het is gewoon makkelijker om full time te werken. Daar zijn de banen op ingericht, dat wordt verwacht, dat doet iedereen zo
	Ik zou wel minder uren mogen werken maar het is gewoon niet praktisch.
	Ik merk nu al met een dag ouderschapsverlof, dat dat al heel moeilijk te combineren is. Volgens mij heb ik van een jaar lang heb ik de helft wel op die dag kunnen genieten en de andere helft heb ik moeten verschuiven. Door allerlei vergaderingen en plannings en heel veel dienstreizen, want ik zit ook heel veel in het buitenland. Dat is toch wel lastig plannen.
	Maar op dat moment had ik best wel een drukke baan. Het werk vereist veel. Af en toe zijn er weken dat het echt super druk is.
	Ik had graag langer verlof gehad, dat had ook wel gekund want ik had nog veel vakantie dagen. Ik weet niet meer zo goed waarom ik dat niet heb gedaan. Ik denk dat het toen heel druk op het werk was, als ik dan nog meer verlof had opgenomen dan was ik denk ik vervangen op dat project. Dat wilde ik niet.

	Mijn leidinggevende zei letterlijk tegen mij, het maakt mij niet uit of je 10 uur per week werkt of 60 uur, je moet gewoon zorgen dat dit project gereed komt.
	Als ik dan 32 uur ga werken dan ga ik mezelf waarschijnlijk ook voor de gek houden. Dan zou ik overlopen van het werk want ik heb heel veel te doen. Uiteindelijk ga ik dan toch meer werken terwijl ik er niet voor betaald word. Dat ga ik niet doen.
<b>Replacement during leave</b>	Er is geen vervanging geregeld, mijn leidinggevende heeft toen in principe mij vervangen. Hij deed dat werk er bij.
	Dat was gewoon net als dat je op vakantie gaat. Dat blijft gewoon liggen, en wat echt moet gebeuren dat wordt opgepakt door iemand anders.
	Er werd geen vervanging geregeld voor die 2 weken die ik heb opgenomen na de geboorte. Dat was hetzelfde als dat ik op vakantie was gegaan.
	Mijn werk is blijven liggen tijdens die 2 weken dat ik thuis bleef na de zwangerschap.
<b>Peer examples</b>	Ja, als ik kijk naar mijn collega's, dan is het wel dat zij allemaal 5 dagen werken. En ik ken eigenlijk geen collega's die daadwerkelijk hun werkter hebben aangepast naar 4 dagen of 3. Ik heb alleen 2 vrouwelijke collega's en die doen beide deeltijd en die vervullen samen een functie. Maar dat zijn dan vrouwen, ik heb daar geen voorbeelden van van mannen.
	De meeste van mijn collega's werken full time. Er is maar een collega die 32 uur werkt.
	De meeste collega's werken 5 dagen. Als er collega's zijn die 4 dagen werken, dan zitten ze vaak alsnog wat te doen op hun vrije dag.
	Mijn collega's werken allemaal meer dan hun vrouwelijk partner. De man is niet afwezig in de zorg voor de kinderen maar heeft wel een kleinere rol.
<b>Manager's attitude</b>	Degene die ik nu heb is wel wat minder begripvol, die heeft zelf ook geen kinderen dus die heeft daar ook minder begrip voor. Dat is altijd hard werken en carrière maken.
	Vanuit mijn leidinggevende is er geen begrip voor mijn thuissituatie. Ik denk dat hem de situatie niet heel veel interesseert.
	Op papier houdt het management rekening met je thuis situatie maar in de praktijk denk ik dat het tegen valt. Ze stimuleren wel zo snel mogelijk terug te komen op de werkplekken.
<b>Work culture</b>	Er wordt op werk gedacht dat het huishouden meer een taak voor de vrouw is. je werkt natuurlijk met heel veel mannen. Nu is de verdeling nou eenmaal zo dat daarvan de vrouwen ook veel meer thuis zijn.
	Ja lange overuren maken zijn gebruikelijk. Er wordt verwacht dat je werk boven prive zet.
	Wat je wel merkt is dat als er iets met de kinderen is en je moet in de ochtend vroeg bellen van ik kan niet komen. Dat soort situaties heb je meer omdat je een druk thuis leven hebt. Dus dan voel je je eerder bezwaard tegen collega's. Terwijl het gewoon logisch is. Dus ik voel me wel bezwaard maar tegelijkertijd heeft nog nooit iemand er wat van gezegd.
	Er wordt gedacht dat het ten koste gaat van werk als je te veel bent toegewijd aan je prive leven. Wij zitten met deadlines dus als het moet dan moet het.
	Mijn partner maakt de laatste tijd wel veel overuren.
	Ja het is normaal om overuren te maken.
	Mijn collega's begrijpen niet waarom überhaupt nog werkt. En als ik naar huis ga omdat ons kind ziek is dan is de vraag waar is en waarom zij dat niet doet.

