

Reconciling career and family in Switzerland

What do STEM women experience?



Reconciliation of Work and Family...

SWIN

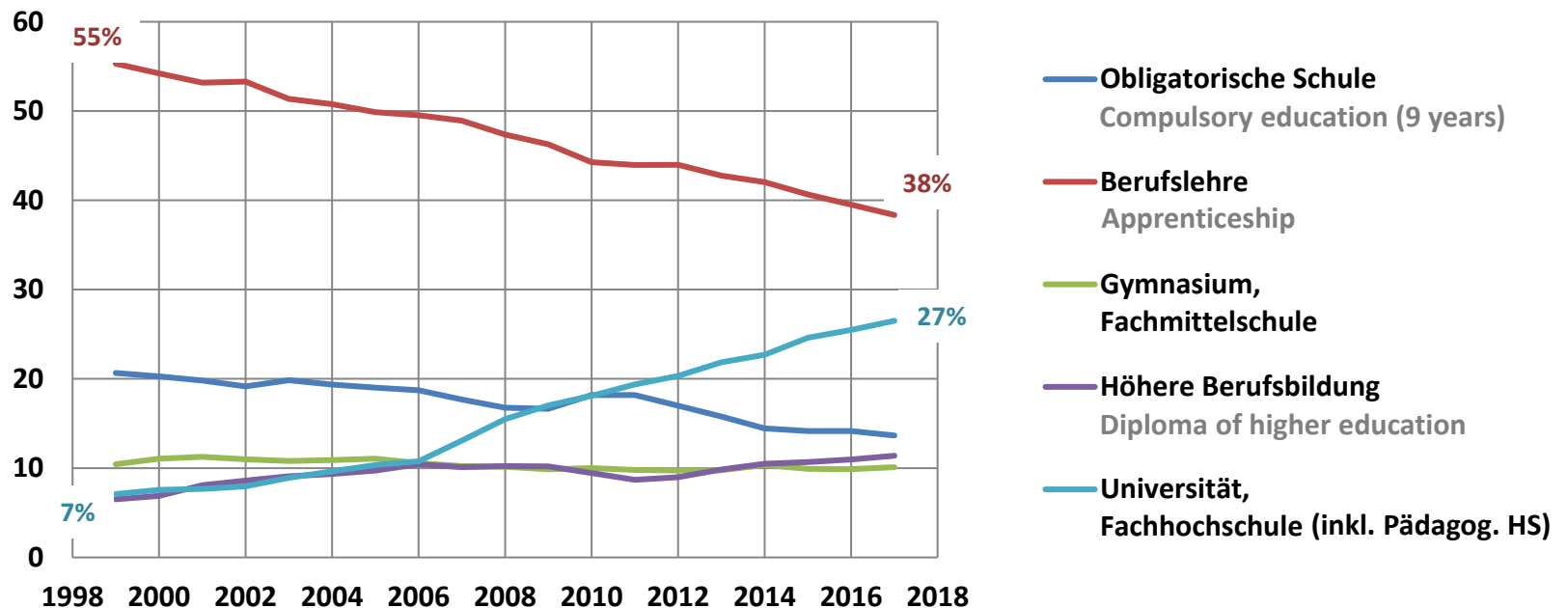


Goal of today's presentation

- Being a mother in Switzerland is a little bit weird sometimes...
- Look at some background data to better understand the situation in Switzerland
- Working group at the SVIN: what is the specific situation of STEM-women and what do they experience when having a family?

