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Department of Sociology



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Sliding into a Gendered Division of Labour

Swiss Couples' Decision-Making Process of Dividing Paid
and Unpaid Work

Author: Selina Furgler

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Supervisor: Kjell Nilsson

Abstract

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In Switzerland the one-and-a-half-earner model where the father is the primary wage-earner working full-time and the woman is the secondary wage-earner working part-time while taking over the majority of care and housework responsibilities is predominant. This is discussed critically as the normative and institutional context incentivises parents to adopt a division of labour that disadvantages women in terms of economic vulnerability and social recognition. The aim of this study is to examine the decision-making process of highly educated Swiss couples that has led them to adopt a gendered division of labour. Joint in-depth interviews were conducted and analysed inductively. It is shown that the interviewed couples take many decisions implicitly and focus on short-term and incremental decision-making. This enables them to handle the great number of decisions at hand and allows them to avoid conflict and uncertain outcomes. However, by agreeing on things implicitly, much room for the influence of prevalent gendered norms and institutions on the division of paid and unpaid work is left. By using the concept of the gendered master status (Krüger and Levy 2000, 2001), it is demonstrated how gendered differences in women's and men's life paths are reinforced in the transition to parenthood. The limited awareness of the influence of the underlying gender structures on their division of work can partly explain why the couples do not feel very constrained in their choice of a family and work model. Additionally, the costs of countering norms and institutions in order to live in a more gender equal model are sometimes rated as excessive. This leads couples to accept the fact that the goals of being a good parent and a good employee are not compatible. It is discussed how such constraints can be reduced. Finally, the problem is addressed that by focusing on short-term and objective decisions, couples tend to only marginally include more abstract long-term consequences of the one-and-a-half-earner model.

Keywords: division of labour, gender equality, family policy, couples' decision-making, gendered master status, transition to parenthood, part-time work

Popular Science Summary

Most families in Switzerland live in a one-and-a-half-earner model. This means that the father works full-time and is mainly responsible for the income of the family. The mother is employed part-time and next to that she takes care of most childcare and household task. The problem is that some families do not choose this family and work model because it corresponds to their ideals but rather because institutional factors, such as taxes, salary differences or the high costs of childcare, encourage them to adapt it. Also, normative factors, like the idea of being a good mother, can motivate couples to take over a more gender traditional division of labour. Problematic about the one-and-a-half-earner model itself is that the woman is financially dependent on her partner and that she has lower career opportunities with her part-time employment. In case of a divorce, she is therefore at a risk of old age poverty. This master's thesis examines how highly educated Swiss couples discuss and take decisions about their division of work. Interviews were conducted together with both the man and the woman. A high level of education is usually associated with a more gender equal division of work. This makes it interesting to ask this group of couples how they ended up in the one-and-a-half-earner model.

The analysis of the interviews showed that the couples silently agree on many things and that negotiations are rare. If they do take explicit decisions, then mainly about short-term issues and only step by step. In this way couples can avoid taking decisions about more abstract issues where the outcome is unclear and where a discussion would need more time and energy, or possibly even result in conflict. But by not actively discussing their division of work, routines and norms define the way things are done. Especially gendered norms and institutions seem to have a strong influence on how couples divide paid and unpaid work. For example, many interviewees lead back their division of work to the fact that it was more difficult for the man to reduce his hours of work or to the fact that the mother is better in looking after the child. The interviewed couples, however, seem to be satisfied with their division of labour. Partly because they are only limitedly aware of how the underlying gender structure influences their choices; they do not feel restricted by it. Or because their ideology is in line with the predominant norms. Still, some couples do feel a tension between their values and their practices. Yet, they often think that the costs of countering norms and institutions in order to live in a more gender equal model are excessive. Instead the couples accept the fact that they cannot combine the goals of being a good parent and a good employee. In the end of this study it is therefore discussed how such constraints that couples are facing can be reduced. It is also argued that the couples should better include long-term risks of the one-and-a-half-earner model in their decision-making process.

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1 Introduction

Female labour market participation is high in Switzerland. With 82,2% of all women being active on the labour market, Switzerland scores second place behind Sweden in a European comparison. Yet, the Swiss employment rate is highly influenced by gender and by the family situation. Whereas women clearly reduce their labour market participation after the birth of a child, such a change can hardly be seen for fathers (Bundesamt für Statistik 2016, 3–9, 2017, 33). Before the birth of the first child 72% of Swiss women work full-time¹, 20% work part-time and 8% are non-working. Most young mothers return to the labour market within six months after the birth of a child. However, it is remarkable that 75% of women reduce their employment rate to less than 70% after the birth of their first child. Mothers tend to increase their hours of employment when their children grow older but working part-time stays very common for Swiss mothers (Bundesamt für Statistik 2017, 37, 2018; Girardin et al. 2016, 148).

This results in a predominance of the ‘one-and-a-half-earner model’² where the father is the primary wage-earner working full-time and the woman is the secondary wage-earner working part-time while taking over the majority of care and housework responsibilities (Bundesamt für Statistik 2018). This is not per se a bad thing. Nonetheless, it is heavily discussed both in recent academic and public discussions. One criticism is that lifestyle preferences are not the main determinants for the actual labour market behaviour of Swiss mothers and fathers. Studies show that a part of the couples who originally wish for a more gender equal division of labour eventually opt for a more traditional model (Bundesamt für Statistik 2017, 94; Ernst Stähli et al. 2009, 341, 345; Giudici and Schumacher 2017, 5). This is mainly traced back to institutional and normative constraints. Listed most often are the scarcity and high costs of childcare as well as Switzerland being the only European country without parental³ or paternity leave. Further also the 14-week maternity leave remains relatively short in international comparison (Girardin et al. 2016; SECO Direktion für Arbeit 2016, 18; Valarino 2017, 206). On a normative level both highly gendered work identities of women and men and highly gendered norms of parenthood are influencing the decision about a family and work model (Bütler 2007; Girardin et al. 2016). Due to these

¹ Both the employment rate of 90% and 100% is considered as full-time as this is done by the Swiss Federal Statistics Office.

² Concept adopted from Wiesmann, Boeije, van Doorne-Huiskes, and den Dulk (2008).

³ Parental leave means a leave that is available to the mother or the father; to distinguish from maternity leave that is available only to the mother and from paternity leave that is available only to the father (Valarino 2017).

constraints, choosing an alternative way of dividing paid and unpaid work than the one-and-a-half-earner model brings about additional strains for both the mother and the father. Not every couple has the necessary resources to deal with these additional burdens. It is therefore comprehensible that many parents decide to divide paid and unpaid work more gender traditionally.

However, in Switzerland's social policy setting a part-time employment bears many risks. Especially old age pensions are very sensitive towards a part-time employment. This makes women as typical secondary wage-earners and part-time employees financially dependent on their partner. In case of a divorce there is a high risk of old age poverty (Bonoli et al. 2016). This risk is further increased by lower career opportunities and more insecure jobs that come with part-time employments (Kopp 2017, 55). Although these facts are more and more talked about, it seems like long-term consequences are, due to their complexity, hard to include in the personal decision for a model of family and work (Bonoli et al. 2016, 4).

Recent discussions surrounding the division of paid and unpaid work of Swiss couples are held on both an economically oriented and on a gender equality level. Within the economic-oriented discourse it is argued that work incentives for women should be improved in order to counter the shortage of skilled workers (Häusermann and Kübler 2010, 174; Lanfranconi 2015, 137). The gender equality discourse, on the other hand, stresses how gender inequalities, such as the persistent gender pay gap in Switzerland, are reinforced through the transition to parenthood. Thus, normative and institutional constraints incentivise young parents to adopt a division of work and care that over time accumulates disadvantages of women in financial terms and social recognition (Giudici and Gauthier 2009, 273–75; Levy 2016, 292–93).

Although these topics are addressed on a political level, not much has changed in Switzerland's family policy in the last ten years. Most regulations stay voluntary and the governmental offices for gender equality have weak control and sanction mechanisms. They are therefore to a large part dependent on companies taking action and implementing conditions that allow their employees to live in their preferred model of family and work. Possible taken measures are for example company-owned childcare facilities, flexible working hours or a more generous parental leave scheme. A step forward might be made on the national level soon as Switzerland will vote on a popular initiative for a payed compulsory paternal leave of 20 days (Lanfranconi 2015, 137–38; Müller et al. 2017, 5–6).

1.1 The Swiss context

In comparative welfare politics the Swiss model is hard to classify. It is often called a hybrid with both strong conservative and liberal traits. At the same time, it is regularly referred to as a welfare laggard as social policy has expanded comparatively late. In many fields, such as unemployment and health insurance, Switzerland had caught up with other OECD countries until the end of the 20th century. Family policy development came especially late. Reforms of child-care subsidization and the introduction of compulsory maternity insurance, for example, were only introduced after the turn of the millennium. Important reasons for Switzerland's delay of welfare state development are the country's federal state structure as well as the system of direct democracy. Family policy is mainly organized on a cantonal and a local level. Thus, it varies a lot according to one's place of residence and it is hard to pass reforms on a national level. Further, the political power relations are often not in favour of welfare expansion: Traditionally, the market-liberal party has a strong influence in Switzerland. Last but not least, the feminist movement is relatively weak in Switzerland compared to other European countries (Armingeon 2001, 145, 154–55; Häusermann and Kübler 2010, 164–67, 188–90; Mach and Trampusch 2011, 12–23).

Today, Swiss family policy can be categorized as 'modernized family traditionalism' (Levy, Kellerhals, and Widmer 2002). Gender equality norms have gained importance and neither the occupational sphere nor the family sphere is still exclusively a male or a female domain. But on an ideological level family values are still quite traditional in Switzerland (Girardin et al. 2016, 146–48, 166–68). This results in a, what Grunow and Veltkamp (2016, 20–24) call, large policy-culture gap. On the one hand, a traditional 'breadwinner-homemaker model' is no longer accepted. On the other hand, attitudes towards mothers as workers and fathers as carers are more negative in Switzerland than in other European countries. This puts parents into a difficult position when deciding for a division of paid and unpaid work and makes Switzerland a very interesting case to analyse.

1.2 Aim and research question

Prior studies give a comprehensive picture of individual and structural factors that influence the transition to parenthood, yet, the steps involved in how couples come to a particular division of labour are less explored. Understanding this process is important because the way couples talk about and end up dividing different tasks is eventually what leads to a gendered division of labour. This discussion and negotiation process lies at the heart of the causes for the gendered division of labour (Carlson and Hans 2017, 3; Wiesmann 2010, 3). My aim is therefore to investigate when and how young parents negotiate their division of labour. Instead of asking what factors were considered, I want to see how they came into the discussion and how they were weighted. My main interest lies in the following research question including three sub-questions:

How do highly educated couples in the Canton of Berne choose to live in a one-and-a-half-earner model?

