

## Families and households

**Strand organisers: Kathrin Morosow (University of Manchester) and Nitzan Peri-Rotem (University of Exeter)**

**Families and households in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) organiser: Jennifer Golan (University of Bath)**

**Transition to adulthood organiser: Ginevra Floridi (University of Edinburgh)**

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### **13:30 - 15:00 Monday 9 September: Families and households 1: Childcare and child welfare**

**Does Formal Childcare Uptake Stimulate Continued Fertility? Evidence by migration background for Belgium**

**Jonas Wood, Laura Ceurvels, Julie Maes, Karel Neels - University of Antwerp**

The hypothesis that formal childcare stimulates fertility by reconciling work and family life is theoretically well-grounded and often empirically supported using a wide range of research designs. However, in contrast to the large body of literature focusing on the national or local availability of childcare provisions, previous research rarely assesses the association between individual-level formal childcare uptake and continued childbearing. This study assesses whether the uptake of formal childcare amongst employed one-child mothers increases second birth hazards. Benefitting from unique linked Census and register-data for the complete residential Belgian population for 2011-2022, this study applies dynamic propensity score matching and hazard models to estimate the effect of formal childcare uptake on second birth hazards amongst working mothers with a young firstborn child. Results suggest a positive impact of formal childcare uptake on second birth hazards shortly after the first birth, which weakens when controlling for selective formal childcare uptake, and which varies by migration background. Hence, this article evidences a linkage between actual childcare uptake for the firstborn child and subsequent second births, which contributes to our understanding of the multifaceted effects of work-family reconciliation policies on fertility. Our findings regarding selectivity and heterogeneity in the effects of uptake should invite policy-makers to reflect on social differentials in the benefits of subsidized formal childcare.

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**A Decomposition of Changes in Formal Childcare Usage in the Netherlands from 2010 to 2019**

**Flora Zhou, Tom Emery, Jennifer Holland - Erasmus University Rotterdam**

Twenty years after the Barcelona Summit, 35.9% of children aged 0-3 in the EU have been enrolled in formal childcare, which has exceeded the Barcelona Target — providing childcare to at least 33% of children under 3 years. Meanwhile, it is observed that trends and fluctuations of changes in formal childcare usage vary by country. For example, in the UK and Spain, we even find a decrease in formal childcare usage for a certain period. Therefore, the specific drivers behind the longitudinal trend in formal childcare remain under investigation. Using Dutch administrative data, we investigate the factors that explain the change in formal childcare usage in the Netherlands from 2010 to 2019, and whether this exacerbates or mitigates existing socio-economic inequalities. Our preliminary results show that there was an approximately 50% increase in formal childcare usage from 2010 to 2019. However, formal childcare usage is unevenly distributed among educational groups; formal childcare usage is higher in groups of parents with higher levels of education. In subsequent analyses, we will use Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition analysis to examine how much of the change in formal childcare usage can be attributed to parental labor market participation, costs of formal childcare services, the supply of childcare services, and how much of the change remains unexplained. Moreover, we examine whether socio-economic inequalities in childcare are associated with these differences in occupation, income, the costs and supply of childcare. Results of these analyses will deepen our understanding of the mechanisms underlying persistence and change in childcare inequality.

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**Sociodemographic patterns of substantiated child welfare system involvement in a Norwegian birth cohort**  
**Mary Elizabeth Hemler - Norwegian University of Science and Technology, - , - , - ,**

A central task of the child welfare system (CWS) is to determine if there is credible evidence to substantiate harm to children and thereby provide services to families. This study employs logistic regression models to explore the relationship between five sociodemographic factors (socioeconomic status (SES), household composition, immigrant background, age, and gender) and substantiation patterns in the Norwegian child welfare system (CWS). Using an administrative dataset consisting of CWS cases regarding children in the 2005 birth cohort during a 5-year observation period (2013-2017), the article first examines the impact of these sociodemographic factors on the likelihood that referrals end in the decision to provide services. Next, we explore associations between these same factors and substantiated reasons for service provision. The analyses indicate that low SES and immigrant background increase the likelihood of case substantiation, while high SES decreases the likelihood of case substantiation. Compared to cases involving middle SES families, cases involving low SES families are more likely to be substantiated due to problems with the parent(s), while cases involving high socioeconomic status families are less likely to be substantiated due to problems with the parents. However, low socioeconomic status families and single parent families are less likely to be substantiated for domestic violence, physical abuse, or emotional abuse than middle socioeconomic status families and two-parent families, respectively. Taken together, the results suggest that there is a lower threshold for substantiation in cases involving low SES families and single parent families.

