





# Men's involvement in the family and fertility: what about men's opportunity costs?

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#### Gender revolution



- Massive entry of women to the LM
- Low involvement of men in childcare
- Increase in opportunity costs for women → decline in TFR
- Source: Esping-Andersen and Billari (2015)

- Men gradually increase involvement in childcare
- Opportunity costs for women decline
  → increase in TFR

# Mixed empirical evidence

 Some studies find positive effects of men's involvement in the family on subsequent childbearing, e.g. Dommermuth et al (2015) for Norway and Olah (2003) and Duvander et al (2010) for Sweden





Fathers' leave use and transition to 3rd child

Source: Duvander et al. 2016

## Use of parental leaves among fathers

Male share of number of days of maternity, paternity and parental leave used



Source: OECD (2016), Background brief on fathers' leave and its use

# Mixed empirical evidence

• Many weak or insignificant effects: Cooke (2009) for Spain, Craig and Siminski (2011) for Australia, Miettinen et al (2015) for Finland; also non-linear effects



Predicted probabilities of a 2nd birth by division of household labour, US

Source: Torr and Short (2004)

Predicted effects of Italian father's share of childcare on log-odds of 2nd birth

Source: Cooke (2009)

#### Astonishing trends in TFR



# Are the proponents of the gender revolution theory wrong?

- There might be other intervening factors:
  - increasing labour market uncertainty, new work arrangements, automation, increasing time demands for professionals
  - spread of ICT: Netflix, smartphones, social media, etc.
- Measurement problems (e.g. selection)
- What about men's opportunity costs?

# What about men's opportunity costs?

- Women's opportunity costs widely discussed in the literature
- Men: so far fatherhood premium after birth
- But: fatherhood premium lower in countries where men's involvement in the family more strongly supported socially and institutionally (Buenning and Pollmann-Schult 2016, Baranowska-Rataj and Matysiak 2014)
- Swedish men are "punished" more for the parental leave use than Swedish women (Evertsson 2016)
- Ideal worker model: men are still seen as loyal and committed employees whose work is not affected by family obligations (Acker 1990, Dowd 2012)
- Gender differences in occupational structure

## What about men's opportunity costs?

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

NOTES AND COMMENTARY Di Free Access

Housework, Gender Role Attitudes, and Couples' Fertility Intentions: Reconsidering Men's Roles in Gender Theories of Family Change

Bai	rbara S. Okun 🔀, Liat Raz-Yurovich					
Fir	st published: 20 November 2018   https://doi.org/10.1111/padr.12207	Cite	d by	: 1		
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Effects of men's housework on their fertility intentions

# Our approach

• Looking how partners' involvement in housework and childcare affects partners' willingness to have a(nother) child



- Childcare is more absorbing than housework: stronger effects of childcare
- Childcare is more self-fulfilling: weaker effects of childcare

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#### Data

- <u>HILDA:</u> The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey Longitudinal and detailed information on family and labour market dynamics as well as the economic and subjective well-being of individuals
- Comprehensive set of questions on division of household labour and fertility desires and intentions
- Original sample: 7,682 households (15,127 individuals aged 15+)
- Wave-to-wave response rate: ~95%
- Panel waves 2001-2015
- Our sample:
  - Men with 0-2 children in a union with a woman aged 18-44
  - Women aged 18-44 with 0-2 children in a union with a man

### Hierarchical data structure



#### • Three-level linear models:

- Allow to study effects of:
  - his involvement on his desires
  - her involvement on her desires
  - cross-over effects: his involvement on her desires and vice versa
- Allow to control for a couple context

## Method: measures

- Dependent variable:
  - Fertility desires: How do you feel about having a child / more children in the future? (scale 0-10)
  - Fertility expectations: How likely are you to have a child / more children in the future (scale from 0-10)
- Explanatory variables (measured for both partners):
  - <u>absolute time</u> spent on:
    - housework (cooking, cleaning, washing dishes / clothes, ironing, etc.)
    - childcare (playing, routine care, clothing, teaching, supervising, bringing children to childcare)
    - paid work

### Method: model specification

$$\begin{split} FerDes_{cit} &= \pmb{\alpha} \times Gender_{ci} \times FamInv_{cit} + \pmb{\alpha}^p \times Gender_{ci}^p \times FamInv_{cit}^p + \\ &+ \pmb{\gamma} \times Gender_{ci} \times X_{cit} + \pmb{\gamma}^p \times Gender_{ci}^p \times X_{cit}^p + \\ &+ (\beta_0 + \mu_{0c} + \mu_{0i}) + \epsilon_{cit} \end{split}$$

- *FerDes<sub>cit</sub>* fertility desires of a respondent *i* in couple *c* at time *t*
- FamInv<sub>cit</sub> (FamInv<sup>p</sup><sub>cit</sub>) time spent on housework / childcare by respondent i (respondent's partner) in couple c at time t
- $X_{cit}$  ( $X_{cit}^{p}$ )- control variables for a respondent *i* (respondent's partner) in couple *c* at time *t*
- $\mu_{0c}$ ,  $\mu_{0i}$  couple-specific and individual-specific random intercepts
- $\epsilon_{cit}$  model residual
- Models estimated separately for the childless, parents of 1 child and parents of 2 children

### Method: model specification

 $FerDes_{cit} = \alpha \times Gender_{ci} \times FamInv_{cit} + \alpha^p \times Gender_{ci}^p \times FamInv_{cit}^p + \dots$ 



<sup>•</sup>  $FamInv_{ci}$ . - person-specific mean family involvement (constant within a given parity)

# Results (1)

**His FD** 

ns

ns

ns

#### Effects of person-specific involvement on fertility desires (FD)



	Her FD	His FD
Total	ns	ns
Childless	ns	ns
With one child	ns	ns
With two children	ns	ns



	Her FD	His FD
Total	-	-
Childless		
With one child	ns	-
With two children	-	ns



	Her FD	His FD
<b>Total</b>	ns	ns
Childless	ns	ns
With one child	ns	ns
Nith two children	ns	ns

		Her FD
	Total	ns
	Childless	ns
	With one child	ns
] ]]	With two children	-







	Her FD	His FD
Total	ns	ns
Childless	ns	ns
With one child	ns	+
With two children	ns	ns

# Results (2)

#### Effects of person-specific involvement on fertility expectations (FE)





Childless

Total

With one child	ns	ns
With two children	-	-



With two children	-	-
	Her FD	His FD
Total	ns	ns
Childless	ns	ns
With one child	ns	ns
With two children	ns	ns



	Her FD	His FD
Total	ns	-
Childless	ns	ns
With one child	ns	-
With two children	ns	ns







	115	115
	Her FD	His FD
<b>Total</b>	ns	ns
Childless	ns	ns
With one child	ns	ns
With two children	-	ns

## Conclusions

- Changes in housework load are rather weakly related to childbearing, by contrast to childcare
- Increases in childcare reduce childbearing desires (among women and men) and childbearing expectations among women → opportunity costs?
- But also interesting cross-over effects:
  - An increase in woman's childcare lowers men's childbearing desires and expectations (Feeling of guilt? Tensions between partners?)
  - But an increase in men's involvement also in some cases lowers women's childbearing desires (intensive parenting norm among mothers? Maternal gatekeeping?)

# Challenges

- Few men involved in childcare: how to measure men's opportunity costs if few men involved in childcare?
- Reversed causality...
- How do the effects we find translate into the final couple decision to have a child?



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