WORKING FROM HOME AND EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF CAREER PROSPECTS IN EUROPE: THE GENDER AND FAMILY PERSPECTIVES

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Working from Home and Employee Perception of Career Prospects in Europe: the Gender and Family Perspectives

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Abstract: This article examines the relationship between work from home and perceived career prospects for employees from 29 European countries, considering gender and family perspectives. The indicators of career prospects pertain to advancement prospects, job visibility, and rapport with a supervisor and colleagues. Multilevel modelling was applied to the cross-sectional data of the European Working Conditions Survey which was merged with the country-level Family Policies Sub-Index to grasp the potential moderating effect of national contexts. The findings indicate positive relationships between work from home and career prospects for men both fathers and non-fathers, and rather negative relationships for women, especially for mothers. Higher provision of work-family reconciliation measures and the prevalence of work from home are associated with better career prospects reported by both men and women. Varying relationships for different work from home frequencies are observed, with workers who work from home less frequently reporting better career prospects.

1. Introduction

The prevalence of work from home (WFH), broadly defined as paid work that is carried out from home rather than the employer's premise, has increased substantially over the years across most industrialised countries (ILO 2020). The development of new technologies enabled WFH, while the recent outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has further accelerated the already increasing prevalence of this mode of work. Importantly, WFH is forecasted to remain an integral part of the working life for many people (Barrero et al. 2021). Although WFH is not a new phenomenon and it has been widely researched, its impact on careers is still considered rather ambiguous. On one hand, WFH means fewer workplace distractions (Nardi and Whittaker 2002) and interruptions (Konradt et al 2003) which are common in collocated office environments. Avoiding such interruptions can allow employees to stay more focused and improve their productivity levels, ultimately leading to better job outcomes. Subsequently, the increased levels of job satisfaction and perceived autonomy (Gajendran and Harrison 2007; Fonner and Roloff 2010) experienced by many home-based workers, can also have a positive impact on the quality and quantity of work that one performs. Indeed, the extant literature indicates that people who engage in WFH tend to be as efficient and productive as office-based workers, and often even more so as the time saved on commuting is often used to perform more work (Golden and Veiga 2008; Bloom, 2014; Gajendran et al. 2014). This means that theoretically, individuals who WFH should not experience performance devaluation and hindered career prospects.

On the other hand, a lack of consistent communication with colleagues and supervisors may deprive workers of informal learning and mentoring opportunities, interpersonal networking as well as the transfer of implicit knowledge (Cooper and Kurland 2002; Bourdeau et al. 2019). Those who work from home can also suffer increased levels of perceived isolation and diminished workplace visibility (Whittle and Mueller 2009; Bourdeau et al. 2019). Subsequently, Morganson et al. (2010) find that those who work outside of the employer's premise report increased difficulty in building workplace relationships, particularly with other colleagues. The way individuals who WFH feel about various aspects related to career development (e.g. prospects for advancement, interpersonal relations with other colleagues and managers) is particularly important because it significantly impacts their work attitudes and behaviour. For example, Golden et al. (2008) argue that the feelings of professional isolation reported by some remote workers are linked with lower job performance, implying that perceptions of employees are important for their job-related outcomes. Similarly, the perception

of gender bias in the workplace has been found to negatively affect women's organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Miner-Rubino and Cortina 2007; Settles et al 2012).

An important feature in the link between WFH and career prospects is the frequency of WFH, as those who engage in this mode of work more frequently appear to be particularly disadvantaged. The results of the meta-analysis by Gajendran and Harrison (2007) indicate that those who WFH often are less likely to experience the benefits of WFH, such as an increased level of job satisfaction and autonomy. The authors also find that remote work is negatively correlated with the co-worker relationship quality, however, only for those who engage in remote work on a more frequent basis. Subsequently, Martinez and Gomez (2013) found that the more employees were engaging in remote work, the fewer training and development opportunities they were receiving, which carries clear implications for career development. More recently, Golden and Eddleston (2020) found that American remote workers experience lower salary growth, with the highest penalties paid by frequent users of this mode of work. Considering the existing evidence, it is imperative that research concerning the link between WFH and career development incorporates the distinction of different WFH frequencies.

The consequences of the use of WFH and its impact on careers can also differ depending on one's gender or parenthood status. This is due to the fact that men and women tend to use this mode of work for different reasons (Sullivan and Lewis, 2001, Bailey and Kurland, 2002, Hilbrecht et al. 2008) and experience different levels of engagement in the domestic and professional spheres (McMunn et al. 2020; Craig and Mullan 2011). The current literature is not consistent when it comes to assessing the moderating role of gender or parenthood status in the impact of WFH on career prospects, often indicating conflicting results with penalties (e.g. Leslie et al, 2012) or benefits (e.g. Weeden 2005; Munsch 2016) experienced by women or gender being not important at all (Golden and Eddleston 2020). Therefore, a question remains open whether any gender differences in the link between WFH and careers exist and in what way they are exhibited.

Importantly, the extant research indicates that the broader context in which those who WFH are embedded can also shape their professional experience (Chung 2022). For example, organisational settings, such as high-performance work culture, can either enhance or restrict employees' ability and willingness to engage in alternative modes of work (Lott and Abendroth 2020; Thebaud and Pedulla 2022). As WFH is often perceived and used by many as a great way of combining care and professional lives (Powell and Craig 2015), it can be argued that in countries with systems that are more supportive of work-family reconciliation, WFH can be

a more positive and less stigmatising experience. The current literature provides evidence on the role of gender norms (Chung and Van der Lippe 2020), and national culture (Ollo-Lopez et al. 2020) in the link between WFH and various career-related aspects but the provision of family-friendly policies and institutional settings have not been explored yet. In addition, the prevalence of WFH can be particularly vital as it can indicate the level of social acceptance and normalisation of such a working arrangement (Thebaud and Pedulla 2022). Hence, workers operating in settings where WFH is more prevalent can perceive this mode of work in a better light and fear the negative consequences that follow its use much less.

The aim of this study is to investigate the association between WFH and perceived career prospects. This investigation is based on the cross-sectional data of the European Working Conditions Survey from 2015. Notably, the data is from the pre-pandemic times when the prevalence of WFH was significantly lower and not all organisations possessed the digital infrastructure to offer this mode of work. Although Covid-19 has brought substantial changes to the work domain, and WFH in particular, the findings of this study provide valuable information on the state of the matter before the crisis. As the pandemic was a very peculiar situation, findings from research conducted during those times will be rather context-specific. Thus, knowing the conditions prior to those times appears vital, and can be helpful in drawing potential (but difficult) predictions for how the future of WFH can look like. The central finding of this study is that women, especially mothers, who WFH often (i.e. daily or several times a week) report worse career prospects than those working in the office. Engaging in WFH does not seem to be detrimental to men's perception of their career prospects, as they tend to report better career prospects when working from home. In addition, higher provision of childcare services and leaves, as well as the prevalence of WFH are associated with a higher likelihood of reporting better career prospects when working from home, for both men and women.

The article makes several important contributions to the literature and practice. First, it focuses on a broad array of self-reported indicators of career prospects rendered in a form of an index, which allows for the inclusion of a valuable employee perspective. Understanding the perception of employees is important because it directly affects their work attitudes and behaviour at work. Next, the article explores the mechanisms behind the link between WFH and career prospects (i.e. gender and parenthood status). In addition, the article incorporates the investigation of how the rate at which WFH occurs (i.e., different frequencies) impacts career prospects. The experiences of employees who WFH several times a week and those who do so less frequently are likely to be different. Therefore, the differentiation of WFH frequencies

allows for more appropriate conclusions to be drawn from the findings and it is something that has been advocated for by the research community (Golden et al. 2008; Allen et al. 2015; Lab and Wooden 2022). Finally, the article accounts for the cross-country variations, emphasising the importance of national-level policies and institutional settings as well as the prevalence of WFH in the link between WFH and career prospects. Such an approach constitutes a very novel contribution to the literature.

2. Theoretical considerations

In line with the *stigmatisation theories* (Goffman 1963), workers who deviate from the norm of a traditional employee archetype are more likely to be stigmatised, namely, experience differential treatment and devaluation of their work. In cultures with a strong 'ideal worker' presence, those who do not fall into the traditional (male) model of an employee whose merit is judged by the number of hours worked and high devotion to the organisation can be rendered as less valuable employees (Williams et al. 2013). Previous research indicates that using flexible working arrangements, and remote work especially, can lead to career penalties due to the *flexibility stigma*, which is a belief that workers who use flexible working arrangements for care purposes are somehow less productive and less committed to the workplace (Cech and Blair-Loy 2014; Chung and van der Horst 2018). Although the virtue of flexible working was to help people achieve a better work-life balance and support parents with work-family reconciliation, it has also created invisible obstacles and such barriers, although rarely publicly acknowledged, can damage careers. Indeed, the results of the experimental study by Fernandez-Lozano et al. (2020) conducted on a sample of managers in Spain show that remote workers are viewed as less committed to their careers and suffer lower promotion scores than those who work from the office. Therefore, it can be argued that as there is a common understanding among employees that WFH is valued less than office-based work (i.e. public stigma), workers who WFH can experience apprehension of being exposed to stigma (i.e. self-stigma) and subsequently either restrain from WFH or report negative perceptions about their careers when using it (Bos et al. 2013).

Another theoretical premise on which this article is structured is the *signalling theory* (Spence 1973). As explained by Spence (1973) employee attributes can be divided into Indices (fixed), for example, sex or race, and Signals (alterable), which refer to observable characteristics or behaviour indicating one's attitudes and abilities at work. Workers are able to send signals to employers and adjust their bargaining power. In other words, employees,

through for instance physical presence in the workplace can create appearances about unobservable attributes such as organisational commitment or productivity (Bourdeau et al. 2019). Workplace visibility, through physical presence in the workplace, is considered to be a great (and perhaps the easiest) way of signalling engagement, commitment as well as quality and quantity of work. Such knowledge is available not only to employers but also to workers themselves. Thus, individuals may know that by engaging in WFH, and their diminished physical presence in the workplace, they send signals of being less committed and devoted to work. Subsequently, engaging in WFH can send a signal of prioritising the family over work, which will go against the 'ideal worker' norm (Williams et al. 2013). Considering the existing evidence, it has been hypothesised that:

> H1. Individuals who WFH on a frequent basis will be more likely to report worse career prospects.

