



Educational Assortative Mating and Gendered Time Allocation in Sweden and the U.S.

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Theoretical background

Comparative advantages between partners

GS Becker: Specialization determines the gain to marriage

VK Oppenheimer: Status consistency supports women's labor market participation

Bargaining theory: The allocation of time and resources depends on partners' bargaining power

Household division of labor



Theoretical background

Theory



Empirical research

Focus on individual and, more recent, partner effects

- → What about couple effects?
 - Importance of the educational composition of partners
 - Surprising discrepancy given more equal opportunities in education and employment

Gender equality at different stages across countries

- → Is there gender-neutral specialization in Sweden?
 - Pattern in which partner with highest/lowest earnings potential takes up more paid labor/housework, irrespective of gender

Hypotheses

- Higher education → more paid work and less home production and leisure (opportunity costs), with the exception of childcare
- Higher education → more gender-neutral parenthood
- EAM affecting household division of labor in line with specialization
 - Man-higher heterogamy → most traditional div of L
 - Woman-higher → less traditional div of L
 or gender-neutral specialization in SWE
- Weekends less restricted, so less specialization



This paper

What is the role of the couple's educational composition for household division of labor across Sweden and the U.S.?

- Heterogamy vs homogamy
- Testing the specialization hypothesis



This paper

SWE = U.S.:

- ➤ Highly educated population with similar educated attainment for ♂ and ♀
- ➤ High FLFP, narrowing gender wage gap, but still lower opportunity costs for women's time

SWE ≠ U.S.:

- ➤ SWE: Extensive public support to all working parents, active family policies (incl childcare), high income tax
- ➤ U.S.: Market-oriented model differentiation across groups, childcare expensive, outsourcing re HW less so

Data

- SWETUS 2000/01 & 2010/11
- ATUS 2003 & 2010
- Partnered (married and cohabiting) ♂ and ♀, 20-54 years, in two-adult household w child under 18
- Excluding: retired, students, disabled
- N = 1,099 SWETUS 2000/01 (478 fathers, 621 mothers)
 219 SWETUS 2010/11 (108 fathers, 111 mothers)
- N = 2,231 ATUS 2003 (1,061 fathers, 1,165 mothers)
 1,364 ATUS 2010 (648 fathers, 716 mothers)



Variables

- Dependent variables:
 - Daily minutes of paid work (PW), routine housework (HW), childcare (CC)
- Independent variables:
 - own education (primary & HS vs college/university)
 - educational homogamy vs heterogamy (spouse equal vs spouse higher or lower educational attainment)
- Control variables: age, presence of pre-schooler in hh, own and spousal employment status

Analysis

Descriptive analysis: time use patterns

 Gender and time use in SWE and the U.S. with respect to PW, HW and CC

Multivariate analysis

- OLS regression models (weighted) estimated separately by gender, day of the week, survey year and country
 - 1) Baseline model + controls (ref.cat. = < college)
- 2) Educational heterogamy (ref.cat. = individuals in homogamous relationships)

Results I

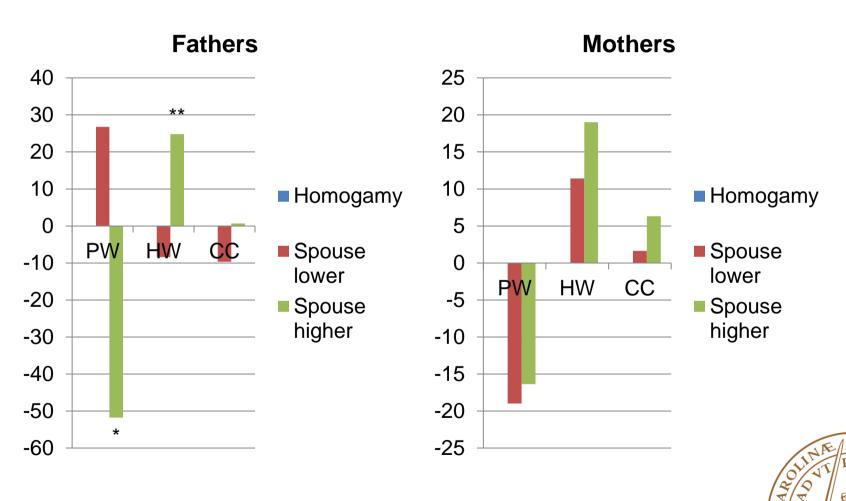
- General gendered time use pattern across SWE and the U.S.:
 - PW: ♂ > 우
 - HW: ♂ < 우
 - CC: ♂ < 우
- Gender gaps larger in the U.S. than in SWE
- Gaps are closing due to ♀ increasing PW and ♂ increasing CC
- Education less influential in predicting time use in SWE than in the U.S.

