Parenthood and employment: the impact of policies and culture on gender inequality in Switzerland

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to analyse the effect of cantonal social policies and cultural settings (in Switzerland) on women's and men's employment behaviour. Special consideration is given to the transition to parenthood.

Design/methodology/approach – Based on data from the Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS) this paper conducts multilevel analyses to test individual and cantonal effects on the probability of employment and on working hours. To analyse the effect of parenthood, models for women and men with children under three are contrasted with models for women and men without children or with older children.

Findings – The paper documents the persistence of gender inequality in employment linked to parenthood. How the reconciliation of work and family life can be realised for women and men strongly depends on a set of policies and cultural conditions. Moreover, individual characteristics such as education or marriage are important predictors.

Research limitations/implications – A shortcoming of this study is the focus on the individual employment use and not on household-level division of labour. This disadvantage is due to the design of the SLFS, which is (at present) the only available survey to allow regionalisation at the cantonal level. However, the paper adds important results to the debate about gender inequality and parenthood in Switzerland as previous research has focused only little on cantonal diversity.

Originality/value – The paper connects to previous cantonal comparative studies of female employment but extends their analyses in three important ways. By analysing cantonal differences in policies and culture this paper takes the diversity of framework conditions in Switzerland into account. Furthermore it simultaneously analyses male and female employment behaviour to get a better understanding of gender inequality and parenthood.

Keywords Employment, Switzerland, Working hours, Cantons, Gender inequality, Time use

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The transition to parenthood is one of the most important events in the life course. It still is one of the major reasons for gender inequality in employment (Stier *et al.*, 2001; Blossfeld and Hofmeister, 2006). While women in Europe mostly reduce their working hours or exit the labour market, the employment of men does not change or even increases with the transition to parenthood (OECD, 2002). However, there are large differences regarding the gender gap of parents' employment rates. In 2000 it varied between 3.5 percentage points in Denmark and 44.7 percentage points in Spain (OECD, 2002). But even in countries with small employment gender gaps, mothers mostly work part time, fathers still work full time. Research identified political, economic, cultural,

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and demographic factors as relevant for differences across countries (Fuwa, 2004; Hantrais and Ackers, 2005; van der Lippe *et al.*, 2011; Orloff, 2009). Especially important is the welfare state (van der Lippe and van Dijk, 2002; Lewis, 2002; Daly and Rake, 2003). Policies influence individual behaviour and can therefore increase or hinder parents' employment (Gornick and Meyers, 2004; Lewis, 2002). The political setting in turn (as well as individual behaviour) is partly shaped by gender roles and norms about work and care giving (Orloff, 2009).

Due to the strong federalism in Switzerland there is great variation of regional (cantonal) welfare state regulations (Armingeon *et al.*, 2004). Even though socio-political issues are regulated at the national level, too, especially family policies differ greatly among the federal units – the cantons (FDHA, 2004). The strong federalism furthermore reflects the heterogeneity of cultural norms and values (Fux, 1997, p. 357). This diversity can also be found regarding gender inequalities in employment. French-speaking and urban cantons have the highest female employment rates (Bühler, 2001). Gender gaps in average paid work volumes[1] are smallest in urban cantons like Geneva or Basel-Stadt (Gasser *et al.*, 2014). A comparative analysis of Swiss cantons (Epple *et al.*, 2014) furthermore shows that more traditional cantons have a higher level of gender time inequality regarding the distribution of paid and unpaid work.

Studies analysing both female and male employment in Switzerland are very few, especially regarding the influence of political and cultural factors (e.g. for international comparisons, Fuwa, 2004; van der Lippe *et al.*, 2011). Maternal employment in Switzerland is well analysed (Stadelmann-Steffen, 2007), but there is little knowledge about fathers' employment behaviour, in particular from a cantonal perspective. Against this backdrop, this paper focuses on cantonal differences regarding the political and cultural setting and their effect on women's and men's employment with special regard to parenthood. By comparing the individual labour market participation and working hours of women and men with and without small children (zero to three) two main questions will be answered: how does the employment behaviour change when it comes to the birth of a child in the context of different cantonal and individual factors? Are there gendered differences in these changes?

