

# Articulating Work and Family in Belgium : a Gendered Use of Institutional Measures

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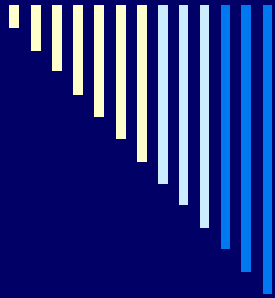
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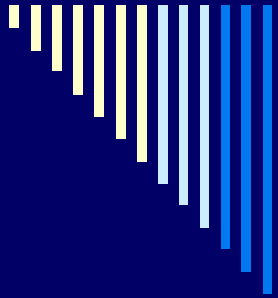
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# Introduction

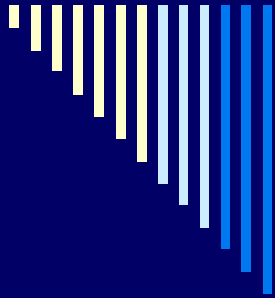
- The idea that professional investment and family investment are not incompatible is now currently considered, both for women and for men.
  - A cumulative model of work/family articulation (WFA) is put forward.
  - Institutionalising the “cumulative” work-family model faces various forces, including those resulting from the labour market logic and the family burdens.
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- “The labour market requires mobility, without considering personal situations. The couple and the family require the opposite. (...) The subject of the market is the individual himself, without any relational, conjugal or family ‘handicap’” (Beck)
- The labour market logic and the condition of decommodification (to be not totally dependant of the labour market -to sell our labour force- for living) : in order to have the possibility to live without have to work all time: working time regulation, paid leaves, paid holiday, social benefits, wage minima...



- The family constraints and the condition of defamilialization : requires the externalisation of the burdens, costs and responsibilities in order for family members to have the capability to have time and energy for other activities: different accessible services, like childcare providers.



- Societal models of articulation of professional life and family life are of course not homogeneous, since they depend on how societies meet these conditions through the combination of the three great institutions: Family, State and Market.
- The Nordic Model : “the setting up of a complete collective model of family policies to help parents during the major part of their children’s youth” (OECD, 2005). This model shows a high level of full-time employment in women, more specifically those with children.



# Where does Belgium stand?

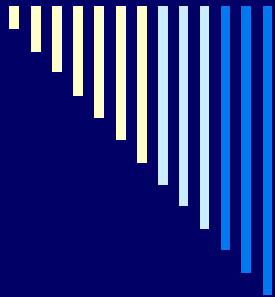
	Japan	Sweden	Belgium
Activity rate, women (25-54 y.o.) in 2004 (a)	68.1	85.3	74.3
Proportion of part-time in total female employment in 2004 (b)	41.7	20.8	34.1
Employment rate of mothers of a child under 6, living in a couple (c)	33.3	77.8	71.8
Total fertility rate (children per woman) in 2004 (d)	1.38	1.75	1.48



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## In Belgium

- More than 70% of mothers with a child under 6 and living in a couple have a job
  - 46% of Belgian couples with a child under 6, both spouses work full-time, whereas in 19.4% the husband works full-time and the wife part-time
  - still 27.3% of couples in which the wife is not active
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- The preference rate for the full-time bi-active model is higher than the effective rate: 54.8% of couples would prefer the full-time bi-active model and 28.8% would prefer the bi-active model where the man works full-time and the woman part-time
- 13.4% of couples adhere to the breadwinner man and housewife woman model.





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# Temporary - Part-time work

- Temporary or fixed term work represents 8.9% of the total salaried work (6.8% for men and 11.4% for women)
  - 42.6% of salaried women are concerned by part-time work, and 7.8% of salaried men
  - The main reason given by men is not having found a full-time job (31.3%)
  - For women, the first reason given is linked to child care (29.1%) and the second one to personal and family reasons (25.7%).
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# Time-budget