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**Behind closed doors: Child disability and family members' social well-being**  
**Elena Neri - Bocconi University**

Disability shapes early life course outcomes, yet its spillovers on family members remain largely understudied. The paper investigates the effects of child disability on mothers' and older siblings' social well-being. Drawing from the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), a UK population-representative, longitudinal study, I first explore how having a 5-year-old child with disabilities affects mothers' social life. Second, I examine how having a younger sibling with disabilities, aged either 3 or 5, affects older siblings' behavioral and emotional adjustments. Additionally, employing causal forest estimation I explore the potential factors moderating the sibling spillover effect. The study introduces a novel measure of child disability, combining a subjective assessment of activity limitation (i.e., the GALI) and an objective proxy of early life activity limitation (i.e., utilization of special education). Results show that mothers of children with disabilities on average spend less time with their friends on a weekly basis and have smaller social networks. Older siblings of children with disabilities face greater externalizing and internalizing problems and are no more prosocial than their peers without a sibling with disabilities. Lastly, causal forest variable importance ranking identifies mothers' mental health status as the most important moderating factor, followed by socio-economic positioning – proxied by household income and mother's educational level – and older siblings' age. Comprehensively, I find that also family members experience the “disabling” effects societal barriers impose on their loved ones. Child disability is associated with within-family lower social well-being, suggesting it increases risks of social exclusion and isolation, particularly for mothers.

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**Does alloparenting really improve child health and wellbeing? A cross-cultural investigation of alloparenting and its associations with child outcomes across 5 populations**  
**Rebecca Sear - Brunel University London, Anushé Hassan - London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Laure Spake - Binghamton University, John Shaver - University of Otago, the Evolutionary Demography of Religion Project Team, multiple affiliations**

There is growing consensus in the social sciences that it really does “take a village to raise a child”: childcare and other forms of investment in children is typically provided by multiple individuals beyond the parents. There is also a common belief that caregiving from these “alloparents” is associated with improved child, and possibly maternal, outcomes. This paper uses both quantitative and qualitative data collected from ~4000 women, from 5 countries (The Gambia, Malawi, Bangladesh, India and the US), for the Evolutionary Dynamics

of Religion, Family Size and Child Success project to explore alloparenting across different contexts. This project was (partly) designed to collect detailed data on the support networks of women and to test whether this support is associated with child and maternal outcomes. Both quantitative and qualitative data show that alloparenting is important across all contexts, though there are differences in who supports parents and what types of support they provide between populations. Associations between this support and child and maternal outcomes are mixed, however. Child height and weight, for example, are not consistently positively associated with support from alloparents. We conclude that the literature on alloparenting needs to more cautiously consider whether associations between alloparenting and child outcomes are causal. Alloparenting is universal, and parents may strategically use alloparenting to ensure all children receive roughly equal amounts of care, where possible. Associations between alloparenting and subsequent outcomes may therefore be context-specific, and require an understanding of local family dynamics.

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## **16:45 - 18:15 Monday 9 September: Families and households 2: Economic and social implications of the division of housework**

### **Do Flexible Hours and Working From Home Allow Parents to More Equally Share Childcare Tasks? Bernice Kuang, Brienna Perelli-Harris, Ann Berrington - University of Southampton**

This study examines how the gendered division of childcare tasks varies by the specific type of childcare task; parental employment status; and flexible work arrangements. Childcare encompasses a range of diverse tasks, yet is persistently gendered, with women doing more than men. Flexible working (i.e. working from home and flexible hours) has generally been found to exacerbate childcare inequalities among working couples, but less is known about how flexible working intersects with the tasks of childcare that directly interfere with the workday. This study used the UK Generations and Gender Survey (2022-23), a nationally representative dataset with detailed data on the division of individual childcare tasks and the working arrangements of respondents and their partners, focusing on heterosexual couples with coresidential children under the age of 10 (n=1,040). We used logistic regression to analyze the gender division of specific childcare tasks and associations with work patterns. Childcare tasks that interfere with the workday were particularly gendered (i.e. staying home with ill children, getting children dressed, dropping off or picking up children at school or childcare). When fathers worked from home or had access to flexible hours, these tasks tended to become more equally shared. The same effects were not found for mothers. In conclusion, fathers' use of flexible working seems to enable more equal sharing of childcare chores that interfere with the workday and may help to address one persistent form of gender inequality.

