



Work Autonomy,
Flexibility and
Work-Life Balance

Flexibility stigma and worker's use of flexible work arrangements

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The project

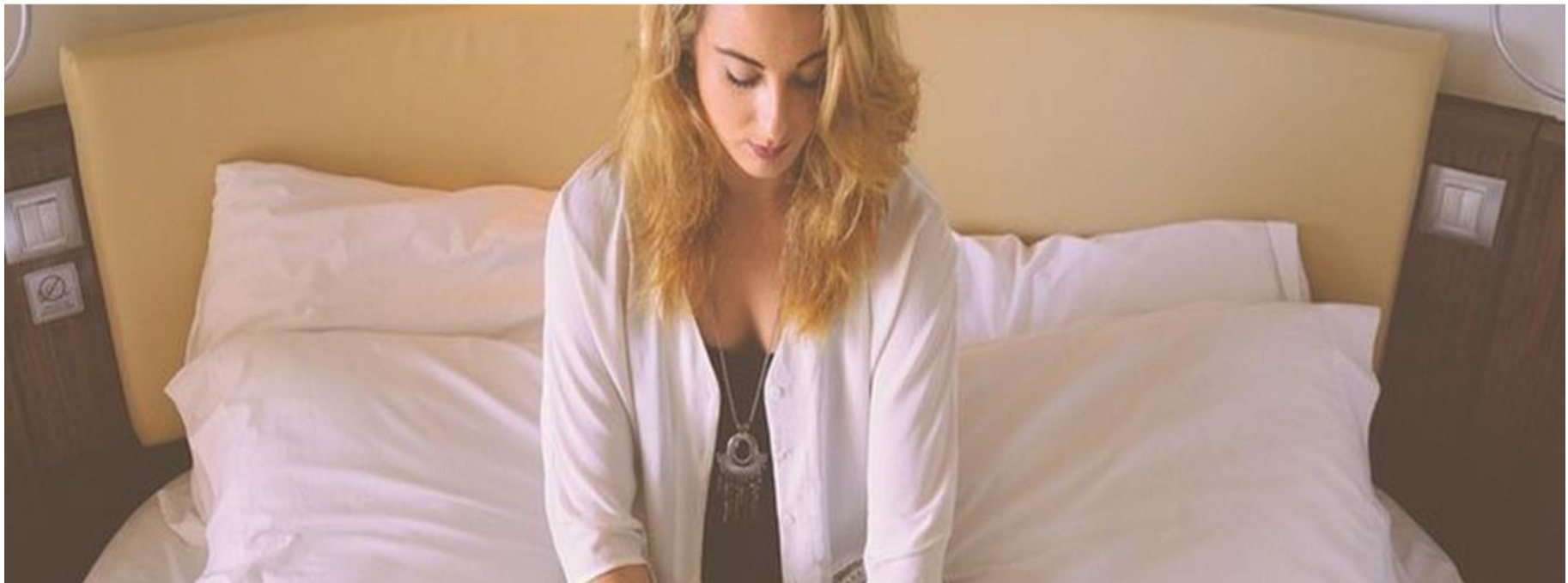
-  Future Research Leader (Dec 2013 –Oct 2017)
- Examines European/UK data to examine who has access to flexible working and its outcomes (especially on work-family outcomes)
 - Data used: European Social Survey, European Company Survey, European Working Condition Survey, Work Employment Relations Survey, BIS-WorkLife Balance Survey, Understanding Society, G-SOEP
 - Methods used: multilevel analysis, panel analysis, MG SEM



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Flexible working is making us work longer

Flexible work is on the rise but research shows it often leads to people working longer hours than they would otherwise.



Right to flexible working

- UK right to flexible working – introduced in 2003, expanded in 2007 and again in 2014
- available for parents of children <6 and children with a disability <18 → carers of adults and children <17 → all workers

Stall...

Table 3.1: The proportion of all employees taking up flexible working arrangements

	2000	2003	2006	2011
	WLB1	WLB2	WLB3	WLB4
	%	%	%	%
Part-time working	24	28	26	32
Flexi-time	24	26	26	23
Temporary reduced hours	N/A	13	10	8
Regular home working	20 ¹	11	10	13
Compressed working week	6	11	8	10
Annualised hours	2	6	6	5
Job-share	4	6	6	4
Term-time working	14	15	13	10
Not worked flexibly in last 12 months	-	49	44	40
Currently working flexibly, or has done so in the last 12 months	-	51	56	60

Slacking off?



