

# Female Employment and Working status within households \*

Elena Grimaccia (Istat)

**Abstract** The aim of this paper is to analyse the distribution of employed people among the household, in relation to the level of female employment. Households are classified by the presence of employed and unemployed members. The main indicators of the distribution of employment among and within Italian households are shown. Their changes, mostly due to the job crisis, and their persistence, related to territorial and gender differences are analysed. The comparison with other European countries allows to underline the weakness of the Italian labour market. Finally, an analysis of women participation to the labour market in relation with the family role is carried out.

**Key words:** Labour statistics, household, gender analysis

## 1 Introduction

Both the lack of a job and the presence of atypical form of work are factors of a possible poverty of a household. The quote of people with low income is maximum among the households without any worker, is very high among families with only atypical jobs and it is still very high for households with only one earner (OECD, 2005).

In this contest, the analysis of Labour Force Survey data on Employment related to households is fundamental in a country like Italy where there are no minimum-income benefits and the unemployment benefits are among the less generous in the OECD countries (OECD, 2009). Thus, the presence of at least one employed member is essential for the subsistence of a household, if no other kind of income is available.

The analysis of the number of employed people related to the household composition is of great interest because employment reduces considerably the poverty risk, but also the analysis of working time and employment duration by household composition are useful because they are related to the risk of both in-work poverty and unemployment.

An analysis of the inequalities of the distribution of employment among the Italian households has been carried out. Being the largest household typology, we focused on couples with children, also to obtain better comparisons. Also the distribution by gender of employment within households is provided.

The effects of the recent economic and job crisis on employment of women and at households level are shown.

Finally, we have focused our attention on women, to study the factors that most influence their participation in the labour market. In order to do this, a logistic regression analysis has been conducted, both for men and women, taking into account some variables related to their family role.

## 2 Employment at household level in the European Union

The analysis of the risk of poverty by work intensity in the household confirms the importance of the presence of employed members in order to decrease the vulnerability of households to poverty.

“Work intensity” is an Eurostat indicator of the presence and kind of jobs present in the household. It varies from 0, corresponding to “no member in employment” to 1, when all adult members are fully employed.

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\*[elgrimac@istat.it](mailto:elgrimac@istat.it)

The risk of poverty rate calculated by work intensity is one of the Eurostat indicators of the social inclusion strand.

**Table 1:** Population between 18 and 64 years at-risk-of-poverty by work intensity of the household in the EU countries – Year 2008 (*at risk of poverty rate(a)*)

	Households without dependent children with work intensity:					Households with dependent children with work intensity:				
	1	0	0.5-1	0-0.5	0-1	1	0	0.5-1	0-0.5	0-1
European Union (27 countries)	5	34	9	22	11	7	59	19	41	22
<b>Italy</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>27</b>
Belgium	3	34	4	14	6	4	71	12	42	17
Bulgaria	2	49	8	35	14	3	85	14	56	25
Czech Republic	2	21	3	20	6	3	70	9	40	12
Denmark	5	27	6	29	9	4	49	8	21	9
Germany	5	50	10	28	13	5	66	10	31	12
Estonia	5	73	8	49	14	9	92	14	44	17
Ireland	3	45	6	11	7	7	47	10	35	15
Greece	9	30	13	26	17	10	38	26	48	29
Spain	5	41	9	27	13	8	61	24	52	28
France	5	22	7	22	10	5	68	17	50	22
Cyprus	8	53	4	27	8	2	69	15	31	17
Latvia	8	81	17	43	21	10	91	19	50	24
Lithuania	4	55	9	34	13	10	55	22	66	27
Luxembourg	5	19	9	22	12	8	51	18	41	21
Hungary	2	17	5	16	8	4	53	11	33	16
Malta	1	38	3	8	4	2	75	12	27	14
Netherlands	4	22	6	17	8	5	50	9	18	10
Austria	3	27	10	15	11	5	59	11	25	13
Poland	6	23	8	19	11	11	45	21	39	24
Portugal	8	32	8	23	11	9	70	27	41	29
Romania	14	23	10	12	11	14	62	27	32	28
Slovenia	4	37	4	15	7	3	49	12	35	16
Slovakia	3	19	4	12	5	5	66	15	39	18
Finland	4	39	7	32	12	5	58	8	42	11
Sweden	6	28	9	34	13	5	64	13	34	16
United Kingdom	5	40	14	36	17	8	53	23	50	25
Iceland	5	28	12	40	16	5	30	10	40	12
Norway	5	29	12	34	15	3	37	10	28	12

(a) cut-off point: 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers

Source: Eurostat

In most of the European Countries the absence of an employed member is a key factor for the risk of poverty. This risk is higher for households with children.

