

YOUR, MY or OUR kids

Is there more gender inequality in time use in stepfamilies than in dual parent families?

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Abstract¹

The aim of this paper is to know whether stepfamilies are more egalitarian than dual parent families. We defined two typologies of stepfamilies taking into account who brings in the children, the woman or the man. We use the differences in time devoted to paid, unpaid work and leisure to measure the level of equality within couples. We identify how domestic tasks are distributed by gender in each stepfamily typology in comparison with dual parent families. We establish which variables are associated more with gender egalitarian arrangements. To perform this analysis, we will use the Spanish Time Use Survey (2009-10) and the Catalan version (2010-2011). Our preliminary results show that when woman brings in the children the couple is more egalitarian than dual parent families in unpaid work. That is due to their employment status, as dual earners are more equals. However, when man brings in the children there aren't significant differences between stepfamilies and dual earner families.

Key words: gender, inequality, stepfamilies, time use.

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Introduction

Divorce implies a change in both time use and living arrangements for all family members. On the traditional breadwinner model the woman spends more time doing domestic work and childcare. But, what happens when this woman or man after having a divorced, starts a new relationship bringing in her or his children?

Most Spanish research on the domestic division of labor has focused on married, cohabited (Gonzalez *et al.*, 2010) or dual earner couples (García, 2013) but there is a lack of information of stepfamilies. A recent research by Treviño, Gumà and Permanyer (2013) shows a diversity of sociodemographic profiles among stepfamilies and larger heterogamy levels among the members that is not associated with larger gender inequality.

In this context, we want to explore whether stepparent couples are more egalitarian than dual parent couples in terms of unpaid work, paid work and leisure. To make an accurate analysis we defined two typologies of stepfamilies taking into account who brings in the children, the woman or the man. We have the following hypotheses:

- Whether women bring in their children would be more equal than dual parent couples on paid work and less on unpaid work, especially on childcare.
- Whether men bring in their children would be less equal than dual parent couples on paid work and more on unpaid work.

Besides, we want to establish which variables are associated with more gender egalitarian outcomes in stepfamilies compared to those playing a similar role in dual parent families. We want to know if these differences are caused by socioeconomic factors or by the typology of the household.

Data and Methods

We use the Spain Time Use Survey (2009-2010) and the Catalan Time Use Survey (2010-2011) to perform our analysis. They were conducted with Eurostat guidelines and follow similar methodology. They collect information on all household members ten years or older and examines the activities undertaken during a day, their duration and the context in which they arise. We selected these surveys because they satisfied two conditions: we can identify each nuclei typology and they have an individual activity diary.

The sample consisted of 7.993 dual parent nuclei and 160 stepparent ones and has information about the time uses of both members of the couple. To analyze the difference between the types of partner we will use general lineal models where the time difference (in paid, unpaid –domestic work and childcare- or leisure) by man and woman is the dependent variable. In the first model, and as a starting point to determine this difference, only the type of partner variable will be added. In this model we also control for other variables such as survey edition, weekend day and age of the youngest child. To estimate the impact of other population characteristic we will produce two new models adding variables that can presumably lead to higher differences. Model two includes domestic service, nationality, type of union, woman's educational attainment, number of children and woman's age and in model three we add couple's employment status.

Preliminary results

Results show a clear difference among stepfamilies typologies (she or he brings in the children). Stepfamilies are more egalitarian in paid work in both typologies but especially when he brings in the children. For this typology the equality increases in more than one hour in the model 1 and around 2 hours in the last model.

We found unexpected results in unpaid work. When she brings in the children the couple is 29 minutes more egalitarian than dual parent couples. Our hypothesis was that if the man was not biologically related to the child he wouldn't take care of them, as consequence the equality should be smaller. But the results highlight that this bigger equality is due to child care and not to housework. However, when we add other variables the significant difference disappears.

