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Employment patterns: a crossroad between class and gender: a long-term longitudinal study of spouses' careers in West Germany

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Employment Patterns: A Crossroad Between Class and Gender

A Long-term Longitudinal Study of Spouses' Careers in West Germany

von

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Arbeitspapier Nr. 33

Preface

In the Special Collaborative Programme "Status Passages and Risks in the Life Course", the research project B6 attempts to examine the interrelationship between the family and the employment sphere within the household context. This empirical study, based on longitudinal data from the German Socioeconomic Panel, examines the effects of spouses' characteristics on married women's employment careers.

Employment behavior of married women in West Germany can only be understood within its household context. Although in first jobs, spouses are similar in terms of career resources and income potentials, the initial symmetry of couples becomes very gender skewed with regard to moves between paid (full-time and part-time) work and unpaid housekeeping work in the course of marriage. Social class differences are also substantial and span across two generations. The higher the occupational position of the husband, the stronger the impact on their wives to leave and stay out of the labor market. The most traditional family patterns, with strong specialization of the husband on market work and the wife in the domestic sphere, are found in cases where the husband comes from a lower-class family, experiences an upward mobility in the occupational hierarchy, and then marries a woman with lower career resources.

Prof. Dr. Ansgar Weymann
Chair, Special Collaborative Programme No. 186

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1 *Introduction*

Labor market and social mobility studies generally emphasize individuals rather than families or households as the units of empirical analysis. For example, human capital models postulate that job opportunities of individuals can be explained by differences in productivity, and that this productivity is a result of persons' investments into general and job-specific human capital (Becker 1975; Mincer 1974). Studies of labor market segmentation have been demonstrating that the labor market can be broken down into relatively closed partial markets, which are then not equally accessible to all individual workers (e.g., Blossfeld and Mayer 1988). Social mobility theory (e.g. Goldthorpe 1980; Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992) and status attainment approaches (e.g., Blau and Duncan 1967; Sewell and Hauser 1975) considered the variation in the social position of families as the dependent variable to be explained - but with no inequality between husband and wife (Sørensen and McLanahan 1987). These studies therefore investigated only the hierarchical relationships among male household heads competing for jobs in the labor market. The consequence of this research has been a tendency to ignore forms of inequality other than those of education, occupation and income for male heads of household (Curtis 1986). This pervasive male bias in the labor market and stratification literature has widely been criticized (Dex 1990; McRae 1990). Since the early 1980s, an enormous amount of literature that focuses on women's paid work, female labor force participation, gender-specific job and income opportunities as well as the sex-specific segregation of occupations has been generated. Unfortunately, most of these studies have been adopting an individualistic perspective, again focusing mainly on women's or men's position in the marketplace.

Only recently have sociologists started to explore the dynamic interrelationship of spouses over the life course empirically.[1] They have been drawing attention to the fact that families and households are not all the same and that differences in family and household relationships over time influence the behavior of their individual members (e.g., Sorensen and McLanahan 1987; Krüger and Born 1991; Krüger 1993; Erzberger 1993; Lauterbach 1994; Bernasco 1994).

The analysis presented here is part of a broader research project on the careers of partners living in couples, and takes a dynamic approach to the study of how spouses affect each other over the life course. It is based on a symmetric perspective, trying to examine the interdependencies of husbands' and wives' transitions between full-

[1] Based on the economic theory of the family, there have been a great number of studies focusing on the labor supply of married women. However, most of these studies are based on cross-sectional data.

or part-time paid work and unpaid household work beginning at the time of entry into marriage. What follows can therefore not be generalized for all women, all men, or women and men in nonmarital unions. The extent and nature of these interdependencies within marriages, varying across the family life cycle as well as between social classes, will be examined. Using data from the German Socio-economic panel, an event history analysis is used in order to consider the development of husbands' and wives' careers over the life course and across a broad range of marriage cohorts in West Germany. This long-term longitudinal approach allows married couples' employment careers to be studied in the context of a changing system of social stratification. There are three specific questions that will be addressed here: (1) To what extent are the transitions between (full-time and part-time) paid market work and unpaid housework gendered within marital unions in West Germany? (2) To which degree do spouses marry assortatively and how does this affect their employment relationships over the family cycle? (3) Do class-specific differences in the division of labor between husbands and wives become more or less important across marriage cohorts?

We begin with a description of long-term trends in labor force participation in Europe in general and in West Germany in particular, and then present a theoretical discussion of how husbands and wives affect each other in different social classes as well as summarize findings of previous research. This will then be followed by a description of our data, variables and methodological approach to parallel careers. Finally, we will discuss the results of our empirical analysis and summarize the main points.

2 *Long-term Trends in Labor Force Participation, Full-time Work, and Part-time Employment*

We start with a short description of long-term trends in labor force participation, full-time work and part-time employment based on studies in which data on individuals was used. This research shows that in most Western European countries women's economic activity rates were characterized by a surprisingly high stability up to the 1970s or later (Blossfeld and Hakim forthcoming). From a long-term historical perspective, there was no clear upward trend in female labor force

participation rates from the mid-nineteenth century until the early 1970s or later.[2] In Western Europe, the notion of a "rise" in women's overall economic activity rates can therefore only apply to a fairly recent period. Beginning at the early 1970s, they slowly rose in most Northern European countries.[3]

The change in the economic activity rates of women is however hard to interpret because it summarizes several structural developments which run in opposite directions and nearly cancel each other out. In particular, women's extending school enrollment (Blossfeld and Shavit 1993) increasingly shifts women's labor market entry into higher ages and reduces the economic activity rate of young women. However, the economic activity rate of married women has dramatically risen in Northern Europe.[4] This was particularly evident from about the 1950s until the mid 1970s, which was historical phase of sustained economic growth. Therefore, in many modern countries one can say that married female workers substituted for unmarried female workers between 1950 to 1970 (Oppenheimer 1972; Hakim 1993a; Blossfeld and Rohwer forthcoming). However, in recent publications, Hakim (1993a) emphasized that if one wants to understand married women's rising employment in Northern Europe appropriately, it is important to make a distinction between part-time and full-time employment.[5]

Part-time work is not evenly distributed among the sexes. In the European Union countries, part-time work is very rare among men, and the part-time workforce is almost entirely female. Men are normally employed full-time, unless they are in school, partially retired, suffer from health problems, or are employed part-time

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[2] Such was the case, for example, in Great Britain (Dale and Joshi 1992; Hakim 1993a), France (Riboud 1985), West Germany (Müller, Willms, and Handl 1983; Willms-Herget 1985), Spain, Sweden or the Netherlands (OECD 1988).

[3] Among the highly industrialized Western capitalist countries, only the United States of America has experienced a continuous and accelerating growth in women's overall employment for a longer historical period (Hakim 1993a, Drobnič and Wittig 1995, forthcoming). The same is true for women's economic activity rates in the former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe (i. e. former Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and former Yugoslavia) after the end of the Second World War. In these countries, women's labor market participation rates were very high by international standards, reflecting institutional regulations and employment policies which differed profoundly from Western capitalist economies (Drobnič forthcoming).

[4] The term Northern Europe refers to several Western European capitalistic countries in the north of Europe. We use it to distinguish them from the Southern "Rim": Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

[5] In addition, it might also be useful to separate part-timers from marginal workers.

involuntarily due to low labor demand (Rosenfeld and Birkelund 1992). In the European countries, the average proportion of part-time working men was about 3% and of women 29% in 1989. There is, however, a substantial variation in the proportion of employed women who work part-time among the European countries.

Also the extent to which women have worked part-time in Northern Europe has changed considerably and can be divided into three periods. There is a first phase, in which the women's part-time work rate grew fast and steeply between the 1950s and the mid-1970s; there has been a second phase of stability or moderate growth in most of the countries, which started in the late 1970s;[6] and there has been a third phase of slight decline in some of the countries that had already reached a comparatively high proportion of female part-time workers like Denmark (Leth-Sørensen and Rohwer forthcoming) or Sweden (Sundström forthcoming) during the 1980s.

All in all, the rather impressive increase in married women's labor force participation rates that has occurred during the last thirty years in Northern Europe has basically been the result of an expansion of married women's part-time employment (Blossfeld and Hakim forthcoming). This suggests, as mentioned by Bernhardt (1993), that women's role as a supplementary worker has hardly changed in most of the European countries. Increasing availability of female part-time work will have lessened the antagonism between work and motherhood for women. Since these women keep their foot in the labor market, they are not completely dependent on their husbands or partners in an economic sense; however, they have by and large suppressed their own (long-term) job opportunities and other interests during the phase when they are raising young children (Bernhardt 1993). It is therefore problematic to treat women's part-time work as undistinguishable from full-time work and expect it to be a major catalyst for change (Hakim 1993a, 1993b). It has been widely believed that the increase in the labor force participation of women as such would lead to less sex-specific occupational segregation, improve career opportunities for women compared to those of men, and bring more equality in earnings between working men and women. However, if the increase in the labor force participation of women is due to their entering part-time jobs in a labor market that is by and large organized around full-time employment, these expectations are

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[6] The exception is the Netherlands where the proportion of part-time employed women among the employed increased from 46% to 62% (see de Graaf and Vermeulen forthcoming).

unwarranted. Thus, the rise in married women's labor force participation in Northern Europe should have only slightly affected the gender inequality (Hakim 1993a).

However, it is equally wrong to consider women's part-time work only in terms of "atypical" or "precarious" employment (Blossfeld and Hakim forthcoming). First of all, this view neglects the fact that the overwhelming majority of part-time working women in Europe are married secondary earners in households, where at least one additional family member is working on a full-time basis (Büchtemann and Quack 1990; Hakim 1993a). Thus, women's part-time work is in most cases a supplement to at least one additional full-time worker in the household. Second, such families normally also provide protection in case of sickness and unemployment as well as social security in old age (Büchtemann and Quack 1990). Third, the atypical work perspective often assumes that part-time work constitutes some kind of an employment buffer against economic downturns and thus involves job insecurity and a relatively high risk of unemployment. The available empirical evidence for West-Germany shows that this is not the case (Büchtemann and Quack 1990; Quack 1993).[7] Finally, the pure fact that around 30% of employed women work part-time in the European Union may question the label "atypical" at all (c.f. Ellingsaeter 1992).

In summary, a full-time work perspective on women's labor force participation overstates the "liberating and equalizing" effects of women's part-time work and provides a far too optimistic picture of the change in the sex-specific inequality structure in Europe. On the other hand, the atypical work perspective (Mückenberger 1985) exaggerates the "marginalizing" features of married women's part-time work and develops a much too pessimistic scenario. Both approaches miss the central point of women's change in labor force participation in Northern Europe: they do not recognize that married women's part-time work is a new and qualitatively different category of work that is not identical with a full-time work arrangement, nor is it per se a marginal, exploitative form of employment. To understand women's employment position appropriately, it is therefore necessary to look at their employment status and their family situation.

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[7] This perspective might, however, be true for Great Britain. "In Britain part-timers are less likely to be in clerical and secretarial work, and much more likely to be in semi or unskilled manual work, particularly domestic and child-care jobs." (Dale and Joshi 1992: 105).

3 *Theoretical Discussion and Previous Research*

Before we present our empirical analysis of married women's paid work in the household context, we will first discuss various hypotheses and summarize previous research findings with regard to the interdependence of husbands' and wives' employment patterns.

3.1 Hypotheses based on the Economic Theory of the Family

The economic theory of the family (e.g., Becker 1981) is among the few approaches that draw attention to the fact that an individual's allocation of paid work in the market and unpaid work in the home is best understood within the context of the family as a matter of interdependence with activities and characteristics of other family members (Mincer and Polachek 1974). In the following, we briefly describe the main hypotheses within this approach which are important in the context of our research.

The economic theory of the family provides an intergenerational model because it links the human capital investment decisions of each new generation of men and women to the extent of sex-specific division of labor in the adult population of society. This is because investments in human capital of young women and men strongly depend on their expectations with regard to future sex-specific roles in the family and marketplace. Given the less market work of wives compared to their husbands in modern societies, young women compared to young men are less likely to acquire market skills as a result of both the women's decision and the decisions of employers, who may be expected to invest in worker skills to some extent. In other words, according to this view, there is in general (1) a comparative advantage of women over men in household work and (2) a comparative advantage of men over women in the labor market because of sex-specific accumulation of earnings capacity over the early life-course.

Based on these sex-specific investment differences, men and women are considered trading partners who decide to marry if each partner has more to gain by marrying than by remaining single. The questions of whether to marry and who will marry whom are therefore related to expectations of what will happen within the union in the future and in particular:

(1) what the expected gains of the marriage are (i.e. the dependencies of partners' utilities on each other): In the economic theory of the family, altruism is considered to be an important element in the functioning of families. It is common in families not only because families are small and have many interactions, but also because marriage markets tend to "assign" altruists to their beneficiaries. An altruist is made better off by actions that raise his/her family income and worse off by actions that lower it. Since family income is the sum of his/her own and his/her beneficiary's income, the altruist would refrain from actions that raise his/her own income, if they lower the beneficiary's even more; and would take actions that lower his/her own if they raise the income of his/her beneficiaries even more. Altruism ties couples together, even if only one of the partners is altruistic, as then all the family members are concerned about their joint income and try to maximize it, even the selfish family members. The mechanism that guarantees this is the compensatory behavior of transfers from altruists to others. Thus, as long as altruists receive something, selfish family members behave altruistically, both toward altruists and toward the altruists' other beneficiaries. This type of behavior makes it possible to define a family utility function based on the altruists' preferences that everybody wants to maximize.

(2) how the gains are going to be distributed within the family (e.g. the degree of positive and negative assortative mating): Becker (1981) distinguishes the individual's traits that determine earnings capacity (or income and wage) and individual characteristics that determine non-market productivity (intelligence, education, health, etc.).[8] If the earnings capacity is held constant, the optimal sorting of most non-market traits of mates tends to be positive and strong. Thus, a "superior" woman raises the productivity of a "superior" man and vice-versa.

(3) what division of labor they rest on (e.g. the extent of specialization in the household and market sector): If non-market traits are held constant, the utility of mates is maximized by a perfect negative assortative match with regard to their earnings capacities. This means that low-wage women tend to marry high-wage men and low-wage men tend marry high-wage women. Men and women with lower earnings capacity will then be used more extensively in household production, and those with higher earnings capacity will be used more

[8] Although this differentiation is problematic, we take it seriously for the time being.

extensively in market production. It is important to note that the economic theory of the family predicts the division of labor between a husband and a wife on the basis of the comparative advantage and does not per se assign the housework to wives.

Because of sex-specific investments into human capital at the beginning of marriage, wives will mainly rely on husbands as providers; and husbands will mostly depend on wives for the maintenance of the home as well as for the bearing and rearing of children.[9]

In the economic theory of the family, the production and rearing of children is considered to be one of the main purposes of families. They use market goods and services, as well as the time of parents, to achieve this goal. Again, because of the sex-specific investments into earnings capacity, the economic theory of the family predicts that it is especially the mother who will interrupt her market work to take care of the children. However, in principle, this could also be the father if his earnings capacity is much lower than his wife's.

Based on this model, it is possible to make predictions with regard to changes in the employment behavior of husbands and wives if the earnings capacity of young people changes across birth cohorts. In West Germany, women show a larger increase than men at all higher levels of educational attainment across birth cohorts (Blossfeld and Shavit 1993) and their shift from relatively unskilled production and service jobs to skilled service and administration occupations has been more pronounced than that of men (Blossfeld 1987). Young German women do therefore not only stay in the educational system longer than the women of older generations, but they are better than ever able to turn higher education into better job and career opportunities (Blossfeld 1989). Thus, this growth in the earnings power of younger women and their increasing labor force experience before marriage (Blossfeld and Huinink 1991) should raise the labor force participation of each younger cohort of married women. In combination with declining fertility across cohorts, this should allow younger married women to spend more time in the labor force prior to their first child and after the last child has entered school, and therefore reduce the aggregate time spent in childcare by young mothers. The greater number of women with better career opportunities should however also increase the likelihood that

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[9] Becker (1981) also refers to biological and intrinsic differences between the sexes to explain the sexual division of labor, but the main argument emphasizes the differences in earnings capacities at the beginning of marriage.

high-wage women marry low-wage men. And in turn, this should then lead to an increasing proportion of males that rely on wives as providers, and wives that rely on husbands as supplementary workers and for the maintenance of the home as well as for the rearing of children.

3.2 Consequences of the Sex-specific Division of Labor in the Family

A core feature of Becker's family model is that, according to the principle of comparative advantage, spouses will tend to specialize within the marriage because this is the most efficient productive strategy.[10] Thus, the economic theory of the family is an approach that tends to predict that one spouse (in the past normally the wife) concentrates on full-time homekeeping and childrearing, while the other one (in the past normally the husband) works full-time in the marketplace. On the basis of women's increasing earnings capacity across cohorts, which makes specialization within marriage increasingly difficult and therefore reduces interdependence and integration, Becker (1981) concludes that the family as a social institution in modern societies is threatened. He argues that these developments will lead to a decline of marriage and fertility as well as to a rise in divorce rates.

This position has been questioned by Oppenheimer (1993). She argues that although specialization may promote interdependence, it may not provide much cohesion for particular marriages. If it is relatively easy for one partner to replace the other through remarriage, then a considerable amount of marital instability must be produced by specialization. In many cases, segregated sex roles do increase the stakes in marriage but mainly for the wives who are at home, not for the husbands who normally go to work (England and Farkas 1986). Thus, the consequence for the integrative mechanism of gender specialization in the family has been economic dependency of wives on husbands (Sørensen and McLanahan 1987). Hence, specialization in families may increase the "gain" women obtain from a particular marriage by virtually eliminating other marital and non-marital options (Oppenheimer 1993). Beyond that, specialization also means that the small nuclear family is particularly vulnerable to the temporary (unemployment, illness) or permanent (separation, death) loss of a unique individual who provides an essential function – at home or at the labor market. Thus, "extreme" sex-role specialization not only

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[10] Of course, this mechanism will enhance the comparative advantages over time and intensify the specialization of husbands and wives with the increasing marriage duration.

entails risks for small families in a world characterized by unpredictable events, such as sickness, death, or unemployment, but also because of the very nature of the independent nuclear family as a social unit. As noted by Oppenheimer (1993: 24), "it is an inescapable biological fact that individuals' consumption needs and productive capabilities vary markedly by age. Consequently, a basic feature of nuclear families is that the ratio of consumers to producers, and hence the family's standard of living, can vary substantially over the family's development cycle ... Hence, specialization involves a potentially serious loss of flexibility in dealing with changes in both a family's internal composition and the stresses posed by its environment." From this perspective, wives' employment can be viewed as a highly adaptive family strategy in a modern society, rather than as a threat to the family as a social institution (Oppenheimer 1993).

3.3 Industrialization, Life-style and Labor Market Participation

There are also other reasons for the impressive integration of married women into paid work. Industrialization and modern technology have dramatically changed the standard of living in modern societies. Eggebeen and Hawkins (1990) argue that to enjoy the benefits of this tremendous growth in the standard of living, households have had to shift time from domestic activities to work in the market. This is because the most sophisticated and diverse goods and services that advanced technologies offer cannot be produced at home.[11] Thus, the only way to enjoy quality goods and services is to purchase them in the market. Eggebeen and Hawkins (1990) therefore conclude that the need to provide basic necessities for the family has declined over time as a motive for married mother's labor force participation. However, over the same time, desires to achieve and maintain a higher standard of living have increased. "Couples' choices to enjoy the fruits of a prosperous economic system and the products of a technologically advanced society, and to enjoy them at a younger age, are responsible for this important trend" (Eggebeen and Hawkins 1990).

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[11] It means a devaluation of the economic contributions of domestic labor in relation to market labor (Vickery 1979).

3.4 Men and Women as Providers

Research shows that even though most wives do paid work, the responsibility and recognition for family provision falls on husbands, and both wives and husbands are ambivalent about wives as providers (Szinovacz 1984). In particular, the meaning of work is different for husbands and wives. Women typically say, "Work is what I do, not what I am," while men typically offer their occupation first when asked, "Who are you?" (Cohen 1987). Husbands seem better able than wives to keep paid work and family as separate spheres of life, whereas women tend to shape their participation in the marketplace in response to family needs (Gerson 1985). "All this results in personal as well as structural resistance to change in the division of paid labor by gender. Therefore, when there is an increase in demands for family, wives, and not husbands, typically respond by reducing the amount of time spent in paid work" (Berk 1985). Thus, the presence of small children is closely related with wives' reduced participation in paid work (Moen 1985). Some wives find it easier to temper their husbands' opposition to their employment or to integrate paid work with family work when they can work part-time (Ferree 1976). Wives of professional husbands are more likely to be in intermittent part-time employment, whereas wives of non-professional husbands tend to have intermittent full-time employment (Moen 1985).

It has been shown that male authority and masculinity are identified with success in paid work for men. In families where husbands and wives are contributing earnings to their families, men retain the responsibility and recognition for provision (Hood 1983).