## 9.2 Accommodating workplace for mothers

Theme	Quotes
<b>Response to pregnancy</b>	Dat ik zwanger was heb ik tijdens de sollicitatie al verteld, tijdens het 2 <sup>e</sup> gesprek. Dat vonden ze prima. Ze vroegen wel wat dat betekende voor het aantal uren dat ik wilde werken. Zij zeiden ja als we jou niet aan kunnen nemen dan kunnen we überhaupt geen vrouwen meer aan nemen. Ik werk in het onderwijs en daar werken veel vrouwen.
	Ik heb dat direct de eerste werkdag verteld en mijn leidinggevende zei dat hij dat al wel had verwacht. Hij reageerde positief en mijn collegas ook.
	Dat wist mijn leidinggevende ook wel en die zei; ja het was voor mij niet echt een verrassing dat dat zou komen. Vooral omdat ik in het onderwijs werk waar 70 tot 80 procent vrouw is dus ik was niet de eerste die zwanger was. .
	De reactie op mijn zwangerschap was prima, ik kan daar niets bijzonders over zeggen. De mensen die zelf ouder zijn die reageren net een tikkeltje enthousiaster. Het is niet ter sprake gekomen hoe dit het werk zou beïnvloeden. Maar mijn directe collega vroeg wel hoe veel ik uur ik zou gaan werken na de bevalling. De HR afdeling heeft wel laten weten dat ik vooraf moest aangeven hoe veel uur ik wilde gaan werken na de bevalling, en of ik ouderschapsverlof op ging nemen.
	Het is natuurlijk zo dat ik 30 jaar was en net een kind had gekregen, dus iedereen wist dat er nog een zou komen. Dat ligt in de lijn der verwachting, dat is natuurlijk zo. Toen ik uiteindelijk zwanger was, toen kwam ik bij hem binnen en toen zei hij oh je bent zwanger. Hij wist dat al meteen. Dat was prima verder.
	Ja dat vonden ze heel leuk. Ik vond het wel spannend om het te vertellen want ik had net een vast contract gekregen en dan is het toch lastig om te vertellen dat je er direct een hele tijd uit gaat. Maar die directrice zegt ook; ja er werken hier nou eenmaal veel vrouwen en we weten dat dit soort dingen gebeuren. Ze heeft wel gevraagd of ik ouderschapsverlof wil op nemen.
	Ik weet dat een collega van mij zwanger was bij haar sollicitatie. Zij heeft dat toen tijdens de sollicitatie gezegd en toen zei de leidinggevende: dat heb ik niet gehoord, we gaan gewoon verder met het gesprek. Die moest ook echt na een maand dat ze in dienst was al met verlof. Ze hebben daar hebben ze helemaal niet naar gevraagd tijdens mijn sollicitatie. Dat is natuurlijk ook binnen het onderwijs. Bijna iedereen is vrouw, heeft kinderen en werkt met kinderen. Ze kunnen daar niet op gaan selecteren want dan houden ze niemand meer over.
<b>Work hours after child birth</b>	Ik heb bij ons tweede kind ook ouderschapsverlof opgenomen. De werkgever reageerde daar prima op, heel neutraal en begripvol.
	Ik was docent en voor de vakken die ik moest geven werd iemand anders gezocht, toen ik aangaf dat ik minder wilde werken.
	Het was het meest voor de hand liggend dat ik minder ging werken omdat ik sowieso ander werk moest vinden en hij nog zijn baan had. Ik mocht zelf mijn uren kiezen bij mijn nieuwe werkgever. Ik had daar ook meer uren kunnen werken.
	Persoonlijke voorkeuren heeft niet mee gespeeld. Ik moest toch al van baan verwisselen en kon mijn uren zelf kiezen en hij niet.
	Er werd niet perse heel vervelend gereageerd op mijn gewerkte uren maar daar ga je toch aan twijfelen. Als ze zeggen; "Oh werk jij 3 dagen? Ik bleef toen thuis." Dan dacht ik toch wel tja. Sommige mensen insinueren wel iets. Dus dat zeggen ze niet direct tegen mij maar ze zeggen wel hoe zij het deden.
	Ik heb meer collega's die 4 dagen werken, dus dat is geen probleem.