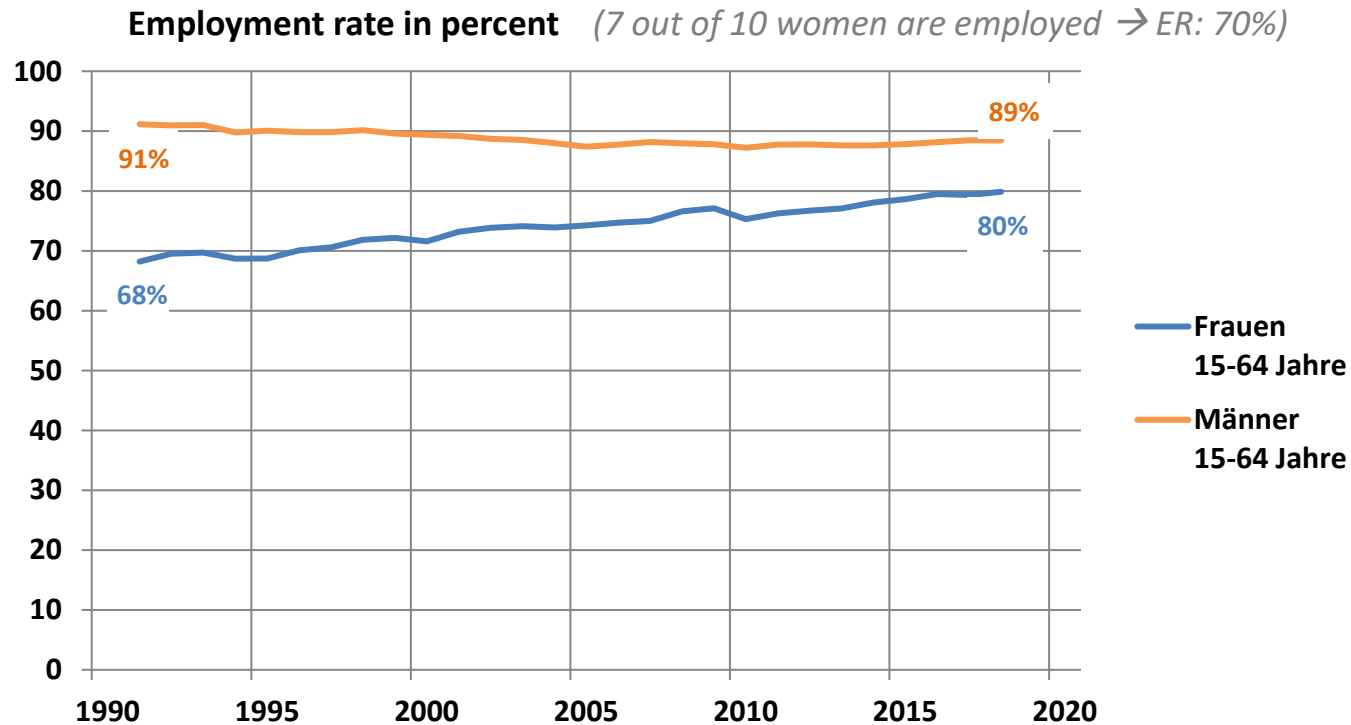
Women in Switzerland - Education

Highest completed education of women in Switzerland (age 25-64), in percent



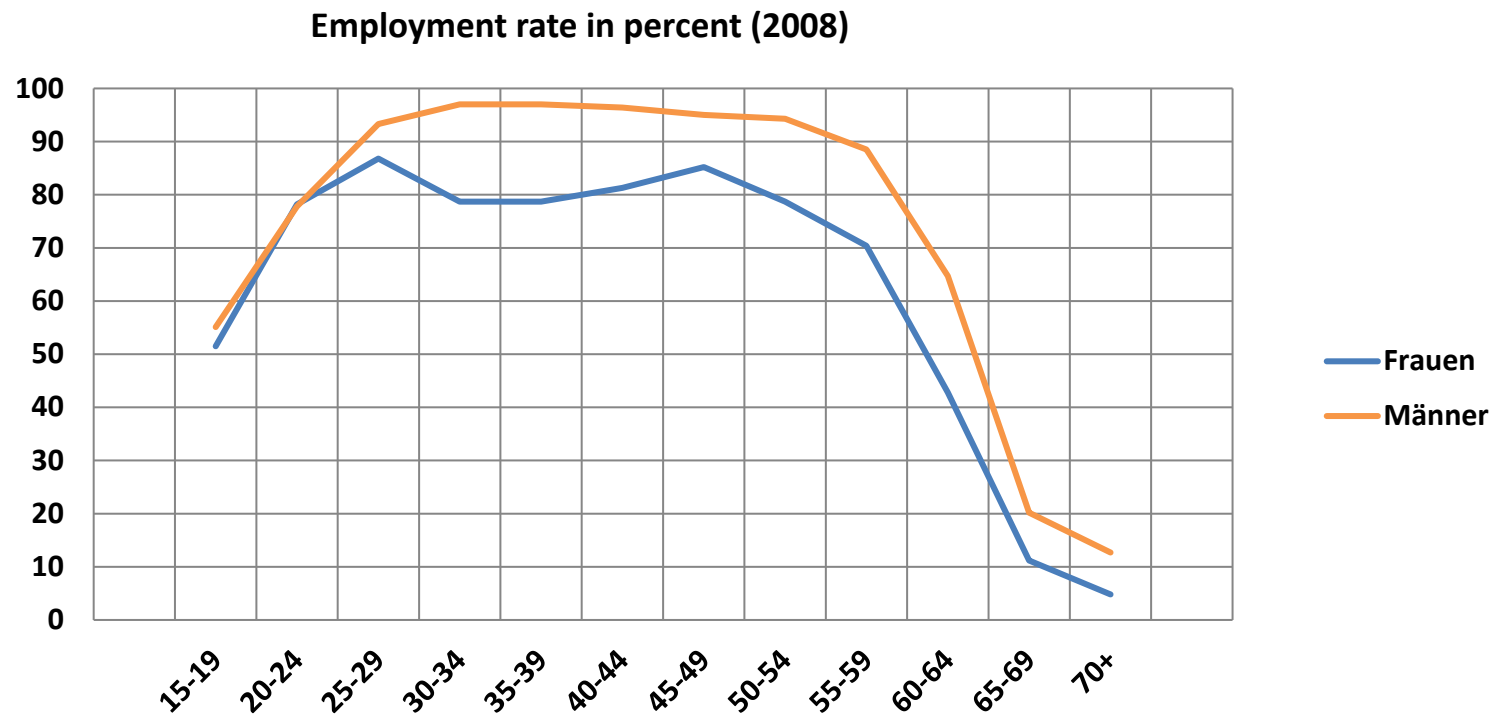
Reference: BFS (2017): Bildungsstand der ständigen Wohnbevölkerung nach Alter und Geschlecht

