

EQUALLIVES: Inequality, early adult life courses and economic outcomes at mid-life in comparative context

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- [EQUALLIVES:](#)
- The project also asks how **labour market and family choices** interact to create accumulated advantage and disadvantage over the life course.
- The research compares four countries with different models of welfare state: the United Kingdom (liberal), Germany (conservative corporatist), Denmark and Finland (Nordic social democratic).
- Additional comparison countries: United States, Egypt, Israel (so far)

Projects - Gender equality

1. Life course trajectories and outcomes at mid-life
2. The accumulation of economic disadvantage: how childbirth and partnership affects income and poverty risks
3. Parents return to work after childbirth

Life course trajectories and outcomes at mid-life

- **Economically successful life courses** are remarkably similar across countries:
 - these combine staying in education and then going straight into a stable, high-earning job with marriage and children.
 - **accumulation of advantage** in work and family lives over time.
 - women are far less likely than men to experience this privileged type of life course.

- **Socio-economically disadvantaged** life courses highly country-specific.
 - in Germany and the United Kingdom poor economic outcomes go with high fertility,
 - in Nordic countries, those with poor economic outcomes are more likely to be childless.

- To ameliorate these effects, **early family support and education policy** in Germany and the United Kingdom needs to target children from socio-economically disadvantaged back-grounds.

- Nordic countries might wish to consider greater **support for single, childless adults** with precarious employment.

The accumulation of economic disadvantage: how childbirth and partnership affects income and poverty

- Investigates how the penalty to motherhood influences the income and poverty risk of families and single mothers.
- Assesses whether different routes to single motherhood differentially affect income
- Looks at the US, UK and will shortly include Germany
- **Findings:**
 - Motherhood earnings penalties lead to a reduction in family income (and in female economic independence).
 - *Earnings penalties are as important as partner absence for explaining the reduced income and higher poverty risk of single mother families.*
 - Married mothers see the largest declines in own earnings following childbirth
 - Regardless of route to single motherhood, most single mothers end up in weak economic position

Parents returning to work after childbirth

- What are the employment pathways parents take after childbirth?
- How do these pathways differ by **job characteristics**?
- Data for the UK so far. Extending to other countries.

Mothers are more likely to withdraw from full-time employment compared to men after having children

Mothers are more likely to withdraw from full-time employment over time.

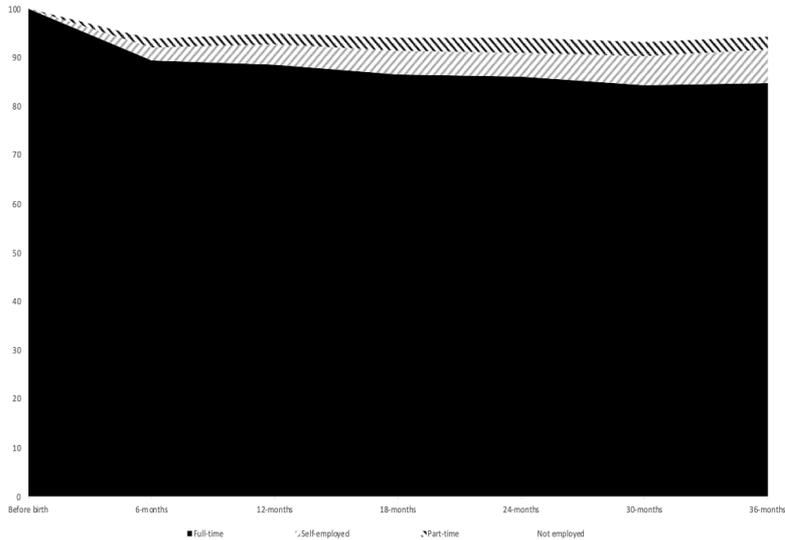
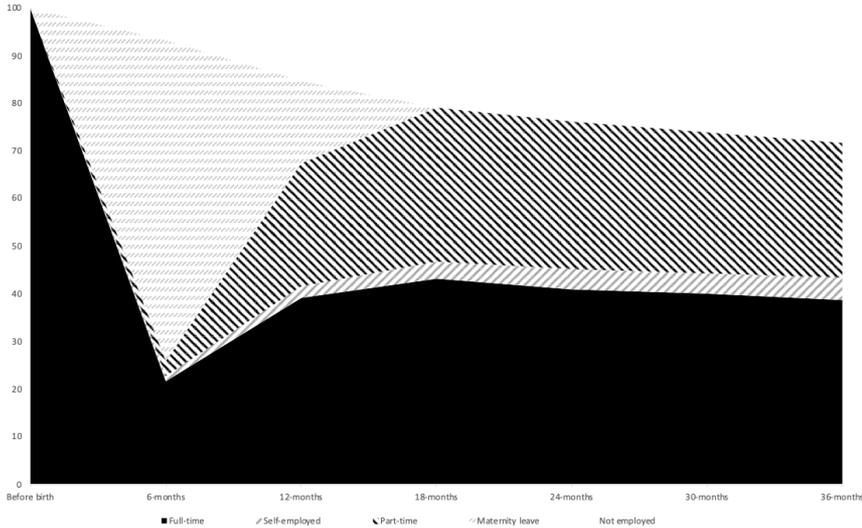
- the majority of women working full-time prior to childbirth either stop working or return to work part-time
- those who leave the labour market rarely return to work 3-5 years after the child's birth.