	Ik denk wel dat ik minder werk heb gekregen toen ik naar 4 dagen ben gegaan. Mijn manager verdeeld het werk binnen het team.
	Ik denk niet dat het invloed heeft op mijn carrière dat ik minder ben gaan werken. In mijn team werken de meeste mensen maar 4 dagen.
	De werkgever is er al veel meer op ingesteld dat een moeder minder gaat werken. Ze zijn eigenlijk al blij als je nog 4 dagen blijft werken en niet nog minder vraagt.
	Er werd denk ik wel al ingecalculeerd dat ik minder zou gaan werken. Ik denk dat ik dat toch wel aan heb gegeven. Daar hebben we het toch over gehad in de weken voordat ik met verlof ging. Maar er kwam gewoon een vervangster voor mij op die school. Omdat ik vervolgens ouderschapsverlof op nam kon die persoon deels blijven.
	Er is wel eens gezegd dat ik veel werk. Dat zal mijn partner wel anders te horen hebben gekregen. Ik denk niet dat veel mensen tegen hem hebben gezegd; "Oh ga je nog full time werken?" Dat zal wel een verschil zijn.
	Maar toen ik zei dat ik minder ging werken, toen zeiden ze dat ze dat al verwacht hadden. Dat zegt dan toch dat ze denken dat dat meer bij de vrouw past. Ik denk dat ze verbaasd waren geweest als ik had gezegd dat ik full time was blijven werken.
	Bij de tweede zwangerschap, toen was wel de reactie "o jee dan gaat ze vast minder werken." Ze denken wel dat het zwaar is om 32 uur te werken en 2 kinderen.
	Mijn leidinggevende en ik hebben het er wel over gehad over hoe veel uur ik zou werken na de zwangerschap.
	Ik weet nog dat ik tegen mijn manager zei; ik wil een dag minder gaan werken en dan ouderschapsverlof opnemen als je dat goed vindt. Toen zei hij: dat maakt niet uit of ik dat goed vind of niet want je hebt daar gewoon recht op. Hij had het liever niet gehad maar hij wist ook wel dat dat niet uit maakte.
	Ik denk dat dat ook best wel bepalend kan zijn. Dat er wordt aangenomen dat jij als moeder minder gaat werken en dat dat dan ook automatisch gebeurt.
	Ik heb betaald ouderschapsverlof en dat scheelt best wel, dan ben je flexibeler in het aantal uren dat je terug komt. Mijn partner had alleen onbetaald ouderschapsverlof.
<b>Replacement during leave</b>	Tijdens mijn zwangerschapsverlof, daar is iemand voor aangenomen.
	Ja voor mij is er dus vervanging gekomen tijdens mijn zwangerschap. Er is iemand die 4 dagen in de week is gaan werken bij ons op school. En zij heeft ook daarna de uren die ik minder ging werken opgevangen.
	Mijn werk is opgevangen tijdens mijn zwangerschapsverlof, daar is iemand op aangenomen. Iemand anders heeft mij dus vervangen en hij is op mijn functie gebleven.
	Toen ik met verlof ging zijn er nieuwe mensen aangenomen dus die vingen dat werk meteen op.
	Er komt een vervanger, een leerkracht uit de pool en die heeft mijn werk overgenomen.
	Toen ik met zwangerschapsverlof ging, kwam er een volledige vervanging voor mij. En toen ik minder ging werken bleef die persoon nog twee dagen.
<b>Manager</b>	Mijn leidinggevende is heel fijn daar in want hij heeft ook 2 kinderen. Hij is daar heel flexibel in, als er iets is met ons kind.
	Mijn leidinggevende heeft begrip voor mijn thuis situatie. .
	Toen ik met verlof ging had ik nog twee leidinggevendes, een man die zelf ook kinderen had en een vrouw die bijna met pensioen ging en die net oma werd. Dus die waren alleen maar hartstikke blij, babies vonden ze heel leuk.

	Hij heeft zelf ook 3 kinderen. Dus als je zegt de kinderen zijn ziek, dan is daar ruimte voor.
<b>Job characteristics</b>	Ik deed eerst best wel vaak iets in het weekend of in de avond. Ik merk wel dat mensen dat iets minder verwachten. Ergens verwachten ze minder van mij omdat ik kinderen heb.
	Op werk is het niet handig, want 24 uur is dan net wat weinig voor de continuïteit van zorg, het zou beter zijn als ik 4 dagen werkte.
<b>Peer examples</b>	Het is wel erg fijn als je directe collegas hebt die ook een kind hebben en minder zijn gaan werken. Dat klinkt gek maar dat helpt wel. Anders dan zou ik meer een schuld gevoel hebben over het verminderen van mijn uren. Het helpt wel mee met de acceptatie.
	Bij collegas zie ik dat de vrouw toch meestal degene is die minder gaat werken en de zorg op zich neemt.
	Ik heb een collega en die krijgt nu haar tweede kindje maar werkt 4 dagen en dan wordt er de hele tijd de vraag gesteld; ga je dan straks 3 dagen werken? Terwijl zij het prima vind zo want haar man werkt minder. Maar dan toch wordt er verwacht dat zij straks minder gaat werken. Als vrouw moet je je verantwoorden als je 4 dagen werkt terwijl je kinderen hebt. Als je als vrouw je op jouw carrière richt dan doe je je kinderen te kort. Overal hoor je dat wel.
<b>Work culture</b>	Het is prima om naar huis te gaan als je uren er op zitten. Er wordt bij ons bijna nooit overgewerkt.
	Er werken heel veel vrouwen, er werken sowieso heel veel vrouwen in het onderwijs. Zij waren heel relaxed en heel aardig. Een andere collega die kreeg ook een baby en toen waren ze ook van “goh als hij naar de opvang moet en je bent wat later dan is dat prima”. Wat dat betreft is dat nooit een probleem geweest.
	Ik denk wel dat bij onze directrice denk dat werk boven prive gaat. Als je bij ons op het werk een stapje hoger wil komen dan moet je wel laten zien dat als je kind ziek is, dat je dan dat regelt en dat je zorgt dat je gewoon op werk bent.