Flexibility stigma against those working flexibly is prevalent, making workers working flexibly work harder to compensate for this flexibility stigma

Flexibility stigma

- “Flexibility stigma” (Williams et al., 2013) the stigma workers face when using various types of flexible working arrangements - deviate from the image of the ‘ideal worker’
- Cech and Blair-Loy (2014) men especially in male dominated occupations face a further “femininity stigma” - deviates from the masculine worker’s image of being the providers rather than the carer (Williams et al., 2013; Cha and Grady, 2014)

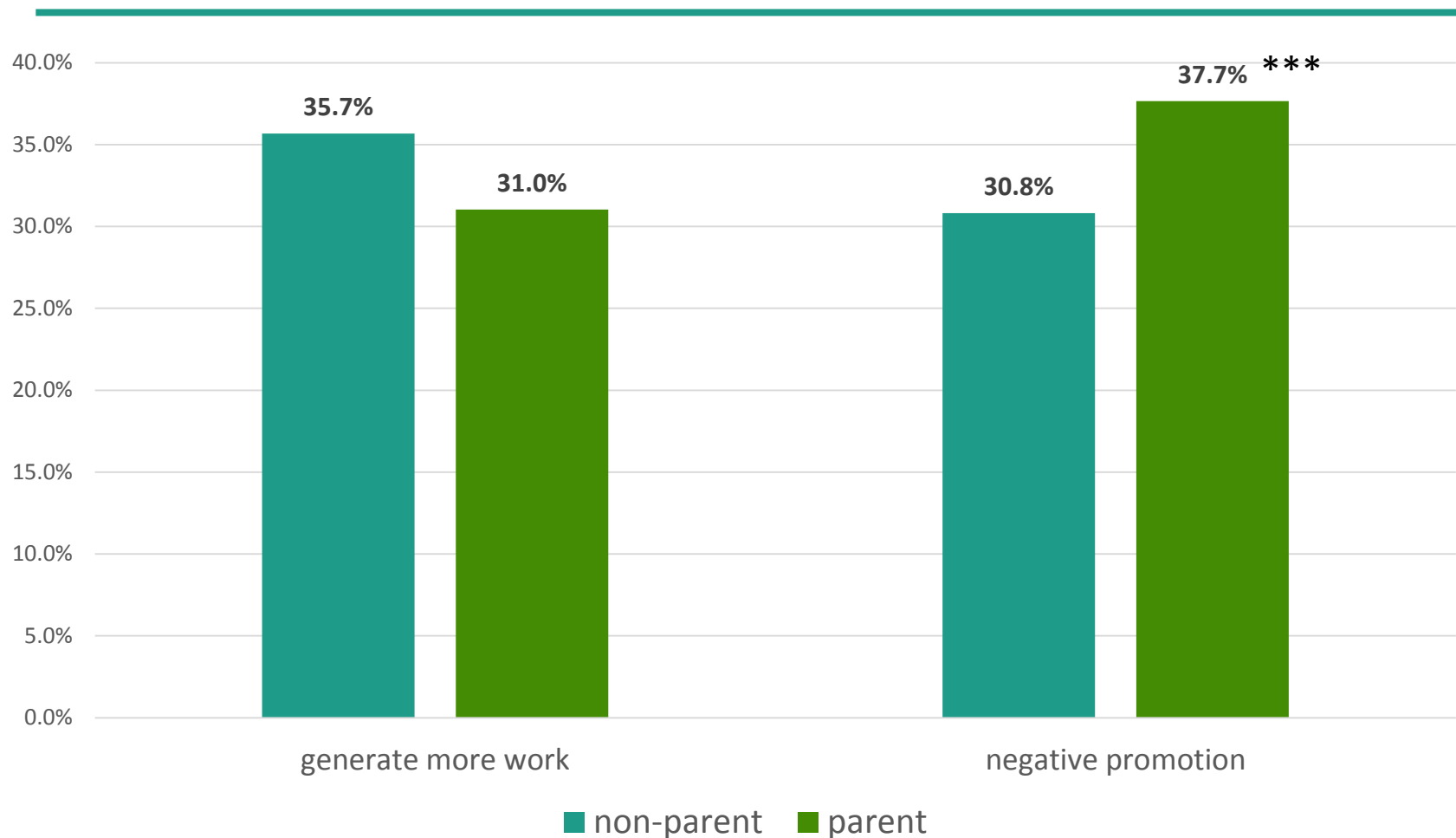
Research question

- Flexibility stigma prevalence in the UK
- Examine how it influences take up of flexible working arrangements – gender differences / differences for parents vs non-parents