> H1.a Such a relationship will not exist for those who WFH sporadically.

2.1 Moderating factor: gender

The rationale for gender differences in the link between WFH and perceived career prospects stems from the fact that there is a substantial difference in the position of men and women in the labour market. Although progress has been made in many Western societies, women still experience different labour market outcomes than men, for example in regards to promotion (Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2008) and pay (Blau and Kahn, 2017; Cukrowska-Torzewska and Matysiak, 2020), to name a few. Women's careers are often marked by the experience of child-rearing or even the potential to do so, which is something that men do not experience to the same extent (Ely et al. 2014). Working mothers seem to be experiencing the biggest career penalties (Benard and Correll 2010), largely due the fact that they still bear the main responsibility for providing care at home across many countries in the industrialised world (McMunn et al. 2019). However, even in countries with more egalitarian gender roles and higher involvement in childcare, such as Nordic countries (Eydal and Rostgaard 2011), women's career trajectories and outcomes are different from men's (Cukrowska-Torzewska and Matysiak, 2020). There are several mechanisms that have been proposed to explain this phenomenon. The literature points out a certain level of statistical discrimination experienced by working mothers, possibly due to the image of a higher-risk employee who may discontinue working because of family obligations and is less devoted to work (Correll et al 2007; Gangl and Ziefle 2009). Another explanation why women experience worse labour market outcomes suggests that mothers experience a loss of skills and non-accumulation of human capital during

care-related employment breaks (Napari 2010), which can be detrimental to their careers. Mothers also tend to choose jobs which are more compatible with care (i.e. part-time jobs, jobs in the public sector and those that offer higher flexibility, less commuting and are less stressful) but such jobs often entail worse career development prospects, and worse pay (Gangl and Ziefle 2009; Felfe 2012; Cukrowska-Torzewska and Matysiak, 2020). In addition, some working mothers may be relatively more oriented towards family than paid work and therefore perform worse in their jobs, leading to worse career outcomes (Anderson et al 2003; Budig and England 2001).

Furthermore, it can be argued that women may experience worse career prospects than men when they WFH due to the potentially varying reasons why they engage in this mode of work (Sullivan and Lewis 2001; Chung and van der Lippe 2020. It has been suggested that being able to work more and with higher efficiency is one of the key reasons behind the choice of WFH for men, whereas women are attracted to this form of work mostly accommodate paid work to family demands (Sullivan and Lewis 2001; Powell and Craig 2015). For women especially then, WFH can be a signal of prioritising personal and family concerns above work, regardless of the employee's actual motives (Golden et al. 2006; Kossek et al. 2006; Golden and Eddleston 2020). The perception of one's commitment to work and general orientation (family-oriented vs. work-oriented) can be taken into consideration when assessing promotion decisions and substantially affect career prospects (Veiga et al. 2004; Golden and Eddleston 2020). It has been argued that workers using flexible work arrangements witness their work being devalued due to their deviation from the work devotion schema that places work at the centre of one's life (Dumas and Sanchez-Burks 2015; Golden and Eddleston 2020). Women who engage in WFH are at risk of being at odds with the image of an 'ideal worker', a person who is fully devoted to their work, always available to take on more responsibility and is free from other obligations, particularly family-related (Williams et al. 2013; Cech and Blair-Loy 2014). Therefore, women engaging in WFH can send a signal to the employer that they prioritise family over work, ultimately leading to stigmatisation and negative perceptions of their career prospects. Considering the above evidence and theory, it has been hypothesised that:

> *H2.Mothers who WFH will be more likely to report worse career prospects than mothers working from the office.*

> *H2.a This will not be true for fathers.*

2.2 Moderating factor: country context

Although the extent literature provides some evidence on how the group-level moderators affect engagement and prevalence of WFH, little is known whether the national context can also moderate the link between WFH and career prospects. The descriptive analysis indicates that WFH is most prevalent in Nordic countries where individuals exhibit higher levels of trust towards each other and where power distance is shorter (Eurofound 2020). Empirical evidence shows that smaller power distance, higher levels of individualism and femininity, as well as better remote work regulations facilitate the use of HBW (Ollo-Lopez et al. 2020). Similarly, organisational norms, such as high-performance work culture and high financial costs related to the use of flexible work policies have a negative effect on men's and women's intention to engage in flexible work (Thebaud and Pedulla 2022).

Comparative research points out the particular importance of work-family reconciliation policies when assessing gender-based career outcomes (Budig et al 2016). Evidence shows that in countries with higher provisions of formal childcare and parental leaves, mothers accumulate more years of employment and tend to experience better promotion opportunities and pay (Cukrowska-Torzewska 2017; Boeckmann et al. 2015; Thevenon and Solaz 2013). It has been argued that mothers operating in such countries are more likely to remain in employment, less likely to reduce their working hours or transition to family-friendly jobs and do not experience losses in their human capital to the same extent as mothers in countries with less supportive measures (Hallden et al. 2016; Thevenon and Solaz 2013; Gornick and Meyers 2004). Subsequently, in countries with higher provision of childcare services, women can be also less likely to be seen as the primary caretakers, which can improve their labour market situation by changing the employer's perception and reducing the image of a higher-risk employee who may discontinue working and is less devoted to work (Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson 2001). It could also be assumed that in countries with a higher provision of formal childcare, motherhood will have a smaller impact on employee productivity (Hallden et al. 2016; Elvin-Nowak and Thomsson 2001). Indeed, a recent comparative analysis of industrialised countries shows that the provision and the quality and quantity of formal childcare are particularly important for working mothers and substantially improve their professional outcomes (Kowalewska 2020).

In addition, this article investigates whether in countries with a higher prevalence of WFH, where this mode of work is more socially accepted and less stigmatised, individuals engaging in it report better career prospects. The inclusion of this feature can be particularly

important for mothers who engage in WFH, assuming they do so in order to better combine professional and personal lives. Based on the previous evidence, it has been hypothesised that:

H3.In countries with a higher provision of formal childcare services and leaves and a higher prevalence of WFH, parents who WFH will be more likely to report good career prospects.

3. Data and methodology:

3.1 Data and sample

The 2015 European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) is used to provide a sample of full-time and part-time employees (N=22,306; 51,89% women). The sample is limited to employees of working age (24-65 years old) and does not include self-employed workers as their careers tend to follow different trajectories and vary in attitudes toward job attributes (Feldman and Bolino 2000; Levesque et al. 2002). The micro-level data (EWCS) is merged with the Family Policies Sub-Index (FPI), which contains country-level information on the provision of childcare services and leaves (Matysiak and Węziak-Białowolska 2016). The sub-index is constructed based on questions regarding the provision of formal childcare for children of various age groups, quality of childcare, out-of-pocket parents' expenses on childcare, availability of parental leaves by gender, as well as sick-child leave availability for parents. The rationale behind the choice of this index is that in countries that score high on it, where there is more provision of external childcare, child-rearing is not perceived as solely women's responsibility. Hence, women's position in the labour market and perceptions of them as employees can be more positive, as explained in the previous section. Another macro-level indicator used in this article pertains to the prevalence of WFH. This indicator is calculated based on the EWCS dataset and represents a percentage of parents in the working population that is working from home at least several times a month. Although the 2015 EWCS contains data for 35 European countries, the sample includes only 29 countries (Norway, UK, Switzerland and EU27 without Malta) because the group-level indicator (the FPI index) is not available for the remaining countries. Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix A include information on how the 29 European countries score on the FPI index and WFH prevalence and further description of the components of the FPI index.

3.2 Measures

The outcome variable is a career prospects index constructed as a combined score of ten variables (Cronbach alpha = 0.801) with an equal weight attached to each of them. The term career prospects can be understood broadly as a chance for future success in the profession. Subsequently, the indicators of career prospects used in this study include (1) general advancement prospects; job visibility: (2) recognition for a well-done job, (3) consultation before objectives are set at work; rapport with a supervisor: (4) supervisor helps and supports you (5) supervisor supports your professional development, (6) supervisor praises you for the well-done job, (7) supervisor provides useful feedback on your work; and rapport with colleagues: (8) colleagues help and support you, (9) there is good cooperation between you and your colleagues, (10) you get on well with your colleagues. Importantly, all of the indicators are self-reported and refer to the perception of the employee on his or her situation at work. Such an approach allows for the exploration of the employee perspective, which is important because it substantially affects their attitudes and behaviour at work. Each of the ten outcome variables used to create the career prospects index has three categories (disagree; neither; agree). Men appear to have a similar proportion of workers indicating favourable career prospects as women, with small variations in some variables. A more detailed description of the measures used to create the outcome variable, together with information on the proportion of men's and women's scores on the ten variables, is available in Table 3 in Appendix A. The scale of the career prospects index ranges from 0 to 19. The index is further recoded into a binary outcome variable with the levels of (0) poor career prospects (46.99% of the sample) and (1) good career prospects (53.01% of the sample) used in the models.

For the explanatory variable, a question about WFH frequency is recoded into a 3-point scale: (3) 'daily and several times a week' called 'often' in the article (2) 'less than several times a week and several times a month' called 'sporadically' (1) never. The moderators include binary variables gender: (1) women (0) men, and children: (1) parents (0) non-parents. In terms of control variables, the worker's occupation (ISCO-88 1-digit codes), age (in years: 15-24; 25-35; 36-45; 46-55; 56-65), education (less than secondary; secondary; tertiary), tenure (in years worked for the organisation: 1; 2-5; 6-10; 11-15; 15-60), business sector (private; public; other), sector of the economy (NACE 1-digit codes), type of employment contract (unlimited; limited; temporary; no contract), part-time work (part-time; full-time) and firm size (in a number of employees: 1; 2-9; 10-249; 250+) are included in the models. Summary statistics for the variables used in the analysis are presented in Table 4 in Appendix A.

