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Effects of policies and gender role attitudes on the division of paid and unpaid work within households

Menno J.G. Jacobs
Effects of policies and gender role attitudes on the division of paid and unpaid work within households

WORC Paper 99.03.004/6

Menno J.G. Jacobs
Previously, the following papers and reports written by members of the Network were published by WORC:


Willemsen, T.M. & Frinking, G.A.B. (Eds.). (1998). The role of social partners in the redivision of paid and unpaid work, an international comparison. Tilburg: WORC report 98.05.002/6

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Every European country has, to some degree or other, forms of policy aimed at the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work between men and women. Mostly, these policies create the legal framework for such facilities as child care and leave arrangements. The more regulatory forms of policy are to be sought in fiscal laws which provide equal tax rates for working men and women. The availability of favourable policy measures to reconcile the division of paid and unpaid work shows much differentiation among various European countries. The Scandinavian countries are well known for their large number of facilities, whereas countries like the United Kingdom and Ireland are much less equipped in this respect. In the United Kingdom, for example, there is still no regulation for parental leave. In some countries the leave is on nearly full pay (Sweden, Finland), whereas in others it is unpaid (Greece, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France1) (European Commission, 1998; Eurostat, 1995). Also, there are great differences in publicly funded child care. In Germany and the Netherlands, for example, only two percent of the small children (0-2 years of age) are in publicly funded child care, whereas in Denmark this percentage reaches up to 48% (Gornick et al., 1997).

In all European countries the participation of women in the labour market has increased during the last two or three decades (Charles, 1993), but very little is known as to whether, or how much, the respective policies have contributed to this increase. Despite the fact that women, on average, spend more hours doing paid work, men stay far behind on the way to egalitarianism, by doing only little more unpaid work. This leaves many women with a double burden, or 'second shift', as Hochschild (1989) has called it. This phenomenon increases the need for more knowledge about the effectiveness of emancipation policy measures, and the way they could possibly influence the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women. Although the existing policies aimed at reconciling employment and family life are very well documented, relatively little is known about their effectiveness (Hantrais & Letablier, 1996). The possible effects are difficult to measure, because the policies vary and have different meanings in various countries, and the presumed effects may have different causes. Given the differences between countries with regard to the division of paid and unpaid work, this gives rise to the question if and how certain policy measures are effective. To answer this question (specifically the how), one should take contextual variables of the various countries into account, and make comparisons between these

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1 Parental leave in France is unpaid for the first child. For following children there is a fixed payment during the leave. In the Netherlands, there is 70% paid parental leave in governmental jobs.
countries. The national study that is described here is one of many national studies conducted in several European countries, participating in the European Network on Policies and the Division of Unpaid and Paid Work (http://cwis.kub.nl/~fsw_2/network, Willemsen & Frinking, 1995). The purpose of this network is to do international comparative research in the field of family relations, labour force participation, use of family policy measures and division of tasks within the household. In order to optimize international comparability, one survey questionnaire is used by all participating countries (Willemsen, 1997). So far, the participating countries include Finland, Denmark, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Portugal and Greece.

THEORETICAL NOTIONS

The main objective of the European Network on Policies and the Division of Unpaid and Paid Work is to determine in what country-specific circumstances certain policies are (or could be) effective. The most appropriate way to approach this question is by comparing national studies which follow one and the same research design and method. Preferably, data are obtained by using extensive national surveys. The survey method provides data at a micro-level of analysis, which can be used to investigate the use of policies and the division of paid and unpaid work, within the national context. However, to be able to do international comparative research, aggregated, macro-level, data are required. This appeals to a persistent theoretical problem in the social sciences, known as the micro-macro dilemma (Coleman, 1990; Lindenberg, 1990). It seems difficult, if not impossible, to integrate both levels of analysis within one study, because of several contradictory assumptions within these approaches, the most important of which are the irreconcilable perspectives of objectivism versus subjectivism and the rationality of choices, or more broadly, the applied model of man (Mahar et al., 1990).

Pierre Bourdieu has made a promising attempt to bridge the gap between micro and macro, by his Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1994). This theory offers the theoretical tools for building a satisfactory, multidisciplinary research design, which can be used for international comparison purposes. One important advantage of this theory is the notion of habitus, a concept that represents contextual ‘variables’ within individual acting schemes. Habitus from a macro-level perspective generates individual action, whereas individual action generates habitus. Individual
action, behaviour, or practices (the designation may differ across disciplines) is seen as the result of habitus in interaction with several forms of capital.

The triangle (habitus, capital, practice) has different constellations depending on the given field. Stated in the form of a generative formula: \([[\text{Habitus}] \ (\text{Capital})] + \text{Field} = \text{Practice} \) (Bourdieu, 1984: 101). In the following, these terms will be explained.