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### **The Authority Gap: Intersections of Gender and Ethnicity Helen Kowalewska – University of Bath**

Women are less likely than men to oversee other employees' work. However, prior research on this gender supervisory gap is based on the general population and masks gender and ethnic/racial privileges and disadvantages in attaining supervisory authority. To contribute to addressing this shortcoming, this study asks: how do employed women's and men's probabilities of holding supervisory responsibility vary by ethnic-racial background? It uses logistic regressions of a representative sample of Census data for England and Wales (N=513,143 men; 507,914 women).

Preliminary results show that women are around 15% less likely to hold supervisory responsibilities than men, even after controlling for individual-level characteristics, women's higher part-time employment rates, and employment sector. Nevertheless, separate regressions by gender and ethnicity indicate this headline gender supervisory gap is driven mainly by the situation for the White British majority. Results expose the compounding oppression of ethnicity/race in addition to gender faced by minority ethnic women in seeking supervisory responsibilities. Large gender gaps for South Asian groups are consistent with gendered and racialised work/family experiences and the gendered dimensions of religion, with Muslim women – but not Muslim men – especially disadvantaged. Chinese and White minority women are also doubly-disadvantaged

in accessing supervisory responsibilities, highlighting the gendered and racialised marginalisation they face despite the former's educational advantages and latter's Whiteness. Black women are relatively disadvantaged, too, although the extent of this disadvantage is smaller, and Black men face similar levels of disadvantage. For Black workers, race is seemingly more salient than gender in determining underrepresentation in supervisory authority.

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**Does working-from-home bring more babies? The mediating roles of gender division of domestic labor**  
**Shiyu Yuan - University of Kent, Heejung Chung - Kings College of London**

Unlike previous crises, the COVID-19 pandemic introduced unique dynamics beyond economic uncertainty and health concerns, notably the widespread adoption of working from home (WFH). This shift may diminish cultural barriers and stigmas associated with WFH, potentially making it a permanent change in the workplace. This paper explores how WFH affects employees' fertility intentions, focusing on the mediating roles of total workload and domestic labor distribution.

The study analyzes data from the Understanding Society surveys: the main survey Wave 10 (2018-2020) and the COVID-19 Survey Wave 9 (September 2021), deliberately excluding the strict lockdown period. This allows for an examination of the impact of WFH on fertility across the pre and post-COVID periods using a weighted general linear mixed-effects model with time interaction terms.

Initial findings reveal that women who work from home are more likely to plan for a child within the next three years compared to those who do not, with this effect intensifying post-COVID. Specifically, women who consistently work from home show a significantly higher likelihood of planning to have a child compared to those who never worked from home. No similar impact is found among men. These results suggest that companies might consider maintaining or expanding WFH policies to support work-life balance, appealing particularly to employees contemplating family expansion. Additionally, these findings fuel broader discussions about shifts in family life due to a rapidly evolving workplace since the pandemic. Further analysis will employ a weighted latent growth mediation model to delve into how domestic labor distribution and workload mediate these effects.

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**The Association between Family Strategies and the Next Generation's Economic Outcomes**  
**Lisa Waddell - University of Bristol**

Persistent gender stratification of economic outcomes (e.g., remuneration, esteem) is likely driven in part by the gendered way heterosexual parents share paid and unpaid labour. Existing work insufficiently considers mothers' and fathers' joint contributions to family well-being (i.e., family strategies), which has left the evidence base overly relying on mothers' responses. Additionally, there is an over-focus on variables related to economic potential, which can considerably differ from actual outcomes. Addressing these gaps, this study uses long-running UK household panel surveys to investigate the association of family strategies on a person's economic outcomes (i.e., earnings and economic prestige). With the relatively young sample available in the Harmonised British Household Panel Survey and the Understanding Society survey, mothers' and fathers' reported earnings and housework hours when participants were aged 12 or younger were combined to create two types of family strategy: one for paternal share of housework and one for maternal share of income. Allowing effects to vary by gender, these family strategies were each regressed against participants' highest reported economic outcomes (i.e., earnings and economic prestige) at 21 years or older. Findings suggest that as maternal share of income increases, gender differences in earnings decrease. This effect is also seen in occupational prestige to a lesser extent. Paternal share of housework, on the other hand, appears to have little direct effect on economic outcomes. These results are discussed in relation to the existing literature and importance to policy.

