

## *Gender equality in the G20 – Additional analysis from the time dimension*

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### **Executive summary**

**In brief.** This note examines how the unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men in G20 countries affects their respective levels and patterns of participation in, and rewards from, the labour market. Achieving a suitable balance between paid work and care for children, older or disabled persons is a common challenge for workers, especially women workers, in many G20 countries.

**Unpaid care work: the root cause of the gender gap in hours spent in paid work.** In G20 countries, women still carry out the bulk of unpaid care work. It is not surprising therefore that, across G20 countries, women are more likely to be in employment when there is a more equal sharing of time spent in unpaid care work between women and men. Even when in employment, women are more likely to work short hours (less than 35 hours per week) and men are more likely to work very long hours (more than 48 hours a week). Unless an equal sharing of time spent in unpaid care work between women and men is achieved, it will not be possible to achieve gender equality in labour market outcomes.

**Labour markets reward parenthood unequally: the 'motherhood penalties'.** Without exception, the amount of time women dedicate to unpaid care work increases notably with motherhood, and, in particular, with the presence of children under five years old. Estimates for selected G20 countries with available data show that mothers face a triple penalty in the labour markets. A *motherhood employment penalty*, as women with young children are less likely to be employed than women without children. On a positive note, this penalty has decreased in most of the G20 countries with available data. There is also a *motherhood wage penalty* with working women with children earning less than working women without children, and which can persist across a woman's working life. The combination of long working hours in managerial and leadership positions, the unequal distribution of time spent in unpaid care work, and the long-lasting belief of "think manager-think man" make it even more difficult for mothers of young children to be managers. As a result, a *motherhood leadership penalty* is observed across G20 countries with available data. By contrast, fathers have better employment and pay prospects and access to managerial positions compared to mothers but also to men without children, due to their perceived role of being breadwinners.

**General policy directions.** Tackling large gender gaps in unpaid work and caregiving could help promote greater gender equality in the labour market. This could be achieved through a range of measures including:

- *Expanding the use of social policy measures to encourage more gender balanced childcare.* Well-paid paternity leave and father-specific parental leave have been found to encourage take up of leave by fathers and can help to establish more equitable caregiving.
- *Changing stereotypes and norms around caregiving and housework.* This is crucial but challenging. Governments should apply a range of measures and tools, including awareness campaigns, to reduce bias against male caregiving and highlighting women workers significant contribution to family income and national GDP, thereby promoting gender-equitable sharing of unpaid work.
- *Closing the coverage gaps in early childhood education and care as well as in long-term care by increasing investments in care services.* This would help to promote a more equal distribution of time spent in unpaid care work between women and men, and more and better-quality jobs in care sectors.
- *Closing data gaps on gender differences in work-life balance.* This could include carrying out more frequent time-use surveys, better collecting data on fathers' leave-taking, and conducting public opinion surveys before and after public awareness campaigns and publicly disseminating the results.