3.5 Social Class and the Sex-specific Division of Labor

Thoits argues that middle- and upper-class spouses will be first to change their division of labor by gender if there are children, and this change "will filter down the social ladder" (Thoits 1987: 21). Working class wives often work out of financial reasons. However, working class spouses try to maintain the image of wives as secondary providers by defining husbands's income as essential and wives' salary for "extras" (Zavella 1987). Ferree (1987) and Rosen (1987) show that most working-class wives do paid work for both economic and personal reasons. Although working class wives's jobs are often worrisome and wearisome, most working-class wives take pride in their job, welcome contact with other people, and enjoy the

recognition and respect that accompanies a paycheck. When they want to quit work, it is typically because their jobs are not good, not because they want to be full-time homemakers (Rosen 1987). However, most of these wives have contradicting feelings: they think their jobs are good for themselves and their families but, at the same time, feel guilty about their homes and children (Zavella 1987). "The realities of class mean that working-class families often find themselves dividing paid-work by gender more equitably than middle-class families, not only in terms of earnings, but also in responsibility and recognition for family provision" (Thompson and Walker 1989).

Middle-class husbands have the most trouble sharing family provision with their wives (Fendrich 1984). Stanley, Hunt, and Hunt (1986) found that young, highly educated, and occupationally successful fathers in dual-earner marriages are less satisfied with their marriages and personal lives than similar men who are sole providers for their families. They report that these successful men feel cheated because they have no wife at home to provide full-time service. Ferree (1987) argued that in middle-class families, husbands earnings level makes wives income, at best, supplemental and, at worst, unnecessary. Thus, it is easy in such families for husbands to view wives as supplementary providers and to consider their wives' paid work as a privilege for wives rather than as a contribution to the whole family. Also Weiss (1985, 1987) reports that successful middle-class husbands believe that their wives work for their own benefit and not to contribute to the family. Paid employment is seen as an opportunity for getting wives out of the house and giving them a chance to realize and express themselves. Husbands tend to believe it unselfish for supporting their wives' need to work outside of the family. Most of these husbands feel proud of their wives' job success but feel that their time on the job means that there is diminished attention to childcare and home management.

In many upper-middle-class families, wives' efforts help husbands to succeed. However, their efforts are less visible. Pananek (1979) shows how middle-class wives support their husbands' career advancement through family work: maintaining clothing, entertaining colleagues, appropriately training children, and engaging in the politics of status maintenance. Fowlkes (1987) describes how many wives of professors and physicians keep the home running, encourage their husbands, accommodate their own careers, and move when their husbands have to move.

In the following, we are going to empirically assess some of the hypotheses about the dynamic interrelationship of spouses over the life course in West Germany in

order to gain more insight into the basic structure of spouses' relationships and their long-term changes across marriage cohorts.

4 *Data, Variables, and Methods*

4.1 Data

Our analysis of couples' careers is based on data from the German Socioeconomic Panel (SOEP), a nationally representative longitudinal dataset of persons, households, and families in the Federal Republic of Germany. The first data collection was carried out in 1984 when about 6,000 households and 12,245 individuals were interviewed, and data on employment history were collected retrospectively. There has been a further panel wave in every subsequent year. We used information from ten panel waves in West Germany. Since all adult members of the sample households have been interviewed individually, SOEP offers a unique opportunity to match and study couples. Since one of our aims is to study long-term changes over various cohorts and non-marital cohabitation is a relatively recent phenomenon in Germany, we limited the analysis in this paper to married couples.

For the analysis presented here, we first reconstructed individuals' employment histories from the respondent's 15th birthday until the time of data collection or his/her 65th year of age. Further, we extended these histories with monthly data that noted individuals' employment changes between each panel wave for the period 1983-1992. Next, we reconstructed the family histories that were recorded in the second panel wave. These data include information on the beginning and the end of (at most three) respondent's marriages in the period before 1984 as well as birth years of children for female respondents. Later, changes in marital status and childbearing history were obtained on a monthly basis from the consecutive panel waves.

Female respondents served as a basis for matching. To be included in the spouses sample, a woman must have reported being "married," and must have identified the person to whom she was married in at least one wave of the panel. Although theoretically it would be most appropriate to study first marriages for all cohorts, this selection criterion was abandoned in view of practical difficulties. If a person's marriage started and ended before 1984, this ex-spouse was not included in the

sample and no information on him or her was available, which made the selection of the first marriage unsuitable. Therefore, the respondents' last marriages were studied. We succeeded to identify and match 1289 German spouses for whom all required variables were available.[12]

The basic spouses' dataset consisted of a series of respondents' employment episodes and out-of-labor-market statuses, starting with the time of marriage and ending with either marriage dissolution or with a right censored observation at the time of the last panel wave.

4.2 Variables

The purpose of our paper is to explicitly link the dynamics of the family life cycle and spouses's resources with the career patterns of the family members. To be able to perform a causal analysis, we need information on underlying processes that generate the observed distribution of a person's employment statuses. Therefore, the processes of entering and leaving the labor force in the career history must be known.

Various states in respondents' employment history have been distinguished: full-time, part-time employment, housekeeping, unemployed, retired, and other. Dependent variables in the analysis presented in this paper are transition rates from (1) full-time employment to housekeeping status, (2) part-time employment to housekeeping, (3) housekeeping status to full-time employment, and (4) housekeeping to part-time employment.

There are two kinds of independent variables: time-constant, and time-varying variables which change their states over the time of marriage. To introduce time-dependent measures into the rate equations, we used the method of episode splitting, described in detail by Blossfeld, Hamerle and Mayer (1989), and Blossfeld and Rohwer (1995). Each episode has been split in a duration of at most 12 months. For each of the sub-spells, four different pieces of information were provided: time at the beginning and end of the sub-spell and its location within the employment episode, values of the time-dependent covariates at the beginning of these sub-spells, whether

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[12] Many cases were lost from our analysis because the long-term biographical data on employment histories, family histories, and first entrance into the labor market were asked by the SOEP researchers in three separate panel waves.

the interval ended with an event or not, and the values of other covariates relevant for the analysis. Estimates were performed with the Transition Data Analysis (TDA) program (Rohwer 1994).

The following sets of independent variables were included in the analysis:
a. Stratification variables:
- Woman's social origin, operationalized by her father's occupational status, measured by the Wegener (1985) occupational score
- Woman's education, measured in years of schooling
- Woman's career resources or earnings potentials, operationalized by the occupational status of her first job; measured by the Wegener score.

b. Woman's age and career history before marriage:
- Woman's previous full-time work experience, measured as cumulative duration of her employment in full-time jobs before marriage
- Woman's previous part-time work experience, measured as cumulative duration of her employment in part-time jobs before marriage
- Woman's age, included in the models in a linear and quadratic form as a time-dependent covariate
- Woman's age at marriage

c. Childrearing history:
- Number of children, time-dependent covariate
- Preschool child; time-dependent dummy variable, indicating the presence of at least one child until 6 years of age in the family
- School child; time-dependent dummy variable, indicating that no child younger than 6 years but at least one child under 18 years of age is present
- Child > 18 years; also a time-dependent dummy, marking the time within marriage with grown up children.

The reference category for the children variables is "no children."

d. Partner's resources:
- Partner's social origin, operationalized by his father's occupational status (Wegener occupational score)
- Partner's education, measured in years of schooling
- Partner's career resources or earnings potentials, operationalized by the occupational status of his first job; measured by the Wegener score

e. Marriage cohorts:
- Married 1955-1964, dummy variable
- Married 1965-1974, dummy variable
- Married 1975-1984, dummy variable
- Married 1985 or later, dummy variable

The reference category for marriage cohorts are couples married in the period before 1955.

4.3 Methods

The longitudinal analysis of spouses' interdependent careers is a methodologically difficult endeavor because of the issue of reverse causation. Reverse causation means that one career, considered from a theoretical point of view as the dependent one, has (direct or indirect) effects on the independent covariate process(es). Reverse causation is seen as a problem in event history analysis because the effect of a time-dependent covariate on the transition rate is confounded with a feedback effect of the dependent process on the values of the time-dependent covariate.[13]

In this paper, we apply a "causal approach" to the analysis of interdependent systems that was suggested and described in detail by Blossfeld and Rohwer (1995). We believe that this is a more appropriate approach for a study of spouses' careers than the normally used "systems approach." In particular, it provides a straightforward solution to (1) the simultaneity problem of interdependent processes, (2) the identification of lags between causes and their effects, and (3) the study of temporal shapes of effects (Blossfeld and Rohwer 1995; Blossfeld, Klijzing, Pohl and Rohwer 1995). In this approach, the history and the present state of the system are seen as a condition for change in (any) one of its partial processes. Given two parallel employment careers of a husband (Y_t^A) and his wife (Y_t^B), a change in Y_t^A at any (specific) point in time t' may be considered as being dependent on the history of both processes up to, but not including t'. Or stated in another way: what happens with Y_t^A at any point in time t' is conditionally independent of what happens with Y_t^B at t', conditional on the history of the joint process $Y_t = (Y_t^A, Y_t^B)$ up to, but not including t'. Of course, the same reasoning can be applied if one focuses on Y_t^A instead of Y_t^B as the "dependent variable." Blossfeld and Rohwer (1995) call this

[13] In other words, the value of the time-dependent covariate carries information about the state of the dependent process.

the principle of conditional independence for parallel and interdependent processes.[14]

The same idea can be developed more formally. Beginning with a transition rate model for the joint careers, $Y_t = (Y_t^A, Y_t^B)$, and assuming the principle of conditional independence, the likelihood for this model can be factorized into a product of the likelihoods for two separate careers: a transition rate model for Y_t^A which is dependent on Y_t^B as a time-dependent covariate, and a transition rate model for Y_t^B which is dependent on Y_t^A as a time-dependent covariate.[15] Estimating the effects of time-dependent (qualitative and metric) changes on the transition rate can easily be achieved by applying the method of episode splitting (see Blossfeld, Hamerle, and Mayer 1989; Blossfeld and Rohwer 1995).

5 Results

We begin our empirical analysis of the employment careers of spouses with a description of who marries whom, then describe gender-specific employment transitions over the joint family history, and finally study the mobility between full-time or part-time work and homekeeping with hazard rate models.

5.1 Assortative Mating in West Germany

In the past, research on assortative mating in Germany tended to focus on the wife's status mobility but not on that of the husband's (Mayer 1977; Handl 1988; Teckenberg 1991). This is because in the conventional stratification theory, social inequality among families is thought to be determined only by the occupational attainment of the male heads of household. A woman's social status has therefore only been ascribed to her on the basis of the job position of her providers, i. e. her

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[14] The terminology is adapted from Gardner and Griffin (1986), and Pötter (1993).

[15] The mathematical steps leading to this factorization are, in principle, very easy but unfortunately need a complex terminology. The mathematical apparatus will therefore not be given here. The mathematics can be found in Blossfeld and Rohwer (1995), Gardner and Griffin (1986), Pötter (1993), and Rohwer (1994). An important implication is that since not only the states, but also functions of time (e.g. duration) can be included conditionally, the distinction between state and rate dependence proposed by Tuma and Hannan (1984) loses its meaning (see also Pötter 1993).

father in the family of origin or her husband in her own family (Goldthorpe 1980, 1983). This traditional perspective is reflected in the statement that "What a man 'does' defines his status, but whom she marries defines a woman's." The opposite perspective, that a man's social class might be affected through marriage, has therefore been widely neglected in sociological research (McRae 1986; Jones 1991). The following analysis takes a more symmetric view. It examines the job position of young men and women close to the time of marriage and compares the extent of status mobility through occupational attainment and marriage for both sexes.

Figure 1: Joint Density of Husband's and Wife's Wegner Scores

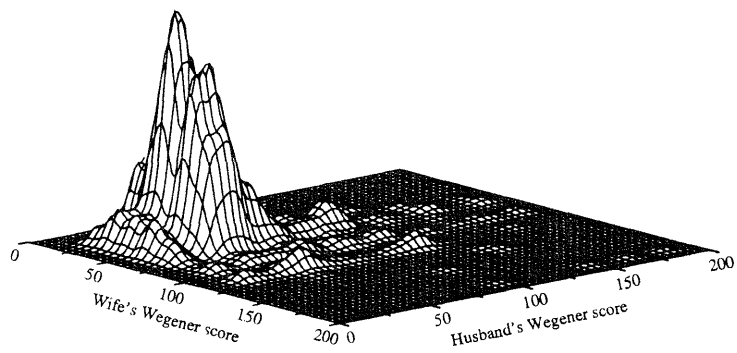
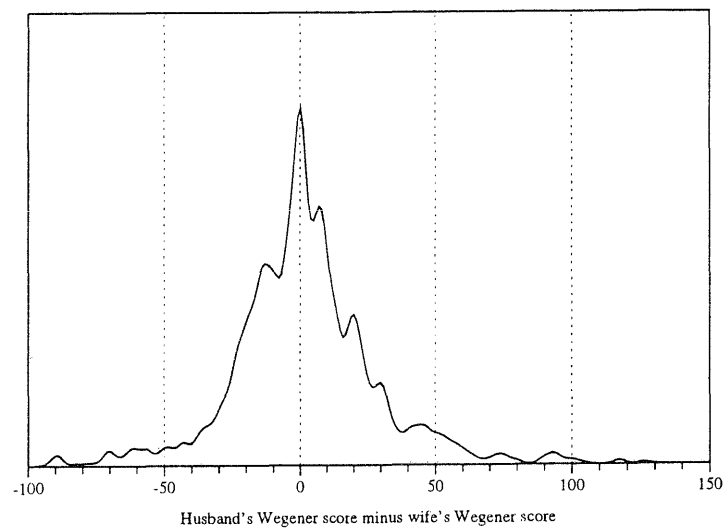


Figure 1 shows the joint distribution of husbands' and wives' social status, or in terms of human capital theory, their earnings potential, close to the time of marriage. The "mountains" in this picture reflect a high degree of homogamy in partner's status but at the same time also an important degree of marriage mobility. Some spouses have moved up through marriage, others have experienced degradation. The degree of upward and downward mobility through marriage for husbands and wives is shown in Figure 2. The density of the differences between husbands and wives status scores clearly peaks and strongly clusters around zero. Thus, there is a great deal of endogamy and homogamy in the social statuses of spouses and most people marry within their own status group. The distribution, although slightly skewed to the right, is surprisingly symmetric. Thus, there is an upward and downward mobility through marriage for both wives and husbands.

Of course, this finding raises questions about how the status of husbands and wives is measured. The occupational structure in West Germany, as in all modern societies, is highly sex-segregated (see Blossfeld 1987). The magnitude prestige scale of

Figure 2: Density of Wegener Score Differences Between Husbands and Wives



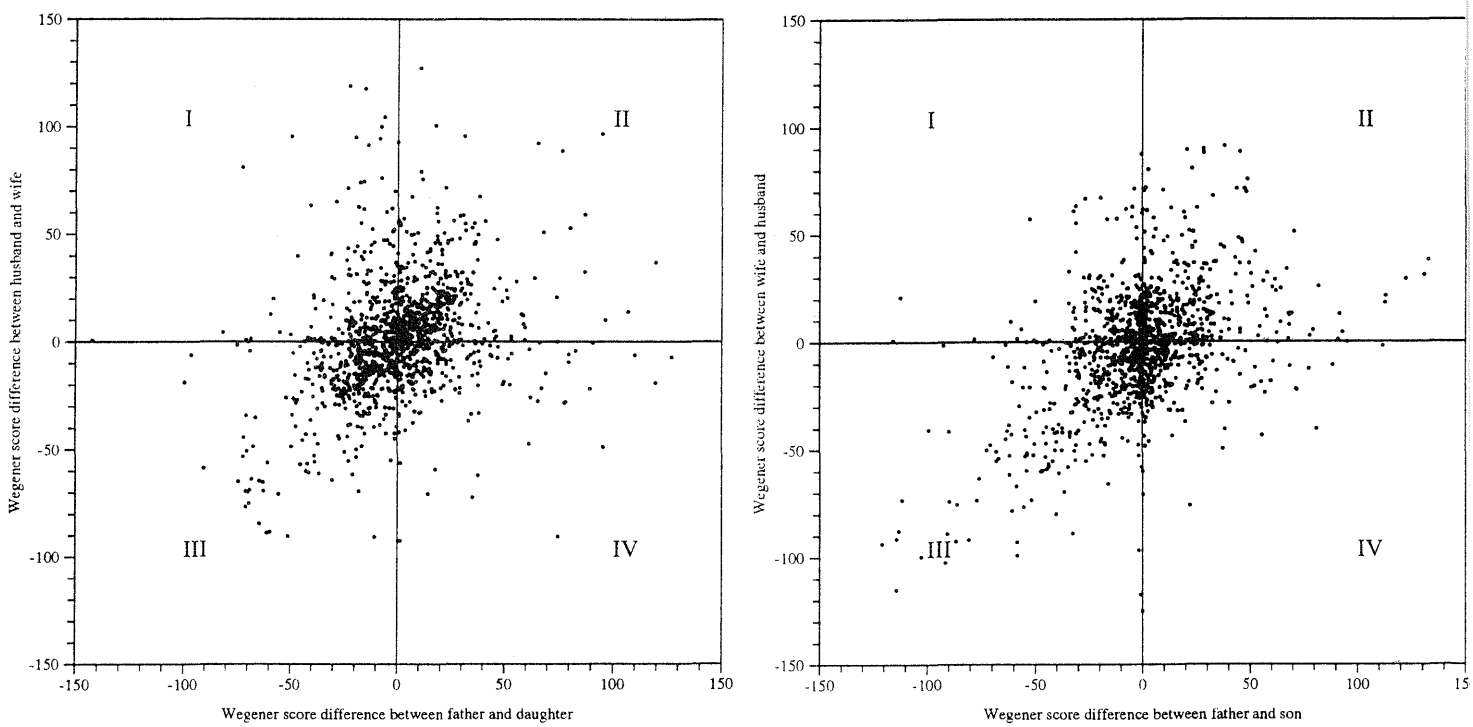
Wegener (1985), which certainly has a strong male bias, could to some degree overestimate women's social position because it could assign higher scores to positions that are dominated by women. And a wife with a higher status than her husband, but in a female-typed occupation, may not be perceived as having a higher occupational status because the dominant feature of her occupation is not its status but its feminine identification. Thus, the "sex-segregated labor force may provide a buffer, preventing status comparisons between spouses from being made" (Hiller and Philliber 1982). Although both of these arguments are plausible and may explain some of the differences between wives and husbands, there are many couples in our sample, where the wife's status score was much higher than the husband's[16] (see Figure 2). Based on the economic theory of the family, one would therefore expect that within these couples, males would rely more on wives as providers, and husbands would show a tendency to specialize on the maintenance of the home and the rearing of children, as well as take over the role of a supplementary worker. Our further analysis will show whether this is indeed the case in West Germany.

However, before we continue with this type of analysis, we briefly review some of the intergenerational aspects of assortative mating. Figure 3a plots the status difference between father's (when the daughter was 16 years old) and daughter's

[16] Empirical examples from the Socio-Economic Panel of status differences, where the scores of the wives' first jobs considerably exceed those of their husbands: the wife is a pharmacist and the husband an engine fitter; the wife is a sociologist and the husband a carpenter; the wife is a social worker and the husband an agricultural laborer; the wife is a teacher and the husband a watchmaker.

position (at her first job) against the difference in husbands' and wives' status score. Four different cases are logically possible: women move up occupationally when compared to their fathers and then once again through marriage (I. quadrant in Figure 3a); women move downwards occupationally, but gain in status position through marriage (II. quadrant); women move up occupationally and then experience downward mobility through marriage (III. quadrant); and finally, women move down occupationally and then also through marriage (IV. quadrant). There does not appear to be any strong systematic relationship in this figure since the points do not show a distinct pattern. Thus, all of the four logical possibilities are more or less equally distributed.

Figure 3: Intergenerational Association of Wegener Score:
3a Wegener Score Difference Between Father and Daughter
3b Wegener Score Difference Between Father and Son



If we draw the corresponding pattern for men (Figure 3b), we find a sort of clustering along an upwardly sloping straight line, indicating more intergenerational association than for women. In particular, men who have achieved a higher social position than their fathers, tend to marry wives who have a social position at about the same level as their family of origin (quadrant III in Figure 3b). As will be seen

later on in our empirical analysis, this type of husband has the most trouble in dealing with his wife's paid employment and tends to use his wife's efforts for his own career advancement.

5.2 Employment Transitions of Husbands and Wives

In terms of occupational scores and earnings potentials of first jobs, husbands and wives show strong homogamous tendencies, which was an expected outcome of our analysis. However, a relatively large proportion of spouses also exhibit differences in their career resources, and these differences span in both directions (Figure 2). Relatively frequent are not only cases where men have considerably higher earnings potentials than their wives, but also cases where women surpass their husbands in levels of career resources.

Due to high homogamy and the symmetry of the differences in earnings potentials of husbands and wives, one would expect not only a large number of wives but also a substantial number of husbands with lower earnings capacity to specialize in household production or work part-time as supplementary workers. This is because the economic theory of the family postulates the rule of comparative advantage. Thus, we were particularly interested in transitions between paid employment and out-of-the-labor market state for both husbands and wives. However, the initial intentions to study these moves for both spouses in parallel were swiftly abolished after the employment trajectories for couples were examined. Table 1 shows how extraordinarily gender-specific the employment transitions in West Germany are. For example, among all married West German spouses that we identified in the SOEP sample, only 25 full-time employment episodes for husbands ended up in housekeeping (Table 1). However, for wives, this is a common move within marriage: no less than 1243 events of this type were recorded among the wives. Also other transitions between paid work and housekeeping are very frequent for wives but negligible for husbands, so we have to conclude that employment patterns within marriages in West Germany are so gender-specific that no parallel analysis is feasible. Therefore, the following analysis will only concentrate on wives' employment patterns.

