Gender inequality in the family setting

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Abstract

Now that human capital increases the propensity to be in union for both men and women, the gender differences in the patterns of entry and exit from relationships have decreased. However, there are still strong gender differences in living with children, with women at younger ages and women not in couples being more likely than men to be living with children. Women are more likely to be lone parents while men are more likely to be living as part of a couple. While the employment rate of women in unions is no longer suppressed if they are living with children, their average work hours remain lower, while men have the highest employment rate and highest average work hours if they are living with children. For both men and women, parents do more unpaid work than persons without children though parenthood increases women's more than men's unpaid work. In the context of diverse and less stable families, a more equal division of both earning and caring activities would benefit gender equality.

Keywords: gender, unions, children, earning, caring.

Résumé

Maintenant que le capital humain augmente la propension à être en union pour les hommes et les femmes, les différences entre les sexes dans les modèles d'entrée et de sortie de relations ont diminué. Cependant, il y a encore de fortes différences entre les sexes dans la propension à vivre avec les enfants : les plus jeunes femmes et les femmes qui ne sont pas en couple sont plus susceptibles que les hommes de vivre avec les enfants. Les femmes sont plus susceptibles d'être des parents seuls alors que les hommes sont plus susceptibles de vivre dans le cadre d'un couple. Alors que le taux d'emploi des femmes en union n'est plus réduit si elles vivent avec des enfants, leurs heures moyennes de travail restent inférieure, tandis que les hommes ont le taux d'emploi et les heures moyennes de travail les plus élevés si ils vivent avec des enfants. Pour les hommes et les femmes, les parents font plus de travail non-payé que les personnes sans enfants, mais la parentalité augmente plus le travail non-payé des femmes que des hommes. Dans le contexte des familles diverses et moins stables, une répartition plus égale dans la division des activités d'emploi et de soins serait bénéfique pour l'égalité des sexes.

Mots-clés : gendre, unions, enfants, emploi, soins.

Introduction

Families are arenas for sharing and caring, but they are also arenas of power relations. Both love and exploitation can occur in families. The balance of these dynamics depends considerably on socio-economic dimensions that give rise to differential access to resources on the basis of gender and age. It also depends on the extent to which people can enter and exit from relationships. The potential for exploitation is much higher if some members control decisions about the formation or dissolution of the family, and if there is limited alternative support for those who remove themselves from their family setting.

We first consider change and diversity across the various types of families. We then assess gender differences in the entry and exit from relationships and gender differences in living with children. Because gender issues in families are most apparent in the central activities of earning a living and caring for each other, we also look at gender inequalities in the division of paid and unpaid work. The concluding section addresses certain policy questions associated with gender inequality in family settings.

Family diversity

Families have become increasingly diverse. In the "Leave it to Beaver" era of the 1950s there was one predominant family model: the heterosexual nuclear family with a traditional division of labour. Recent census reports reveal the diversity across family types today. In the 2011 census, families with two married parents and children at home represented only 31.9 per cent of families, while 7.3 per cent were cohabiting couples with children, and 16.3 per cent were lone-parent families (Statcan 2012). Therefore, almost half (44.5 per cent) of families did not include children at home. Among couple families with children at home, 12.6 per cent were stepfamilies (Statcan 2012: 11). Stepfamilies were also more likely to involve cohabitation rather than marriage: among families with children, common-law couples comprised 14.0 per cent of intact families but 50.1 per cent of stepfamilies. Same-sex couples comprised 0.8 per cent of all families.

These trends towards greater diversity across families have been linked to weakening norms against divorce, premarital sex, cohabitation, voluntary childlessness, and same-sex relationships. The trends are also linked to the gender revolution and the growing importance of individual autonomy for both women and men.

Value change has promoted individual rights, along with less regulation of the private lives of individuals by the larger community (Dagenais 2008). There is a heightened sense that both women and men should make their own choices about relationships and child-bearing. Diversity is valued in living arrangements and in family forms. While most people do not live in same-sex relationships themselves, the majority support the right to equal treatment for gay and lesbian relationships and marriages.

A key change has been greater flexibility in the entry and exit from relationships, as represented by cohabitation and divorce. Cohabitation first changed premarital relationships, but also changed post-marital relationships; cohabitation effectively changed marriage itself, by introducing less rigid understandings of unions. Common-law couples represented 6.3 per cent of all couples in 1981, but this number had risen to 19.9 per cent by 2011. In recent times, as well, evidence indicates that more than one-third of marriages end in divorce within the first 25 years (Milan 2013: 14).

