

Title: Gender inequality in the life course. The effect of parenthood in the division of unpaid work

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to test if younger generations are more egalitarian or if more similar behavior among younger generations is due to life cycle factors. Data used in the analysis are from the Spanish time use surveys carried out in 2002-2003 and 2009-2010 and we measure the level of equality within the couple using differences in time devoted to unpaid work (housework and caregiving) between the spouses.

We analyze gender differences in time devoted to unpaid work the two surveys for generations born between 1963 and 1982. We focus on changes observed following a transition from 0 to 1 child and from 1 child to 2 children.

Preliminary results show that there is greater difference in time devoted to unpaid work with the arrival of a newborn and lower incidence of cohorts. Life cycle factors are more important than generations.

Background

Differences in the use of time between men and women are manifested throughout the life cycle (Anxo et al, 2011; Colom Moreno, 2009). Individuals learn their gender roles from childhood and develop their gender identity throughout their lives (Wight, 2008). However, differences are not constant at all ages and family situations, but vary with age and certain circumstances and events (Anxo et al, 2011; Baxter et al, 2008). In this sense, marriage, parenthood and participation in the labor market are important factors in explaining differences in the use of time.

Gender differences in time use are evident among children and as children transition into young adulthood and co-resident romantic relationships. As children, girls usually do more household work than boys although the total amount done by both is small (Blair, 1992; Gupta, 2006; Wight, 2008). However, emancipation and singlehood suppose a reduction of gender differences in the use of time (South & Spitze, 1994). Entry into union increases gender differences in time use (Gupta, 1999). Differences depend on the characteristics of the couples as type of union (cohabitation or marriage), educational attainment and wages of couples'

members and participation in the labor market (Batalova & Cohen, 2002; Baxter, 2005; Domínguez, 2012, Blau, 1998, Bianchi et al 2000, Gershuny, 2000).

Work and family have pronounced effects on couples' time use. Parenthood is one of the main triggers of inequalities in couples' use of time (Anxo et al, 2011; Baxter et al, 2008). The arrival of a child is associated with a reinforcement of gender roles and it increases the time that mothers spend in domestic and care work (Hallberg and Klevmarcken, 2003; Moreno Colom, 2009). Regarding the labor market, the usual pattern shows an increase of time spent by men in paid work while women often reduce their time in paid work and sometimes temporarily abandon (Blossfeld and Drobnic, 2001). Combining parenthood and paid work seems more difficult for women than for men and the coping strategies they develop differ (Anxo et al, 2011). Motherhood aggravates the double burden or second shift that women must cope with since they are usually the primary caregivers. The greatest inequalities are given in the first years after the birth of the children because older children require less attention and mothers usually reenter the labor market (Moreno Colom, 2009). Another consequence of motherhood is the increase of disparities in leisure time. In this sense, the presence of children under three years is associated with a lower valuation of leisure time by women (Nazio and MacInnes, 2007). In addition to women's reduction in individual leisure time, they experience an increase in multitasking activities where they perform various activities simultaneously (Bittman and Wajcman, 2000; Bianchi et al 2006).

We must take into account that the effect of parenthood on gender inequalities in time use can be mitigated by work policies that encourage greater parental involvement in the tasks of parenting (permission, flexibility in the day) and also the availability of childcare outside the home. The effect of motherhood on women's time use in the long term is more important and more difficult to reverse in less egalitarian societies where the policies implemented by the state are less developed (Dribe & Stanfors, 2009, Bühlmann et al, 2010). In Spain, policies to balance work and family life are scarce (Torns et al, 2011).

Objectives and Research question

The reduction of gender differences in the use of time in the last decades has been widely documented (Bianchi et al. 2006; Sayer 2005; Gershuny 2000). Part of the reduction is a consequence of a more egalitarian society while other part can be associated with a more egalitarian behavior between young people.

In the case of Spain, the gender gap in unpaid work was 3.41 hours in couples where the woman was younger than 35, 4.07 when she was between 35 and 49 and 4.39 when she was between 50 and 64. Seven years later, the differences decreased to 2.40, 2.91 and 3.41, respectively¹. These data are consistent with our expectations: couples are more egalitarian in 2009 compared to 2002 and young couples are more egalitarian than older ones. However, while the first assumption is clear in the sense that there is some unanimity in the scientific community that the trend is towards greater gender equality, the second expectation is not as clear. This is the issue we address in this paper and we aim to clarify how the differences

¹ Estimates from the Spanish Time Use Surveys 2002-2003 and 2009-2010.

between men and women with increasing age, an increase which corresponds to the transition to parenthood, especially for younger couples. The presence of children in the household increases inequality, reinforcing gender roles in the sense that it is often the woman who reduces her working hours to reconcile the care of their children (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000; Blossfeld & Drobic, 2001; Hallberg & Klevmarcken, 2003; Bianchi et al, 2006; Anxo et al, 2011; Baxter et al, 2008; Moreno Colom, 2009).

