

www.modernfatherhood.org

Parental Working in Europe: Underemployment

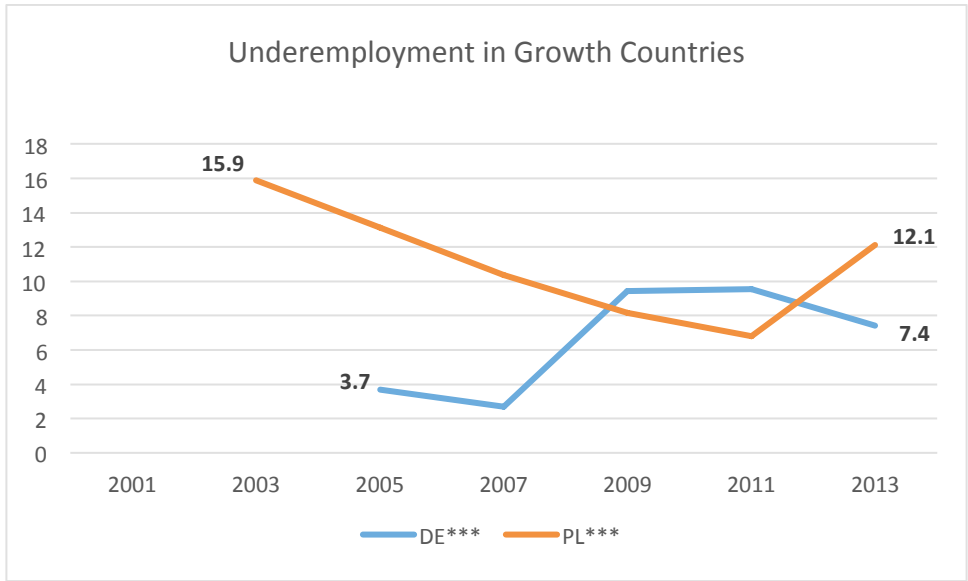
Authors: Matthew Aldrich, Sara Connolly, Margaret O'Brien, Svetlana Speight and Robert Wilshart

This **Research Note** investigates the changing proportion of parents in couple households across EU countries, who are underemployed. Underemployment is defined as an individual wanting to work more hours than they currently do. For more information on the definitions, country groupings, data and methods used, see the accompanying **Research Note [Parental Working in Europe: Methodology]**.

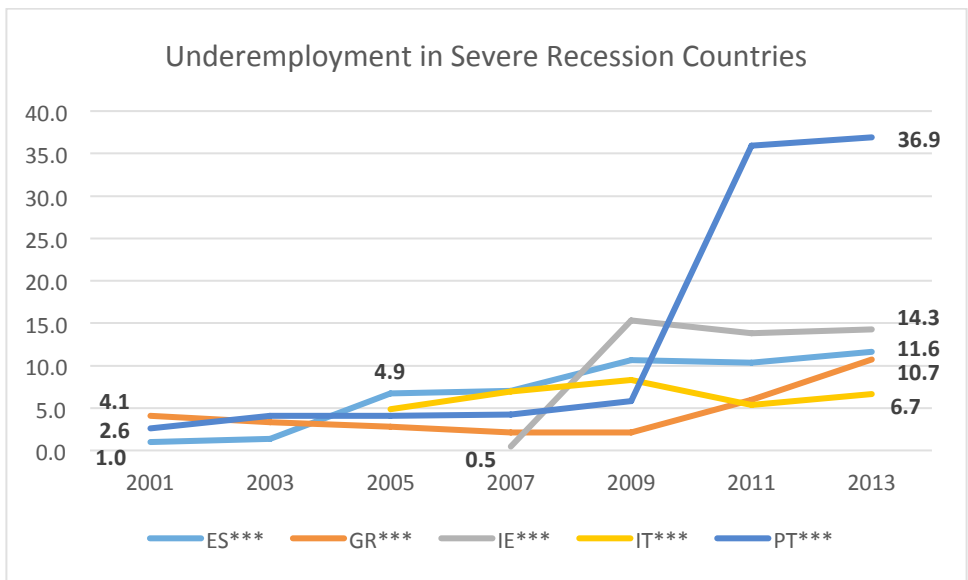
There were three main trends. Firstly, despite the impact of the recession across Europe, some countries have seen a sustained decline in the rate of underemployment – notably, those countries in Eastern Europe. Poland's economy grew continuously over the period, so perhaps it is not a surprise that the labour market fared well, but underemployment of full-time parents also fell in the *Recession (Eastern)* countries. Secondly, most other countries studied experienced an increase in underemployment. Thirdly, the rise in underemployment was greatest in the *Severe Recession* countries. These countries also experienced large increases in unemployment, signifying a lack of employment opportunities. The inability of couples to respond to redundancies by one partner would contribute to underemployment, and have potentially severe consequences on the income stability of households.