- *When and how do couples discuss about and decide upon their division of labour?*
- *How do values influence their decision-making?*
- *How do contextual factors influence their decision-making?*

I conducted in-depth interviews with heterosexual parents where the father is the primary wage-earner and the woman is the secondary wage-earner. The sample is restricted to couples with a high level of education and who live in the Canton of Berne. Research shows that a high level of education tends to be associated with more gender egalitarian ideals and a more gender equal division of paid and unpaid work (Davis and Greenstein 2009; Grunow and Evertsson 2016). As most Swiss qualitative studies focus on French-speaking Switzerland, it is interesting to look across the language border

Having a deeper understanding of Swiss parents' decision-making process can be of interest for policymakers, employers as well as parents or soon-to-be-parents themselves. As explained above, Swiss couples are confronted with a cultural and practical dilemma. Knowing more about how they deal with this situation helps to create policies that actually facilitate their transition to parenthood. Such an understanding helps to find strategies of balancing work and

family as well as strategies of promoting gender equality that are both beneficial for Swiss parents and their employers (Grunow and Veltkamp 2016, 24; Wiesmann 2010, 135–36).

Continuing from this introduction, I will give an overview of the relevant literature. Then, I will outline the methods used in this study and subsequently I will present the theoretical framework that I used to analyse my collected data. This is followed by the analysis itself and finally leads to the concluding discussion.

2 Previous Research

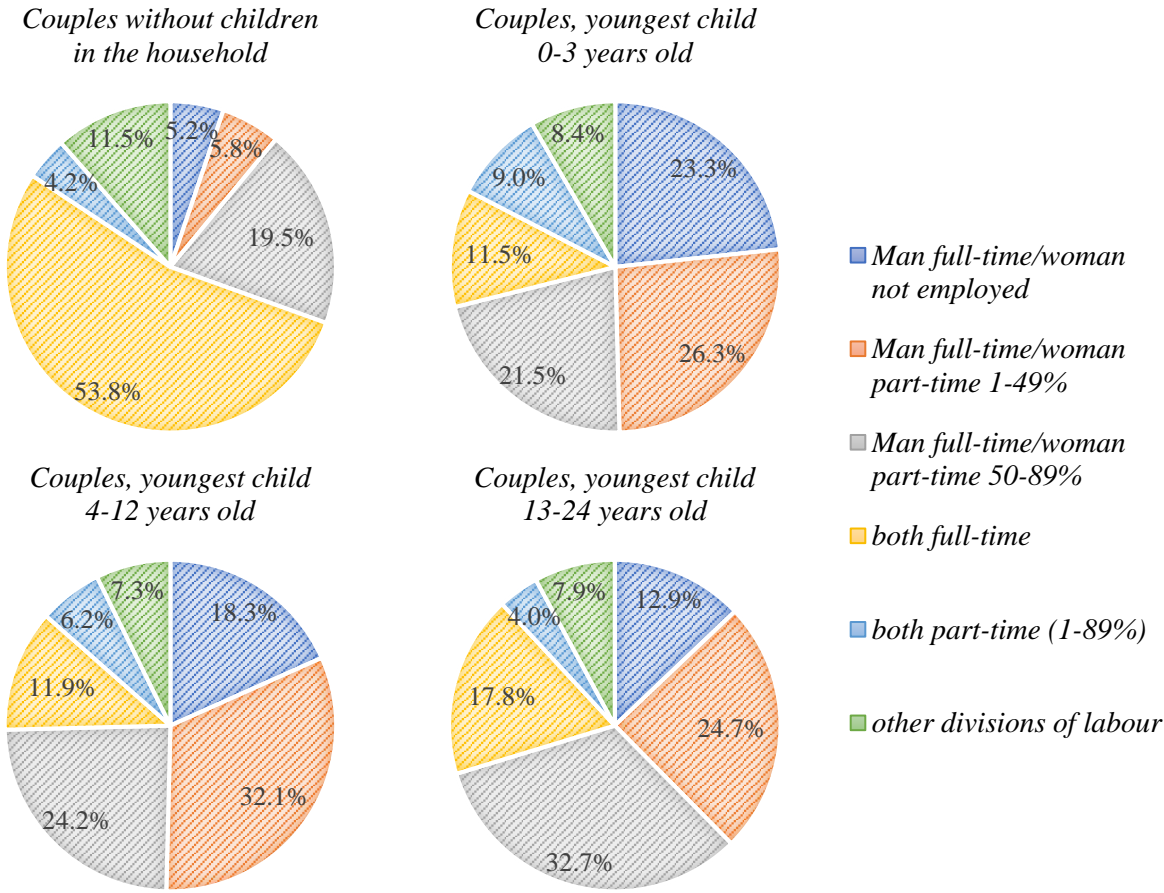
2.1 Swiss parents' division of labour

The female labour participation rate in Switzerland has grown much closer to the male labour participation rate in the last 30 years. However, the division of paid work, housework and childcare after having children stays highly gendered. It is mainly the woman who reduces her rate of employment in order to look after the children and to do most part of the housework. The man, on the other hand, mostly remains in the labour market to the same extent as before the birth of the first child and only takes over responsibility for a few childcare or housework tasks. The traditional breadwinner-homemaker model was replaced by the one-and-a-half-earner model where the woman does return to the labour market after the maternity leave, but most commonly with a part-time employment under 50%. Often, mothers do increase their employment rate when children grow older, but the one-and-a-half-earner model stays predominant no matter the age of the youngest child. An increase of the female employment rate is related to a reduction of the mother's housework responsibilities and less time spent with childcare (Bundesamt für Statistik 2016, 2, 2017, 2018, 40–42). Figure 1 shows the distribution of Swiss parents' work model according to the age of their youngest child (Bundesamt für Statistik 2017, 35).

The specific division of labour varies with the sociodemographic background of both parents. Swiss mothers with a tertiary education level take up work faster after the birth of a child than mothers with a lower education level. At the same time, they usually reduce their responsibilities for housework and childcare. If the father also has a high level of education, an egalitarian division of labour becomes more likely. Yet, if only the father has a tertiary education level, it is more common to divide tasks more gender traditionally (Bundesamt für Statistik 2016, 3, 2017, 40; Giudici and Schumacher 2017, 9; Kersten 2016, 100). Further, the number of children

correlates negatively with the employment rate of Swiss mothers and married parents tend to divide their tasks more gender traditionally than parents who are not married (Giudici and Gauthier 2009, 8–11; Kersten 2016, 98). Lastly, parents’ division of labour is dependent on their place of domicile. Living in an urban area often comes with the mother investing less time for childcare tasks. In Switzerland it is further remarkable that in the French-speaking part mothers tend to work at a higher employment rate than in the other parts of the country (Bundesamt für Statistik 2016, 3, 2017, 40).

Figure 1: Distribution of Swiss parents’ work model according to the age of their youngest child (translated into English, Bundesamt für Statistik 2017, 35)



One could expect that the couples in the sample would divide paid and unpaid work gender-equally as both man and woman have a tertiary education level and live in an urban area. Nonetheless, they all do not divide paid and unpaid work completely gender-equally which makes them and their decision-making process interesting to investigate.

2.2 Wishes and constraints in the transition to parenthood

Several theories try to explain why couples divide paid and unpaid work in a gendered way. The rational choice approach applied to the family (Becker 1981) expects parents to optimize the efficiency of their family unit. It therefore makes sense for them to each specialize on one field of work as this is the most efficient strategy. Another approach argues that an unequal division of household labour is the result of structurally asymmetric distribution of resources. Parents would not have the same power of resources in negotiations (e.g. social status, education, income etc.) which enables the one with more external resources to opt out of the unpaid labour (Aassve, Fuochi, and Mencarini 2014, 1001–2). The gender ideology perspective traces the division of paid and unpaid work back to predominant occupational and family roles that shape both women's and men's identity (Bühlmann, Elcheroth, and Tettamanti 2009, 50–51; Carlson and Hans 2017, 2–3; Wiesmann 2010, 4–11).

Recent Swiss studies do not completely renounce such approaches. Yet, they do not seem to explain the situation adequately. They, for example, lack an explanation for the discrepancy between predominant egalitarian values of Swiss parents and their actual employment patterns (Bühlmann, Elcheroth, and Tettamanti 2009, 49; Ernst Stähli et al. 2009, 345). Although the egalitarian model, where both parents equally share paid and unpaid work is named most often as an ideal model by Swiss parents before the birth of their first child, the one-and-a-half-earner model dominates in reality (Bundesamt für Statistik 2017, 94). Also, Girardin et al. (2016) show in their study how couples where the mother earns more than the father – and it would therefore be financially reasonable for the mother to have a higher employment rate than the father – still tend to fall into a traditional division of work. Swiss scholars promote a more structural view where the institutional and normative context that parents live in shape their division of labour (Grunow and Veltkamp 2016, 13; Levy 2016, 297). The idea is that the values of parents do determine their practices, but they are influenced by structures of opportunities and constraints. These structures change with biographical stages and the arrival of the child is seen as a main turning point. With the birth of the first child, the institutional and normative context of a couple changes drastically and both woman and man need to adapt to their new roles of being a parent (Bühlmann, Elcheroth, and Tettamanti 2009, 52, 62–63).

On an institutional level the parental leave scheme in Switzerland makes it more difficult for men to live their role of a caregiver. Leave uptake by fathers is rare as men have no legal

entitlement to paternal leave and access to paid or unpaid leave depends on the employer (Valarino 2017, 224–26). Expensive and scarce childcare further disincentivizes female labour market participation. In combination with the joint taxation, it can make sense for the woman to reduce her hours of work and therewith save both childcare costs and taxes (Girardin et al. 2016, 151). This effect is amplified by the predominant wage inequality and the fact that women on average work in less paid sectors and positions (Bütler and Ruesch 2009, 65).

Normatively, constraints are embedded in gendered work identities as well as parental roles. In Switzerland it is much less common for men to reduce their hours of employment for childcare than for women. Girardin et al. (2016, 157–68) have shown in their study that women feel the need to cut back on their careers due to parenthood obligations. Men on the other hand, only plan on reducing their hours of employment if this does not entail any job performance losses or if their job is of minor importance to them. Additionally, the attitude is still predominant that it is best for the child to be with its mother. Father involvement in childcare is seen positively but rather as special father-child moments than concrete roles and activities in everyday life. Full childcare is, next to being expensive and scarce, also not according to norm of good parenting (Girardin et al. 2016, 167–68).

