Care and Career – Educational Enrolment and Couples' Childbearing Behaviour in Sweden

1. INTRODUCTION

Some of the most significant social changes in Western countries in the last 50 years can be related to the substantial increase in female labour force participation and the structural changes that have taken place in the family. The increase in women's labour force participation has altered the division of paid and unpaid work as well as expectations on what men and women should be and are capable of doing, and the male breadwinner norm is no longer taken for granted. Another, more recent, societal trend is the massive inflow of students in higher education among both men and women. Not only has the number of students grown steadily, but the years spent in higher education have also increased considerably in recent decades.

Common for these trends is that they all have had a significant effect on childbearing behaviour. As both men and women with higher education enter parenthood later in life, as compared to those with lower education, the extended education is considered one of the most important reasons behind the postponement of first births. The influence of female labour force participation and altered gender roles on childbearing, however, is less clear-cut and what is more, it has changed over the years. While the correlation between total fertility rate and female labour force participation was negative in the 1970s, the correlation is now reversed and countries with a high female labour force participation, such as the Nordic countries, have higher fertility rates than countries with lower female labour force participation as for example in Southern Europe (e.g. Ahn and Mira 2002; Billari and Kohler 2004).

The increase in female labour force participation implies that in most families today there are two parties' educational and occupational careers, as well as incomes, that have to be taken into account when decisions on childbearing are made. This raises questions about how these decisions are made, whose studies and income is crucial, and how gendered roles and expectations are related to childbearing behaviour. Previous research have studied individual childbearing behaviour with regards to education and earnings (see for example Andersson 2000; Hoem 2000; Hoem 1993), but we do not know much about the interaction between the mother's and the father's activities. Neither do we know much about the impact of educational enrolment on childbearing propensities as most studies on education and fertility focus on the influence of educational attainment. The evidence there is indicates that students have much lower fertility than other young adults of the same age (Thalberg 2011; Liefbroer and Corijn 1999).

The purpose of this study is to find out whether Swedish fathers' and mothers' educational enrolment and earnings are associated with a couple's further childbearing propensities in different ways. Another intention is to detect whether couples' childbearing behaviour, with regard to the above mentioned factors, have changed in recent decades. There are many reasons why Sweden is an interesting case to study. To begin with, Swedish students are relatively older in international comparison, which makes the postponement of childbearing until after finishing education a question of particular relevance in Sweden. In addition, Sweden has a comparatively large group of students that already has children, which makes it a good example when examining the effects of enrolment on childbearing at higher parities. As more and more young adults enrol in higher education for longer and longer periods, the effect of enrolment on fertility is an important issue that concerns an increasingly larger group of young adults. Often seen as one of the forerunners in the second demographic transition, and one of the most gender equal countries in the world (for example Oláh and Bernhardt 2008; Haas 2003; Surkyn and Lesthaeghe 2004), Sweden is also a particularly interesting case when examining gender differences in childbearing behaviour.

A point of departure in this study is that potential gender differences in childbearing behaviour, with reference to educational activity and earnings, are reflections of the gendered division of labour and the different normative expectations on, as well as actual behaviour of, mothers and fathers. Although gender roles indeed have changed in the last several decades, even in Sweden the traditional gendered patterns regarding the division of paid work, housework and childrearing still remains to a large extent. While women's labour force participation has increased dramatically, less change has occurred in the amount of men's unpaid work at home. As couple interaction is part of most people's life, at least at some point in time, the division of labour has a large impact on both partners' behaviour and opportunities on the labour market. Since these negotiations as well as decisions regarding childbearing in general takes place within couples, couple studies are ideal for examining the interplay between family and occupational and educational careers.

In the following section, a contextual background of family policies along with educational trends and policies is given. Section three discusses previous research and theoretical perspectives on the gendered division of paid and unpaid work. Thereafter follows a section on data and methods before empirical results are presented. The paper is finalized with a concluding discussion.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Families and family policy in Sweden

The way couples negotiate and divide paid and unpaid work between them is highly dependent on which kind of family support that is offered from the state. Family policies structure childbearing decisions as well as the gendered division of paid and unpaid work, both directly through economic incentives (or disincentives) and ideologically through the spreading of norms and values. Since childrearing is still considered primarily mothers' responsibility, a key aspect of family policy is the extent to which it relieves mothers of unpaid care work by distributing this task between the public sector, the market and men and women (Neyer 2006).