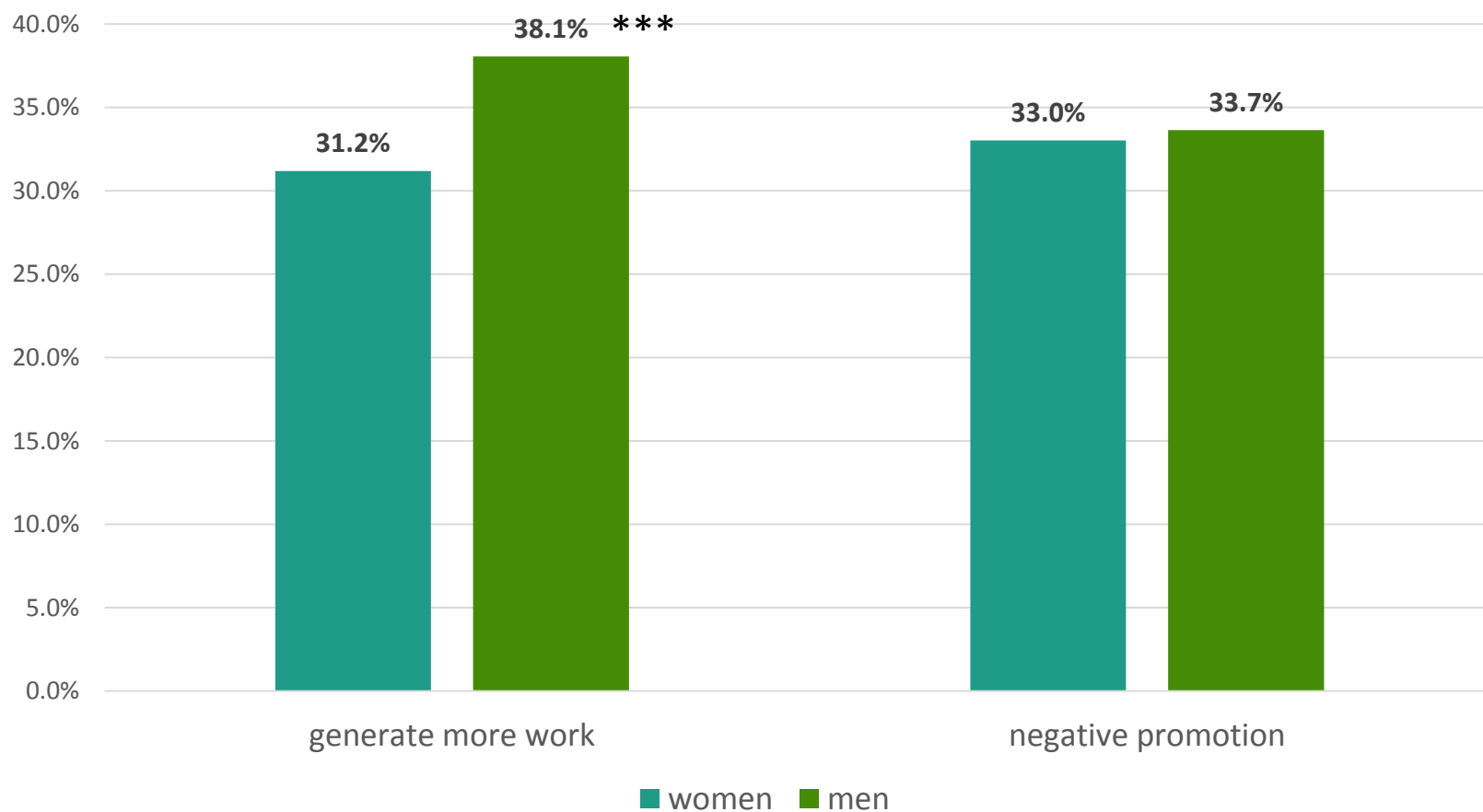
Data

- BEIS Work-Life Balance Survey of 2011 (4th wave)
- 1874 core+893 boost sample of parents
- Parents= with children under 12
- Flexibility stigma 1: “People who work flexibly create more work for others.”
- Flexibility stigma 2: “People who work flexibly are less likely to get promoted”
- **strongly agree, agree**, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree

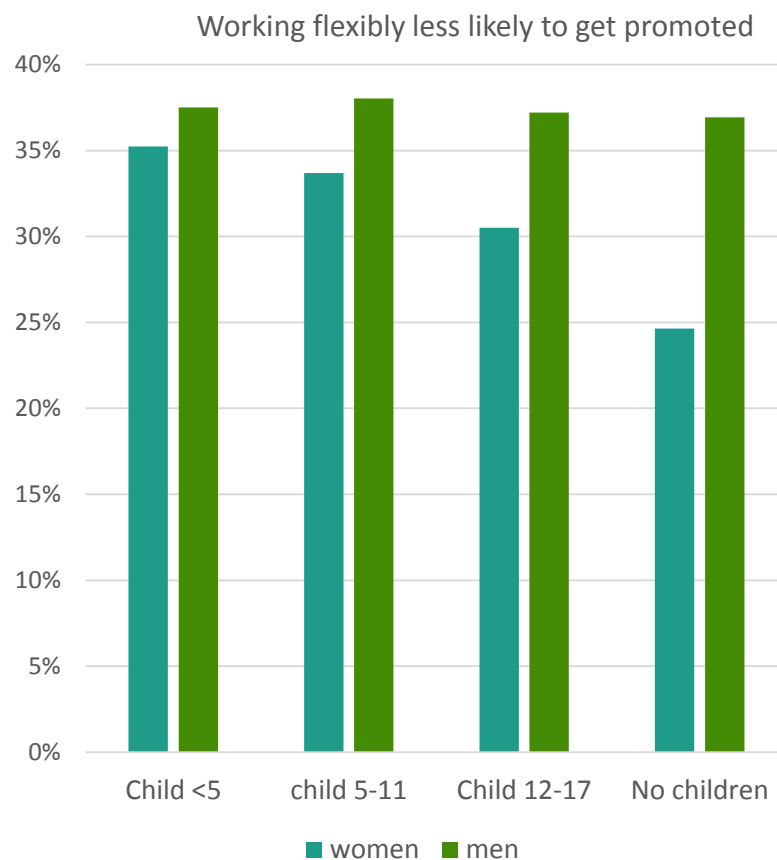
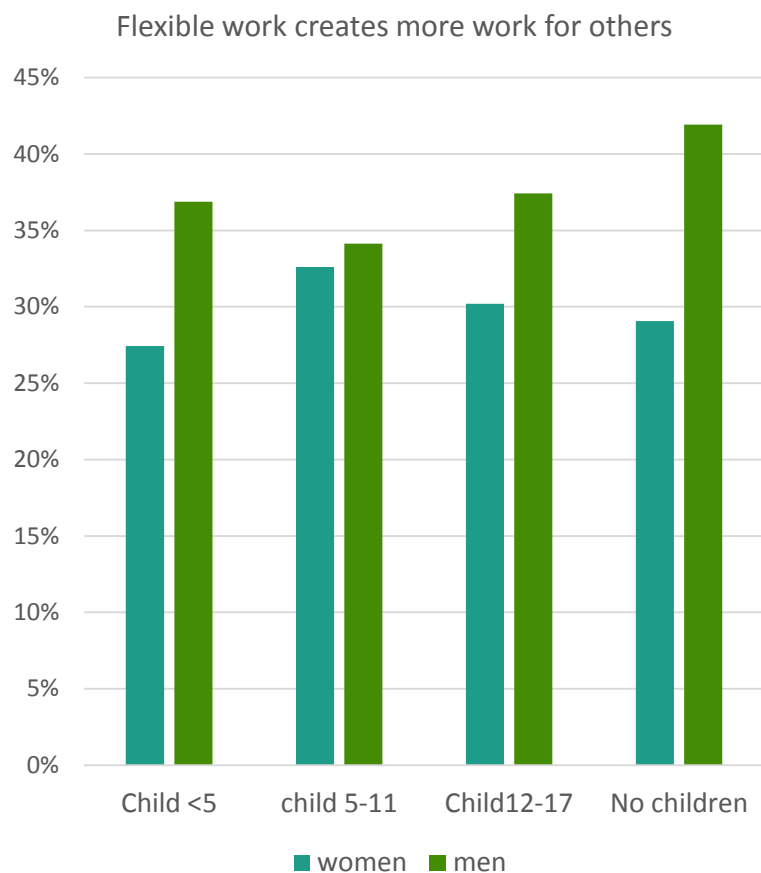
Predicted probability of having flexibility stigma (BIS WLB 2011)