In Italy the risk of poverty rate is similar to the EU level among the households without dependent children while it is higher for household with children.

Between 2007 and 2008 (the latest year available), the indicator grew for households with work intensity greater than 0.5, regardless of the presence of dependant children.

Another key indicator used by Eurostat to evaluate Social Inclusion is the share of population in jobless households. This indicator refers to adults aged 18 - 59 who are living in households where no-one works, as a share of adults aged 18-59 in the total population. Jobless households are households where no member is in employment, i.e. all members are either unemployed or inactive<sup>1</sup>.

Both the numerators and the denominators come from the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). The definitions apply to individuals living in private households<sup>2</sup> residing in Member States. All individuals who belong to the same household are resident where the household maintains a dwelling which their members use as their principal residence. Persons carrying out obligatory military service are not included. Students aged 18 -24 who live in households composed solely of students of the same age class are not counted in either numerator or denominator.

<sup>1</sup> Definitions follow the decision taken at the Laeken European Council of December 2001 and revised in 2003.

<sup>2</sup> The EU-LFS covers persons living in private households. Persons living in collective households (halls of residence, medical care establishments, religious institutions, collective workers' accommodation, hostels, etc) and persons carrying out obligatory military service are not included. Only the employment of the residents in the country is considered.

**Table 2:** Population in jobless households in the EU countries – Years 2000- 2009 (*share of persons aged 18-59 who are living in households where no-one works of total*)

GEO/TIME	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
European Union (27 countries)	10.2	10.2	10.4	10.4	10.4	10.3	9.8	9.3	9.2	10.1
<b>Italy</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>10.4</b>
Belgium	12.4	13.3	14.0	14.4	13.8	13.7	13.6	12.3	12.0	12.8
Bulgaria	16.2	17.7	17.1	15.9	14.4	13.7	12.1	10.2	9.0	9.7
Czech Republic	7.8	7.8	7.3	7.7	8.0	7.4	7.2	6.5	6.0	6.7
Denmark	:	:	8.4	9.4	9.4	8.6	7.7	8.1	6.8	:
Germany	9.7	9.8	10.3	10.9	11.1	11.0	10.5	9.5	9.0	9.2
Estonia	11.3	11.3	10.5	10.2	9.7	8.6	6.6	6.0	6.2	10.4
Ireland	8.3	8.5	8.8	9.1	8.6	8.3	7.8	7.9	9.0	12.9
Greece	9.7	9.4	9.4	9.0	9.1	8.9	8.1	8.0	7.5	8.5
Spain	7.7	7.5	7.5	7.3	7.2	6.6	6.3	6.2	7.4	10.8
France	10.2	10.2	10.1	10.1	10.2	10.3	10.5	10.0	9.8	10.5
Cyprus	5.2	5.0	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.3	5.2	4.7	4.9	5.6
Latvia	14.8	13.1	10.3	8.8	8.1	8.5	6.7	6.6	6.4	10.5
Lithuania	10.0	11.4	8.9	8.2	7.8	6.8	6.9	7.0	9.0	12.0
Luxembourg	7.0	6.6	7.1	7.5	7.1	6.7	7.1	7.0	7.9	7.3
Hungary	13.4	13.2	13.0	11.7	12.0	12.3	11.8	11.9	12.5	13.1
Malta	7.7	7.6	7.9	8.5	8.8	8.2	7.9	7.7	8.1	8.3
Netherlands	7.6	6.9	6.8	7.8	7.9	7.9	7.4	6.5	5.9	6.0
Austria	7.9	7.8	7.3	6.8	8.2	8.4	7.6	7.1	7.0	7.3
Poland	:	13.6	15.0	15.0	15.5	14.8	13.2	11.6	10.1	10.2
Portugal	4.5	4.4	4.8	5.3	5.3	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.5	6.7
Romania	9.0	9.4	11.8	11.5	11.8	11.3	10.3	10.4	10.5	10.9
Slovenia	8.7	8.1	8.2	8.8	7.7	7.1	7.4	6.5	6.4	7.5
Slovakia	10.4	10.1	10.5	10.3	10.5	10.3	9.5	8.9	7.5	8.2
Finland	:	:	:	11.0	11.1	10.5	9.5	9.1	8.1	:
United Kingdom	11.3	11.2	11.2	11.0	11.0	10.9	10.8	10.7	10.7	11.5