In Sweden and the other Nordic countries, family policy is strongly oriented towards a dual earner-carer family where both parents are involved in both the labour market and in child care (Gornick and Meyers 2008; Ferrarini and Duvander 2010). The promotion of the dual earner-carer family involves, among other things, a completely individualized social security and tax system. Each individual pays his/her own taxes and works up eligibility for earnings-related social benefits (above the minimum level), such as parental leave insurance, sick pay and pensions (Henz and Sundström 2001). Labour force participation among mothers is high, 82 percent of mothers with youngest child in ages 0-18 are in the work force (Statistics Sweden 2010).[1] By these means, welfare state policies has given Swedish women more economic independence and more influence over issues such as the division of housework, childcare and the allocation of money (Hobson 1990; Roman and Vogler 1999).

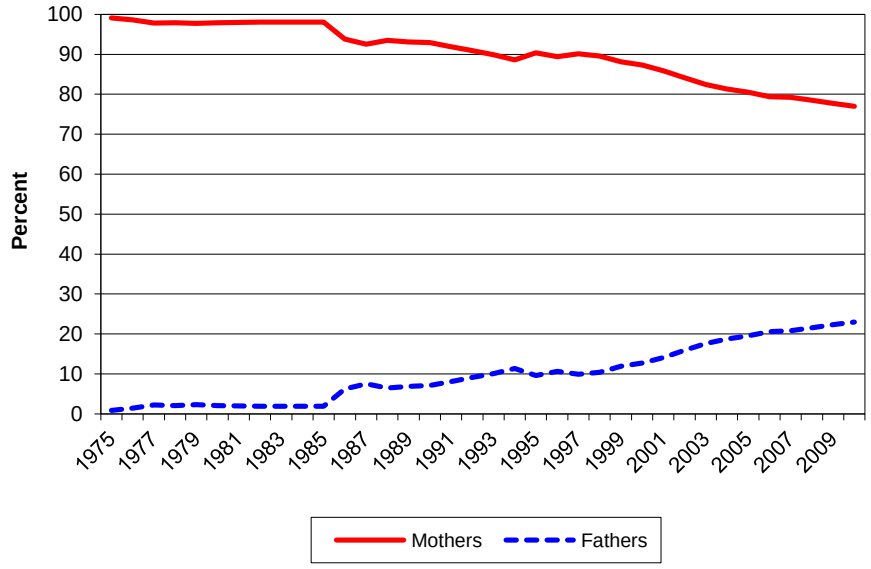
One of the corner stones of Swedish family policy is the parental leave insurance. The insurance presently entitles parents to 480 days of paid leave for each child.[2] Parents themselves can decide who will claim the parental leave benefit, except for two months that are earmarked for each parent.[3] The flexibility of the parental insurance has allowed Swedish couples to maintain relatively traditional gender arrangements when it comes to caring for small children. Even though fathers slowly increase their share of parental leave days each year, mothers still use the by far largest share of the leave (see figure below). The use of parental leave is a clear indication of who is responsible for day-to-day childcare during the child's first years and is therefore an unusually clear-cut example of how men and women make trade-offs between work and family (Bygren and Duvander 2005).

To be entitled to the earnings-related parental insurance one has to work for a minimum of 240 days before the birth of the child. Students that have not worked before enrolment, and others with weak labour market attachment, are not eligible for the earnings-related parental leave benefit and instead

[1] Mothers on parental leave from work are included in this category.
[2] 390 days with 80 percent wage replacement and an additional 90 days with a lower flat-rate benefit.
[3] Up to the mid-1990s it was possible for one parent to take the whole leave. To increase paternal involvement, one month was "earmarked" for each parent in 1995, the so called "daddy month". In 2002 the "daddy month" was increased to two months.

receive a benefit at a low flat rate.[4] Fathers without or low income are overrepresented among those who do not take any parental leave at all (National Social Insurance Board 2002).

Figure 1 – Mothers' and fathers' share of all used parental leave days, Sweden 1975-2010.