Fathers typically remain in full-time work and those who do change employment status tend to move from being out of the labour market or working part-time to full-time jobs

Full time workers: returning to work

Mothers

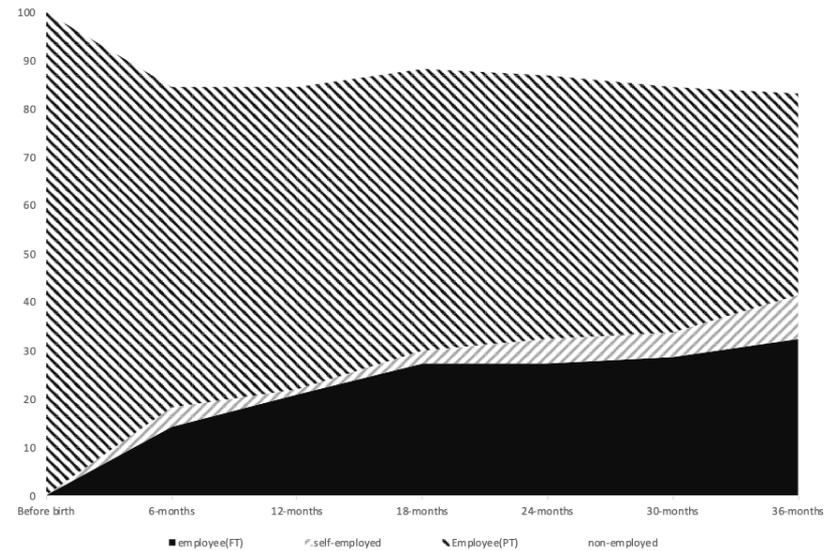
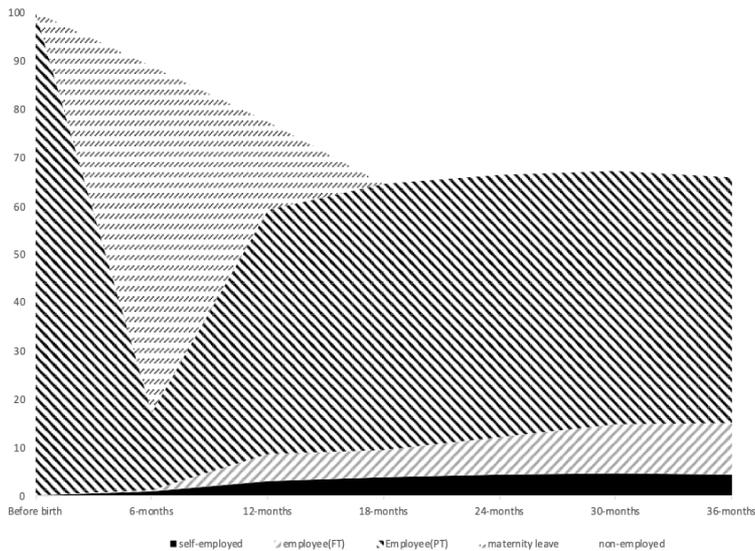
Fathers