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

The quote of individuals living in jobless households in Italy was 10.4 in 2009 (it was 9.2 in 2007) while the European Union average was 10.1 (it was 9.3 in 2007). After the continuous decline from 2000 to 2007, the level of the indicator returned between 2007 and 2009 to the levels of 2001.

In some Countries, like Spain, France and United Kingdom, it returned to the levels of 2000.

The Netherlands and Germany are among the few Countries where the impact of the economic crisis on this indicator has been lower.

The total amount of population living in households with all adults not working in the EU was almost 112 million persons in 2008 (2009 not available), and was 110 million in 2007. Excluding households composed solely of students or solely inactive aged 65 and over, people in jobless household were nearly 54 million in 2008, 394 more than 2007 and 2 million more than 2006.

Another indicator that can be built based on labour force survey data is the share of people in full employed household (however the EULFS data at household level are only available until 2008) . According to this indicator Italy has a low presence of households with full employment (all adults working), For example in 2008, the quote of full employed households is 32.4%, 16 points less then United Kingdom, 15 less then German, 13 less then France, while the UE27 average was 42.1%.

This difference is due to the fact that for a long time and partially still today, the prevalent model of labour participation of Italian households has been the one with only one adult (usually male) employed and the other members out of the labour supply: the “one breadwinner” model. In the past, especially when the job stability was higher, this model has enabled as many households as possible to have at least one income from a job. In period of economic crisis when job stability is lower, however this model leaves a large amount of household at high risk of poverty.

### 3 The distribution of work in the Italian households

In Italy, the boundary between unemployment and inactivity is very thin, therefore, for our purposes, the study of employment is much more relevant.

The most important distinction is the one between households with at least one member employed and those without employment.

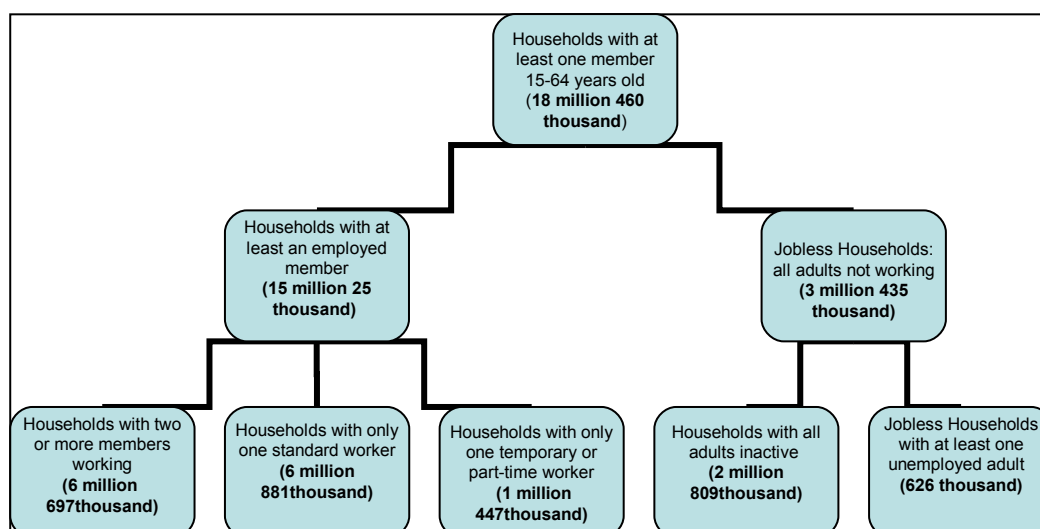
Households with employment can also be divided following a criterion of their vulnerability to economic trends.

Households with two or more employed members benefit by a stronger position towards both family instability and risk of unemployment.