Besides the greater flexibility in entry and exit from relationships, we have seen a delay in family formation. The mean age at first marriage was 23 for women and 25 for men in 1961–71, but by 2008 it had risen to age 29 for women and 31 for men (Kerr and Beaujot 2016). In 1965, 30.8 per cent of first-time brides were under 20 years of age, compared to 3.5 per cent in 2000. Of more significance, the age at women's first giving birth increased from a mean of 23.6 years in 1961 to 28.5 in 2011.

The family transitions associated with home leaving and union formation have involved not only a delay, but also more fluidity through less defined transitions and variability from case to case. The trajectories have diverged from the traditionally preferred pathway of finishing schooling, leaving the parental home, entering the labour force, and then getting married (Ravanera et al. 2006; Ravanera and Rajulton 2006).

Educational attainment has increased, leading to a later completion of education and later entry into full-time employment, which has also occurred because of insecurities in the labour market (Beaujot 2006). Since both men and women need to position themselves in relation to the labour market, Oppenheimer (1988) speaks of a "career entry theory" of marriage timing. To make the most profitable match, prospective partners need to know how each will be positioned for earning income. Two incomes have become important for maintaining stable middle-class standing (Coltrane 1998). Consequently, the completion of education and higher income prospects have come to be positively related to women's probability of getting married, a pattern that has always been the case for men (Ravanera and Rajulton 2007; Sweeney 2002).

Family diversity can be found in the variety of living arrangements evident today: alone or in a family; married or cohabiting; two parents or a lone parent; opposite-sex or same-sex; couples with children or without;

and intact families or stepfamilies. Diversity is also evident in how earning and caring responsibilities are shared: single breadwinner versus dual earners; and a traditional gender division of work and care versus a more equal division by gender. Because of significant cultural and political changes, many Canadians now celebrate this diversity, because it means more family options beyond the once-predominant heterosexual couple with children and a traditional gender division of labour.

Another important indicator of change is that Statistics Canada decided not to publish the vital statistics of marriage after 2008. Of course, divorce statistics do not include separations of relationships that were not official marriages, or persons who are separated but not divorced. Consequently, Statistics Canada data on families generally do not differentiate married and cohabiting unions. In this chapter, we do the same: our tables combine married and cohabiting families.

Gender differences in the entry and exit from relationships

While sharing a common culture, ethnicity, or religion was once the dominant factor in union formation, education now plays a much more important role. Potential mates often socialize in similar educational settings, and persons with similar educational assets are more likely to enter into marital unions.

Since 1970, there has been an increase in educational homogamy, i.e., in people marrying others with a similar level of education. Hou and Myles (2008) found that this increase was more about changing patterns of mate selection than about the growing similarity in educational attainments of men and women. Among men with a university degree, 67 per cent were married to women with a university degree in 2006, compared to only 38 per cent in 1981 (Martin and Hou 2010: 71). These results reflect what can be called assortative mating, in which people form relationships with others having a similar level of education, leading to an accentuation of the differences across couples.

Selectivity in union formation

In their analysis of the propensity to marry in the United States, Goldscheider and Waite (1986) found that, before 1980, stable employment increased the likelihood of marriage for men but not for women. In that period, women apparently were more likely to use a higher personal income to "buy out of marriage," because higher income gave women greater options outside of marriage and so reduced their relative preference for marriage. These patterns would change in the 1980s, as economic prospects became positively related to marriage for both men and women (Pew Research Center 2010; Sweeney 2002). In a comparison of the propensity to marry by level of education in 25 European countries, Kalmijn (2013) found that more highly educated women were less likely to be married in countries with traditional gender roles, but more likely to be married in countries with relatively egalitarian gender roles.

Such findings suggest that socio-economic characteristics have long been important for men's marriage-ability, but that this pattern now applies to women as well. In Canada, as well, Ravanera and Rajulton (2007) analyzed data for 1993–8 to show that increased education is the main factor in the postponement of marriage, and that greater economic assets increase the propensity to marry for both men and women.

Selectivity into union dissolution

Using Swedish data for 1970–99, Kennedy and Thomson (2010) determined that educational differences in family instability were small in the 1970s, but then increased due to the rising union disruption among less-educated parents. Sweden now conforms to the patterns in other countries in showing socio-economic differences in family stability, with more separations for those with lower socio-economic status. Using longitudinal data from Canada over the period 2002–7, Bohnert (2011) also found evidence of these patterns: employment difficulties were associated with increases in the relative risks of union dissolution, while home ownership had the opposite effect.