Le Goff and Levy (2016) show in their recent publication how gender differences are especially embedded in norms and institutions surrounding the birth of a child in Switzerland. Therewith they are activated when couples have a baby. Wiesmann (2010, 80–82) calls this phenomenon in her study on Dutch couples' transition to parenthood a 'gendered kick-off'. The fact that the mother stays home full-time with the child during the maternity leave, allows her to develop skills that her partner does not have. The father, on the other hand, returns to work and therewith further develops his professional abilities. An unintended specialisation of tasks occurs as both the mother and the father become experts in their fields. This entails a challenge for couples who try to divide paid and unpaid work gender equally as they need to actively counter the developed gendered routines and habits developed during the maternity leave.

Consequently, gender culture and family policy in Switzerland restrict the individual agency of parents whose preferences deviate from the prevalent gender norms. A father who would prefer to be the main caregiver of the child might, for instance, decide to stay the main income earner instead because the normative and institutional conditions make it easier to implement such a family and work model (M. Evertsson and Grunow 2016, 285–86; Grunow and Veltkamp 2016,

14). Particularly for men and women with a higher education level this can result in a situation of tension between their values and practices when living in a country like Switzerland. Through education they are expected to be exposed to egalitarian ideals which should counter their traditional gender stereotypes and lead to more gender egalitarian values. Further, both woman and man have invested a lot in education and professional training which makes it less likely that the woman wants to give up her career to live in a traditional family and work model (Davis and Greenstein 2009, 94, 100). Girardin et al. (2016) show in their study how the Swiss norm of being a good mother stands in direct conflict with the goal of pursuing a career. There-with high-achieving Swiss mothers perceive a tension between their roles as mothers and employees. To reduce the tension of such a dual goals conflict, women tend to reduce their hours of employment after the birth of the first child. It depends on the education level, socio-economic status and career investment, how much stepping back from their professional careers is perceived as unwanted. Even when regretting career losses, some mothers take it for granted that this sacrifice is needed (Girardin et al. 2016, 156–58, 168; Levy 2016, 296).

Yet, by calling it a gender equality paradox, Usdansky (2011) describes how social structures related to work and family can also function the other way around and incentivize well educated couples to live in a more traditional model than their gender egalitarian attitudes would give reason to expect. Firstly, a high income makes it possible for a couples to reduce their total hours of work. They are not dependent on a second income earner which enables the mother, or the father, to opt out of the labour market. Secondly, despite the fact that high status jobs and careers can promote the compatibility of family and careers through more flexible working hours, she argues that this permeability creates more problems than it resolves. It breaks the boundary of work and family and makes it more stressful and demanding to combine professional work and parenting. Finally, the idea of being a good mother requires spending a lot of time with the child, thus less emphasizing the independence of the child, is wider spread at the upper end of the social-class continuum. This accentuates the conflicting time demands of family and work and encourages well educated women to put parenting first (Usdansky 2011, 164–71).

The influence of norms and institutions surrounding family and work are therefore complex but crucial to consider in this study. The aim is to investigate how these factors are incorporated into the decision-making process of parents.

2.3 Risks related to a gendered division of work

If parents adapt a gendered division of paid and unpaid work during the maternity leave it is likely that they continue to specialize in their sex-specific field of work also after the months of leave. As they both have developed a specific skill set it becomes a rational option or at least less costly to keep this division of work (Wiesmann 2010, 82). Giudici and Gauthier (2009, 273–75) show how gender inequalities in the transition to parenthood in Switzerland cumulate over time; they go beyond the gendered kick-off due to the maternity leave. But rather the combination of structural factors and individual strategies leads to a progressive differentiation of the individual career paths of men and women. This means that much before becoming parents, men and women start developing different professional trajectories. Due to their gender-specific socialisation, they, for example, complete different educational degrees and prefer different jobs. These differences are amplified by them linking their lives together, especially when starting a family. At this point, parents redefine their roles and are prone to contextual influences. Giudici and Gauthier (2009, 275) show how women are, in this process, disadvantaged not only by normative and institutional constraints that impede female labour market participation but also by the man's advantages in professional integration. This means that it is very likely that the father focuses on the field of paid work whereas the mother bears the main responsibility for childcare and household. This is problematic because specializing on childcare and housework bears cumulative disadvantages for the woman in terms of economic vulnerability and social recognition (Giudici and Gauthier 2009, 253–54, 273–76).

In their study on the consequences of part-time work on old age pensions in Switzerland, Bonoli et al. (2016) put a number on the risks of a gendered division of labour. Based on different models of family and work, they calculate how high the pension claim of both men and women are. The result shows that old age pensions in Switzerland are highly sensitive to part-time work, especially in case of a divorce and with a low-paid job. The risks are multi-dimensional as a part-time employment does not only mean less money to pay into your pension fund but also less favourable pension fund conditions⁴, more insecure jobs and less career opportunities. As it is very common for mothers in Switzerland to work at an employment rate lower than 50%, they are at a high risk of old age poverty. Consequently, the Swiss Conference for Equality

⁴ On the one hand the employer is only obligated to pay contributions from a certain threshold of yearly income. On the other hand, many pension funds have an absolute excess franchise that diminishes a low income relatively stronger than a high income (Kaiser and Keller 2019).

Commissioners recommends that mothers increase their hours of work as soon as their children grow older. Preferably, they would start working full-time to avoid the risk of old age poverty completely (Bonoli et al. 2016; Schweizerische Konferenz der Gleichstellungsbeauftragten 2016).

It remains unclear how couples include such long-term risks in their decision-making. Are they aware of the cost that spending more time with their children entails? Or are other reasons besides the better compatibility of family and work, behind the prevalence of the one-and-a-half-earner model (Bonoli et al. 2016, 40; Schweizerische Konferenz der Gleichstellungsbeauftragten 2016, 5)?

2.4 Countering prevalent gender norms by explicit decision-making

Next to these large-scale factors that influence the division of paid and unpaid work, the individual decision-making interactions of couples that compose their division of labour remain less explored (Carlson and Hans 2017, 3). Studies differentiate between explicit and implicit decision-making. Whereas the first means that partners actively discuss and negotiate how they want to divide different tasks, the latter refers to decisions that are made without discussion but rather in silent agreements or by changing behaviour incrementally (Sillars and Kalbflesch 1989, 180; Wiesmann et al. 2008, 343). Scholars sometimes assume that modern couples, freed from traditional norms, actively negotiate upon their relationship and division of labour (Finch, Mason, and Mason 1993, 60). Yet, more recent investigations show that many decisions within families are not made explicitly. Instead of negotiating, rituals and routines define the way things are done. Familiar and simple paths are often preferred to negotiations and possible conflicts. This makes decisions prone to contextual influences. Couples and families might perceive their actions as the result of personal decisions without taking into account the gendered structures that underlie them (L. Evertsson and Nyman 2009, 37–38; Nyman and Evertsson 2005, 47–49). This means that couples striving for a gender equal division of paid and unpaid work need to engage into explicit decision-making. Only with a determined strategy it is possible to challenge prevalent gendered institutions and norms (M. Evertsson and Grunow 2016, 290; Wiesmann et al. 2008, 351). Differently said, where gender consciousness is lacking, both partners have fewer expectations of equality. It is therefore unlikely that one of them provokes a conflict that could lead to a change of the current situation (Sullivan 2004, 218–19).

To my knowledge, there is no study focusing on the decision-making process of Swiss couples. Yet, some scholars have shown that Swiss couples do not necessarily reflect on the social conditions of parenthood. The influence of contextual factors on the division of paid and unpaid work is underestimated. Though Swiss family politics are often called a laggard and the lack and scarcity of childcare is commonly criticized, parents do not see it as the reason for their gendered division of labour (Levy 2016, 296). Highly educated couples are expected to have more gender equal values and could therefore challenge prevalent norms with an explicit strategy. But many highly educated Swiss parents forgo to do so. What decision-making process leads them to adopt the one-and-a-half-earner model?

3 Method

3.1 Data collection

To find out more about the decision-making process of parents in Switzerland qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted. A qualitative approach was crucial to get a deep understanding of how couples talked about dividing different tasks and what factors influenced their process leading to a certain family and work model (Carlson and Hans 2017, 3). Both mother and father were interviewed at a time and face-to-face. All interviews were conducted in the families' home. By interviewing couples together, they are expected to render a more complete recount of past experiences. Especially because spouses can help each other to recall memories and because the interaction of the couple provides information that would otherwise be hard to obtain (Allan 1980, 206; Magnusson 2008, 80; Wiesmann et al. 2008, 345). To apprehend the complexity of the decision-making process, the interview guide⁵ was structured into three life phases, seeing the birth of the first child as an important turning point. First, we talked about the ideas of a future division of labour the couple had before the birth of their first child. After that the couples recounted the realization process of these ideas and the steps involved in how the couple ended up in their present division of labour. Finally, possible future changes were addressed. Therewith the focus lay on the micro-level and the parents' personal experiences instead of the broader socio-political context of Switzerland. The interviews were conducted in Swiss German to create a natural and comfortable setting for both the researcher and the interviewees. All interviewees should recount their experiences freely for the researcher to gain a

⁵ See Appendix 1

better understanding of the dynamics of decision-making in couples (Wiesmann et al. 2008, 359). To begin with, an information sheet including conditions of the study and contact details of the researcher was handed out to the interviewees.⁶ Based on that the couples gave their oral consent to be part of this study. The interviews lasted around 50 to 90 minutes. They were recorded and later on transcribed anonymously.

3.2 Sample

The aim of this study is to find out how highly educated heterosexual couples chose to live in a one-and-a-half-earner model. It seems therefore reasonable to interview a homogenous group of couples in order to get a comprehensive picture of the processes that have led to this specific division of paid and unpaid work. This corresponds to a purposive sampling as the cases are chosen because their socio-demographic characteristics help to explore the specific research question (Ritchie et al. 2013, 113–14). Based on previous research, four criteria were established which all couples in the study had to comply with. Firstly, the one-and-a-half-earner model is, in this study, defined as a division of labour where the man is employed to at least 80% and the woman is employed to less than 70%. If possible, the female and male employment rate should vary 20% or more as this makes the couple's division of labour more gender traditional and therefore more interesting for the aim of this study. Secondly, both parents need a tertiary education level. In Switzerland this corresponds to either a university degree or a degree in higher vocational training such as a Federal Diploma of Higher Education (Erziehungsdirektion des Kantons Bern 2018, 8). Thirdly, the couple should have no more than two children. They need to still live at home, the youngest should at least be one year old and the oldest no older than 17 years old. The reason for this is that within one year after giving birth, most Swiss mothers return to the labour market. Further the employment rate of the woman typically rises with the age of the children (Bundesamt für Statistik 2017, 36–37). Fourthly, all families need to live in the Canton of Berne. As family policy in Switzerland is mainly organized at the cantonal and local level, this reduces differences due to various institutional settings.