3.3 Statistical approach

Given that the outcome variable has two categories and the data has a two-level nested structure (employees are nested within countries), multilevel logistic regression with country random intercept is used. The advantage of this method is that it allows for testing the link between individual- and group-level variables and the individual-level outcome (Mathieu et al. 2012). All models are run separately for men and women or mothers and fathers as their career prospects can be affected differently by the same covariates. When analysing the country-level differences, the FPI index and WFH frequency (group-level variables) are run in interactions with WFH frequency (individual-level variable), also in separate models for mothers and fathers.

4. Results:

The estimates of the models are used to draw the predicted probabilities (estimated marginal means) of reporting good career prospects by WFH frequency. The calculated confidence intervals for the predicted probabilities in all graphs correspond to 83%, which allows for an accurate assessment of the statistical significance of the difference between two means for logistic regression (Austin and Hux 2002). The regression tables with the odds ratio for the models are reported in Tables 5 and 6 in Appendix A.

4.1 Gender gap in reported career prospects

The findings indicate that there is a gender difference in reported career prospects for individuals who WFH (Figure 1). Women who WFH often (i.e. several times a week and daily) are less likely to report good career prospects than those working from the office by 10 percentage points. Importantly, this finding exists even when controlling for the worker's job characteristics, such as occupation, sector and education. This means that it is not due to the fact that women may choose jobs which do not allow for performing WFH (e.g. in the care sector). Whereas, men who WFH do not report negative career prospects, and those who do so sporadically are in fact more likely to report good career prospects than those working from the office by 10 percentage points. Such findings indicate that the use of WFH is experienced differently by men and women, and carries different professional implications. It appears that the frequency of WFH is also important as those who WFH less frequently are more likely to report better career prospects than those who WFH often, which is true for both women and men.

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities of good career prospects by WFH frequencies for the subsamples of women and men: multilevel logit random-intercept models.
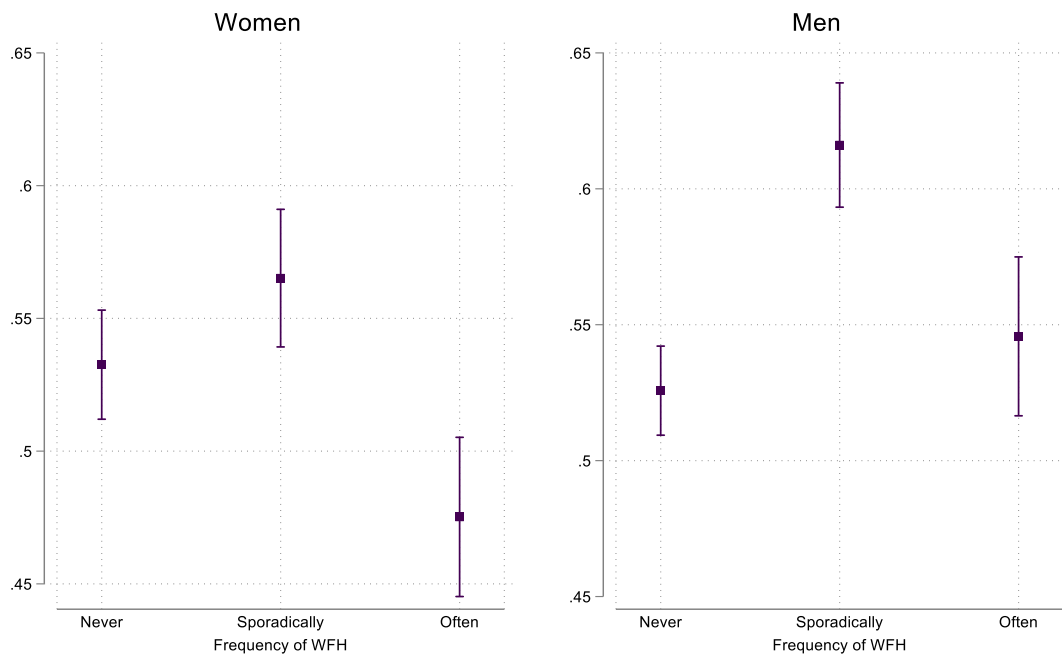
Source: Own calculation based on the EWCS dataset by Eurofound. Control variables include occupation, tenure, sector, contract type, part-time work, firm size, age, and education.

4.2 Gender gap in reported career prospects in the context of family situation

Interactions with parenthood status bring some evidence that being a parent moderates the link between WFH and perceived career prospects (Figure 2). The findings indicate that mothers who WFH often are less likely to report good career prospects than mothers working from the office by 7 percentage points. There is no evidence in the data suggesting that such a relationship exists for childless women. Regarding men, those who WFH sporadically are more likely to report good career prospects than those working from the office, which is true for both fathers and non-fathers. Thus, it appears that parenthood status is particularly important for women as mothers who WFH report hindered career prospects, whereas men tend to be more likely to report better career prospects when WFH sporadically no matter whether they have children or not. In addition, fathers who WFH often are more likely than non-fathers to report good career prospects, suggesting a certain level of fatherhood premium for engaging in WFH.

Figure 2. Predicted probabilities of good career prospects by WFH frequencies and parenthood status for the subsamples of women and men: multilevel logit random-intercept models.

Source: Own calculation based on the EWCS dataset by Eurofound. Control variables include occupation, tenure, sector, contract type, part-time work, firm size, age, and education.

4.3 The role of social policies and WFH frequency in explaining the gender gap in reported career prospects

Next, the interaction models between WFH frequency and WFH prevalence were run for the subsamples of mothers and fathers to grasp the moderating role of national contexts (Figure 3). The findings indicate that a higher prevalence of WFH is associated with an increased likelihood of reporting good career prospects by both fathers and mothers who WFH. More specifically, mothers who WFH sporadically are more likely to report good career prospects if they operate in countries with a higher prevalence of WFH than those who live in countries where this mode of work is less common. For fathers, such a relationship is also found but only for those who WFH often; there are no statistically significant differences for those who WFH sporadically. Interestingly, fathers who WFH sporadically and operate in countries with a low prevalence of WFH are more likely to report good career prospects than those who do so often. Such a difference does not exist in countries where WFH is more prevalent. These findings imply that in environments where the use of WFH is more widespread, women and

men are more likely to report positive career implications related to engaging in this mode of work.

Figure 3. Predicted probabilities of good career prospects by WFH frequencies and WFH prevalence for the subsamples of mothers and fathers: multilevel logit random-intercept models.
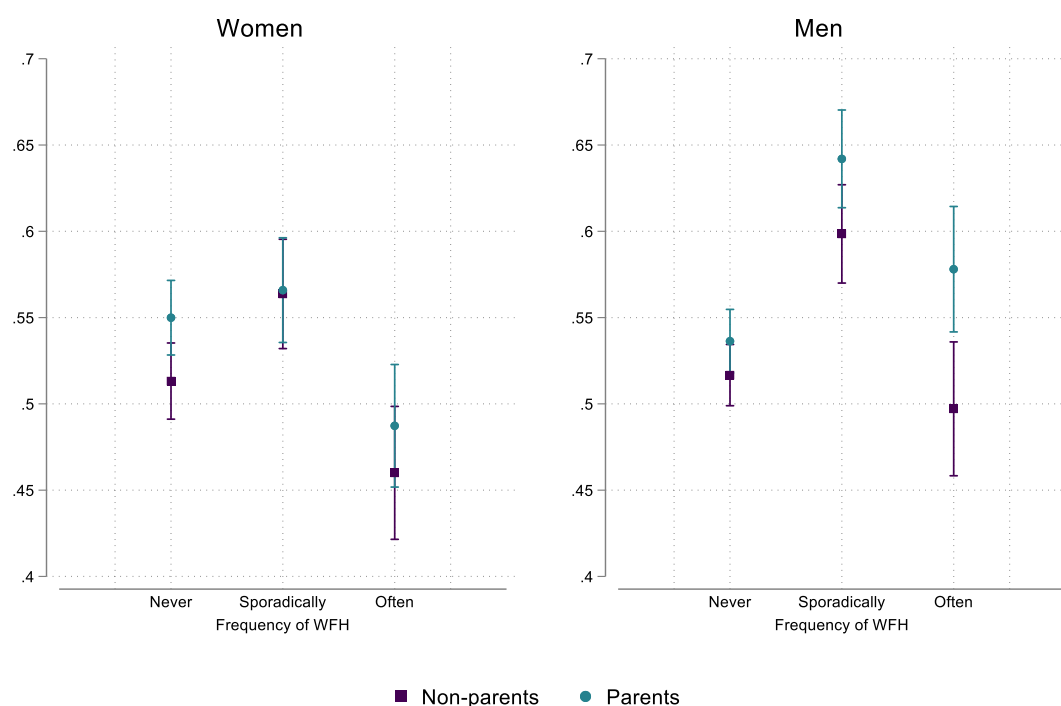

Source: Own calculation based on the EWCS dataset by Eurofound. Control variables include occupation, tenure, sector, contract type, part-time work, firm size, age, and education.

The findings pertaining to the exploration of the importance of the provision of childcare services and leaves indicate that in countries with higher means of these, mothers who WFH sporadically are more likely to report better career prospects (Figure 4). In such countries, mothers who WFH sporadically are also more likely than those who WFH often to report good career prospects. This suggests that the higher provision of childcare services and leaves in a country positively moderates the link between WFH and career prospects but only for those mothers who WFH sporadically. This is in contrast with the situation of fathers who are more likely to report good prospects when they WFH often in countries with higher provision of childcare services and leaves compared to countries where such provisions are less prevalent. Interestingly, fathers who WFH sporadically are more likely than those who WFH often to report better career prospects but only in countries with a lower provision of external childcare services. This relationship does not hold in countries that score higher on the FPI.