## 10. Arrangement of maternity period

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
<b>Pregnancy and birth leave</b>	Dus 2 dagen officieel vanuit de werkgever en aangevuld met vakantie dagen. (male participant)
	Ik heb een week vakantie opgenomen en je krijgt 2 verlof dagen. Vervolgens heb ik nog een jaar lang 80% gewerkt. Ik heb geen ouderschapsverlof opgenomen want dat is onbetaald.
	Ik dat het ook met het beleid te maken heeft. Vrouwen rollen er al veel makkelijker in. Zij krijgen als enige zwangerschapsverlof en dan ben je er al veel meer uit. Dus daar wordt al een beetje op aan gestuurd.
	Ik heb een maand langer verlof, bovenop de 16 weken en daarna nog 3 weken vakantie er aan geplakt. Die vier weken extra geldt alleen voor moeders. Mijn partner kreeg 5 dagen vanuit de overheid en heeft daarna 2 weken vrij genomen.
	Dat heb je al aan het begin, de vrouw heeft dan verlof en de man niet. Dan doet de vrouw natuurlijk veel meer met het kind en dan sluipt het er al een beetje in. Wat ook logisch is dat je als vrouw langer verlof hebt, want je doet de borstvoeding en je moet langer herstellen.

	Veel mannen zeiden vooral; ga lekker werken als de kraamzorg er is, dus in die eerste week. Ik ben achteraf blij dat ik dat niet gedaan heb. Maar dat hoor ik nog steeds af en toe.
<b>Physical recovery and breast feeding</b>	Als een kind geboren wordt dan is z'n kind meer afhankelijk van de moeder. En de moeder heeft hersteltijd nodig en dat hoort er bij. Dat verander je niet. En als je kiest voor borstvoeding is werken minder praktisch.
	Je hebt het kind 9 maanden bij je gedragen, je bent daar veel meer bij betrokken. Je bent moeder, dat is echt iets anders dan vader zijn.
	Die eerste periode is wel anders omdat de moeder borstvoeding geeft, dat zorgt wel voor een andere band. Dat merk ik ook wel.
	ik denk dat de moeder bij de geboorte al een veel sterkere band met het kind heeft. Dat heeft zich al opgebouwd tijdens de zwangerschap. Han
	Ik snap dat het voor een man anders is dan voor een vrouw, zeker na de bevalling. Dat snap ik. Maar qua opvoeding, qua zorgen zie ik geen verschil. Ik vind het ook erg goed dat vaders nu veel meer geboorteverlof krijgen.
	Ja in het begin trokken de kinderen duidelijk meer naar haar toe en daarna meer naar mij toe. Toen mijn partner stopte met borstvoeding geven werd het gelijk.
	Ik heb zelf bij allebei de kinderen borstvoeding gegeven, een half jaar tot 8 maanden. En dan komt het toch wel meer op de vrouw aan, gewoon omdat jij degene bent die ze voedt. Vooral ook in die begin jaren is het wel belangrijk, als ik full time had gewerkt dan had ik dat niet vol kunnen houden. Ik vind het wel heel fijn dat ik dat heb kunnen doen voor hun fysieke gezondheid maar vooral ook voor de sociale en emotionele binding. En als ik die tijd full time had moeten werken dan had ik dat niet vol kunnen houden. Met alleen kolven enzo en dan s nachts niet slapen en er altijd uit moeten. Misschien als ik de fles had gegeven dat het wat minder was. Ik denk wel dat ik het eerste half jaar, ik wil het niet belangrijker noemen, maar het was belangrijk dat ik daar de ruimte voor heb gekregen. Ik heb een andere rol gehad in de begin periode.
	Ik denk dat een pasgeboren baby gewoon de moeder nodig heeft. Ik heb altijd borstvoeding gegeven, dat doe ik nog steeds. Vooral een heel klein kindje die moet gewoon om het uur drinken, dat kan de vader niet geven. Dan kan je wel kolven maar dat vond ik vet omslachtig. Want dan moet je en kolven en vervolgens alsnog dat aan het kind geven. Dus in het begin heeft het kind de moeder gewoon meer nodig. Later wordt dat steeds makkelijker, dan kan een man daar meer in betekenen. Toen ons kind 9 maanden was ben ik weer full time gaan werken en was hij met haar. Dat vond ik prima. Alleen de eerste maanden had ik niet uit handen willen geven.
	Ik heb natuurlijk zwangerschapsverlof en daarna ben ik de ziektewet in gegaan, een half jaar, vanwege rugklachten. Dus dit school ben ik pas weer volledig gaan werken.
	Omdat ik het niet zag zitten om full time te werken en ook een stuk zorg vanuit de moeder, namelijk de borstvoeding die ik gaf. Ze is wat meer van mij afhankelijk.
	Als moeder heb je het kind toch 9 maanden al bij je gehad. Je merkt toch dat tijdens de nachten ik daar sneller wakker van werd en dat ik haar sneller bij me pak omdat ze dan naast mij ligt. Dus bij ons was het wel dat in het begin ons kindje voornamelijk bij mij wilde zijn en dat ik wel het grootste deel van de zorg deed. Ik was toen namelijk nog vrij en moest de volgende dag vroeg op staan en werken. Dus ik vond het dan ook logisch dat ik er dan snachts uit ging.
	Dat komt toch wel denk ik omdat de moeder dat kind 9 maanden bij zich heeft gedragen en daardoor automatisch een stuk zorg op zich neemt. En dan