In a study of multi-partner fertility among Norwegian men born between 1955 and 1984, Lappegard and her colleagues (2009) showed that men's education and income are positively related to the likelihood of having a first birth, and also to the probability of a second birth with the same partner, while men with lower education are more likely to have a subsequent birth with a new partner. That is, men with lower status are less likely to retain a stable partnership.

Proportions living in couples by gender, education, and age

For people over age 30, the evidence on the proportion living as couples confirms that those with more education are more likely to be in union. For instance, at ages 40–4, 83.6 per cent of men with a university degree are part of a couple, compared to 71.4 per cent of men without a university degree (Table 1). For women of the same ages, the differences are smaller but in the same direction, with 78.5 per cent of those with university degrees living in couples, compared to 71.1 per cent of those without a university degree. For people in their twenties, those with no university degree are more likely to be living in couples. That is, those who complete their education sooner are also more likely to cohabit or marry sooner. More generally, within given cohorts, later marriage is associated with higher socio-economic status (Ravanera and Rajulton 2006; Ravanera et al. 1998, 2006). The patterns at ages over 30 imply that higher human capital increases the propensity to union formation, and higher education also increases the likelihood to remain in union or to form a subsequent union.

Table 1. Percent living in couples, for population aged 15+, by gender, education, and age, Canada, 2011

	Male			Female		
	Total	No university degree	University or higher	Total	No university degree	University or higher
15+	60.4	56.8	71.9	57.5	54.4	66.0
15–19	0.4	0.4	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.3
20–24	11.2	11.6	8.7	21.1	22.3	17.4
25–29	40.8	42.3	37.3	54.2	55.8	51.9
30–34	64.3	62.7	67.7	69.9	67.9	72.7
35–39	74.4	71.8	79.6	74.3	71.1	79.0
40–44	75.3	71.4	83.6	73.8	71.1	78.5
45–49	74.0	71.0	82.1	72.5	71.2	75.7
50–54	74.9	72.8	81.4	72.5	72.0	73.8
55–59	76.4	74.7	81.5	70.5	70.6	70.3
60–64	78.8	77.3	82.8	68.4	68.4	68.5
65–69	79.9	78.8	83.2	64.8	64.4	66.3
70–74	79.8	78.8	83.3	58.0	58.1	58.0
75–79	77.6	76.6	81.9	46.0	45.7	48.3
80–84	72.3	71.2	78.1	33.0	32.2	40.7
85+	60.2	58.8	66.8	16.1	15.7	21.2

Source: 2011 NHS micro-file (data are weighted).

Note: (1) Persons living in couples are persons who are married or common-law, as defined by "marital status" and "common-law status"; (2) Total number of cases aged 15+ is 762,879 and there are 34,807 (4.6 per cent) missing cases.

Table 1 also confirms that union formation typically occurs earlier for women: for instance, at ages 25–9, 54.2 per cent of women are married or cohabiting, compared to 40.8 per cent of men. However, the opposite occurs at ages over 40, where a higher proportion of men than women are in union. While there are increased gender similarities in the formation and dissolution of unions, men are advantaged by later entry into relationships and by the higher propensity to be in union at ages 40 and above.

Parenting and gender inequalities

The median age at b irth of the first child has increased for both women and men, but the median age remains four years older for men than women (Ravanera and Hoffman 2012: 29). There are also important gender differences in the proportions living with children. Table 2 shows that in 2011, at ages 20–64, 38.6 per cent of men compared to 43.7 per cent of women were living with children. For persons living in couples, at each age group from 20–4 to 40–4, women were more likely than men to be living with children, and the opposite occurred at ages 45–9 to 60–4, where the men were more likely to be living with children. The contrasts

Table 2. Percent living with children, for (1) married spouses or common–law partners, and (2) others, for population aged 20–64, by gender and age, Canada, 2011

	Male			Female		
	Total	Persons in couples	Persons not in couples	Total	Persons in couples	Persons not in couples
20–64	38.6	58.1	5.9	43.7	55.5	23.0
20–24	3.2	26.2	0.5	10.5	33.3	4.6
25–29	16.9	40.6	1.4	32.2	48.7	13.9
30–34	42.8	65.9	3.7	59.8	73.4	30.3
35–39	61.1	80.4	8.9	74.1	84.7	45.1
40–44	65.4	83.2	14.2	75.4	84.6	51.1
45–49	61.3	78.1	15.4	65.8	73.6	46.1
50–54	49.2	61.9	12.9	43.7	49.2	30.0
55–59	28.3	34.8	7.7	18.8	20.6	14.7
60–64	12.2	14.5	4.2	5.0	5.3	4.3

Source: 2011 NHS micro–file (data are weighted).