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**09:00 - 10:30 Tuesday 10 September: Families and households in LMICs**

### **Labor market penalty for single mothers**

**Somdeep Chatterjee - Indian Institute of Management, Ralitza Dimova - Manchester University, Shubham Ojha - Indian Institute of Management**

It is well established that there is a motherhood penalty in the labor market for child-bearing women. Theoretical models, as well as empirical estimates, suggest that unmarried or never married women without children have a relative advantage in terms of labor market opportunities. However, little is known about single mothers and their labor market outcomes. Aside from the fact that this is an expanding demographic worldwide, single mothers constitute an interesting case from a purely conceptual point of view. On the one hand, they might not have the typical social constraints of married women in traditional patriarchal societies, but on the other hand, they face the same constraints with respect to childcare and childbearing as married mothers. While aggregate data suggests that single mothers' labor market participation rates are usually higher than those of unmarried women, we argue that in contrast to married women without children and married mothers, this realized labor market equilibrium masks potential demand-side discrimination and likely reflects strong supply-side incentives. With the aim of uncovering potential demand-side discrimination effects, we conduct a correspondence study experiment that involves applying to real jobs using fictitious resumes. We show that equally qualified single mothers are much less likely to receive interview callbacks than unmarried women without children, married without children, and married mothers. For every interview callback a single mother has to apply to about 30 jobs, whereas an unmarried woman receives more than two callbacks for as many job applications. As a potential mechanism behind our findings, we find suggestive evidence of inaccurate statistical discrimination by employers.

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### **Bargaining Power and Inheritance Norms: Evidence from Polygamous Households in Nigeria**

**Jennifer Golan - University of Bath, Alessia Isopi - University of Manchester**

We investigate the interaction between inheritance norms and women's bargaining power in determining child labor supply across siblings. With child labor improving the household's future inheritable assets, we develop a theoretical model to capture bargaining power dynamics within complex household structures. Our results suggest that mothers' relative bargaining power increases children's labour supply, especially when inheritance norms assign a greater share to the mother's child.

Using data from Nigeria and the variation in mothers' bargaining power and inheritance norms, we find that children of the more powerful mother work more than children of other mothers within polygamous households. This result is more pronounced for boys, landed households and when first wives can directly increase their returns to future inheritance.

### **Gender Inequality and Fertility Intension in Türkiye: Evidence from the 2022 Turkish Covid-19 Values Study (TCVS)**

**Ceylan Engin - Boğaziçi University, Ladin Toplu - Boğaziçi University, Eralp Kaan Karduz - University of Massachusetts - Amherst**

While the relationship between gender equality and fertility has received significant attention in

demographic literature in recent years, research that addresses this phenomenon in Türkiye remains extremely limited. We aim to fill this gap by investigating how fertility intentions of couples in Türkiye are shaped by their division of labor in the household and gender ideology.

We use the novel 2022 Turkish Covid-19 Values Study (TCVS) survey data, which was conducted with 1500 individuals over the age of 18 across 12 NUTS-1 statistical regions of Türkiye. We limit our analysis to married individuals who are in their childbearing ages, which results in a subsample of 207 women and 181 men.

Drawing from gender equity theories of fertility, previous research in Europe and in the U.S. generally finds a positive association between gender equality and fertility. Fertility tends to decrease when women experience the double burden of paid and domestic work while it increases when men contribute to the household chores more equally. Similarly, individuals express a greater intention to have children when couples share domestic work more equally in their households.

In Türkiye, we observe a deviation from the gender equity theory of fertility unlike what is observed in Western societies. Our findings show that neither unequal distribution of domestic work nor patriarchal values are significant predictors of women's fertility intention. Moreover, while an unequal division of labor does not influence men's fertility intention, patriarchal ideology does. Holding greater patriarchal ideology significantly increases men's desire to have children unlike women.

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### **13:30 - 15:00 Tuesday 10 September: Families and households 4: Transition to adulthood**

#### **A comparative perspective on gender dynamics in couples' labour market preconditions to parenthood Leen Marynissen & Jonas Wood - University of Antwerp**

In the context of the dual-earner model in high income countries, employment and income security have been identified as important preconditions to parenthood for both women and men. However, our understanding of the gendered nature of the associations between employment, income and first births within couples remains limited since research mostly considers men and women separately, rarely addresses partners' relative employment and income positions, and cross-national comparisons are lacking. Consequently, this study uses unique longitudinal register data for Belgium, France, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and the UK and discrete-time hazard models to examine the link between partners' employment status and relative income, and the transition to parenthood in opposite-sex couples in seven Western and Northern European countries. The countries considered exhibit documented differences with respect to factors that might influence the degree to which economic preconditions to parenthood are gendered, such as state-promotion of and institutional support for gender equality, cultural gender norms related to parenting, and gender-differences in labour market opportunities. This paper's cross-national comparative perspective on couple-level gender dynamics in childbearing decisions in both countries that are considered frontrunners regarding gender equality, as well as countries with more moderate or even "traditional" positions may be of interest to national policy-makers in the countries considered, but also nations that have more recently witnessed increasing female labour force participation and the rise of the dual earner model.