Theoretical approach and hypotheses

In what follows we describe theoretical approaches and hypotheses on social policy, culture, and individual employment behaviour.

Social policy

Care is the reproductive basis of wage labour (Pfau-Effinger and Geissler, 2005, p. 5), which is why the social organisation of care work is considered as a central element of welfare state analysis by feminist researchers (Daly and Lewis, 2000, p. 289). The relevant institutions providing care are the welfare state, markets, families, and communities (Amacker *et al.*, 2011). Social policy is an important part of the framework within which employment behaviour takes place (Korpi *et al.*, 2009). Welfare state provision thereby influences men's and women's life courses by shaping gender roles and the distribution of paid and unpaid work (Daly and Rake, 2003). Different policies such as childcare provision, parental leave, or tax regulations can enable but also hinder parents' labour participation (Leitner, 2003; Gornick and Meyers, 2004). In countries that provide care support for working mothers, their employment continuity

is highest (Stier *et al.*, 2001). However, these de-familialisation measures that diminish the burden of caring responsibilities may either be provided by the state, as in social democratic welfare regimes, or profit and non-profit enterprises, as in liberal welfare regimes.

Three cantonal policy variables are included in the analysis. Research identified childcare facilities as crucial feature for the reconciliation of family and work (Pascall and Lewis, 2004; Gornick and Meyers, 2009; Hegewisch and Gornick, 2011). It is expected that the negative effect of parenthood especially on women's employment rates and working hours will be cushioned with a rising supply rate of childcare places. It is further assumed that tax load and tax progression influence employment. A welfare regime is based on its redistribution system via taxation. Moreover, tax systems support certain family models and provide incentives or disincentives for entering the labour market and thus strongly influence the gendered division of work (Sainsbury, 1999). Disincentives for a second earning (usually by women) are highest in joint or split taxation systems (Schwarz, 2012), as it is the case in Switzerland. The cantons possess sovereignty in taxation, however, direct income tax and value-added taxes are regulated at the federal level. Within the European Union it is apparent that in countries with a higher tax load, low-skilled individuals and second earners have the lowest employment rates (OECD, 2011). Due to the joint taxation system a higher tax load is expected to weaken the employment participation of women and to lower their weekly working hours. Depending on the tax progressivity, the so-called marriage penalty even increases, as the low income earner is taxed at a higher rate. Hence, a high tax progression is expected to lower women's employment, too.

Culture

The relation between employment and policies can only be understood by taking into consideration dominant cultural values and norms at the macro level (Pfau-Effinger, 2012). It must, however, be pointed out that policies and culture are intertwined with other macro-level factors, such as political institutions (polity, politics), the economy, or demographic structures. In a broader sense, culture can be defined as "[…] set of denotative (what is), normative (what should be), and stylistic (how done) beliefs, shared by a group of individuals […]" (Schooler, 1996, p. 327). They are on the one hand the result of negotiations and conflicts between social groups, and on the other hand anchored in the institutional context and therefore relatively stable (Archer, 1996). Culture is connected with gendered employment behaviour as it includes ideals about the division of labour between men and women (Pfau-Effinger, 2000). This so-called gender culture defines overall normative gender relations. Cultural values thus influence not only individual behaviour but state's institutions and thus politics, too (Pfau-Effinger, 2000; Orloff, 2009). Policies ensure that individuals orientate their actions towards cultural norms and values by making socially acceptable gender roles and employment compatible. In combination with welfare regulations, gender culture thus shapes the employment behaviour of women and men.