Note: (1) Children are defined as persons under 25 who are living with at least one parent; (2) Persons in couples are married spouses or common–law partners. Persons not in couples are all other people aged 20–64; (3) Total number of cases aged between 20 and 64 is 552,577 and there are 3,526 (0.6%) missing cases.

are greater for persons not living in couples, where, up to ages 55–9, women were considerably more likely to be living with children. At ages 30–54, over 30 per cent of women not in couples were living with children. For men not in couples, the highest proportions living with children were at ages 40–54, with about 13–15 per cent living with children.

These patterns of parenting by age indicate that women are more likely than men to be living with children. The gender differences are especially noteworthy at younger ages, and especially for people who are not in couples. While parenting brings various life satisfactions, parenting also competes with other activities. In particular, there are trade-offs between investing in reproduction and investing in one's own productive abilities. Later entry into relationships, and especially later child-bearing, makes young people more able to handle the trade-offs. In contrast, persons who make transitions early can be relatively disadvantaged. Based on census data from 2006, Ravanera and Hoffman (2012: 31) found that at ages 20–39, fathers had less education than non-fathers, but the opposite applied at ages 40–64 where fathers had more education than non-fathers.

In a study of men born between 1926 and 1975 and women born between 1922 and 1980, based on the 2001 Canadian General Social Survey, Ravanera and colleagues (Ravanera and Rajulton 2007; Ravanera et al. 2006) found that men and women with high social status were more likely to have delayed their entry into parenthood, having first completed post-secondary education. In contrast, men and women with low social status were more likely to become parents at a younger age, often without first completing post-secondary education or having a period of regular full-time work.

Since women typically carry more of the parenting burden, these socio-economic differences in the timing of parenthood affect women more than men. Only at older ages (45+ for men living in union, and 60+ for men not in union) are men more likely to be living with children. By these ages, there is less difficulty in handling the trade-offs between investing in production and investing in reproduction.

Earnings inequality across family types

Diversity can mean differential risks and inequality across families and individuals. In 1980, the average employment earnings of married mothers were highest when husbands had intermediate earnings; however, by the 1990–2000 period, employment earnings of married mothers were higher when husbands were in the higher earnings categories (Myles 2010: 69). Similarly, Gaudet and her colleagues (2011) found that the proportion of women working within two years of a first birth was highest for women whose husbands earned the highest incomes.

Especially important is the contrast between two-earner couples, on the one hand, and breadwinner and lone-parent families, on the other hand. For instance, among couples without children, those with one full-time, full-year worker had only 55.5 per cent of the median earnings of those with two full-time, full-year workers in 2005 (Statcan 2008). For couples with children, those with one earner had only 54.9 per cent of the income of those with two earners. As measured by Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off (LICO), after taxes and transfers, the 2011 poverty rate was 5.1 per cent for two-parent families with children, compared to 21.2 per cent for female lone-parent families and 12.4 per cent for male lone-parent families (Statcan 2013). The low-income rates are also high for non-elderly persons who are "unattached," that is, either living alone or not in a family setting. The poverty rates for the non-elderly unattached are 29.9 per cent for men and 36.0 per cent for women. In contrast, the poverty rates are below 3 per cent for couples with two earners and for elderly couples. Among one-earner couples, there are much higher rates of poverty when children are present (Beaujot et al. 2014).

It is important to observe the significant decline in the low-income proportion among people in lone-parent families over time, from 49.3 per cent in 1996 to 19.7 per cent in 2011 (Statcan 2013). However, the disadvantages of lone-parent families remain significant, at almost four times the rate for two-parent families with children. Further analyses indicate that older female lone parents made significant income gains over the period 1980–2000. This may be partly because they have fewer and older children, they have increased their education, and they are working longer hours (Myles et al. 2007; see also Richards 2010). At the same time, the income gains for married female parents are even stronger, especially through increases in hours worked.

The income situation of younger lone parents did not improve over the period 1980–2000. Lone parenthood is a significant risk factor for women who marry early. For instance, among women under age 25, the proportion with children is highest for the formerly married, as opposed to women who are currently married, cohabiting, or single (Ravanera and Beaujot 2010).