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#### **Mental disorders and becoming a parent among young adults: a nationwide register study in Finland Kateryna Golovina - University of Helsinki, Ripsa Niemi - University of Helsinki, Mai Gutvilig - University of Helsinki, Markus Jokela - University of Helsinki, Marko Elovainio, University of Helsinki; Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare Christian Hakulinen, University of Helsinki; Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare**

Fertility rates have declined in the 2010s in many high-income countries, with a strong decrease observed in Finland. At the same time, mental disorders increased among young people and became a major cause of work disability in Finland over the last decade. We therefore examine the associations between broad and



specific categories of mental disorders and the likelihood of having a first child among young people, and the role of partnership status in these associations. We conducted a nationwide register-based cohort study including all men and women born in Finland from 1980 to 1995 (n=1,210,662). Cox proportional hazard models showed that almost all mental disorders were associated with the lower likelihood of having a first child among men and women, with schizophrenia and intellectual disabilities having the strongest associations. Compared to the main model, differences were minimal for ages 30 and 35 but notable by age 25. People with substance use, childhood onset, anxiety, or any mental disorders had a higher rate of having a first child by age 25 than people without them. People with mental disorders were also less likely to cohabit. Among those who never cohabited, women with substance use disorders (HR=1.57; 95% CI 1.48, 1.65) or childhood onset disorders (HR=1.14; 95% CI 1.09, 1.20) were more likely to have a first child compared to women without these disorders. These findings imply that well-functioning mental health services are important also from a fertility perspective, which should be considered by policy makers.

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**Precarity, class, and parental coresidence in the UK: Evidence amidst the cost-of-living crisis**  
**Vincent Jerald Ramos & Ann Berrington - University of Southampton**

While rates of parental coresidence have been rising gradually over time in the UK, periods of macroeconomic uncertainty such as the 2008 recession and the 2021-23 cost-of-living crisis are likely to have accelerated this increase. This paper examines how labor market precarity (e.g., unemployment and precarious work arrangements) is associated with an increased likelihood of parental coresidence, and how parental class moderates this association. Estimating logistic regression models using select waves of the UK Labour Force Survey data, we estimate the associations between precarity, class, and coresidence, and probe heterogeneities in this nexus by age and gender. Our results suggest that precarious employment (underemployment and temporary and agency work), as well as unemployment, is associated with a higher probability of parental coresidence compared to young adults in stable employment. Parental social class moderates this relationship such that the positive association between precarity and coresidence is most pronounced for young adults with service-class parents and tapers off with age.

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**Does being NEET after completing higher education negatively affect early career labour market outcomes?**

**Marianne Joy Vital - University of Oxford**

This study investigates the consequences of being not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in an understudied developed country context, the Philippines. Based on literature, youth NEETs are likely to experience occupational and wage 'scarring' in their adulthood. While the same adverse effects are likely present in the Philippines, no available study provides evidence. The country has undergone immense educational expansion, with tertiary education completion among the highest in the region. Despite this, the NEET rate has been consistently above 20% the past decade, even among the highly educated. Using the 2014 Philippines Nationwide Graduate Tracer Study, a retrospective survey documenting the employment history of 11,500 highly educated young people, this paper investigates the effects of being NEET after completing higher education on labour market outcomes, specifically their employment and occupational status after five years. The study employs ordinary least squares regression and multinomial logistic regression for the different outcome variables. Preliminary analysis shows non-remarkable differences in labour market outcomes between those who were NEET and non-NEET. On average, being NEET is associated with lower occupational prestige scores by only one point; still, NEETs are more likely to be employed in fixed-term contracts compared to those who were not. However, the factors that seem to be more significantly associated with labour market outcomes are gender, birth order, mother's education, programme and institution, and regional location. This study suggests that in this context, disadvantages in the labour market are not from inactivity, but from social cleavages and education system differentiation.