Women in Switzerland - Employment rate



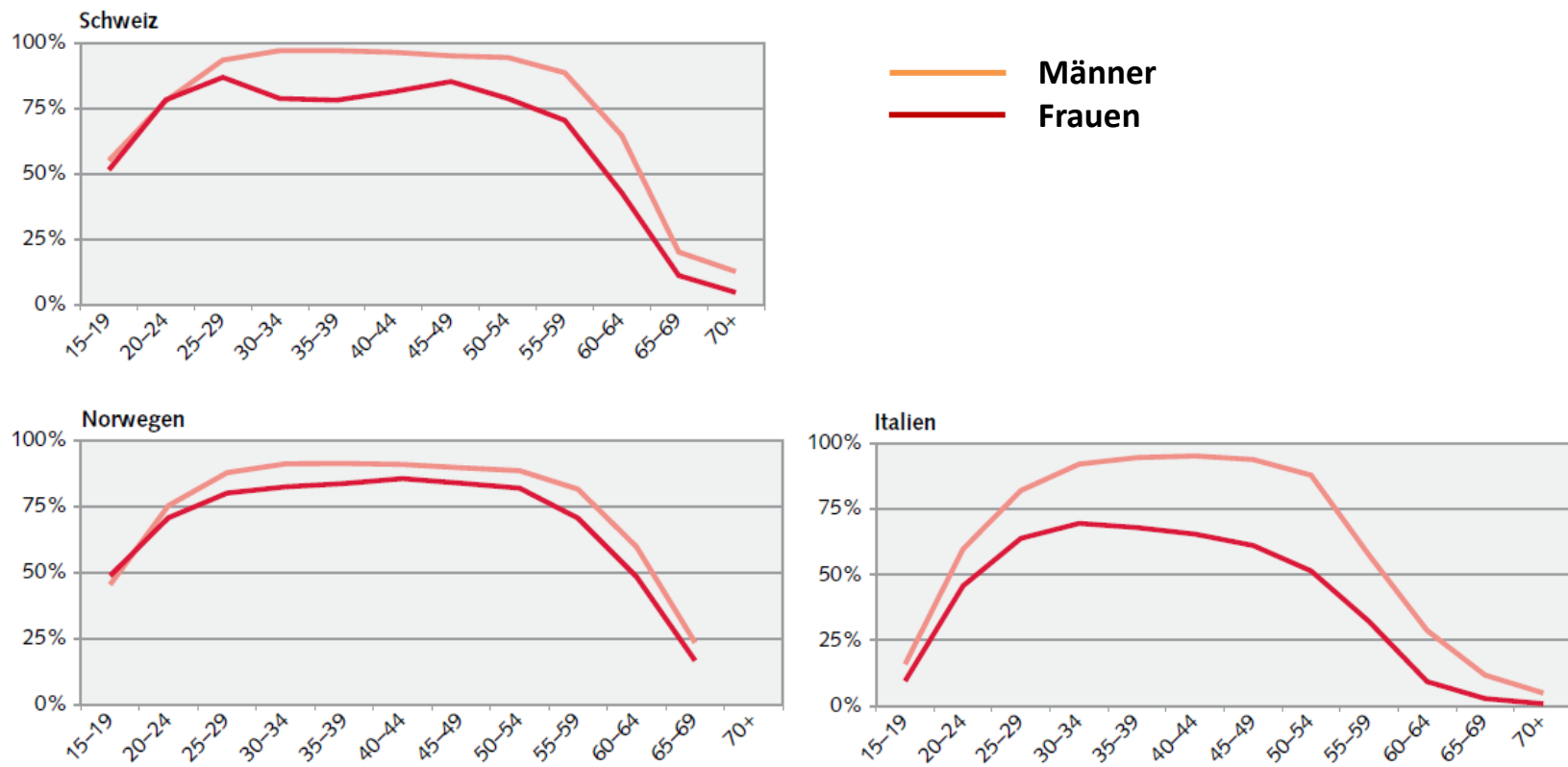
Reference: BFS (2019): Erwerbsquote, 1991-2018, in %.