Figure 4. Predicted probabilities of good career prospects by WFH frequencies and the FPI for the subsamples of mothers and fathers: multilevel logit random-intercept models.
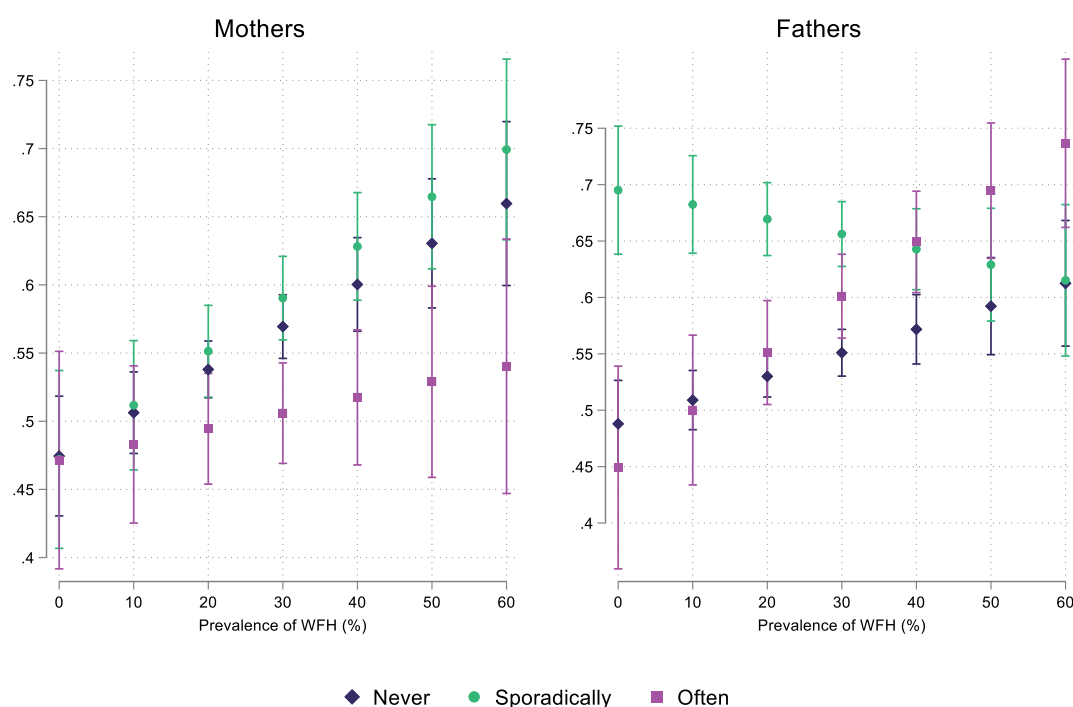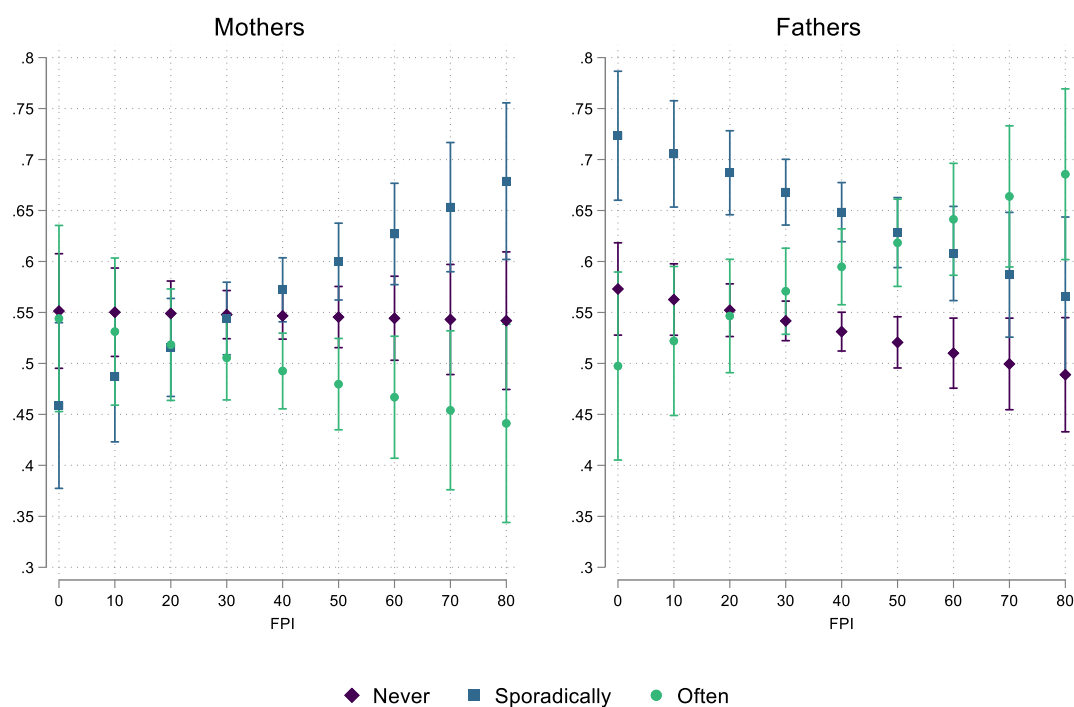

Source: Own calculation based on the EWCS dataset by Eurofound. Control variables include occupation, tenure, sector, contract type, part-time work, firm size, age, and education.

4.4 Robustness check

The above models were run only on the sub-sample of individuals whose occupational grade corresponds to 1-3 codes (managers, professionals, associated professionals) of the ISCO-08 (1 dig) classification where performing WFH is considered to be more possible (Dingel and Neiman 2021). This allows for further grasping whether the obtained results showing a negative association between WFH and career prospects for women are due to the fact that women are overrepresented in occupations where performing WFH is less possible and thus report worse career prospects when engaging in this mode of work. There is no substantial difference between the results obtained on the general sample and the sub-sample of occupations with the codes 1-3 in the 1-digit ISCO-88 codes, as presented in Tables 7 and 8 in Appendix A.

5. Discussion

This article investigates whether a relationship exists between WFH and perceived career prospects, and sheds light on the factors that moderate this link. The study theoretically

contributes to the literature by incorporating the gender and parenthood status perspectives in the exploration of the link between WFH and career prospects. The findings show significant gender differences and point to the need for inclusion of such perspectives in future research. The theoretical contribution extends to investigating how the relationship between WFH and career prospects differs depending on the frequency of WFH, which constitutes an important added value. The results indicate that the positive relationships between WFH and career prospects are common for men, whilst women report rather negative perceptions. Men seem to report improved career prospects, particularly when using WFH less often (i.e., several times a month and less than several times a month), which draws a suggestion that their use of WFH is sporadic and potentially motivated by the willingness (or need) to put in extra effort at work. This conclusion is consistent with previous research in the area suggesting that as men tend to work longer hours than women, they also engage in more work outside of the employer's premise (Eurofound and ILO 2017). In addition, fathers who WFH often are more likely than non-fathers to report good career prospects, which aligns with the existing evidence in the literature suggesting a certain level of fatherhood premium for fathers who use flexible working arrangements (Munsch 2016). Following the signalling theory, using WFH to work more than is required can lead to better career progression opportunities as it signals commitment, quality, and quantity of work (Spence 1973). In such a situation the flexibility stigma associated with the use of flexible working arrangements may not affect those men (Williams et al 2013). Therefore, men who engage in WFH sporadically, assuming they do so in order to increase their productivity levels, will likely report improved career prospects.

Furthermore, the negative associations experienced by women are mostly explained by their parenthood status as the negative outcomes are particularly visible for mothers who use WFH often (i.e., daily and several times a week). The negative connotation of the parenthood status is distinctly true for mothers but not fathers who still seem to benefit from the use of WFH. Working women often face substantial career penalties once they become mothers due to the underlying assumptions around their capacity to work and productivity levels (Kumra and Vinnicombe 2008; Cukrowska-Torzewska and Matysiak 2020). As explained by Chung (2022) mothers engaging in flexible work often suffer the double-whammy stigma, defined as a compound of the motherhood penalties and flexibility stigma. The engagement in frequent WFH for mothers can indicate the need for more flexibility in order to combine work and family responsibilities and signal further prioritisation of family over work (Spence 1973). As such behaviour goes against the 'ideal worker' expectations and carries adverse career consequences,

mothers can perceive their career prospects to be worse when they WFH on a frequent basis (Williams et al. 2013). Such findings are consistent with previous studies showing that women fear being less visible in the workplace and experience negative consequences of WFH on their careers (Allen and Shockley 2009; Mann et al. 2000). Mothers who WFH may also find it difficult to be as productive as office-based employees as they tend to experience many interruptions to their work from their family members and consequently have more fragmented work schedules and perform more multitasking (Powell and Craig 2015; Hill et al. 2003). Working times of men who WFH do not follow the same pattern, and men seem to be able to separate themselves from family matters, for example by creating physical barriers (e.g. locking the door) when they WFH, which is something that women cannot do as they are often still perceived as the primary caregivers (Sullivan and Lewis 2001). Subsequently, regardless of whether the perceived worse career prospects by women are followed by objectively-measured career penalties or not, they constitute important indications of how female employees see their situation at work and may shape their attitudes and behaviour.

