

Couples' Linked Occupational Mobility in the wake of Transition to Parenthood in Switzerland

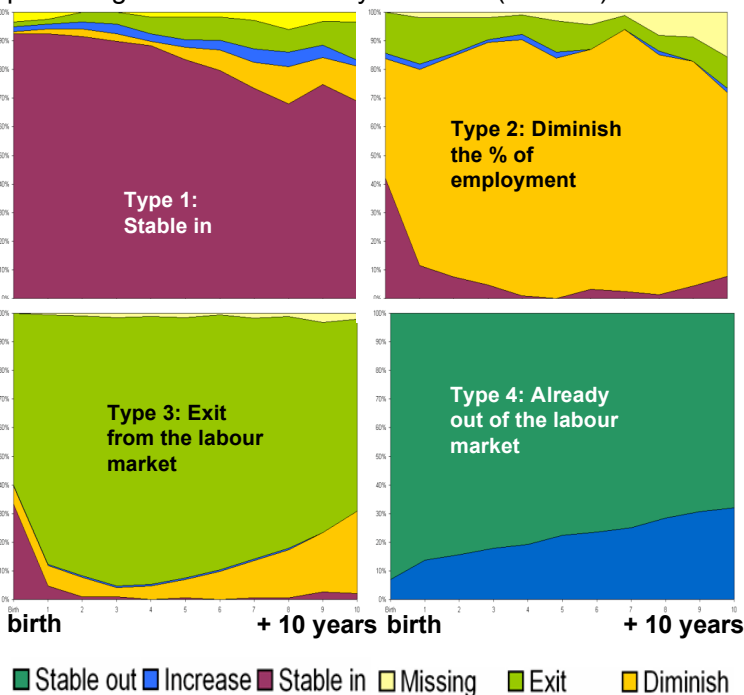
Francesco Giudici and Jacques-Antoine Gauthier (University of Lausanne)

Contact: Francesco.Giudici@unil.ch

Introduction

Transition to parenthood represents a turning point and a moment of major differentiation between men's and women's occupational trajectories. In Switzerland more than in other countries, the presence of a conservative welfare regime and the lack of child care structures favour the formation of families where the man is the unique breadwinner. Transition to parenthood is a crucial moment to observe how occupational trajectories differentiate not only between, but also within sexes. If in practice all men continue to work on a full-time basis, women's trajectories differentiate into 4 types: staying at home, continuing to work (part-time or full-time), and going back to work after a break (Widmer, Levy, & Gauthier, 2006). Inspired by this typology, we formulated two hypotheses stating the main factors determining occupational mobility after transition to parenthood.

Women's types of occupational mobility from the year preceding child's birth to ten years after (0-100%).



Hypotheses

(1) Occupational mobility after transition to parenthood depends on individual occupational characteristics before the transition. For women: self-employment, working full-time, working out of typical female occupations, and/or working in a small number of jobs before the transition favour staying in the labour market; (2) in couples with greater educational and occupational differences before the transition, women have more chances to exit the labour market.

Sample and Method

Data were derived from the retrospective questionnaire of the Swiss Household Panel (www.swisspanel.ch). We selected couples who had their first child between 1984 and 2002 (N = 482). We focused on information related to occupational experience after compulsory education (kind of occupation, status and percentage of employment in the occupation, number of jobs, and highest level of education achieved). We first used Optimal Matching Analysis (Abbott, 1995; Gauthier, 2007) to build a typology of women's changes in activity rates from the year before birth of the child to ten years after. We then used logistic regressions to measure the impact of different variables on the chances of belonging to specific types of occupational mobility.

Results and Conclusions

We ran logistic regressions with types of occupational mobility as dependent variables in three models. Model 1 tested individual occupational experience of women controlling for education, child's birth year (before and after 1990), and age of women at child's birth; Model 2 tested occupational characteristics of couples' last job held before becoming parents; Model 3 compared Models 1 and 2. Results showed that the likelihood of belonging to a specific type depended on various factors: women remaining in the labor market with unchanged rate of employment (Type 1) were either self- or part-time employed; women diminishing their rate of employment (Type 2) have higher education, child born after 1990, smaller number of jobs, and fewer female occupations before child's birth; women leaving labour market (Types 3 and 4) for a longer period are more likely to have a child born before 1990, medium or lower education, higher number of jobs, as well as typical female and part-time occupations. We find evidence supporting models 1 and 2 when tested separately, but see that individual variables tend to hide the effect of couples' characteristics.

This study provides evidence of the need to consider family events and the linked nature of individual lives (Elder, 2003) to understand how women's and men's occupational trajectories differentiate along the life course after their first child's birth.

Logistic Regressions (Odds ratio)

	STABLE IN (type 1)			DIMINISH (type 2)			OUT (type 3 and 4)		
	Model 1 N=482	Model 2 N=424	Model 3 N=382	Model 1 N=482	Model 2 N=424	Model 3 N=382	Model 1 N=482	Model 2 N=424	Model 3 N=382
Individual variables									
<i>Education</i>									
Low	1.54		1.34	0.17**		0.11**	1.94*		4.12**
Medium	0.61**		0.62	0.54*		0.35**	2.23**		3.98**
High	-		-	-		-	-		-
<i>Age at child's birth</i>									
birth	0.98		0.96	0.91*		0.88**	1.06*		1.10**
<i>Child's birth</i>									
<= 1990	1.04		0.90	0.52**		0.68	1.49*		1.38
> 1990	-		-	-		-	-		-
<i>Self-employed</i> †									
?	15.97**		6.83	0.27		0.45	0.13*		0.35
<i>Employers</i> †									
?	0.37		0.34	0.11**		0.03**	7.48**		15.50**
<i>Female activities</i> †									
?	0.91		1.26	0.58*		0.35*	1.52*		1.52
<i>Full time jobs</i> †									
?	2.69*		0.78	1.04		2.99*	0.47**		0.46
Couples' variables									
<i>Education</i>									
Both low and medium	0.86			0.44*			2.01*		
She low - He high	0.55			0.43*			2.67**		
She high - He low	0.57			1.05			1.38		
Both high	-			-			-		
<i>Difference of age</i>									
He is older	-			-			-		
Same age	1.10		1.12	1.16		1.06	0.84		0.85
She is older	1.23		1.22	1.22		1.08	0.78		0.82
<i>Last job: self-employed</i>									
None	-			-			-		
At least one	3.13**		2.20	0.79		0.70	0.45*		0.68
<i>Last job: full - parttime</i>									
Both	-			-			-		
He full time - She parttime	2.97**		3.85*	0.38**		0.15**	0.79		1.35
She full time - He parttime	0.60		0.62	1.50		2.20	0.89		0.75
Both parttime	8.21**		14.30**	0.35		0.09*	0.32		0.50
<i>Gendered occupations</i>									
She female - He male	-			-			-		
She not female - He male	1.83		2.32	1.26		0.67	0.58*		0.70
She female - He not male	1.11		1.14	0.91		1.12	1.01		0.87
Else	1.31		1.90	1.33		0.69	0.70		0.80
Fit of the model (χ^2)									
- Chi ² from model 1	41.92**		45.62**	43.74**		45.39**	22.69*		61.90**
- Chi ² from model 2							14.92		63.89**
- Chi ² from model 3							50.64**		35.43**
DF	8		12	17		8	12		17

*=sig<.05, **=sig<.01

† on number of years of work