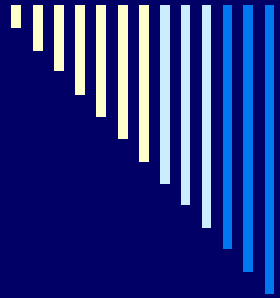
- The time spent at work is 35 hours 1 minute for men and 25 hours 38 minutes for women
  - The time devoted to household tasks is 13 hours 51 minutes for men and 23 hours 40 minutes for women
  - The time devoted to care and education of children is 3 hours 6 minutes for men and 5 hours 18 minutes for women
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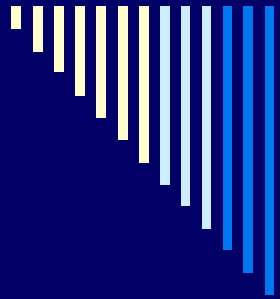
# Institutional supports to WFA

- Work/family articulation is not a private matter where individuals and families have to make choices and juggle with various demands and desires; it is a public matter, and thus up to the State.
  - In Belgium, a number of provisions that can be read (even if that is not their primary objective) as being able to favour a better articulation of working life and family life were institutionalised and have become rights.
  - In Belgium, the offer of child care in day care centres and other child minding is lower than the demand (estimated coverage rate 25%)
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## Family leave policies and the time-credit scheme

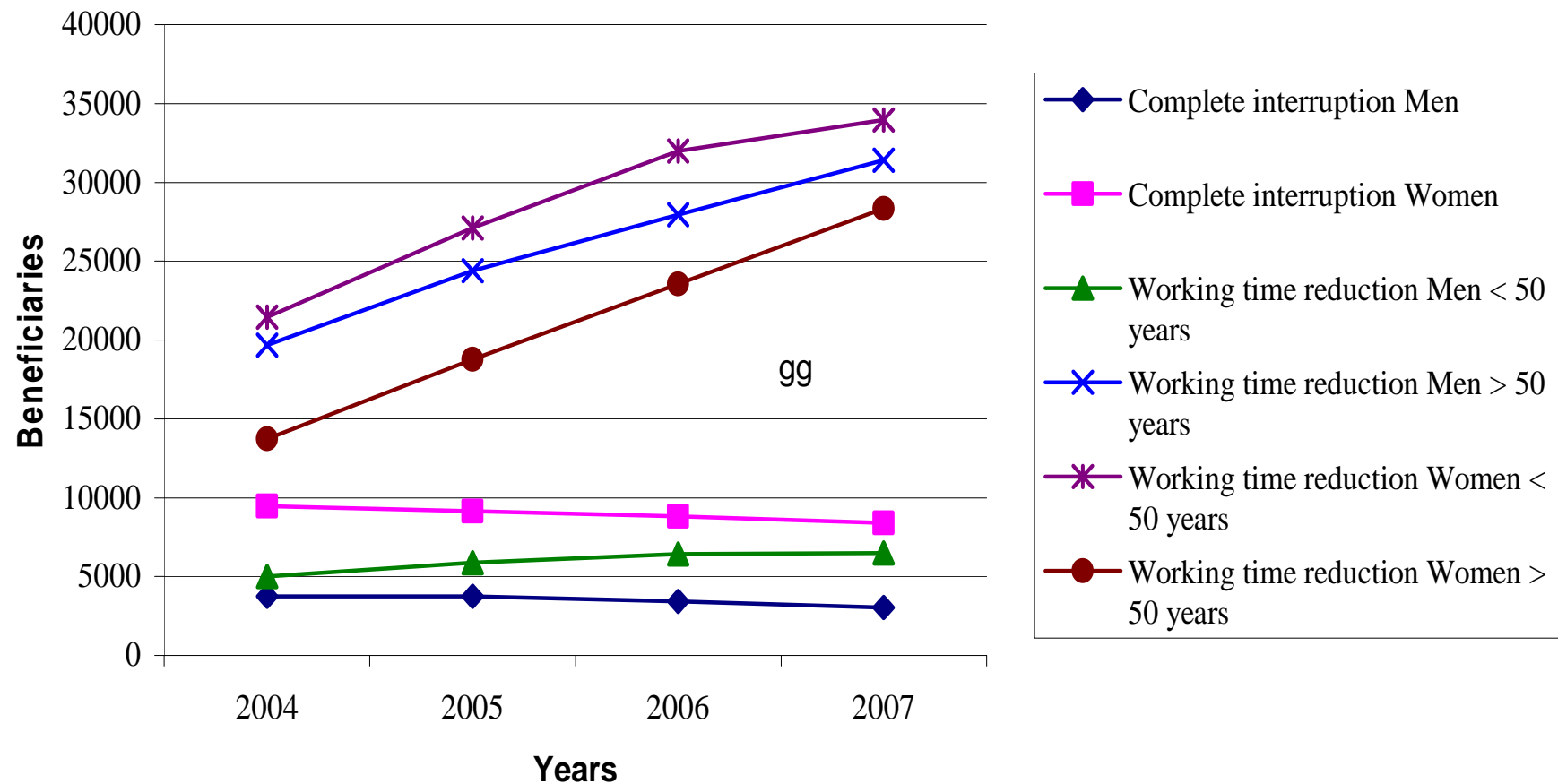
- ❑ Maternity leave (15 weeks)
- ❑ Paternity leave (10 days)
- ❑ Adoption leave (4 or 6 weeks)
- ❑ Parental leave (3, 6 or 15 months)
- ❑ Leave for care and assistance to a seriously ill relative
- ❑ Palliative care leave
- ❑ Reduction or suspension of work in the private sector (time-credit scheme – 1 to 5 Y max)



