

## **Within-couple division of paid labor over family life-course stages in Europe (2004-2008).**

EPC 2016 Extended Abstract

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### **Introduction**

Parenthood has long been considered an obstacle towards gender equal developments in the labor market, as the presence of children has a greater impact on women's labor supply than men's in all national contexts, the gender gaps and penalties with which vary substantially across countries, but are generally most prevalent when children are young (Anxo, Fagan, Cebrian and Moreno, 2007; Dribe & Stanfors, 2009; Gornick & Meyers 1997; Misra, Budig, & Boeckmann, 2011; Stier, Lewin-Epstein & Braun, 2001; Uunk, Kalmijn & Muffels, 2005). While a large body of literature looks at the gendered impacts of parenthood when young children are present, less research has examined the impact over multiple family cycle stages based on the age of the youngest child in the home. This paper examines the division of paid labor of coupled men and women across European countries adhering to differing welfare regime types, comparing partnered men and women across five family life-course stages using five pooled cross-sections of data from *The European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions* (EU-SILC) for 25 European countries between 2004 and 2008 (N= 243,432 individuals).

This paper provides a unique perspective on the division of paid labor in several ways. First, because having children in the home can impact women's participation in employment as well as their working time, both margins are examined. The impact of parenthood on the division of labor is assessed over five family cycle stages based on the age of the youngest child in the home, providing a more nuanced analysis of differentiating regime-type patterns in how couples divide paid labor than studies which compare, for example, parents and non-parents dichotomously or focus specifically on parents of young children. Using five such categories better operationalizes the gendered impact of parenthood, as mothers' time allocation across multiple dimensions, including paid work, can vary substantially over the life course (Anxo et al., 2007; Anxo et al. 2011; Kimmel & Connelly, 2007; Stier, Lewin-Epstein & Braun, 2001). The paper explores these dimensions using Esping-Andersen's (1990) regime-typology, while including several Eastern European countries based on their positioning within this regime framework according to (Fenger, 2007), countries which are largely unexplored in this body of literature.

### **Previous research and theoretical considerations**

This paper considers the impact of children on women's labor supply and couples' division of paid labor within the standard labor supply model and the economic theory of specialization (Becker, 1965, 81). This framework emphasizes how earnings potential differences between men and women influence intra-household specialization, whereby the partner with the higher relative wage will specialize in paid work while the other partner will specialize in domestic production, predicting a negative child effect on women's labor supply. Although gender wage gaps have declined in recent decades, men continue to earn higher wages than women, thus they are more likely to be employed, work more hours, and are less likely to retreat from the labor market when young children are present in the household.

The welfare regime context however alters the forces of specialization and opportunity cost

framework, as the aims, scope, and provisions tend to vary across regimes to a greater extent than within them, differencing in their support of dual-earner couples, family support policies, gender equality in the labor market, and the degree with which they encourage or discourage female labor force participation. Policy context is relevant as it concerns women's employment, as family policy models can foster employment and improve gender equity (Thevonon, 2011). Policy differences across Europe have been found to explain a large percentage of female labor force participation differences across countries (Del Boca, Pasqua and Pronzato, 2009). Some policies have been shown to better enable mothers across the educational distribution to remain in paid work, such as generous provisions of childcare services for children under three years of age (Keck & Saraceno, 2013; Erhel & Guergoat-Lariviere, 2013; Uunk, Kalmijn & Muffels, 2005). The cost of childcare, relative to income, can be considered a tax on women's income, although whether its costs or lack of availability that best drives women's labor market attachment is heavily debated (c.f. Hegewish & Gornick, 2011, p.128-9; Mills et al. 2014). Family policies are embedded in wider social, culture and historical contexts (Korpi, Ferrarini & Englund, 2013), and although policy differences are nuanced across countries in the degree with which they support a dual-earner model of employment, there are commonalities according to the welfare regime a country adheres to.

Scholars have shown that the hours worked of couples without children are similar across a multitude of countries, but great variation exists for those with children (Misra, Budig & Boeckman, 2011). This paper provides a regime-type perspective on this situation, using Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology consists of three typical welfare states; the Social Democratic, Corporatist, and Liberal (1990, 1999). This paper categorizes 25 European countries into six regime clusters, based on Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology with the addition of subtypes based on Fenger, 2007<sup>1</sup> who incorporated eastern European countries into the framework, proceeding under full acknowledgement that family policies are more diverse and nuanced than a clustered analysis based on welfare state regime can account for (Thévenon, 2011).