In terms of job status, workers on a temporary contract are highly sensitive to changes in the business cycle. Thus the distinction between households with only one full time and no temporary (“standard”) employed against households with one part time or temporary or atypical worker.

Among the households with no member in employment it is possible to separate between those completely outside the labour supply and those with one or more components looking for a job.

**Figure 1:** Classification of households in the labour market – 2009



Source: Istat, Labour Force Survey

In Italy, in 2009, the most prevalent typology of households following this classification is the one with one full time employed member, representing the 37.3 per cent of the households where there is at least a member of working age. A third of the households has two employed members, and the 7.8 per cent of households has only one member employed in a temporary or part time job.

In order to obtain a synthetic measure of the distribution of the number of employed persons in the households, the Gini coefficient calculated for the three different macro geographic areas of Italy for the past five years has been analysed. For this purpose, jobs have been considered as exchangeable goods, such as income or wealth.

The inequality of the labour market, measured by the Gini coefficient, is quite high and rich in 2009 the 67.4 %<sup>1</sup>.

In the comparison between 2009 and 2004, the coefficient increases of 1 point, reflecting the higher frequency of the households with only one employed member (from 43% to 45.1%).

The distribution of employment varies notably between the different geographical areas of Italy: is higher in the South and Islands Regions (68.3%) due to the fact that almost a half of the households in these Regions present one employed member.

<sup>1</sup> A low Gini coefficient indicates a more equal distribution, with 0 corresponding with complete equality.

**Table 3:** Households by number of employed members – Years 2004-2009

	Number of employed members in the household						Percentages				
	Thousand						Percentages				
	None	One	Two	Three or more	Total		None	One	Two	Three or more	Total
<b>ITALY</b>											
<b>2004</b>	2999	7372	5612	1141	17123		17.5	43.0	32.8	6.7	100.0
<b>2005</b>	3147	7798	5609	1063	17617		17.9	44.3	31.8	6.0	100.0
<b>2006</b>	3062	7866	5756	1082	17766		17.2	44.3	32.4	6.1	100.0
<b>2007</b>	3059	8054	5766	1091	17971		17.0	44.8	32.1	6.1	100.0
<b>2008</b>	3189	8131	5841	1069	18230		17.5	44.6	32.0	5.9	100.0
<b>2009</b>	3435	8328	5747	950	18460		18.6	45.1	31.1	5.1	100.0
<b>NORTH</b>											
<b>2004</b>	1217	3301	3023	626	8167		14.9	40.4	37.0	7.7	100.0
<b>2005</b>	1262	3515	3042	592	8411		15.0	41.8	36.2	7.0	100.0
<b>2006</b>	1208	3583	3135	581	8507		14.2	42.1	36.9	6.8	100.0
<b>2007</b>	1167	3684	3145	582	8578		13.6	42.9	36.7	6.8	100.0
<b>2008</b>	1198	3729	3204	568	8698		13.8	42.9	36.8	6.5	100.0
<b>2009</b>	1306	3849	3178	497	8831		14.8	43.6	36.0	5.6	100.0
<b>CENTRE</b>											
<b>2004</b>	505	1399	1172	235	3312		15.3	42.2	35.4	7.1	100.0
<b>2005</b>	534	1480	1166	227	3408		15.7	43.4	34.2	6.7	100.0
<b>2006</b>	505	1500	1186	239	3430		14.7	43.7	34.6	7.0	100.0
<b>2007</b>	513	1538	1209	248	3508		14.6	43.8	34.5	7.1	100.0
<b>2008</b>	519	1560	1246	241	3566		14.6	43.7	34.9	6.8	100.0
<b>2009</b>	562	1628	1212	232	3634		15.5	44.8	33.4	6.4	100.0
<b>SOUTH AND ISLANDS</b>											
<b>2004</b>	1277	2672	1416	280	5644		22.6	47.3	25.1	5.0	100.0
<b>2005</b>	1352	2803	1400	244	5798		23.3	48.3	24.1	4.2	100.0
<b>2006</b>	1349	2783	1435	263	5829		23.1	47.7	24.6	4.5	100.0
<b>2007</b>	1379	2833	1412	262	5885		23.4	48.1	24.0	4.4	100.0
<b>2008</b>	1472	2843	1392	260	5966		24.7	47.6	23.3	4.4	100.0
<b>2009</b>	1567	2851	1356	221	5995		26.1	47.6	22.6	3.7	100.0

Source: Istat, Labour Force Survey

To achieve more homogeneity, we have considered separately couples with children, the most numerous typology of family in Italy (9.5 million in 2009).