To measure the extent of the use of policies one should carefully mark out the domains, or fields. Social reality consists of fields. Bourdieu distinguishes a number of them, among which are the ones that are of specific importance to our study: the field of politics, the field of paid labour, and the field of family relations. A field is a configuration of social positions occupied by individuals and institutions. The structure of a field is determined by the power relations (or forces) between its entities. The field of politics is regarded as the dominant field in any society; it is the source of hierarchical power relations that structure all other fields.

Our main interest concerns the overlap of the field of policy and family, and the overlap of the field of policy and labour market. Each area has three aspects of particular interest. These are:

**Policy - labour market**
1. Organisation of working time, including facilities for flexible working hours;
2. Fringe benefits, including maternity and parental leaves, career interruption;
3. Abolition of discrimination between men and women in the labour market: equal pay and equal treatment;

**Policy - family**
4. Child care provisions;
5. ‘Gendered’ social-security and tax schemes;
6. Organisation of school time and curricula;

**Policy - labour market and policy - family**
7. A seventh important aspect is the governmental information service and attempted attitudinal influence with regard to the reconciliation of working and family life.

Point 3, 5, 6 and, to some extent, point 7 are ‘fixed’. In these cases one cannot speak of making use of a policy measure. A tax law that favours single-earner families (point 5), for example, is a given fact. One can hardly choose not to make use of it. However, the ‘fixed’ policy measures belong to the socio-political climate, and may therefore influence the use of ‘free’ policy measures, such as parental leave, part-time working hours, and childcare provisions.
"The *habitus* is a system of durable, transposable dispositions which functions as the generative basis of structured, objectively unified practices" (Bourdieu, 1979: vii in Mahar et al., 1993: 10). In the habitus, the basics of culture are encoded during childhood, in the form of ways of doing things. Habitus causes social reality to be perceived as self-evident. "The habitus is what has to be assumed to understand that social actors are ‘reasonable’ without being rational, i.e. without attuning their behaviour to the maximization of the yields of the means they have at their disposal, or more simply without calculation, without making their goals explicit and without explicitly combining the means at their disposal to reach these goals; in short, without combinations, plans, designs." (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 84, quotation translated).

Especially important for the present research project is the fact that habitus refers to dispositions to behave in a certain way. On the individual level, various types of dispositions are of importance: For instance, dispositions that concern what is appropriate behaviour of men and women, or dispositions about raising your children in a certain way.

However, dispositions as such are hard to reveal. It is better to reconstruct them from their derivates, namely attitudes. By means of data reduction techniques, it is possible to make statements about people's habitus – in our study this concerns aspects of family life. Most important in this respect are gender role attitudes with regard to men and women doing paid work, and unpaid work, as well as aspirations with regard to family matters and paid work.

*Capital* refers to both material and symbolic goods that are worthwhile in a certain situation. The three basic forms of capital are economic capital (e.g. income, assets), cultural capital (e.g. knowledge, value orientations) and social capital (e.g. networks). Which form of capital is of importance depends on the field. In the field of art, for example, cultural capital is of more help than economic capital. In our study, knowledge in the field of policy is of significance. Knowledge of the ‘free’ policy measures, and the use made of them, is an individual, micro-level variable. Therefore this knowledge, and the possible use made of it, should be interpreted as a form of (cultural) capital (Peillon, 1998). Also, education is a form of cultural capital. *Economic capital* is represented by the number of durable goods in the household, and level of profession. Level of profession is not only a reliable indicator of the current income, but also of the possible income, if there is none at the moment of the interview. By doing this, having no income is taken into account as a form of ‘opportunity cost’. *Social capital* is defined as the amount of social support respondents can rely on, e.g. other members of (extended) family who can help out, neighbours,
friends. Professional acquaintances and networks can be a resource in connection with the paid work.

In fact, Bourdieu distinguishes a fourth, more fuzzy form of capital: symbolic capital. It represents the symbolic part of the basic three forms of capital. It is a rather elusive concept, and it will not be used in this study.

*Practice* refers to frequently repeated actions, customs or duties. Practices are mostly accomplished without conscious deliberation. Otherwise, the routine of everyday life would not be possible. The male domination which is still obvious in our culture is also part of this routine. It is a form of symbolic violence, a form of exercise of power in which the actual power is concealed and only works because of authority, of status that is recognized by both sexes (Bourdieu, 1994: 195-196).

In our study, the division of unpaid and paid work is the dependent variable. It forms part of the *practices*. To estimate the division of paid and unpaid work, the time spent on both paid and unpaid work is measured. To gain further insight into the division of tasks, the time spent on leisure activities and personal care is also taken into account.