10 couples were interviewed in total. This sample size seems reasonable as it is assumed that many themes will reoccur repeatedly due to the homogeneity of the sample (Ritchie et al. 2013, 117–18). Also, the time and resources available did not allow to interview more than 10 couples

⁶ See Appendix 2

or 20 people. All interviewees responded to an interview request⁷ that I had sent out to friends and acquaintances. It contained the criteria that the couples needed to fulfil, a short description of the study and conditions of the data collection process. Of half of the interviewed couples I know either the woman or the man personally, the rest are friends of friends.

The age of the couples varies between 27 and 49 years. Three families have children who are already going to school whereof the oldest child is 17 years old. The other seven families have children who are between 10 months and 4 years old. Whereas seven of the couples are married, three are unmarried. All families live in a city or a small-town except one who lives in a small village that lies in an urban area. It is noticeable that most of the women have stereotypically female professions such as primary school teacher, midwife or administrative staff. Their male partners, on the other hand, typically work as engineers or IT specialists. Only in two cases, the jobs are not in line with professional gender stereotypes. It could be argued that this is a bias in the sample that should not be neglected in the analysis as female-dominated professions are typically related to a lower social status, fewer prospects for advancement and lower salaries. Yet, as the professional gender segregation is indeed very high in Switzerland (Bundesamt für Statistik 2019), the jobs distribution of the interviewees is not out of the ordinary. The sample will therefore not be treated as biased. One case notably deviates from the rest of the sample as the couple and their children are clearly older than the rest. This deviation from the otherwise homogenous sample can bring additional insights but needs to be taken into account when analysing the data. Further crucial to consider is that one couple and one father did not grow up in Switzerland but originally come from Germany. However, all three of them have lived in the Canton of Bern for the last 10 years. As the origin can have a great influence on someone's values and norms it is essential to take this into consideration. The rest of the sample was born and raised in Switzerland.

3.3 Data analysis

After each interview a memo was recorded with the first impressions of the just gathered data as well as information on special circumstances that cannot be heard in the interview record. These first ideas for the analysis were complemented by thoughts that came up during the transcription of the interview.

⁷ See Appendix 3

For the analysis of the transcribed interviews the software program NVivo was used. The data was coded in two cycles. In the first cycle, I went through all interview transcripts and used Process, In Vivo and Descriptive Coding to identify different topics that were addressed. Using these different types of coding helped me to label both actions as well as the interviewees' ideas and contextual factors that influences their decision-making. By using these different coding methods I further tried to stay as close to the participants' language as possible (Saldaña 2015, 68–71, 80–97). In the second cycle, I reassessed my codes. I tried to find patterns and identified the main themes. With this, the analysis was done inductively. The notes of the data collection phase helped to take account of all the important themes. Throughout the analysis my aim was to tie the themes that I found in my data to the existing literature. So, when finding patterns of connections, I tried to use theoretical concepts to explain them. Only by that I determined the theoretical framework of this study (Creswell and Creswell 2017, 642; Patton 2015, 541–42; Spencer et al. 2013, 332–39). Finally, this resulted in six themes under which I was able to summarize the different codes. In the analysis part I will take up each theme in a separate sub-chapter. An overview of the final codes and themes can be found in the appendix⁸.

During the whole study I was in close dialogue with a professional working in the field of family policy in the Canton of Berne. By discussing the analysis and the preliminary results with her, I was able to gain a second perspective on my data. Especially her assessment of the robustness of the findings and the interpretations was very useful. As she is working with the topics of my research on an everyday basis, she was able to point out parts of the analysis that seemed suspicious to her or factors that I might have overlooked. I expect this to improve both the validity and reliability of the study (Lewis et al. 2013, 354–59).

3.4 Possible weaknesses

Interviewing couples jointly can compromise the validity of the data mainly because the individual feels less free to express his or her views than when interviewed separately. When answering a question in the presence of the spouse, accounts might be adjusted in order to minimize conflict. Couples can also discuss the interview themes beforehand and agree on a narrative to convey a certain picture of their family and relationship (Valentine 1999, 70–71). Exploring processes that have taken place on a micro-level can be hard as the interviewees might

⁸ See Appendix 4

not remember what their thoughts were and how they took decisions in the past. Even if they do, they might rationalize the events and feelings in retrospective what would bias the results (Sullivan 2004, 218). There is a special risk of adaptive preference formation when talking about how satisfied couples are with their division of labour today. This means that couples might downgrade their wishes if their realization becomes less likely in order to reduce frustration (Elster 1983, 25, 109–10). Based on the data of this study alone it is therefore not possible to tell if there is a gap between values and practices of the interviewed parents. Other than these possible weaknesses, the interviewees seemed to be relaxed and communicative during the interviews. Given the sensitive nature of some of the topics, the form of consent which emphasized the confidentiality of the couples' responses helped to establish a trustful environment. The couples spoke up and I assume that they did not try to conceal facts from their decision-making process.

Finding couples who were willing to participate in the study was not too easy. On the one hand, many possible interviewees were ruled out because they did not comply with at least one of the criteria. On the other hand, a considerable number of couples did not reply to the interview request or declined. Therefore, I was not able to be too picky when it came to the exact working arrangements. In two cases the difference of the rate of employment is only 20% and therefore it is debatable how well this corresponds to a one-and-a-half-earner model. Further the sample choice is probably biased by the fact that mainly couples who are satisfied with their division of paid and unpaid work are willing to be interviewed. I expect that couples who are less satisfied with their current division or had a very conflictual decision-making process would be less willing to contribute to this study.

Due to the scope of this study it is not possible to repeat interviews and check if the same results occur again. Neither was there enough time to take research evidence back to the interviewees to see if they can confirm the meaning that was assigned to the data (Lewis et al. 2013, 354–58). Therefore, the risk exists that I misinterpreted what the interviewees said. I tried to prevent this as well as possible by talking about the findings to other people, some of them parents in Switzerland as well. Further I constantly revised the interpretations by going back to the separate interview transcripts and by asking myself if the preliminary findings do justice to each case (Lewis et al. 2013, 360–61).

4 Theoretical background

This chapter outlines the concepts and theories that were used to analyse the gathered data. Based on the themes that occurred in the interviews, I chose to combine two different theoretical approaches. Firstly, a typology of dyadic decision-making styles helps to analyse the way couples communicate with each other. Specifically, the process of muddling-through describes how decisions are not necessarily taken in a rational and linear way but rather implicitly. This helps to explain why cultural norms and expectations that parents share have a strong influence on their choice of a family and work model (Kirchler 1993; Nyman and Evertsson 2005). The second applied theory of the gender master status is used to analyse those norms and shared expectations that appear when couples argue for their division of labour. The theory explains how the used arguments are based on gender differences that are embedded in prevalent norms and institutions and that are reinforced in the transition to parenthood (Krüger and Levy 2001).

4.1 Implicit and explicit decision-making styles in couples

Sillars and Kalbflesch (1989) differentiate decision-making in couples from the way decision are made in groups. While groups usually have a clear set goal of taking a joint decision, couples' decision-making is less organized, less conscious and embedded in other activities. If couples would function like an effective task group, they would gather information systematically, have a set time to discuss and decide upon a certain issue and continuously evaluate the implementation process. Yet in reality, taking a decision needs time, expertise and energy and couples only have a limited amount of these resources. Therefore, the different issues compete for limited resources and couples take many decisions implicitly to save resources. Such implicit decision-making is reflected in silent agreements, decisions without verbal agreement, which are often based on cultural norms or expectations that partners share. As couples tend to take decisions while doing other things, like shopping or having a meal, there is a limited awareness and a limited planning of decisions. Retrospective awareness of them making the decisions is more likely. Hand in hand with it goes incremental planning instead of proactive planning of decisions. By changing things incrementally, couples can avoid having larger discussions and disagreements that might occur when proactively articulating decision plans. The language used in such decision-making processes tends to be coded as messages have a taken-for-granted-meaning. Although such coded messages are more difficult to interpret, for a couple it is less effortful to not articulate every detail in physical speech. Moreover, explicit decision-making

requires that couples actively plan the decision-making process in advance, for instance by setting a time and a place for discussion. Unless a couple has concerns about their process of communication, such an explicit metacommunication will most likely be avoided. Taking decisions implicitly can also indicate evading conflict. Thus, when confronted with a situation that requires communication, couples might change the topic, start abstracting it or making vague generalities in order to soften the issue. Last but not least, stoicism is contrasting explicit problem solving. Individuals might perceive an issue as beyond their control or think that the costs of changing it are excessive. Therefore, they rather accept the problem instead of doing something about it (Sillars and Kalbflesch 1989, 179–97).

In general, couples only engage in explicit decision-making if something out of the ordinary prompts them to do so or if implicit decision-making does not occur smoothly. By doing this they can manage the decision overload and the limited time, energy and expertise at hand. Yet, the extent of explicit decision-making depends not only on the resources available but also on the homogeneity and stability of a couple's relationship. The more similar the background of a couple is and the more experiences they share, the easier it is for them to take decisions implicitly as they can take a lot for granted. At the same time interactions tend to reoccur in relationships whereby couples' decision-making process becomes less conscious (Sillars and Kalbflesch 1989, 197–202). Both Sillars and Kalbflesch (1989, 202–5) and Wiesmann (2010, 61–62) describe how traditional role orientation reduces the need for explicit communication as partners silently agree on dividing tasks along sex-stereotypic lines. Egalitarian couples, on the other hand, tend to have a more explicit style of interaction because they engage in conflict and try to actively challenge tradition. They locate a third type of couples between the egalitarian and traditional category. Wiesmann (2010, 61–62) calls them transitional couples and describes them as feeling ambivalent about their roles and responsibilities. Although they agree with the notion of gender equality, their ambivalence, meaning the feeling of uncertainty and inconsistency of one's current behaviour and values, triggers implicit decisions and stoicism. Both individuals are more likely to avoid this dissonance by going along with their partners preferences.

In sum, these factors influence how likely it is for a couple to get into a situation of confusion or disruption where they can no longer rely on their usual repertoires and common understanding. As taking decisions implicitly depends on a common understanding, explicit decision-making becomes necessary in such situations (Sillars and Kalbflesch 1989, 202).