Source: Swedish Social Insurance Agency 2011

2.2. Educational trends and educational policy in Sweden

Just as in other Western countries, there has been a massive inflow of students into higher education in Sweden in recent decades. In the 1990s, the increase in enrolment took a big leap with total number of students nearly doubling, partly due to the economic downturn in the beginning of the decade. In addition to the economic crisis, measures implemented to realize the idea of a lifelong learning also contributed to the dramatic increase in enrolment (SOU 2003:130). Parallel with the increase in total number of students, the proportion of women attending higher education has constantly grown and in Sweden women has outnumbered men since the 1970s (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2006). Today, about 60 percent of the undergraduate students are female (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education 2009).

As mentioned above, Swedish students are relatively older, they have one of the highest average ages when entering university and they also leave university at relatively higher ages; the median age for

[4] At the time period studied in this paper the flat rate was 60 SEK/day (about 6 €). Since then the amount has been raised to 180 SEK/day.

completing a first degree is 28 years and one in three students is above age 30, which thus means that many students are in their "childbearing ages" (Statistics Sweden 2009; SOU 2003:130). Whether educational enrolment is considered compatible with childbearing or not is dependent on a number of factors such as own and partner's income, the possibility of attaining parental leave insurance and other state support, as well as norms regarding the "right" sequencing of life events, where completion of education is expected to precede family formation (Thalberg 2011).

Even though a small proportion of students become parents while being enrolled, the share of students that already has children has grown continually since the 1990s, especially among female students (Hallberg, Lindh et al 2011). It is difficult to find data on exactly how many students have children but figures from Statistics Sweden indicate that about a third of all females enrolled in a university education have children. Fewer male students have children, about 13 percent (SOU 2003:130).[5] Even though childbearing among students is rare in Sweden, comparative research shows that entering parenthood while still in education is more common in Sweden and the other Nordic countries than elsewhere in Europe (Billari and Philipov 2004). It is also relatively common for parents to (re)enter education. This is most likely related to the higher ages of students and the relatively generous family and educational policies.

University studies are free of charge and the state offers fairly generous financial assistance consisting of grants and student loans. All students, regardless of their parents' financial situation, are entitled to student financial aid, consisting of both grants and loans for a maximum of 12 semesters. This aid consists of a non-repayable grant plus a loan to be repaid with relatively low interest. About 60 percent of all students also work part-time to make ends meet (Statistics Sweden 2007). Although students without previous work experience are excluded from the income related parental leave insurance, students have equal access to subsidized public child care and child benefits as well as parental leave benefit, albeit at a low flat rate. Students cannot receive full-time student financial aid and full-time parental leave benefit at the same time, but may obtain financial aid for part-time studies along with a reduced parental leave benefit.

3. THE GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOUR AND CARE

3.1. Previous research

[5] Among students in adult education programs (Komvux), the share having children is even higher. It is estimated that 50 percent of the female students and 27 percent of the male students in adult education are parents (2003:130).

The increase in female labour force participation has made the connection between family life and work/studies stronger and more complex, as there now in general are two persons' educational and occupational careers and interests that has to be considered when decisions on family formation and the division of time for work and childcare are made. Moreover, the connection between family and work is a reciprocal relationship where an individual's working life has consequences for family and vice versa. As most studies focusing on the interplay between family and work find different outcomes for men and women, it is likely that also educational enrolment has different implications for couples' childbearing decisions depending on whether it is the mother or the father that is enrolled. The question here is in which direction, and to what extent, gender has an influence.

To understand why and how the effect of educational enrolment may differ for men and women it is essential to look into the gendered division of paid and unpaid labour. For, as said, despite the dramatic increase in women's educational attainment and labour force participation, the division of labour is still highly gendered in Sweden as well as in other Western countries. Gornick and Meyers (2008) have developed a continuum of four different models illustrating this gendered division of labour among different countries. The first model is the fully specialized male breadwinner/female caregiver model. The second model is the dual earner/female part-time caregiver, where mothers combine part-time work with primary responsibility for family care. This is the most common model in Western countries today. The next one is a model where a great part of the childcare is taken care of by state or by private market arrangements, so that mothers can work full-time. The final model is a gender egalitarian dual-earner/dual-caregiver model in which mothers and fathers engage symmetrically in employment as well as in caregiving. As there is no country that completely fulfils the criteria of the last model, it is so far more of a utopian vision for the future. Even in Sweden, where the dual earner-carer couple is the norm and the far most common family model, the expectations, norms and experiences of family responsibilities differ for men and women.