As was stated above, Bourdieu's theory combines the macro-, structural, level with the micro-, individual level of analysis by studying capital, habitus and practices and their interconnections. The theory may seem to leave little room for changes. However, changes in the field of politics, for example new laws or other policy measures, can change some field characteristics, such as the structure of the labour market. Therefore, the profits from the capital of women and men may change: A certain kind of education may become more useful than it used to be, and other behaviours or other uses of one's capital may be called for. This can explain why behaviour can change without much change in habitus.

With the operational definitions of Bourdieu's concepts as presented here, a more elaborated conceptual model can be constructed than the generative formula that we saw before. Habitus and capital, in interaction, influence practices, within a given field. Since it is difficult and precarious to determine causal relationships between these concepts, we will have to be sparing in stating them. This particularly holds for the interaction between habitus and capital. It is unclear whether the use of policies could have influenced the habitus, or the other way around, for example. However, since we started by looking for relatively fixed *dispositions*, and took the relatively changeable attitudes as the way of measuring them, we treat habitus as an exogenous variable.
Clearly, education is also an exogenous variable. This leaves us, as regards the possible interactions between habitus and capital, with the social network variable, and the use of policies variable. The existence, size and composition of a social network could theoretically be influenced by the habitus. But since we are not interested in this (possible) phenomenon, we also treat the social network variable as exogenous. One other capital variable that could be influenced by habitus is the use of policies. Since this is a very important aspect of our study, we postulate this relation as one of the hypotheses that has to be investigated.

Adding up the aforementioned considerations, we are able to draw up a conceptual model, which is depicted in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

Each arrow in the model represents a hypothesis. With regard to habitus for example, this means that we postulate a direct causal relationship of this variable with the use of policies and with the division of paid and unpaid work, as well as an indirect causal relationship of this variable with
the division of paid and unpaid work, via the use of policies. The conceptual model is saturated: All possible but plausible relations are object of study.

In the following, the results are described of a first analysis that was carried out on the Dutch European Network Survey Data, to test the conceptual model. The data in the Netherlands were collected in the summer of 1998. In the first analysis, which is described here, only the core questions of the survey questionnaire were used, to describe the Dutch situation with regard to the named fields, and the impact of the use of policy measures on the division of paid and unpaid work within households.

SAMPLE

The sample used for this part of the research programme consists of 790 couples and may be considered representative of the Dutch population. At least one of the partners is older than 19 and younger than 50 years of age. The respondents all participate in a survey panel, and are used to filling out seemingly complex questionnaires, like the one used here. To reduce non-response and errors, and to avoid negotiation between partners about certain questions, one part of the questions was asked via a written questionnaire, the other part telephonically. The written questionnaire contained questions on work, education, income, dwelling, social network, composition of the household, and the use made of policy measures including childcare provisions. Telephonically asked questions concerned the division of paid and unpaid work among members of the household, relative share in childcare, and opinions about (the reconciliation of) paid and unpaid work.

The response rate of the written questionnaire was 69.4%, 78.5% of which completed the telephone interview. This means that the total response rate was 54.5%. In Table I, some characteristics of the sample are summed up. Table II shows percentages of the highest education completed by the respondents.

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2 In a later stage an individual level of analysis will be chosen. The data of the couples will therefore be supplemented with data of individuals: lone-parent families as well as people living entirely on their own.
Table I – Main demographic characteristics of the sample (N=790 couples)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age women (mean, standard deviation)</td>
<td>39.8 (6.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age men (mean, standard deviation)</td>
<td>42.3 (6.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married (percentage)</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children (mean, standard deviation)</td>
<td>1.7 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in the household (percentage)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young children (&lt; 7 years of age) in the household (percentage)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II – Level of education of men (N=790) and women (N=790)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed education</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low vocational</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low secondary</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium vocational</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High secondary</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High vocational</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VARIABLES

Habitus
The attitude towards (the reconciliation of) family and paid work was measured using 45 attitude statements. These statements come from various sources (see Willemsen, 1997), but most of them originate from a tested and validated scale, the Fragebogen zu Beruf und Familie (Abele & Andrä, unpublished report). This scale consists of four subscales:

- Positive attitude towards working women (six items)
- Negative attitude towards a traditional division of tasks (or 'family role equals woman's role') (six items)
- Positive attitude towards a stronger participation of men in families (six items)
- Positive attitude towards the compatibility of job and family for both partners (six items).

A principal components analysis on each subscale showed one factor for each subscale. An exploratory principal components analysis was performed on the remaining 21 attitude statements. The solution contained six factors. The first factor consisted of 8 items (question numbers 1, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 42, 45), the second of 4 items (2, 3, 7, 10), the third of 4 items (5, 9, 43, 44). The remaining three factors had very low eigenvalues and are to be discarded. Performing a second principal components analysis on the scales as indicated by the first principal components analysis did not show singular factors. From the first subscale, item number 16 and 45 had to be removed, and from the third subscale, item number 5 and 9. Only the second subscale proved to be homogeneous enough to form one factor. Once the first and second factors (of the second round) were established, another principal components analysis was performed on the remaining items. This led to the third factor (of the second round) containing item numbers 16, 43, 44, and 45. Eight items proved to have low correlations with the scales mentioned and do not form a clear factor (question numbers 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 17, 27).