Results II

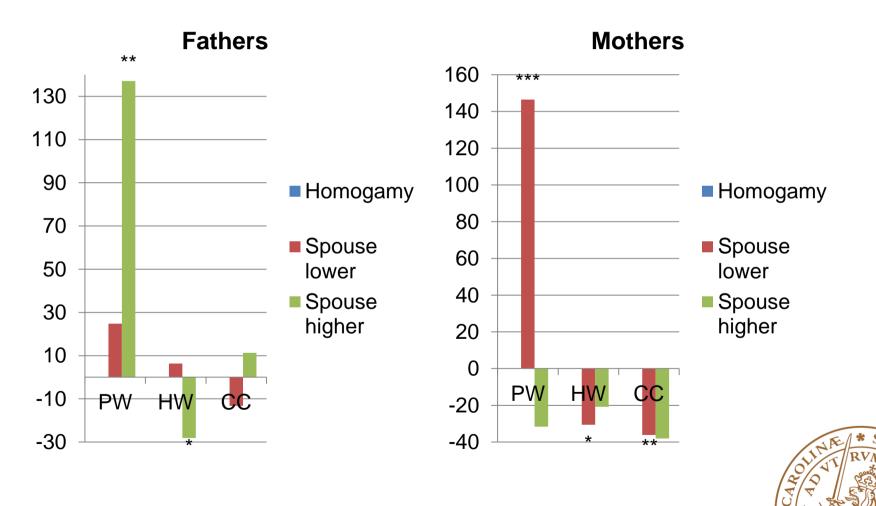
- Overall, limited support of the specialization hypothesis in Sweden and the U.S. 2003-2010
- Homogamy the most egalitarian division of labor
- Persistent impact of own education net of EAM and controls



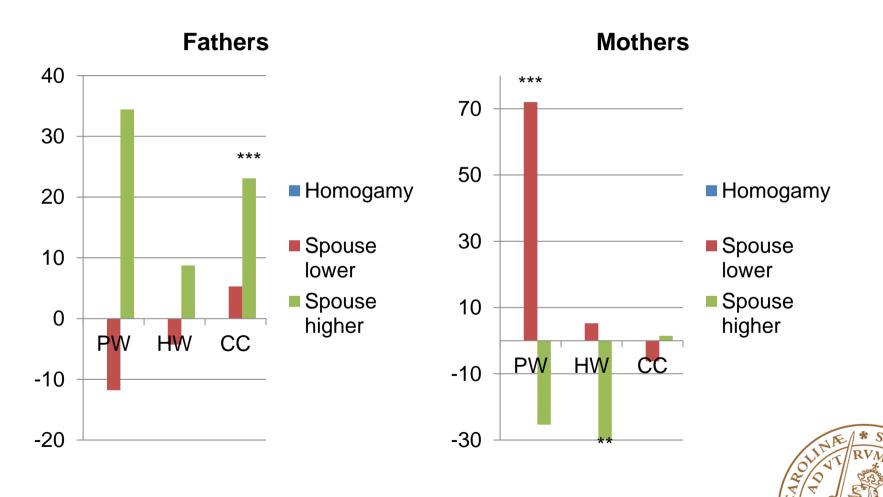
Impact of EAM on time use for fathers and mothers 25-54, Sweden, weekdays 2000/01