Fathers Working Full-Time

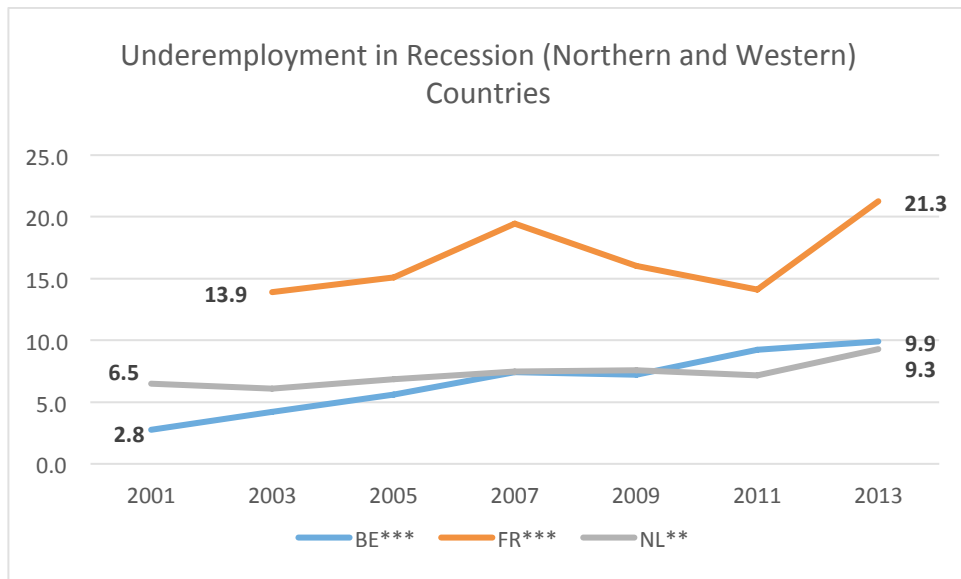
There have been significant changes in the incidence of underemployment for fathers working full-time across the European Union. In *Growth* countries, underemployment has fallen over the time period, but the financial crisis nonetheless had a noticeable effect.