Among couples with children the level of equality is slightly higher and equal, in 2009, to 64.3%.

Between 2004 and 2009, the coefficient presents very dissimilar performances in the different parts of Italy.

In the North, it decreases from 63 to 60.1, while in the “Mezzogiorno” it remains stable, but constantly the highest and equal to 66 per cent.

In the Northern Regions, more than a half of the couples with children has two or more employed people. The variable “number of employed members” is concentrated in the value “two-employed”.

In the South, on the contrary, the mode is in the “one employee” value, that doesn’t varies very much in the recent years, and it is 49.1% in 2009.

On the whole, the percentage of couples with children with at least 2 employed members has decreased between 2004 and 2009, from 53.4% to 52.7%. On the contrary, both the quote of households without any member with a job and the one-employed families have shown an increment.

#### 4 Low level of labour in the Italian Households and participation of women in the labour market

But, who is working within the household? The LFS data allow us to analyse more exhaustively the labour condition inside the household. In order to do that, we focused on couples with children, without other members in the household, other than parents and children, with the aim of a more precise identification of the employment condition analysed by the family role.

In couples with children with only one employed, in more than two cases out of three the only breadwinner is the male parent, in the 22% of the families is a child, and only in less than 10% of cases is the mother who works. Among this households, more than one third of mothers are out of the labour market.

In the South of Italy and Islands, the quote of the male breadwinner is even higher, and reaches the 75.5%.

In the contest of couples with two employed members, male parents are one half of the employed members, females are working in the 40% of cases, and children in the 13%. In the Mezzogiorno, again the percentage of working mothers is lower than in the rest of Italy, and equal to 36.4%.

The low level of labour in the Italian Households is, therefore, mostly related to the low participation of women to the labour market: the low percentage of households with two or more employed people in Italy is strongly related to a low employment rate of women.

**Table 4:** Population (15-64 years old) in couples with children by family role, working status and number of employed members in the household– Year 2009 (*Thousands and differences with 2008*)

Number of employed members in the hh	FEMALE PARENT				MALE PARENT				CHILDREN				TOTAL			
	Emoloyed	Unempl	Inactive	Total	Emoloyed	Unempl	Inactive	Total	Emoloyed	Unempl	Inactive	Total	Emoloyed	Unempl	Inactive	Total
2009																
None	.	50	601	650	.	137	418	555	.	159	600	759	.	346	1619	1965
One empl member	328	243	2905	3476	2607	121	547	3274	808	276	1717	2801	3743	640	5168	9551
Two empl	3429	29	696	4154	3798	23	236	4057	1112	184	1832	3128	8338	237	2764	11339
3 or more	689	9	173	871	783	4	53	839	1217	46	301	1564	2689	59	527	3275
Total	4446	331	4374	9151	7188	285	1253	8726	3137	665	4450	8252	14771	1281	10077	26129
DIFFERENCES 2009-2008																
None	.	10	48	57	.	12	40	53	.	9	33	42	.	32	121	152
One empl member	54	-3	34	85	76	33	-11	97	-40	35	97	92	90	64	120	273
Two empl	-26	-1	-17	-44	-35	6	-18	-47	-30	16	22	8	-92	21	-13	-84
3 or more	-69	3	-36	-102	-93	1	-6	-97	-172	4	-28	-196	-333	8	-70	-395
Total	-41	9	28	-4	-52	52	5	5	-242	65	123	-54	-335	125	157	-53

Source: Istat, Labour Force Survey

Taking into account couples in age class between 25 and 44, the percentage of working female partners is higher than in the total of the working age population. In this case the dual earner model is present in 53,6 of the couples. When there are dependant children the level of female employment decreases and the dual earner model is less present (50.6%), while the level of male employment remains the same (90.9)

**Table 5:** Couples by working status of partners (25-54 years old) in couples with and without children (*Thousands and quote of the total*) – Year 2009