4.1.1 Muddling-through process

One important implicit decision-making strategy of couples is called ‘muddling through’. It is most often applied to purchase decisions where spouses make joint choices spontaneously and incrementally instead of gathering information systematically on alternative products (Kirchler 1993; Park 1982, 406). Originally the muddling-through process was presented as a decision-making strategy in public administration. The main idea is that a completely rational policy-making method, where all alternative solutions would be considered, is only possible for relatively simple problems. As time and money are limited, public administrators do not have the possibility to intensively analyse the situation. Also, a complex problem can rarely be assessed objectively as interests are diverse and people disagree. Public administrators therefore draw on a muddling-through process where they rely on a smaller comparison of policy alternatives and change the status quo only by small steps. This way less information is needed, and the decision-making process stays efficient (Lindblom 1959, 79–83).

Later, the muddling-through process was applied to joint decision-making. Couples apply the strategy for similar reasons as policymakers. They only have a limited capability to process the information that is needed to take a joint decision. Reaching a carefully thought through joint decision would require knowing their partners exact preferences as well as all choice alternatives. Yet, the couple’s cognitive limitations make them plod through decisions in an incremental way, thereby focusing on enhancing their own utility and at the same time avoiding conflict. This conflict-avoiding strategy makes the couples believe that they take decisions jointly whilst they make choices unstructured and disjointed (Kirchler 1993, 406–7, 427–28; Park 1982, 151–52). Park (1982, 152–53, 160–61) identifies three major conflict-avoiding heuristics that couples use to reach choices effectively. The first heuristic is to focus on decisions with objective dimensions rather than subjective dimensions. It is easier for a couple to identify preference differences when talking about the number of rooms of an apartment than about a vaguer characteristic like the appearance of the home. It requires less cognitive effort to identify preference differences on an objective dimension and it is easier to make a joint decision. The second strategy is to avoid conflict by differentiating decision-making tasks according to the spouses’ level of expertise in different areas. Corresponding to the roles of both man and woman in their relationship they prevail against their partner in certain areas of decision-making. The third heuristic is to reach decisions by concessions. A decision is often not equally important for both spouses, so the one with the lower preference intensity concedes in order to prevent a conflict.

4.2 Gendered master status

The concept of a master status was originally introduced by E.C. Hughes in 1945. It shows how one demographic category can dominate other aspects of a person's background or actions. The membership of a race can for example, if deviating from the norm, be a trait that overpowers other characteristics such as a professional standing (Hughes 1945, 357; Krüger and Levy 2000, 384). Krüger and Levy (2001, 163) have redefined the notion of master status by combining it with the concept of "doing gender". Hereby, gender is seen as a dominant category that outweighs other status criteria. The segregation of male and female gender roles is seen as a basic principle that structures our life and is produced and maintained in everyday performances. Through the process of socialisation an individual learns and internalises gender norms and reproduces them on an everyday basis. Next to individuals that do gender through their interactions, the category is also embedded in institutions and is a central feature of the overall social structure. Institutions of our everyday life such as schools or public transportation indirectly influence gender roles. As a result of these processes on a micro-, meso- and macrosocial level the gendered master shapes female and male life paths differently. If we look at career paths of men and women for example, gender can be seen as dominating other categories such as performance. It is manifested above all by the priority assignment of women to the family field and men to the professional field. Certainly, a woman can still be active in the professional field as long as this does not interfere with family work requirements (Gauthier and Valarino 2016, 49; Krüger and Levy 2000, 385, 2001, 163; Le Goff and Levy 2016, 14–16; West and Zimmerman 1987, 125).

The birth of the first child is seen as a turning point in female and male trajectories. Although the category of gender is influencing people's life paths with or without children, the social dynamics of the gendered master status are intensified in the transition to parenthood. It is a phase where both men and women redefine their identities most often accordingly to the predominant norms of gender relations. The institutions surrounding the birth of the child thereby play a very important role as they are highly gendered. A country's paternal leave scheme, for example, influences how parents redefine their role within a couple. It gives them incentives to organize their life according to the sex-specific master status, which typically associates the woman to the domestic sphere and the man to the professional sphere. If a couple's ideology differs from the predominant gender roles or if their situation does not allow living in a traditional family model, for example due to being a single parent, they are confronted with

pressures that often seriously jeopardize the achievement of the alternative model. The gendered master status that is embedded in normative and structural factors can therewith be seen as restricting the individual agency of couples with young children, triggering a gap between their attitudes and practices. This is especially relevant as gendered practices that are intensified with the birth of the first child remain strongly differentiated over years (Gauthier and Valarino 2016, 50; Krüger and Levy 2000, 393; Le Goff and Levy 2016, 15–16; Levy 2016, 293; Levy, Kellerhals, and Widmer 2002, 33).

Nonetheless, the gendered life paths of men and women before having children play an important role in the transition to parenthood too. To be able to avoid the dominance of the gendered master status after the arrival of the first child a woman needs to have a sufficient cultural and economic capital. It greatly matters what educational and professional background she has as well as what her job and income prospective are. These factors legitimize her presence in the professional sphere and allow her to counteract the gendered master status that would typically associate this sphere to the man. Early anticipation of the gendered master status can therefore counteract its effect. Already in the phase of professional orientation, then by professional training and finally in the exercise of a professional activity an awareness of the gendered master status is necessary to counter its effect. The same is true for the man, his awareness of the gendered master status and his familiarity with the domestic sphere (Gauthier and Valarino 2016, 73–75; Levy 2016, 293).

5 Analysis

The results of the ten joint interviews are presented and interpreted in the following six sub-chapters. First the different ways of dividing paid and unpaid work are described to give the reader an overview of the variety of a one-and-a-half-earner model as well as the complexity of organizing paid and unpaid work within a family. Afterwards I will analyse the way couples took decisions about their division of labour. In doing so, both their communication process as well as the content of their considerations will be studied. Subchapters two to six are arranged chronologically, meaning that in the beginning the decision-making process before the birth of the first child is analysed, then the present situation and to conclude possible future changes will be discussed. In each chapter, I will first describe the data, interpret it with the illustrated theories and draw conclusions about how far this corresponds to the previous research having been undertaken in this field.

The used quotes are all translated to English as the language spoken in the interviews was Swiss German. The indication “W” in the quotes stands for “Woman”, “M” for “Man”, and “I” for “Interviewer”.

5.1 Different forms of the one-and-a-half-earner model

All of the interviewed couples live in a one-and-a-half-earner model where the father is employed 80%⁹ or more and bears primary responsibility for the household income and the mother is employed 60% or less and bears primary responsibility for the housework and childcare. The exact division of paid and unpaid work however varies a lot. The following table gives an overview of the different ways the couples in the sample divide their seven days of paid and unpaid work. The table includes weekends because some of the parents also work on Saturday or Sunday. Most commonly, unpaid work is shared on weekends though. As some parents have work schedules that change regularly, and others are very flexible in their working hours, this overview displays an average of their division of labour and not a one-on-one illustration of their everyday life. The indication ‘2 days unpaid work alone’, for example, means that this parent spends a total of two days alone at home managing childcare and housework. ‘Two days’ could mean two full days or possibly four half-days. The job indication does not illustrate the actual job of this person but the occupation group it belongs to according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 [ISCO-08] (International Labour Organization 2012).

Table 1: Overview of the samples’ professions, children and division labour

	Mother	Father	Children	Outsourced
1	<i>Social professional</i> 3 days paid work (60%) 2 days unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	<i>Engineering professional</i> 4 days paid work (80%) 1 day unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	1 toddler ¹⁰ 1 child preschool age	2 days childcare facility
2	<i>Teaching professional</i> 2 days paid work (45%) 3 days unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	<i>Engineering professional</i> 4 days paid work (80%) 1 day unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	1 child preschool age 1 child school age	1 day grandparents

⁹ 100% corresponds to a 42-hour work week in Switzerland.

¹⁰ Young child that does not go to school or preschool yet.

3	<i>Health professional</i> 3 days (60%) 3 days unpaid work alone 1 day unpaid work together	<i>Science and engineering professional</i> 5 days paid work (100%) 1 day unpaid work alone 1 day unpaid work together	2 toddlers	2 days childminder
4	<i>Cultural professional</i> 2 days paid work (50%) 3 days unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	<i>Business and administration professional</i> 4 days paid work (80%) 1 day unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	2 children school age	1 day dayschool center
5	<i>Health associate professional</i> 1 day paid work (20%) 3-4 days unpaid work alone 2-3 days unpaid work together	<i>Teaching professional</i> 4 days paid work (100%) 0-1 day unpaid work alone 2-3 days unpaid work together	1 toddler	0-1 day grandparents
6	<i>Business and administration professional</i> 3 days paid work (60%) 2 days unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	<i>Production and specialized services manager</i> 5 days paid work (100%) 2 days unpaid work together	1 toddler 1 child preschool age	2 days childcare facility 1 day grandparents housecleaner
7	<i>Teaching professional</i> 2 ½ days paid work (45%) 2 ½ days unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	<i>Science and engineering professional</i> 4 ½ days paid work (100%) ½ day unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	1 toddler	2 days childcare facility
8	<i>General and keyboard clerk</i> 2 days paid work, incl.home-office (40%) 3-4 days unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	<i>Information and communications technician</i> 5 days paid work (100%) 2 days unpaid together	2 children school age	
9	<i>Science and engineering professional</i> 3 days paid work (60%) 2 days unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	<i>Science and engineering professional</i> 4 days paid work (80%) 1 day unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	1 toddler	2 days grandpar- ents
10	<i>Health professional</i> 2 days paid work (50%) 3 days unpaid work alone 2 days unpaid work together	<i>Science and engineering professional</i> 5 days paid work (100%) 2 days unpaid work together	1 toddler	2 days grandpar- ents

The table shows that the rate of employment of the women in the sample is a bit above the average in Switzerland as a part-time employment under 50% is most common for Swiss mothers. Nearly all parents outsource a part of the childcare, yet in all interviewed families the majority of the childcare stays within the household. This corresponds to the typical childcare arrangements in Switzerland. Childcare is very frequently outsourced, yet the duration of the care remains relatively short (Bundesamt für Statistik 2017, 49). In most of the cases the grandparents look after the child or the children for one or two days a week. If grandparents do not have a permanently set day, most couples still said that they would be available as a backup and enable them to be more flexible. Compared internationally, Swiss children are often looked after by private persons such as grandparents instead of childcare facilities (Bundesamt für Statistik 2017, 9).