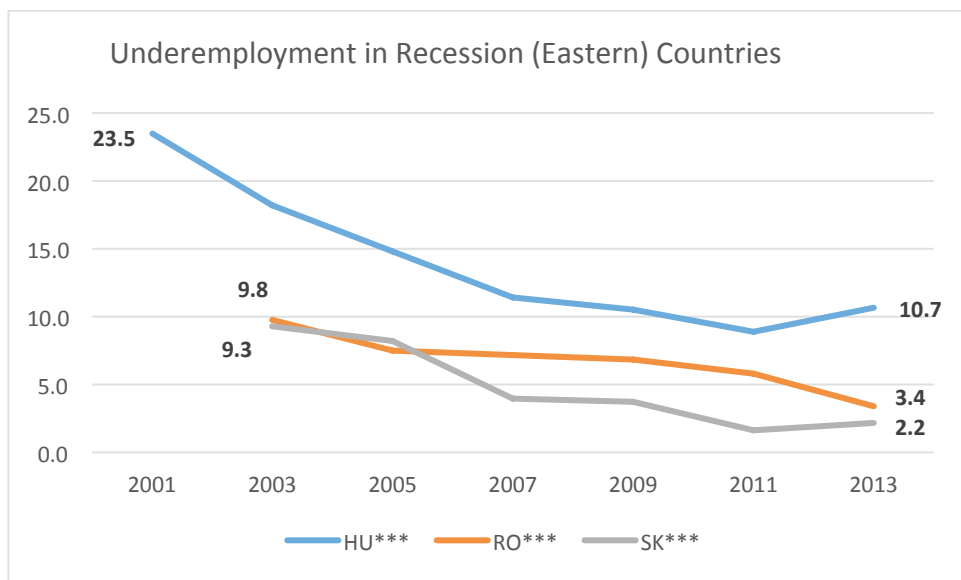
The incidence of underemployment has increased significantly across all of the countries in the *Severe Recession* group, particularly in Portugal, where underemployment reached 36.9% in 2013.



Similarly, there has been an increase in the incidence of underemployment for fathers working full-time in *Recession (Northern and Western)* countries.



Underemployment has fallen in *Recession (Eastern)* countries – along with Poland, these are the only countries to experience a fall in incidence of underemployment over the time period.



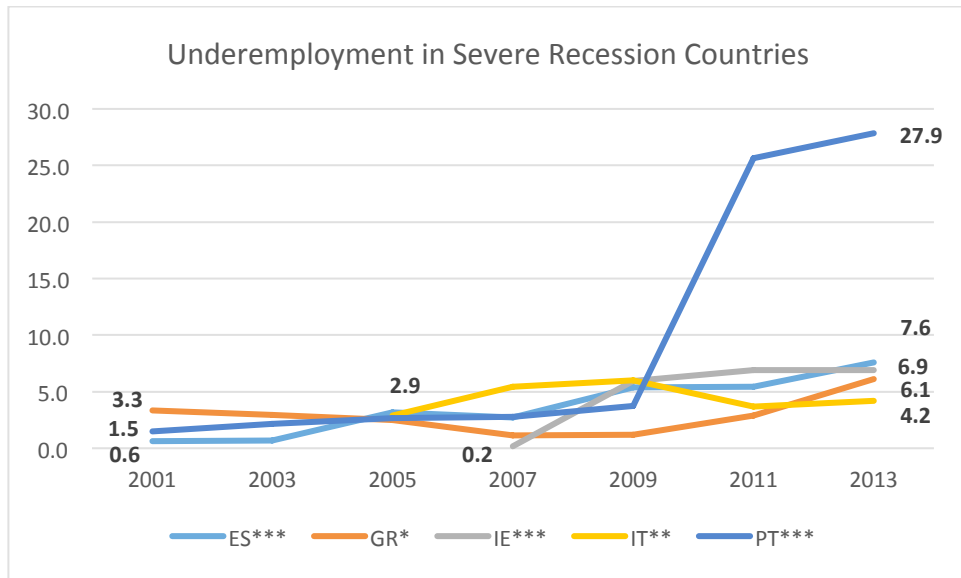
Fathers working Part-Time

In the majority of EU countries, the proportion of fathers working part-time is relatively small, ranging from 0.7% of fathers in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, to 6.9% in Ireland in 2013. Only Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK meet the sample requirements¹ across the time period. Of these, there has only been a significant change in the incidence of underemployment in France, where the proportion increased significantly, from 30.3% in 2003 to 49.0% in 2013.