	trekt zon kind toch meer naar de moeder en dan voel je als moeder meer die verantwoordelijkheid.
<b>Career break during pregnancy</b>	Ik denk dat vooral ook mannen, die hebben altijd gewerkt dus die zitten er veel langer in en die verdienen dus ook meer. Ik kom nu weer net kijken bij het werk wat ik nu doe. Dus voordat ik weer verder ben dat duurt weer even. De onderbrekingen in mijn carrière hebben een rol gespeeld. .
	Nou haar contract was sowieso niet verlengd bij haar werkgever, tijdens de zwangerschap. Dus dat was geen keuze voor haar om minder te gaan werken. Om dan hoogzwanger een nieuwe baan te zoeken is ook lastig.
	Na mijn zwangerschap ben ik weer begonnen, in een andere functie. Dat was vooraf niet bekend. Dat had niets met mijn zwangerschapsverlof te maken maar wel met dat ik thuis zat en niet wist wat er speelde.
	Toen ben ik zwanger geworden en is mijn contract niet verlengd. Ik was zwanger, ik had gezegd dat ik zwanger was en een paar weken daarna zou ik een contractverlengingsgesprek hebben. En toen is hij niet verlengd. Ik had twee keer een jaar contract gehad en dan moeten ze dat een vast contract maken. De officiële reden was dat mijn functie kwam te vervallen. Ik denk dat het wel met mijn zwangerschap te maken had. Ze hebben dat natuurlijk nooit zo gezegd.
	Mijn contract werd niet verlengd dus ik was thuis, dus probleem opgelost. Het was daardoor niet moeilijk om te bepalen wie thuis zou blijven met onze baby.
	Ik wissel vaker van baan ook. Dus het is logisch dat ik wat flexibeler ben. Het is niet dat ik er voor kies om van baan te veranderen, dat gebeurt me gewoon. Eigenlijk zou ik dat niet willen.