Parenthood often strengthens the gendered division of labour and intensifies gendered patterns in time use (Dribe and Stanfors 2009; Blossfeld and Drobnič 2001). Qualitative as well as quantitative studies suggest that norms about mother's care responsibilities are more traditional than norms about father's breadwinner responsibilities. While mothers still are expected to take on the main responsibility for home and children, the male breadwinner ideology has weakened (Hobson and Fahlén 2009; Smith 2004; Blossfeld and Drobnič 2001). A Swedish time use survey from 2000/01 shows that cohabiting mothers with children under age seven on average spent nearly twice as much time on unpaid housework and childcare each day as fathers did. Fathers, on the other hand, spent more than twice as much time on paid work. A comparison with 1990/91 indicates that the way fathers and mothers divide their time between paid and unpaid work is converging, mainly due to mothers' decreasing time

spent on housework/childcare, but to some extent also to fathers decreasing time in paid work (Statistics Sweden 2003). The fact that men have not increased their participation in housework and childcare to the same extent as women have increased their labour force participation has been referred to as men's "lagged adaption" (Gershuny et al 1994). Or similarly, as the "incomplete gender revolution" by McDonald 2000). In this view, the gender revolution has two separate parts, first comes equality in the public sphere, then in the family-oriented private sphere.

Even though equality in the public sphere may be ahead, men's position in the labour market is still stronger as they obtain higher incomes and are more often full-time employed. However, economic independence and having an income of their own is regarded as fundamental by Swedish women (Nyman and Reinikainen 2007; Bracher and Santow 1998). The connection between earnings and other resources and household division of labour is complex and seem to vary between countries. While some studies find that women's share of the housework decreases if their relative resources in terms of education, earnings and social status increases (Evertsson and Nermo 2007; Duvander and Sundström 2002; Bianchi, Milkie et al 2000). Other studies have found that in many families where the woman earns more than the man, the couple respond to this "gender deviance" by attaining even more traditional gender roles (Bittman, England et al 2003), and the more economically dependent husbands are on their wives, the less housework they perform (Brines 1994).

Previous studies on households' division of labour and care has come up with a variety of different theoretical frameworks for explaining the gendered division of labour and care. Several theories have emphasized the strong influence of gendered expectations and norms regarding childrearing and family responsibilities on the way we act. Not only indirectly, through earnings, but also by means of cultural values associated with motherhood/femininity and fatherhood/masculinity. A central part of the "doing gender" is the affirmation of gender differences. As housework is often regarded as "women's work", women perform housework, and men avoid it, to enact symbolically their femininity and masculinity (West and Zimmerman 1987; Connell 1987; Brines 1994). In this way, a household can be described as a "gender factory" where the doing of everyday tasks reflects gender ideals (Berk 1985). The relationship between gender and the division of labour is therefore reciprocal, for at the same time as gender influences the division of labour and care by attaining different parental roles, gender is also constituted within couples. Due to our gendered socialization, the expectations on mothers and fathers are different, which in turn influence the choices we make. While women's parental responsibilities are still seen as "compulsory", men's parenthood is seen as more "voluntary", in the sense that they can choose to what extent they want to take parental leave and participate in childrearing. By contrast, women in general adapt their work situation and other commitments to their parenthood. The use of parental leave insurance clearly illustrates this, hardly any Swedish women

take no parental leave at all and the absolute majority takes at least six months or more (Bygren and Duvander 2005). Since men's range of options regarding parental responsibilities is wider, combining paid work as well as studies with family responsibilities may be less problematic for men than for women (Bekkengen 2002; Ahrne and Roman 1997).

The weakening of the traditional gendered norms has opened up for negotiations about the division of gainful employment, housework and childcare among couples. The term negotiation, however, does not imply that these negotiations are on equal terms or rationally calculated, or for that matter even conscious (Ahrne and Roman 1997). On the contrary, it has been shown that when it comes to the division of labour among dual earner-carer couples very little explicit negotiation takes place. It is rather a case of many small, practical and unintentional decisions, without actual regard to their long-term implications, which lies behind couples' division of labour (Stocks 2007). The gendered patterns are thus reproduced rather unconsciously. Other studies, focusing on household economy, have shown that how a couple chooses to organize its finances rarely is an object of planning and negotiation; in most cases it is rather a product of two individuals financial practices, as well as cultural traditions and gendered norms (Nyman and Dema 2007).