Compared to intact families with children, stepfamilies are more likely to have both parents in paid employment and also working full-time (Vézina 2012). However, stepfamilies are more likely to be financially stressed, with 18 per cent being "unable to meet a financial obligation at least once in the previous year," compared to 11 per cent for intact families and 31 per cent for lone parents. The complex nature of financial obligations, within and beyond the immediate family, contributes to this greater financial stress in stepfamilies and lone-parent families.

Some of the gender inequality that we see in families derives from the relative disadvantage of women compared to men in a given family arrangement. The 2011 low-income rate is higher for female (21.2 per cent) than for male (12.4 per cent) lone parents; for female (36.0 per cent) than for male (29.9 per cent) unattached non-elderly; and for female (16.1 per cent) than for male (12.2 per cent) unattached elderly (Beaujot et al. 2014). Gender inequality also stems in part from the higher probability of women being lone parents, while men are more likely to be living as part of a couple.

Families, earnings, and gender inequality

Although inequality persists, employment and earnings have been moving in a converging direction by gender. For instance, women's labour force participation rate increased from 22.9 per cent in 1951 to 62.3 per cent in 2011, while men's rate declined from 84.1 per cent to 71.5 per cent in the same period (Beaujot et al. 2014). Another example of this converging trend concerns income changes for men and women among couples with children; the median income for husbands declined by 5 per cent between 1980 and 2005 but increased for wives by more than 500 per cent (Statcan 2008: 26). For all couples, wives were earning more than husbands in only 10 per cent of couples in 1976, compared to 30 per cent in 2008 (Statcan 2011).

While there has been movement in a converging direction, important differences remain. At ages 20–64, 78.8 per cent of men and 64.1 per cent of women were employed in 2011 (Table 3). For those working, the mean hours worked were 42.5 for men and 35.2 for women.

Table 3 further differentiates employment rates and mean work hours, both by marital status (married/cohabiting vs other) and by parental status (not living with children vs living with children). There is less evidence of the traditional pattern, in which men's labour force involvement is higher and women's lower, when they are married with children. Nonetheless, men still have the highest employment rate when they are married

Table 3. Employment rate, hours worked at all jobs in a week, and % with low income status, by gender, marital and parental status, persons aged 20–64, Canada, 2011

		Male			Female		
		Employment rate	Mean work hours	% with low income	Employment rate	Mean work hours	% with low income
Mar/Coh	Total	86.4	43.9	7.0	66.2	35.2	6.8
	No Child	78.1	42.6	6.7	66.3	35.8	6.2
	Child(ren)	91.0	44.6	7.2	66.1	34.8	7.4
Other	Total	61.9	39.1	19.3	59.5	35.2	22.0
	No Child	60.7	38.9	23.6	56.4	34.5	25.7
	Child(ren)	77.6	42.0	8.7	68.1	37.2	16.9
Total	Total	78.8	42.5	11.5	64.1	35.2	12.2
	No Child	68.7	40.6	15.0	61.6	35.2	14.3
	Child(ren)	90.4	44.4	7.5	66.4	35.2	10.1

Note: For "Percent with low income", (1) Number of missing cases is 2,283 or 0.3% of total sample size; (2) The definition of low income status is based on After Tax Low Income Cut-offs (LICO-AT).

Sources: (1) "Employment rate" and "Mean work hours" are based on 2011 GSS (data are weighted); (2) "Percent with low income are based on 2011 NHS micro-file (data are weighted).

or cohabiting with children at home. However, women's employment rate is no longer suppressed when they are living with children. For married or cohabiting women, the employment rates are the same for those living with and without children at home (66.1 per cent versus 66.3 per cent). For women who are not in relationships, employment rates are higher if they are living with children, as is the case for men. In terms of average hours worked, men's hours are highest if there are children at home, especially if they are married or cohabiting. Married/cohabiting women have slightly higher average work hours if they have no children, while women who are not in relationships have the highest hours if they have children.

Thus, for both men and women, employment rates are higher for those in relationships. For men, and for women not in relationships, the employment rate and the hours worked are higher when they have children. For women in relationships, the employment rates are the same when comparing those with and without children.

Table 3 also shows economic differences, as measured by the proportions of men and women who are in poverty (below the LICO). For the 20–64 age group, the poverty rate is 11.5 per cent for men and 12.2 per cent for women. The poverty rates are lowest and the gender differences are small for persons who are married or cohabiting, with 7.0 per cent of men and 6.8 per cent of women below the LICO. For persons not in relationships, the rates are much higher: 19.3 per cent for men and 22.0 per cent for women. It can also be seen that the poverty rates are highest for those not in union and not living with children: 23.6 per cent for men and 25.7 per cent for women. Nonetheless, the rates are also high for women with children but not in union, at 16.9 per cent compared to 8.7 per cent for men.