Both childcare and housework are compiled as unpaid work. Typically, parents try to share childcare and housework equally, but the mother spends more time on it as she is home more often, respectively spends less hours with paid work. Some couples explained that this would lead to her bearing the main responsibility for most of the tasks and him having a more executing role in childcare and housework. In the most extreme cases the mother would actively assign tasks to her partner. Many fathers state, however, that they are very flexible in their working hours. This would allow them to manage unplanned task, for example when children got sick and could not go to the childcare facility. Many go as far as saying that there is no need to reduce their working hours because they could easily take an afternoon off if necessary and compensate these hours of work on another day.

With the birth of the first child all mothers have reduced their hours of work whereas most fathers have kept the same number of working hours. Around half of the women have increased their employment rate by 10-20% when their children grew older, some of them also because they changed their job. This corresponds to the average development of the labour participation of Swiss mothers (Bundesamt für Statistik 2016, 2, 2017). Around half of the men have reduced their hours of work by 10-20% or started working partly from home within the first few years after the birth of the first child. One case differs from the rest (Interview 3). Here the mother was still studying when she gave birth to her first child. In order to complete her degree after the maternity leave, her husband reduced his working hours to 60% for a while. After that he returned to a full-time employment again and she started working at an employment rate of 60%.

As the employment rates of the mothers that were interviewed only differ slightly, it is hard to say if they vary with the number of children, with the children's age, with the parent's marital status or with the kind of job the parents have.

5.2 The impossibility of planning a division of work

Already before the birth of the first child, all interviewed couples had some basic ideas about their ideal division of paid and unpaid work. Especially the fact that both the woman and the man should continue to be employed was central. Firstly, they depended on both salaries. Secondly, both the woman and the man wished to remain competitive on the labour market, mainly stressing the fact that they want to make use of their high investment in education. Thirdly, they did not want to lose the variation in their everyday life that is set by their jobs. They expected that focusing on unpaid work would not satisfy either of them in the long run. On the other hand, the couples did not want to work too much, mainly because they thought that it would financially as well as pedagogically be better not to outsource too much of the childcare. At the same time many couples stated that it was clear to them in advance that the woman would be employed part-time and that the man's hours of employment would exceed hers after having children. These ideas correspond to a one-and-a-half-earner model. The couples formulated them as obvious preconditions and they are hardly called into question:

“M: Well, it was always clear. [Woman] had always said that she would reduce her hours of work quite a bit after having children. For me it was not out of the question to reduce as well, but it was also clear, since I earn more than she does, that I will remain the main income earner. Also, because in my job I am very flexible even if I work full-time. [...] That's why it was obvious from the beginning on that I would work more than her. [...] But it was also clear that we both wanted to continue working.” (Interview 5)

*“M: I could never imagine working less than 100% and as far as I understood it, you didn't mind reducing your working hours to 60% or 50%. We never discussed it very much.
W: Yes, it just came about. Working part-time is very convenient where I work. For me it was quite clear that I wanted to work less. [...]*

M: I can't remember that we somehow... Well, we did discuss it but not consciously. We just obviously understood each other.” (Interview 10)

Although all couples did talk about their future division of labour at the latest during the pregnancy, most decisions needed little verbal agreement. For one thing because both soon-to-be mother and father took for granted that their partner was sharing their attitude. They did not feel the need to explicitly discuss their views. For another thing because both partners thought it was hard or even impossible to plan a certain division of labour before the birth of the first child. The interviewees described it as a process where you need to “take things as they come” and “try out different ways of doing one thing”. This view shows that the couples see their family and work model as at least partly out of their control. They did not aim at having an explicit strategy but drew on incremental planning and a trial and error strategy. When describing how they initially divided paid and unpaid work, most couples expressed that the division “came about”.

“W: Maybe it’s good to discuss it [division of labour] before you get children. Although I don’t know if it can be planned.

M: No, it’s probably not plannable. You see how it is for other people in your social environment, but you don’t know how you will react to it. [...] You can certainly plan some things, like childcare after breastfeeding. But not what happens after that...” (Interview 8)

Due to this idea of a limited capacity of planning a division of labour before the arrival of the first child and the assumption that both partners share the same values, couples did not feel the need for explicit decision-making. They did not plan too much and agreed on many things implicitly. This confirms what Sillars and Kalbflesch (1989) have stated, that decisions without verbal agreements are often based on cultural norms or expectations that partners share. But what are the norms and expectations that couples silently agreed on? I will focus on this question in the following chapter.

5.3 Plenty of room for the gendered master status

When digging deeper, the couples brought up a variety of factors that have influenced their ideas and eventually their division of labour. When for example asking why it was so obvious that the man’s hours of employment would exceed the women’s after having children, the reasons ranged from him having a better salary to her being better in looking after the child. Or concerning everyday tasks in the household, many parents said that whoever was more in the mood for something would take care of a certain task. Overall the arguments that were used to reason for their division of work can be sorted into three broad groups. The first group consists

of reasons based on different preferences or abilities, either bound to a moment or in general. Though most couples divide tasks in their everyday life spontaneously and try to alternate as good as possible, some underlying preferences seem to influence their broader family and work model. For instance, only mothers stated that they had a strong wish to stay home with their children two full days or more per working week. Fathers expressed such a desire only in a few cases and if so, their wish was to stay at home at least one day. This preference of the mother staying home more hours than the father also became explicit in statements saying that it would make sense for her to focus on unpaid work as she would not get bored as easily as he would by staying at home. Another argument used was that the woman was more experienced in child-care than the man. Oppositely, it was only men who stated that they really liked their job and therefore did not want to reduce their hours of work. Though some women said that they really enjoyed working as well, this was less bound to the number of hours they were at work.

“W: It was difficult for him [man]. You had never dealt with children before. I’ve had always done that professionally. Maybe you didn’t think you were capable of doing it. What would you be doing with a baby all day long?”

M: Yes, I couldn’t imagine myself doing that. I thought, shit, then you’re at home with a baby – what are you going to do? But that’s the naïve idea of someone who doesn’t have a child and doesn’t care too much about it.” (Interview 7)

“M: For me it is a huge relief that I can be home with the children for dinner. My employer would definitely allow me to reduce my employment rate. 80% is very common where I work. I could... You [interviewer] probably hear that a lot.

W: You could... I think you just don't want to. I mean you can be honest about that.

M: Yes, [...] it is just not necessarily needed. You know, I have once experienced what it is like to have a job where you're hardly ever at home. Now, I am home in the evenings and on the weekends and I have a lot of freedom to do something with the children. [...] I enjoy that a lot. Whether I will reduce my hours of work... probably not. Except the need really exists.

W: I don't think you should depend it on that. It depends on what you want and how you imagine your everyday life. That's my approach to it and for me it works out great. I enjoy the two days with the children so much.” (Interview 6)

The second group of reasons are tied to mother and father having different professions. As mentioned in the description of the sample, most interviewed couples have stereotypically female and male professions. As male-dominated sectors typically bear higher prospect for

advancement and better salaries (Bütler and Ruesch 2009, 65), the decision of the man to be primarily responsible for the household income is often explained by his higher salary. Additionally, couples argued that it was less common to work part-time in male-dominated fields of work. Previous Swiss studies do provide evidence for such an institutional constraint when dividing paid and unpaid work gender equally (Bütler and Ruesch 2009; Le Goff and Levy 2016). Yet, interestingly several couples used this argument as a reason for their division of labour but when recounting the story, it turned out that the man had never actually asked his employer if it was possible to reduce his hours of work. This would mean that is rather the assumption, that it is easier and more accepted for the woman to reduce her hours of work than for the man, that influences the division of paid and unpaid work. Other reasons were similarly ambiguous. Couples, for example, explained that the man would not reduce his hours of work because that would result in him having a lower salary but still bearing the same responsibilities. That was seen as pointless. The same applied to him working at a lower employment rate, especially under 80%, as this would supposedly make his job less interesting. However, the exact same argument could be used to argue against the reduction of the woman's working hours. If she would prioritize paid work and therefore proceed further in her career, her losses of reducing her working hours would probably be greater too. In other words, and in line with Giudici and Gauthier's progressive differentiation of the individual career paths of men and women (2009), it is due to the man specializing in the field of paid work that he has greater losses in reducing his hours of work. Another reason for the man having greater career losses when reducing his hours of work is due to the man and the woman working in different sectors. Many women stated that in their professions it was not necessary to work full-time in order to make a career or that there were no big career possibilities anyway. It was no problem for them to work part-time and still "keep it rolling". This seems not to be the case when the mother does not work in a female-dominated field. Following this, two women working in different sectors faced very different career losses when prioritizing staying home with their children:

"W: Many women want to reduce their working hours while their children are still young. But then it is difficult for them to make progress in their careers at the same time or to do something that corresponds to their education and abilities. I think there are very few possibilities in certain sectors. For me it is difficult. I would like to do something interesting professionally, but my priority is to spend some days at home and to come home in the evening at a decent time."
(Interview 9)

“W: [In my profession] it is enough to work 50% to keep it rolling. You do not miss anything. You keep the same clients only fewer. If I want to work full-time again, I could find another job without difficulties. I do not have career losses either. There are no other responsibilities that I could have except maybe becoming a luminary in my field and write hundreds of books. But that I could also do working part-time as a mother.” (Interview 7)

Finally, some women said that they chose to reduce their working hours because their work content was too similar to childcare. It seemed pointless to them, for example, to give their own child into childcare or to grandparents in order to spend time with children from other parents. Taken as a whole, it seems like the different professional trajectories of men and women are in many cases an important reason for the gendered division paid and unpaid work.

The remaining causes for a gendered division of labour can be summarized as arguments related to the idea of motherhood and of fatherhood. One prominent argument of couples was that the mother would naturally be more important for the child in the beginning as she was breastfeeding it. This would result in a special connection between the mother and the child, whereas the father would take a backseat. At the same time, couples recalled normative pressures of being a good mother. They had the impression that it was less accepted for the mother to go back to work too early or with a high employment rate than it is for the father. This was mainly reflected in comments and questions they got from other people. Then again, many mothers themselves felt that the legal maternal leave in Switzerland was too short. They did not feel ready to return to the labour market to the extent that they had worked before the arrival of the child. Therefore, they either prolonged their leave by taking unpaid leave, they quit their job (or one of their jobs) or they reduced their hours of work to spend more time with the child. Although some fathers also took unpaid leave or reduced their hours of work, many described it as hard to keep up with the mother’s connection to the child and the childcare expertise she had gained during the first couple of months. Some fathers said that it was especially hard to connect to the child when it was still a baby. They felt it was easier to take over childcare tasks when the child was already a bit older.