## Data

Data comes from five pooled cross sections of the *European Survey of Living Conditions* (EU-SILC) 2004-2008, an annual survey undertaken by the European commission (Eurostat, 2009). The sub-sample analyzed includes all heterosexual couples where the woman is aged 20-49, and both partners provided information on their own education, work status and usual hours worked (N=243,432 individuals). Couples with missing work hours and educational data are assessed for their randomness. 67.4 percent of these couples were dual-workers in the sense that both partners worked at least one hour the survey week (N=84,282 couples).

## Method

This paper analyses the division of paid labor on two margins – employment and weekly work hours, using two dependent variables. The main independent variable is *family cycle*, constructed to capture the

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<sup>1</sup> This six regime cluster has been used by others studying the full range of EU-SILC countries (see for example, Whelan & Maître 2010).

gender division of labor over five life stages, based on based on the age of the youngest child in the home. Control variables included age categories, education, marital status, and presence of older siblings in household. The analyses take three steps in analyzing the division of paid labor by regime type. The first is descriptive; examining the gender gap in employment rates and for dual-worker couples the division of weekly work hours over five family cycle stages. The second step uses logistic regression to estimate the odds coupled men and women are employed over the family cycle. The third analysis uses OLS regressions to investigate the impact of parenthood on weekly hours of paid work across six regime types, pooling coupled men and women aged 25-49 in the same models and using a gender\*family cycle interaction, a method has been applied elsewhere to examine the impact of parenthood from a gender perspective (Drabe & Stanfors, 2009; Neilson & Stanfors, 2014).

## Results

**Table 5.** OLS estimates, the interaction between family cycle and gender on weekly work hours, by regime type

	SD	Corp	Liberal	South	PS – Corp	PS Lib
Gender (men ref.)						
Female	-4.295*** (0.225)	-6.997*** (0.226)	-5.951*** (0.380)	-5.988*** (0.211)	-3.439*** (0.200)	-2.609*** (0.451)
No Children (ref)						
Youngest child 0-2	0.431 (0.295)	-0.303 (0.304)	1.103* (0.550)	0.275 (0.272)	0.431 (0.313)	1.411 (0.755)
Youngest child 3-comp. educ	1.434*** (0.336)	0.672* (0.327)	2.379** (0.709)	0.534 (0.289)	0.568 (0.301)	1.490** (0.571)
Youngest child comp. educ-8	1.372*** (0.362)	0.943** (0.324)	0.972 (0.585)	0.442 (0.319)	1.304*** (0.316)	2.990*** (0.671)
Youngest child 9-18	1.164*** (0.281)	1.176*** (0.267)	2.070*** (0.522)	0.628* (0.265)	0.311 (0.230)	0.962* (0.410)
Interact gender*fam cycle						
Female*Youngest child 0-2	-3.563*** (0.358)	-6.919*** (0.366)	-10.752*** (0.710)	-4.165*** (0.343)	-2.034*** (0.340)	-4.460*** (0.997)
Female*Youngest child 3-comp. educ	-4.131*** (0.370)	-8.703*** (0.406)	-11.845*** (0.900)	-4.337*** (0.360)	-2.047*** (0.332)	-1.097 (0.674)
Female*Youngest child comp. educ-8	-4.352*** (0.429)	-9.407*** (0.404)	-9.914*** (0.729)	-3.362*** (0.375)	-2.025*** (0.335)	-2.611** (0.828)
Female*Youngest child 9-18	-2.713*** (0.298)	-7.085*** (0.318)	-8.639*** (0.627)	-2.930*** (0.308)	-0.549* (0.240)	-0.421 (0.525)
Constant	40.357*** (0.711)	41.330 (0.952)	43.824 (1.622)	44.174 (0.797)	47.743 (0.748)	41.361 (1.150)
F	177.3	502.8	139.5	237.7	112.0	18.0
R2	0.167	0.324	0.303	0.169	0.085	0.061
N	25,669	28,598	7,635	28,124	31,533	7,303

*Note:* \*\*\* $p < .001$  \*\* $p < .01$  \* $p < .05$ . See Appendix A for details on sample composition. Control variables include age, education level, partner's education level, presence of older sibling, marital status and disposable household income categories. Year and country dummies included for each pooled regression.

*Source:* Author's calculations using EU-SILC 2004-2008

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