This leaves us with three extra scales:

- Strong orientation towards paid work (six items)
- Strong orientation towards family (four items)
- Work above family (four items)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Attitude statement</th>
<th>M²</th>
<th>S²</th>
<th>C²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Positive attitude towards working women</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eigenvalue 2.04, proportion variance explained 33.9%, Cronbach's internal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consistency parameter $\alpha = 0.58$, High score (5) = Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Working women are, in general, more interesting and stimulating people than</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>housewives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>In general, working women are more self-confident than housewives</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>A woman's life is incomplete without a career</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>A working woman is more easily accepted and respected in society</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Only working women are truly independent</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>A woman should not quit her job because she has a child</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Negative attitude towards a traditional division of tasks</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eigenvalue 2.13, proportion variance explained 35.5%, Cronbach's internal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consistency parameter $\alpha = 0.63$, Answers are reversed, high score (5) =</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>In general, women are not as committed to their careers as men are</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>A man's occupation is more important to him than a woman's is to her</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Raising children is, in general, more rewarding for a woman than</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>In general, women are less suited for professional competition than men</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>For most women, being a housewife is an attractive alternative to lifelong</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>occupational stress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Highly career-oriented and ambitious men should not have a working wife</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F:3.58 M:3.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Positive attitude towards a stronger participation of men in families</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eigenvalue 1.90, proportion variance explained 31.7%, Cronbach's internal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consistency parameter $\alpha = 0.56$, High score (5) = Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>In general, men should do half the housework</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Men should reduce their professional involvement after the birth of a child</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Men should take a daily active role in all aspects of their children's education</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>A man should be willing to reduce his own occupational interests for the sake of</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>his wife's/partner's career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Family life can function just as well when the woman works and the man takes care</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of the household and children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>A man should not reduce his professional obligations because of a child. (item</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>switched, high score = strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Positive attitude towards the compatibility of job and family for both partners
Eigenvalue 2.32, proportion variance explained 38.7%, Cronbach's internal consistency parameter $\alpha = 0.68$, High score (5) = Strongly disagree

4.1 A relationship is too heavily burdened when there are children and both partners work
2.79 1.01 0.52
4.2 Parents who both work full-time do this at the expense of their child's development
2.46 1.02 0.47
4.3 In general, there is not enough time left for common interest when both partners work
3.02 1.04 0.43
4.4 Even if both partners work full-time, work and family are compatible (Item switched, high score = strongly agree)
2.71 1.02 0.42
4.5 In general, parents who are strongly committed to their work cannot be good mothers and fathers
F:2.58 M:2.83
4.6 In general, even a strong concentration on job and career leaves enough time to be involved in a close relationship (Item switched, high score = strongly agree)
F:3.66 M:3.49

5 Strong orientation towards paid work
Eigenvalue 2.19, proportion variance explained 36.6%, Cronbach's internal consistency parameter $\alpha = 0.63$, High score (5) = Strongly agree

5.1 Work is important because it allows me personal fulfilment
3.70 0.88 0.56
5.2 Work is important because it provides me with contacts outside of the house
3.60 0.94 0.47
5.3 Work is important because it gives me independence and autonomy
3.29 0.96 0.37
5.4 I would continue to work even if I could receive an income equal to the income from my current job without having to work for it
F:3.17 M:3.40
5.5 It is important for me to be successful in my occupation
F:3.36 M:3.36
5.6 A woman should not sacrifice her professional career for her children
F:2.91 M:3.29

6 Strong orientation towards family
Eigenvalue 1.62, proportion variance explained 40.4%, Cronbach's internal consistency parameter $\alpha = 0.50$, High score (5) = Strongly agree

6.1 Children need both a mother and a father to be successful and well-adjusted
3.64 0.99 0.50
6.2 Children make a marriage happy
F:3.56 M:3.73
6.3 No one can take care of children as well as their own mother
F:3.21 M:3.45
6.4 It is very important that a family has at least the evening meal together
F:3.02 M:3.53

7 Work above family
Eigenvalue 1.64, proportion variance explained 40.9%, %, Cronbach's internal consistency parameter $\alpha = 0.50$, High score (5) = Strongly agree

7.1 I would like to have a top position
F:1.95 M:2.34

7.2 In my occupation, I have set very high goals for myself 2.63 0.94 0.50
(45) F:2.51 M:2.75
7.3 To make a career, I am willing to let my family suffer somewhat 1.95 0.72 0.38
(44) F:1.86 M:2.05
7.4 It is good to stay at home full-time and not join in the economic rat race (item switched, high score = strongly disagree) 2.98 0.94 0.17
(16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Communality</th>
<th>Corresponding number in original questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III shows that, on average, men have significantly higher scores on all factors, except the fourth, ‘Positive attitude towards the compatibility of job and family for both partners’. This means that they are more protagonistic than women towards working women, a non-traditional division of tasks, a stronger participation of men in families, a strong orientation towards paid work and a strong orientation towards the family. In further analysis, summation scores are used. If necessary, the item scores (1 to 5) were switched before summation, as indicated in Table III.