Couples (total)					Couples with children				
Working status of male partner	Working status of female partner			Total	Working status of male partner	Working status of female partner			Total
	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive			Employed	Unemployed	Inactive	
Employed	4303	313	2678	7293	Employed	3346	246	2420	6012
	53.6	3.9	33.4	90.9		50.6	3.7	36.6	90.9
Unemployed	131	434	121	296	Unemployed	96	35	105	237
	1.6	0.5	1.5	3.7		1.5	0.5	1.6	3.6
Inactive	156	15	266	437	Inactive	118	12	232	362
	2.0	0.2	3.3	5.5		1.8	0.2	3.5	5.5
Total	4590	371	3065	8026	Total	3560	293	2758	6611
	57.2	4.6	38.2	100		53.9	4.4	41.7	100.0

Source: Istat, Labour Force Survey

## 5 Principal implications of Job crisis on female employment and on households' indicators

While the employment rate of men in Italy is close to the UE27 68.6%, (only two points lower than the European average in the 2009), the female employment rate is ridiculously low: only 46.4% against 58.6% in the same period (Eurostat 2009). The employment of women, that had increased until the 2008, decreases in the 2009, with more intensity in the second half of the year: – 42.000 in the first quarter, -158.000 in the third quarter. So the recent economic crisis has determined a decrease of the already low female employment rate,

The impact of the job crisis has been stronger in the area where female employment was already less developed: in the “Mezzogiorno” we have 105 thousands employed women less than in 2008, with an employment rate of 30,6%.

The employment rate has decreased for women with a lower degree of education more than for women with a tertiary education.

The analysis of the employment condition after one year shows similar results. For 100 women employed in the first quarter of 2008, 10 are not employed one year later, versus 7 men. In the Mezzogiorno the quote of women that are not employed anymore in the first quarter 2009 were 14, while the quote of men in the same conditions was 9.8. Almost 14 employed women with a Primary degree in education were out of employment one year later (8 men).

**Table 6:** Outflows from Different Labour Market Status by Labour Market status one year later, level of education and territory (WOMEN) – First quarter 2008 vs First quarter 2009 (a) (percentage)

Labour status at First quarter 2008	Labour status at First quarter 2009			
	Employed	Unem-	Inactive	Total
	NORTH			
Employed	91.9	2.2	5.9	100
Primary education	88.4	3.1	8.5	100
Secondary education	92.6	2	5.5	100
Tertiary education (University)	95.9	1.2	2.9	100
Unemployed	39.6	27.2	35.9	100
Inactive	6.1	3.4	90.5	100
	CENTER			
Employed	89.6	2.7	7.6	100
Primary education	85.5	3	11.5	100
Secondary education	89.1	3.2	7.7	100
Tertiary education (University)	94.9	1.5	3.5	100
Unemployed	25.9	32.3	41.8	100
Inactive	6.1	5.9	89	100
	SOUTH AND ISLANDS			
Employed	85.8	3.6	10.5	100
Primary education	81.5	3.9	14.6	100
Secondary education	84.9	3.9	10.2	100
Tertiary education (University)	90.8	2.8	6.4	100
Unemployed	22.5	27.8	49.7	100
Inactive	4.7	4.9	90.3	100
	ITALIA			
Employed	90.0	2.6	7.4	100
Primary education	86.2	3.3	10.5	100
Secondary education	90.3	2.7	7.0	100
Tertiary education (University)	94.3	1.7	4.0	100
Unemployed	27.5	28.4	44.0	100
Inactive	5.5	4.4	90.2	100

Source: Istat, Labour Force Survey

(a) Provisional data. Data have been provided by Carlo Lucarelli, Istat.

The job crisis has shown its effect on households' as well as on individuals' indicators. The worsening of the labour market situation among households, shown during the 2008, has gone on in the 2009.

The number of households where no member is in employment<sup>1</sup> has increased from 3 million 59 thousand 2007 to 3 million 435 in 2009.

In 2009, the number of jobless household where at least a member is unemployed, hence looking actively for a job, reaches 626 thousand household, showing a strong rise, after a continuous decline from 2004 to 2007.

The percentage of households with at least one member working decreases to 81.4% in 2009 (was 83%, in 2007) of the total number of households with at least one member 15-64 years old.

Furthermore, the amount of households with two or more members employed has decreased in the same period.

In 2009, almost half of the Italian households including at least an 15-64 person have only one member in employment.