Another key finding pertains to the fact that the national context, in particular the provision of childcare services and the prevalence of WFH, has the potential to moderate the link between WFH and perceived career prospects. Such a perspective is not only novel but also fills a gap in the existing literature. The findings indicate that higher provision of childcare services and leaves, as well as a higher prevalence of WFH are associated with better career prospects. This is true for both fathers and mothers alike. An explanation for this can be the fact that such environments often offer better opportunities for work-family reconciliation, allowing mothers to reduce their image of higher-risk employees and remain in employment (Gangl and Ziefle 2009; Cukrowska-Torzewska and Matysiak 2021). Hence, working mothers can accumulate more human capital which is vital for career development. In addition, the widespread use of WFH can provide a sense of social acceptance toward the use of this mode of work. This can result in flexibility stigma being lessened, as stigma is considered to reside in social contexts, not persons, and can have different levels depending on the broader circumstances (Dovidio et al, 2000). Subsequently, in accordance with the signalling theory individuals who operate in countries with higher provision of childcare services and prevalence of WFH may not be sending negative signals to their employers indicating lower work devotion and commitment (Spence 1973). Thus, the perceptions of their career prospects can be positive. Such findings are consistent with previous research in the area indicating that employees who WFH are more likely to engage in this mode of work and less likely to suffer career penalties

when they work in environments that are more accepting of such modes of work (Thebaud and Pedulla 2022; Matysiak et al. 2022).

This article has several limitations. First, the EWCS dataset does not allow for an investigation into what proportion of the employee's working day is spent on WFH. More precisely, it is impossible to determine whether employees WFH continuously for the entire duration of the working day or use this mode of work (e.g. for a couple of hours) to supplement the work conducted at the office. Knowing this information would allow for a better analysis of the associations between WFH with career prospects, particularly when considering gender differences as it has been suggested that men and women engage in WFH for different reasons and with different intensities (Chung and van der Lippe 2020). Another limitation is the lack of information on how career-oriented employees engaging in WFH are. Such information would allow for handling the endogeneity issue concerning the fact that individuals who are less career-oriented may engage in WFH due to their lack of professional ambition. Thus, the negative associations with perceived career prospects that such workers experience may not in fact stem from the use of WFH. Finally, the methodology involves the use of hierarchical modelling with 29 countries on the 2nd level. Jenkins and Bryan (2016) argue that the number of cases on a group level for multilevel logistic regression should be at least 30 in order to get unbiased results. With this in mind, the group-level effect should be taken with a certain level of caution.

6. Conclusions

To conclude, this article shows that the direction of the association between WFH and perceived career prospects is gendered, and depends on the frequency of WFH and the broader (national) context. It appears that men who engage in WFH experience improved career prospects, which holds true for both fathers and nonfathers. In contrast, women, and especially mothers, perceive their careers to be somehow negatively affected by the experience of WFH. The reason for this can be the inability to remain as productive as office-based workers and the awareness that their engagement in WFH can be perceived as a deviation from the ideal worker norm and signal prioritisation of family over work. This can then lead to adverse career consequences. The frequency of WFH is also an important factor in the link between WFH and career prospects as those who use this mode of work often are particularly negatively affected. Whereas, those who use WFH sporadically, and thus combine the benefits of both the office and home worlds, report improved career prospects. The results pertaining to the moderating role of the country context

indicate the importance of social acceptance of flexible working arrangements and broader support for family-work reconciliation in the link between WFH and career prospects.

Although the findings of this study pertain to the pre-pandemic situation, the extensive use of WFH during Covid-19 may have somehow altered the professional circumstances of men and women engaging in this mode of work. Drawing predictions on whether the recent pandemic and popularisation of the WFH have changed the link between WFH and perceived career prospects in any way is nonetheless difficult. On the one hand, the increased prevalence and normalisation of WFH could have diminished the flexibility stigma and negative career consequences associated with frequent use of WFH. On the other hand, recent evidence indicates that women, especially working mothers, bore most of the burden of simultaneously taking care of the family and working, with likely adverse effects on their future careers (Sevilla and Smith 2020; Zamarro and Prados 2021). Subsequently, despite the increased prevalence of WFH, Moens et al (2022) find that a quarter of all workers still fear that WFH will have a negative effect on their chances for promotion. The recent experimental evidence also confirms the existence of flexibility stigma and shows that workers who WFH are still less likely to be chosen for promotion, salary increase, and be considered committed and competent workers than those working from the office (Matysiak et al. 2022). Therefore, it appears that although the pandemic has increased the prevalence of WFH, the mechanisms behind impaired career prospects when working from home are still present.

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Appendix A

Table 1. The country-level measures: the FPI (pooled sample) and WFH prevalence (subsample of parents) for 29 European countries.

Country	Prevalence of WFH (%)	FPI score
Austria	25	20.40
Belgium	28	41.40
Bulgaria	9	44.90
Cyprus	13	28.80
Czech Rep	16	20.60
Denmark	60	52.90
Estonia	30	46.30
Finland	37	47.50
France	27	36.80
Germany	13	28.10
Greece	12	18.60
Hungary	17	35.80
Ireland	19	15.30
Italy	10	44.30
Latvia	17	45.20
Lithuania	18	43.40
Luxembourg	20	49.70
Malta	23	17.90
Netherlands	44	40.60
Norway	43	55.70
Poland	17	18.80
Portugal	14	46.30
Romania	19	24.20
Slovak Rep	10	24.80
Slovenia	20	56.50
Spain	12	35.50
Sweden	50	75.40
Switzerland	25	6.70
United Kingdom	30	16.60

Table 2. The description of the measures used to create the FPI index. The information presented below comes from Matysiak and Węziak-Białowolska (2016).

Component	Description	Time period	Source
Childcare services	The average number of hours spent in formal childcare by children below three	2009	EU-SILC
	The average number of hours spent in formal childcare by children aged three to compulsory school age	2009	EU-SILC
	The average number of hours spent in formal childcare by children in compulsory school age	2009	EU-SILC
	Children-to-staff ratio in childcare institutions	2008/2009	OECD Family Policy Database
	% out-of-pocket expenses on childcare and the net income of a dual-earner family with each partner earning the average salary in the national economy	2008	OECD Tax and Benefits Database
Childcare leaves	Maternity and parental leave available for mothers in the first year after birth in full-time equivalents (i.e. leave duration in the first year after birth multiplied by the income replacement rate of the respective leave benefit)	2009	Multilinks supplemented with information from Moss (2009)
	Paternity and parental leave reserved for fathers in full-time equivalents	2009	Multilinks supplemented with information from Moss (2009)
	Sick-child leave in full-time equivalents per parent	2009	Council of Europe Family Policy Database

Table 3. The proportion of men's and women's scores on the ten variables used to create the career prospects index (i.e. the outcome variable).

Measure / variable	Gender		
	Men	Women	Total
1. Job offers good prospects for career advancement			
disagree	3,715	4,633	8,348
%	34.62	40.03	37.42
neither	2,593	2,628	5,221
%	24.16	22.71	23.41
agree	4,424	4,313	8,737
%	41.22	37.26	39.17
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00
2. You are consulted before objectives are set for your work?			
rarely or never	3,325	3,666	6,991
%	30.98	31.67	31.34
sometimes	2,275	2,471	4,746
%	21.20	21.35	21.28
always or most of the	5,132	5,437	10,569
%	47.82	46.98	47.38
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00
3. I receive the recognition I deserve for my work			
disagree	1,733	2,049	3,782
%	16.15	17.70	16.96
neither	2,147	2,145	4,292
%	20.01	18.53	19.24
agree	6,852	7,38	14,232
%	63.85	63.76	63.80
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00
4. Your manager helps and supports you?			
rarely or never	1,577	1,568	3,145
%	14.69	13.55	14.paź

sometimes	9,155	10,006	19,161
%	85.31	86.45	85.90
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00

5. Your immediate boss encourages and supports your development

disagree	1,367	1,495	2,862
%	12.74	12.92	12.83
neither	2,006	1,845	3,851
%	18.69	15.94	17.26
agree	7,359	8,234	15,593
%	68.57	71.14	69.90
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00

6. Your immediate boss provides useful feedback on your work

disagree	1,391	1,521	2,912
%	12.96	13.14	13.05
neither	1,778	1,73	3,508
%	16.57	14.95	15.73
agree	7,563	8,323	15,886
%	70.47	71.91	71.22
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00

7. Your immediate boss gives you praise and recognition when you do a good job

disagree	1,406	1,477	2,883
%	13.10	12.76	12.92
neither	1,684	1,586	3,27
%	15.69	13.70	14.66
agree	7,642	8,511	16,153
%	71.21	73.54	72.42
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00

8. Your colleagues help and support you?

rarely or never	727	831	1,558
%	6.77	7.18	6.98
Sometimes	1,698	1,713	3,411
%	15.82	14.80	15.29
always or most of the	8,307	9,03	17,337
%	77.40	78.02	77.72
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00

9. There is good cooperation between you and your colleagues

disagree	263	347	610
%	2.45	3.00	2.73
neither	775	815	1,59
%	7.22	7.04	7.13
agree	9,694	10,412	20,106
%	90.33	89.96	90.14
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00

10. I generally get on well with my work colleagues

disagree	218	245	463
%	2.03	2.12	2.08
neither	530	606	1,136
%	4.94	5.24	5.09
agree	9,984	10,723	20,707
%	93.03	92.65	92.83
Total	10,732	11,574	22,306
%	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 4. Summary statistics for the variables used in the models for the pooled sample and by gender.