Employment rate in life course



Reference: UNECE Gender Statistics Database in BFS Aktuell (2008): Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann.

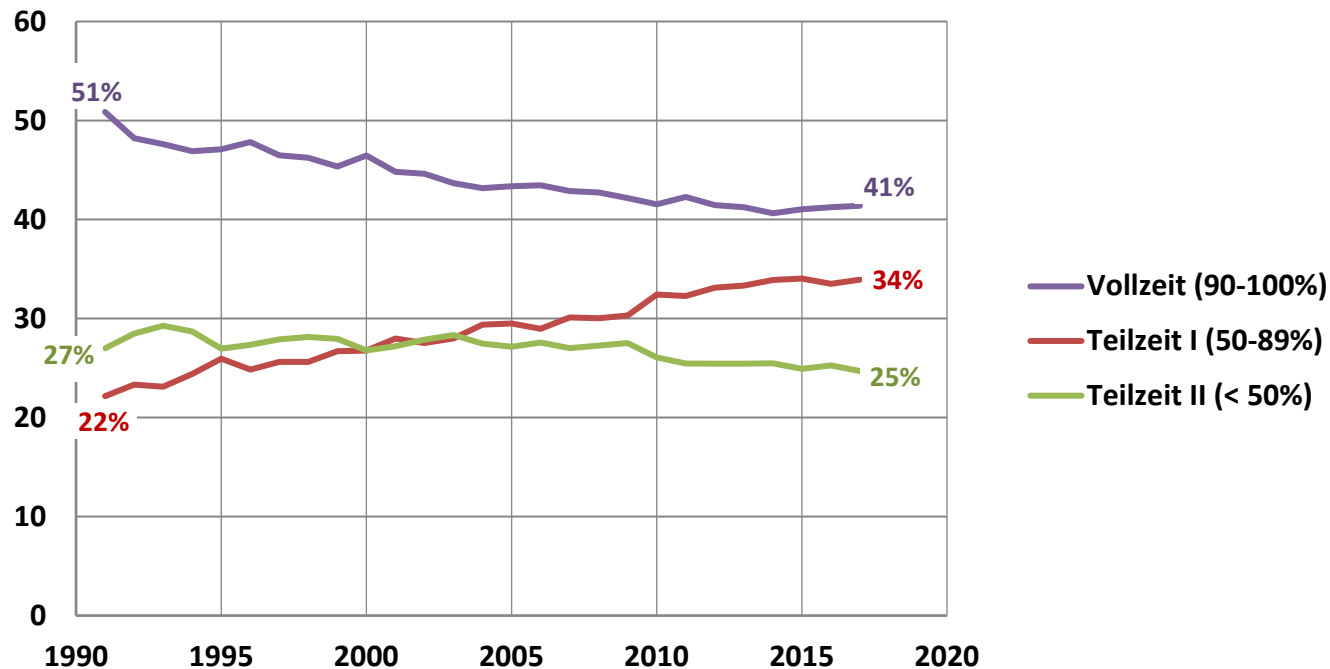
Employment rate in life course - comparison



Reference: UNECE Gender Statistics Database in BFS Aktuell (2008): Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann.

