

Work-life balance

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Gender Equality - A key for economic and social development in Europe and beyond

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What is meant by work-life balance (WLB)?

Criticism:

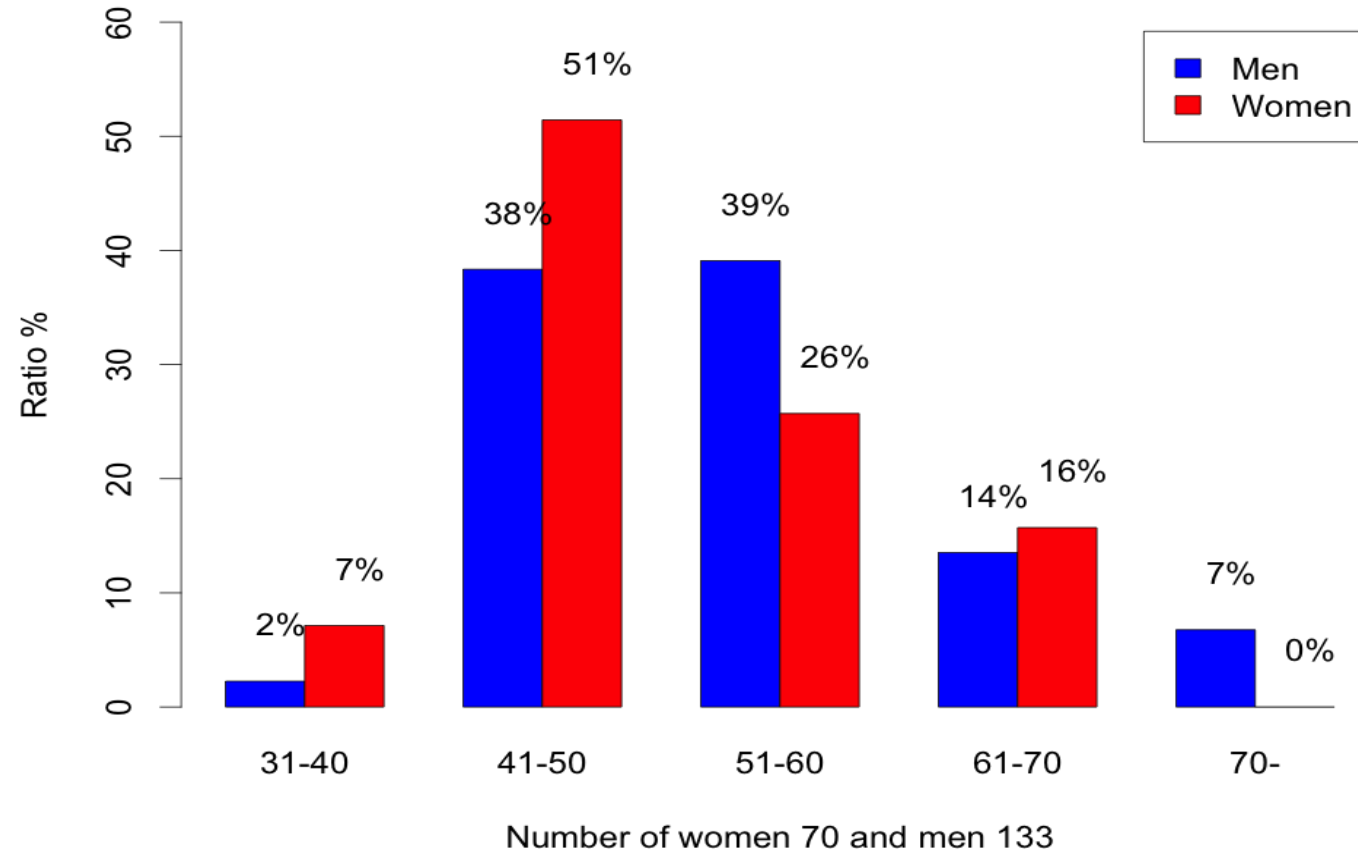
- ▶ What is meant by “life”, as time from work does not automatically mean leisure (Hyman and Baldry, 2011).
- ▶ The concept of work-life balance is very much situated in the discussion of neo-liberal thinking of **personal choice**, **the responsibility of the individual** while leaving out the institutional and social structural pressures (Burke, 2004; S. Lewis et al., 2007).