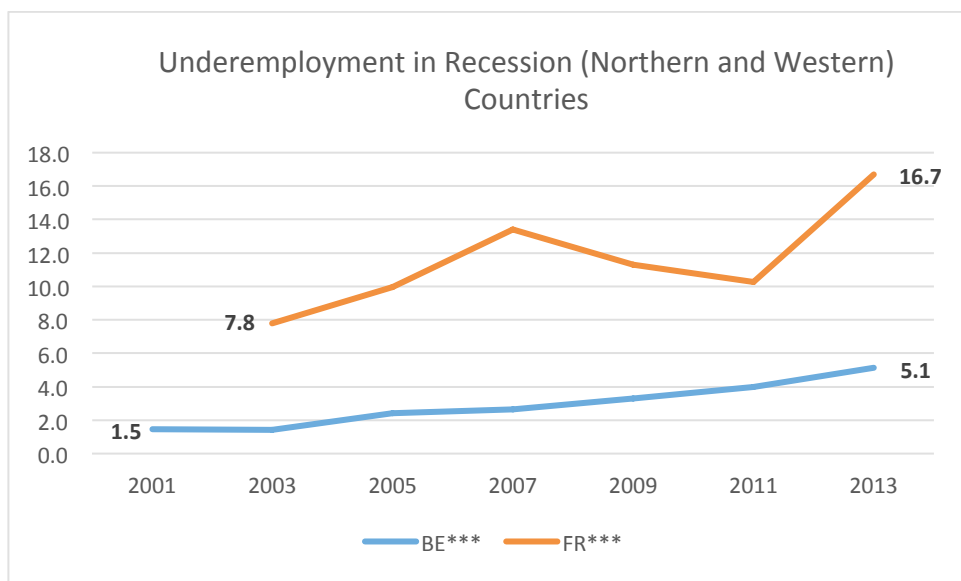
¹ At least 50 observations are required to meet the sample size requirements – see accompanying **Research Note** [hyperlink to \[Parental Working in Europe: Methodology\]](#) for details.

Mothers working Full-Time

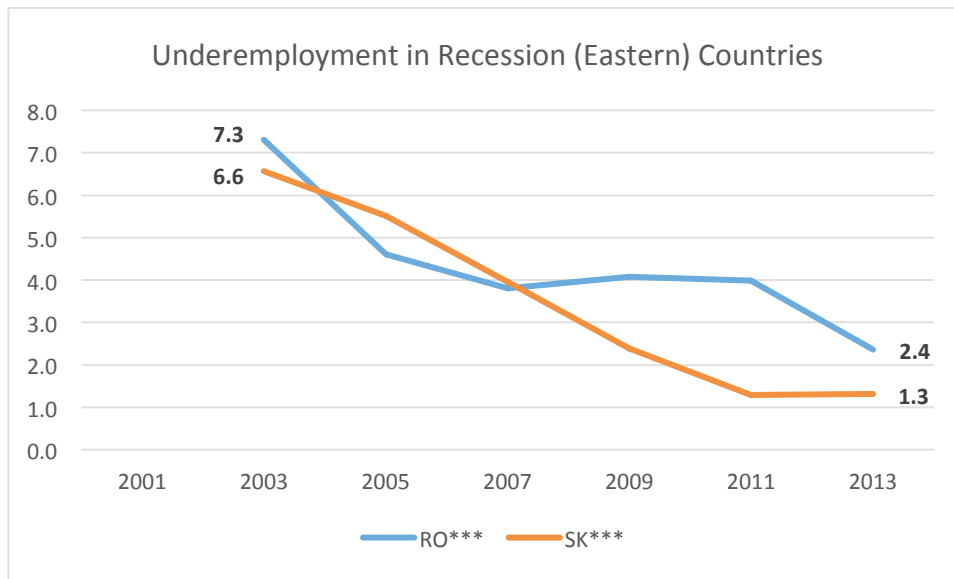
There have been no significant changes in the incidence of underemployment for mothers working full-time in *Growth* countries. However mothers working full-time experienced significant increases in underemployment in all countries within the *Severe Recession* group.



The incidence of underemployment also increased for mothers working full-time in Belgium and France.