Our research question is: does greater egalitarianism among young couples reflect generational change or are they in a stage of their life cycle that favors this equality? The consequences of one or another response on the evolution of equality between men and women are diametrically opposed: generational change would signal a rapid evolution towards equality in society as a whole, while life cycle conditions would suggest the evolution towards equality would be much slower.

Data and Methods

Unfortunately, a longitudinal survey about time allocation of the same couples at different moments of the life cycle is not available. However, two time use surveys have been carried out in Spain in the last decade. Both surveys (2003-2003 and 2009-2010) follows a similar methodology and collect information about all the household members 10 years of age and older by means of a diary of activities. Although information gathered is not for the same individuals, we have selected characteristics from both surveys that are similar in order to work with populations as similar as possible.

Heterosexual couples are our population target. Gender gap in unpaid work is our dependent variable to measure the grade of equality in the couple. We have considered as unpaid work domestic tasks and care activities.

To test the effect of the arrival of a child, we compare differences between couples without children for different generations in the first moment with couples of the same generation 7 years later (years between both surveys) who has had a child between the first and second moment (it means that they have 1 or 2 children in the second moment and they are younger than 7). In a similar way, to test the arrival of a second child we compare couples with a child in 2002-2003 with couples with 2 children in 2009-2010 (it is one child older than 7 and other child between 0 and 7).

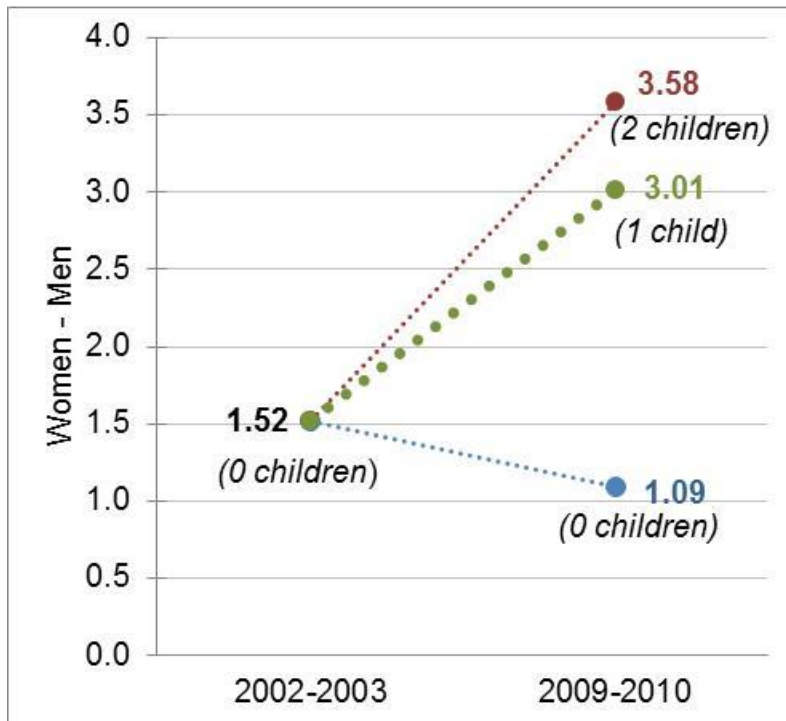
Our main variables of interest are the life cycle according to the number of children and the cohort. We compute OLS models where we control for other variables such as employment status, level of education, nationality, type of union, day of the week and availability of domestic service.

Table 1. Sample size

	FIRST TRANSITION		SECOND TRANSITION	
	2002-2003 (0 children)	2009-2010 (0-2 children)	2002-2003 (1 child)	2009-2010 (1-2 children)
1963-1967 <i>(35-39 in 2002-2003)</i>			294	186
1968-1972 <i>(30-34 in 2002-2003)</i>	329	268	469	265
1973-1977 <i>(25-29 in 2002-2003)</i>	422	428	215	101
1978-1982 <i>(20-24 in 2002-2003)</i>	108	341		

Results

Figure 1. Gender gap in Unpaid work in 2002-03 and 2009-2010 by number of children. Transition to first child



Source: Own calculations from the Spanish Time Use Surveys 2002-2003 and 2009-2010.

Figure 1 shows the gender gap in unpaid work according to the number of children for our entire sample. In 2002-2003, when all couples had 0 children, the gender gap was 1.52 hours. Seven years later, couples that still were without children had a gap in unpaid work of 1.09 hours. With

the arrival of the first child the gap doubles and it increases to 3 hours. The transition from 0 to 2 children increases the gap by 2 hours, it is half an hour more than the transition to 0 to 1.