WLB among executives in Iceland

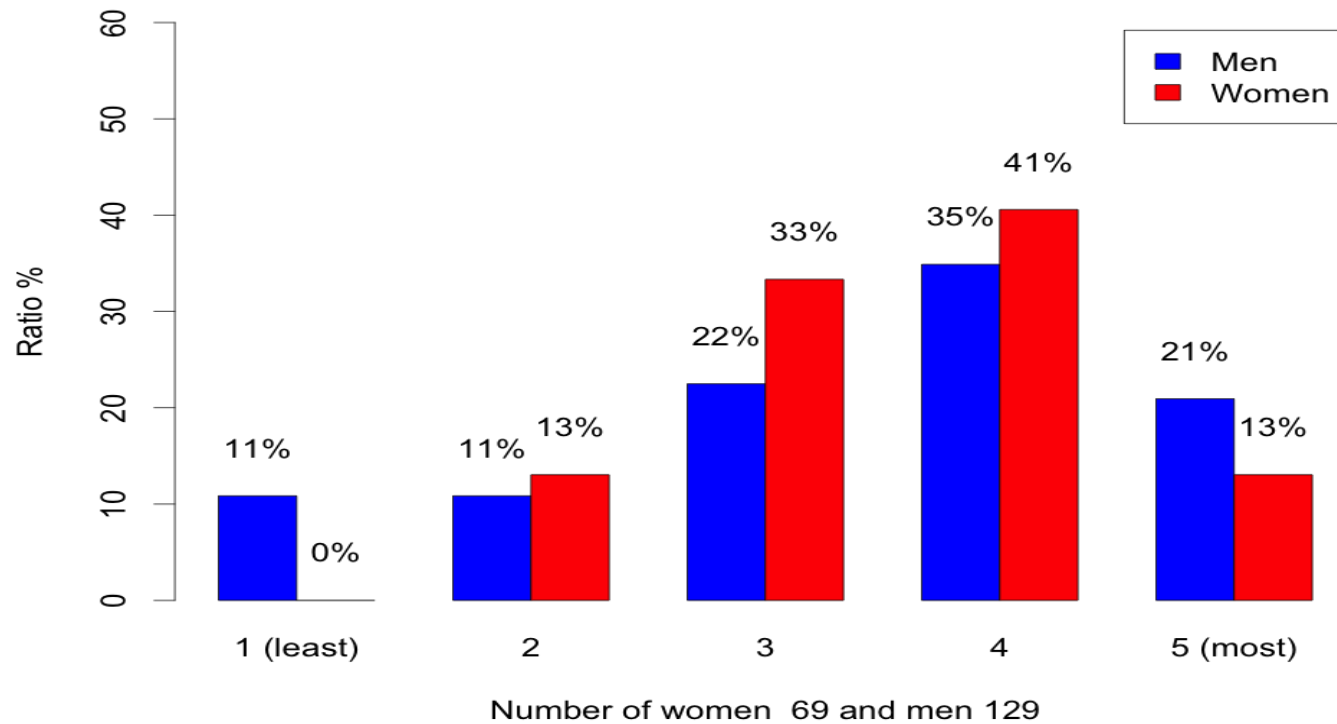
Spouse working full time in paid job with children 16 years old and younger living at home

Source: Survey sent to 1349 executives in the largest companies in Iceland (by revenue), launched in November 2014.

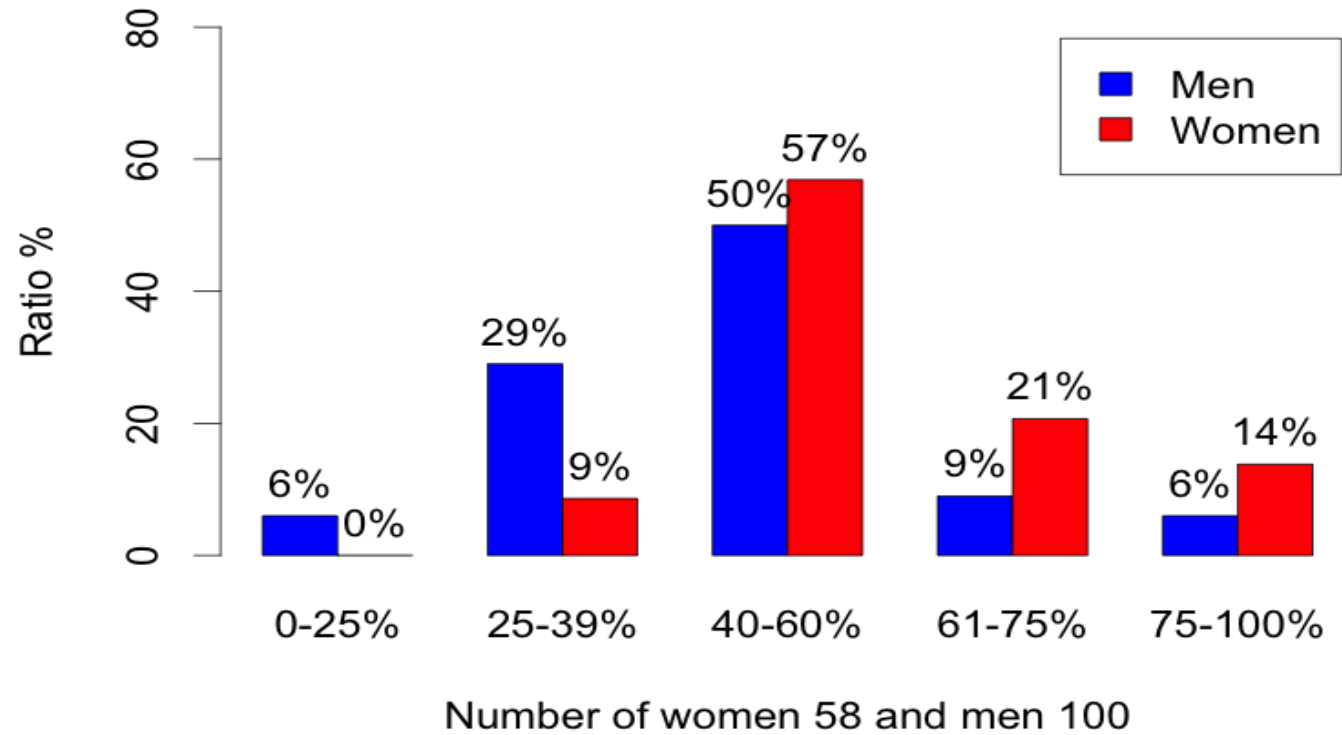
How many hours do you work (paid work) in a typical week?