The crucial conclusion at this point is that the division between market work and household work among West German husbands and wives does not seem to be driven by the logic of a comparative advantage in investments into human capital.

Table 1: Gender specific employment transitions for couples

Origin state		Destination state	Nr. of events Husbands	Wives
Transitions between paid work and housework:				
full-time	→	housekeeping	25	1243
part-time	→	housekeeping	5	1020
housekeeping	→	full-time	26	465
housekeeping	→	part-time	5	1441
Transitions between various labor market statuses:				
full-time	→	part-time	136	584
part-time	→	full-time	133	374
full-time	→	unemployment	587	264
part-time	→	unemployment	20	172
unemployment	→	full-time	506	133
unemployment	→	part-time	22	161
unemployment	→	housekeeping	8	262

Source: German Socio-Economic Panel

Even in those couples where wives have a much higher earnings potential than their husbands, husbands will normally work full-time and the wives - as the following analysis will show - will adjust their paid (full-time and part-time) work in response to family demands. Thus, according to the economic theory suggested by Becker (1981), the sexual division of labor within families could then only be explained by reference to biological and intrinsic differences between sexes. However, this seems to us to be a very reductionist perspective. Instead, we argue from a sociological perspective that there are pervasive gender-specific norms in the German society, as in many other modern societies, that assign the responsibility and recognition for family provision to husbands and not to wives. These norms are so strong that they make comparative advantages in human capital investments meaningless for the division of work between husbands and their wives.

5.3 Transition from Full-time to Housekeeping for Wives

Table 2 shows the "initial" status of wives at the time of marriage across consecutive marriage cohorts. Particularly in the oldest marriage cohort, the proportion of housewives around the time of marriage is relatively high; however, this proportion falls in younger cohorts. In the 1960s and 1970s, almost three quarters of newly married women worked full-time. This high percentage of full-timers continued for younger cohorts but has somewhat eroded for women married in the second part of the 1980s, when unemployment seized a non-negligible share of the female labor force. In spite of that, the general pattern is that a large majority of women work full-time at the time when they marry. This makes full-time work a natural starting point for the analysis of transitions in employment states for married women.

Table 2: Women's employment status at the time of marriage, for various marriage cohorts (in percentages)

	married -1954	married 1955-64	married 1965-74	married 1975-84	married 1985-
Full-time empl.	57	73	74	70	68
Part-time empl.	5	6	4	8	6
Housewife	29	16	12	11	13
Other[1]	9	5	10	11	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: German Socio-Economic Panel
[1] Other statuses: in school or vocational training, student, unemployed, retired, on childcare leave, other.

Table 3 presents the estimated effects on the hazard rate of employment exits from full-time jobs. Piecewise constant rate models have been used to control for the duration dependence in full-time work. The general pattern in this transition is a low initial exit rate which increases in the period when the person is in employment for 6-12 months; afterwards the rate falls continuously over the time spent in employment. Since our main purpose in this analysis is to examine the effects of the family cycle and the spouse, the specification of the baseline rate only serves for control purposes and will not be interpreted substantively.

Table 3: Effects on the transition rate from full-time work to housekeeping. SOEP, piecewise constant model.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Duration < 6 months	-5.6433**	-5.1627**	-2.9247**	-2.8541**	-3.1433**	-3.3040**	-3.2719**	-2.9938**
Duration 6-12 months	-3.7289**	-3.2464**	-0.9719*	-0.9020	-1.1623**	-1.3164**	-1.2869**	-1.0118*
Duration 1-3 years	-4.5400**	-4.0577**	-1.6292**	-1.5612**	-2.0456**	-2.1948**	-2.1651**	-1.8933**
Duration 3-5 years	-4.8250**	-4.3473**	-1.6819**	-1.6155**	-2.1723**	-2.3056**	-2.2760**	-2.0008**
Duration > 5 years	-5.6481**	-5.1807**	-1.8457**	-1.7915**	-2.2761**	-2.3956**	-2.3710**	-2.0962**
W's social origin	-0.0004	0.0011	0.0015	0.0015	0.0011	-0.0000	-0.0002	-0.0003
W's education		-0.0500**	-0.0282	-0.0207	-0.0084	-0.0412	-0.0382	-0.0394
W's occup. score			-0.0056**	-0.0057**	-0.0057**	-0.0079**	-0.0075**	-0.0079**
W's full-time < marr.				0.0014	0.0010	0.0011	0.0009	-0.0011
W's part-time < marr.				-0.0080	-0.0080	-0.0076	-0.0079	-0.0078
W'age			-0.1998**	-0.1997**	-0.2283**	-0.2401**	-0.2423**	-0.2428**
W's age^2			0.0016**	0.0016**	0.0024**	0.0025**	0.0025**	0.0026**
W's age at marr.			0.0771**	0.0668**	0.0679**	0.0710**	0.0749**	0.0735**
No. of children					-0.0527	-0.0280	-0.0302	-0.0223
Preschool child					1.2426**	1.2457**	1.2283**	0.7736**
School child					-0.0841	-0.0708	-0.0788	0.1374
Child > 18 years					-0.4171	-0.4240	-0.4265	-0.5672
H's social origin						-0.0042**	-0.0041**	-0.0044**
H's education						0.0666**	0.0652**	0.0661**
H's occup. score						0.0040*	0.0038*	0.0001
Married 1955-64							-0.0455	-0.0392
Married 1965-74							-0.0548	-0.0384
Married 1975-84							-0.1542	-0.1409
Married 1985-							-0.1190	-0.1146
H's occ.score×preschool child								0.0080**
H's occ.score×school child								-0.0051
H's occ.score×child > 18								0.0019

Number of events: 639
** $p \leq .05$
* $p \leq .10$

In Model 1, we first estimate the effect of wives' social origin on the likelihood that they will interrupt their employment. The effect is not statistically significant, indicating that social origin in itself does not directly explain women's behavior in the labor market. Social origin may however operate in opposing directions and cancel each other out. For example, higher status families may, on the one hand, transmit to their daughters negative attitudes towards female employment; but on the other hand, such families typically provide better opportunities for higher educational

attainment, which, in turn, increase labor market chances and the attractiveness of paid employment.

We proceeded in this direction in the next model by including wives' education (Table 3, Model 2). According to the human capital theory, more investment in education and training raises market efficiency, which means higher productivity and higher income potential, thus making work in the marketplace more likely. Indeed, wives' schooling has a strong negative effect on employment interruptions. Other things equal, each additional year of schooling decreases the likelihood of leaving the labor market by about 5 percent. However, when wives' first job is included in Model 3, it becomes evident that not the abstract educational level in itself, but the market value of this education is decisive in governing their labor market behavior. It is only when a woman is able to market her potential educational resources, i.e. obtain a good job, that her attachment to the labor market within marriage increases.

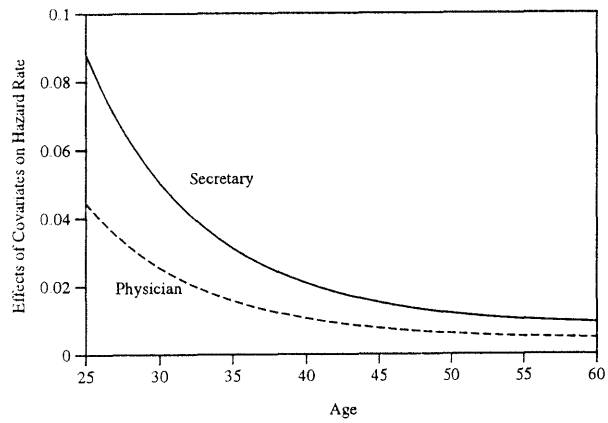
Age has been included in this model in linear and quadratic form to assess the baseline rate over the life course. Age also orders multiple episodes over the life span and is in many cases a good proxy for different stages in the individual life course. The shape of the hazard rate has a decreasing tendency over the life cycle and only reverses its direction at the age of 62. Here it should be reminded however that only married women are included in our sample and the observation period starts at the time of marriage. In another study, it has been shown that when all women are observed, the hazard rate rises first for West German women in their twenties and then starts to fall afterwards (Drobnič, Blossfeld, Rohwer, Wittig 1995).

Marriage age also has a strong statistically significant impact on wives' employment interruptions; the older the women are when they marry, the more rapidly they leave full-time employment. This is quite a surprising result and demands careful consideration. Previous empirical analyses have shown that a longer participation in the educational system shifts women's entering into marriage to older ages (Blossfeld and Huinink 1991). Education thus has two contradicting effects on wives' labor market interruptions. On the one hand, higher education results in better occupational opportunities and better jobs, which prevents women from leaving paid work. But on the other, longer schooling typically increases the age at marriage (Oppenheimer 1988; Blossfeld 1995), which leads to earlier interruptions.

To illustrate these complex and not readily obvious results of our event history analysis, we simulated a series of examples that should provide a more

straightforward insight into the estimated effects of the independent variables on the non-observable hazard rate. Figure 4 presents the estimated effects of covariates on the likelihood to quit a full-time job and become a housewife for two different women. Both of them married at the age of 25; one of them is a secretary (occupational score on the Wegener scale=65); the other is a medical doctor with the highest possible occupational score of 186.8. The fact that no information on children and partner is used is a common situation in standard labor market analyses.

Figure 4: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



Secretary, no children, no information on husband

Physician, no children, no information on husband

In this graph, we can easily see how both women experience a falling shape in the hazard rate across the age span from 25 to 60. Second, the secretary with lower occupational resources has a higher tendency to interrupt her employment; the difference is particularly large in younger ages.[17] These results corroborate hypotheses of the human capital theory.

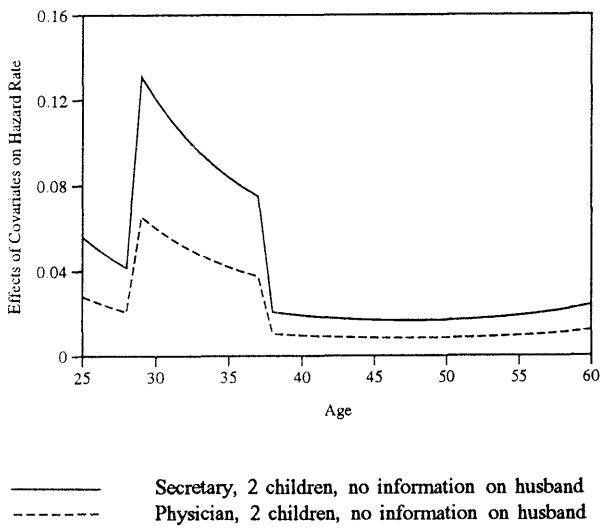
At the next stage, we include information on children into the analysis. Because of the gender-specific division of labor within the family and the labor market in West Germany, wives' employment patterns are particularly affected by the number and age of children. These factors have been included in a time-varying form and the results are presented in Model 5 (Table 3). Not surprisingly, there is a strong effect of a preschool child in the family on the mother's transition rate to housekeeping. The presence of a preschool child increases the transition rate by 246%.[18] The

[17] Note: the illustrative figures in this paper do not display the actual level of the hazard rate and should therefore not be interpreted as such. The baseline rate has been omitted from our calculations in order to avoid a mingling of the covariate effects with the baseline rate which is not constant over the duration of the episodes.

[18] Since (exp(1.2426) -1)×100%=246%.

effect is clearly visible in Figure 5, where it has been assumed that both the secretary and the physician got their first child at the age of 29 and the second one at the age of 32. Again, both women display a similar shape but the secretary with less career resources displays a higher likelihood to quit employment. The rate falls considerably only after the second child reaches school age. This is again in agreement with human capital theory.

Figure 5: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



We finally elaborate our model further to specify the extent to which wives' labor market exits depend on their husbands' resources. In Model 6 (Table 3), all the previous covariates that refer to women's characteristics and children remain significant, and at the same time strong effects of partners are detected. The higher the husband's education, the faster women leave their employment. This effect is additionally strengthened by a good occupational position of the husband. Overall, husband's resources have an impeding effect on wife's labor force participation. Similar results have been found in other studies (Bernasco 1994; Ferber and Huber 1979; Erzberger 1993). An explanation for a positive effect of husband's education remains a bit of a puzzle. The typical argument from the economic theories that education is an indicator of higher earnings which in effect induces specialization in the household is questionable. Namely, the effect of education also remains present when we include husbands' earnings capacity in terms of their jobs.[19]

Another interesting result that emerges shows how behavior patterns are mediated through social relations across generations. In models 6, 7 and 8, there is a strong significant negative effect of husband's social origin on his wife's hazard rate. This means that particularly men who come from lower status families, but themselves

[19] Also Bernasco (1994), who directly included information on husbands' earnings in his estimation of exit rates of Dutch women, found a persistent and substantial effect of husband's education.

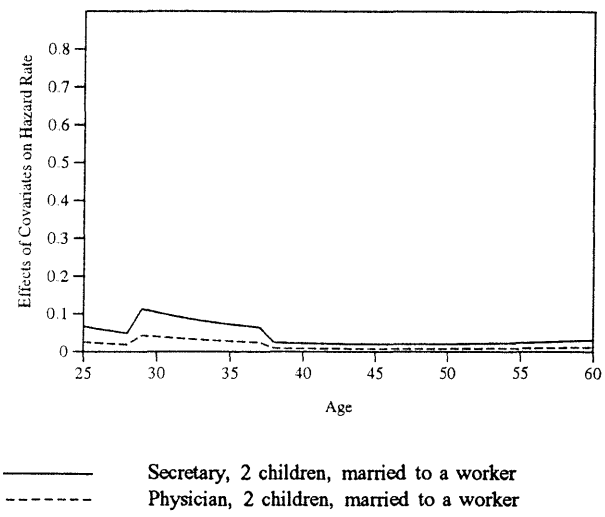
succeeded to reach good occupational positions, tend to give their wives a strong push to quit their employment.

In Model 7 (Table 3), cohort dummies have been included. Surprisingly, there are no direct changes across cohorts with respect to the interruption patterns of married women. Of course, had we looked at the cohorts in the usual cross-sectional aggregate way, we probably would have found some significant changes in the proportion of working married women across cohorts. However, our analysis shows that what has changed over time are the circumstances, not the basic pattern. Younger women have on the average a higher education and give birth to fewer children later on in life; this contributes to their higher participation in the labor market. But they also marry later and generally have husbands with higher occupational resources, which increases their probability to leave employment. When we control these relevant factors overall, no significant changes remain across marriage cohorts.

Finally, we included an interaction effect of husband's occupational position and children, and found that the effect of a preschool child is particularly strong in families where a husband has a higher occupational status.

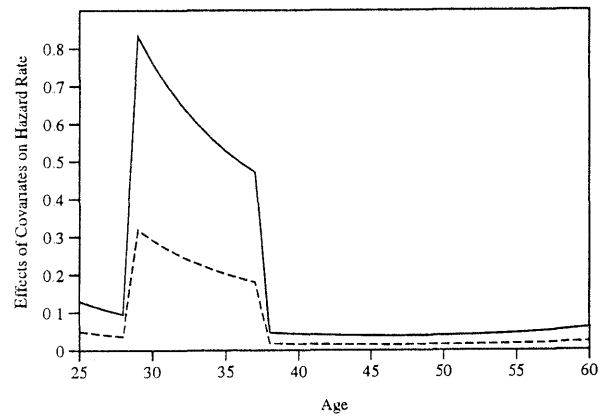
Again, we simulated various situations to illustrate how the effects of husbands modify the transition rate of wives from full-time employment to housekeeping. In Figure 6, we included information on husband's schooling and job position into our example cases. A secretary and a female physician, married at the age of 25 and having two children, are now both married to a husband with 11 years of education and a rather low occupational score of 40. Both women are not very likely to interrupt and the difference in the hazard rate between them becomes very small. Thus, to some extent

Figure 6: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



the wives' employment interruptions in Germany reflect the system of social inequalities. There seems to be a strong impact of the economic needs of the family on women's employment. When husbands cannot provide sufficient financial support, wives tend to stay in full-time employment and in such a situation, the effects of small children are also moderate.

Figure 7: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



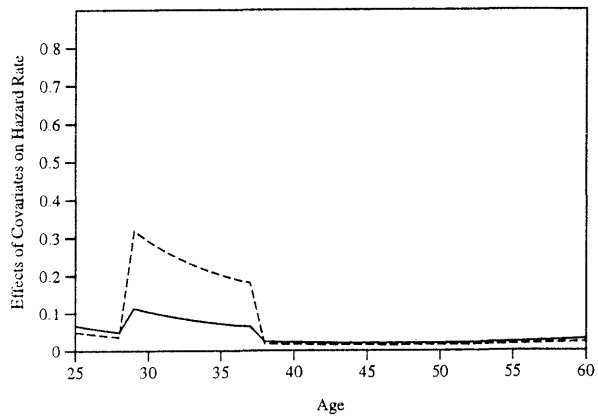
The situation would have been very different if both women were married to a physician, as shown in Figure 7. Now the rate for both women somewhat increases already at the beginning of marriage and escalates - particularly for the secretary - at the time of birth of the first child. This suggestively illustrates the impact of husband's position on his wife's employment behavior. Particularly when the husband has a much higher occupational position than his wife - that is when the differences in resources that the couple brings into the marriage are large - is there a tremendous influence on her likelihood to become a housewife. In such households, the traditional family pattern with strict division of market work for husband and domestic work for wife is most commonly found.

It is interesting to note that the impact of a preschool child strongly depends on the husband's job position. If the husband has a higher social position, a traditional role model is fostered and there is a high tendency to interrupt employment when there are small children in the family. However, if the husband is in the bottom part of the occupational hierarchy, the influence of preschool children on wives' employment behavior is small.

At the next stage, we introduced a more realistic situation with a strong marriage homogamy. This time, the secretary is married to a skilled worker, and the female doctor to another physician. Figure 8 shows for the first time a situation where the

hazard rate for the two women gets reversed. Now the exit rate is higher for the higher skilled woman, which indicates that at a certain point the husband's resources simply override a woman's own career assets. Even if the female physician has a much higher income potential than a secretary, she will be more likely to interrupt employment when she is married to a husband with a high social status. Hence, by omitting the effects of the husband and focusing on the wife's individual resources only, one would make a wrong prediction with regard to the employment behavior of these women.

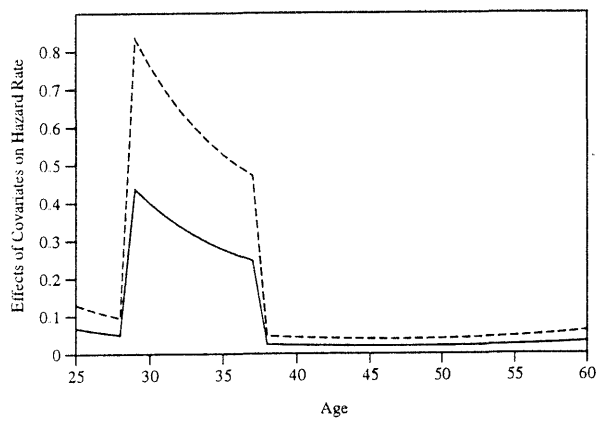
Figure 8: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



Secretary, 2 children, married to a worker
Physician, 2 children, married to a physician

Finally, Figure 9 illustrates the variation in the wife's transition rate, dependent on the social origin of her husband. The example shows a secretary married to a physician, who himself either comes from a high or low social class origin. It is evident that an upward mobility of the husband increases the pressure for a wife to retreat to the housekeeping role. In sum, the most traditional division of labor is found in families where the resources of husbands are much greater than their wives' and where husbands have achieved much better jobs than their fathers.

Figure 9: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



Secretary, 2 children, husband is physician coming from a higher-class family
Secretary, 2 children, husband is physician coming from a lower-class family

5.4 Transition from Part-time to Housekeeping for Wives

Transitions from part-time employment to housekeeping are of a somewhat different nature than exits from full-time employment. Few women in Germany work part-time before marriage. Part-time is a typical option for married women with children at re-entry into the labor market (Blossfeld and Rohwer forthcoming; Pfau-Effinger 1994). Therefore, exits from part-time employment usually occur later on in women's career trajectories. These results are presented in Table 4 and the

Table 4: Effects on the transition rate from part-time work to housekeeping. SOEP, piecewise constant model.