The strong ideology of gender equality in Sweden, both in terms of policy and in people's ideal of a couple relationship, has had the consequence that both men and women actively try to present factual inequalities in the relationship, such as an unequal uptake of parental leave, as something else – as being a question of economy or practicality – in order to avoid being regarded as gender unequal (Haavind 1984; Almqvist, Sandberg et al 2010). As for the division of parental leave, interviews reveal that economic motives are given as explanations to why the mother takes the largest part of the parental leave, both in families where the mother has the highest *and* in families where the mother has the lowest income. Whereas couples where the mother is the highest income earner argue that the father's parental leave benefit would be too low, couples where the father has the highest income argue that if he took parental leave they would lose too much income (Bekkengen 2002). Thus, even though economic reasons are put forward, it seems as gender indeed is important, in particular when it comes to childcare.

3.2. Hypotheses

As shown above, the female role as a primary caregiver still seems to be rather strong in Sweden today. Time use studies as well as the unequal uptake of parental leave both indicate that men's involvement in childcare and housework indeed is "lagging behind". Bearing in mind the design of the Swedish parental leave, where the parental leave benefit is based on the individual's earned income

prior to when the child is born, a plausible hypothesis would therefore be that since mothers take the largest part of the parental leave, it should have a stronger negative effect on the couple's childbearing risks if the *mother* is a student, as compared to couples where the man, for whom taking parental leave is more "optional", is a student.

An alternative hypothesis would be that expectations that the father should be the main breadwinner still predominate, so that being a student, which in most cases is associated with low earnings, is not seen as compatible with becoming a father/having more children. If this is true, the *father's* enrolment should have a stronger negative effect on the couple's childbearing. Another alternative hypothesis is that the division of paid and unpaid work to a high extent still is rather traditional. Fathers are expected to be breadwinners and mothers caregivers, which means that being a student would have a negative effect for both parents. Yet another hypothesis is the opposite situation, where mothers' and fathers' responsibilities, despite the above mentioned differences, are similar enough to make the impact of being a student the same for mothers and fathers.

As most evidence indicates that there has been some but no radical change in the division of paid and unpaid work during the time period studied, a reasonable hypothesis is that the effect of enrolment on couple's further childbearing propensities remains rather constant over the period. It is true that fathers have increased their uptake of parental leave, but in the end of the 1990s it was still much lower than the mothers' share. Neither did the labour force participation of mothers (as compared to fathers) change much during the period.[6] The results below will give us some indication of how strong these gendered norms – the woman as a primary caretaker and the man as a principal breadwinner – are today and whether it has changed over time.

4. DATA AND METHODS

The data used in this study are taken from the Swedish population register system. Since Swedish registry data do not contain information about cohabitation status of individuals we have no information about couples' first birth risks. However, as soon as a couple has a common child, we can link them together and examine their higher order birth risks. Our study population is defined to include all couples with one or two children that are registered as living on the same address. Moreover, both parents are born in Sweden, and mothers are aged 19-42. The couples are followed

[6] Non published data, based on e-mail correspondence with Maria Håkansson, Statistics Sweden 2011-04-12.

between 1984 and 1999 to see whether or not they have another child together, data on childbearing histories is then linked to data on taxable earnings and student status.

Defining student status is to some extent problematic given that an individual may combine several different activities, such as studies, work, unemployment and parental leave at the same period of time. A person could also be registered as enrolled without being particularly active, or even drop out during the semester. Here *Student status* is defined as an individual having received any kind of student financial aid (study grant and/or study loan) during the previous year. As more than 80 percent of all students in Sweden receive some kind of student financial aid, and those who do not most likely are part time students with a decent income from other activities, the large majority of all students are covered by this definition. *Earnings* is defined as earned taxable income the preceding year of being under risk of childbirth and also includes income replacements during sickness and parental leave. The income variable is here divided into the following two categories: *low* income refers to a yearly income of less than 240,000 SEK (about 24,000 €) and *high* income to 240,001 SEK or more (in fixed prices as of 2011). Since about half of the mothers with children under age six work part time in Sweden, a large majority of the mothers in our sample falls in to this category, while most men belong to the high-income group (Statistics Sweden 2001). Finally, controls for the effect of *current age* of the woman, *duration* since previous birth and *Calendar year*, with single-year periods from 1984 to 1999 are also included.[7] Given that data on earnings as well as student financial aid are based on data from the preceding year, there is of course a risk that a person's earnings and student status no longer is the same at the time of being under risk of childbirth. However, as a normal pregnancy lasts for about 9.5 months, and the earnings-related parental leave insurance requires at least 240 days of work before the birth of a child, it is still a fair indicator of a person's economic situation and attachment to the labour market when decisions on childbearing are taken.