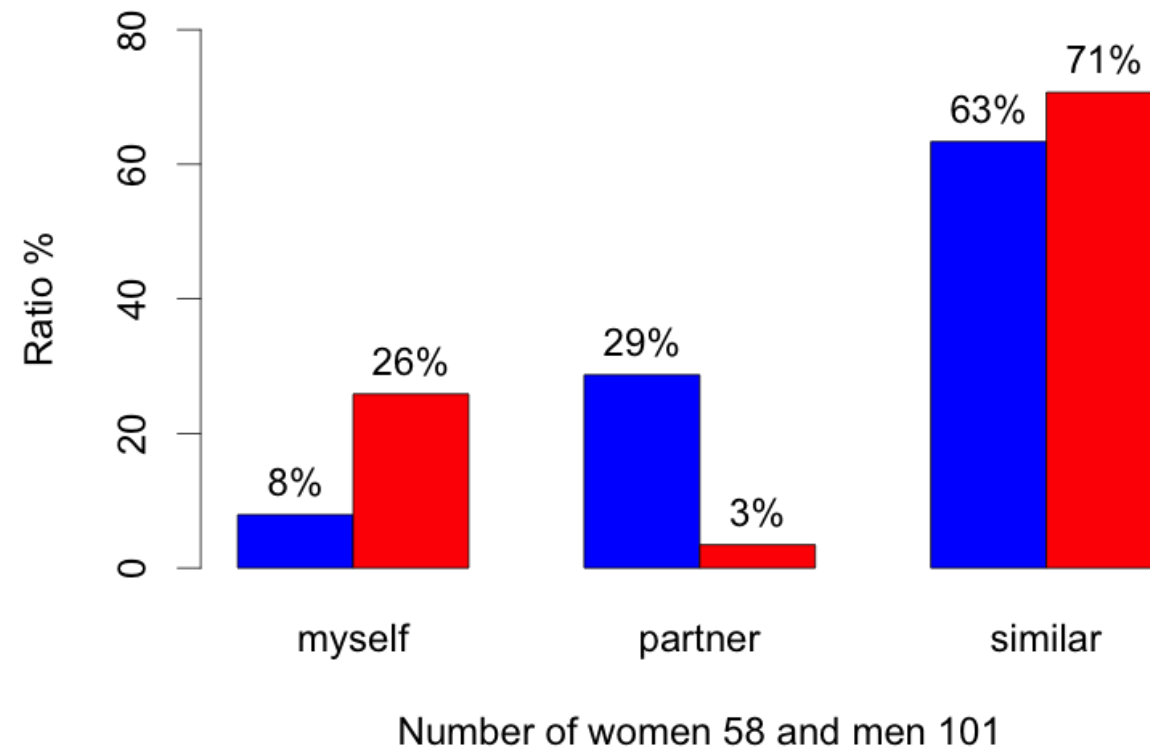
To what extent would it be possible to combine your current job with main responsibility for children and family logistics (sick children, night vigil, follow up on school / recreational activities etc.)?



How large would you estimate your share of the collected responsibility for your children and child-care?



How do you share the (house)work at home?





Flexibility

Interviews with 32 executives in 2010 and 2011

Flexibility: time squeeze vs. power over time

Well, if you have such a stressful job like me, then [flexibility] is just necessary. When work goes so much into your private life, then your private life needs to go into work as well, otherwise you won't be able to have this balance.
(female)

'I can be working here and there, but you want to be with the people, your co-workers. It is much more fun at work [...]'. (male)

(Rafnsdóttir G.L., & Júlíusdóttir Ó., 2018)

Societal issue:

- Go beyond policies and gender equality plan to practice
- Challenge gender assumptions
 - Ideal worker / ideal carer
 - Intersectionality: different social groups, different needs (dis/ability, ethnic groups, ageism...)
 - other?

Bibliography

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