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**Gendering family policy: how taxes, services, and benefits shape the Hungarian household structures**  
**Eirini Ktori – University of Edinburgh**

In recent years, the field of family policy has undergone significant growth, emerging as a distinct discipline for particularly in relation to the welfare state and household support. The evolution of family household settings, from the male-breadwinner model (Lewis, 1994) to the dual earner model (Sainsbury, 1994), has been influenced by the crisis of capitalism and shifts in societal norms. This departure from traditional heteronormativity facilitated women's entry into the labour force, albeit at the expense of commodifying social reproduction (Ferragina, 2019). In post-communist states, the impact of capitalism was characterised by democratic instability, leading to the adoption of generous welfare support to maintain political stability (Saxonberg and Sirovátka, 2018). Yet, weak political leadership resulted in emergency welfare measures only to become permanent fixtures, exacerbating the democratic challenges posed in the Eastern European region (Inglot, 2008). Despite the economic pressures, Hungary stands out for its consistent expansion of family policy support, a generosity that contributed to what Fodor (2021) describes as “carefare”. The paper follows a critical and historical approach to analyse path dependency and continuity in Hungarian family policy. It views family policy as a three-pillar system consisted by taxes, services, and benefits. The paper argues that Hungary’s family policies, rooted in the 1960s and 1970s, have undergone significant transformation in the post-2010 era under Orbán’s leadership. The expansion of the tax system has been politicised to align with the government's agenda of a strong nation by and for the Hungarians. Drawing on existing family policy literature and a discursive analysis of selected government speeches from 2014-2020, the paper highlights the language used to justify the need for more Hungarian children normalising the women's roles in nation building.

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### **09:00 - 10:30 Wednesday 11 September: Families and Households 5: Family policies**

**Designing a survey instrument to evaluate people’s perceptions of family policies to support fertility in Scotland.**

**Francesca Fiori - University of Strathclyde, Daniele Vignoli - University of Florence, Raffaele Guetto - University of Florence**

In 2023, fertility in Scotland fell to a historical low, to the extent that low fertility is regarded as one of the country’s future challenges, and the Scottish Government is committed to reduce barriers preventing individuals from starting a family. The implicit assumption is that if conditions were more favourable, people in Scotland would have more children. But how can we know if that would be the case?

This study intends to answer this question by designing Factorial Survey Experiments (FSE) to collect primary quantitative data from a sample of respondents of childbearing age living in Scotland. This approach, novel within demographic research, allows the appraisal of hypothetical and complex scenarios.

The FSE questionnaire ask participants to evaluate the likely fertility response of a fictitious couple under different policy packages. The first section consists of the ‘vignette’, i.e., a description of the fictitious couple’s characteristics and a combination of family policy measures; each vignette is followed by a question asking respondents to predict the fictitious couple’s fertility intentions in the following three years (under the depicted scenario). The second section includes questions about respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics.

The vignettes are informed by a review of family policy measures (e.g., childcare, parental leave, cash transfers) currently in place within the Scottish context; and of those that might be envisaged for the future (currently debated within the Scottish/UK context and/or implemented in other contexts).

BSPS participants attending the session may be asked to test the survey instrument and provide feedback.

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**Maternity leave take-up in UK academia. Why are they hurrying back?**

**Joanna Clifton Sprigg - University of Bath, Eleonora Fichera - University of Bath, Simona Tudor - SOFI, Stockholm University**



In this paper we explore the effects of terms of maternity leave policy on the duration of leave taken by mothers, focusing on the higher education sector in the United Kingdom, where there is a wide variation in financial coverage of the packages offered by employers. We use unique newly collected individual level data for over 13,000 academic and professional services staff at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the UK and add to it data on university characteristics from the Higher Education Statistics Agency and area-level characteristics from the Office for National Statistics. Using an instrumental variable approach, we find that on average academics take 2 additional weeks of leave for every additional week of full pay provided within the maternity leave package, when professional services staff take 2.7 additional weeks. Academics respond positively to the financial terms of the policy in departments with a lower proportion of teaching-only contracts, higher proportion of female employees and in institutions with above median generosity of the maternity leave package. These results may suggest the culture, research and teaching environment within departments may affect decisions of academics differently than of professional service staff.

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### **Shared Parental Leave in the UK – revolution? The effects of the policy rollout on leave uptake and length by parents.**

**Joanna Clifton-Sprigg - University of Bath, Eleonora Fichera - University of Bath, Melanie Jones - Cardiff University, Ezgi Kaya - Cardiff University**

Family-friendly policies are important for addressing gender inequalities in the labour market. The UK ranks among the lowest across the OECD and EU countries in terms of the attractiveness of its family-friendly policies (Chzhen, 2019). Shared Parental Leave was introduced in the UK in April 2015 with the aim of “enabling both parents to share the caring responsibilities in the child's first year of life” and “retain a strong link with the labour market” (Department for Business and Skills, 2013). Although it affected only a subgroup of working parents, the reform could have potentially revolutionised the caring landscape in the UK.