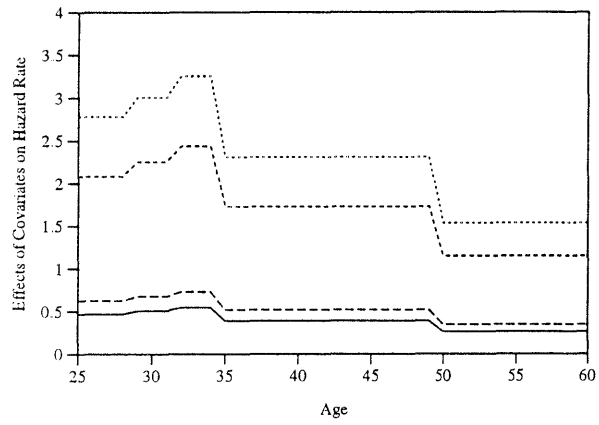
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Duration < 6 months	-4.1606**	-4.3714**	-5.0281**	-5.0438**	-5.7166**	-5.8892**	-5.9363**
Duration 6-12 months	-4.4489**	-4.6579**	-5.3118**	-5.3273**	-5.9876**	-6.1578**	-6.1825**
Duration 1-3 years	-4.6357**	-4.8444**	-5.5044**	-5.5206**	-6.1668**	-6.3338**	-6.3218**
Duration 3-5 years	-5.2054**	-5.4134**	-6.0850**	-6.1013**	-6.7141**	-6.8753**	-6.7982**
Duration > 5 years	-6.0231**	-6.2276**	-6.9428**	-6.9614**	-7.4712**	-7.6255**	-7.4593**
W's social origin	0.0030*	0.0024	0.0025	0.0025	0.0024	0.0023	0.0032*
W's education		0.0211	0.0369	0.0385	0.0403	0.0303	0.0279
W's occup. score			-0.0025	-0.0024	-0.0032	-0.0032	-0.0053*
W's full-time < marr.				-0.0001	-0.0002	-0.0002	0.0010
W's part-time < marr.				0.0015	0.0013	0.0013	0.0026
W'age			0.0235	0.0269	0.0592	0.0591	0.0485
W's age^2			-0.0002	-0.0002	-0.0006	-0.0006	-0.0001
W's age at marr.			0.0008	-0.0027	-0.0020	-0.0003	-0.0377**
No. of children					0.0774*	0.0785*	0.0781*
Preschool child					-0.0044	0.0043	-0.0469
School child					-0.3064**	-0.3083**	-0.3429**
Child > 18 years					-0.6317**	-0.6375**	-0.7512**
H's social origin						-0.0027	-0.0027
H's education						0.0413*	0.0362*
H's occup. score						-0.0023	-0.0017
Married 1955-64							0.0734
Married 1965-74							0.8701**
Married 1975-84							1.0105**
Married 1985-							1.4943**

Number of events: 545
** $p \leq .05$
* $p \leq .10$

increasingly complex models can be followed step-by-step as in the case of full-time employment. Let us move directly to the full Model 7. It is only when all covariates are included, that the effect of women's career resources becomes statistically significant, showing that women with better first jobs are less likely to leave the part-time segment of the labor market. Husbands' education has again a negative effect. Thus, women married to highly educated men exit employment more rapidly. Women who have married at an older age, who have had more children, or raised children that are of school age or older, are more likely to stay in part-time employment. Most importantly, a strong effect of marriage cohort is observed. Women who married after the mid-1960s increasingly leave part-time jobs. This effect is of course associated with the rapid expansion of part-time employment that started in the 1960s. Before that, women did not hold part-time jobs and could therefore not leave them. The result also shows that part-time work is a more transient employment form – it is often accepted but also often quit.

The illustration of this type of employment transition is provided in Figure 10. It shows the contrast between couples married before 1965 and those married after 1985. Not only is the transition rate for the youngest marriage cohorts significantly higher, but also the influence of children and the husband's educational level become more pronounced, thereby gaining in importance.

Figure 10: Transition from Part-time Employment to Housekeeping



——— Women, married before 1965, 2 children, husband with low education

- - - - - - - Women, married before 1965, 2 children, husband has university degree

---------- Women, married in 1985 or later, 2 children, husband with low education

..... Women, married in 1985 or later, 2 children, husband has university degree

5.5 Transition from Housekeeping to Full-time Employment for Wives

It has already been shown that no changes in terms of exits from full-time employment occurred across cohorts, apart from changes resulting from the changed composition of the female labor force. However, the labor force participation rate of women rose during the periods under consideration. A logical explanation for that phenomenon is that women must have been re-entering the labor force after the

Table 5: Effects on the transition rate from housekeeping to full-time employment.
SOEP, piecewise constant model.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Duration < 6 months	-5.4255**	-5.4542**	-6.7063**	-7.1546**	-6.1942**	-6.0386**	-5.9494**
Duration 6-12 months	-5.6234**	-5.6518**	-6.8928**	-7.3378**	-6.3472**	-6.1916**	-6.0698**
Duration 1-3 years	-5.7753**	-5.8035**	-7.0701**	-7.5153**	-6.4578**	-6.2960**	-6.1318**
Duration 3-5 years	-6.0984**	-6.1264**	-7.4402**	-7.8884**	-6.7846**	-6.6171**	-6.4076**
Duration > 5 years	-6.6034**	-6.6305**	-7.9406**	-8.4071**	-7.4872**	-7.2989**	-7.0597**
W's social origin	-0.0058*	-0.0059*	-0.0047	-0.0053	-0.0051	-0.0035	-0.0037
W's education		0.0030	0.0082	-0.0025	0.0101	0.0439	0.0131
W's occup. score			-0.0023	-0.0033	-0.0025	-0.0001	-0.0005
W's full-time < marr.				-0.0045**	-0.0037*	-0.0040**	-0.0031
W's part-time < marr.				-0.0045	-0.0045	-0.0050	-0.0044
W'age			0.1401**	0.1518**	0.1019**	0.1035*	0.1038*
W's age^2			-0.0019**	-0.0020**	-0.0018**	-0.0018**	-0.0017**
W's age at marr.			-0.0490**	-0.0209	-0.0081	-0.0019	-0.0214
No. of children					0.1274**	0.1195*	0.1197*
Preschool child					-0.7056**	-0.6968**	-0.7925**
School child					0.0471	0.0474	-0.0037
Child > 18 years					0.3224	0.3184	0.2287
H's social origin						0.0007	-0.0000
H's education						-0.0525	
H's occup. score						-0.0052	-0.0075**
Married 1955-64							-0.1621
Married 1965-74							0.0774
Married 1975-84							0.2571
Married 1985-							1.3501**

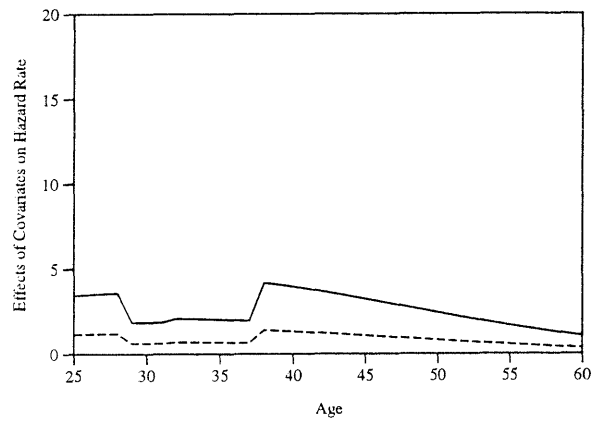
Number of events: 242
** $p \leq .05$
* $p \leq .10$

interruption faster and on a more massive scale. Let us first have a look at the (re)entries into full-time jobs in Table 5 and the illustration in Figure 11 which is based on model 7.

The first unexpected result is that women's entry into full-time employment is independent of their educational level and career resources. However, it does depend on their husband's resources. A higher occupational status of the husband decreases the hazard rate, as shown in Figure 11, for the cohorts married before 1985. However, there was little variation among households in different social classes because re-entry into full-time employment was infrequent for older cohorts.

A substantive change in terms of married women in full-time employment in West Germany has only come about in the last ten years, but this change is by no means trivial. Women in younger marriages are almost four times more likely to move from housekeeping to full-time employment than women who married before the mid-1980s (Figure 12). However, with the increased flow into the labor

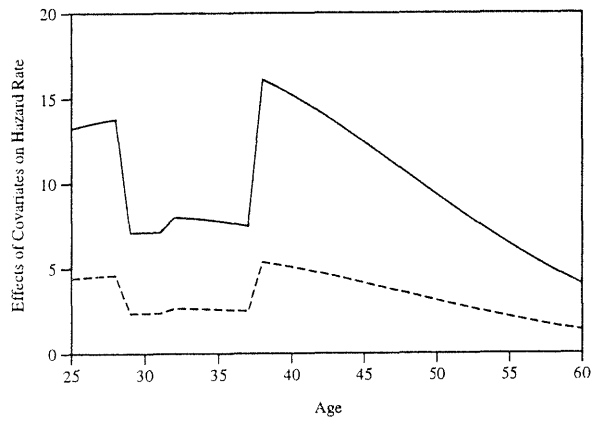
Figure 11: Transition from Housekeeping to Full-time Employment



——— Women, married before 1985, 2 children, husband is a worker

------- Women, married before 1985, 2 children, husband is a physician

Figure 12: Transition from Housekeeping to Full-time Employment



——— Women, married in 1985 or later, 2 children, husband is a worker

------- Women, married in 1985 or later, 2 children, husband is a physician

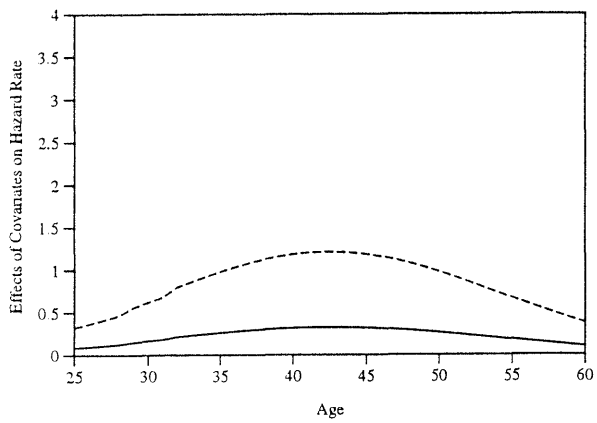
market, the differentiation between social classes became more pronounced, too. The rate of entering full-time employment increased for all women but was disproportionally strong for those women whose husbands have a low occupational status. Thus, full-time employment of married women seems to be fostered by the economic need of the family to a large extent. With a more massive entering into the full-time segment of the labor market however the household composition gains in importance. Young children play a much more important role for these women than in former times, when the group of women entering full-time jobs was small and highly selected. With full-time work becoming increasingly common, particularly in households with less resources from the husband, it also becomes more life-cycle specific, with children having a strong inhibiting effect.

5.6 Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment for Wives

It has been shown that full-time employment has gained in importance for married women after the family interruption only recently. Part-time work, on the other hand, has been the major engine of change in female employment in West Germany (Table 6). In transition from housekeeping to part-time employment, women's own resources, children, the partner's resources, as well as the overall increase in the availability of part-time jobs, play an important role.

If only information on women is available, the plotted rate of entry into part-time employment gives a smooth non-monotonic shape over the life course. When information on children is included (Table 6, Model 5), the rate decreases but the shape remains basically the same (Figure 13). Here we have an example of two

Figure 13: Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment



——— Low educated woman, 2 children, no information on husband

- - - - - - - High educated woman, 2 children, no information on husband

Table 6: Effects on the transition rate from housekeeping to part-time employment.
SOEP, piecewise constant model.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Duration < 6 months	-4.0731**	-5.2081**	-10.4524**	-10.3845**	-9.4911**	-9.6127**	-9.7503**
Duration 6-12 months	-5.0831**	-6.2049**	-11.3838**	-11.3160**	-10.4177**	-10.5362**	-10.5998**
Duration 1-3 years	-5.3187**	-6.4283**	-11.6327**	-11.5630**	-10.6424**	-10.7532**	-10.7143**
Duration 3-5 years	-5.8672**	-6.9682**	-12.2952**	-12.2240**	-11.2850**	-11.3905**	-11.2694**
Duration > 5 years	-6.1247**	-7.1897**	-12.8867**	-12.8159**	-11.9564**	-12.0527**	-11.6934**
W's social origin	0.0045**	0.0002	0.0007	0.0007	0.0006	0.0010	0.0018
W's education		0.1194**	0.1225**	0.1269**	0.1316**	0.1479**	0.0994**
W's occup. score			0.0002	0.0004	0.0009	0.0023	0.0005
W's full-time < marr.				0.0000	0.0001	-0.0002	-0.0001
W's part-time < marr.				0.0059**	0.0055**	0.0053**	0.0068**
W'age			0.3821**	0.3831**	0.3226**	0.3204**	0.2769**
W's age^2			-0.0044**	-0.0045**	-0.0038**	-0.0037**	-0.0027**
W's age at marr.			-0.0955**	-0.1030**	-0.0964**	-0.0907**	-0.1292**
No. of children					0.0806**	0.0748**	0.1066**
Preschool child					-0.1500	-0.1437	-0.3340**
School child					0.1691	0.1774	-0.0178
Child > 18 years					-0.3225	-0.3114	-0.5589**
H's social origin						-0.0042**	-0.0034*
H's education						0.0204	0.0156**
H's occup. score						-0.0053**	-0.0047**
Married 1955-64							0.9958**
Married 1965-74							1.8577**
Married 1975-84							2.5384**
Married 1985-							2.9691**

Number of events: 762
** $p \leq .05$
* $p \leq .10$

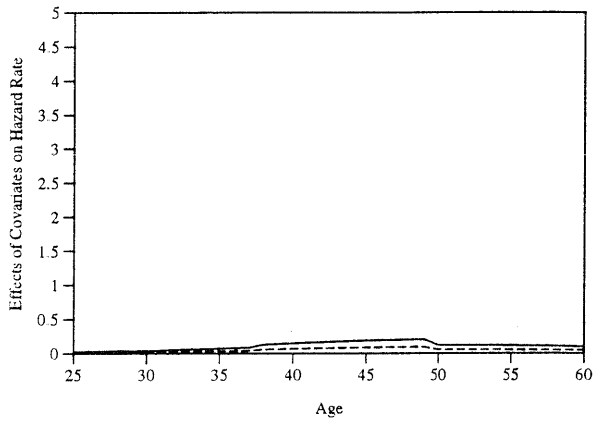
women, one with 12 years of schooling and the other with a university degree. Women's own resources increase their attachment to the labor market. A woman with a university degree has a significantly higher rate of entering part-time employment. However, it is only when the husband's characteristics and the historic period in which the couple got married is known, that the whole spectrum of variation in females' life courses becomes visible.

Figure 14 shows a woman with 12 years of education, with two children, married in the 1950s to a husband of either high or low social status. Her likelihood to enter

part-time employment was extremely low and because of that, the household characteristics were basically unimportant. A woman in such a situation remained a housewife or perhaps entered full-time employment.

In the 1980's, the circumstances changed dramatically. The woman's own educational level strongly augmented her entrance into part-time employment. In addition, the household's characteristics became very important. Let us have a look at the effects of children and husband's resources when a woman's own characteristics are held constant (Figure 15). Now the husband's resources play a contradictory role in the wife's employment behavior. On the one hand, his education fosters the wife's employment. Higher educated husbands perhaps recognize that employment for its own sake might be important for women, and a part-time working wife does not threaten their gender identity. However, husbands' high occupational status has a negative effect on their wives' labor market participation, even for part-time employment. It

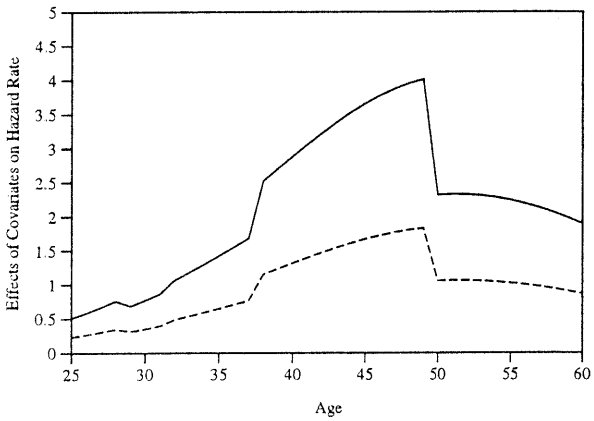
Figure 14: Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment



——— Low educated woman, married in the 1950s, 2 children, husband has high education but low status job

------- Low educated woman, married in the 1950s, 2 children, husband is a physician

Figure 15: Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment



——— Low educated woman, married in the 1980s, 2 children, husband has high education but low status job

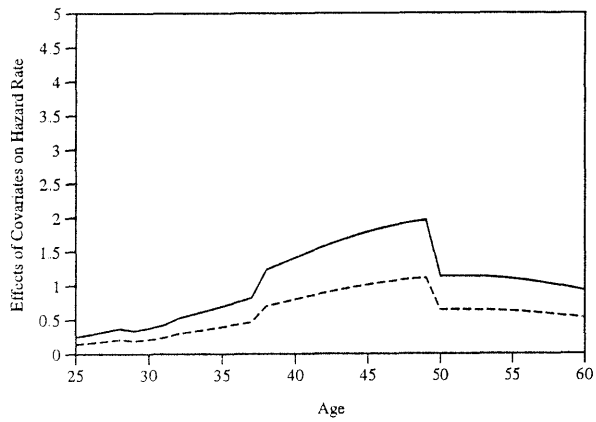
------- Low educated woman, married in the 1980s, 2 children, husband is a physician

seems that in spite of higher education, men keep their traditional role expectations. The higher their occupational position - particularly when it is much higher relative to the wife's own career resources - the more power they wield in the bargaining position over their wives' employment.

In Figure 15, it is shown that higher status husbands decrease the likelihood of their wives' entry into part-time jobs. Also the effects of children have become more pronounced for these younger marriage cohorts. When preschool children are present in the household, but also if the couple has grown up children, the entry rate decreases. The number of children however increases the entry rate. These are fairly complex patterns, which reflect household responsibilities and the time requirements of children, as well as the need for a supplementary income in larger families.

Finally, Figure 16 illustrates the additional negative effect of a husband's social origin on his wife's part-time employment. Holding all other individual and household characteristics constant, husbands who come from higher status families again have a stronger negative impact with respect to part-time participation of married women. Thus, upward mobile husbands tend to use wives' full support at home, and to accommodate their husbands' wishes, wives often reduce their part-time employment.

Figure 16: Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment



——— Low educated woman, married in the 1980s, 2 children, husband is a physician coming from a lower-class family

- - - - - - - Low educated woman, married in the 1980s, 2 children, husband is a physician coming from a higher-class family

6 *Summary and Conclusion*

The purpose of this paper has been to explore: (1) To which degree spouses marry assortatively and how this affects their employment patterns over the family life cycle; (2) To what extent the transitions between (full-time and part-time) paid work

and unpaid household work are gendered within marital unions; (3) Whether there are class-specific differences in the division of labor between husbands and wives and if yes, to what degree do they change across marriage cohorts?

In terms of career resources and earnings potentials of first jobs, spouses show strong homogamous tendencies. However, a considerable proportion of couples also exhibit differences in their career resources, and these differences span in both directions. Relatively frequent are not only cases where men have higher earnings potentials than their wives, but also where women surpass their husbands in their levels of career resources.

Within the marital union, this initial symmetry, which should in effect imply similar employment patterns for husbands and wives in marital unions, becomes very skewed with regard to moves between paid work and unpaid housekeeping work. This clearly contradicts the "comparative advantage" thesis of the economic theory of the family. The moves between labor market and household work are extremely gender-specific in West Germany and can only be studied for women.

Contrary to the individualistic approaches frequently used in labor market and social mobility studies, we have demonstrated that married women's employment behavior can only be understood in its household context. Women who are predominantly in full-time employment at the time of marriage, continue to interrupt their employment at the birth of the first child. This does not mean that women's own resources do not matter. Well-educated women with higher career resources and income potential are less likely to interrupt their careers and - had they interrupted - are more likely to re-enter the part-time segment of the labor market. This corroborated the human capital theory. In addition, there is a general trend across marriage cohorts to increasingly re-enter paid employment after the interruption. This has been true for part-time employment for a long time, and has also become more common for full-time employment in the last decade. Wives' work has become an important condition for achieving and maintaining a higher standard of living in West Germany.

However, our analysis also shows that there are strong effects of husbands on their wives' employment careers. The higher the occupational position of the husband, the stronger the impact on their wives to leave and stay out of the labor market. This is particularly pronounced in cases where the husband has considerably more earnings potentials than his wife. However, even when the wife has substantial own resources at her disposal, high career resources of the husband may override her own career

potentials. This has been shown in our example for employment interruptions – when a highly-skilled wife, married to a high status man, had a higher interruption rate than a less-skilled women, married to a man with lower income potentials.

Another interesting finding is that the husband's social origin tends to have a more distinct impact on the wife's employment behavior than her own social origin. The most traditional family patterns, with strong specialization of the husband on market work and the wife in the domestic sphere, are found in cases where the husband comes from a lower-class family, experiences an upward mobility in the occupational hierarchy, and then marries a woman with lower career resources. This could be interpreted as a sign that upwardly mobile men need stronger support from their wives within the domestic sphere in order to succeed in their careers. Thus, these wives in particular accommodate their own careers and behave very traditionally.

And finally, a clear trend of the increasing effects of children and spouses on women at the stage of re-entry into the labor market is visible across the cohorts. In former times, married women typically interrupted their employment because of household and childcare responsibilities, and only small proportions of them re-entered the labor force. Those who re-entered, either did so for financial reasons or valued other rewards of the occupational achievement; in any case, the impact of the household structure and the occupational position of their husbands had little effect on the likelihood of re-entering. However, when a rising proportion of women opt for employment, their employment patterns become increasingly dependent on the household situation, i.e. the number and ages of children, and the social class of their husbands. Hence, some traditional structural determinants of the life course of wives may be changing in contemporary modern societies, but at the same time new distinct gender and class structural parameters come into play.