Women in Switzerland - Employment level

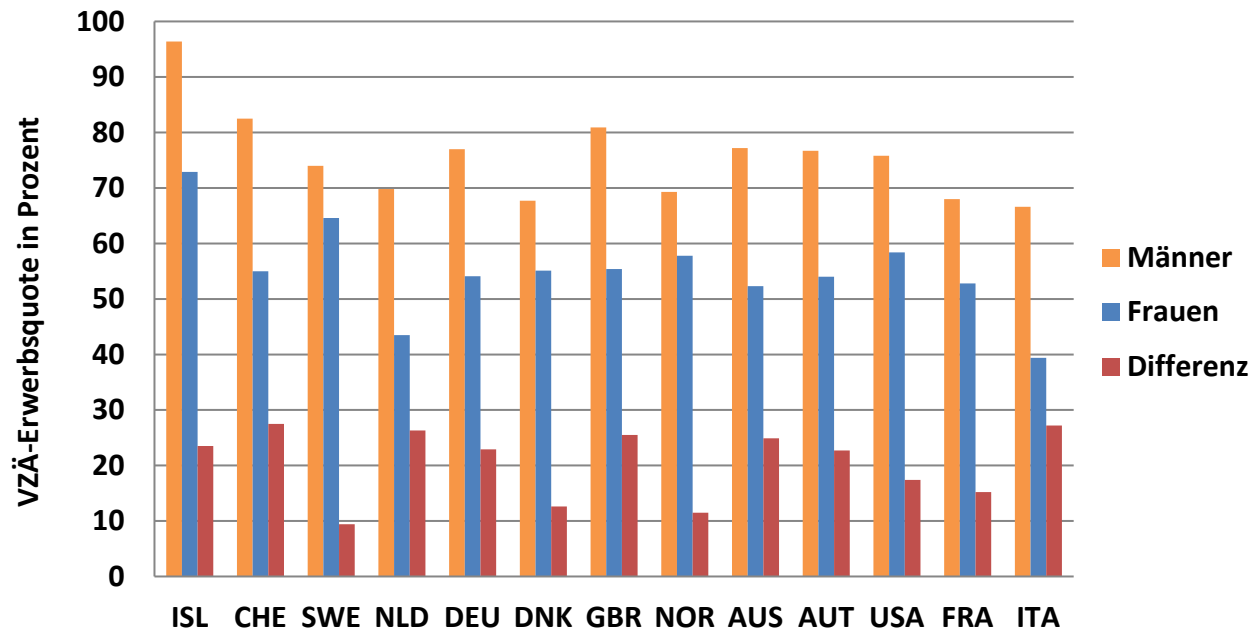
Percentage of employees per working time model (*sums up to 100%*)



Reference: BFS (2018): Beschäftigungsgrad, 1991-2017, in %.

Switzerland in international comparison

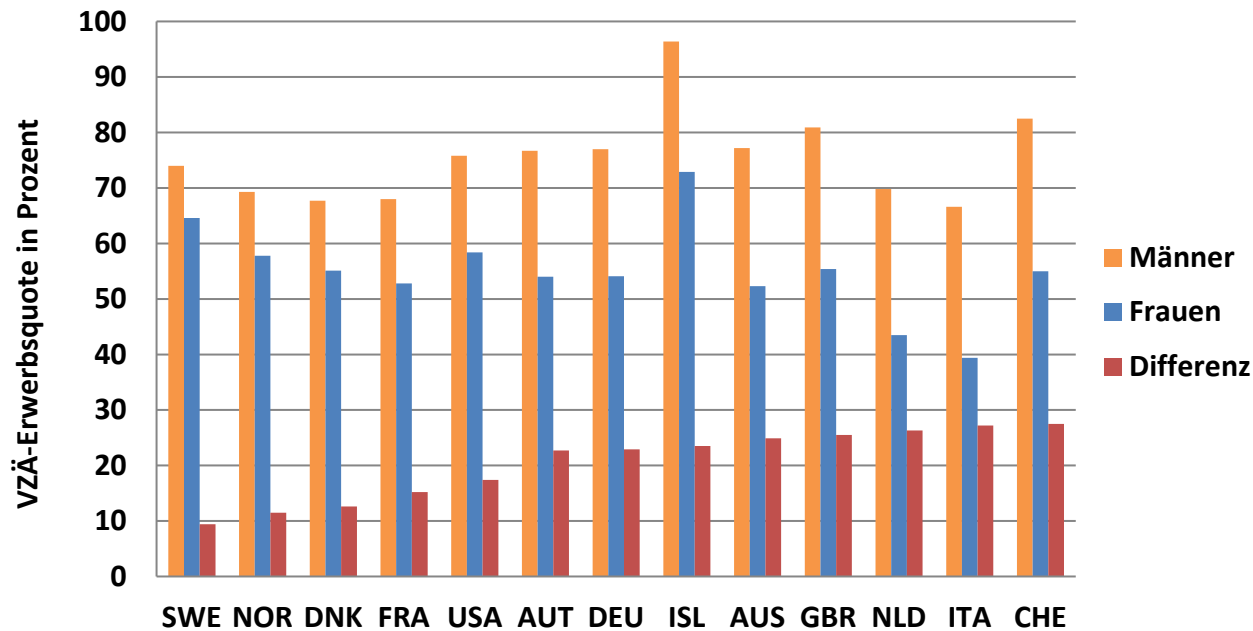
Fulltime equivalent employment rate by country and sex (\triangleq effective volume of work done)



Quelle: OECD (2018): Full-time equivalent employment rate, by sex

Switzerland in international comparison

Fulltime equivalent employment rate by country and sex (\triangleq effective volume of work done)