Research to date points towards low take-up of this policy due to poor financial coverage and complicated regulations (Birkett and Forbes, 2019). However, no causal analysis of take-up and length of leave has been undertaken.

This paper fills this informational gap. It evaluates whether the policy achieved its objectives by using the UK Household Longitudinal Study data and Regression Discontinuity in Time around the reform implementation. We focus on take-up and the length of leave taken by fathers and mothers, comparing cohorts of parents pre- and post-April 2015. Thanks to UKHLS's panel dimension and detailed information on the child's birth date, child-related leave, and respondent's and partner's characteristics, we consider the overall effect as well as heterogeneities within it.

We find no significant effect on leave take-up or length by mothers and by fathers. This holds true for all parents on average, as well as for various subgroups.

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### **A Family Leave Length Trade-off? Women's Labour Force Status in Comparative Perspective**

**Kathrin Morosow - University of Manchester**

A frequently cited aim of parental leave policies is to provide parents with the opportunity to combine work and family. The availability of additional childcare leaves is prolonging mothers' time out of the labour market, however, and thus may counteract women's labour market participation. This study is the first to differentiate between the whole range of labour force status outcomes: employment, unemployment and inactivity. Using data for 20 countries from the Luxembourg Income Study, this study examines the relationship between paid family leave length and mothers' labour market status. Calling on multinomial logistic regression with country fixed effects, this study finds that the provision of comparatively long paid family leave is associated with increased unemployment risks among mothers of 0 to 15 year olds. A slight peak when children are 4 to 6 years old and leave is longer than two years suggests that mothers' are most vulnerable when they re-enter the labour market after a longer leave. These results are in line with prominent theories of human capital depreciation, signalling or statistical discrimination. Leaves of over one year, on the other hand, are associated with reduced inactivity among mothers. Hence, results indicate a trade-off when it comes to leave length. Shorter leaves are associated with mothers dropping out of the

labour market, especially when children are young, while longer family leaves are associated with increased unemployment risks.

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## **11:00 - 12:30 Wednesday 11 September: Families and households 6: Partnership dynamics and inequality**

### **Partnership survival after first conception**

**Alessandro Di Nallo - Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research**

Childbearing significantly influences both individual well-being and the stability of intimate relationships. This study utilizes data from the first 13 waves of the British "Understanding Society" (2008-2023) and the first 14 waves of the German "Pairfam" (2009-2023) to examine partnership dissolution among couples experiencing their first conception. Participants are categorized into four groups: (a) those transitioning to parenthood upon first conception, (b) those with a live birth post-pregnancy loss, (c) those with a live birth pre-pregnancy loss, and (d) those who experience a non-live birth and remain childless.

By employing event history analysis with random and fixed effects, the research investigates differences in partnership stability, considering factors such as time since the first conception, and sociodemographic and partnership characteristics at the time of the first conception: women's age, partners' age difference, partners' educational attainment, homogamy, union duration (in linear and quadratic terms), partnership status at conception, and women's union order at conception.

The findings reveal that in both countries, couples who have a pregnancy loss without a subsequent live birth are at a significantly higher risk of separation compared to other groups, especially in the first two to four years following the first conception. After this period, the likelihood of dissolution begins to decrease, aligning with the levels seen in other groups. These results suggest that unintended childlessness, possibly driven by the stress of pregnancy loss and exacerbated by fertility treatments, significantly impacts relationship stability. This study highlights the need for further research into how early relationship stressors and fertility challenges affect couples' long-term relationship trajectories.