In 2009, in Italy there are almost 1.5 million households where the only employed person is a temporary or a part-time worker.

Employment rates within Italy vary considerably according to regional patterns. Southern Italy presents more critical labour market conditions than other areas of the country: in the first semester 2009, there are 93 thousand households with no member in employment more than in the same period of 2008.

In the South of Italy live 341 thousand households where the only employed member has a temporary job.

The number of households with children decreases (-20thousand) but among them we find 99 thousand more jobless households. In particular, couples with children are most affected from the job crisis. Among this kind of household (that represent more than an half of the total of households in Italy) there are 73 thousand less with at least one employed member and 63 thousand more with no member in employment.

## 6 Female Employment and Family role

In Italy, the participation of women in the labour market is among the lowest one in Europe but it also presents strong differences: the employment rate is indeed lower among the young ones, the less educated and women residing in the South of Italy and on the Islands. But, most of all, women in Italy still face many difficulties in reconciling work with family (OECD, 2007).

The gap between Italy and the rest of Europe for the employment rate of women (25 – 54 years old), indeed, raises for women with children, reaching 14 points for mothers of two children (69,2% e 54,8% respectively in the Ue27 and Italy).

In many other European countries, such as France, differences among the employment rate of women following the number of their children are scarce. Instead, in Italy the difference with the employment rate of women with no children grows as the number of children increases: 4.5 points lower for one child mothers, 10 points with two children, 22 points for women with three children or more.

The tools to support the female employment are well known in Europe. For instance, part time jobs are widely supported to help mothers reconciling work and family and has been recently used to reduce losses in employment.

In Italy, the quote of part-time workers keeps on remaining below the Ue27 average, being the 27.9% in the 2009 (is the 31 per cent in the EU27). Considering Netherlands as a benchmark, for its highest level of female employment, Italy shows a difference of 50 points less in the quote of part time.

Clearly, both at European and Italian level, the use of part-time increases with the number of children for women between 25 and 54 years old. However, comparing with Germany, Netherlands, and United Kingdom, Italy's delay in the use of reduced working time and other forms of flexible time work is evident. In Italy, the difference in the incidence of part time on the female employment is of 10 points between women with no children and women with one child, while it reaches 20 points in Germany and 25 points in the UK and the Netherlands.

<sup>1</sup> The analysis refers to households where at least one member is between 15 and 64 years old.



In the rest of Europe, also other forms of flexibility in working time and place are rapidly developing. Just as an example, in Germany 12.3% of women work from home, 12.5% among those with one child, 16,6% with two children, while in Italy they are stuck at 4,9%, 4,5%, and 5,2%.

To give again statistical evidence both of the difficulties of women with children of being employed and the factors that increase that probability, a logistic regression has been applied to the LFS data for 2009 of women (Grimaccia, 2003). The response variable is “being employed”, while the explanatory ones are related to level of study, age, geographical area of residence and family role. The same model of logistic regression has been applied also to mothers, considering the number of children too.

**Table 7:** Odds ratio Estimates – logistic Regression – 2009 LFS data on Women

Effect		Point estimate
<b>Role in the family</b>	Single vs Daughter	1.933
	In couple (Partner/married) vs Daughter	1.079
<b>Age</b>	15-24 vs 55-64	0.688
	25-34 vs 55-64	3.151
	35-44 vs 55-64	4.518
	45-54 vs 55-64	4.153
<b>Education</b>	Primary vs tertiary (University)	0.194
	Secondary vs tertiary (University)	0.573
<b>Territory</b>	North vs “Mezzogiorno” (South + Islands)	3.081
	Center vs “Mezzogiorno” (South + Islands)	2.345

This is because for a woman the probability of being employed decreases if she is in couples with children. The effect shown by the “role in the household” being “single” is indeed positive, while for women in couple or alone with children it is negative (0,232 and -0,136). The odds ratio for singles versus daughter is still larger than 1, indicating a stronger probability for the former of being employed. For men, on the contrary, the only family role that is linked with a lower probability of being employed is “child”. Of course, in Italy, there is a biunique correlation between not having a job and still residing with parents. Men with any other family role have higher probability of being employed.