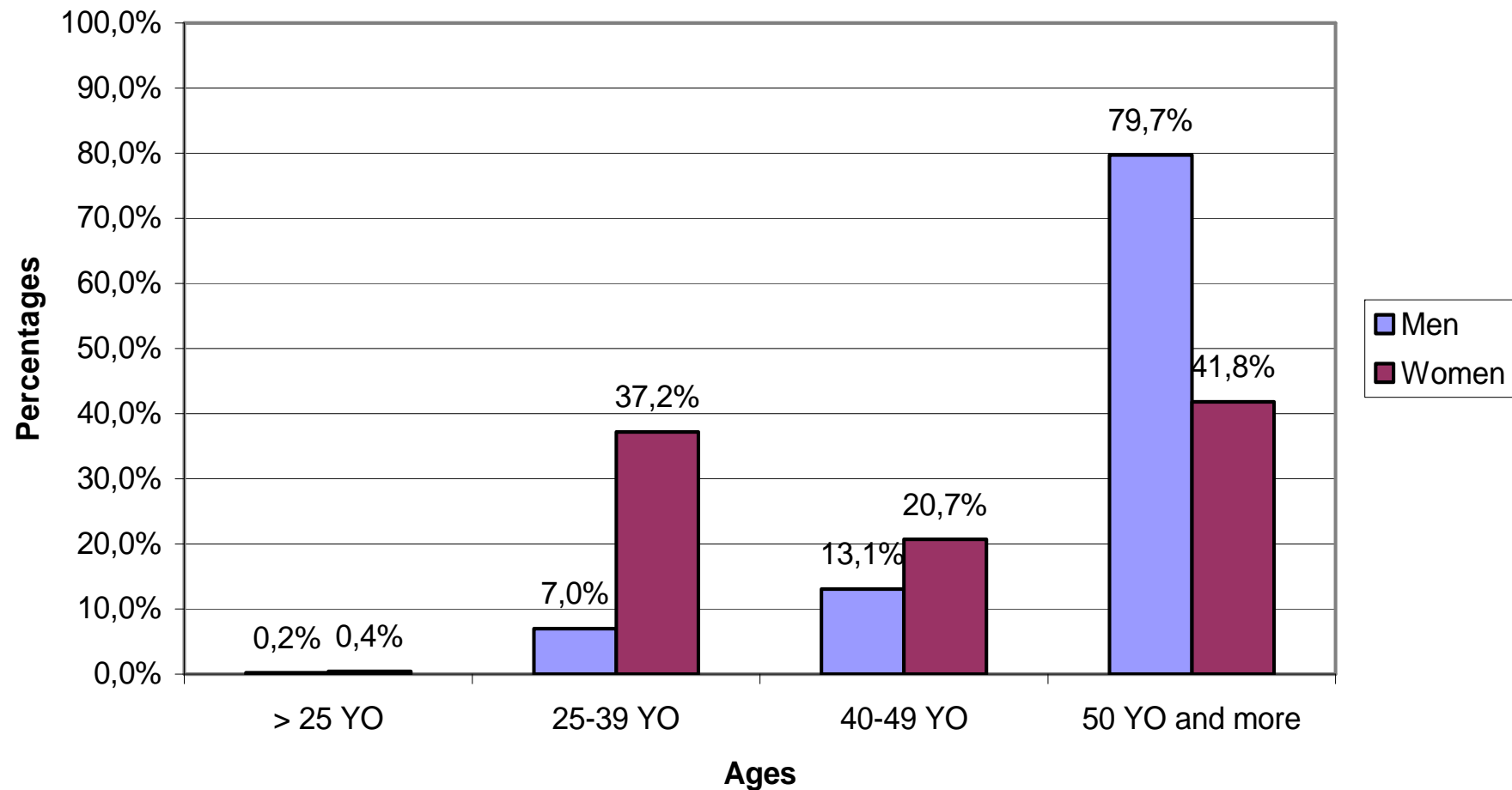
# Use of institutional measures



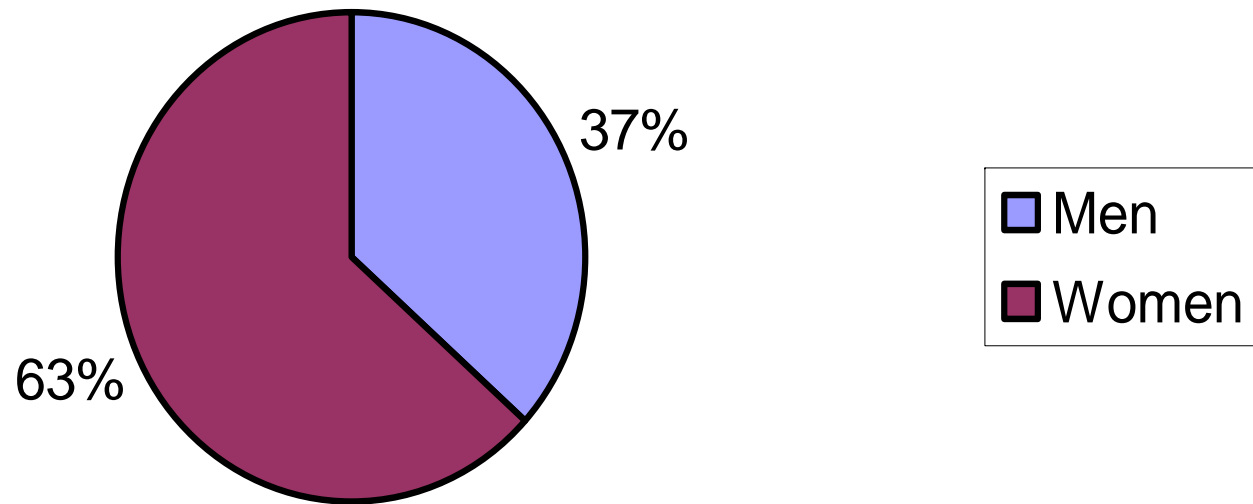
# Graph 1. Evolution of men and women using time-credit in the private sector