Capital
The number of durable goods is measured by the number of (durable) consumer goods in the household. This concerns the presence of a refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, washing machine, drier, microwave and the number of cars. The average number is 6.0.

Level of profession has five levels, ranging from lower ‘blue collar’ work to academic work. The average is 2.55 (S=0.88).

Educational level has seven levels ranging from elementary school to academic education. The average is 3.97 (S=1.63) for men and 3.76 (S=1.47) for women.

Support from others is measured by the number of people actually mentioned that may provide help if needed. Three different areas are distinguished: Help with some unexpected problem (M=3.83, S=2.38), Help with a health problem (M=2.51, S=2.23), Help with sudden need for child care (M=2.34, S=2.08).

Use of policy regulations is measured by the number of available facilities for reconciling paid and unpaid work between men and women that are used by the respondent. For the Dutch case, these facilities include: publicly funded child care (the so-called buiten-schoolse opvang or ‘out of school child care’, and the kinderopvang or ‘day care center’), paid parental leave, unpaid parental leave, calamity leave, paid work time reduction, flexible working hours. The maximum
of this variable therefore is seven\(^3\). The average is 0.59, standard deviation 0.93. This average number may seem quite low, but the picture changes when one looks at specific groups within the sample, namely men and women who are (or were) employed while having children under seven years of age. Table IV gives an overview of the percentages men and women who have made use of certain ways to facilitate the combination of work and children. A distinction is made between men and women who had paid work at the moment of the interview, and those who were unemployed at that moment but had combined work with children earlier in their lives.

TABLE IV – Percentages men and women with at least one child under seven years of age who have made use of child care or leave arrangements to facilitate the combination of work and children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currently employed</th>
<th>Currently unemployed but previously employed while having children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women (N=123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school child care</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day care center</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid parental leave</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid parental leave</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working time reduction</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible working hours</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calamity leave</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Still, the percentages are not very high, but we may conclude that flexible working hours among men and women, and working time reduction among women, are quite popular in the Netherlands. It is remarkable that there is no difference in the percentages of women taking paid or unpaid parental leave, whereas for men the question whether or not the leave is paid seems fairly important. The low percentages of men making use of policies to facilitate the combination of paid work and having young children, underscore the male-breadwinner model as predominant in the Netherlands.

\(^3\) It seems contradictory that paid parental leave and unpaid parental leave could be used by one and the same respondent.
Practice: Relative division of paid and unpaid work

The method used in this survey to obtain data on the division of paid and unpaid work was to ask the respondents to make an estimation of the time spent on several activities during an ordinary working day, an ordinary not-working day, an ordinary Saturday, and an ordinary Sunday. The reported hours spent can be distributed into five categories, including paid work, household chores, child care, leisure time and ‘other activities’. To compute weekly hours the reported hours on a ‘ordinary working day’ were multiplied by the number of days the respondent works per week. The same procedure was applied to the ‘ordinary not-working day’: The reported hours on the not-working day were multiplied by five minus the number of days spent on paid work. Finally the reported hours on Saturday and Sunday were added.

Not every respondent produced plausible estimations. In some cases, we find weeks of less than 100 hours, as well as weeks of more than 300 hours, which deviates considerably from the expected 168 hours. Five percent of the respondents reports total weeks of less than 112 hours, and five percent scores above 217 hours. If we clean the data by leaving out implausible estimations according to some rules of thumb, we would have to discard 24.7% of the respondents. These arbitrary rules would be:

- Working more than 16 hours per day
- Travelling more than 6 hours per day
- Cooking more than 4 hours per day
- Doing dishes more than 3 hours per day
- Washing and ironing more than 4 hours per day
- Cleaning more than 4 hours per day
- Shopping more than 4 hours per day
- Taking care for elderly or sick members of the household more than 12 hours per day
- Transportation of children more than 4 hours per day
- Playing with children more than 6 hours per day
- Doing voluntary work more than 8 hours per day
- Doing unpaid work for specific persons more than 8 hours per day
- Spending more than 14 hours per day on leisure

However, since the question is ‘did you ever made use of a policy regulation’, this does occur.
Spending more than 4 hours per day on personal care
Sleeping less than 4 hours or more than 12 hours per day.
If, nevertheless, a day would count more than 30 hours, it would also be reported as 'missing value'.