The effect of student status and earnings on the couple's birth risk is estimated by intensity-regression (or proportional-hazards) models, which is a common measure when looking at relative risks of childbearing. The observation window opens at a first or second birth, at the beginning of the observation period (1984), or when the woman turns 19, and closes at either the time of birth of a next child, at age 42, at separation, emigration, death, or at the end of the observation period (1999).

5. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

[7] Controlling for *age difference* did not affect the result significantly wherefore it is not included in the analysis.

5.1. The effect of gender, enrolment and earnings on childbearing risks

Table 1 clearly shows that the implication of enrolment in higher education for a couple's childbearing risks is highly dependent on whether it is the mother or the father that is enrolled. As expected by my first hypothesis, mothers enrolment strongly lowers the risk of having another child. For fathers, being a student has hardly any effect on their propensity to have second child. Interestingly, fathers' enrolment has a strong *positive* effect on third birth risks. This somewhat unexpected result is however in line with previous studies on Sweden that show that men with a weak labour market attachment, such as low-income earners, students, welfare recipient, or non-participants, have the highest propensity to have a third child (see for example Andersson and Scott 2007). Couples where both parents are students have about the same low probability of having a second child as couples where only the mother is a student. As regards third births however, couples where both parents are enrolled have only slightly lower birth risks as compared to couples where both are in the labour force.

Table 1 – The effect of enrolment on birth risks, Sweden 1984-1999. Standardized for duration since previous birth, current age and calendar period. Separate models for each parity.

	Second child	Third child
Mother student	0.59	0.64
Father student	0.99	1.37
Both students	0.56	0.90
None student	1	1

Moving on to the interaction of student status and income level, we observe that one-child couples where both parents are high-income earners have high second birth risks (table 2). Nearly as high second birth risks are also found among couples where the father is a student and the mother is in the labour force. Further, the lowest risks are consistently found among couples where the mother is a student, and their fertility is only marginally higher if the father is a high-income earner. Couples where both are students have roughly equal low risks as couples where only the mother is a student, something which indicates that the student status of the mother is decisive.

Table 2 – Couples' relative second birth risks by the mother's and the father's student status and income, Sweden 1984-1999. Standardized for duration since previous birth, current age and calendar period (percent of exposure time within parenthesis).

	Father student	Father low-income earner	Father high-income earner
Mother student	0.58 (0.4%)	0.57 (1.6%)	0.65 (1.2%)
Mother low-income earner	1.03 (1.5%)	1 (47.8%)	1.07 (39%)
Mother high-income-earner	1.07 (0.1%)	1.03 (2%)	1.18 (6.3%)

When it comes to third birth risks the pattern is somewhat different (table 3). Here, also, the lowest risks are found among couples where the mother is a student, and the highest risks among couples where the father is a student and the mother is in the labour force. What differs however, is that couples where only the father is a student, have an even higher third birth risk than those where both parents are high-income earners.

Table 3 – Couples' relative third birth risks by the mother's and the father's student status and income, Sweden 1984-1999. Standardized for duration since previous birth, current age and calendar period (percent of exposure time within parenthesis).

	Father student	Father low-income earner	Father high-income earner
Mother student	0.87 (0.1%)	0.64 (1.0%)	0.62 (1.5%)
Mother low-income earner	1.35 (0.7%)	1 (38.4%)	0.94 (50.2%)
Mother high-income earner	1.23 (0.1%)	1.12 (1.6%)	1.15 (6.3%)

5.2. A stable pattern?

Even though some of the curves presented below are irregular due to few exposures it is clear that the impact of the parents' student status on second and third births is rather stable over time. Couples where both parents are in the labour force, and couples where only the father is a student, have the highest second and third birth risks while couples where the mother is a student, or both are students, have the lowest risks. During the 1990s, second and third birth risks decreased for all couples. Third birth risks seem more sensitive to changes in the business cycle than second birth risks, this applies to students as well as those in the labour force. However, among couples where the mother is a student both second and third birth risks appear to be less affected by the business cycle than among couples where none, or only the father, is a student. For this group, fertility seems more stable as it did not increase as much during the economic boom in the late 1980s, nor did it drop as sharp during the recession in the early 1990s.