“M: It’s obvious that the woman is more important for the child in the beginning. [...] Especially while breastfeeding biology makes a difference.

W: Yes, but just for the first six months. Afterwards you can compensate that very well. I think it is just easily settled that the woman stays at home and the man continues to work. No one says anything.” (Interview 2)

“W: You could notice that he has less a connection to the child when it was still a small baby. I also found that difficult at the very beginning [...], but I was able to manage that somehow. For you it was rather ‘What should I do with this human being?’. Only now that it is a little person with a character and language, you can relate much better.

M: [...] That’s true. Now, I can imagine looking after the child for two days and I don’t think anymore that I’m not capable. That would have been different two years ago.” (Interview 7)

The combination of biological, normative and also institutional factors seem to encourage that the mother gains the upper hand in childcare especially when the children are still very young.

Overall, the three groups of arguments coincide with the idea of Swiss scholars that parents are, in their choice of a family and work model, influenced by structures of opportunities and constraints that promote a model where the woman reduces her hours of paid work after the birth of the first child (Levy 2016). Of course, not all of the above-mentioned reasons for a gendered division of labour apply to each of the studied cases. More likely, one or two of the presented arguments dominate the reasonings of each interviewed couple. In one case (Interview 4), for example, the woman is really passionate about her job and originally her career ambitions were high, probably higher than her husband’s. Yet, she felt the strong desire to spend enough time with her children. She experienced the maternity leave as too short and was not ready to invest as much into her job as she did before the birth of her child. Additionally, her husband earns more money than she does. He is very flexible in his job and is satisfied with the amount of time he can spend with his children through that. Hence, she decided that the wish of spending a lot of time with her children was more important to her than her career ambitions and therefore she quit one of her two jobs. He reduced his hours by a day as more would make his job less interesting and was not necessarily needed to cover the childcare tasks.

In these reasonings the gendered master status becomes visible (Le Goff and Levy 2016). The differences in preferences, abilities, professions and most clearly concerning the idea of motherhood and the bond to the child are based on gender. This makes gender the dominant category that overshadows other categories such as professional standing, career ambitions or the wish of spending time with the child. Even if one characteristic deviates from the sex-specific norm, it can be overshadowed by the other characteristics that are in line with the gender norm. In one case (Interview 1), for example, the woman’s job payed better than her husband’s job and there-with deviated from the norm. According to the rational choice approach applied to the family (Becker 1981), it would have made sense for her to specialize on the field of work to rationally

optimize the efficiency of the family unit. Nonetheless, she quit her job and prolonged her maternity leave because she was not ready to go back to work and felt the strong urge to spend more time with her child. Her husband, on the other hand, did not call his working hours into question. This example shows how the gendered master status is both embedded in the norms of the mother and father themselves but also the institutions surrounding the birth of the child (Krüger and Levy 2001, 163; Le Goff and Levy 2016, 14–16). The maternity leave in this example, as well as in other cases, influenced the initial division of labour of couples and strengthened the segregation of male and female gender roles. Only the mother is entitled to a paid leave in Switzerland which is why she takes over the main responsibility for the field of childcare whereas the father further specialized in the field of paid work. This corresponds to what Wiesmann (2010) calls a gendered kick-off. During the maternity leave couples develop gendered routines and skills that are hard to counter afterwards. Such a gendered kick-off gives the woman a head start. It is likely that with it an unintentional specialization of tasks occurs.

Especially interesting to see is that the gendered master status does not just appear with the birth of the first child but results from a life-long process which intensifies in the transition to parenthood. That the mother and the father voice different preferences as well as that they work in different sectors can be seen as a result of their gendered life paths. Throughout their whole lives, the gendered master status influenced them differently. In the interviews this became apparent, for instance, when one woman described her choice of a professional path:

“W: Maybe if I had wanted to have a career as well, then that would have been a reason to not have any children at all. Yet, when I started studying, I already thought about the fact that you could combine this job very well with having a family. Part-time work is no problem. And I never really had ambitions to make a career.” (Interview 10)

Thus, this woman had already internalized the norms of being a woman or a mother and what this implies in gendered terms. She chose her typically female work trajectory according to it and therefore reproduced the gender norm. Together with other characteristics that she and her husband had gained in their gendered life paths, it was obvious to them after the birth of their first child to divide paid and unpaid work in a gender traditional way.

However, as already pointed out in the previous chapter, the gendered master status shapes the decision-making process rather unconsciously. The couples are aware of how their jobs, their salaries, their preferences or the maternal leave have influenced their choices, but it is mostly a

retrospective awareness. In several cases the parents decided explicitly that the father should stay home alone with the children only when the child was a bit older. They first had to realize that there was an imbalance in the connection to the child or in the overall workload to consciously change the situation:

“W: [child] was very fixated on me. Because I was always there and [father] only on weekend and in the evenings. [...] Sometimes [child] was very tedious towards him and I had to do everything. You could feel very strongly that there was a huge imbalance in the time presence. With the second child it was much better because you were home at least one day.

M: Yes, I also think that the wish to reduce my hours of work only arose through that. In the beginning we did not think about that much. We didn't really plan it.” (Interview 2)

Such examples for explicit decision-making will be discussed in the next chapter. In line with previous studies, the interviewees show a limited awareness of the underlying gender structure in the decision-making process before the birth of the first child (L. Evertsson and Nyman 2009; Nyman and Evertsson 2005). As their decision-making remains mainly implicit the possible influence of the gendered master status is high. Only with a high gender consciousness and an explicit strategy they would be able to challenge prevalent gendered norms and institutions (Grunow and Evertsson 2016; Sullivan 2004; Wiesmann et al. 2008).

Two cases of the sample deviate from the others. Here the fathers recount having the explicit goal of “being a present father” already before the birth of the first child. Therefore, one of them (Interview 9) made sure that he could stay home alone with the child for at least one day after the maternity leave ended and he insisted on a paternity leave of one month. In the other case (Interview 3), the father stayed home alone with the child for two months after the maternity leave ended. Later he temporarily reduced his employment rate in order to enable the mother to complete her degree. Both couples expressed how these measures helped them to “lay the foundation” for a more balanced division of work and a more balanced relation to the child.

“W: You've always been interested in taking on an active role of a father.

M: Yes, I certainly didn't want to be just a weekend daddy. I was always there for my children, also during the week. When you work full-time and have to leave early in the morning and only return late in the evening, then you might not even see your kids at all. Since I work that close to home, it is much easier. I have more time to spend at home and with the children. We got used to one another.

W: Yes, and you were also at home for almost two months with our first child. [...] And after that you only worked three day in the office. [...] Therewith you definitely laid a good foundation.” (Interview 3)

“M: I’m very glad that I’m home alone with the kid on Fridays. This way, I just need to do everything. If I didn’t have that day then you would probably be the number one caregiver and he [child] wouldn’t want me to change diapers or anything. The roles would already be given and as a man you wouldn’t stand a chance. [...] Now with this day, I am also a key caregiver and I don’t have the feeling that you can do things better than I do and I don’t prefer when you do things. This makes us both more equal.” (Interview 9)

These two cases exemplify how an awareness and anticipation of the gendered master status can help in countering its effect on the division of labour (Levy 2016). It is surprising how little the interviewed couples do engage in explicit decision-making before the birth of the first child. Due to their high level of education they were expected to have more gender egalitarian values and therefore provoke more conflict that could eventually lead to a change of the current situation (Sullivan 2004). In the following chapters I will further look into the explicit decision-making of couples and find possible reasons for why they do not have a more explicit strategy to counter the influence of the gendered master status.

5.4 Focusing on the here and now

Saying that couples would only engage in implicit decision-making before the birth of the first child oversimplifies the situation. Many times, the interviewees have accounted conscious decisions, related to their division of labour, that needed explicit negotiations beforehand. For instance, the choice of a place of residence is crucial. Here soon-to-be-parents placed importance on the proximity to schools, to their workplace and to their family and friends who could take over childcare tasks. These factors should make it easier for them to combine work and family.

“M: In our arrangement we can simply lock the door and go on holidays. [...] Our situation wouldn’t allow us to have a huge house with grounds.

W: Those were the discussions we had. We clearly decided against taking over our parents’ home. This additional effort would not have been possible. [...]

M: There were of course many decisions like this. We consciously chose this apartment and its location so that our parents are close by.” (Interview 6)

Decisions about the proximity of the workplace to their home and about the possibility of flexible work time or of part-time work were also common. Further subject of discussions was the standard of living a couple wanted to have, how much childcare they wanted to outsource or how much time they both dedicated to their hobbies. What all of these portrayed discussions have in common is that they focus on the here and now. Couples try to create an ideal situation in the present where they can master both work and family.

These short-term decisions stand in contrast to long-term considerations such as paying into the pension fund, planning a professional career or realizing a gender equal family and work model. Hardly any couple brought up long-term factors that were considered in the decision-making process. If they did, it was about saving for the future and for retirement. Yet, as the short-term factors are more perceptible and seem more pressing, they tend to overshadow the long-term considerations. One father (Interview 8) recounted his decision between getting a better salary but in return starting to commute an hour every day versus keeping his job and his short trip to work. To him it was obvious that he would prioritize the latter. Saving money for the pension fund was never really considered, he said. Other couples have started to think about the long-term risks of a part-time employment yet have pushed away such considerations as they were too abstract and too hard to plan. The following quote of an unmarried couple nicely shows how long-term considerations are deemphasized and how couples focus on their everyday life in the present:

I: And financial things, how did you discuss those?

W: We've tackled them a few times. This is something that we still need to do. Because I am already at a disadvantage for later in case we'd break up or you [man] would die or whatever. [...] But for me this is not a reason to work more. It is more important to me to spend time with our child now.

I: Why haven't you discussed it much so far?

W: Maybe because it isn't something that matters today or tomorrow. So, we postponed it. [...] It came up again and again. And maybe we would like to get consultation on how to take care of it best. But so far, we just couldn't be bothered." (Interview 10)

Even if long-term considerations are not pushed aside but actively discussed, it seems hard to cope with their complexity. Marriage, for example, is seen as a solution to the risk of old age poverty of the woman as the typical second income earner. Married couples argue that both spouses' pension funds are added up after the divorce and then divided equally (Schweizerische

Bundeskanzlei n.d.). Although this is correct and it weakens the long-term risks of the one-and-a-half model for the woman, studies show that married women remain at a risk of old age poverty (Bonoli et al. 2016). Only one couple (Interview 5) said that the woman consciously increased her hours of work because of this long-term risk. Here, however, the situation was so accentuated that she would have fallen out of her pension fund completely otherwise. It seems as if long-term consequences are only dealt with when the solution is fairly simple and assessable or if the problem is really pressing.