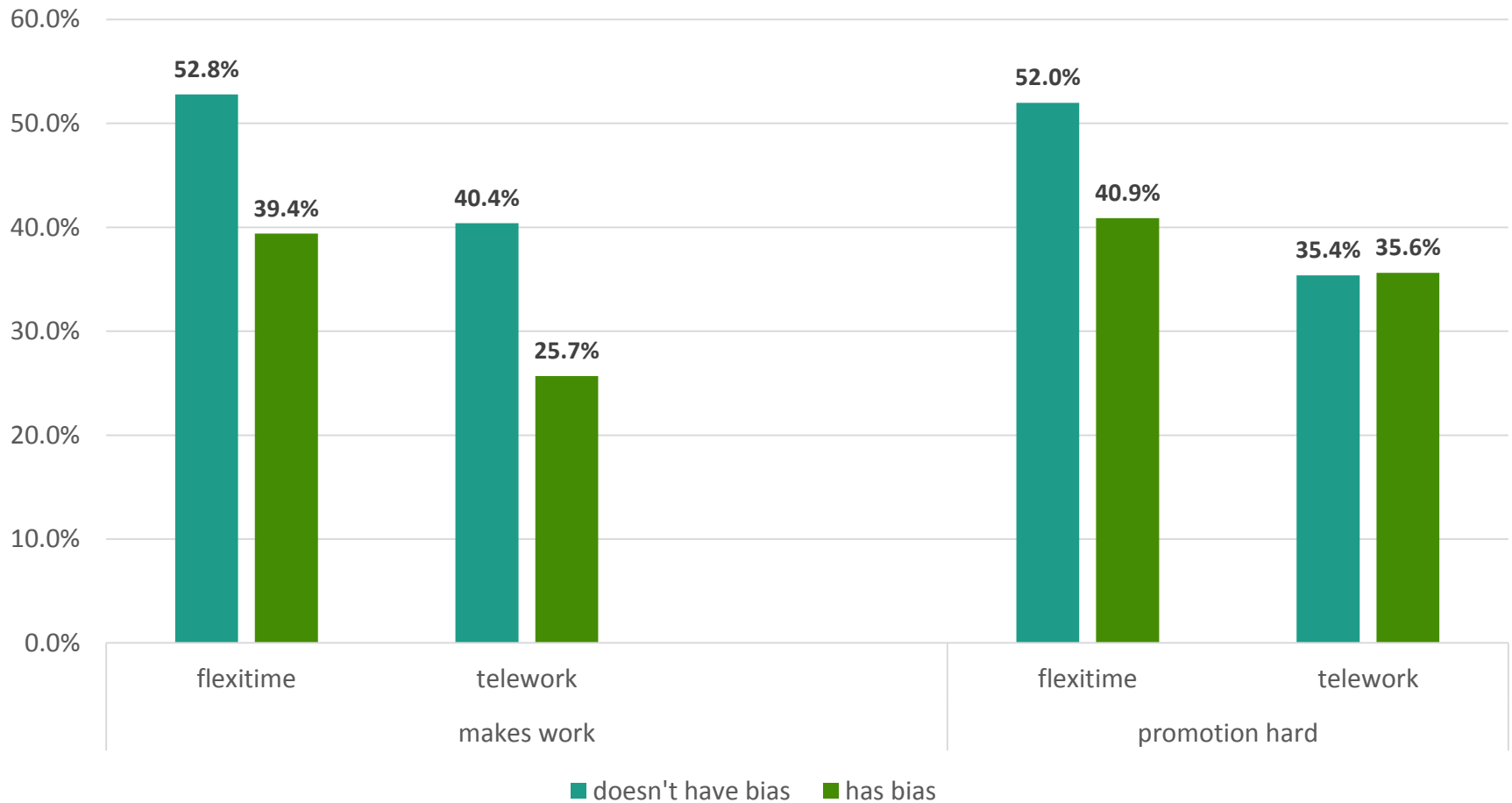
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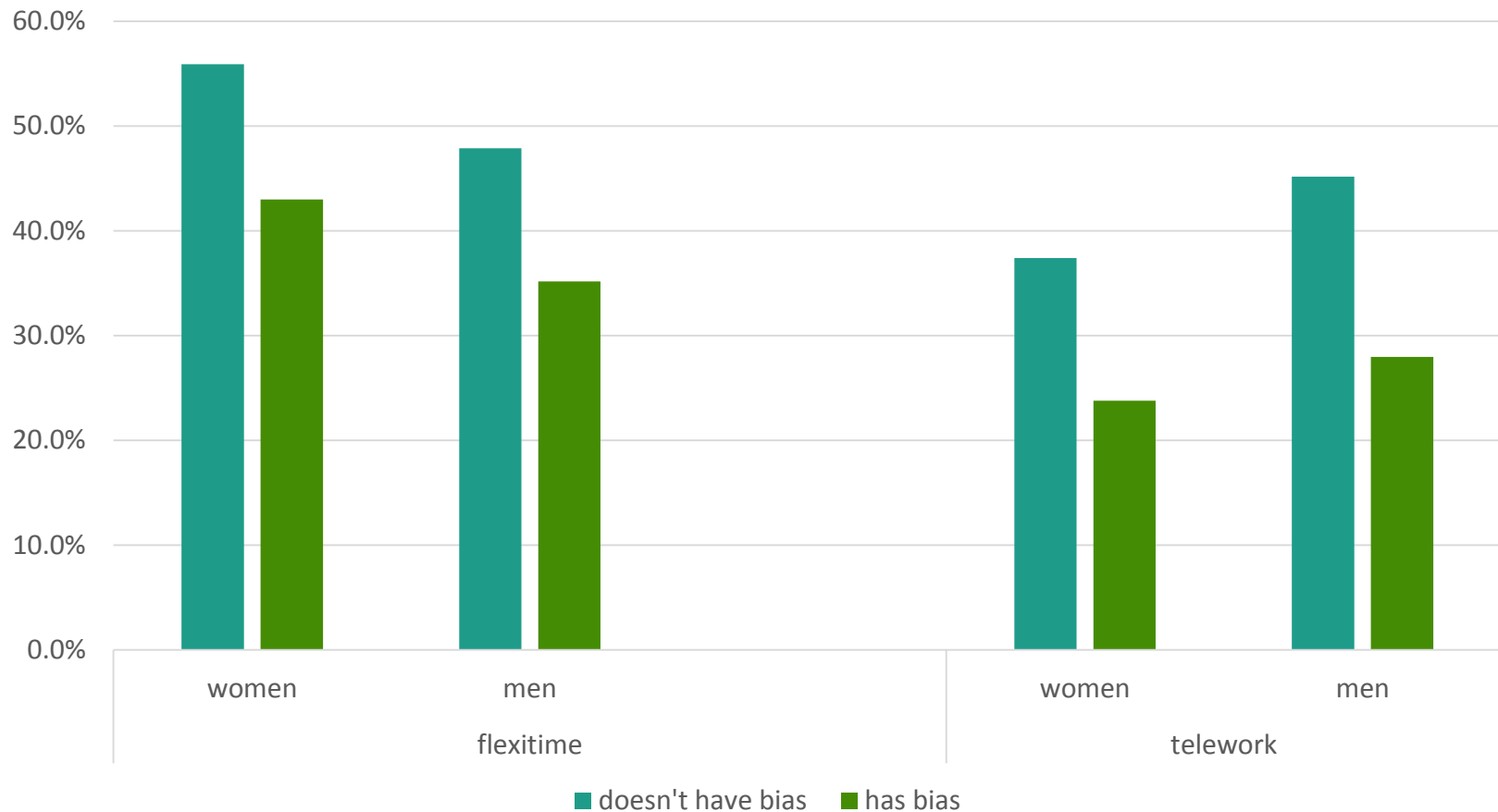
Proportion of individuals with flexibility stigma (BIS WLB 2011)



When available, the likelihood of taking of flexible working arrangements and flexibility stigma



Gender differences- makes work for others → take up of flexible working arrangements



Conclusion

- Despite the increase in work intensity of workers working flexibly, Flexibility stigma prevalent
- Parents more likely to fear the consequences of flexible working on their careers
- Men more likely to have stigma towards those who work flexibly (male-dominated workplaces)
- Flexibility stigma reduces the worker's likelihood of taking up the arrangement

Tackling work culture

- Largely to do with the ideal work culture norm/presenteeism
- We need to tackle these culture – otherwise flexible working may not be as effective of a policy
- Senior managers setting a role model
- Campaigns
- Stronger rights – EC social pillar protection for flexible workers

Thank you!

For comments & questions
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