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Sonderforschungsbereich 186
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Statuspassagen und Risikolagen im Lebensverlauf

Employment Patterns: A Crossroad Between Class and Gender

A Long-term Longitudinal Study of Spouses' Careers in West Germany

von

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Preface

In the Special Collaborative Programme "Status Passages and Risks in the Life Course", the research project B6 attempts to examine the interrelationship between the family and the employment sphere within the household context. This empirical study, based on longitudinal data from the German Socioeconomic Panel, examines the effects of spouses' characteristics on married women's employment careers.

Employment behavior of married women in West Germany can only be understood within its household context. Although in first jobs, spouses are similar in terms of career resources and income potentials, the initial symmetry of couples becomes very gender skewed with regard to moves between paid (full-time and part-time) work and unpaid housekeeping work in the course of marriage. Social class differences are also substantial and span across two generations. The higher the occupational position of the husband, the stronger the impact on their wives to leave and stay out of the labor market. The most traditional family patterns, with strong specialization of the husband on market work and the wife in the domestic sphere, are found in cases where the husband comes from a lower-class family, experiences an upward mobility in the occupational hierarchy, and then marries a woman with lower career resources.

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1 *Introduction*

Labor market and social mobility studies generally emphasize individuals rather than families or households as the units of empirical analysis. For example, human capital models postulate that job opportunities of individuals can be explained by differences in productivity, and that this productivity is a result of persons' investments into general and job-specific human capital (Becker 1975; Mincer 1974). Studies of labor market segmentation have been demonstrating that the labor market can be broken down into relatively closed partial markets, which are then not equally accessible to all individual workers (e.g., Blossfeld and Mayer 1988). Social mobility theory (e.g. Goldthorpe 1980; Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992) and status attainment approaches (e.g., Blau and Duncan 1967; Sewell and Hauser 1975) considered the variation in the social position of families as the dependent variable to be explained - but with no inequality between husband and wife (Sørensen and McLanahan 1987). These studies therefore investigated only the hierarchical relationships among male household heads competing for jobs in the labor market. The consequence of this research has been a tendency to ignore forms of inequality other than those of education, occupation and income for male heads of household (Curtis 1986). This pervasive male bias in the labor market and stratification literature has widely been criticized (Dex 1990; McRae 1990). Since the early 1980s, an enormous amount of literature that focuses on women's paid work, female labor force participation, gender-specific job and income opportunities as well as the sex-specific segregation of occupations has been generated. Unfortunately, most of these studies have been adopting an individualistic perspective, again focusing mainly on women's or men's position in the marketplace.

Only recently have sociologists started to explore the dynamic interrelationship of spouses over the life course empirically.[1] They have been drawing attention to the fact that families and households are not all the same and that differences in family and household relationships over time influence the behavior of their individual members (e.g., Sorensen and McLanahan 1987; Krüger and Born 1991; Krüger 1993; Erzberger 1993; Lauterbach 1994; Bernasco 1994).

The analysis presented here is part of a broader research project on the careers of partners living in couples, and takes a dynamic approach to the study of how spouses affect each other over the life course. It is based on a symmetric perspective, trying to examine the interdependencies of husbands' and wives' transitions between full-

[1] Based on the economic theory of the family, there have been a great number of studies focusing on the labor supply of married women. However, most of these studies are based on cross-sectional data.

or part-time paid work and unpaid household work beginning at the time of entry into marriage. What follows can therefore not be generalized for all women, all men, or women and men in nonmarital unions. The extent and nature of these interdependencies within marriages, varying across the family life cycle as well as between social classes, will be examined. Using data from the German Socio-economic panel, an event history analysis is used in order to consider the development of husbands' and wives' careers over the life course and across a broad range of marriage cohorts in West Germany. This long-term longitudinal approach allows married couples' employment careers to be studied in the context of a changing system of social stratification. There are three specific questions that will be addressed here: (1) To what extent are the transitions between (full-time and part-time) paid market work and unpaid housework gendered within marital unions in West Germany? (2) To which degree do spouses marry assortatively and how does this affect their employment relationships over the family cycle? (3) Do class-specific differences in the division of labor between husbands and wives become more or less important across marriage cohorts?

We begin with a description of long-term trends in labor force participation in Europe in general and in West Germany in particular, and then present a theoretical discussion of how husbands and wives affect each other in different social classes as well as summarize findings of previous research. This will then be followed by a description of our data, variables and methodological approach to parallel careers. Finally, we will discuss the results of our empirical analysis and summarize the main points.

2 *Long-term Trends in Labor Force Participation, Full-time Work, and Part-time Employment*

We start with a short description of long-term trends in labor force participation, full-time work and part-time employment based on studies in which data on individuals was used. This research shows that in most Western European countries women's economic activity rates were characterized by a surprisingly high stability up to the 1970s or later (Blossfeld and Hakim forthcoming). From a long-term historical perspective, there was no clear upward trend in female labor force

participation rates from the mid-nineteenth century until the early 1970s or later.[2] In Western Europe, the notion of a "rise" in women's overall economic activity rates can therefore only apply to a fairly recent period. Beginning at the early 1970s, they slowly rose in most Northern European countries.[3]

The change in the economic activity rates of women is however hard to interpret because it summarizes several structural developments which run in opposite directions and nearly cancel each other out. In particular, women's extending school enrollment (Blossfeld and Shavit 1993) increasingly shifts women's labor market entry into higher ages and reduces the economic activity rate of young women. However, the economic activity rate of married women has dramatically risen in Northern Europe.[4] This was particularly evident from about the 1950s until the mid 1970s, which was historical phase of sustained economic growth. Therefore, in many modern countries one can say that married female workers substituted for unmarried female workers between 1950 to 1970 (Oppenheimer 1972; Hakim 1993a; Blossfeld and Rohwer forthcoming). However, in recent publications, Hakim (1993a) emphasized that if one wants to understand married women's rising employment in Northern Europe appropriately, it is important to make a distinction between part-time and full-time employment.[5]

Part-time work is not evenly distributed among the sexes. In the European Union countries, part-time work is very rare among men, and the part-time workforce is almost entirely female. Men are normally employed full-time, unless they are in school, partially retired, suffer from health problems, or are employed part-time

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[2] Such was the case, for example, in Great Britain (Dale and Joshi 1992; Hakim 1993a), France (Riboud 1985), West Germany (Müller, Willms, and Handl 1983; Willms-Herget 1985), Spain, Sweden or the Netherlands (OECD 1988).

[3] Among the highly industrialized Western capitalist countries, only the United States of America has experienced a continuous and accelerating growth in women's overall employment for a longer historical period (Hakim 1993a, Drobnič and Wittig 1995, forthcoming). The same is true for women's economic activity rates in the former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe (i. e. former Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and former Yugoslavia) after the end of the Second World War. In these countries, women's labor market participation rates were very high by international standards, reflecting institutional regulations and employment policies which differed profoundly from Western capitalist economies (Drobnič forthcoming).

[4] The term Northern Europe refers to several Western European capitalistic countries in the north of Europe. We use it to distinguish them from the Southern "Rim": Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

[5] In addition, it might also be useful to separate part-timers from marginal workers.

involuntarily due to low labor demand (Rosenfeld and Birkelund 1992). In the European countries, the average proportion of part-time working men was about 3% and of women 29% in 1989. There is, however, a substantial variation in the proportion of employed women who work part-time among the European countries.

Also the extent to which women have worked part-time in Northern Europe has changed considerably and can be divided into three periods. There is a first phase, in which the women's part-time work rate grew fast and steeply between the 1950s and the mid-1970s; there has been a second phase of stability or moderate growth in most of the countries, which started in the late 1970s;[6] and there has been a third phase of slight decline in some of the countries that had already reached a comparatively high proportion of female part-time workers like Denmark (Leth-Sørensen and Rohwer forthcoming) or Sweden (Sundström forthcoming) during the 1980s.

All in all, the rather impressive increase in married women's labor force participation rates that has occurred during the last thirty years in Northern Europe has basically been the result of an expansion of married women's part-time employment (Blossfeld and Hakim forthcoming). This suggests, as mentioned by Bernhardt (1993), that women's role as a supplementary worker has hardly changed in most of the European countries. Increasing availability of female part-time work will have lessened the antagonism between work and motherhood for women. Since these women keep their foot in the labor market, they are not completely dependent on their husbands or partners in an economic sense; however, they have by and large suppressed their own (long-term) job opportunities and other interests during the phase when they are raising young children (Bernhardt 1993). It is therefore problematic to treat women's part-time work as undistinguishable from full-time work and expect it to be a major catalyst for change (Hakim 1993a, 1993b). It has been widely believed that the increase in the labor force participation of women as such would lead to less sex-specific occupational segregation, improve career opportunities for women compared to those of men, and bring more equality in earnings between working men and women. However, if the increase in the labor force participation of women is due to their entering part-time jobs in a labor market that is by and large organized around full-time employment, these expectations are

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[6] The exception is the Netherlands where the proportion of part-time employed women among the employed increased from 46% to 62% (see de Graaf and Vermeulen forthcoming).

unwarranted. Thus, the rise in married women's labor force participation in Northern Europe should have only slightly affected the gender inequality (Hakim 1993a).

However, it is equally wrong to consider women's part-time work only in terms of "atypical" or "precarious" employment (Blossfeld and Hakim forthcoming). First of all, this view neglects the fact that the overwhelming majority of part-time working women in Europe are married secondary earners in households, where at least one additional family member is working on a full-time basis (Büchtemann and Quack 1990; Hakim 1993a). Thus, women's part-time work is in most cases a supplement to at least one additional full-time worker in the household. Second, such families normally also provide protection in case of sickness and unemployment as well as social security in old age (Büchtemann and Quack 1990). Third, the atypical work perspective often assumes that part-time work constitutes some kind of an employment buffer against economic downturns and thus involves job insecurity and a relatively high risk of unemployment. The available empirical evidence for West-Germany shows that this is not the case (Büchtemann and Quack 1990; Quack 1993).[7] Finally, the pure fact that around 30% of employed women work part-time in the European Union may question the label "atypical" at all (c.f. Ellingsaeter 1992).

In summary, a full-time work perspective on women's labor force participation overstates the "liberating and equalizing" effects of women's part-time work and provides a far too optimistic picture of the change in the sex-specific inequality structure in Europe. On the other hand, the atypical work perspective (Mückenberger 1985) exaggerates the "marginalizing" features of married women's part-time work and develops a much too pessimistic scenario. Both approaches miss the central point of women's change in labor force participation in Northern Europe: they do not recognize that married women's part-time work is a new and qualitatively different category of work that is not identical with a full-time work arrangement, nor is it per se a marginal, exploitative form of employment. To understand women's employment position appropriately, it is therefore necessary to look at their employment status and their family situation.

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[7] This perspective might, however, be true for Great Britain. "In Britain part-timers are less likely to be in clerical and secretarial work, and much more likely to be in semi or unskilled manual work, particularly domestic and child-care jobs." (Dale and Joshi 1992: 105).

3 *Theoretical Discussion and Previous Research*

Before we present our empirical analysis of married women's paid work in the household context, we will first discuss various hypotheses and summarize previous research findings with regard to the interdependence of husbands' and wives' employment patterns.

3.1 Hypotheses based on the Economic Theory of the Family

The economic theory of the family (e.g., Becker 1981) is among the few approaches that draw attention to the fact that an individual's allocation of paid work in the market and unpaid work in the home is best understood within the context of the family as a matter of interdependence with activities and characteristics of other family members (Mincer and Polachek 1974). In the following, we briefly describe the main hypotheses within this approach which are important in the context of our research.

The economic theory of the family provides an intergenerational model because it links the human capital investment decisions of each new generation of men and women to the extent of sex-specific division of labor in the adult population of society. This is because investments in human capital of young women and men strongly depend on their expectations with regard to future sex-specific roles in the family and marketplace. Given the less market work of wives compared to their husbands in modern societies, young women compared to young men are less likely to acquire market skills as a result of both the women's decision and the decisions of employers, who may be expected to invest in worker skills to some extent. In other words, according to this view, there is in general (1) a comparative advantage of women over men in household work and (2) a comparative advantage of men over women in the labor market because of sex-specific accumulation of earnings capacity over the early life-course.

Based on these sex-specific investment differences, men and women are considered trading partners who decide to marry if each partner has more to gain by marrying than by remaining single. The questions of whether to marry and who will marry whom are therefore related to expectations of what will happen within the union in the future and in particular:

(1) what the expected gains of the marriage are (i.e. the dependencies of partners' utilities on each other): In the economic theory of the family, altruism is considered to be an important element in the functioning of families. It is common in families not only because families are small and have many interactions, but also because marriage markets tend to "assign" altruists to their beneficiaries. An altruist is made better off by actions that raise his/her family income and worse off by actions that lower it. Since family income is the sum of his/her own and his/her beneficiary's income, the altruist would refrain from actions that raise his/her own income, if they lower the beneficiary's even more; and would take actions that lower his/her own if they raise the income of his/her beneficiaries even more. Altruism ties couples together, even if only one of the partners is altruistic, as then all the family members are concerned about their joint income and try to maximize it, even the selfish family members. The mechanism that guarantees this is the compensatory behavior of transfers from altruists to others. Thus, as long as altruists receive something, selfish family members behave altruistically, both toward altruists and toward the altruists' other beneficiaries. This type of behavior makes it possible to define a family utility function based on the altruists' preferences that everybody wants to maximize.

(2) how the gains are going to be distributed within the family (e.g. the degree of positive and negative assortative mating): Becker (1981) distinguishes the individual's traits that determine earnings capacity (or income and wage) and individual characteristics that determine non-market productivity (intelligence, education, health, etc.).[8] If the earnings capacity is held constant, the optimal sorting of most non-market traits of mates tends to be positive and strong. Thus, a "superior" woman raises the productivity of a "superior" man and vice-versa.

(3) what division of labor they rest on (e.g. the extent of specialization in the household and market sector): If non-market traits are held constant, the utility of mates is maximized by a perfect negative assortative match with regard to their earnings capacities. This means that low-wage women tend to marry high-wage men and low-wage men tend marry high-wage women. Men and women with lower earnings capacity will then be used more extensively in household production, and those with higher earnings capacity will be used more

[8] Although this differentiation is problematic, we take it seriously for the time being.

extensively in market production. It is important to note that the economic theory of the family predicts the division of labor between a husband and a wife on the basis of the comparative advantage and does not per se assign the housework to wives.

Because of sex-specific investments into human capital at the beginning of marriage, wives will mainly rely on husbands as providers; and husbands will mostly depend on wives for the maintenance of the home as well as for the bearing and rearing of children.[9]

In the economic theory of the family, the production and rearing of children is considered to be one of the main purposes of families. They use market goods and services, as well as the time of parents, to achieve this goal. Again, because of the sex-specific investments into earnings capacity, the economic theory of the family predicts that it is especially the mother who will interrupt her market work to take care of the children. However, in principle, this could also be the father if his earnings capacity is much lower than his wife's.

Based on this model, it is possible to make predictions with regard to changes in the employment behavior of husbands and wives if the earnings capacity of young people changes across birth cohorts. In West Germany, women show a larger increase than men at all higher levels of educational attainment across birth cohorts (Blossfeld and Shavit 1993) and their shift from relatively unskilled production and service jobs to skilled service and administration occupations has been more pronounced than that of men (Blossfeld 1987). Young German women do therefore not only stay in the educational system longer than the women of older generations, but they are better than ever able to turn higher education into better job and career opportunities (Blossfeld 1989). Thus, this growth in the earnings power of younger women and their increasing labor force experience before marriage (Blossfeld and Huinink 1991) should raise the labor force participation of each younger cohort of married women. In combination with declining fertility across cohorts, this should allow younger married women to spend more time in the labor force prior to their first child and after the last child has entered school, and therefore reduce the aggregate time spent in childcare by young mothers. The greater number of women with better career opportunities should however also increase the likelihood that

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[9] Becker (1981) also refers to biological and intrinsic differences between the sexes to explain the sexual division of labor, but the main argument emphasizes the differences in earnings capacities at the beginning of marriage.

high-wage women marry low-wage men. And in turn, this should then lead to an increasing proportion of males that rely on wives as providers, and wives that rely on husbands as supplementary workers and for the maintenance of the home as well as for the rearing of children.

3.2 Consequences of the Sex-specific Division of Labor in the Family

A core feature of Becker's family model is that, according to the principle of comparative advantage, spouses will tend to specialize within the marriage because this is the most efficient productive strategy.[10] Thus, the economic theory of the family is an approach that tends to predict that one spouse (in the past normally the wife) concentrates on full-time homekeeping and childrearing, while the other one (in the past normally the husband) works full-time in the marketplace. On the basis of women's increasing earnings capacity across cohorts, which makes specialization within marriage increasingly difficult and therefore reduces interdependence and integration, Becker (1981) concludes that the family as a social institution in modern societies is threatened. He argues that these developments will lead to a decline of marriage and fertility as well as to a rise in divorce rates.

This position has been questioned by Oppenheimer (1993). She argues that although specialization may promote interdependence, it may not provide much cohesion for particular marriages. If it is relatively easy for one partner to replace the other through remarriage, then a considerable amount of marital instability must be produced by specialization. In many cases, segregated sex roles do increase the stakes in marriage but mainly for the wives who are at home, not for the husbands who normally go to work (England and Farkas 1986). Thus, the consequence for the integrative mechanism of gender specialization in the family has been economic dependency of wives on husbands (Sørensen and McLanahan 1987). Hence, specialization in families may increase the "gain" women obtain from a particular marriage by virtually eliminating other marital and non-marital options (Oppenheimer 1993). Beyond that, specialization also means that the small nuclear family is particularly vulnerable to the temporary (unemployment, illness) or permanent (separation, death) loss of a unique individual who provides an essential function – at home or at the labor market. Thus, "extreme" sex-role specialization not only

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[10] Of course, this mechanism will enhance the comparative advantages over time and intensify the specialization of husbands and wives with the increasing marriage duration.

entails risks for small families in a world characterized by unpredictable events, such as sickness, death, or unemployment, but also because of the very nature of the independent nuclear family as a social unit. As noted by Oppenheimer (1993: 24), "it is an inescapable biological fact that individuals' consumption needs and productive capabilities vary markedly by age. Consequently, a basic feature of nuclear families is that the ratio of consumers to producers, and hence the family's standard of living, can vary substantially over the family's development cycle ... Hence, specialization involves a potentially serious loss of flexibility in dealing with changes in both a family's internal composition and the stresses posed by its environment." From this perspective, wives' employment can be viewed as a highly adaptive family strategy in a modern society, rather than as a threat to the family as a social institution (Oppenheimer 1993).

3.3 Industrialization, Life-style and Labor Market Participation

There are also other reasons for the impressive integration of married women into paid work. Industrialization and modern technology have dramatically changed the standard of living in modern societies. Eggebeen and Hawkins (1990) argue that to enjoy the benefits of this tremendous growth in the standard of living, households have had to shift time from domestic activities to work in the market. This is because the most sophisticated and diverse goods and services that advanced technologies offer cannot be produced at home.[11] Thus, the only way to enjoy quality goods and services is to purchase them in the market. Eggebeen and Hawkins (1990) therefore conclude that the need to provide basic necessities for the family has declined over time as a motive for married mother's labor force participation. However, over the same time, desires to achieve and maintain a higher standard of living have increased. "Couples' choices to enjoy the fruits of a prosperous economic system and the products of a technologically advanced society, and to enjoy them at a younger age, are responsible for this important trend" (Eggebeen and Hawkins 1990).

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[11] It means a devaluation of the economic contributions of domestic labor in relation to market labor (Vickery 1979).

3.4 Men and Women as Providers

Research shows that even though most wives do paid work, the responsibility and recognition for family provision falls on husbands, and both wives and husbands are ambivalent about wives as providers (Szinovacz 1984). In particular, the meaning of work is different for husbands and wives. Women typically say, "Work is what I do, not what I am," while men typically offer their occupation first when asked, "Who are you?" (Cohen 1987). Husbands seem better able than wives to keep paid work and family as separate spheres of life, whereas women tend to shape their participation in the marketplace in response to family needs (Gerson 1985). "All this results in personal as well as structural resistance to change in the division of paid labor by gender. Therefore, when there is an increase in demands for family, wives, and not husbands, typically respond by reducing the amount of time spent in paid work" (Berk 1985). Thus, the presence of small children is closely related with wives' reduced participation in paid work (Moen 1985). Some wives find it easier to temper their husbands' opposition to their employment or to integrate paid work with family work when they can work part-time (Ferree 1976). Wives of professional husbands are more likely to be in intermittent part-time employment, whereas wives of non-professional husbands tend to have intermittent full-time employment (Moen 1985).

It has been shown that male authority and masculinity are identified with success in paid work for men. In families where husbands and wives are contributing earnings to their families, men retain the responsibility and recognition for provision (Hood 1983).