Figure 2 – Relative risk for a couple of having a second child by gender and student status over time, Sweden 1984-1999. Standardized for current age and duration since previous birth.

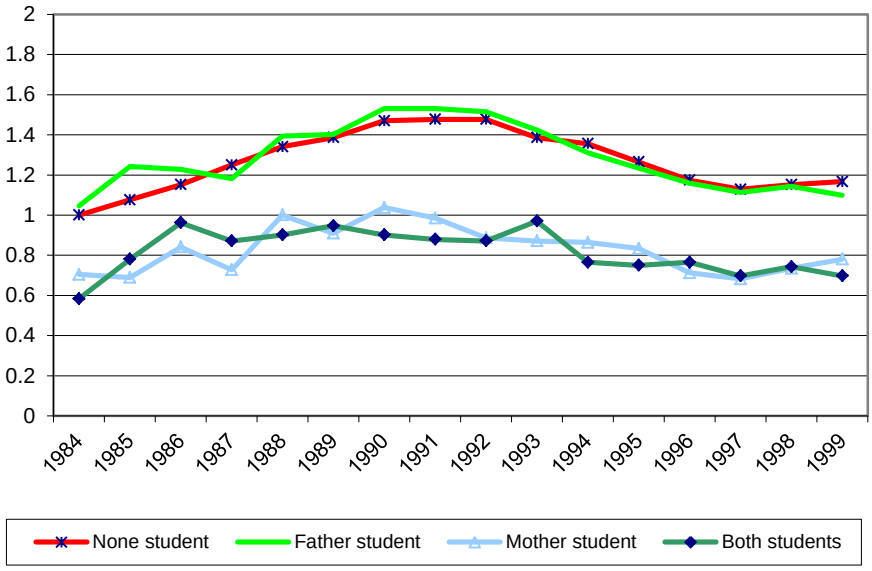
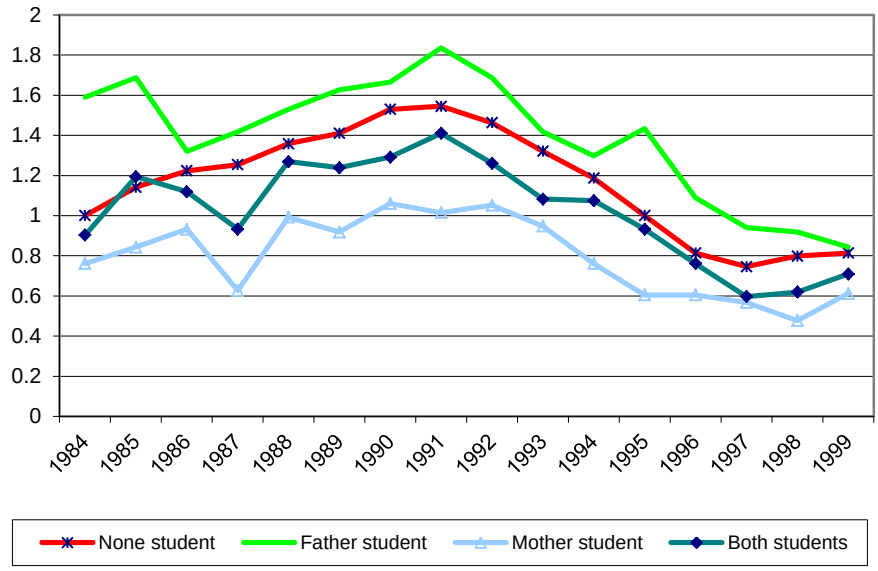


Figure 3 – Relative risk for a couple of having a third child by gender and student status over time, Sweden 1984-1999. Standardized for current age and duration since previous birth.