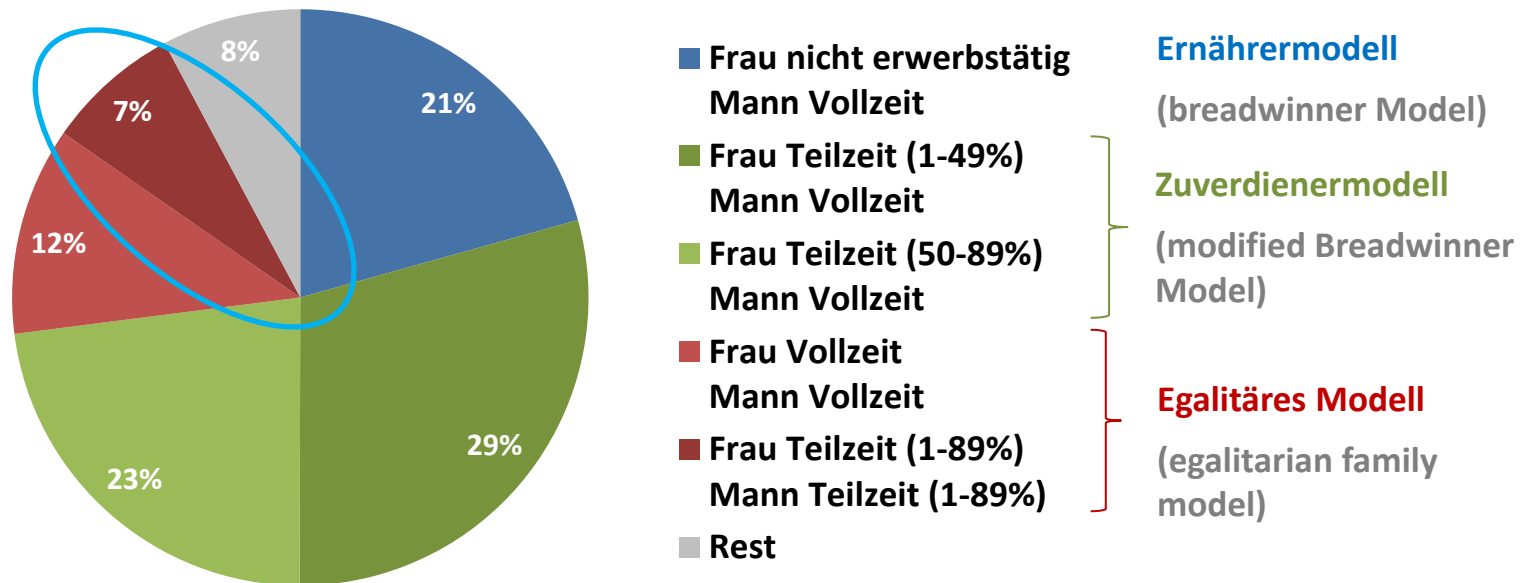
Quelle: OECD (2018): Full-time equivalent employment rate, by sex

Political framework in Switzerland for families

- Strong subsidiarity principle
 - The state should only perform tasks for which no subordinate actors can be found (cantons, municipalities, families, foundations).
 - Impact: In Switzerland, family is a private matter. "The state should not interfere in family matters".
- Rather liberal organised welfare state
 - Employees must organize themselves to be insured against old age, illness, unemployment, maternity, etc.
 - Impact: e.g. maternity insurance: introduced in Switzerland only in 2004 (Sweden in 1963; USA still no paid leave)
- Strong federalism
 - Cantonal/communal regulation of e.g. day care offers, day schools, child allowances, tax deductions for childcare, ...
 - Impact: large cantonal and communal differences