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.
	All		Women		Men	
Career prospects						
Poor career prospects	.4699184	.4991055	.4724382	.4992613	.4672009	.4989463
Good career prospects	.5300816	.4991055	.5275618	.4992613	.5327991	.4989463
WFH						
Never	.7837684	.4116814	.7853421	.4105986	.7818723	.4129904
Sporadically	.1327944	.3393585	.126403	.3323141	.1401541	.3471601
Often	.0834372	.2765468	.0882549	.2836748	.0779736	.2681403
Gender						
Men	.4811262	.4996549				
Women	.5188738	.4996549				
Age						
15-24	.0160269	.125581	.0152611	.1225936	.0169093	.1289366
25-35	.2558995	.4363733	.248026	.4318813	.264862	.4412764
36-45	.2817619	.4498659	.2865105	.4521458	.276236	.4471519
46-55	.2866796	.4522186	.2922832	.4548268	.2803306	.4491778
56-65	.1596321	.3662709	.1579192	.3646773	.1616621	.3681545
Education						
less than secondary	.1529341	.3599303	.1382957	.3452216	.1697639	.3754395
secondary	.4933437	.4999646	.4724273	.4992558	.5173648	.4997174
tertiary	.3537222	.4781327	.3892769	.4876025	.3128713	.4636801
Sector of the economy						
private	.6493086	.477195	.5908848	.491687	.7159273	.4509888
public	.2872427	.4524838	.3402509	.4738093	.2267712	.4187593
other	.0634486	.2437724	.0688643	.2532316	.0573016	.2324268
Firm size						
1	.0262817	.1599747	.0375183	.1900348	.0136263	.1159384
2-9	.1920044	.3938838	.1998183	.3998777	.1832073	.3868516
10-249	.4295391	.4950195	.4273737	.4947146	.4319471	.4953667
250+	.3521747	.4776569	.3352896	.4721081	.3712193	.48315
Occupation (isco-88 1 digit)						
Armed forces occupations	.0048034	.0691413	.0009341	.0305505	.0092282	.0956228
Managers	.0617684	.2407387	.0520451	.2221254	.0729103	.2599991
Professionals	.1857677	.388926	.2203243	.4144791	.1462782	.3533984
Technicians and associate professionals	.1318982	.3383861	.142657	.3497344	.1195088	.3243987
Clerical support workers	.1184843	.3231864	.1579369	.364694	.0733679	.2607494

Service and sales workers	.1771571	.3818084	.2297324	.4206748	.1170683	.321514
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	.0110301	.1044452	.0058718	.0764046	.0169311	.1290181
Craft and related trades workers	.1077744	.3101008	.0293588	.1688157	.1974527	.398092
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	.0859989	.2803675	.0321612	.176434	.1474985	.3546157
Elementary occupations	.1153176	.3194105	.1289784	.3351873	.0997559	.2996858
Part-time work						
Part-time	.192919	.3945972	.2805424	.4492797	.0936575	.2913629
Full-time	.807081	.3945972	.7194576	.4492797	.9063425	.2913629
Sector of the economy (NACE 1 digit)						
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	.0170175	.1293387	.0106828	.1028073	.0242645	.153875
Mining and quarrying	.0035379	.0593764	.0015261	.0390369	.0058386	.0761905
Manufacturing	.1479568	.3550635	.1037091	.3048929	.198438	.3988388
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	.0072528	.0848554	.0031186	.0557589	.0119806	.1088024
Water supply; sewerage, waste management	.0080311	.0892576	.0025878	.0508058	.0142554	.1185463
Construction	.0609234	.239194	.0130715	.1135846	.1156354	.3197994
Wholesale and retail trade	.1387582	.3457001	.1565921	.3634278	.118441	.3231418
Transportation	.0619494	.2410679	.0292615	.1685442	.0992569	.299018
Accommodation and food service activities	.0466301	.210849	.0521531	.2223431	.0403397	.1967622
Information and communication	.0253671	.1572401	.0153275	.1228557	.0368517	.1884047
Financial and insurance activities	.0318061	.1754867	.0335081	.1799651	.0298756	.1702507
Real estate activities	.0059791	.0770947	.0066353	.0811891	.005232	.072146
Professional, scientific and technical activities	.0370777	.1889555	.0428638	.2025567	.0304823	.1719166
Administrative and support service activities	.0646029	.2458281	.0685422	.2526825	.0601304	.2377373
Public administration and defence	.067504	.2508972	.0603145	.2380765	.0756749	.2644872
Education	.1027773	.3036731	.1410656	.3481008	.058993	.2356206
Human health and social work activities	.1200778	.3250583	.1886404	.3912357	.0417046	.1999208
Arts, entertainment and recreation	.0149655	.1214169	.0175171	.1311921	.0120564	.1091419
Other service activities	.0209093	.1430831	.0271382	.1624915	.0138004	.1166662
Activities of households as employers	.0125951	.1115208	.0214319	.1448239	.0025023	.049962
Activities of extraterritorial organisations	.0005661	.0237859	.0005972	.0244306	.0005308	.0230335
Tenure						
1	.1567546	.3635758	.156422	.3632671	.1571308	.363938
2-5	.2731211	.4455705	.2833177	.4506245	.2613471	.4393855

6-10	.2107487	.4078476	.2136626	.4099051	.2074341	.4054847
11-15	.1281106	.3342189	.1276339	.3336929	.1286384	.3348121
15-60	.231265	.421649	.2189639	.413558	.2454497	.43037

Table 5. The odds ratio from the multilevel logistic regression models with random country intercept for the sub-samples of women and men.

VARIABLES	Women	Men	Women Interaction model	Men Interaction model
WFH				
Sporadically	0.141**	0.407***	0.218**	0.352***
	(0.062)	(0.065)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Often	-0.247***	0.060	-0.229**	-0.083
	(0.077)	(0.084)	(0.111)	(0.117)
Children				
Parents			0.158***	0.084*
			(0.047)	(0.048)
WFH Sporadically # Parents			-0.149	0.112
			(0.115)	(0.120)
WFH often # Parents			-0.041	0.262*
			(0.141)	(0.155)
Age				
20-35	-0.093	-0.174	-0.138	-0.198
	(0.167)	(0.163)	(0.168)	(0.163)
36-45	-0.152	-0.321*	-0.230	-0.376**
	(0.168)	(0.165)	(0.170)	(0.166)
46-55	-0.293*	-0.320*	-0.344**	-0.363**
	(0.170)	(0.166)	(0.170)	(0.167)
56-65	-0.394**	-0.452***	-0.404**	-0.462***
	(0.175)	(0.171)	(0.175)	(0.171)
Education				
secondary	0.102	0.181***	0.110	0.183***
	(0.070)	(0.062)	(0.070)	(0.062)
tertiary	0.196**	0.406***	0.209***	0.407***
	(0.080)	(0.076)	(0.080)	(0.076)
Business sector				
public	-0.217***	-0.037	-0.218***	-0.036
	(0.061)	(0.068)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Other	-0.050	0.135	-0.047	0.137
	(0.087)	(0.097)	(0.087)	(0.097)
Firm size				
1	0.286	0.205	0.288	0.190
	(0.277)	(0.318)	(0.277)	(0.318)
2-9	0.100	-0.009	0.098	-0.029
	(0.275)	(0.316)	(0.275)	(0.316)
10-249	0.032	0.008	0.029	-0.015
	(0.277)	(0.317)	(0.277)	(0.317)
Occupation				
Managers	0.509	0.134	0.531	0.133
	(0.607)	(0.249)	(0.607)	(0.249)
Professionals	0.215	-0.121	0.236	-0.109
	(0.602)	(0.243)	(0.603)	(0.243)
Technicians and associated professionals	0.086	-0.265	0.110	-0.251
	(0.602)	(0.240)	(0.602)	(0.240)
Clerical support workers	-0.158	-0.557**	-0.136	-0.538**
	(0.602)	(0.245)	(0.602)	(0.245)
Service and sales workers	-0.121	-0.315	-0.099	-0.302

	(0.603)	(0.241)	(0.603)	(0.241)
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	-0.611	-0.451	-0.588	-0.443
	(0.668)	(0.296)	(0.669)	(0.296)
Craft and related trades workers	-0.571	-0.434*	-0.554	-0.422*
	(0.614)	(0.242)	(0.614)	(0.242)
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	-0.632	-0.700***	-0.607	-0.686***
	(0.613)	(0.244)	(0.613)	(0.244)
Elementary occupations	-0.798	-0.726***	-0.779	-0.708***
	(0.605)	(0.245)	(0.605)	(0.246)
Part-time work				
Part-time	0.083*	0.262***	0.100**	0.255***
	(0.048)	(0.075)	(0.049)	(0.075)
Sector of the economy				
Mining and quarrying	-0.061	0.224	-0.051	0.209
	(0.532)	(0.294)	(0.534)	(0.295)
Manufacturing	-0.261	0.013	-0.272	0.011
	(0.231)	(0.164)	(0.231)	(0.164)
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	-0.122	0.606**	-0.120	0.606**
	(0.398)	(0.252)	(0.398)	(0.252)
Water supply; sewerage, waste management	-0.329	0.006	-0.356	0.011
	(0.425)	(0.228)	(0.426)	(0.228)
Construction	0.077	0.074	0.076	0.073
	(0.279)	(0.170)	(0.279)	(0.170)
Wholesale and retail trade;	-0.323	0.098	-0.330	0.098
	(0.226)	(0.167)	(0.226)	(0.167)
Transportation	-0.239	-0.179	-0.247	-0.179
	(0.247)	(0.170)	(0.247)	(0.170)
Accommodation and food service activities	-0.318	-0.052	-0.324	-0.046
	(0.237)	(0.191)	(0.237)	(0.191)
Information and communication	-0.078	0.346*	-0.083	0.345*
	(0.267)	(0.193)	(0.267)	(0.193)
Financial and insurance activities	0.138	0.266	0.126	0.274
	(0.244)	(0.199)	(0.244)	(0.200)
Real estate activities	0.403	-0.276	0.402	-0.262
	(0.331)	(0.327)	(0.331)	(0.327)
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.071	0.291	0.068	0.300
	(0.240)	(0.201)	(0.241)	(0.201)
Administrative and support service activities	-0.136	0.050	-0.143	0.052
	(0.233)	(0.174)	(0.233)	(0.174)
Public administration and defence	0.033	0.313*	0.018	0.311*
	(0.238)	(0.182)	(0.238)	(0.182)
Education	0.035	-0.015	0.023	-0.012
	(0.231)	(0.190)	(0.231)	(0.190)

Human health and social work activities	-0.125	0.123	-0.137	0.123
	(0.228)	(0.191)	(0.228)	(0.191)
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.019	0.516**	0.016	0.511**
	(0.266)	(0.257)	(0.266)	(0.257)
Other service activities	0.095	0.577**	0.084	0.585**
	(0.252)	(0.254)	(0.253)	(0.254)
Activities of households as employers	-0.350	0.500	-0.366	0.491
	(0.388)	(0.620)	(0.388)	(0.619)
Activities of extraterritorial organisations	0.937	1.553	0.872	1.648
	(0.881)	(1.104)	(0.880)	(1.103)
Tenure				
2-5	-0.045	-0.188***	-0.047	-0.191***
	(0.064)	(0.067)	(0.064)	(0.067)
6-10	-0.045	-0.038	-0.053	-0.047
	(0.068)	(0.071)	(0.069)	(0.071)
11-15	-0.049	-0.097	-0.055	-0.108
	(0.078)	(0.081)	(0.078)	(0.081)
15-60	0.103	-0.023	0.097	-0.034
	(0.075)	(0.077)	(0.075)	(0.077)
Country	0.105***	0.058***	0.105***	0.057***
	(0.031)	(0.019)	(0.031)	(0.018)
Constant	0.326	0.271	0.265	0.288
	(0.721)	(0.458)	(0.722)	(0.458)
Observations	11,574	10,732	11,574	10,732
Number of groups	29	29	29	29

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6. The odds ratio for the multilevel logistic regression models with random country intercept for the sub-samples of mothers and fathers.