Therefore, except for women who are living with children and not in union, the gender differences in poverty rates are not large across marital and parental statuses. On the whole, men are advantaged by being more likely to be in union, while women are disadvantaged by being more likely to be not in union but living with children.

Families, caring, and gender inequality

It is especially in caring activities that family status differentiates men and women (Beaujot 2000). However, there has been some change, with men doing more housework and child care than in the past (Doucet 2006; Ranson 2010).

For this section, we rely on time-use surveys that measure each person's activities over a 24-hour day. Time use provides a means of gauging both earning and caring activities on the basis of the same metric (see Marshall 2006, 2011, 2012; Milan et al. 2011; Turcotte 2007). The activities that take place over a 24-hour day can be grouped into four categories: (1) paid work (including commuting to and from work, and education), (2) unpaid work (including housework, household maintenance, child care, elder care, and volunteer work), (3) personal care (including eating and sleeping), and (4) leisure or free time (including active and passive leisure).

The tables presented here use the categories of paid work and unpaid work, which together can be seen as productive activities, in contrast to the down time associated with personal care and leisure. In the period 1986–2010, women's paid work hours increased and men's unpaid hours increased (Beaujot et al. 2014). In 1986, women's paid work plus education represented 58.9 per cent of men's time in these activities, compared to 74.0 per cent in 2010. For unpaid work, men's time in 1986 represented 46.3 per cent of women's time, compared to 65.9 per cent in 2010. Therefore, for the whole population, men's unpaid work time represented less than half of women's unpaid work time in 1986, compared to two-thirds in 2010.

Based on time-use surveys in 1986, 1992, 1998, and 2005, Marshall (2006) used the title of "Converging gender roles" to describe the trends in paid and unpaid work. Marshall (2011) showed this convergence by comparing the division of work across three generations: late baby boomers (born 1957–66), Generation X (1969–78), and Generation Y (1981–90). She found increasing gender similarity in the involvement in paid work and housework from the earlier to the later generation. For young adults (ages 20–9) in dual-earner couples, she found increased sharing of economic and domestic responsibilities over generations, as women increased their hours of paid work and men increased their share of household work. However, even for the younger generations, the presence of dependent children reduced the woman's contribution to the couple's total paid work time, and increased her relative time in housework.

When paid work and unpaid work are added, the average total productive activity of men and women is found to be very similar in each of the survey years. For instance, in 2010, for ages 15–64, the average total productive hours per day (paid plus unpaid) were 8.4 hours for men and 8.8 hours for women (Table 4). For both men and women, and at each of the age groups shown, the total productive hours increase as we move from those not in relationships with no children, to those in relationships without children, to those in relationships with children.

The younger married or cohabiting parents have rather complementary patterns of time use: men did an average of 6.5 hours of paid work and 4.0 hours of unpaid work, while women did an average of 6.5 hours of unpaid work and 3.7 hours of paid work, with average total hours of 10.5 for men and 10.2 for women (Table 4). At ages 45–64, the average hours of unpaid work increased for the four marital and parental categories shown: unmarried with no children, married no children, married parents, and lone parents.[1] The lone parents, both women and men, have the longest hours of unpaid work. At ages 15–44, the increase occurs only over the first three marital/parental categories, with both male and female lone parents having less unpaid work than married parents of the same gender.

Table 4. Average daily hours in paid work and unpaid work, for population 15-64, by gender, age, marital and parental status, Canada, 2010

	Men				Women			
	Total	Paid	Unpaid	N	Total	Paid	Unpaid	N
15–44 years old								
Unmarried no children	6.9	5.4	1.4	1,152	7.7	5.8	1.9	1,044
Married no children	9.2	6.8	2.4	377	9.0	5.6	3.4	449
Married parents	10.5	6.5	4.0	968	10.2	3.7	6.5	1,317
Lone parents	10.0	6.4	3.7	56	10.3	4.5	5.8	107
45–64 years old								
Unmarried no children	7.1	4.3	2.8	755	8.0	4.1	3.9	1,105
Married no children	8.0	4.8	3.2	1,347	8.1	3.7	4.5	1,729
Married parents	9.7	6.5	3.2	478	9.5	4.3	5.1	390
Lone parents	8.7	4.6	4.1	51	9.5	3.9	5.6	125
Total	8.4	5.7	2.7	5,184	8.8	4.5	4.3	6,542

Source: 2010 GSS (data are weighted).
Note: Married includes cohabiting.