Graph 2. Distribution of time-credit beneficiaries according to age and gender

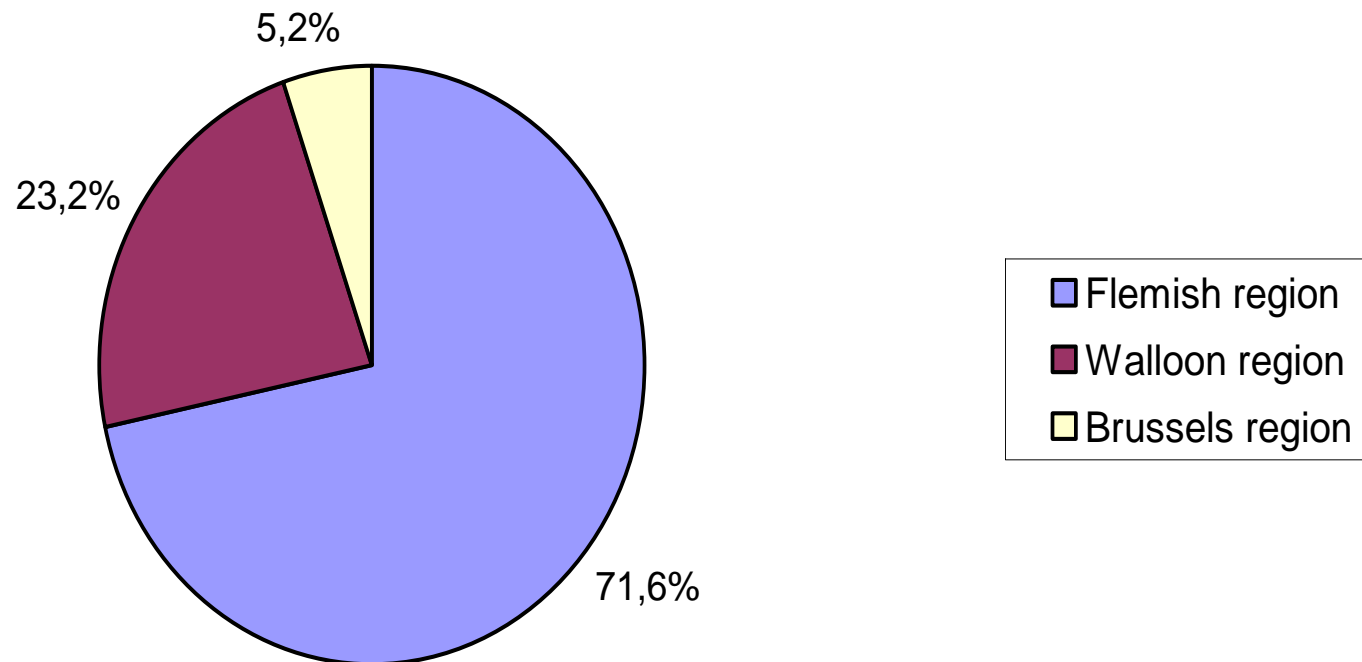


### Graph 3. Use of time-credit according to gender

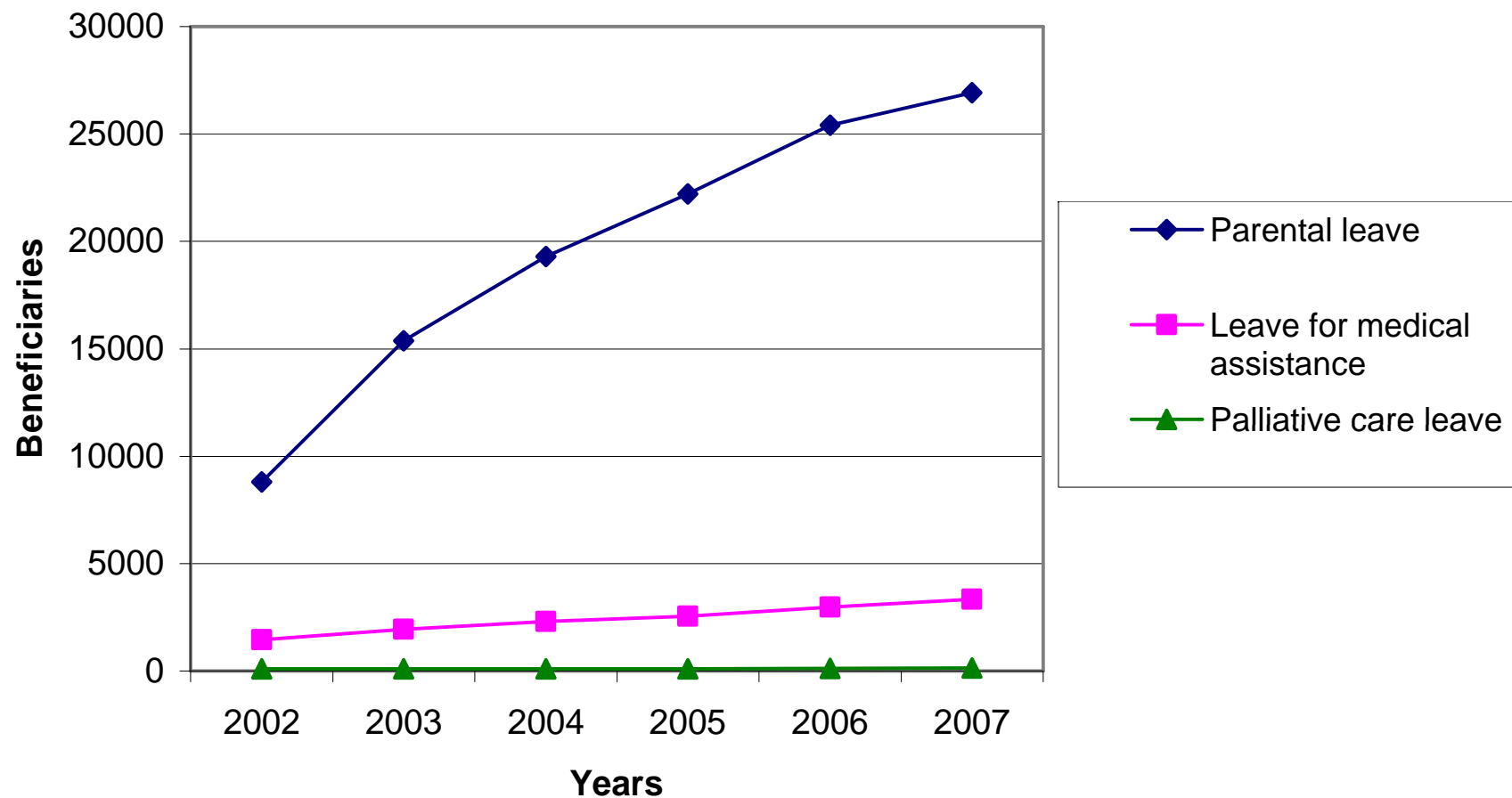