VARIABLES	FPI		WFH prevalence	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
WFH				
Sporadically	-0.399*	0.703***	-0.011	0.923***
	(0.221)	(0.236)	(0.183)	(0.203)
Often	-0.032	-0.323	-0.013	-0.165
	(0.258)	(0.282)	(0.234)	(0.279)
FPI	-0.001	-0.004		
	(0.005)	(0.004)		
WFH Sporadically # FPI	0.013**	-0.005		
	(0.005)	(0.005)		
WFH often # FPI	-0.005	0.015**		
	(0.006)	(0.007)		
Age				
20-35	0.205	-0.637	0.223	-0.607
	(0.438)	(0.653)	(0.438)	(0.656)
36-45	0.082	-0.701	0.101	-0.666
	(0.437)	(0.653)	(0.438)	(0.656)
46-55	-0.016	-0.753	-0.000	-0.722
	(0.438)	(0.654)	(0.439)	(0.657)
56-65	-0.083	-0.731	-0.064	-0.698
	(0.449)	(0.660)	(0.449)	(0.663)
Education				
secondary	0.203**	0.208**	0.200**	0.210**
	(0.095)	(0.092)	(0.095)	(0.092)
tertiary	0.283***	0.580***	0.279**	0.581***
	(0.109)	(0.113)	(0.109)	(0.113)
Business sector				
public	-0.211**	-0.077	-0.210**	-0.073
	(0.083)	(0.101)	(0.083)	(0.101)
Other	-0.135	0.267*	-0.139	0.273*
	(0.120)	(0.148)	(0.120)	(0.148)
Firm size				
1	0.458	0.336	0.466	0.384
	(0.384)	(0.616)	(0.384)	(0.621)
2-9	0.353	0.079	0.357	0.110
	(0.382)	(0.612)	(0.381)	(0.617)
10-249	0.234	0.077	0.230	0.093
	(0.384)	(0.614)	(0.383)	(0.619)
Occupation				
Managers	0.058	-0.353	0.024	-0.356
	(0.740)	(0.335)	(0.738)	(0.335)
Professionals	-0.266	-0.553*	-0.293	-0.550*
	(0.733)	(0.330)	(0.731)	(0.330)
Technicians and associated professionals	-0.394	-0.512	-0.427	-0.515
	(0.732)	(0.324)	(0.730)	(0.324)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Clerical support workers	-0.582	-0.809**	-0.612	-0.807**
	(0.732)	(0.334)	(0.730)	(0.334)
Service and sales workers	-0.445	-0.426	-0.478	-0.423
	(0.733)	(0.326)	(0.731)	(0.326)
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	-1.173	-0.729*	-1.214	-0.740*
	(0.844)	(0.422)	(0.842)	(0.422)
Craft and related trades workers	-0.827	-0.779**	-0.841	-0.790**
	(0.748)	(0.328)	(0.746)	(0.328)
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	-1.130	-0.884***	-1.151	-0.891***
	(0.750)	(0.330)	(0.748)	(0.330)
Elementary occupations	-1.106	-0.985***	-1.129	-0.981***
	(0.736)	(0.338)	(0.734)	(0.338)
Part-time work				
Part-time	0.079	0.218*	0.094	0.210
	(0.066)	(0.129)	(0.066)	(0.129)
Sector of the economy				
Mining and quarrying	0.869	0.027	0.850	0.063
	(0.881)	(0.420)	(0.876)	(0.419)
Manufacturing	-0.348	-0.155	-0.355	-0.155
	(0.329)	(0.250)	(0.329)	(0.250)
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	0.144	0.795**	0.130	0.791**
	(0.558)	(0.396)	(0.558)	(0.397)
Water supply; sewerage, waste management	-0.925*	0.082	-0.924*	0.094
	(0.554)	(0.353)	(0.554)	(0.353)
Construction	0.423	-0.051	0.413	-0.057
	(0.404)	(0.258)	(0.404)	(0.259)
Wholesale and retail trade;	-0.242	-0.046	-0.244	-0.048
	(0.324)	(0.255)	(0.324)	(0.256)
Transportation	-0.276	-0.356	-0.282	-0.359
	(0.353)	(0.260)	(0.353)	(0.260)
Accommodation and food service activities	-0.477	-0.302	-0.478	-0.300
	(0.339)	(0.306)	(0.339)	(0.307)
Information and communication	-0.055	-0.005	-0.055	-0.010
	(0.379)	(0.288)	(0.379)	(0.289)
Financial and insurance activities	0.041	0.359	0.038	0.360
	(0.344)	(0.308)	(0.344)	(0.308)
Real estate activities	0.618	-0.932*	0.609	-0.968*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	(0.487)	(0.557)	(0.487)	(0.559)
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.058	-0.057	0.065	-0.062
	(0.346)	(0.306)	(0.346)	(0.306)
Administrative and support service activities	-0.038	-0.340	-0.051	-0.340
	(0.334)	(0.269)	(0.334)	(0.269)
Public administration and defence	-0.042	0.144	-0.049	0.144
	(0.338)	(0.275)	(0.338)	(0.276)
Education	0.095	-0.362	0.083	-0.362
	(0.331)	(0.287)	(0.331)	(0.288)
Human health and social work activities	-0.093	-0.102	-0.116	-0.125
	(0.326)	(0.288)	(0.326)	(0.289)
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.135	0.342	0.135	0.323
	(0.385)	(0.391)	(0.385)	(0.391)
Other service activities	0.148	0.774*	0.139	0.750
	(0.360)	(0.460)	(0.360)	(0.460)
Activities of households as employers	-0.420	1.211	-0.431	1.236
	(0.529)	(1.161)	(0.529)	(1.159)
Activities of extraterritorial organisations	0.698	-0.616	0.687	-0.561
	(0.952)	(1.485)	(0.953)	(1.485)
Tenure				
2-5	-0.093	-0.172	-0.096	-0.168
	(0.091)	(0.111)	(0.091)	(0.111)
6-10	-0.131	-0.048	-0.135	-0.037
	(0.094)	(0.111)	(0.094)	(0.111)
11-15	-0.184*	-0.122	-0.187*	-0.114
	(0.105)	(0.121)	(0.105)	(0.121)
15-60	0.103	-0.016	0.103	-0.002
	(0.103)	(0.116)	(0.103)	(0.116)
Country	0.109***	0.052**	0.085***	0.048**
	(0.035)	(0.021)	(0.028)	(0.020)
WFH prevalence			0.014**	0.009*
			(0.005)	(0.005)
WFH Sporadically # WFH prevalence			0.003	-0.015**
			(0.006)	(0.006)
WFH often # WFH prevalence			-0.009	0.013
			(0.008)	(0.009)
Constant	0.293	1.221	-0.024	0.800
	(0.997)	(0.995)	(0.990)	(0.996)
Observations	6,154	4,919	6,154	4,919
Number of groups	29	29	29	29

Standard errors in
parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7. Robustness analysis: the odds ratio from the multilevel logistic regression models with random country intercept for the sub-samples of women and men who work in occupations 1-3 of 1-digit ISCO-88 codes.

VARIABLES	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers Interaction model	Fathers Interaction model
WFH				
Sporadically	0.089	0.407***	0.090	0.301**
	(0.078)	(0.087)	(0.113)	(0.118)
Often	-0.280***	0.096	-0.313**	-0.053
	(0.092)	(0.104)	(0.131)	(0.146)
Children			0.034	0.018
			(0.078)	(0.099)
WFH sporadically # Parents			-0.004	0.212
			(0.148)	(0.164)
WFH often # Parents			0.056	0.280
			(0.167)	(0.195)
Age				
20-35	-0.138	-0.499	-0.151	-0.526
	(0.278)	(0.370)	(0.279)	(0.371)
36-45	-0.171	-0.593	-0.197	-0.659*
	(0.281)	(0.372)	(0.285)	(0.375)
46-55	-0.338	-0.674*	-0.355	-0.733*
	(0.284)	(0.375)	(0.285)	(0.377)
56-65	-0.417	-0.645*	-0.421	-0.663*
	(0.291)	(0.382)	(0.292)	(0.382)
Education				
secondary	-0.246	0.324*	-0.242	0.322*
	(0.209)	(0.180)	(0.209)	(0.180)
tertiary	-0.092	0.467***	-0.088	0.463***
	(0.207)	(0.176)	(0.207)	(0.177)
Business sector				
public	-0.103	-0.055	-0.104	-0.054
	(0.089)	(0.111)	(0.089)	(0.111)
Other	-0.141	0.129	-0.142	0.125
	(0.123)	(0.154)	(0.123)	(0.154)
Firm size				
1	0.280	0.709	0.276	0.662
	(0.592)	(0.792)	(0.592)	(0.791)
2-9	-0.048	0.447	-0.053	0.393
	(0.587)	(0.786)	(0.587)	(0.785)
10-249	-0.111	0.493	-0.115	0.436
	(0.589)	(0.787)	(0.590)	(0.786)
Occupation				
Professionals	-0.255**	-0.226**	-0.255**	-0.217**
	(0.110)	(0.109)	(0.110)	(0.109)
Technicians and associated professionals	-0.421***	-0.419***	-0.420***	-0.407***
	(0.110)	(0.104)	(0.110)	(0.104)