To assess the impact of cultural values at the macro level, Switzerland is an interesting case to look at. The equal division of work between men and women is more supported in some cantons than in others (Gasser *et al.*, 2014). As cantons possess a high autonomy, the various public welfare organisations and tax systems reflect different cantonal gender arrangements and thus represent different gender cultures. Moreover, Switzerland comprises four language regions with different cultural traditions. The traditional male breadwinner model, for example is most common in

German speaking cantons (Bühler and Meier Kruker, 2002). Thus, votes on gender relevant issues repeatedly show that more importance to gender equality is given in French- and Italian-speaking parts. The variable language region, indicating the share of people speaking Latin languages, therefore is plausibly linked to longer working hours for women and shorter working hours for men, with no effect of parenthood. The second important dimension regarding cultural differences in Switzerland is the religion (Vatter, 2002). The confessional environment in some cantons still shapes the politics (Geser, 2004). Moreover, religious beliefs provide a cultural framework regarding family norms and gender relations (Houseknecht and Pankhurst, 2000). Catholicism thereby is linked to a less egalitarian division of work (Voicu *et al.*, 2009). A higher share of Catholics is assumed to promote a less egalitarian division of work and thus lowers women's employment, especially when it comes to the birth of a child. Finally, the effect of traditionalism is analysed, measuring average attitudes (among the population with voting rights) regarding four issues: preservation of tradition, strong army, law and order, and equal opportunities for foreigners[2]. A strong traditionalism can be interpreted as rejection of any cultural change including the change of gender relations and rising gender equality (Stolz, 2001). It is expected to reduce women's employment participation and working hours, as in a more traditional context the male breadwinner model is still dominant (Pfau-Effinger, 2000). The working hours of men are expected to be longer in more traditional cantons. Even though all three cultural variables indicate the same interrelation with the gendered employment behaviour (modernism vs traditionalism) their Pearson's correlation is low[3]. That implies that on the one hand each indicator measures differing cultural elements, and on the other hand, the cantonal variation regarding cultural values and norms is big.

Individual characteristics

Although the focus here lies on the influence of social policy and culture, individual factors are integrated in the analyses, too. We assume that individual choices are affected by opportunities and restrictions and are embedded in the societal context. Research identified educational investments, aspirations, and family status as important individual factors influencing employment behaviour. Based on the human capital theory a higher education is assumed to increase the employment intensity of both men and women. Education is a form of human capital and can be seen as an investment leading to more productivity and thus higher earnings (Becker, 1993). Longer working hours and a higher workload are therefore more attractive for higher educated men and women. Especially mothers of small children are expected to work longer hours if they are higher educated. Furthermore, it is expected that foreigners show differing employment behaviour than Swiss citizens, as generally their employment rates are lower (Charles, 2005). Finally, the marital status is integrated, as studies state a strong negative effect especially in Switzerland on the employment on women (Charles *et al.*, 2001; Stadelmann-Steffen, 2007).

Data and method

The analyses are based on the Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS) for 2010 containing information about the structure of the labour force and employment behaviour, household composition, and demographic characteristics. The sample is restricted to men and women of prime age (25-49) who are Swiss or have a foreign citizenship with a residential permit for at least one year. Respondents who work at least one hour per

week for money (or without payment in family businesses) are classified as employed (Federal Statistical Office (FSO), 2004). Two dependent variables measuring the employment behaviour are used: the employment itself (yes or no), indicating whether a respondent is (self-)employed, and the individual weekly working hours of employees. Models were estimated separately for women and men with and without at least one child aged zero to three living in the same household. To study the effect of parenthood, the models for women and men with infants are contrasted with the models for women and men without children under the age of 15 (in the following: non-parents)[4]. This strategy of analysis accounts for the fact that gender inequality in paid work (in Switzerland) is especially pronounced among parents with young children (Lévy and Ernst, 2002). The operationalisation of the independent individual and cantonal variables is summarised in Table I.