## 11. Gender beliefs

Theme	Quotes
<b>Societal beliefs</b>	Ik denk dat dat veel meer de zorg is die de vrouw voor de kinderen heeft en dat ze dat zelf ook graag willen. En dat mannen het prima vinden om gewoon te blijven werken en minder de zorg voor de kinderen hebben.
	Er zijn moeders die ervoor kiezen vanuit religieuze gedachte om helemaal niet te werken. Maar tegelijkertijd is er een hele cultuur bij de mannen om heel hard en veel te werken. Vooral in deze regio. Dus in bepaalde regio's is daar nog wel druk op, een bepaalde verwachting dat de vrouw thuis is. Maar vaak ook echt een eigen keuze, dat de vrouw dat als haar eerste roeping ziet.
	Bij ons in de kerk zouden mensen toch raar kijken als ik en mijn vrouw beide 40 uur zouden gaan werken en de kinderen naar de opvang gebracht zouden worden. Dan heeft het de voorkeur dat dan de vrouw minder gaat werken. Terwijl als de man er dan voor zou kiezen om minder te gaan werken, ja dan heeft hij wel even wat uit te leggen.
	Bij de afdelingen waar personeel werkt met een lager opleidingsniveau is de rolverdeling veel traditioneler dan bij het hoger opgeleid personeel. Een collega die uitvoerend werk doet die zegt: bij ons in huis is er nooit discussie, het is heel simpel, de vrouw doet het huishouden binnen, de man doet alles buiten.
	Ik denk dat de verwachting is dat de vrouw minder gaat werken dan de man.
	Ik denk dat het over het algemeen meer geaccepteerd is als mannen 5 dagen werken dan vrouwen. Als ik 4 dagen werk dan wordt nog wel eens gezegd dat dat veel is, ik denk niet dat mijn partner dat krijgt bij 5 dagen.
	De gangbare visie is dat je gewoon door werkt als vader. Als moeder ga je minder werken.

	Directe collegas vragen wel eens aan mij, hoe ik het werk combineer met een kleine. Ze vragen dan of ons kind naar de opvang gaat, wie vangt ons kind op als ik werk. Ik heb wel het gevoel dat men dat soort vragen vaker aan vrouwen stelt dan aan mannen. Aan mijn partner zouden ze dat niet vragen.
	Veel mensen zeggen; “oh je hebt 2 kleine kinderen en je werkt 4 dagen dat is best wel veel!” Maar dan denk ik altijd van; nou je zal maar niet werken, dan heb je pas een hectisch leven want dan ben je de hele tijd thuis met die kinderen. Dat is echt veel drukker.
	Dat mensen denken, ja je bent een moeder dus dan is het wel de bedoeling dat je meer thuis bent. Ik moet zeggen dat als ik zeg ik werk 32 uur en heb 2 jonge kinderen, mensen vinden dat wel veel. Meestal krijg ik dat wel te horen. Zo van; “oh zo veel en dan nog kleine kinderen, dan zul je het wel druk hebben.” Terwijl ik denk; nee dan is het juist minder druk.
	Mensen gaan er van uit dat ik volledig voor de kinderen zor en dat mijn partner geen bijdrage levert.
	Ik zou geneigd zijn te zeggen dat de verwachting vanuit de maatschappij is dat de man werkt en de vrouw voor het kind zorgt. Maar ik denk dat dat iets is wat we zelf creëren. Ergens is die verwachting er nog wel.
	Ik denk wel dat de maatschappij denkt dat de man meer moet werken dan de vrouw als er kinderen zijn. Het wordt eerder geaccepteerd als de moeder minder gaat werken, bij de man wordt daar toch wat vreemder naar gekeken. Toen ik minder ging werken voelde ik dat wel zo. Dat ik meer uit te leggen heb dan wanneer ik een vrouw was geweest. P
<b>Personal beliefs</b>	Maar ik denk wel dat het voor mij een soort van vanzelfsprekend is dat de kostwinning voornamelijk zijn verantwoordelijkheid is. En dat mijn grootste verantwoordelijkheid de zorgtaken zijn.
	Ik voel me wel meer verantwoordelijk voor het hoofdkomen en dat dat stabiel is.
	Ik geloof wel dat de man en vrouw verschillend zijn. Zo heeft god dat bedoeld. Dat wil niet zeggen dat ze gelijk zijn maar wel gelijkwaardig. Een vrouw is veel empathischer dan een man. Een man heeft een grotere lichaamskracht. Er zijn mentale en fysieke verschillen. Zo heeft god de mens gemaakt. Dat komt tot uiting in de rol die ze hebben. De man en de vrouw hebben verschillende eigenschappen en zijn daardoor geschikter voor een bepaalde rol.
	Ik wilde geen 40 uur werken omdat ik geloof dat als god mij een kindje geeft dat ik daar als moeder een zorgtaak voor heb. Ik zie dat echt als een geschenk. Dat ik dat kindje moet opvoeden, ik voel me daar in wel de eerste verzorger en dat wil ik ook graag zijn. Ik geloof dat god de moeder gemaakt heeft om kinderen groot te brengen en te koesteren en lief te hebben. Ik geloof ook dat vaders daar een hele belangrijke taak in hebben maar die is wel anders want die is niet gemaakt om het kind borstvoeding te geven bijvoorbeeld. Daarom denk ik ook echt dat god het bedoelt heeft dat je als moeder de eerste zorgtaak voor het kind hebt.

### 9.3 Finances

Theme	Quotes
<b>Unpaid parental leave</b>	Ik heb geen ouderschapsverlof opgenomen want dat is onbetaald.
	Ouderschapsverlof destijds kreeg je niets door betaald en nu krijg je 80% door betaald. Dat is wel een verschil natuurlijk. Dus financiën hebben wel mee gespeeld. Nu kan ik het ook betalen om minder te gaan werken.