Table 1: General lineal models

		Model I		Model II		Model III	
		B	Sign	B	Sign	B	Sign
Paid work	She brings the children	1,105	***	0,705	*	-0,283	No sig.
	He brings the children	1,188	*	1,089	*	2,096	***
	Dual parent	ref		ref		ref	
Unpaid work	She brings the children	-0,492	*	-0,290	No sig.	0,256	No sig.
	He brings the children	-0,045	No sig.	-0,144	No sig.	-0,775	*
	Dual parent	ref		ref		ref	
Domestic work	She brings the children	-0,242	No sig.	-0,139	No sig.	0,258	No sig.
	He brings the children	0,115	No sig.	-0,014	No sig.	-0,464	No sig.
	Dual parent	ref		ref		ref	
Childcare	She brings the children	-0,250	*	-0,151	No sig.	-0,003	No sig.
	He brings the children	-0,160	No sig.	-0,131	No sig.	-0,311	No sig.
	Dual parent	ref		ref		ref	
Leisure	She brings the children	-0,870	***	-0,614	***	-0,334	*
	He brings the children	-0,319	No sig.	-0,188	No sig.	-0,429	No sig.
	Dual parent	ref		ref		ref	

Model I: Nuclei typology + Survey edition + Weekend day + Age of the youngest child

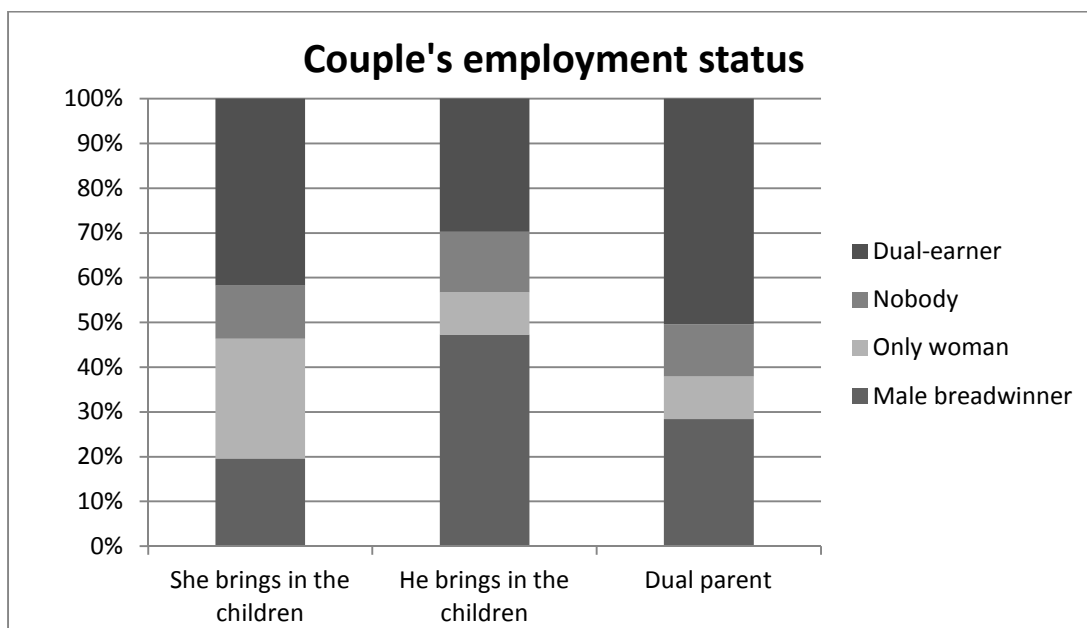
Model II: Model I + Domestic service + Nationality + Type of union + Woman educational attainment + Number of children + Woman age

Model III: Model II + Couple employment status

Our general lineal model shows that the key is employment status. Men who bring in their children usually have a partner with a low activity rate. We think that they are looking for a traditional woman, a mother for their children. These couples also trend to have children of their own. In these cases the woman are often younger than man and want to have a shared

child not only to make the relationship more stable, as literature has often posted, but also because she has yet to have her own biological child.

The opposite happens when the woman brings in their children. Woman has higher activity rates because as a single-mother she has worked. Her rates are also higher than dual parent women. What she searches for is a man that could help her at home without taking into consideration his employment status. In this case the man could possibly have his own children but they may be living in their mother's house.



Source: Authors' calculations, EET Spain 2009-10, EUT-Catalunya, 2010-11.

Next steps

It is important to take into consideration that this communication is made with provisional results. Our database is going to grow because we are in the process to add the Spain Time Use Survey carried out in 2002-2003. When the database will be finish the sample will be bigger and could obtain more significant results.

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