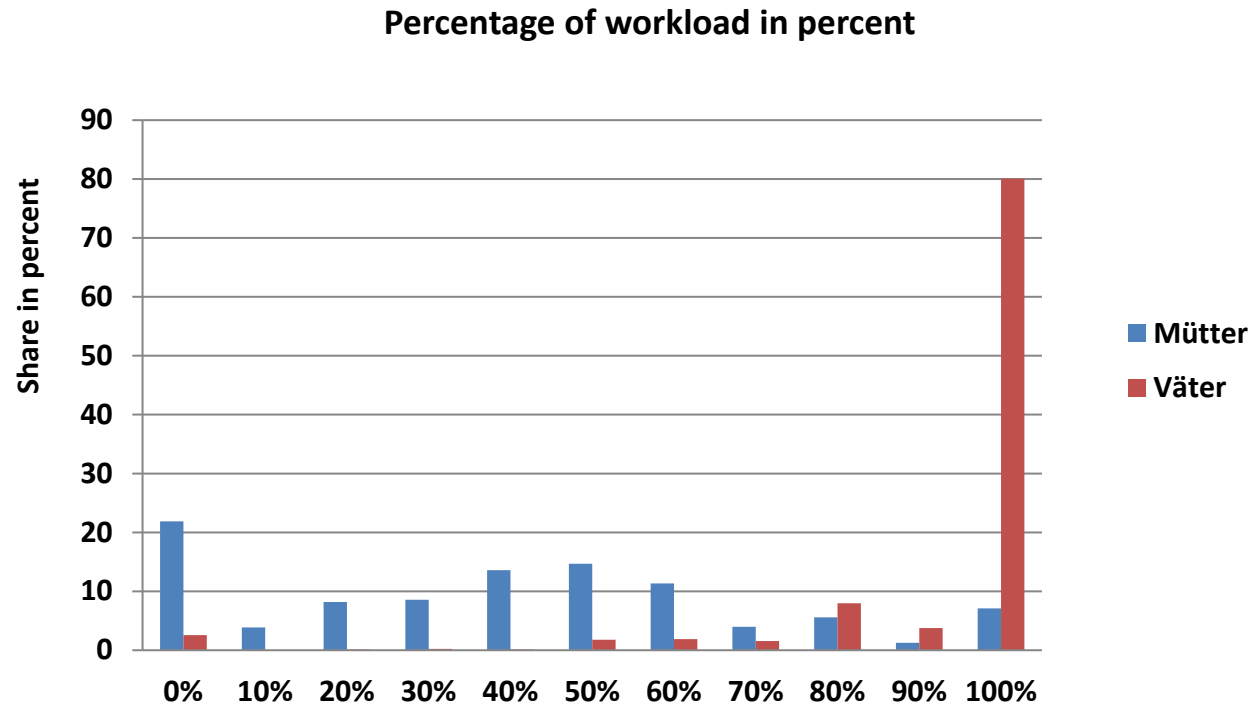
Family models in Switzerland

Family models for couples in Switzerland (youngest child 0-12 years), 2017



Reference: BFS (2017): Familien in der Schweiz. Statistischer Bericht 2017

Part-time work of parents in Switzerland



Reference: Schweizerisches Haushaltpanel, Paarhaushalt, jüngstes Kind <14a (eigene Berechnungen)

What have we learned

1. Education of women has changed enormously in the last 20 years
 - more women have a higher education → not an option to stay at home
 - situation of their own mothers very different → lack of role models
2. Employment rate for women has risen strongly over the last 30 years
 - due to working mothers → new group of stakeholders on the labour market
 - motherhood affects employment behaviour, whereas fatherhood doesn't
3. High proportion of women in part-time employment
 - large difference in (paid) working volume between men and women (100% vs. 65%)
 - plus: women earn less → women have less financial weight in the family → less bargaining power → favouring the traditional gender role models

What have we learned

4. “Family policy” in Switzerland

- family is a private matter in Switzerland → state should not interfere
- no standard solution for reconciling work and family life → families are forced (have the freedom) to find individual solutions

5. Modified breadwinner model (♂ full-time, ♀ part-time) has become the new norm for families

- stay-at-home-mothers and mothers who work full-time or in high workloads are exceptions from the norm → justify oneself
- egalitarian model (both partners work part-time) not realized very often (only 7%)
- mothers remain the main responsables for household and care work

Working group on reconciliation of career and family

- What did we investigate:
 - What factors play a role in reconciling career and family for STEM-women?
 - What is the professional environment and working conditions for STEM-women? What makes compatibility difficult, what makes it easier?
 - What are success factors (resp. what are the minimum requirements) so that reconciliation of career and family works? (*preliminary results*)