A very important tool to contrast the non employment of women is reaching a university degree. A low level of education has a negative effect on the probability of working (-0,925). Having accomplished a high level of education increases in a significant way the probability for a woman of being in employment: the odds ratios for the high school versus university degree are equal to 0,573. For men, the probabilities of having a job with a secondary level degree in education or a tertiary level are more similar, being the odds ratio 0.776.

Another effect of the adult male breadwinner systems is evident on the employment level of young women. Being less than 25 years old implies a negative effect on being employed (-1.121), while the class of age that shows more probability of having a job is between 35 and 44 years old. Also for men, being less than 25 has a negative effect on being employed (-0.8829).

The model shows also that there are fewer probabilities of being employed for women living in the South of Italy or on the Islands: the odds ratios versus North and Centre are 3.08 and 2.35 respectively. This is still true for men, even if the odds ratio are slightly lower than in the model for women (2.17 and 1.89).

It is worth mentioning that considering together men and women in a model that takes into account also the variable “gender”, the odds ratio for male versus female is equal to 1.9.

After having verified in terms of probability that the family role has for women a significant effect on being or not employed, the analysis has been focused on women who are in couple (with or without children). In this way only women with a family burden have been analysed, excluding women still living as a child with their parents or women living alone.

The women selected following these criteria have been analysed in relation with their age, level of the education degree, area of residence, number of children and nationality. The first result is that having one or more children has a negative effect on the probability of being employed for women, being the parameter estimation equal to -0.147 (with a significant level of confidence). Maybe, a less granted result is that women with a non Italian nationality, when they live in couple, have a lower probability of being employed than women with Italian nationality. The subject is worth of a separate analysis. Here it is enough to mention that, among many other reasons, foreign women have less probability of being employed when in couple because they do not have the family network that in Italy is the basic tool to reconciling work and family.

**Table 8:** Odds ratio Estimates – logistic Regression – 2009 LFS data - Women in couple

Effect		Point estimate
Number of children		0.863
Nationality	Italian vs Other nationality	1.842
Age	15-24 vs 55-64	1.595
	25-34 vs 55-64	3.389
	35-44 vs 55-64	4.756
	45-54 vs 55-64	4.310
Education	Primary vs tertiary (University)	0.147
	Secondary vs tertiary (University)	0.430
Territory	North vs "Mezzogiorno" (South + Islands)	3.073
	Center vs "Mezzogiorno" (South + Islands)	2.420

Degree of education and geographical area of residence have for mothers the same effects that they have for women in general, being less probable having a job for women living in Mezzogiorno and with a lower level of education.

The effect of age is instead slightly different, being the effect of being younger than 25 less strong (we are considering women already independent from their family of origin).

Applying the same model to men living in couple, the estimations of the effects show, first of all, that having children have a positive effect of being employed (+0.219, significant). For men, being younger than 25 have no significant effect on the model. Also having a secondary level of education have no effect on the model.

The model, on top of the results presented, shows the importance of analysing family variables when studying the female employment.

## 7 Results

It is clear from the analysis of the number of employed members in the households, that the one breadwinner model is widely spread in Italy. Furthermore, the comparison with other European countries shows that jobless households are widely present in Italy.

In most cases the one breadwinner is a male adult, especially in the case of couples with children.

The economic crisis that started in 2008 has determined an increase of households with only one employed adult, but it has also shown the risk of such a model, leaving in 2009 more than 3 million households without an employed member and thus at strong risk of poverty (almost 400 thousands more than in 2007).

Therefore the job crisis and the resulting higher instability of jobs shows that the adult male breadwinner model is not sustainable anymore. Also, the growing instability of families increases the possibility of falling in poverty, mostly for women with children. In short, the low level of female employment increases the economic vulnerability of households, especially in time of crisis.

In the South and in the Islands, the model of the one male breadwinner is still widely present, and shows only but few signs of being overcome. In the “Mezzogiorno” the level of female employment is very low and for a woman the probability of being employed decreases if she is in couples with children.

Another very important factor that impacts on female employment is the level of education. The lower the education level, the higher the probability of not being employed. This is again a stronger phenomenon in the South.

These conclusions point out that in order to reduce the risk of poverty rate, from an employment point of view, it is critical to have policies that increase female employment. A first important tool to do that is to support women in reaching higher level of education. Secondly, policies that allow to reconcile work and family are needed to support employment of mothers (ie parental leaving, time flexibility of jobs, part time, and work from home).

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