On average the estimations are quite good, however. As can be seen in Table V, the mean totals of hours per week spent on the tasks mentioned do not differ much from the optimum of 168 hours per week. A representative Dutch survey, conducted by the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) in 1995 (Van Praag & Niphuis-Nell, 1997; Van der Lippe, 1997), estimated the total number of hours per week men with at least one child younger than six years of age spent on household tasks at 8.6 hours. They spent 8.4 hours per week on childcare. In our survey we find 7.9 hours spent on household tasks and 12.7 hours on childcare. The number of hours spent on childcare is higher in our survey. This may be the consequence of the different method used by the respective surveys. The SCP used the diary method, whereas in our study post-hoc average estimations are used. The description of childcare tasks is almost similar, whereas the description of household tasks is more elaborate in the SCP study (Van der Lippe, 1997: 157).

In further analysis, as many cases as possible are taken into account, regardless of whether the reported hours spent on several tasks are plausible or not.

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4 These numbers are not found in Table V. In Table V, the reported hours concern men with at least one child under seven years of age.
Table V shows clearly that in the Netherlands men do most of the paid work and women do most of the unpaid work. Having young children in the household increases the total estimated number of hours per week by men and women. On average, women report ten to twelve hours per week more than men, which could be an indicator of the extra effort mothers of young children put in, even if the extra time spent by women on leisure, personal care and sleep is taken into account.

The division of paid and unpaid work is definitely the most complex variable used in the model. It is constructed by adding up the reported time spent on several tasks, namely

- hours spent on paid work, education, traveling time on behalf of work or study and voluntary work;
- hours spent on preparing meals, doing dishes, washing and ironing, and cleaning, in short: household tasks.

Every respondent was given a score by comparing the amount of time spent on paid and unpaid work, as reported by themselves and their partners.
The scores are computed using two formulas, one for men and one for women. If the respondent is male, the formula is: 

\[(A - B) - (C - D) / (A + B + C + D) * -100\]

If the respondent is female, the formula is:

\[(A - B) - (C - D) / (A + B + C + D) * 100\]

The maximum score of this index is 100 (the man doing all the unpaid work, the woman all the paid work), the minimum is -100 (the woman doing all the unpaid work, the man doing all the paid work). A zero score means an equal division of tasks in hours spent. Example: If a male respondent works 40 hours, and his partner works 30 hours, and the respondent spends 10 hours on household tasks and his partner 30 hours, then a score is achieved of -27.3. The mean of the sample is -50.5, stddev 37.5. A score of -50 is achieved when the man spends three times the number of hours on paid work compared to his wife, and three times fewer hours spent on household chores. In general: the higher the score, the more equal, or even reversed the roles are.

This way of representing the relative division of paid and unpaid work has one important disadvantage: The computed score for each respondent is not unique. Two identical scores may be ascribed to different grounds. For example: If both partners each spend half the time of some other couple on paid and unpaid work, they achieve the same score. But if they spend 10 hours less in each category, they achieve a more extreme score (that is, lower if the score is negative, higher if the score is positive). The indicator proposed here, despite this 'shortcoming', is a good measure of the egalitarianism in the division of tasks between man and woman. A difference of a few hours between partners on one type of work (that is, paid or unpaid) is less significant if both partners spend much time on both types of work, and more significant if both partners spend relatively little time on both types of work, which corresponds with the idea of egalitarianism.
ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed by using a multivariate regression technique, known as path analysis. The path analysis was performed by using the linear structural equation modelling computer programme LISREL8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Parameter estimation was carried out on the basis of the maximum likelihood method, which is relatively insensitive to smaller samples. Modification indices were used to optimize the fit of the model. Four (recursive) models were computed: Two general models, one for women and one for men, and two specified models, one for women with at least one child younger than seven years of age, and one for men with at least one such child. The goodness of fit of the models is rather good. The p-values of the $\chi^2$-scores are all above 0.05, which means that no model had to be rejected. The coefficients that are presented are beta and gamma weights. They are comparable to regression beta weights, which means that an increase of one standard score of the independent variable predicts an increase of $\beta$ or $\gamma$ standard scores of the intermediate or dependent variable. Indirect effects can be computed by multiplying the effect of the independent variable on the intermediate variable with the effect of the intermediate variable on the dependent variable.