6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

In this study, the effect of educational enrolment and earnings on couples' propensities to have a second or a third child has been investigated. My hypothesis was that since mothers take the largest part of the parental leave, it should have a stronger negative effect on the couple's childbearing risks if the mother is a student. I also expected the effect to be rather constant over the time-period studied. The empirical results support this hypothesis and indicate that couples are making their childbearing decisions primarily based on the mother's student status. Couples where the mother is a student have the lowest second and third birth risks while couples where neither of the parents are students, and couples where only the father is a student, have the highest second and third birth risks, irrespective of partner income. As expected, this pattern, where the mother being a student has a negative impact on couples' second and third births, and the father being a student has a positive impact, is also quite stable over time. The findings suggest that while the male breadwinner has been almost entirely replaced by the dual-earner couple in Sweden, mothers' role as primary caretakers of small children still remains strong. This interpretation is in keeping with previous research on the division of labour (for example Hobson and Fahlén 2009; Smith 2004; Blossfeld and Drobnič 2001). The absence of change over time should however not be interpreted as evidence that there has been no change at all in the gendered division of labour. More likely, changes have been gradual and not of the magnitude needed to be visible in an analysis of this relatively short period of time.

The strong negative effect of mother's enrolment on couple's childbearing risks shows that having children while in education is considered problematic. One probable explanation to this is that the low parental leave benefit that students receive prevents student mothers from having more children. Women's strive for an income could both be interpreted in terms of attaining a traditional female caretaker role but could also be a sign of independence, in that they do not want to rely economically on a man. The fact that this negative effect only concerns couples where the mother is a student indicates that taking parental leave is still primarily seen as the mother's duty. However, the rather large share of female students that already have children shows that enrolment may be compatible with family life after all. One interpretation is that the flexible work hours may be regarded as favourable when having small children, while, due to the design of the Swedish parental leave system, *becoming* a mother is not. The weak effect of the father's income level on the couple's childbearing risks indicates that economic independence indeed is fundamental for Swedish women as suggested by for example Nyman and Reinikainen (2007) and Bracher and Santow (1998).

For fathers, enrolment does not seem to be an obstacle to having more children, quite the reverse. This suggests that the norm that the father should be the main breadwinner is not widespread in Sweden today. Another interpretation could of course be that the father is studying in order to become a future breadwinner. The results also indicate that taking parental leave is not considered "compulsory" for men, but something men may do if it is suitable. If the mother is eligible for parental leave, she may take the whole parental leave (except for the two so-called daddy months), while the father may carry on with his studies. However, considering that fathers with small children tend to have long working hours (Statistics Sweden 2009), a father who is a student is by comparison probably more accessible and more active in childrearing than most employed fathers, which facilitates the many times difficult combination of work and family for mothers. Even though a student father may not take parental leave, he may well be an excellent "secondary caretaker". Another explanation may be a selection effect where men, who despite having children choose to enrol in education, are more family oriented or less career oriented than other fathers. The high fertility of student fathers could hence also be interpreted as men's active partaking in childrearing having a positive influence on couples' further childbearing. This explanation is in line with previous studies carried out in Sweden, which have shown a positive effect of fathers' uptake of parental leave on couple's second and third birth propensities (Oláh 2003; Duvander and Andersson 2006).

Seemingly, there are several factors influencing the impact of enrolment on a couple's decision to have another child. The striking difference when it comes to the effect of mother's and father's enrolment indicates that gender roles indeed is an important factor. Other explanations may concern economic factors related to the parental leave insurance. It is however evident that the effect of

enrolment on childbearing is not solely a question of money, but rather an interaction of gender roles, family policy and economy. This interpretation is in line with previous research on the gendered division of parental leave (see for example Bekkengen 2002; Duvander and Sundström 2002; Hobson et al 2006; Haas 1992). The results strengthen the hypothesis that the division of labour in Sweden today could best be described as a dual-earner-female-caretaker-model. The double burden for women implies that combining work and family life is harder for mothers than for fathers, which in turn has negative effects on mothers' health and well-being, as well as on their wage development and career opportunities (Lundberg 1996; Duvander and Evertsson 2011). As mothers in all Western countries still are the main caretakers of small children, this double burden is not unique for Sweden. However, expectations on roles of fathers show greater variation. In Central and Southern Europe the ideal of a male breadwinner has been shown to be still rather strong (Neyer and Rieck 2008; Lück 2005). However, gender roles and the division of labour is a process, constantly under change. If men's uptake of the parental leave continues to rise, perhaps as a result of more "daddy months", and if Sweden is thereby increasingly resembling the forth, utopian model in Gornick and Meyers continuum, attaining a decent income before having another child may possibly become equally important for both men and women.

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