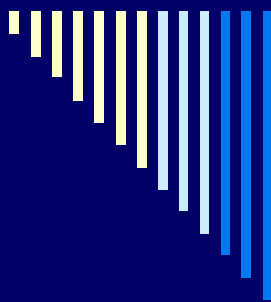
## Graph 4. Distribution of beneficiaries of time-credit according to regions



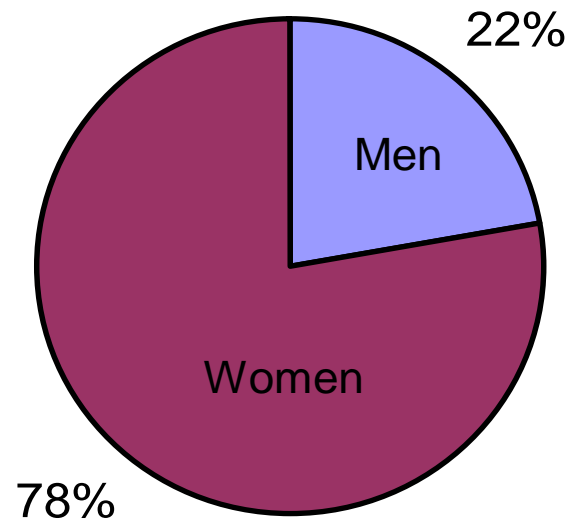
Graph 5. Evolution of men and women using thematic leaves in the private sector