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows the results of the path analysis that was performed on the women in the sample, regardless of whether they had any children or not. We see significant effects of all of the attitude factor scores on the dependent variable, the division of paid and unpaid work. The strongest effect comes from 'positive attitude towards doing paid work', also referred to as 'strong orientation towards paid work'. The effect is positive, which means that the stronger the orientation towards paid work, the more equal the division of tasks between the partners. Second in line is 'positive attitude towards men doing household work', with a moderately strong effect on the division of paid and unpaid work. Less strong effects have 'positive attitude towards the family', 'positive attitude towards an egalitarian division of tasks', 'negative attitude towards a traditional division of tasks', and 'positive attitude towards working women'. There is a remarkably strong effect of having a social network that may help in case there is a sudden problem with childcare on the use of policy regulations. A 'positive attitude towards working women' and a 'positive attitude towards paid work' have small effects on the use of policy regulations, and there is also a small
effect of the number of durable goods in the household. However, the proportion of variance explained by this intermediate variable is rather limited (12%). Besides, no significant effect is found of the use of policy regulations on the division of paid and unpaid work.

FIGURE 1 - Path model, women, N=701 (Chisq=3.357, df=7, p=0.85, agfi=99, cn=3853)

However, the rather strong effect of a social network that may help when there is a sudden problem with childcare on the use of policy regulations, gives rise to the idea that some other factor plays a role, namely the presence of (young) children in the household. It is only then that there would be any need for a social network that could help with instant problems regarding childcare. Therefore another model was computed concerning women with young children.
This model is depicted in Figure 2. It is much simpler than the model presented in Figure 1. Clearly, a positive attitude towards doing paid work has a strong direct effect on the division of paid and unpaid work, but also indirect, via the use of policy regulations.

The most striking difference between the two models is the link between the intermediate and the dependent variable. We find a strong effect of the use of policy regulations on the division of paid and unpaid work. We also see that the effect of the social network variable has disappeared. This leads to the conclusion that especially women with young children make use of policy regulations, in such a way that it influences the division of tasks between her and her partner.
The models that were computed concerning only the men show similarities as well as some interesting differences with the models concerning the women. The most important similarities are that we do not find an effect between use of policies and the division of paid and unpaid work among men in general, while we do find this effect among fathers of young children. Also the attitudinal variables have strong effects on both the intermediate and the dependent variable, although the path coefficients are different. The strongest effect on the division of paid and unpaid work comes from the factor-score ‘positive attitude towards working women’. It is followed by ‘positive attitude towards an egalitarian division of tasks’. Smaller effects have ‘positive attitude towards men doing household work’ and ‘negative attitude towards a traditional division of tasks’. These two effects are not found among fathers with young children.
As was the case among women, the social network variable has an effect on the use of policies. This effect is not present when we consider men with young children only. It is remarkable in this respect that educational level has a positive effect on the use of policy regulations and on the division of paid and unpaid work among men in general, but that this is absent when we consider only men with young children. Among men, we also see an effect of a social network variable that was not found among women. It is difficult to explain why having a social network that may help in case of illness may influence the division of paid and unpaid work.

DISCUSSION

The results presented here may already provide us with interesting information about the way attitudes of men and women, and the use of policies may influence the division of paid and unpaid work. If we look at the results of the path analysis that was performed on the data of the women compared to the one that was carried out on the data of the men, we see that in both cases strong effects on the division of paid and unpaid work come from attitudes that are oriented towards the role of the partner. For women, a positive attitude towards men doing household work has a strong positive effect on the equality of the division of tasks, whereas for men, a
positive attitude towards working women has a strong similar effect. It seems that breaking through the norms and values that are set by traditional gender roles, namely that a man should not do household work and a woman should not do paid work, leads to a more egalitarian division of tasks. This may not sound very new in general, but the surprising difference found here is that this breakthrough is directed not towards oneself, but towards the role of the partner.

The strong positive effect of the ‘positive attitude towards paid work’ in the women’s models form important exceptions to this phenomenon. This ‘self-oriented’ attitude plays no role in the models concerning the men, but is very important in the models concerning the women. Combining these findings, we may conclude that especially the attitudes that deviate from the traditional norms are good predictors of the division of tasks between men and women. Whether men have a strong positive attitude towards themselves having paid work or not does not influence the division of tasks. The attitude has little to do with (a change of) reality, because it is normal for a man to have paid work. But if a woman has a strong orientation towards paid work, adaptation of the status quo, of the habitus is needed. If we define habitus in a more psychological sense than Bourdieu (1984) would approve of, namely as a set of predispositions formed by contextual and cultural variables and therefore shaping the strength of the attitudes, we could say that it is here that these contextual and cultural variables of a certain country interfere with opinions, and therefore indirectly with behaviour. Looked upon it this way, the way the attitudes affect behaviour strongly depends on the specific cultural norms and values, such as the extent to which the labour participation of women is considered a matter of major concern, for instance, by the government as well as by the individual, a taboo on children being in childcare for more than, say, three days a week\(^5\), or the open-mindedness of employers towards men who want to have time to take care of their children.