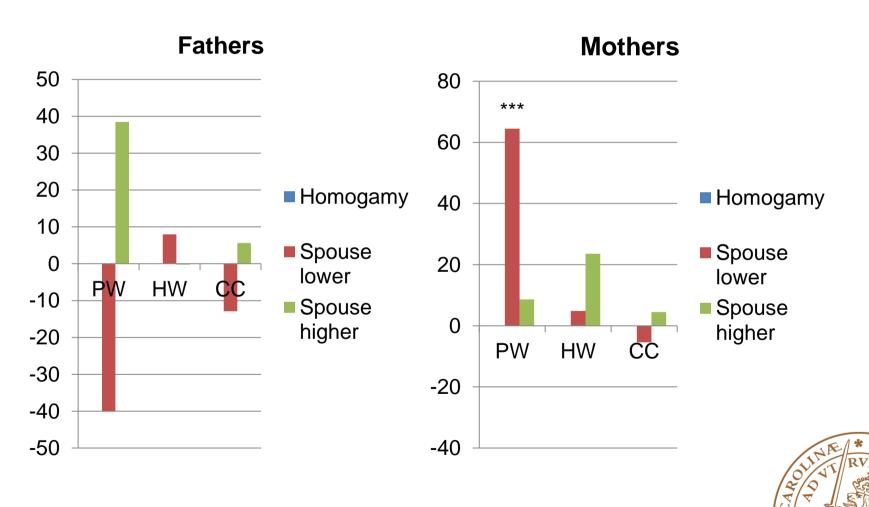
Impact of EAM on time use for fathers and mothers 25-54, Sweden, weekdays 2010/11



Impact of EAM on time use for fathers and mothers 25-54, U.S., weekdays 2003



Impact of EAM on time use for fathers and mothers 25-54, U.S., weekdays 2010



Results II

- Overall, limited support of the specialization hypothesis in Sweden and the U.S. 2003-2010
- Homogamy the most egalitarian division of labor
- Persistent impact of own education net of EAM and controls
- Women (with college education) important actors in heterogamous relationships, promoting change



Results III: Sweden

- Fathers' time use more affected by EAM than mothers'
- EAM influences fathers' HW more, but has no impact on CC
- Evidence of gender-neutral specialization emerging in SWE
 - Fathers with spouse with higher education works more than homogamous ♂ in SWE 2010/11, and is different compared to 2000/01 in that it increases PW
 - For mothers, having a spouse with lower education implies more PW than homogamous ♀ in SWE 2010/11, and is different compared to 2000/01 in that it increases mothers' PW
 - EAM (spouse lower) makes ♀do less HW in 2010/11 compared to 2000/01, and less CC
- Results not driven by economic resources
 - Instead related to cultural beliefs and values associated with education



Results III: United States

- Mothers' time use more affected by EAM than fathers' time use
- EAM influences fathers' CC more, but has no impact on HW
- Evidence of gender-neutral specialization emerging in U.S.
 - For mothers, having a spouse with lower education implies more PW than homogamous ♀ in US 2003 & 2010
 - EAM (spouse lower) makes ♂ & ♀do less CC on weekends in 2010 (fathers also 2003)
- More influence of economic resources in U.S. (wage inequality, robust outsourcing market)
 - But also related to cultural values of intensive parenting as means of intergenerational transmission of status

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- Homogamy more gender equal, in both Sweden and the U.S.
- Stronger impact of own education (potential earnings) on time allocation than of heterogamy



What is the role of the couple's educational composition for household division of labor across Europe?

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Is there gender-neutral specialization in Sweden?



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Is there gender-neutral specialization in Sweden?

- Yes, indication of this in 2010/11
- More gender equality in SWE than in the U.S.
- Results show couple education matters more for HW in SWE and more for CC in the U.S.
- This is in line with the countries' different orientation when it comes to outsourcing opportunities and state support for working parents