

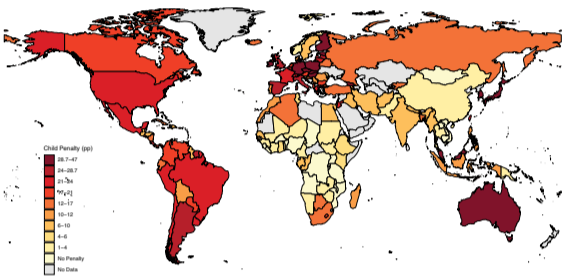
WHO HAS THE POWER TO ADDRESS THE CHILD PENALTY GLOBALLY?



SCAN TO HEAR MORE FROM GABRIEL ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Child Penalty Atlas

The LSE Hub for Equal Representation presents the Child Penalty Atlas (childpenaltyatlas.org) to measure the child penalty around the world. This data enables the Hub to investigate one of the root causes of gender inequality in the labour market and look at how it varies globally.

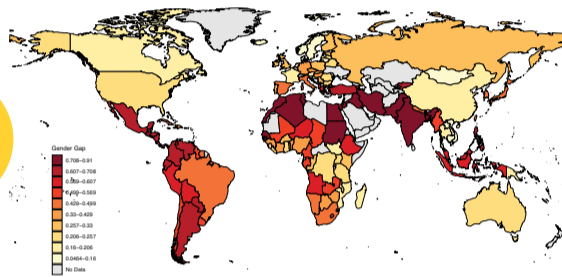


The child penalty around the world

This heat map shows the child penalty in 134 countries around the world: the darker the colour, the higher the penalty. Almost everywhere globally, women's careers seem to suffer after they become parents.

WOMEN SHOULDER THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNPAID WORK, AFFECTING THEIR ABILITY TO ACCESS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

40% OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE UK AGREE THAT: "A WOMAN SHOULD STAY AT HOME WHEN SHE HAS CHILDREN UNDER SCHOOL AGE"



The gender employment gap globally

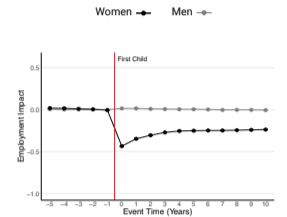
There is a wide variation in the employment gap between men and women across the world. In countries with greater gender equality, the gap is around 5 per cent, while in countries with greater gender inequality, it can be as high as 90 per cent.

Child penalty across continents

The impact of motherhood on employment not only varies greatly between countries, but also among world regions. These graphs compare the child penalty for men and women after the birth of their first child in Europe, Africa and Latin America.

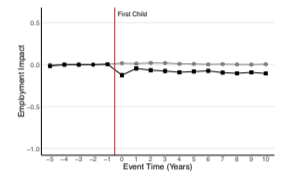
EUROPE CHILD PENALTY: 29%

In high-income regions, child penalties are high. 80 per cent of the gender gap in employment is due to women leaving the workforce after their first child.



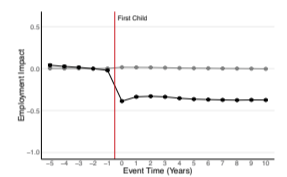
AFRICA CHILD PENALTY: 9%

In the poorest areas, women tend to exit the workforce before motherhood and directly after marriage. Here, lower child penalties only explain 10 per cent of the gender gap in employment.



LATIN AMERICA CHILD PENALTY: 38%

In middle-income countries, women are more likely to work after marriage, but many quit permanently after becoming mothers. In Latin America, 38 per cent of working mothers leave the labour force after having a child, and 37 per cent remain out of work 10 years later.



Having children requires money, time, resources and energy. Yet, parenthood impacts men and women differently. Mothers spend more time on unpaid childcare and less on paid employment, affecting their long-term economic opportunities. This is known as the child penalty, or the motherhood penalty. This is the average amount by which a woman's probability of being employed declines in the 10 years after the birth of her first child relative to men.

AS OF 2024...

24% OF WOMEN LEAVE THE LABOUR FORCE IN THE FIRST YEAR AFTER HAVING THEIR FIRST CHILD

17% ARE STILL ABSENT AFTER FIVE YEARS

15% ARE STILL ABSENT AFTER 10 YEARS



WHAT IS DRIVING THIS CHILD PENALTY AND WHAT ROLE CAN POLICYMAKERS PLAY IN FIXING IT?

The impact of gender norms

The average working-age woman in the UK earned 40 per cent less than her male counterpart in 2019.

This pay gap vastly increases after parenthood.

This gap seems to suggest unequal parental involvement in unpaid care work shapes inequalities in the job market.

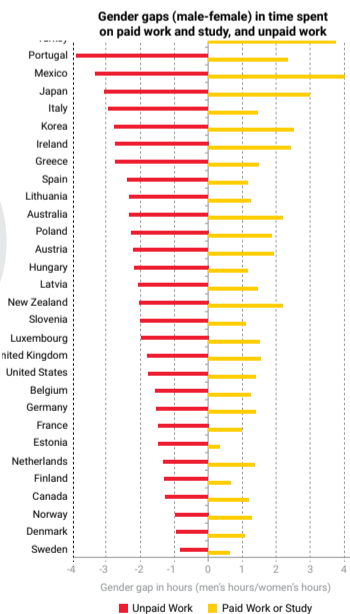
These inequalities are exacerbated by gender norms and stereotypes that are reinforced by government policies and wider society.



THE UK GOVERNMENT "STAY HOME, SAVE LIVES" POSTER, RELEASED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, WAS WITHDRAWN AFTER IT SHOWED ONLY WOMEN UNDERTAKING DOMESTIC CHORES

MOTHERS WHO EARN MORE THAN THEIR MALE PARTNERS BEFORE CHILDBIRTH ...

... ARE MORE LIKELY TO REDUCE THEIR WORKING HOURS IN THE YEAR AFTER CHILDBIRTH



GENDER INEQUALITY CANNOT BE ELIMINATED WITHOUT ALSO ADDRESSING THE CHILD PENALTY

WHAT POLICIES COULD HELP ADDRESS THE CHILD PENALTY?



CHALLENGE GENDER NORMS

Change attitudes through policies that support more equal sharing of responsibility between parents rather than reinforcing traditional gender roles.

TARGET OUTCOMES FOR THE CARER

This includes training to aid re-entry into the labour force after time out, legislation updating workplace hiring, promotion and evaluation processes, and increased childcare facilities in the workplace.

MOBILISE WOMEN'S TALENTS FOR GROWTH

Today women are, on average, at least as educated as men, but their talents are not fully utilised. Better balance of paid work between men and women will benefit economic growth.

PRIORITISE GIRLS' EDUCATION

In developing countries, governments should prioritise and invest in girls' education to address the high entry barrier to the labour market.

IMPROVE THE RIGHT TO FLEXIBLE WORKING

Flexible working makes it easier to balance work and family life. Strengthening the right to flexible working means more women can remain in and return to work.

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Hub for Equal Representation in the economy (H.E.R.)

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