In many respects, men proved to be significantly more egalitarian in mind than women. We found significant differences on ‘positive attitude towards working women’, ‘negative attitude towards a traditional division of tasks’, ‘positive attitude towards a stronger participation of men in families’, ‘paid work orientation’, and ‘family orientation’. This finding is contradictory to a great deal of research in this field, which usually shows women’s to have more egalitarian opinions than men (Nelson, 1988; Willemsen, 1992).

\(^5\) In the Netherlands, 34% has objections to a married woman working outside the house if that means that small children have to go to childcare (SCP, 1998: 141).
Several Dutch studies have shown that men have very egalitarian gender role attitudes (SCP, 1998). However, relatively high educated men also have higher working aspirations (Jacobs, 1998). This corresponds to the finding in this study, namely that higher educated men make more use of policies and have a more egalitarian division of tasks. The use of policies enables them to combine work with care for their children.

Comparing the mothers with the fathers, we see that the effect of the use of policies on the division of paid and unpaid work is somewhat smaller among men than among women. This is partly due to the fact that the attitude variable 'Positive attitude towards an egalitarian division of tasks' explains variance of the dependent variable directly in the men's model, and only indirectly in the women's model. This leads to the conclusion that men fulfil their wish for a more egalitarian division of tasks not only indirectly, by making use of policy regulations, but also directly, by changing the division of paid and unpaid work. Among women we do not find a direct relation from this attitude variable to the dependent variable, which means that the effect is only indirect, namely via the use of policy regulations.

Now that we have arrived at this point, some critical thoughts come to mind. There are two considerations that need attention. In the first place, it should be noted that the variable 'use of policy regulations' is constituted by the sum of seven possible policy measures that can be used in the Netherlands to reconcile work with family life. Of course, it would be better to look at the respective forms of policy regulations separately. It would provide us with knowledge about what specific policy measure could be effective in specific circumstances, defined by individual attitudes and socio-economic status. However, since the use of certain policy regulations is so limited, the variance in these separate variables would be too small to use them in statistical analysis. Most of these 'variables' would be more like constants with a value of close to zero. For the time being, we may conclude on the basis of this study, that policy measures are effective in the redivision of paid and unpaid work, but other research methods are needed to shed light on the question what particular kinds of policy measures could be effective in this respect.

A second point of consideration is the causal structure of the model. This concerns mainly the relation between attitude and behaviour. Many attitudinal research programmes have to deal with this problem (see for example Liska, 1984), namely that there are practically no arguments for not proposing that the causality between attitude and behaviour is just the other way around. Cognitive dissonance reduction mechanisms may be held responsible for adaptation of the
attitudes, once the individual is faced with certain kinds of behaviour that are imposed on him or her by interpersonal power relations or even forms of *habitus*. In this research design, this might even be considered as a serious problem, because the dependent variable is defined as the relative division of tasks between partners. In the research design as it is proposed here, individual variables are compared with joint behaviour, and it is precisely there that mechanisms of power may play a significant role. So, although in our opinion, it is fair to maintain the postulated causal relations, it would be good to complete the study into the effect of policy measures on the relative division of tasks, with a study of these effects on absolute time spent on paid and unpaid work by the individual.

**CONCLUSION**

Little is known about the effect of policy regulations on the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women, especially from an international comparative perspective. To make this comparison, it is essential to take contextual variables of the countries under study into account. In this article, an attempt has been made to assess the effect of the use of policies on the division of paid and unpaid work in the light of several attitudinal variables, which are presumed to be a reflection of the socio-cultural circumstances with regard to the reconciliation of work and family in the Netherlands. The attitudinal variables proved to have strong effects on the division of paid and unpaid work within households. It is remarkable in this respect that some of the strongest effects come from attitudes that are directed towards the role of the partner. A positive attitude towards working women among men, and a positive attitude towards men doing housework among women determine to a relatively large extent the division of tasks within the household, and, to a lesser degree, the number of policy regulations that has been made use of. Use of policy regulations is most frequent among employed women with young children, as could be expected. It has a positive effect on the division of tasks between men and women. Given this result, a logical next step is to investigate what kinds of policy regulations are effective in what kinds of circumstances. The minimal use of unpaid parental leave among men, for example, is an interesting subject for further investigation. Since the men that take unpaid parental leave are so few, it is not possible to investigate this further using a (sample of a) whole population. One has to look into specific subgroups of the population, which, in this example, could be young fathers from dual-earner families. Only then can a useful comparison be made between European
countries, on a specific topic, with knowledge of relevant attitudinal variables as an indicator of the social and cultural circumstances under which the policy measure is, or could be, effective.

It has now been shown that having non-traditional attitudes towards the role of the partner with regard to the division of tasks, together with the use of policy regulations, contributed to a more egalitarian division of tasks. This provides support for further elaboration of the conceptual framework to be used in international comparative research into the effectiveness of policy regulations.
REFERENCES