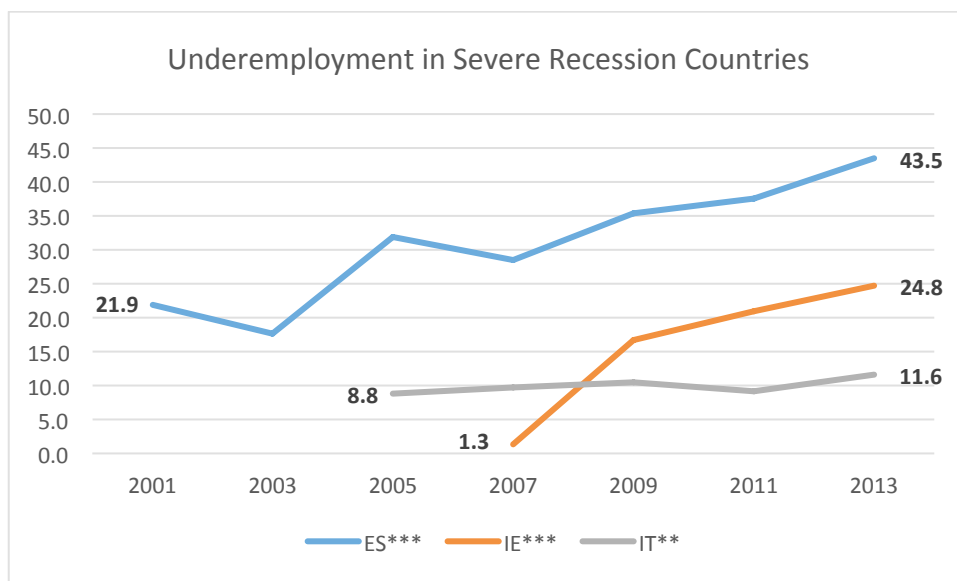


Mothers working full-time in *Recession (Eastern)* countries experienced falling levels of underemployment.

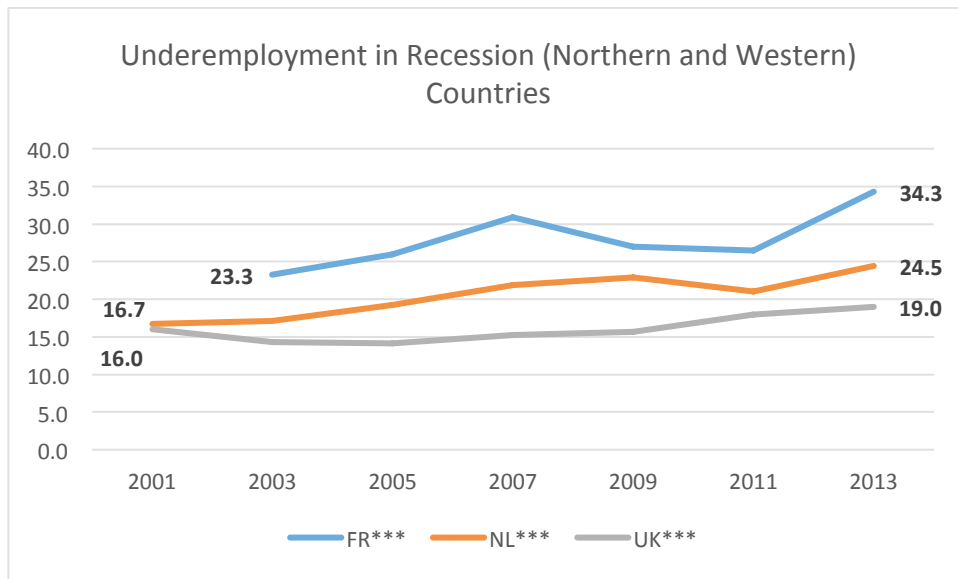


Mother working Part-Time

Mothers working part-time in *Growth* countries did not experience any significant changes in the incidence of underemployment over the period. However mothers in *Severe Recession* countries did experience significant increases in underemployment.



Similarly there have been significant increases in the incidence of underemployment for mothers in *Recession (Northern and Western)* countries.



There were no significant changes in the incidence of underemployment in any country from the *Recession (Eastern)* group.