3.5 Social Class and the Sex-specific Division of Labor

Thoits argues that middle- and upper-class spouses will be first to change their division of labor by gender if there are children, and this change "will filter down the social ladder" (Thoits 1987: 21). Working class wives often work out of financial reasons. However, working class spouses try to maintain the image of wives as secondary providers by defining husbands's income as essential and wives' salary for "extras" (Zavella 1987). Ferree (1987) and Rosen (1987) show that most working-class wives do paid work for both economic and personal reasons. Although working class wives's jobs are often worrisome and wearisome, most working-class wives take pride in their job, welcome contact with other people, and enjoy the

recognition and respect that accompanies a paycheck. When they want to quit work, it is typically because their jobs are not good, not because they want to be full-time homemakers (Rosen 1987). However, most of these wives have contradicting feelings: they think their jobs are good for themselves and their families but, at the same time, feel guilty about their homes and children (Zavella 1987). "The realities of class mean that working-class families often find themselves dividing paid-work by gender more equitably than middle-class families, not only in terms of earnings, but also in responsibility and recognition for family provision" (Thompson and Walker 1989).

Middle-class husbands have the most trouble sharing family provision with their wives (Fendrich 1984). Stanley, Hunt, and Hunt (1986) found that young, highly educated, and occupationally successful fathers in dual-earner marriages are less satisfied with their marriages and personal lives than similar men who are sole providers for their families. They report that these successful men feel cheated because they have no wife at home to provide full-time service. Ferree (1987) argued that in middle-class families, husbands earnings level makes wives income, at best, supplemental and, at worst, unnecessary. Thus, it is easy in such families for husbands to view wives as supplementary providers and to consider their wives' paid work as a privilege for wives rather than as a contribution to the whole family. Also Weiss (1985, 1987) reports that successful middle-class husbands believe that their wives work for their own benefit and not to contribute to the family. Paid employment is seen as an opportunity for getting wives out of the house and giving them a chance to realize and express themselves. Husbands tend to believe it unselfish for supporting their wives' need to work outside of the family. Most of these husbands feel proud of their wives' job success but feel that their time on the job means that there is diminished attention to childcare and home management.

In many upper-middle-class families, wives' efforts help husbands to succeed. However, their efforts are less visible. Pananek (1979) shows how middle-class wives support their husbands' career advancement through family work: maintaining clothing, entertaining colleagues, appropriately training children, and engaging in the politics of status maintenance. Fowlkes (1987) describes how many wives of professors and physicians keep the home running, encourage their husbands, accommodate their own careers, and move when their husbands have to move.

In the following, we are going to empirically assess some of the hypotheses about the dynamic interrelationship of spouses over the life course in West Germany in

order to gain more insight into the basic structure of spouses' relationships and their long-term changes across marriage cohorts.

4 *Data, Variables, and Methods*

4.1 Data

Our analysis of couples' careers is based on data from the German Socioeconomic Panel (SOEP), a nationally representative longitudinal dataset of persons, households, and families in the Federal Republic of Germany. The first data collection was carried out in 1984 when about 6,000 households and 12,245 individuals were interviewed, and data on employment history were collected retrospectively. There has been a further panel wave in every subsequent year. We used information from ten panel waves in West Germany. Since all adult members of the sample households have been interviewed individually, SOEP offers a unique opportunity to match and study couples. Since one of our aims is to study long-term changes over various cohorts and non-marital cohabitation is a relatively recent phenomenon in Germany, we limited the analysis in this paper to married couples.

For the analysis presented here, we first reconstructed individuals' employment histories from the respondent's 15th birthday until the time of data collection or his/her 65th year of age. Further, we extended these histories with monthly data that noted individuals' employment changes between each panel wave for the period 1983-1992. Next, we reconstructed the family histories that were recorded in the second panel wave. These data include information on the beginning and the end of (at most three) respondent's marriages in the period before 1984 as well as birth years of children for female respondents. Later, changes in marital status and childbearing history were obtained on a monthly basis from the consecutive panel waves.

Female respondents served as a basis for matching. To be included in the spouses sample, a woman must have reported being "married," and must have identified the person to whom she was married in at least one wave of the panel. Although theoretically it would be most appropriate to study first marriages for all cohorts, this selection criterion was abandoned in view of practical difficulties. If a person's marriage started and ended before 1984, this ex-spouse was not included in the

sample and no information on him or her was available, which made the selection of the first marriage unsuitable. Therefore, the respondents' last marriages were studied. We succeeded to identify and match 1289 German spouses for whom all required variables were available.[12]

The basic spouses' dataset consisted of a series of respondents' employment episodes and out-of-labor-market statuses, starting with the time of marriage and ending with either marriage dissolution or with a right censored observation at the time of the last panel wave.

4.2 Variables

The purpose of our paper is to explicitly link the dynamics of the family life cycle and spouses's resources with the career patterns of the family members. To be able to perform a causal analysis, we need information on underlying processes that generate the observed distribution of a person's employment statuses. Therefore, the processes of entering and leaving the labor force in the career history must be known.

Various states in respondents' employment history have been distinguished: full-time, part-time employment, housekeeping, unemployed, retired, and other. Dependent variables in the analysis presented in this paper are transition rates from (1) full-time employment to housekeeping status, (2) part-time employment to housekeeping, (3) housekeeping status to full-time employment, and (4) housekeeping to part-time employment.

There are two kinds of independent variables: time-constant, and time-varying variables which change their states over the time of marriage. To introduce time-dependent measures into the rate equations, we used the method of episode splitting, described in detail by Blossfeld, Hamerle and Mayer (1989), and Blossfeld and Rohwer (1995). Each episode has been split in a duration of at most 12 months. For each of the sub-spells, four different pieces of information were provided: time at the beginning and end of the sub-spell and its location within the employment episode, values of the time-dependent covariates at the beginning of these sub-spells, whether

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[12] Many cases were lost from our analysis because the long-term biographical data on employment histories, family histories, and first entrance into the labor market were asked by the SOEP researchers in three separate panel waves.

the interval ended with an event or not, and the values of other covariates relevant for the analysis. Estimates were performed with the Transition Data Analysis (TDA) program (Rohwer 1994).

The following sets of independent variables were included in the analysis:
a. Stratification variables:
- Woman's social origin, operationalized by her father's occupational status, measured by the Wegener (1985) occupational score
- Woman's education, measured in years of schooling
- Woman's career resources or earnings potentials, operationalized by the occupational status of her first job; measured by the Wegener score.

b. Woman's age and career history before marriage:
- Woman's previous full-time work experience, measured as cumulative duration of her employment in full-time jobs before marriage
- Woman's previous part-time work experience, measured as cumulative duration of her employment in part-time jobs before marriage
- Woman's age, included in the models in a linear and quadratic form as a time-dependent covariate
- Woman's age at marriage

c. Childrearing history:
- Number of children, time-dependent covariate
- Preschool child; time-dependent dummy variable, indicating the presence of at least one child until 6 years of age in the family
- School child; time-dependent dummy variable, indicating that no child younger than 6 years but at least one child under 18 years of age is present
- Child > 18 years; also a time-dependent dummy, marking the time within marriage with grown up children.

The reference category for the children variables is "no children."

d. Partner's resources:
- Partner's social origin, operationalized by his father's occupational status (Wegener occupational score)
- Partner's education, measured in years of schooling
- Partner's career resources or earnings potentials, operationalized by the occupational status of his first job; measured by the Wegener score

e. Marriage cohorts:
- Married 1955-1964, dummy variable
- Married 1965-1974, dummy variable
- Married 1975-1984, dummy variable
- Married 1985 or later, dummy variable

The reference category for marriage cohorts are couples married in the period before 1955.

4.3 Methods

The longitudinal analysis of spouses' interdependent careers is a methodologically difficult endeavor because of the issue of reverse causation. Reverse causation means that one career, considered from a theoretical point of view as the dependent one, has (direct or indirect) effects on the independent covariate process(es). Reverse causation is seen as a problem in event history analysis because the effect of a time-dependent covariate on the transition rate is confounded with a feedback effect of the dependent process on the values of the time-dependent covariate.[13]

In this paper, we apply a "causal approach" to the analysis of interdependent systems that was suggested and described in detail by Blossfeld and Rohwer (1995). We believe that this is a more appropriate approach for a study of spouses' careers than the normally used "systems approach." In particular, it provides a straightforward solution to (1) the simultaneity problem of interdependent processes, (2) the identification of lags between causes and their effects, and (3) the study of temporal shapes of effects (Blossfeld and Rohwer 1995; Blossfeld, Klijzing, Pohl and Rohwer 1995). In this approach, the history and the present state of the system are seen as a condition for change in (any) one of its partial processes. Given two parallel employment careers of a husband (Y_t^A) and his wife (Y_t^B), a change in Y_t^A at any (specific) point in time t' may be considered as being dependent on the history of both processes up to, but not including t'. Or stated in another way: what happens with Y_t^A at any point in time t' is conditionally independent of what happens with Y_t^B at t', conditional on the history of the joint process $Y_t = (Y_t^A, Y_t^B)$ up to, but not including t'. Of course, the same reasoning can be applied if one focuses on Y_t^A instead of Y_t^B as the "dependent variable." Blossfeld and Rohwer (1995) call this

[13] In other words, the value of the time-dependent covariate carries information about the state of the dependent process.

the principle of conditional independence for parallel and interdependent processes.[14]

The same idea can be developed more formally. Beginning with a transition rate model for the joint careers, $Y_t = (Y_t^A, Y_t^B)$, and assuming the principle of conditional independence, the likelihood for this model can be factorized into a product of the likelihoods for two separate careers: a transition rate model for Y_t^A which is dependent on Y_t^B as a time-dependent covariate, and a transition rate model for Y_t^B which is dependent on Y_t^A as a time-dependent covariate.[15] Estimating the effects of time-dependent (qualitative and metric) changes on the transition rate can easily be achieved by applying the method of episode splitting (see Blossfeld, Hamerle, and Mayer 1989; Blossfeld and Rohwer 1995).

5 Results

We begin our empirical analysis of the employment careers of spouses with a description of who marries whom, then describe gender-specific employment transitions over the joint family history, and finally study the mobility between full-time or part-time work and homekeeping with hazard rate models.

5.1 Assortative Mating in West Germany

In the past, research on assortative mating in Germany tended to focus on the wife's status mobility but not on that of the husband's (Mayer 1977; Handl 1988; Teckenberg 1991). This is because in the conventional stratification theory, social inequality among families is thought to be determined only by the occupational attainment of the male heads of household. A woman's social status has therefore only been ascribed to her on the basis of the job position of her providers, i. e. her

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[14] The terminology is adapted from Gardner and Griffin (1986), and Pötter (1993).

[15] The mathematical steps leading to this factorization are, in principle, very easy but unfortunately need a complex terminology. The mathematical apparatus will therefore not be given here. The mathematics can be found in Blossfeld and Rohwer (1995), Gardner and Griffin (1986), Pötter (1993), and Rohwer (1994). An important implication is that since not only the states, but also functions of time (e.g. duration) can be included conditionally, the distinction between state and rate dependence proposed by Tuma and Hannan (1984) loses its meaning (see also Pötter 1993).

father in the family of origin or her husband in her own family (Goldthorpe 1980, 1983). This traditional perspective is reflected in the statement that "What a man 'does' defines his status, but whom she marries defines a woman's." The opposite perspective, that a man's social class might be affected through marriage, has therefore been widely neglected in sociological research (McRae 1986; Jones 1991). The following analysis takes a more symmetric view. It examines the job position of young men and women close to the time of marriage and compares the extent of status mobility through occupational attainment and marriage for both sexes.

Figure 1: Joint Density of Husband's and Wife's Wegner Scores

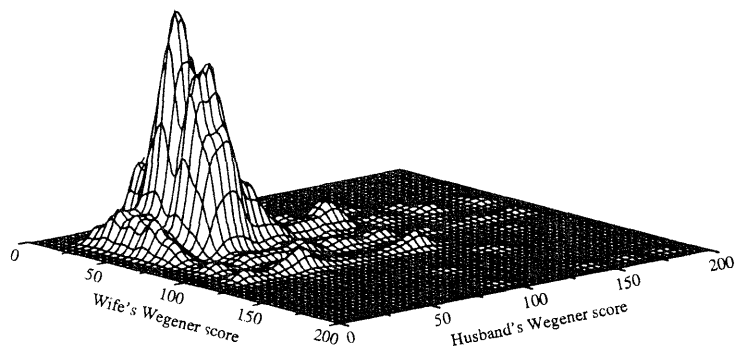
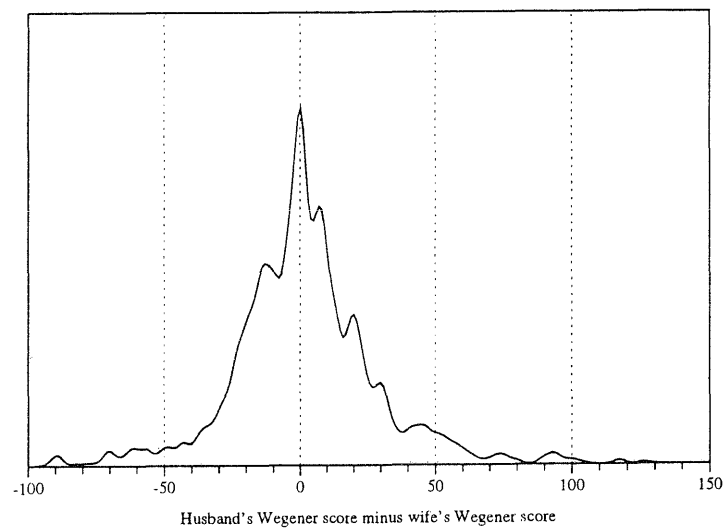


Figure 1 shows the joint distribution of husbands' and wives' social status, or in terms of human capital theory, their earnings potential, close to the time of marriage. The "mountains" in this picture reflect a high degree of homogamy in partner's status but at the same time also an important degree of marriage mobility. Some spouses have moved up through marriage, others have experienced degradation. The degree of upward and downward mobility through marriage for husbands and wives is shown in Figure 2. The density of the differences between husbands and wives status scores clearly peaks and strongly clusters around zero. Thus, there is a great deal of endogamy and homogamy in the social statuses of spouses and most people marry within their own status group. The distribution, although slightly skewed to the right, is surprisingly symmetric. Thus, there is an upward and downward mobility through marriage for both wives and husbands.

Of course, this finding raises questions about how the status of husbands and wives is measured. The occupational structure in West Germany, as in all modern societies, is highly sex-segregated (see Blossfeld 1987). The magnitude prestige scale of

Figure 2: Density of Wegener Score Differences Between Husbands and Wives



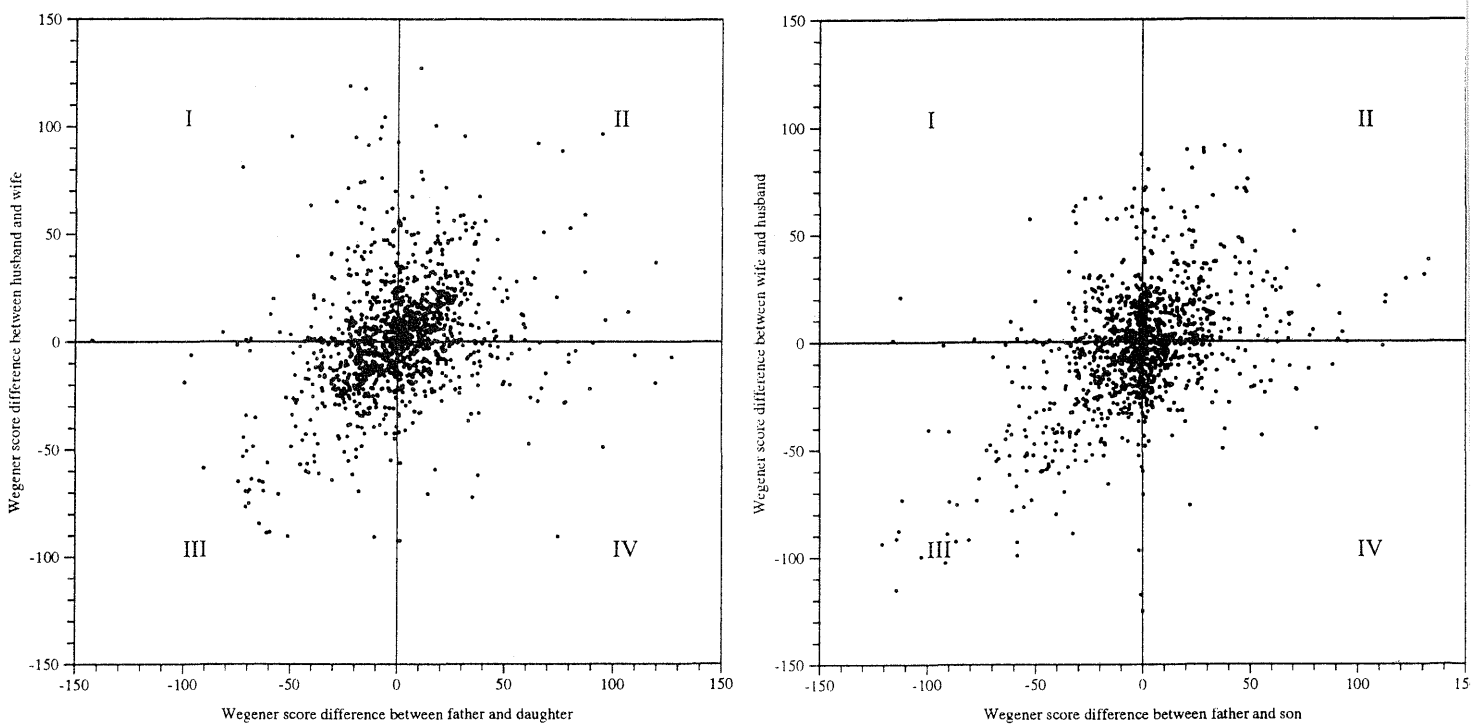
Wegener (1985), which certainly has a strong male bias, could to some degree overestimate women's social position because it could assign higher scores to positions that are dominated by women. And a wife with a higher status than her husband, but in a female-typed occupation, may not be perceived as having a higher occupational status because the dominant feature of her occupation is not its status but its feminine identification. Thus, the "sex-segregated labor force may provide a buffer, preventing status comparisons between spouses from being made" (Hiller and Philliber 1982). Although both of these arguments are plausible and may explain some of the differences between wives and husbands, there are many couples in our sample, where the wife's status score was much higher than the husband's[16] (see Figure 2). Based on the economic theory of the family, one would therefore expect that within these couples, males would rely more on wives as providers, and husbands would show a tendency to specialize on the maintenance of the home and the rearing of children, as well as take over the role of a supplementary worker. Our further analysis will show whether this is indeed the case in West Germany.

However, before we continue with this type of analysis, we briefly review some of the intergenerational aspects of assortative mating. Figure 3a plots the status difference between father's (when the daughter was 16 years old) and daughter's

[16] Empirical examples from the Socio-Economic Panel of status differences, where the scores of the wives' first jobs considerably exceed those of their husbands: the wife is a pharmacist and the husband an engine fitter; the wife is a sociologist and the husband a carpenter; the wife is a social worker and the husband an agricultural laborer; the wife is a teacher and the husband a watchmaker.

position (at her first job) against the difference in husbands' and wives' status score. Four different cases are logically possible: women move up occupationally when compared to their fathers and then once again through marriage (I. quadrant in Figure 3a); women move downwards occupationally, but gain in status position through marriage (II. quadrant); women move up occupationally and then experience downward mobility through marriage (III. quadrant); and finally, women move down occupationally and then also through marriage (IV. quadrant). There does not appear to be any strong systematic relationship in this figure since the points do not show a distinct pattern. Thus, all of the four logical possibilities are more or less equally distributed.

Figure 3: Intergenerational Association of Wegener Score:
3a Wegener Score Difference Between Father and Daughter
3b Wegener Score Difference Between Father and Son



If we draw the corresponding pattern for men (Figure 3b), we find a sort of clustering along an upwardly sloping straight line, indicating more intergenerational association than for women. In particular, men who have achieved a higher social position than their fathers, tend to marry wives who have a social position at about the same level as their family of origin (quadrant III in Figure 3b). As will be seen

later on in our empirical analysis, this type of husband has the most trouble in dealing with his wife's paid employment and tends to use his wife's efforts for his own career advancement.

5.2 Employment Transitions of Husbands and Wives

In terms of occupational scores and earnings potentials of first jobs, husbands and wives show strong homogamous tendencies, which was an expected outcome of our analysis. However, a relatively large proportion of spouses also exhibit differences in their career resources, and these differences span in both directions (Figure 2). Relatively frequent are not only cases where men have considerably higher earnings potentials than their wives, but also cases where women surpass their husbands in levels of career resources.

Due to high homogamy and the symmetry of the differences in earnings potentials of husbands and wives, one would expect not only a large number of wives but also a substantial number of husbands with lower earnings capacity to specialize in household production or work part-time as supplementary workers. This is because the economic theory of the family postulates the rule of comparative advantage. Thus, we were particularly interested in transitions between paid employment and out-of-the-labor market state for both husbands and wives. However, the initial intentions to study these moves for both spouses in parallel were swiftly abolished after the employment trajectories for couples were examined. Table 1 shows how extraordinarily gender-specific the employment transitions in West Germany are. For example, among all married West German spouses that we identified in the SOEP sample, only 25 full-time employment episodes for husbands ended up in housekeeping (Table 1). However, for wives, this is a common move within marriage: no less than 1243 events of this type were recorded among the wives. Also other transitions between paid work and housekeeping are very frequent for wives but negligible for husbands, so we have to conclude that employment patterns within marriages in West Germany are so gender-specific that no parallel analysis is feasible. Therefore, the following analysis will only concentrate on wives' employment patterns.