	Als ik minder zou kunnen gaan werken met behoud van salaris zou ik het ook doen.
	Ouderschapsverlof heb ik niet gedaan, dat heeft te maken met het feit dat als je ouderschapsverlof opneemt dat je inkomen dan zakt. Dat moet je opgeven bij het afsluiten van een hypotheek dus dan zou ik een lagere hypotheek kunnen krijgen. Dus voor huizen zoeken is dat niet zo gunstig, dat is de belangrijkste reden dat ik dat niet gedaan heb.
	Qua salaris zitten we gelijk maar ik had betaald ouderschapsverlof en hij onbetaald.
<b>Low wage of mother</b>	Nou ik sluit niet uit dat ik nog een keer minder ga werken maar ik denk persoonlijk speelt financieen daar toch ook een rol in. Feit is gewoon dat we niet beide boven modaal verdienen, maar als we dat wel zouden doen dan zou ik misschien wel minder gaan werken.
	Ik denk dat ik niet altijd full time wil blijven werken. Als ik meer ga verdienen dan zou ik wel minder willen gaan werken. Ik wil niet een situatie waar in ik net rond kom, dat lijkt met niet plezierig.
	Relatief kost het je ook vrij veel inkomen. Dat is ook belangrijk, dat ze het er financieel niet voor over hebben. Dat als de vrouw al minder is gaan werken dan kan de man niet ook minder gaan werken.
	Het zou niet gaan als mijn partner meer werkt en ik minder. Dat zou niet gaan met de hypotheek, die hebben we op een combinatie van onze salarissen aangevraagd. En als we dat zouden omdraaien dan zou dat niet gaan.
	Uiteindelijk wil je natuurlijk ook geld verdienen. En als mijn man 300 euro verdient en ik 100, dan is de keuze snel gemaakt. Het moet ook allemaal door gaan, en alles moet betaald worden en kinderen die zijn duur en je moet met alles mee kunnen doen. Dus uiteindelijk is geld daar in misschien wel het belangrijkste. Of daar baseer je jouw keuze op. Ik zou ook graag 40 uur werken want ik vind werken heel leuk. Daar maken we ook wel eens grapjes over. Maar uiteindelijk is er dan ook de helft minder geld. Dan is de keus snel gemaakt. Dan is geld toch heel belangrijk. .
	De reden dat ik dat ouderschapsverlof heb opgenomen was heel simpel; financieel kan het, je hebt er recht op, dus waarom niet? Sommige mensen hebben misschien nog iets er bij dat ze graag bij hun kind willen zijn de eerste jaren, maar dat is bij mij niet de reden geweest. Daarbij is het in leveren van 20% van mijn salaris wat anders dan het in leveren van 20% van zijn salaris.
<b>Costs of child care</b>	We merken dat de vaste lasten omlaag gaan omdat we minder kwijt zijn aan kinderopvang. Het is financieel voor ons goed haalbaar om minder te werken.
<b>Not important</b>	Ja we moeten wel de hypotheek kunnen betalen, maar we zijn er wel achter gekomen dat het goed gaat met 24 uur werken. P
	Financieen hebben geen rol gespeeld in deze afweging want als ik full time zou gaan werken dan zou ik net zo veel verdienen als wanneer full time werkt. Het is niet dat hij meer inkomen heeft dan ik.
	Het was goed financieel haalbaar om beide terug te gaan in uren.
	Financieen speelden geen rol want ik verdiende per uur destijds net wat meer dan mijn partner.

#### 9.4 Preferences in ideal setting

Theme	Quotes
	Ik vind het wel positief dat vaders meer aanwezig zijn in het gezin. Ik vind het belangrijk om ze van school te halen etc. Ik wil mijn kinderen leren