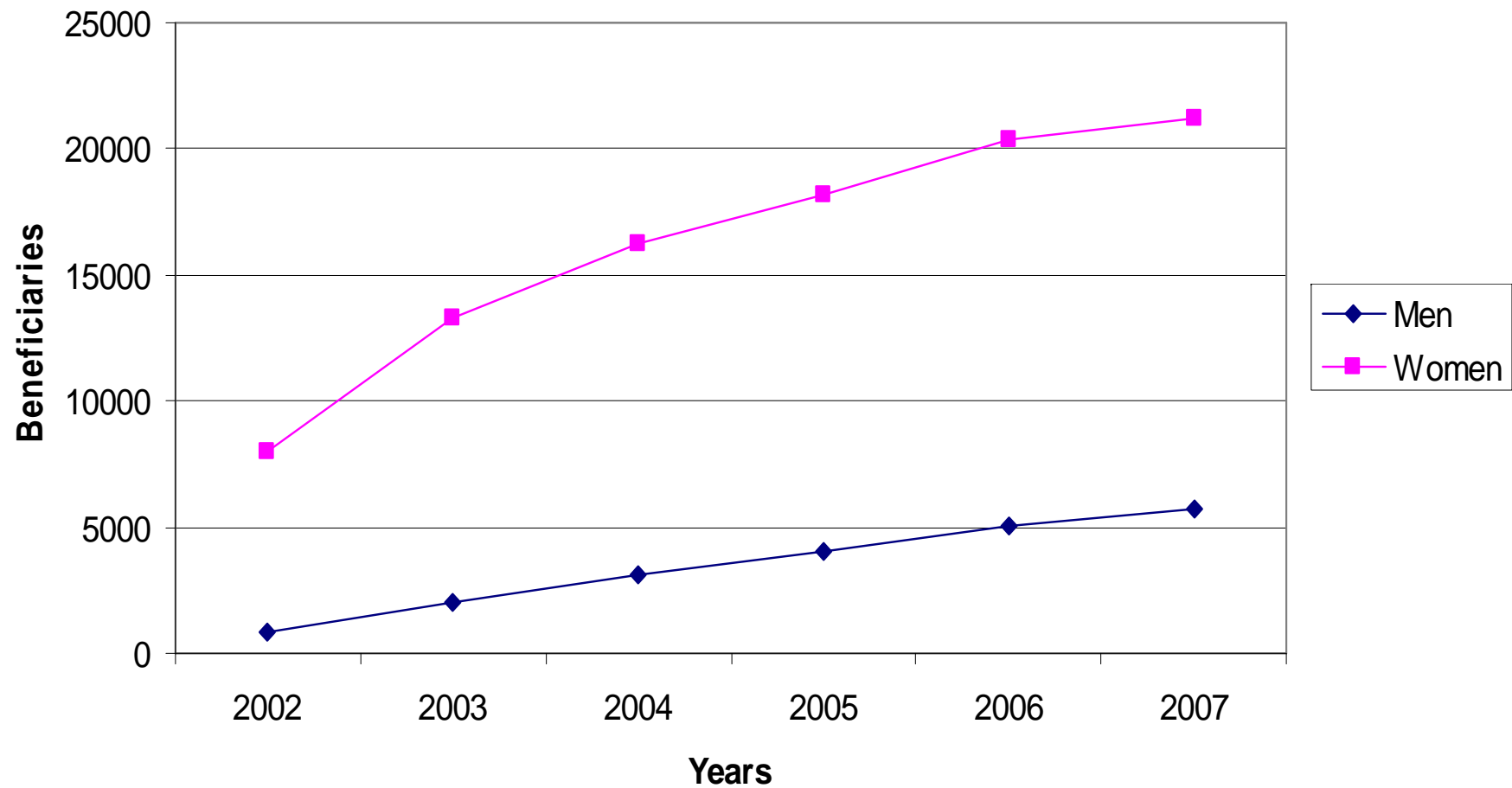
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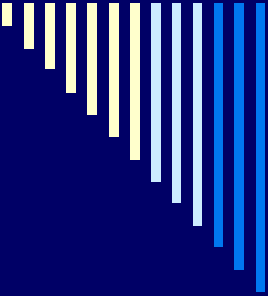


## Graph 6. Use of thematic leaves in the private sector, according to gender



Graph 7. Evolution of the number of men and women taking parental leave in the private sector





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## The encouragement allowance given by the Flemish region could have a positive effect on men and the career interruption scheme?

- The proportion of men in the beneficiaries of the allowance is 20% in 2005. This is much lower than the national proportion!
  - But the allowance is mostly given for motives of care-credit, workers over the age of 50 are not much concerned by the disposition. 5.4% of the total number of persons request care-credit after the age of 50, whereas at the national level, 41% benefit from time-credit or thematic leave.
  - In order to correct the comparison, we need to calculate the proportion of men in the use of career interruption schemes without counting workers above 50.
  - Following the calculation of Olivier Besançon (2008), the result is 18% of men in the time-credit or thematic leave schemes, for the whole country. After this adjustment, the proportion of men having requested the care-credit allowance is now 19%.
- So we can suppose that the monthly 168.93 euro supplement is not an incentive for men.
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# Conclusion

- ❑ In Belgium, besides maternity, paternity and adoption leaves, thematic leaves (parental leave, care of seriously ill relatives or palliative care) and time-credit schemes allow to partially or totally leave the labour market without breaking the link with employment.
  - ❑ Passing laws in the matter is not sufficient to ensure a more equalitarian articulation.
  - ❑ We have shown how women remain the main users of these measures (thematic leaves and time-credit), although they are open to both sexes.
  - ❑ The next presentation of Jessie will give us a deeper analysis of career break through the time use comparisons of men and women.
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