The crucial conclusion at this point is that the division between market work and household work among West German husbands and wives does not seem to be driven by the logic of a comparative advantage in investments into human capital.

Table 1: Gender specific employment transitions for couples

Origin state		Destination state	Nr. of events Husbands	Wives
Transitions between paid work and housework:				
full-time	→	housekeeping	25	1243
part-time	→	housekeeping	5	1020
housekeeping	→	full-time	26	465
housekeeping	→	part-time	5	1441
Transitions between various labor market statuses:				
full-time	→	part-time	136	584
part-time	→	full-time	133	374
full-time	→	unemployment	587	264
part-time	→	unemployment	20	172
unemployment	→	full-time	506	133
unemployment	→	part-time	22	161
unemployment	→	housekeeping	8	262

Source: German Socio-Economic Panel

Even in those couples where wives have a much higher earnings potential than their husbands, husbands will normally work full-time and the wives - as the following analysis will show - will adjust their paid (full-time and part-time) work in response to family demands. Thus, according to the economic theory suggested by Becker (1981), the sexual division of labor within families could then only be explained by reference to biological and intrinsic differences between sexes. However, this seems to us to be a very reductionist perspective. Instead, we argue from a sociological perspective that there are pervasive gender-specific norms in the German society, as in many other modern societies, that assign the responsibility and recognition for family provision to husbands and not to wives. These norms are so strong that they make comparative advantages in human capital investments meaningless for the division of work between husbands and their wives.

5.3 Transition from Full-time to Housekeeping for Wives

Table 2 shows the "initial" status of wives at the time of marriage across consecutive marriage cohorts. Particularly in the oldest marriage cohort, the proportion of housewives around the time of marriage is relatively high; however, this proportion falls in younger cohorts. In the 1960s and 1970s, almost three quarters of newly married women worked full-time. This high percentage of full-timers continued for younger cohorts but has somewhat eroded for women married in the second part of the 1980s, when unemployment seized a non-negligible share of the female labor force. In spite of that, the general pattern is that a large majority of women work full-time at the time when they marry. This makes full-time work a natural starting point for the analysis of transitions in employment states for married women.

Table 2: Women's employment status at the time of marriage, for various marriage cohorts (in percentages)

	married -1954	married 1955-64	married 1965-74	married 1975-84	married 1985-
Full-time empl.	57	73	74	70	68
Part-time empl.	5	6	4	8	6
Housewife	29	16	12	11	13
Other[1]	9	5	10	11	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: German Socio-Economic Panel
[1] Other statuses: in school or vocational training, student, unemployed, retired, on childcare leave, other.

Table 3 presents the estimated effects on the hazard rate of employment exits from full-time jobs. Piecewise constant rate models have been used to control for the duration dependence in full-time work. The general pattern in this transition is a low initial exit rate which increases in the period when the person is in employment for 6-12 months; afterwards the rate falls continuously over the time spent in employment. Since our main purpose in this analysis is to examine the effects of the family cycle and the spouse, the specification of the baseline rate only serves for control purposes and will not be interpreted substantively.

Table 3: Effects on the transition rate from full-time work to housekeeping. SOEP, piecewise constant model.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Duration < 6 months	-5.6433**	-5.1627**	-2.9247**	-2.8541**	-3.1433**	-3.3040**	-3.2719**	-2.9938**
Duration 6-12 months	-3.7289**	-3.2464**	-0.9719*	-0.9020	-1.1623**	-1.3164**	-1.2869**	-1.0118*
Duration 1-3 years	-4.5400**	-4.0577**	-1.6292**	-1.5612**	-2.0456**	-2.1948**	-2.1651**	-1.8933**
Duration 3-5 years	-4.8250**	-4.3473**	-1.6819**	-1.6155**	-2.1723**	-2.3056**	-2.2760**	-2.0008**
Duration > 5 years	-5.6481**	-5.1807**	-1.8457**	-1.7915**	-2.2761**	-2.3956**	-2.3710**	-2.0962**
W's social origin	-0.0004	0.0011	0.0015	0.0015	0.0011	-0.0000	-0.0002	-0.0003
W's education		-0.0500**	-0.0282	-0.0207	-0.0084	-0.0412	-0.0382	-0.0394
W's occup. score			-0.0056**	-0.0057**	-0.0057**	-0.0079**	-0.0075**	-0.0079**
W's full-time < marr.				0.0014	0.0010	0.0011	0.0009	-0.0011
W's part-time < marr.				-0.0080	-0.0080	-0.0076	-0.0079	-0.0078
W'age			-0.1998**	-0.1997**	-0.2283**	-0.2401**	-0.2423**	-0.2428**
W's age^2			0.0016**	0.0016**	0.0024**	0.0025**	0.0025**	0.0026**
W's age at marr.			0.0771**	0.0668**	0.0679**	0.0710**	0.0749**	0.0735**
No. of children					-0.0527	-0.0280	-0.0302	-0.0223
Preschool child					1.2426**	1.2457**	1.2283**	0.7736**
School child					-0.0841	-0.0708	-0.0788	0.1374
Child > 18 years					-0.4171	-0.4240	-0.4265	-0.5672
H's social origin						-0.0042**	-0.0041**	-0.0044**
H's education						0.0666**	0.0652**	0.0661**
H's occup. score						0.0040*	0.0038*	0.0001
Married 1955-64							-0.0455	-0.0392
Married 1965-74							-0.0548	-0.0384
Married 1975-84							-0.1542	-0.1409
Married 1985-							-0.1190	-0.1146
H's occ.score×preschool child								0.0080**
H's occ.score×school child								-0.0051
H's occ.score×child > 18								0.0019

Number of events: 639
** $p \leq .05$
* $p \leq .10$

In Model 1, we first estimate the effect of wives' social origin on the likelihood that they will interrupt their employment. The effect is not statistically significant, indicating that social origin in itself does not directly explain women's behavior in the labor market. Social origin may however operate in opposing directions and cancel each other out. For example, higher status families may, on the one hand, transmit to their daughters negative attitudes towards female employment; but on the other hand, such families typically provide better opportunities for higher educational

attainment, which, in turn, increase labor market chances and the attractiveness of paid employment.

We proceeded in this direction in the next model by including wives' education (Table 3, Model 2). According to the human capital theory, more investment in education and training raises market efficiency, which means higher productivity and higher income potential, thus making work in the marketplace more likely. Indeed, wives' schooling has a strong negative effect on employment interruptions. Other things equal, each additional year of schooling decreases the likelihood of leaving the labor market by about 5 percent. However, when wives' first job is included in Model 3, it becomes evident that not the abstract educational level in itself, but the market value of this education is decisive in governing their labor market behavior. It is only when a woman is able to market her potential educational resources, i.e. obtain a good job, that her attachment to the labor market within marriage increases.

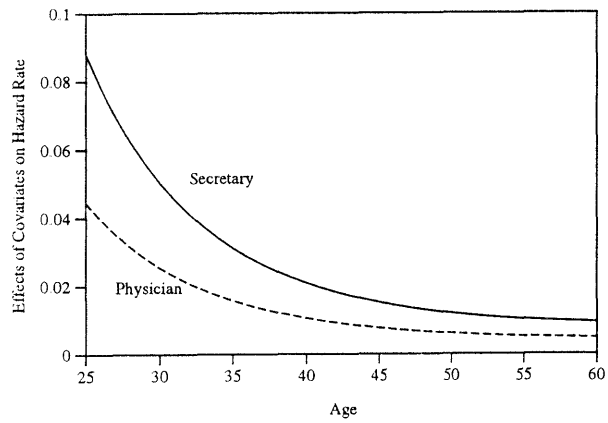
Age has been included in this model in linear and quadratic form to assess the baseline rate over the life course. Age also orders multiple episodes over the life span and is in many cases a good proxy for different stages in the individual life course. The shape of the hazard rate has a decreasing tendency over the life cycle and only reverses its direction at the age of 62. Here it should be reminded however that only married women are included in our sample and the observation period starts at the time of marriage. In another study, it has been shown that when all women are observed, the hazard rate rises first for West German women in their twenties and then starts to fall afterwards (Drobnič, Blossfeld, Rohwer, Wittig 1995).

Marriage age also has a strong statistically significant impact on wives' employment interruptions; the older the women are when they marry, the more rapidly they leave full-time employment. This is quite a surprising result and demands careful consideration. Previous empirical analyses have shown that a longer participation in the educational system shifts women's entering into marriage to older ages (Blossfeld and Huinink 1991). Education thus has two contradicting effects on wives' labor market interruptions. On the one hand, higher education results in better occupational opportunities and better jobs, which prevents women from leaving paid work. But on the other, longer schooling typically increases the age at marriage (Oppenheimer 1988; Blossfeld 1995), which leads to earlier interruptions.

To illustrate these complex and not readily obvious results of our event history analysis, we simulated a series of examples that should provide a more

straightforward insight into the estimated effects of the independent variables on the non-observable hazard rate. Figure 4 presents the estimated effects of covariates on the likelihood to quit a full-time job and become a housewife for two different women. Both of them married at the age of 25; one of them is a secretary (occupational score on the Wegener scale=65); the other is a medical doctor with the highest possible occupational score of 186.8. The fact that no information on children and partner is used is a common situation in standard labor market analyses.

Figure 4: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



Secretary, no children, no information on husband

Physician, no children, no information on husband

In this graph, we can easily see how both women experience a falling shape in the hazard rate across the age span from 25 to 60. Second, the secretary with lower occupational resources has a higher tendency to interrupt her employment; the difference is particularly large in younger ages.[17] These results corroborate hypotheses of the human capital theory.

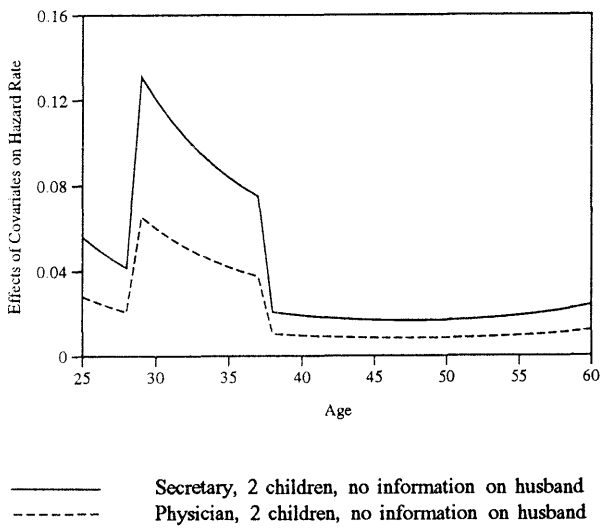
At the next stage, we include information on children into the analysis. Because of the gender-specific division of labor within the family and the labor market in West Germany, wives' employment patterns are particularly affected by the number and age of children. These factors have been included in a time-varying form and the results are presented in Model 5 (Table 3). Not surprisingly, there is a strong effect of a preschool child in the family on the mother's transition rate to housekeeping. The presence of a preschool child increases the transition rate by 246%.[18] The

[17] Note: the illustrative figures in this paper do not display the actual level of the hazard rate and should therefore not be interpreted as such. The baseline rate has been omitted from our calculations in order to avoid a mingling of the covariate effects with the baseline rate which is not constant over the duration of the episodes.

[18] Since (exp(1.2426) -1)×100%=246%.

effect is clearly visible in Figure 5, where it has been assumed that both the secretary and the physician got their first child at the age of 29 and the second one at the age of 32. Again, both women display a similar shape but the secretary with less career resources displays a higher likelihood to quit employment. The rate falls considerably only after the second child reaches school age. This is again in agreement with human capital theory.

Figure 5: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



We finally elaborate our model further to specify the extent to which wives' labor market exits depend on their husbands' resources. In Model 6 (Table 3), all the previous covariates that refer to women's characteristics and children remain significant, and at the same time strong effects of partners are detected. The higher the husband's education, the faster women leave their employment. This effect is additionally strengthened by a good occupational position of the husband. Overall, husband's resources have an impeding effect on wife's labor force participation. Similar results have been found in other studies (Bernasco 1994; Ferber and Huber 1979; Erzberger 1993). An explanation for a positive effect of husband's education remains a bit of a puzzle. The typical argument from the economic theories that education is an indicator of higher earnings which in effect induces specialization in the household is questionable. Namely, the effect of education also remains present when we include husbands' earnings capacity in terms of their jobs.[19]

Another interesting result that emerges shows how behavior patterns are mediated through social relations across generations. In models 6, 7 and 8, there is a strong significant negative effect of husband's social origin on his wife's hazard rate. This means that particularly men who come from lower status families, but themselves

[19] Also Bernasco (1994), who directly included information on husbands' earnings in his estimation of exit rates of Dutch women, found a persistent and substantial effect of husband's education.

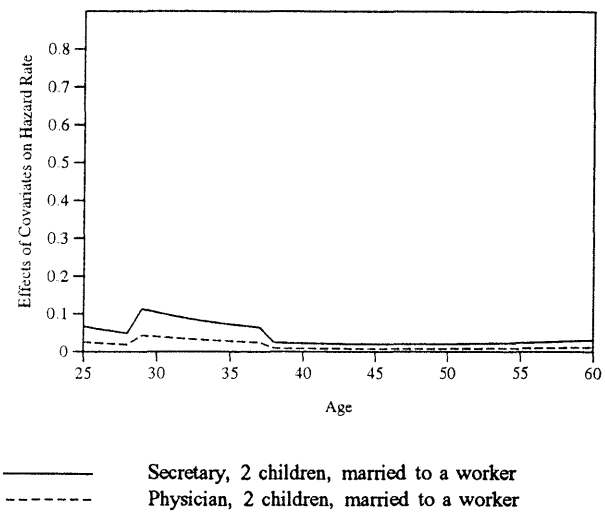
succeeded to reach good occupational positions, tend to give their wives a strong push to quit their employment.

In Model 7 (Table 3), cohort dummies have been included. Surprisingly, there are no direct changes across cohorts with respect to the interruption patterns of married women. Of course, had we looked at the cohorts in the usual cross-sectional aggregate way, we probably would have found some significant changes in the proportion of working married women across cohorts. However, our analysis shows that what has changed over time are the circumstances, not the basic pattern. Younger women have on the average a higher education and give birth to fewer children later on in life; this contributes to their higher participation in the labor market. But they also marry later and generally have husbands with higher occupational resources, which increases their probability to leave employment. When we control these relevant factors overall, no significant changes remain across marriage cohorts.

Finally, we included an interaction effect of husband's occupational position and children, and found that the effect of a preschool child is particularly strong in families where a husband has a higher occupational status.

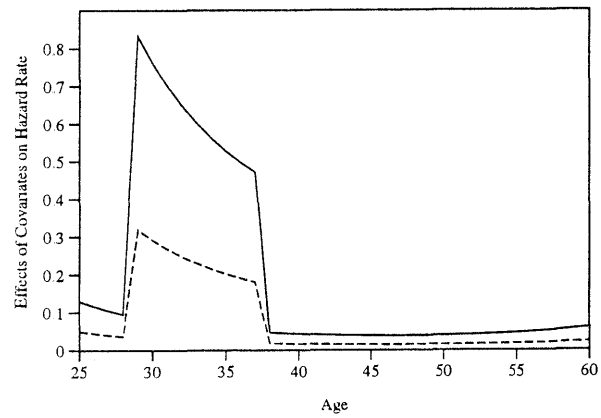
Again, we simulated various situations to illustrate how the effects of husbands modify the transition rate of wives from full-time employment to housekeeping. In Figure 6, we included information on husband's schooling and job position into our example cases. A secretary and a female physician, married at the age of 25 and having two children, are now both married to a husband with 11 years of education and a rather low occupational score of 40. Both women are not very likely to interrupt and the difference in the hazard rate between them becomes very small. Thus, to some extent

Figure 6: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



the wives' employment interruptions in Germany reflect the system of social inequalities. There seems to be a strong impact of the economic needs of the family on women's employment. When husbands cannot provide sufficient financial support, wives tend to stay in full-time employment and in such a situation, the effects of small children are also moderate.

Figure 7: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



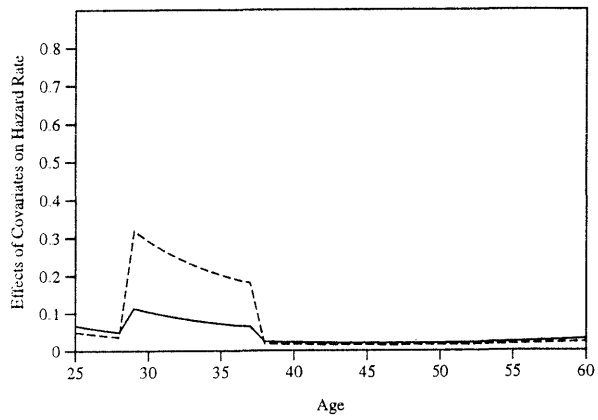
The situation would have been very different if both women were married to a physician, as shown in Figure 7. Now the rate for both women somewhat increases already at the beginning of marriage and escalates - particularly for the secretary - at the time of birth of the first child. This suggestively illustrates the impact of husband's position on his wife's employment behavior. Particularly when the husband has a much higher occupational position than his wife - that is when the differences in resources that the couple brings into the marriage are large - is there a tremendous influence on her likelihood to become a housewife. In such households, the traditional family pattern with strict division of market work for husband and domestic work for wife is most commonly found.

It is interesting to note that the impact of a preschool child strongly depends on the husband's job position. If the husband has a higher social position, a traditional role model is fostered and there is a high tendency to interrupt employment when there are small children in the family. However, if the husband is in the bottom part of the occupational hierarchy, the influence of preschool children on wives' employment behavior is small.

At the next stage, we introduced a more realistic situation with a strong marriage homogamy. This time, the secretary is married to a skilled worker, and the female doctor to another physician. Figure 8 shows for the first time a situation where the

hazard rate for the two women gets reversed. Now the exit rate is higher for the higher skilled woman, which indicates that at a certain point the husband's resources simply override a woman's own career assets. Even if the female physician has a much higher income potential than a secretary, she will be more likely to interrupt employment when she is married to a husband with a high social status. Hence, by omitting the effects of the husband and focusing on the wife's individual resources only, one would make a wrong prediction with regard to the employment behavior of these women.

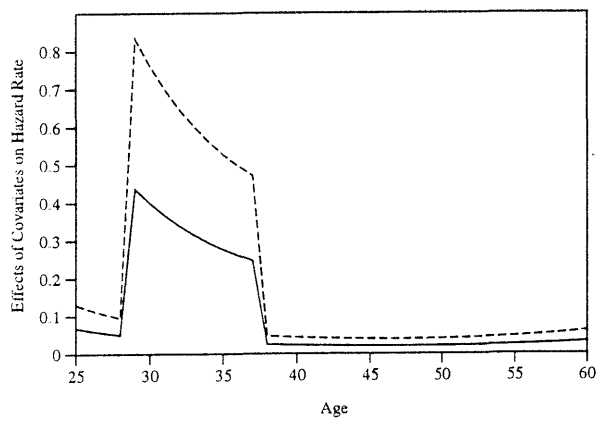
Figure 8: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



Secretary, 2 children, married to a worker
Physician, 2 children, married to a physician

Finally, Figure 9 illustrates the variation in the wife's transition rate, dependent on the social origin of her husband. The example shows a secretary married to a physician, who himself either comes from a high or low social class origin. It is evident that an upward mobility of the husband increases the pressure for a wife to retreat to the housekeeping role. In sum, the most traditional division of labor is found in families where the resources of husbands are much greater than their wives' and where husbands have achieved much better jobs than their fathers.

Figure 9: Transition from Full-time Employment to Housekeeping



Secretary, 2 children, husband is physician coming from a higher-class family
Secretary, 2 children, husband is physician coming from a lower-class family

5.4 Transition from Part-time to Housekeeping for Wives

Transitions from part-time employment to housekeeping are of a somewhat different nature than exits from full-time employment. Few women in Germany work part-time before marriage. Part-time is a typical option for married women with children at re-entry into the labor market (Blossfeld and Rohwer forthcoming; Pfau-Effinger 1994). Therefore, exits from part-time employment usually occur later on in women's career trajectories. These results are presented in Table 4 and the

Table 4: Effects on the transition rate from part-time work to housekeeping. SOEP, piecewise constant model.

