

## **Gender norms and the perception of workers who use flexible work arrangements**

Flexible work arrangements, which allow workers to decide where and when they work, are often presented as a solution that helps parents balance their professional careers and domestic duties. By working from home or having flexible working hours, they have more time for themselves and can adjust their schedules to pick up their child from kindergarten or attend important school events. Therefore, policymakers are implementing laws enabling flexible work arrangements, and companies are increasingly promoting these solutions among their employees.

However, there is the other side of the coin. Workers who use flexible work arrangements may be perceived by their colleagues as less committed and less effective. It can lead to lower earnings and worse promotion and career development opportunities. As a result, some employees may be reluctant to use these options. Within this project, I will examine whether such a situation actually occurs and whether men who use flexible work arrangements are perceived differently than women. The reason is that stereotypes about the roles of men and women in the labour market can influence these assessments. Traditionally, men were seen as engaged in professional work, while women's main role was caring for the home and children. Survey research shows that a relatively large number of people still agree with these beliefs. Therefore, men who use flexible work arrangements due to family obligations may fear being perceived as less effective and acting against commonly held beliefs about gender roles.

To answer these questions, I will conduct a study in which participants will evaluate fictional workers. Some will be using flexible work arrangements, while others will not. The reasons for using flexible work arrangements will also vary. This study can inform decision-makers about the benefits, challenges, and consequences of flexible work arrangements. It is particularly important as the EU Directive on "work-life balance", which recently came into force, emphasizes the need to promote flexible work arrangements among workers.