Part time workers: returning to work

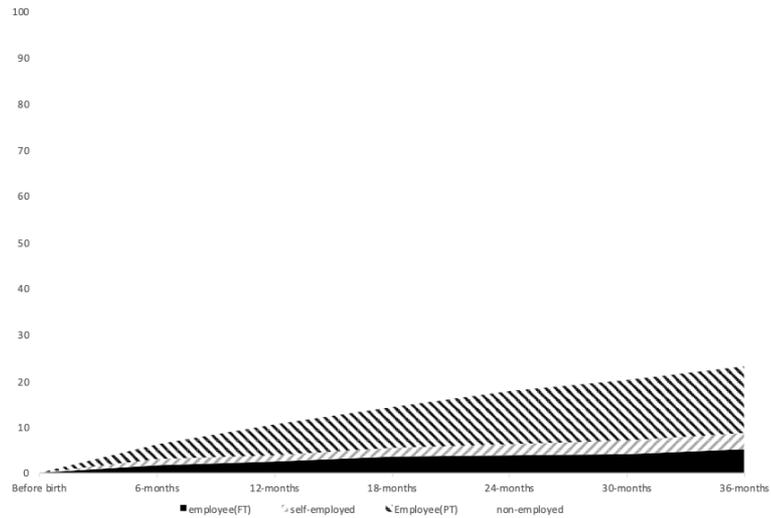
Mothers

Fathers

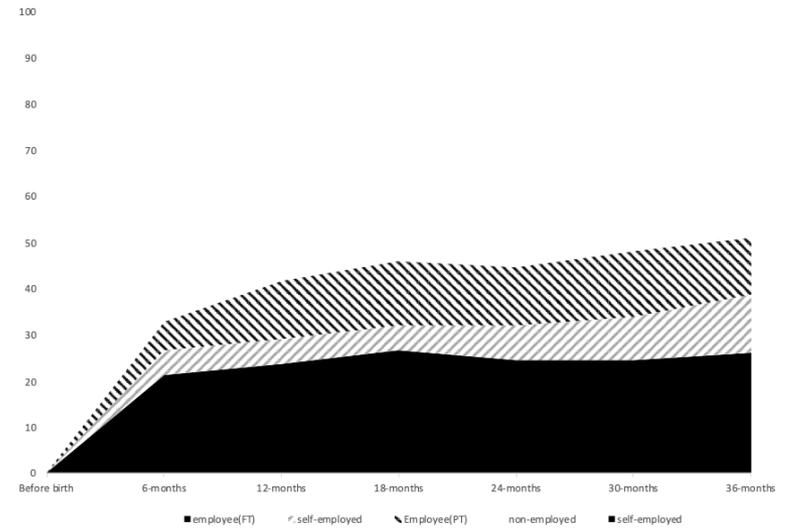


Not employed before birth

Mothers



Fathers



What factors influence patterns of returning to work?

- The employment status of women prior to birth is the most important factor influencing the probability of returning to full-time work.
 - Those working **full-time prior to birth** were **eight times more likely to return to work full-time.**
- Those whose **own mothers worked** were twice as likely to return to work (full or part-time)
- Those working in the **public sector** and in **large firms** are more likely to return to work.
- Few differences in patterns to return to work by **industry**: only those in **education** are more likely to return to work (we compared retail, finance, education, health, public admin and voluntary sector)

Thank you