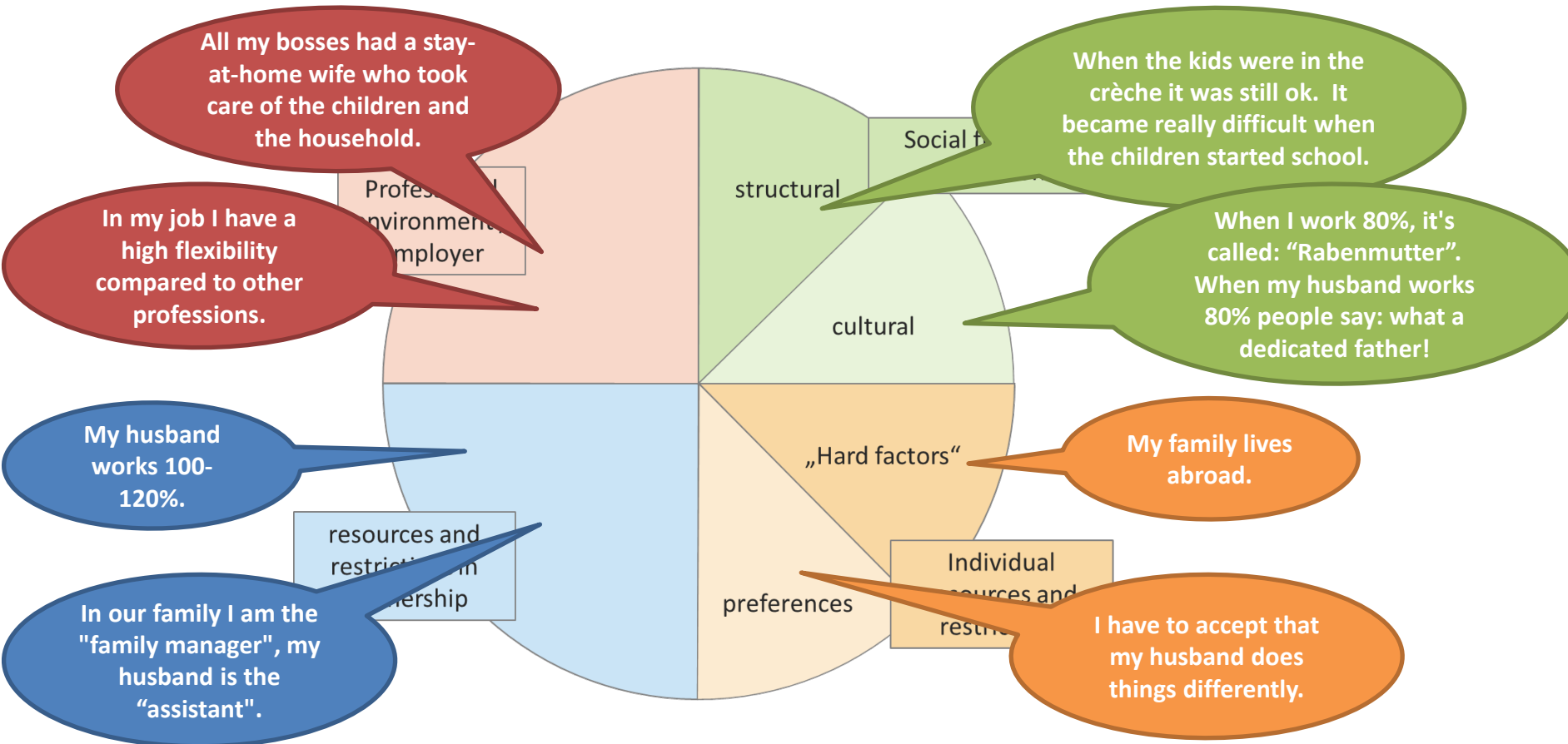
- Final report:

https://svin.ch/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SVIN_AG_Vereinbarkeit_Schlussbericht.pdf

What plays a role in reconciling career and family




What plays a role in reconciling career and family



Working conditions in STEM professions

Private Sector		Academia	
Complicating factors	Facilitating factors	Complicating factors	Facilitating factors
conservative industry, few women → no female role models	Stimulating and motivating work content	Temporary employment	Flexibility in the daily structure
Very high workload at certain points	Good wages → hire a cleaner	100% output expected despite part-time employment	Work rather outcome- than presence-oriented
Employers often only in large towns → long commuting distance	Outcome-oriented work → high flexibility in certain work phases	Mobility is required for research grants	Part-time work often possible
High specialization → restricted job opportun.	Home office, mobile office, ann. work. time	Highly competitive working environment	Home office possible for certain works
Part time often not possible	Regular working hours, unlimited contract	Partner often also works in research → same requirements	Universities have their own crèches

Success factors for reconciliation...

1. Have the right partner.
2. Stay in an urban area. Do not move to the countryside.
3. Short distances between home, workplace and crèche.
4. Crèche: easily accessible for both partners to share responsibility.
5. Avoid an initial asymmetrical division of work. This can result in unwanted situation from which you hardly get out (path dependency).
6. Negotiate solutions with your employer *before* the child is born. Go into the discussion with a ready-made proposal. Also applies to your partner.
7. Be aware that you cannot have everything. You will have to limit yourself somewhere (e.g. hobbies, political engagement, workload...).
8. Have the necessary portion of luck... 

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**SCHWEIZERISCHE VEREINIGUNG
DER INGENIEURINNEN**



Thank you for your attention!