As the data is hierarchically structured (individuals are nested in cantons), multilevel regression analyses are used (Hox, 2010; Snijders and Bosker, 2011). Conventional regression models overestimate effects because the assumption of independence between observations and thus between error terms would be violated. Multilevel models allow the dependent variable to vary both across individual and contextual units and for simultaneous testing of individual and contextual variables (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002)[5]. As the dependent variable for the probability of employment is a binary outcome variable, logistic models are applied. The table presents average marginal effects (AME) that are the predicted probabilities at the mean of the population (Kopp and Lois, 2014). The dependent variable for working hours is linear, thus linear multilevel models are realised.

Results

For reasons of space and clarity, the tables do not show the null models that contain only the constant and no independent variables. Those so-called intercept-only models

Variables	Operationalisation
Policies	
Supply rate	Supply rate of full-day childcare places per child (0-3 years), weighted average number of places, years 2009/2010 (Stern *et al.* (2013)
Tax load	Total index of the taxation on income and wealth, in per cent, 2006 (EDF, 2013)
Tax progression	Difference between the levels of taxes that married couples with two children pay if they earn 100,000 vs 50,000 Swiss Francs (EFD, 2013)
Culture	
Language region	Share of people speaking Latin languages (French or Italian), based on own calculations from the Swiss Labour Force Survey, in per cent, 2010
Traditionalism	Index measuring average attitudes (among the population with voting rights) regarding four issues: preservation of tradition, strong army, law and order, and equal opportunities for foreigners, based on own calculations, index range between 0 and 1, data from the Swiss Electoral Studies (selects) for 2007
Catholicism	Share of Roman Catholics, as percentage of the total number of permanent resident population 15 years or over, 2000 (IDHEAP/BADAC)
Individual characteristics	
Age	Age in years; age in years squared
Higher education	Dummy: tertiary education (1); lower and upper secondary level (0)
Foreigner	Dummy: foreigner (1); Swiss (0)
Married	Dummy: married (1); unmarried, widowed, living apart (0)

Table I. Variables and operationalisation of independent variables

provide information about the variance components. In all estimated null models, the between-variances (cantonal level) prove to be significant. Thus, multilevel analysis seems to be adequate as the employment rates and working hours differ significantly between the cantons. The intra-class correlation provides the proportion of total variance (individual plus contextual variance) attributed to the cantonal level (Hox, 2010). In the models for the employment decision, it varies between 0.4 per cent in the models of women with children and 1 per cent for women without children, respectively, 2.4 per cent in the models of men without children and 4.4 per cent for men with children. Regarding the employment intensity, it varies between 0.5 per cent in the models for women without children, 1 per cent in both models for men and 7 per cent in the model for women with small children[6]. Finally, the models containing only individual variables are not displayed, as the values and significances do not differ when including contextual variables.

Results of the multilevel models for the probability of employment of women and men are shown in Table II. The effects of individual variables change only little between models with and without children. As expected, higher education increases the likelihood of being employed, for both men and women, regardless of whether they have small children. In all models, foreigners are less likely employed than Swiss citizens. The probability rises for women with infants. The effect of the marital status is gendered. Married women are less likely employed than cohabiting or single women, with and without small children. Again, women with infants show a higher probability. For men, in contrast, marriage increases the likelihood of being employed, but not so for those with young children. Finally, age increases solely the employment of men and women without small children. But with increasing age, this effect reverses and shows an inversely U-shaped relationship, which means that the effect becomes negative. Older men and women without children have a lower employment rate.

Controlling for individual variables, higher supply rates of childcare places reduce the probability for women without children younger than 15 to be employed. Contrary to our expectations, no effect was found for mothers of small children. In both models men have a lower likelihood of employment in cantons with higher supply rates. Contrary to our expectations, the likelihood of employment for mothers with young children increases with the tax load. No effect was found for tax progression. Regarding the cultural dimension, women without children in cantons with a higher share of Romanic speakers are less likely employed. No effect of the language region was found on men's participation in employment. Unexpectedly, no cultural variable has a significant effect on women. Men are more likely employed in more traditional cantons, regardless their family status. No effect was found for the share of Catholics.