Table 2. OLS Transtion to first child

	Model I		Model II		Model III	
	B	sig	B	sig	B	sig
Lyfe cycle. Num children		.000		.000		.000
2 children 2009-2010	2.280	***	1.807	***	1.889	***
1 child 2009-2010	1.574	***	1.457	***	1.516	***
0 child 2009-2010	-0.352		-0.083		-0.014	
0 child 2002-2003	ref		ref		ref	
Cohort		.387		.234		.141
1978-1982	-0.228		-0.300		-0.354	*
1973-1977	-0.190		-0.150		-0.131	
1968-1972	ref		ref		ref	
Employment Status				.000		.000
None at work			1.026		0.955	**
Female breadwinner couple			-2.178	***	-2.156	***
Male breadwinner couple			2.200	***	2.175	***
Dual earner, female works full time			-0.319		-0.245	
Dual earner, female works part time			ref		ref	
Nationality				.840		.653
Both Spanish			-0.034		-0.076	
At least one Foreigner			ref		ref	
Educational attainment of the woman						.003
Primary or less					0.493	**
Secondary School					0.433	**
University Degree					ref	
Type of Union						.637
Cohabitors					0.069	
Married					ref	
Day of the week		.000		.000		.000
Monday-Thursday	0.547	***	0.609	***	0.591	***
Friday-Sunday	ref		ref		ref	
Domestic Service		.000		.001		.008
Yes	-1.316	***	-0.798	**	-0.668	**
No	ref		ref		ref	
Constant	1.417	***	1.086	***	0.735	*
r2	0.329		0.400		0.401	

Source: Own calculations from the Spanish Time Use Surveys 2002-2003 and 2009-2010.

Table 2 corresponds to the OLS models for the transition to the first child. First model includes only the main variable of interest (Life cycle and cohort) and day of the week and availability of domestic service as control variables. In the second model we add the employment status and the nationality, two variables that have changed significantly between both periods. The third model contains all the control variables.

Change in the gender gap from 0 to 1 child is statistically significant. The increase is around 1 hour and a half and it is quite stable in all the models. Change from 0 to 2 children is also

significant. It is estimated in 2.2 hours in the first model, but it decreases to 1.9 when the other variables are included. The change for couples that remains without children is not significant.

Cohort coefficients are not significant in the most of the models and categories. Only the estimate for the cohort 1978-82 in the complete model is significant at level 0.05 and it predicts a slight decrease around 20 minutes in the inequality for the youngest cohort.

Table 3. OLS Transtion to Second child

	Model I		Model II		Model III	
	B	sig	B	sig	B	sig
Lyfe cycle. Num children		.031		.497		.587
2 children 2009-2010	-.597	*	-0.091		-.030	
1 child 2009-2010	-.479	*	0.215		-.030	
1 child 2002-2003	ref		ref		ref	
Cohort		.022		.371		.566
1973-1977	.678	*	0.323		.247	
1968-1972	.517	*	0.196		.150	
1963-1967	ref		ref		ref	
Employment Status				.000		.000
None at work			0.337		.406	
Female breadwinner couple			-4.142	***	-4.023	***
Male breadwinner couple			2.641	***	2.723	***
Dual earner, female works full time			-0.913	**	-.751	*
Dual earner, female works part time			ref		ref	
Nationality				.610		.614
Both Spanish			-0.157		-.157	
At least one Foreigner			ref		ref	
Educational attainment of the woman						.021
Primary or less					.646	**
Secondary School					.468	*
University Degree					ref	
Type of Union						.093
Cohabitators					.538	
Married					ref	
Day of the week		.000		.000		.000
Monday-Thursday	0.881	***	1.014	***	1.017	***
Friday-Sunday	ref		ref		ref	
Domestic Service		.000		.000		.000
Yes	-1.136	***	-0.199		0.036	
No	ref		ref		ref	
Constant	3.218	***	2.654	***	2.074	***
r2		0.013		0.278		0.284

Source: Own calculations from the Spanish Time Use Surveys 2002-2003 and 2009-2010.

Table 3 shows OLS estimates for the transition to the second child following the same structure as the transition to the first child in the Table 2. In this case, the transition from 1 child to 2 children supposes a decrease in the inequality, but this estimate decreases when the other variables are included in the model and it is not significant. It suggests a much lower impact of the second child in the gender gap. Cohort is not significant in the transition to the second child.

These results suggest that life cycle is more important than cohort. So we expect that changes to a more gender equality will be slower because the higher equality observed in younger generation will decrease when they have children. Our results also shows the big impact of the first child and the much lower of the second child.

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