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### **How does flexible working influence men's and women's housework and well-being? Findings from the UK Household Longitudinal Study**

**Baowen Xue & Anne McMunn - UCL**

In the UK, the 'right to request' flexible work policy has gradually been extended over the past decade and as of June 2014 is available to all employees who have been employed for at least 26 weeks. We aim to assess how use of flexible working has influenced men's and women's housework and well-being and whether the 2014 policy reform has been effective in increasing the uptake of flexible working. Data come from the UK Household Longitudinal Study (2010-2020). Using fixed effects models, we investigated the relationship between uptake of flexible working and hours spent on housework, sharing of housework, psychological distress, mental health functioning, overall life satisfaction and satisfaction of leisure time, for men and women separately. We applied a difference-in-differences method to estimate the effect of the 2014 policy reform on the uptake of flexible working (N=6846). The use of flexible working was associated with increased hours of housework for both men (0.15h/w) and women (0.31 h/w) as well as women's share of housework (0.81%). The uptake of flexible working was associated with decreased psychological distress and improved mental health functioning for both men and women. It did not influence overall life satisfaction but improved satisfaction with leisure time for both men and women. The 2014 policy reform only slightly increased the use of flexible working for women but not for men. Working men and women may benefit from flexible working on mental health but gender natural flexible working policy may increase gender inequalities in divisions of housework.

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**Location, Location, Location? Opportunities to Meet on Mixed-Religion Relationships in a Divided Society**  
**Catherine B McNamee & Paula Devine - Queen's University Belfast**

Demographers frequently use romantic relationships as a barometer for gauging societal acceptance of intergroup contact as it can have the greatest social barriers to cross. Despite declines in sectarian conflict, Northern Ireland society remains divided according to ethno-religious indicators. Past estimates of mixed-religion relationships have put it at around 10% or less of partnerships. Prior research on mixed-religion relationships in Northern Ireland has focused on prevalence, health, or stability outcomes, or demographic characteristics of couples within these relationships; however, no known study has examined where adults are meeting their partners and how that might shape the prevalence of mixed-relationships. Social barriers can restrict opportunity to meet partners of different backgrounds; if people are meeting partners in segregated social spaces then it is less likely they will form mixed-relationships. This is particularly relevant within Northern Ireland, given the high levels of residential and educational segregation. This research contributes to the literature by utilizing the 2023 Northern Ireland Life and Times, a large-scale representative survey of adults 18+ (n=1,200), to investigate where and when respondents met their partners, and how or if this is associated with being in a mixed-religion relationship.

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**Consequences of within-couple age heterogamy on personal wealth throughout marriage: A longitudinal dyadic perspective**

**Daide Gritti - University of Trento, Theresa Nutz - GESIS - Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences**

In Western countries men are on average a few years older than their female partners. The economic consequences of within-couple age differences are an understudied topic, limited to the consequences of income differentials. This study aims to investigate the association of within-couple age differences on personal wealth accumulation over the course of marriage in heterosexual couples in Germany. The theoretical framework posits that age homogamy ( $M=W$ ) benefits both partners' personal wealth accumulation through synchronized joint investments over time. In return, age heterogamy ( $M \neq W$ ) may result in advantages for the older partner related to age productivity and bargaining power, albeit with stronger benefits for men. Utilizing longitudinal data from the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP), we employ multilevel dyadic growth curve models. We consider both women's and men's personal wealth and further distinguish between their jointly and solely held wealth. Preliminary results indicate a wealth premium for both men and women in age-homogamous couples. The gender wealth gap however remains present over the course of marriage, as joint investments cannot reduce within-couple inequalities. Further, men seem to benefit more strongly from being the older partner than women, while women's wealth accumulation largely depends on their (similarly aged or older) male partner's contribution. The study's unique contribution lies in its dyadic life course perspective, shedding light on within-couple age differences as a largely neglected driver of the gender wealth gap.

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**The gendered division of housework and sexual relationships: Evidence from the GGS-II on six European countries**

**Nitzan Peri-Rotem - University of Exeter**

The gendered division of housework and sexual intimacy are assumed to be closely related, as they involve the enactment of gender norms and power dynamics. However, previous studies on this relationship have found inconsistent results; while some studies suggested that couples who share housework more equally have more frequent sex, other studies found that increased contribution of men to traditionally "female housework" is linked with reduced sexual activity. The present study compares the role of perceived level of satisfaction from the division of housework to the actual division of work between partners as predictors of sexual activity in the past month. The data is drawn from Round 2 of the Gender & Generations Surveys (GGS-II) from Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Moldova and the Czech Republic, which were carried on in 2020-2023. A logistic regression is used to estimate whether or not the respondent has had sexual intercourse over the past four weeks using a subsample from each country of men and women aged 18-49 who live with a partner of the opposite sex. Across the different countries, the level of satisfaction with the division of household tasks is positively associated with sexual activity for both women and men. By contrast,

a higher contribution of the male partner to household tasks is either not significant or negatively associated with sex occurrence. These findings indicate that the perceived fairness of the division of housework may be more important to sexual frequency than the actual share of work between partners.

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