Table III shows multilevel results for the individual working hours of employed men and women, with and without infants. The models show that higher educated women have longer working hours than lower educated women, regardless their family status. Although men have a higher likelihood of employment with higher education too, a higher education leads to significant lower working hours, with and without small children. This may be explained with the financial resources of better educated men that allow them to reduce their work load. Moreover, research shows that fathers with higher education are more likely to have more modern attitudes towards gender equality (Hofäcker, 2007). While a foreign citizenship decreases the likelihood for employment of women, their working hours are significantly higher, regardless the family status. On average, the socio-economic status of foreign women is lower than that of Swiss women, which is why they are more exposed to unemployment and

Table II.
Results of multilevel analysis for the probability of employment

	Women				Men			
	No children		With infants		No children		With infants	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Individual level								
Age	0.016**	0.015**	0.023	0.023	0.017***	0.017***	0.004	0.004
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Age squared	−0.000***	−0.000***	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000***	−0.000***	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Higher education	0.067***	0.065***	0.075***	0.072***	0.060***	0.060***	0.039***	0.039***
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Foreigner	−0.072***	−0.070***	−0.121***	−0.121***	−0.031***	−0.031***	−0.035***	−0.033***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Married	−0.059***	−0.059***	−0.133***	−0.133***	0.031***	0.031***	−0.005	−0.005
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Cantonal level								
Supply rate	−0.217**		0.154		−0.186***		−0.152**	
	(0.094)		(0.167)		(0.063)		(0.062)	
Tax load	−0.000		0.001**		−0.000		−0.000	
	(0.000)		(0.001)		(0.000)		(0.000)	
Tax progression	−0.001		−0.005		−0.000		−0.000	
	(0.004)		(0.006)		(0.002)		(0.002)	
Catholics		−0.000		−0.000		−0.000		−0.000
		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)
Romanic speakers		−0.040***		−0.002		−0.009		−0.004
		(0.011)		(0.029)		(0.010)		(0.008)
Traditionalism		0.001		−0.001		0.002***		0.002***
		(0.001)		(0.001)		(0.001)		(0.000)
Constant	0.869***	0.870***	0.644***	0.643**	0.906***	0.906***	0.963***	0.963***
	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Level 1 variance	0.018***	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.019	0.000
n	6,872	6,872	2,932	2,932	6,840	6,840	2,763	2,763

Notes: Average marginal effects (AME) are reported, robust SE in brackets. ***$p < 0.01$; **$p < 0.05$; *$p < 0.1$

Table III. Results of multilevel analysis for individual working hours

	Women				Men			
	No children		With infants		No children		With infants	
	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Individual level								
Age	0.232***	0.234***	−0.493***	−0.495***	0.111***	0.110***	−0.077*	−0.078*
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.134)	(0.134)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.044)	(0.044)
Age squared	−0.004***	−0.004***	0.007***	0.007***	−0.001***	−0.001***	0.001*	0.001*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Higher education	0.217***	0.223***	0.547***	0.557***	−0.060*	−0.062*	−0.168***	−0.168***
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.113)	(0.113)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Foreigner	0.264***	0.269***	1.229***	1.223***	0.025	0.023	−0.049	−0.046
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.110)	(0.110)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Married	−1.026***	−1.029***	−0.789***	−0.780***	0.179***	0.180***	0.147**	0.154**
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.148)	(0.148)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.071)	(0.071)
Cantonal level								
Supply rate	−0.520		4.740**		−2.207***		−1.834***	
	(0.467)		(2.053)		(0.438)		(0.485)	
Tax load	−0.000		0.002		0.000		−0.002	
	(0.002)		(0.006)		(0.001)		(0.002)	
Tax progression	−0.011		0.035		−0.008		−0.014	
	(0.018)		(0.083)		(0.018)		(0.020)	
Catholics		0.000		0.002		0.002		0.002
		(0.002)		(0.004)		(0.002)		(0.002)
Romanic speakers		0.040		0.927***		−0.068		−0.070
		(0.072)		(0.172)		(0.073)		(0.083)
Traditionalism		0.009*		−0.033***		0.017***		0.013**
		(0.005)		(0.012)		(0.005)		(0.005)
Constant	7.009***	6.308***	5.141***	7.596***	8.463***	7.168***	9.140***	7.784***
	(0.175)	(0.282)	(0.733)	(0.782)	(0.146)	(0.264)	(0.198)	(0.328)
Level 1 variance	0.000***	0.000***	0.235***	0.012***	0.006***	0.006***	0.006	0.007
Level 2 variance	3.849***	3.848***	5.138***	5.141*	1.587***	1.588***	1.022***	1.023***
n	5,982	5,982	1,874	1,874	6,197	6,197	2,626	2,626