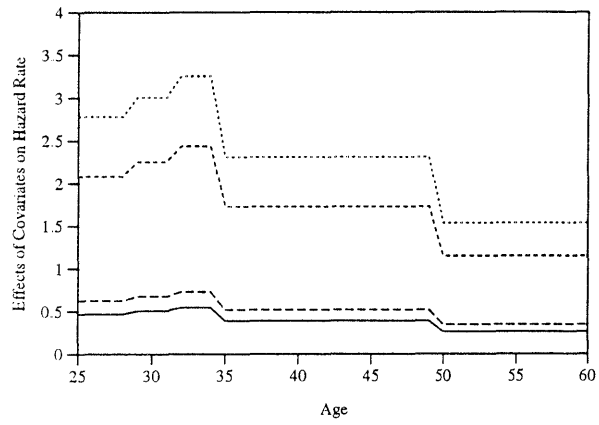
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Duration < 6 months	-4.1606**	-4.3714**	-5.0281**	-5.0438**	-5.7166**	-5.8892**	-5.9363**
Duration 6-12 months	-4.4489**	-4.6579**	-5.3118**	-5.3273**	-5.9876**	-6.1578**	-6.1825**
Duration 1-3 years	-4.6357**	-4.8444**	-5.5044**	-5.5206**	-6.1668**	-6.3338**	-6.3218**
Duration 3-5 years	-5.2054**	-5.4134**	-6.0850**	-6.1013**	-6.7141**	-6.8753**	-6.7982**
Duration > 5 years	-6.0231**	-6.2276**	-6.9428**	-6.9614**	-7.4712**	-7.6255**	-7.4593**
W's social origin	0.0030*	0.0024	0.0025	0.0025	0.0024	0.0023	0.0032*
W's education		0.0211	0.0369	0.0385	0.0403	0.0303	0.0279
W's occup. score			-0.0025	-0.0024	-0.0032	-0.0032	-0.0053*
W's full-time < marr.				-0.0001	-0.0002	-0.0002	0.0010
W's part-time < marr.				0.0015	0.0013	0.0013	0.0026
W'age			0.0235	0.0269	0.0592	0.0591	0.0485
W's age^2			-0.0002	-0.0002	-0.0006	-0.0006	-0.0001
W's age at marr.			0.0008	-0.0027	-0.0020	-0.0003	-0.0377**
No. of children					0.0774*	0.0785*	0.0781*
Preschool child					-0.0044	0.0043	-0.0469
School child					-0.3064**	-0.3083**	-0.3429**
Child > 18 years					-0.6317**	-0.6375**	-0.7512**
H's social origin						-0.0027	-0.0027
H's education						0.0413*	0.0362*
H's occup. score						-0.0023	-0.0017
Married 1955-64							0.0734
Married 1965-74							0.8701**
Married 1975-84							1.0105**
Married 1985-							1.4943**

Number of events: 545
** $p \leq .05$
* $p \leq .10$

increasingly complex models can be followed step-by-step as in the case of full-time employment. Let us move directly to the full Model 7. It is only when all covariates are included, that the effect of women's career resources becomes statistically significant, showing that women with better first jobs are less likely to leave the part-time segment of the labor market. Husbands' education has again a negative effect. Thus, women married to highly educated men exit employment more rapidly. Women who have married at an older age, who have had more children, or raised children that are of school age or older, are more likely to stay in part-time employment. Most importantly, a strong effect of marriage cohort is observed. Women who married after the mid-1960s increasingly leave part-time jobs. This effect is of course associated with the rapid expansion of part-time employment that started in the 1960s. Before that, women did not hold part-time jobs and could therefore not leave them. The result also shows that part-time work is a more transient employment form – it is often accepted but also often quit.

The illustration of this type of employment transition is provided in Figure 10. It shows the contrast between couples married before 1965 and those married after 1985. Not only is the transition rate for the youngest marriage cohorts significantly higher, but also the influence of children and the husband's educational level become more pronounced, thereby gaining in importance.

Figure 10: Transition from Part-time Employment to Housekeeping



——— Women, married before 1965, 2 children, husband with low education

- - - - - - - Women, married before 1965, 2 children, husband has university degree

---------- Women, married in 1985 or later, 2 children, husband with low education

..... Women, married in 1985 or later, 2 children, husband has university degree

5.5 Transition from Housekeeping to Full-time Employment for Wives

It has already been shown that no changes in terms of exits from full-time employment occurred across cohorts, apart from changes resulting from the changed composition of the female labor force. However, the labor force participation rate of women rose during the periods under consideration. A logical explanation for that phenomenon is that women must have been re-entering the labor force after the

Table 5: Effects on the transition rate from housekeeping to full-time employment.
SOEP, piecewise constant model.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Duration < 6 months	-5.4255**	-5.4542**	-6.7063**	-7.1546**	-6.1942**	-6.0386**	-5.9494**
Duration 6-12 months	-5.6234**	-5.6518**	-6.8928**	-7.3378**	-6.3472**	-6.1916**	-6.0698**
Duration 1-3 years	-5.7753**	-5.8035**	-7.0701**	-7.5153**	-6.4578**	-6.2960**	-6.1318**
Duration 3-5 years	-6.0984**	-6.1264**	-7.4402**	-7.8884**	-6.7846**	-6.6171**	-6.4076**
Duration > 5 years	-6.6034**	-6.6305**	-7.9406**	-8.4071**	-7.4872**	-7.2989**	-7.0597**
W's social origin	-0.0058*	-0.0059*	-0.0047	-0.0053	-0.0051	-0.0035	-0.0037
W's education		0.0030	0.0082	-0.0025	0.0101	0.0439	0.0131
W's occup. score			-0.0023	-0.0033	-0.0025	-0.0001	-0.0005
W's full-time < marr.				-0.0045**	-0.0037*	-0.0040**	-0.0031
W's part-time < marr.				-0.0045	-0.0045	-0.0050	-0.0044
W'age			0.1401**	0.1518**	0.1019**	0.1035*	0.1038*
W's age^2			-0.0019**	-0.0020**	-0.0018**	-0.0018**	-0.0017**
W's age at marr.			-0.0490**	-0.0209	-0.0081	-0.0019	-0.0214
No. of children					0.1274**	0.1195*	0.1197*
Preschool child					-0.7056**	-0.6968**	-0.7925**
School child					0.0471	0.0474	-0.0037
Child > 18 years					0.3224	0.3184	0.2287
H's social origin						0.0007	-0.0000
H's education						-0.0525	
H's occup. score						-0.0052	-0.0075**
Married 1955-64							-0.1621
Married 1965-74							0.0774
Married 1975-84							0.2571
Married 1985-							1.3501**

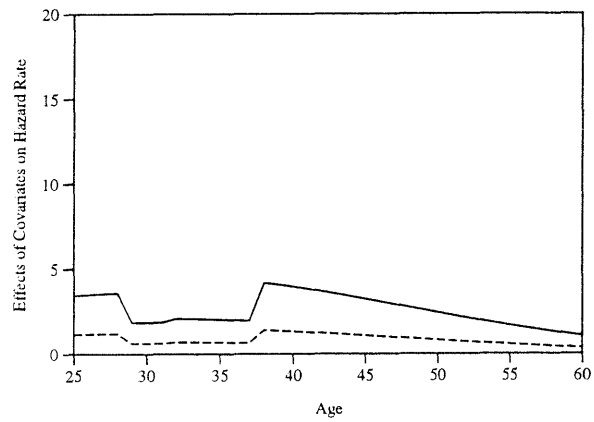
Number of events: 242
** $p \leq .05$
* $p \leq .10$

interruption faster and on a more massive scale. Let us first have a look at the (re)entries into full-time jobs in Table 5 and the illustration in Figure 11 which is based on model 7.

The first unexpected result is that women's entry into full-time employment is independent of their educational level and career resources. However, it does depend on their husband's resources. A higher occupational status of the husband decreases the hazard rate, as shown in Figure 11, for the cohorts married before 1985. However, there was little variation among households in different social classes because re-entry into full-time employment was infrequent for older cohorts.

A substantive change in terms of married women in full-time employment in West Germany has only come about in the last ten years, but this change is by no means trivial. Women in younger marriages are almost four times more likely to move from housekeeping to full-time employment than women who married before the mid-1980s (Figure 12). However, with the increased flow into the labor

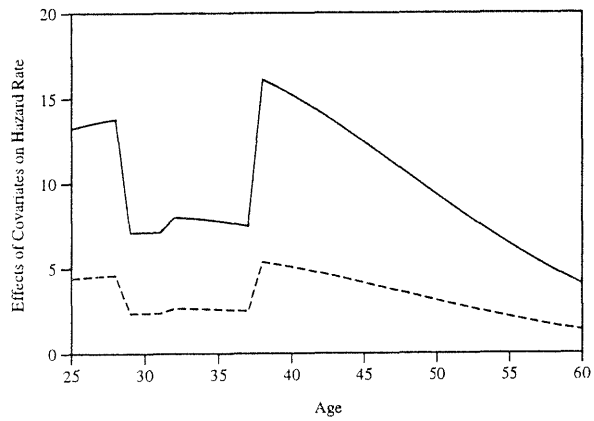
Figure 11: Transition from Housekeeping to Full-time Employment



——— Women, married before 1985, 2 children, husband is a worker

------- Women, married before 1985, 2 children, husband is a physician

Figure 12: Transition from Housekeeping to Full-time Employment



——— Women, married in 1985 or later, 2 children, husband is a worker

------- Women, married in 1985 or later, 2 children, husband is a physician

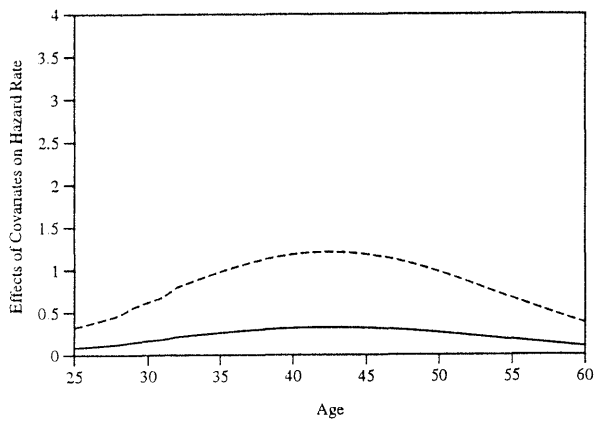
market, the differentiation between social classes became more pronounced, too. The rate of entering full-time employment increased for all women but was disproportionally strong for those women whose husbands have a low occupational status. Thus, full-time employment of married women seems to be fostered by the economic need of the family to a large extent. With a more massive entering into the full-time segment of the labor market however the household composition gains in importance. Young children play a much more important role for these women than in former times, when the group of women entering full-time jobs was small and highly selected. With full-time work becoming increasingly common, particularly in households with less resources from the husband, it also becomes more life-cycle specific, with children having a strong inhibiting effect.

5.6 Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment for Wives

It has been shown that full-time employment has gained in importance for married women after the family interruption only recently. Part-time work, on the other hand, has been the major engine of change in female employment in West Germany (Table 6). In transition from housekeeping to part-time employment, women's own resources, children, the partner's resources, as well as the overall increase in the availability of part-time jobs, play an important role.

If only information on women is available, the plotted rate of entry into part-time employment gives a smooth non-monotonic shape over the life course. When information on children is included (Table 6, Model 5), the rate decreases but the shape remains basically the same (Figure 13). Here we have an example of two

Figure 13: Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment



——— Low educated woman, 2 children, no information on husband

- - - - - - - High educated woman, 2 children, no information on husband

Table 6: Effects on the transition rate from housekeeping to part-time employment.
SOEP, piecewise constant model.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Duration < 6 months	-4.0731**	-5.2081**	-10.4524**	-10.3845**	-9.4911**	-9.6127**	-9.7503**
Duration 6-12 months	-5.0831**	-6.2049**	-11.3838**	-11.3160**	-10.4177**	-10.5362**	-10.5998**
Duration 1-3 years	-5.3187**	-6.4283**	-11.6327**	-11.5630**	-10.6424**	-10.7532**	-10.7143**
Duration 3-5 years	-5.8672**	-6.9682**	-12.2952**	-12.2240**	-11.2850**	-11.3905**	-11.2694**
Duration > 5 years	-6.1247**	-7.1897**	-12.8867**	-12.8159**	-11.9564**	-12.0527**	-11.6934**
W's social origin	0.0045**	0.0002	0.0007	0.0007	0.0006	0.0010	0.0018
W's education		0.1194**	0.1225**	0.1269**	0.1316**	0.1479**	0.0994**
W's occup. score			0.0002	0.0004	0.0009	0.0023	0.0005
W's full-time < marr.				0.0000	0.0001	-0.0002	-0.0001
W's part-time < marr.				0.0059**	0.0055**	0.0053**	0.0068**
W'age			0.3821**	0.3831**	0.3226**	0.3204**	0.2769**
W's age^2			-0.0044**	-0.0045**	-0.0038**	-0.0037**	-0.0027**
W's age at marr.			-0.0955**	-0.1030**	-0.0964**	-0.0907**	-0.1292**
No. of children					0.0806**	0.0748**	0.1066**
Preschool child					-0.1500	-0.1437	-0.3340**
School child					0.1691	0.1774	-0.0178
Child > 18 years					-0.3225	-0.3114	-0.5589**
H's social origin						-0.0042**	-0.0034*
H's education						0.0204	0.0156**
H's occup. score						-0.0053**	-0.0047**
Married 1955-64							0.9958**
Married 1965-74							1.8577**
Married 1975-84							2.5384**
Married 1985-							2.9691**

Number of events: 762
** $p \leq .05$
* $p \leq .10$

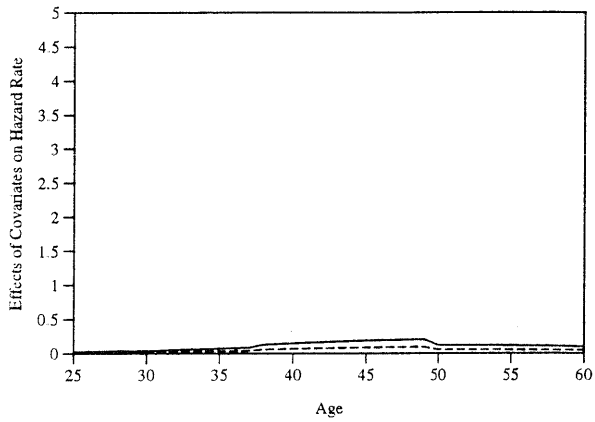
women, one with 12 years of schooling and the other with a university degree. Women's own resources increase their attachment to the labor market. A woman with a university degree has a significantly higher rate of entering part-time employment. However, it is only when the husband's characteristics and the historic period in which the couple got married is known, that the whole spectrum of variation in females' life courses becomes visible.

Figure 14 shows a woman with 12 years of education, with two children, married in the 1950s to a husband of either high or low social status. Her likelihood to enter

part-time employment was extremely low and because of that, the household characteristics were basically unimportant. A woman in such a situation remained a housewife or perhaps entered full-time employment.

In the 1980's, the circumstances changed dramatically. The woman's own educational level strongly augmented her entrance into part-time employment. In addition, the household's characteristics became very important. Let us have a look at the effects of children and husband's resources when a woman's own characteristics are held constant (Figure 15). Now the husband's resources play a contradictory role in the wife's employment behavior. On the one hand, his education fosters the wife's employment. Higher educated husbands perhaps recognize that employment for its own sake might be important for women, and a part-time working wife does not threaten their gender identity. However, husbands' high occupational status has a negative effect on their wives' labor market participation, even for part-time employment. It

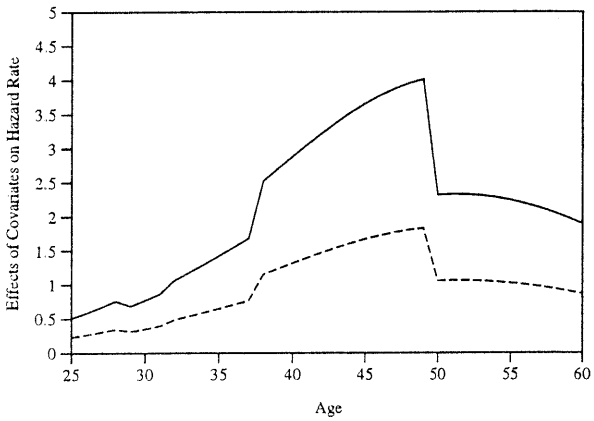
Figure 14: Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment



——— Low educated woman, married in the 1950s, 2 children, husband has high education but low status job

------- Low educated woman, married in the 1950s, 2 children, husband is a physician

Figure 15: Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment



——— Low educated woman, married in the 1980s, 2 children, husband has high education but low status job

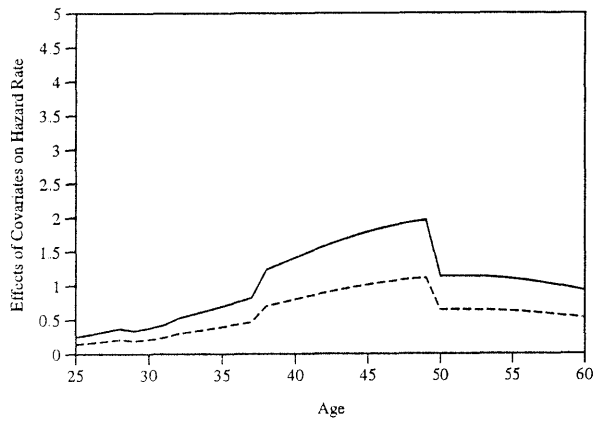
------- Low educated woman, married in the 1980s, 2 children, husband is a physician

seems that in spite of higher education, men keep their traditional role expectations. The higher their occupational position - particularly when it is much higher relative to the wife's own career resources - the more power they wield in the bargaining position over their wives' employment.

In Figure 15, it is shown that higher status husbands decrease the likelihood of their wives' entry into part-time jobs. Also the effects of children have become more pronounced for these younger marriage cohorts. When preschool children are present in the household, but also if the couple has grown up children, the entry rate decreases. The number of children however increases the entry rate. These are fairly complex patterns, which reflect household responsibilities and the time requirements of children, as well as the need for a supplementary income in larger families.

Finally, Figure 16 illustrates the additional negative effect of a husband's social origin on his wife's part-time employment. Holding all other individual and household characteristics constant, husbands who come from higher status families again have a stronger negative impact with respect to part-time participation of married women. Thus, upward mobile husbands tend to use wives' full support at home, and to accommodate their husbands' wishes, wives often reduce their part-time employment.

Figure 16: Transition from Housekeeping to Part-time Employment



——— Low educated woman, married in the 1980s, 2 children, husband is a physician coming from a lower-class family

- - - - - - - Low educated woman, married in the 1980s, 2 children, husband is a physician coming from a higher-class family

6 *Summary and Conclusion*

The purpose of this paper has been to explore: (1) To which degree spouses marry assortatively and how this affects their employment patterns over the family life cycle; (2) To what extent the transitions between (full-time and part-time) paid work

and unpaid household work are gendered within marital unions; (3) Whether there are class-specific differences in the division of labor between husbands and wives and if yes, to what degree do they change across marriage cohorts?

In terms of career resources and earnings potentials of first jobs, spouses show strong homogamous tendencies. However, a considerable proportion of couples also exhibit differences in their career resources, and these differences span in both directions. Relatively frequent are not only cases where men have higher earnings potentials than their wives, but also where women surpass their husbands in their levels of career resources.

Within the marital union, this initial symmetry, which should in effect imply similar employment patterns for husbands and wives in marital unions, becomes very skewed with regard to moves between paid work and unpaid housekeeping work. This clearly contradicts the "comparative advantage" thesis of the economic theory of the family. The moves between labor market and household work are extremely gender-specific in West Germany and can only be studied for women.

Contrary to the individualistic approaches frequently used in labor market and social mobility studies, we have demonstrated that married women's employment behavior can only be understood in its household context. Women who are predominantly in full-time employment at the time of marriage, continue to interrupt their employment at the birth of the first child. This does not mean that women's own resources do not matter. Well-educated women with higher career resources and income potential are less likely to interrupt their careers and - had they interrupted - are more likely to re-enter the part-time segment of the labor market. This corroborated the human capital theory. In addition, there is a general trend across marriage cohorts to increasingly re-enter paid employment after the interruption. This has been true for part-time employment for a long time, and has also become more common for full-time employment in the last decade. Wives' work has become an important condition for achieving and maintaining a higher standard of living in West Germany.

However, our analysis also shows that there are strong effects of husbands on their wives' employment careers. The higher the occupational position of the husband, the stronger the impact on their wives to leave and stay out of the labor market. This is particularly pronounced in cases where the husband has considerably more earnings potentials than his wife. However, even when the wife has substantial own resources at her disposal, high career resources of the husband may override her own career

potentials. This has been shown in our example for employment interruptions – when a highly-skilled wife, married to a high status man, had a higher interruption rate than a less-skilled women, married to a man with lower income potentials.

Another interesting finding is that the husband's social origin tends to have a more distinct impact on the wife's employment behavior than her own social origin. The most traditional family patterns, with strong specialization of the husband on market work and the wife in the domestic sphere, are found in cases where the husband comes from a lower-class family, experiences an upward mobility in the occupational hierarchy, and then marries a woman with lower career resources. This could be interpreted as a sign that upwardly mobile men need stronger support from their wives within the domestic sphere in order to succeed in their careers. Thus, these wives in particular accommodate their own careers and behave very traditionally.

And finally, a clear trend of the increasing effects of children and spouses on women at the stage of re-entry into the labor market is visible across the cohorts. In former times, married women typically interrupted their employment because of household and childcare responsibilities, and only small proportions of them re-entered the labor force. Those who re-entered, either did so for financial reasons or valued other rewards of the occupational achievement; in any case, the impact of the household structure and the occupational position of their husbands had little effect on the likelihood of re-entering. However, when a rising proportion of women opt for employment, their employment patterns become increasingly dependent on the household situation, i.e. the number and ages of children, and the social class of their husbands. Hence, some traditional structural determinants of the life course of wives may be changing in contemporary modern societies, but at the same time new distinct gender and class structural parameters come into play.

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