The converging trend in gender roles is also seen through the increased number of dual-earner couples between 1986 and 2005 (Marshall 2006). In 2005, among dual-earner couples, husbands put in 54 per cent of the total time that couples spent at jobs, and wives did 62 per cent of the time that couples spent on housework. Marshall (2006) observes that "children widen the gap" and "education narrows it." In dual-earner couples, the

division of labour becomes more equal as wives have higher incomes. For couples with the wife's income at $100,000+, the division was equal, with each partner spending some 6.5 hours per day on paid work and 1.5 hours on housework.

Table 5 presents figures on time use in productive activities by employment status, for men and women. It is noteworthy that the average total productive hours are again very similar, at 9.3 hours for men and 9.4 hours for women, for the total age group 25–54. As average paid hours are reduced over the categories of full-time, part-time, and not employed, the average unpaid hours increase over these same categories, for both men and women. Nonetheless, for both men and women, the average total hours are lowest for those who are not employed and highest for those working full-time. For men, the average hours of child care are quite similar over these categories of employment; for women, however, the average hours of child care increase from those working full-time, to part-time, to not employed. Thus, among persons working full-time the average hours of child care are lowest, and are most similar for men and women.

Table 5. Average daily hours of paid work and unpaid work, ages 25-54, by gender and labor force status, Canada, 2010

	Male					Female				
	Paid work	Child care	Other Unpaid	All unpaid	Total paid and unpaid	Paid work	Child care	Other Unpaid	All unpaid	Total paid and unpaid
Total	6.2	0.6	2.4	3.0	9.3	4.5	1.2	3.7	4.9	9.4
Full-time	7.0	0.6	2.3	2.9	9.9	5.9	0.8	3.2	4.1	10.0
Part-time	4.2	0.6	2.7	3.3	7.5	3.5	1.6	4.0	5.6	9.1
Not employed	2.6	0.7	3.0	3.7	6.3	1.5	2.0	4.7	6.8	8.3

Source: 2010 GSS (data are weighted).

Another way of measuring the variability in earning and caring is at the couple level. By comparing spouses, we can determine whether a given person does more, the same amount, or less of both paid work and unpaid work (Table 6). For couples where neither is a full-time student and neither is retired, we have combined the patterns into five models for the division of paid and unpaid work.[2] The most predominant model is complementary traditional, where the man does more paid work and the woman does more unpaid work; however, this model's proportion has declined over time, from 43.5 per cent of persons in couples in 1992 to 33.4 per cent in 2010. The female double burden, in which women do more unpaid work and at least as much paid work compared to men, has remained rather constant over time, involving some 26 to 27 per cent of couples. The shared-role model, in which women and men do about the same amount of unpaid work, has increased, from 22.6 per cent of couples in 1992 to 28.8 per cent in 2010. The male double burden, in which men do more unpaid work and at least as much paid work compared to women, has increased over time, from 5.8 per cent to 8.8 per cent. The complementary gender-reversed model is the least common, but it has increased from 1.7 per cent to 3.2 per cent of couples during the period 1992–2010.

Table 6. Distribution of couples by models of division of work, Canada, 1992–2010

	Persons in couples			
Models of Division of Work (%)	1992	1998	2005	2010
Complementary-traditional	43.5	39.1	32.9	33.4
Complementary-gender-reversed	1.7	2.7	3.0	3.2
Women's double burden	26.5	26.8	26.8	25.9
Men's double burden	5.8	7.6	10.7	8.8
Shared roles	22.6	23.8	26.5	28.8

Sources: Beaujot et al. 2013, Table 6 (based on 1992, 1998, 2005 and 2010 General Social Surveys).

Other analyses indicate that the models in which women do more unpaid work (complementary traditional or women's double burden) are more common when there are young children present, while the models in

which men do a more equal share of unpaid work are more likely when women have more education and other resources (Ravanera et al. 2009). Other analyses using these models of the division of work indicate that, in 2005 and 2010, average household incomes are highest in the shared-roles model, intermediate in the models involving the double burden, and lowest in the complementary-roles model (Beaujot et al. 2014). Thus, contrary to the theory that shared roles are an inefficient approach to the division of paid and unpaid work, couples in the shared-roles model have the highest average incomes.