Notes: Robust SE in brackets. ***$p < 0.01$; **$p < 0.05$; *$p < 0.1$

precarious working conditions, and have longer working hours. No significant effect of nationality was found for men. Again, marriage has a clear gendered effect. A marriage decreases the working hours significantly for all women. Married men work more hours per week than unmarried men, regardless their family situation. Finally, the effect of age has a U-shaped curve, regarding women and men with infants. That implies that their working hours are higher if they are of younger age, fall with increasing age and increase again. The models for men and women without children show the reverse effect of age, which means their working hours increase up to a certain age and then start to decrease.

Regarding the cantonal variables, it is noteworthy that the supply rate of childcare places again has a significant negative effect on men. In accordance with the expectations, women with infants show higher working hours with increasing supply rates. No other policy variable in all models shows a significant effect. While the share of Romanic speakers solely had a negative effect on the probability of employment of women without children, it has a positive effect on the working hours of mothers of infants. Again, no effect of the language region is found for men. Traditionalism is accompanied by lower working hours of employed mothers and unexpectedly by higher working hours of women without children. Moreover, traditionalism leads to higher working hours of men with and without small children. With the exception of the effect on women without children these results are in line with the expectations that a traditional culture rejects social change and tends to preserve existing norms. For women, this effect becomes important with the transition to parenthood. Again, Catholicism shows no effect.

Discussion and conclusion

The gendered effect of parenthood on employment is a principal driving force for gender inequality in general, as well as for the potential of a more equal division of housework and family work. The empirical findings presented here address the question whether these gendered effects are influenced by cantonal social policy and cultural contexts.

The pattern of individual-level effects comparing the models for parents (i.e. parents of young children) with those for non-parents (i.e. men and women without a coresident child under 15) shows hardly any difference. It seems that parenthood does not change the basic pattern of individual determinants for the probability of employment and working hours. Solely the otherwise positive effect of marriage on the employment of men disappears in the model for fathers' working hours. A comparison of the models further shows strong gender differences with respect to both employment decisions as well as working hours. First, higher education and thus investment in human capital plays an important role regarding gender equality in employment. Higher educated women are more likely to be employed and have longer working hours than lower educated women. Higher educated men have a higher likelihood of employment, too, but they are able to reduce their working hours significantly. This result might point into the direction of a generally stronger sharing of housework and family work between higher educated men and women. Second, being married has a gender-specific effect. A marriage increases the likelihood of employment among women without children and decreases their work hours. By contrast, marriage increases work hours and the likelihood to be employed of men without children.

The focus of this paper is not on individual-level characteristics, however, but on contextual factors. The results confirm international findings that social policy

supports employment, potentially buffering the gendered impact of parenthood. The details are complex, however. Contrary to our expectations, mother's probability of employment increases with the tax load. Two explanations are plausible. First, a high tax load may decrease available income and thus make a second income more desirable. Second, a higher tax load is associated with a more generous welfare regime, as taxes are an important way of financing welfare expenditures (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Usually, a larger welfare state is accompanied with higher employment rates of mothers, as it is the case in social-democratic states.