Part-time work

Part-time	0.282***	0.346**	0.286***	0.341**
	(0.075)	(0.138)	(0.076)	(0.138)

Sector of the economy

Mining and quarrying	-0.307	-0.729	-0.306	-0.746
	(0.811)	(0.582)	(0.810)	(0.583)
Manufacturing	-0.205	-0.021	-0.201	-0.021
	(0.526)	(0.396)	(0.525)	(0.397)
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	-0.666	-0.017	-0.665	-0.012
	(0.740)	(0.483)	(0.740)	(0.484)
Water supply; sewerage, waste management	-0.782	0.332	-0.785	0.345
	(0.783)	(0.555)	(0.783)	(0.556)
Construction	0.110	-0.341	0.117	-0.343
	(0.593)	(0.410)	(0.593)	(0.411)
Wholesale and retail trade;	-0.423	-0.195	-0.418	-0.194
	(0.524)	(0.401)	(0.524)	(0.402)
Transportation	-0.065	-0.340	-0.062	-0.333
	(0.564)	(0.422)	(0.563)	(0.422)
Accommodation and food service activities	-0.254	-0.568	-0.250	-0.554
	(0.613)	(0.537)	(0.613)	(0.537)
Information and communication	0.002	0.044	0.009	0.048
	(0.548)	(0.403)	(0.548)	(0.404)
Financial and insurance activities	0.015	-0.070	0.018	-0.061
	(0.531)	(0.412)	(0.531)	(0.413)
Real estate activities	0.540	-0.453	0.547	-0.433
	(0.641)	(0.533)	(0.641)	(0.533)
Professional, scientific and technical activities	-0.003	0.036	0.003	0.040
	(0.526)	(0.409)	(0.526)	(0.410)
Administrative and support service activities	0.012	-0.035	0.013	-0.028
	(0.542)	(0.430)	(0.542)	(0.431)
Public administration and defence	-0.167	0.031	-0.164	0.035
	(0.526)	(0.410)	(0.526)	(0.411)
Education	-0.180	-0.302	-0.176	-0.297
	(0.519)	(0.405)	(0.519)	(0.406)
Human health and social work activities	-0.352	-0.161	-0.348	-0.158
	(0.518)	(0.412)	(0.518)	(0.413)
Arts, entertainment and recreation	-0.337	0.205	-0.332	0.199
	(0.550)	(0.458)	(0.550)	(0.458)
Other service activities	0.212	0.444	0.214	0.450
	(0.595)	(0.522)	(0.595)	(0.523)
Activities of households as employers	-1.620		-1.626	
	(1.343)		(1.344)	
Activities of extraterritorial organisations	0.804		0.803	

	(1.251)		(1.250)	
Tenure				
2-5	-0.092	-0.382***	-0.093	-0.384***
	(0.110)	(0.131)	(0.110)	(0.131)
6-10	-0.250**	-0.267*	-0.254**	-0.282**
	(0.114)	(0.137)	(0.114)	(0.137)
11-15	-0.050	-0.367**	-0.053	-0.378**
	(0.127)	(0.151)	(0.128)	(0.151)
15-60	-0.065	-0.395***	-0.068	-0.406***
	(0.121)	(0.145)	(0.121)	(0.145)
Country	0.096***	0.081**	0.096***	0.081**
	(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Constant	1.367	0.604	1.361	0.699
	(0.863)	(0.967)	(0.863)	(0.967)
Observations	5,251	3,812	5,251	3,812
Number of groups	29	29	29	29

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 8. Robustness analysis: the odds ratio from the multilevel logistic regression models with random country intercept for the sub-samples of women and men who work in occupations 1-3 of 1-digit ISCO-88 codes.

VARIABLES	FPI		WFH prevalence	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
WFH				
Sporadically	-0.454	0.670**	-0.212	0.852***
	(0.286)	(0.317)	(0.237)	(0.290)
Often	-0.278	-0.241	-0.399	-0.234
	(0.311)	(0.357)	(0.277)	(0.354)
FPI	-0.004	-0.009		
	(0.005)	(0.006)		
WFH Sporadically # FPI				
	0.013**	-0.003		
WFH often # FPI	(0.007)	(0.007)		
	-0.001	0.014*		
Age	(0.007)	(0.008)		
20-35				
	0.216	-0.257	0.220	-0.258
36-45	(0.191)	(0.224)	(0.190)	(0.225)
	0.139	-0.210	0.145	-0.204
46-55	(0.170)	(0.193)	(0.170)	(0.193)
	-0.071	-0.326*	-0.072	-0.327*
56-65	(0.170)	(0.188)	(0.169)	(0.189)
	-	-	-	-
Education				
secondary	-0.168	0.455*	-0.164	0.415
	(0.280)	(0.253)	(0.279)	(0.252)
tertiary	0.017	0.790***	0.016	0.746***
	(0.278)	(0.252)	(0.277)	(0.251)
Business sector				
public	-0.128	-0.134	-0.124	-0.140
	(0.123)	(0.159)	(0.123)	(0.159)
Other	-0.360**	0.205	-0.365**	0.205
	(0.169)	(0.236)	(0.169)	(0.236)
Firm size				
1	-0.243	0.235	-0.234	0.239
	(0.872)	(0.214)	(0.870)	(0.215)
2-9	-0.448	0.007	-0.445	0.009
	(0.867)	(0.114)	(0.864)	(0.115)
10-249	-0.571		-0.571	
	(0.869)		(0.867)	
Occupation				
Professionals	-0.335**	-0.169	-0.325**	-0.161
	(0.154)	(0.151)	(0.153)	(0.151)
Technicians and associated professionals	-0.466***	-0.155	-0.461***	-0.149
	(0.153)	(0.145)	(0.152)	(0.145)
Part-time work				
Part-time	0.359***	0.434*	0.366***	0.419*
	(0.100)	(0.225)	(0.101)	(0.225)

Sector of the economy

Mining and quarrying	-0.055	-0.125	-0.082	-0.047
	(1.095)	(0.772)	(1.093)	(0.774)
Manufacturing	-0.513	0.114	-0.549	0.133
	(0.721)	(0.540)	(0.720)	(0.542)
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	-0.326	0.795	-0.408	0.806
	(1.037)	(0.703)	(1.038)	(0.705)
Water supply; sewerage, waste management	-1.398	0.936	-1.416	0.978
	(0.985)	(0.956)	(0.985)	(0.956)
Construction	0.193	-0.349	0.180	-0.314
	(0.844)	(0.559)	(0.843)	(0.561)
Wholesale and retail trade;	-0.835	-0.136	-0.856	-0.110
	(0.721)	(0.548)	(0.720)	(0.550)
Transportation	-0.272	-0.182	-0.306	-0.184
	(0.774)	(0.578)	(0.773)	(0.580)
Accommodation and food service activities	-0.604	-0.993	-0.641	-0.971
	(0.857)	(0.833)	(0.856)	(0.835)
Information and communication	-0.151	-0.040	-0.172	-0.028
	(0.758)	(0.552)	(0.757)	(0.554)
Financial and insurance activities	-0.451	0.272	-0.473	0.287
	(0.724)	(0.568)	(0.723)	(0.570)
Real estate activities	0.044	-0.721	0.008	-0.697
	(0.860)	(0.802)	(0.860)	(0.807)
Professional, scientific and technical activities	-0.422	-0.100	-0.435	-0.080
	(0.724)	(0.564)	(0.724)	(0.566)
Administrative and support service activities	-0.334	0.090	-0.365	0.117
	(0.738)	(0.603)	(0.738)	(0.605)
Public administration and defence	-0.555	0.114	-0.594	0.138
	(0.719)	(0.562)	(0.719)	(0.564)
Education	-0.355	-0.434	-0.382	-0.405
	(0.712)	(0.556)	(0.711)	(0.558)
Human health and social work activities	-0.586	-0.084	-0.619	-0.064
	(0.709)	(0.565)	(0.709)	(0.567)
Arts, entertainment and recreation	-0.500	0.304	-0.520	0.312
	(0.763)	(0.648)	(0.762)	(0.649)
Other service activities	0.109	0.679	0.098	0.653
	(0.816)	(0.778)	(0.815)	(0.780)
Activities of households as employers	-1.207		-1.250	
	(1.599)		(1.599)	
Activities of extraterritorial organisations	0.152		0.093	
	(1.431)		(1.432)	

Tenure

2-5	-0.017	-0.322	-0.013	-0.311
	(0.159)	(0.214)	(0.160)	(0.215)
6-10	-0.264*	-0.146	-0.258	-0.124
	(0.158)	(0.212)	(0.158)	(0.213)
11-15	-0.097	-0.223	-0.091	-0.203
	(0.173)	(0.224)	(0.173)	(0.224)
15-60	0.012	-0.344	0.020	-0.317
	(0.167)	(0.216)	(0.167)	(0.217)
Country	0.098**	0.091*	0.089**	0.107**
	(0.041)	(0.047)	(0.039)	(0.052)
WFH prevalence			0.002	-0.003
			(0.006)	(0.008)
WFH Sporadically # WFH prevalence			0.010	-0.010
			(0.007)	(0.009)
WFH often # WFH prevalence			0.002	0.018
			(0.009)	(0.011)
Constant	1.845	0.430	1.645	0.186
	(1.185)	(0.685)	(1.179)	(0.693)
Observations	2,828	1,907	2,828	1,907
Number of groups	29	29	29	29

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1