Discussion

The greater variability and fluidity in family transitions and family patterns have brought considerable diversity in the families and family experiences of individual children, women, and men. This has been celebrated as evidence of less rigidity and more pluralism in family forms, but has also brought other forms of inequality in the earning and caring ability of families. It is noteworthy that, among families with children, 27.2 per cent are lone-parent and 12.6 per cent are step-parent families.

Some family trends have moved in the direction of reduced gender inequalities, especially a greater sharing of paid work, and towards men's greater participation in unpaid work. However, the differences remain large, and the inequalities are accentuated by the presence of young children.

Across family types, those with the highest poverty rates involve people who are unattached to families, and also lone-parent families. A significant portion of gender inequality in family settings derives from the higher likelihood of women being lone parents. Until age 50, women are more likely than men to be living with children, while men over age 40 are more likely to be living in a couple.

The patterns for entering marital or cohabiting unions have become more similar for women and men, with socio-economic status positively related to union formation for both men and women. There is also higher union dissolution among those with lower socio-economic status. The delays in union formation and parenthood have also benefited both men and women, who profit from a longer period of human capital accumulation. This also implies that those who form unions early, and especially those who have children early, are more likely to be disadvantaged. These patterns of early union and early parenthood affect women more than men.

In the context of diverse and less stable families, what directions should social policy take? In our view, equality across gender would especially benefit from the promotion of a model of gender equity in the division of both earning and caring. As a report for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe proposes: "transforming gender norms is vital to the success of family policies" (United Nations 2013: 11). In particular, the two-income model should be promoted at the expense of the breadwinner model.

In the past, family policy followed the breadwinner model, with an emphasis on men's family wage and associated pension and health benefits, along with widowhood and orphanhood provisions in the case of the premature death of breadwinners. That is, the focus of family policy was on dealing with the loss of a breadwinner and supporting the elderly who were beyond working age. The challenge of current policy is to accommodate children who receive lower parental investments; young lone parents who have difficulty coping with both the earning and caring functions; the disadvantages faced by couples where neither has secure employment; and the difficulties of unattached persons at older labour force ages who have limited employment potential.

As we move towards a two-income model, we should discuss putting aside widowhood benefits, tax deductions for dependent spouses, and pension-splitting. Similarly, while income-splitting for taxation purposes promotes more equality across two-parent families with children, it provides no benefit to lone-parent families. These provisions, based on a breadwinner model, can promote dependency, especially for women. If the aim is to reduce inequality across all families and not just across two-parent families, then policies should take the form of the Child Tax Credit, the Working Income Tax Credit, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, where the strongest transfers occur for those who have the lowest incomes.

Across family types, lone parents are especially disadvantaged. The widowhood and orphanhood provisions are clearly inadequate when the death of the breadwinner is infrequently the reason for lone parenthood. The policies promoting the employment of the lone parent are important, as are the child tax benefits and child-care

subsidies tailored to families with lower income. There is also an "equivalent to spouse tax credit" that, for tax purposes, counts the first child of a lone-parent family as equivalent to a dependent spouse. We would propose that tax deductions for dependent spouses should be abolished and replaced, for all families, with a tax deduction for the first dependent child. That would leave room for an alternative like that used in Norway, such as doubling the child tax benefit for the first child of a lone-parent family.

We should promote a more egalitarian type of family that includes greater common ground between women and men in family activities. Just as policy has promoted the de-gendering of earning, we would argue for approaches that increase equal opportunity through the de-gendering of child care (Beaujot 2002). We should discuss the types of social policy that would further modernize the family in the direction of co-providing and co-parenting. Key questions here include parental leave and child care. Parental leave supports the continuing earning roles of parents, and public support for child care reduces the costs for working parents. The Quebec model for parental leave, including greater flexibility and a dedicated leave for fathers, has promoted the greater participation of men in parental leave (Beaujot et al. 2013). At the same time, the higher Quebec support for child care has promoted women's earning activities.

Notes

1. As elsewhere in the chapter, the married category includes cohabiting, while the unmarried category is neither married nor cohabiting.

2. These models are based on questions regarding time use in the previous week for the respondent and the respondent's spouse. Combining the paid and unpaid work hours for the couple, we first divided both the paid and unpaid work hours of respondent and spouse into three categories: respondent does more (over 60 per cent of the total), respondent does less (under 40 per cent of the total), and they do the same (40–60 per cent of the total). From the nine models in terms of a given partner doing more, the same, or less of both paid and unpaid work, we derived the five models as specified in Table 6. The 2010 questionnaire used categories rather than the exact number of hours for spouse's time use over the week. Using the respondents of given sexes and presence of children, we established point estimates from these categories.

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