Childcare facilities buffer the gendered impact of parenthood and raise the potential for a more balanced division of paid work and house and family work between men and women. It is related to longer working hours among mothers of young children, and lower employment rates and working hours for fathers. This confirms previous results by Stadelmann-Steffen (2007) and Stern *et al.* (2013). However, the supportive role of childcare facilities for mothers only applies for those already employed. They do not increase mothers' probability of employment, but in contrast lower those of women without children. Moreover, increasing supply rates of childcare facilities lead to fewer employed men and shorter working hours of men without children, too. Thus, the supply rate can be seen as an indicator for the extent of the double-carer model among families, by showing different cantonal degrees of familialism. As the supply rate also influences those men and women without children, it furthermore can be interpreted as an indicator for the general cantonal welfare arrangement and the underlying gender culture, although in some cantons the responsibility for childcare lies upon the market or communities (Epple *et al.*, 2014).

Besides public policies, parents' employment is associated with the cultural context. Traditionalism exacerbates the "re-traditionalising" impact of parenthood. In more traditional cantons mothers of small children have lower working hours while fathers increase both their employment and working hours. However, this is especially true for working parents, as no cultural effect was found on the employment rate of mothers. To the contrary, women without children show an increased probability of employment. Furthermore, male employment in all models is positively linked to a traditional context, regardless of fatherhood.

Even controlling for traditionalism and Catholicism, female employment is closely related to the language region. In French- or Italian-speaking cantons, fewer women without children are employed, but employed mothers work longer hours. The terms and conditions to work longer are better for mothers in those cantons than in German-speaking cantons. However, men's employment behaviour does not change across language regions.

In summary, cantonal policies and cultural values seem to have more influence on employment decision of women without small children on the one hand, and on the working hours of employed mothers on the other hand. The contextual influence on male employment behaviour on the contrary seems independent of fatherhood. This allows drawing several conclusions. On the one hand, reconciliation of work and family in Switzerland is in large parts left to women, and on the other hand a more equal distribution of work between men and women strongly depends on the cantonal policies and gender culture, especially the organisation of child care. Achieving more gender equality in employment should therefore stronger focus on fathers and their caring responsibilities. However, to fully capture the complex cantonal interrelations of social policy and culture further research has to integrate additional indicators such as economic factors.

Notes

1. Employment work volumes consist of arithmetic average hours worked weekly in a canton, including unemployed persons (Gasser *et. al.*, 2014).
2. Due to a "silent election", no data is available for Nidwalden. Because of the similarity to Obwalden as a neighbouring canton, the same value is assigned to Nidwalden.
3. Correlation of Catholicism and language region: $r = 0.2$; correlation of Catholicism and traditionalism: $r = 0.3$; correlation of language region and traditionalism: $r = -0.4$.
4. In order to statistically test significant effects on different groups, interaction effects are often used (Kopp and Lois, 2014). However, with regard to reduction of complexity and a better overview of results this analytical strategy was not used. In terms of statistical correctness, only integrating all relevant groups in one model and estimating interaction effects would allow to compare results between women with and without infants, for example. However, we estimated all relevant interaction effects and found no difference of directions of effects with regard to the presented results.
5. A shortcoming of this study is the focus on the individual instead of household level, due to the design of the SLFS. Until now, no data are available with a sample size big enough to allow regionalisation to the cantonal level and containing information about both parents. However, studies on the Swiss national level (Sousa-Poza and Widmer, 1998) and of international comparisons (Sayer and Gornick, 2012; Roeters, 2013) prove the importance of the household composition regarding the gendered division of work. Subsequent studies moreover will have to show how individual level variables interact with cantonal settings, as policies and cultural values may have a group-specific effect.
6. These in comparison to R^2 in conventional regression models low numbers can partly be attributed to a design effect, as the ICC depends on the number of higher level contexts (Maas and Hox, 2005). As the number of cantons cannot be changed, the design effect can therefore not be reduced by changing the sample size.

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