	kennen en weten met wie ze omgaan. Dat de overheid mannen meer verlof geeft als er kinderen geboren worden, dat vind ik heel positief. Maar ik zie dat niet veel in mijn omgeving, dat mannen zoals ik meer aanwezig zijn in het gezin.
	Volgens mij hebben ze in Zweden of Finland een jaar lang gecombineerd verlof met zn tweeën, dat lijkt mij wel iets. Dat zou ik wel op nemen.
	Als ik minder zou kunnen gaan werken met behoud van salaris zou ik het ook doen.
	Als ik meer ga verdienen dan zou ik wel minder willen gaan werken.
	Maar vooral tijd samen als gezin zou ik wel fijn vinden. Mijn man zou dan ook minder willen werken, hij zou dan ook terug gaan naar 3 dagen in de week. .
	Als ik een ideale baan zou kunnen creëren zou ik een baan willen waar ik mijn kind bij kan betrekken, dat ik het kan combineren. Mijn ideaal zou dan niet zijn dat ik minder dagen per week werk maar dat ik een half jaar full time werk en dan een half jaar helemaal niet werk.
	Ik zou het leuk vinden als mijn partner ook 4 dagen zou werken, op de voorwaarde dat dat kan met zijn werk. Niet dat hij dan in de stress zit en hele dagen zit te bellen, daar wordt hij natuurlijk ook niet gelukkig van. Het is denk ik ook leuk voor de band tussen ons kind en mijn partner.
	Het meest ideale is natuurlijk alle kindzorg en huishouden 50-50 verdelen. Dat zou ik het liefst willen. Als geld geen probleem is zou het leuk zijn om beide een dag minder te werken. .
	Ik zou het liever meer verdeeld zien of meer samen doen. Dan zou ook minder gaan werken en we zouden beide ander werk gaan doen waar we gelukkiger van worden. Dan zouden we 2 of 3 dagen werken. Ik zou het vooral zo inrichten dat meer tijd met haar zou hebben.
	Ik kan dan alleen voor mezelf spreken en dan zou ik denk ik part time werken. Ik vind het niet erg om te werken maar ik zou wel graag meer tijd met ons kind door brengen.

## 10 Appendix B: Codebook

Theme	Factor
1. Father's workplace	Initial response to pregnancy
	Replacement during leave
	Work hours after childbirth
	Job characteristics
	Peer examples
	Work culture
2. Mother's workplace	Initial response to pregnancy
	Replacement during leave
	Work hours after childbirth
	Job characteristics
	Peer examples
	Work culture
3. Arrangement of maternity period	Pregnancy and leave
	Physical recovery and breast feeding
	Career break during pregnancy
4. Gender beliefs	Societal beliefs
	Personal beliefs
5. Finances	Wage
	(un)paid parental leave
	Cost of childcare
	Not important

## 11 Appendix C: Interview Guideline

### Individual factors

- Age
- Sex
- Relation status
- Education
  - WO
  - HBO
  - MBO
- Age partner
- Sex partner
- Education partner
  - WO
  - HBO
  - MBO
- Children and their age
- Religion
- Ethnicity
  - Dutch
  - Western non-Dutch
  - Antilean-Surinamese
  - Maroccan-Turkish
  - Non-western

### Work before first child (participant and their partner)

- Profession
- Hours
- Employment contract
- Sector
- Number of employees
- Female/male ratio employees
- Income
- Mother/father ratio household income

### Work after first child (participant and their partner)

- Profession
- Hours
- Employment contract
- Sector
- Number of employees
- Female/male ratio employees
- Income
- Mother/father ratio household income

### Work during pregnancy and leave

- Pregnancy leave for mother, birth leave for father
- Adjustment of work hours (participant and partner)
- Fear of professional repercussions?
- Image, status?
- Expectations from employer, manager, colleagues regarding work hours?

- Response to pregnancy?
- If and how is work covered during leave?
- Response regarding combining child and work?
- Impact on nature of work, change in responsibilities or projects?
- Expectations regarding, effort, availability?
- Negative or positive responses regarding the choices made?

### **Individual factors (continuation)**

- Why chosen for specific amount of work hours?
- Financial considerations?
- Feel like leave is justifiable?
- Want to care for children?
- Role of father and mother?
- Division of household labour?
- Chilcare opportunities?
- Impact of religion?

### **Firm level**

- Replacement during leave or reduction of hours
- Workplace characteristics regarding family
  - Norm regarding combining children and work?
  - Management cares for family life of employees?
  - Specific policy regarding childbirth or children?
  - Policies are known to employees?
- Manager
  - Manager respects private life?
  - Manager understands family situation?
  - Manager helps in career development?
  - Manager is an example on how to combine family life and work?
- Gender beliefs at work
  - Norm regarding mother/father taking care of the household?
  - Norm regarding father/mother taking care of children?
  - Mother/father should take up leave?
- Work culture
  - Employees should be devoted to work?
  - What characterizes a productive employee?
  - Is private life discussed at work?
  - Response to leaving work early to take care of sick child?
  - Working over time?

### **Policy level**

- What leave policy?
- Impact of leave policy?
- Paid or unpaid?

### **Societal factors**

- News and media regarding children and work?
- Expectations from environment?
- Norms in society?

### **Preferences in ideal setting?**

- Prefer to work more/less?
- Prefer longer/shorter, paid/unpaid, different leave?

- Why is current division in paid labour not the other way around?
- What would be your ideal situation?

**Future plans:**

- More/less work?
- Change in division of paid labour?