The described focus on short-term decisions is in line with the muddling-through process (Park 1982). The interviewed couples are dealing with many decisions, yet only have a limited cognitive capacity to grasp the issues at hand. Their strategy to focus on short-term decisions like their place of residence instead of long-term decisions such as preventing risks of a part-time employment corresponds to the first heuristic after Park. The depicted short-term decisions require less cognitive effort as their outcomes are objective and therewith the couple's preferences are easier to identify. The long-term decisions, on the other hand, are abstract and it is harder to identify one's own, let alone the partner's preferences. Consequently, a couple does not focus on long-term decisions as long as they stay so abstract and do not seem too pressing. The effort of taking such decisions seems only to be undertaken when the issue is important enough to the couple. In the previously mentioned example of the fathers who proactively decided to spend more time at home with their child, it seems like the extra effort that was needed to discuss and organize such a division of labour was worth it in order to live a more active role as a dad to them. If this is not the case, the couples decision-making process remains implicitly and consequently along prevalent gender norms.

5.5 Never touch a running system

Couples continue to have a similar decision-making strategy after the birth of their first child. The short-term factors still dominate their decision-making and the parents try to prevent bigger changes from happening. Many situations, of course, still require explicit negotiations. For one thing, couples take explicit joint decisions to make their family and work model run more smoothly. In several cases, the mother suggested that the father should reduce his hours of work to take some workload off her or to improve his relationship to the child. Sometimes it was also the father proposing it. Or the parents realised that how they divided the day was not convenient, so they tried to find a better alternative.

“W: There were phases when [father] was pretty destroyed after work. It’s been a while now; the kids were still small then and I did not work much. I took over more tasks at home because I noticed that he had no energy left at all. So that was when I thought it would be good if it changed. Mainly for the children’s sake and so that you had more of them.

M: Exactly, those were the reasons for my change of job. I was too tired and had no patience left for the children. I realized that it was time for a change.” (Interview 2)

For another thing, the couples engage in explicit decision-making if they are confronted with contextual barriers that do not allow them to implement their work and family model as planned. These constraints are mostly given by the employer, the work schedule or the school timetable. Especially the couples where one of them has a changing work schedule and no flexible working hours, they regularly have to sit down together and discuss how they will divide the tasks in the future. Yet, all of these discussions and negotiations, although being explicit, do not seem to bring about major changes. They modify the system incrementally. This can be seen nicely by the example of one couple (Interview 3) where the division of work has changed many times. When they describe their regular adjustments, it seems like they are rather complying with their schedules than rethinking their whole model:

“M: We discuss the most when you get your work schedule and we need to fill our calendars. We need to detect problematic days and find solutions for them. Grandparents, friends, godparents, or worst case we need to take a day off. [...] Well, often it’s not even much of a discussion, we just need to take it as it comes.

W: [...] And soon we’ll have a bigger rearrangement again because of my job change. [...] And then [child] starts kindergarten this summer and it will get even more complicated to organize. Who will bring him there in the morning? Who will be home for lunch?” (Interview 3)

Parents seem to strive for a status quo. So, once they have established a family and work model, they are not very eager to change it again. Especially the uncertainty that is related to change and the extra effort the adaption process implicates, keeps them from rearranging their current division of work. The couples see themselves as a well-practiced team that does not have to communicate so much anymore. Keeping this system means saving energy, whereas changing it implies negotiating your working hours with your employee, handing over working tasks to colleagues, learning to take over new tasks, getting used to a new rhythm and so on. Additionally, the couples feel uncertain about how such a change will influence their financial situation,

how their child will react to the rearrangement or if reducing their working hours will make their job less interesting.

I: You [mother] said you could work more right now, why don't you do it?

W: That's what we're discussing now. Because it involves rebuilding the current system. And you [father] once said 'Never touch a running system'. At the moment everything works, and we make ends meet. We'd have to try out everything and settle in again.

M: [...] If you undo one screw, then it might have other consequences too. We'd seriously have to draw up a budget if we start adjusting our employment rates. It would simply have to be calculated." (Interview 4)

"W: We have been together for such a long time now... At some point you just become a well attuned team. And as long as things do not bother you extremely, you keep them as they are. You don't really discuss them unless it truly upsets you." (Interview 1)

Consequently, parents only change the system if it is "absolutely necessary" and if so, only by small steps. As described above, the maternity leave provides a gendered kick-off that makes parents divide tasks gender traditionally (Wiesmann 2010). With the parents' reluctance of changing the system, it is likely that they keep their gendered division of work. Couples often state that reducing the man's hours of work was not necessary. And it was neither necessary that the woman would increase her hours of work. Instead they solved the problem by making use of the flexible working hours or by rearranging their schedules.

This again, corresponds to a muddling-through process (Lindblom 1959). Couples are confronted with a situation of conflict or confusion because their division of work does not run smoothly and at least one of the partner's wishes to change something. Explicit decision-making is required because they can no longer depend on a common understanding (Sillars and Kalbflesch 1989). Yet, couples keep their negotiations at a minimum. They feel uncertain about altering their division of labour and dread both the effort of the negotiation and the adaption. By changing things incrementally, they can reduce negotiation and conflict (Park 1982).

The muddling-through process can therewith, at least partly, explain why the couples in the sample do not challenge prevalent gender norms and institution more determinately. The assumption has been that, due to their high level of education, both partners have more gender-egalitarian values and are reluctant to leave the labour market as they have invested a lot in their education. From the interview data it cannot be said how gender traditional or gender egalitarian

the values of the couples are. Although it is central to the interviewed couples to alternate and support each other as much as they can, many also state that a complete equilibrium was never the goal. They imagine it being more complicated if all tasks need to be coordinated and no one would bear the main responsibility. More important to them is that both mother and father can do whatever they feel like doing.

“W: Couples who divide work fifty-fifty, I think that’s very admirable if it works. But still, I think it is challenging. You have to organize it really well and agree upon everything. Especially when times overlap... [...] As long as everything runs smoothly, it’s fine. But as soon as the kids get sick or something like that, it’s a big challenge.” (Interview 8)

Such statements show that their will to counteract the gendered kick-off is not strong enough to face conflict and engage in explicit decision-making that is needed to challenge prevalent norms and institutions (Grunow and Evertsson 2016; Wiesmann et al. 2008). In one case (Interview 9), for example, the father could have well imagined working less than the mother originally. But now that they have established a one-and-a-half-earner model and he is employed 80%, he is afraid that his work will become less interesting if he reduced his employment rate and is therefore reluctant to do so as long as it is not really required. Wiesmann (2010) leads back the prevalence of implicit decision-making in couples’ to their ambivalent feeling about their roles and responsibilities as parents. Such feelings did not clearly appear in the interviews. Rather the parents seem to plod through decisions in an incremental way, thereby focusing on enhancing their own utility and at the same time avoiding conflict (Kirchler 1993, 406–7, 427–28; Park 1982, 151–52).

5.6 The luxury of living in a one-and-a half-earner model?

So far, I have analysed the decision-making process of Swiss couples that leads to a one-and-a-half-earner model. Next to analysing how couples talk about their division of labour, I have identified what factors were considered and how they were prioritized differently. In the last two chapters the muddling-through process helped to understand why couples mainly focus on short-term and incremental decision-making. The question raised now is how the parents feel about their present division of labour? Were they able to achieve the ideals they had in mind before the birth of their first child? Or did they feel restricted by norms and institutions? Do they feel a tension between their values and the lived practice? This is especially of interest because we can assume that if a couples’ ideology differs from the predominant gender norms

it is confronted with pressures that make it hard to achieve their preferred family and work model. The couple might therewith be restricted in its individual agency which can trigger a gap between their attitudes and practices (Grunow and Veltkamp 2016, 12–14).

All of the interviewed couples said that they were content with their present family and work model and that they would not feel an urgent need to change anything. In a few cases, it was up for discussion if the father would make better use of his flexible working hours and, for example, work one day from home. It was also discussed if the father would reduce his hours of work in the future to take some workload off the mother. But this was mostly kept as a backup plan if the childcare tasks would become a too large burden for the mother and if the couple could not find another solution to support her. Other than that, couples said that when the children would be older, the mother might increase her hours of work as less time would be spent on childcare or she would enjoy the additional time that she would have to herself. None of the fathers who are working 80% planned on going back to a full-time working schedule. Several mothers described that now their priority was the child or were the children. But them growing older would allow them to go back to activities that were more “self-fulfilling” be it more work or leisure.

“W: For me it is clear that if the children need less care, then I want to work more. What exactly, or if I’ll even have the possibility to increase my employment rate, I cannot say yet. Maybe I’ll have done another education until then and I’ll be working as something else. I cannot rule that out, but what that could be, I cannot say. But for sure I would like to fill the time with something that I do for my own sake.” (Interview 4)

When talking about their division today, many mothers described their situation as a luxury. By this they meant that they appreciated not being employed at a higher rate and having the possibility to spend so much time with their kids. Many mothers praised their working time schemes that allowed them to combine work and family. Furthermore, some said that they enjoyed that it was financially possible to live in a one-and-a-half-earner model and that their partner was willing to be the main income earner of the family and therewith make it possible for them to have less hours of employment.

“W: I was never too eager to work more; I have to say. For me it was quite convenient that [father] worked 80% and I get through with my 40%. That’s why I never put any pressure on him to reduce his working hours.” (Interview 2)

“W: I enjoy the luxury of not working full-time. Maybe, at one point, I’ll work 80% again. If the parents become of secondary importance for the kids. But then I would also really enjoy having a day just to myself. I’d rather have more time for myself and the family and less money than working full-time again.” (Interview 1)

All the fathers also said that they were happy with the solution that they had found. This was often related to the argument that them reducing their employment rate under 80% would have had negative consequences financially and career-related, therefore they were glad that they could organise it differently. A few went further and said that they were glad that the mother did not demand that they would reduce their hours of work. Next to that, many praised their flexible working hours that allowed them to keep their employment rate and still take over childcare and housework tasks. Also, in the cases where they could imagine working less than 80%, the fathers were content with the model they had today. Last but not least, all couples who partly outsourced their childcare to the grandparents, stressed how great this was for them. They appreciated this support so much because it allowed them to overcome difficulties and would give them some flexibility and free time.

When asked if they had faced constraints in the transition to parenthood, the list stayed relatively short. All of them said that they were able to divide paid and unpaid work according to their ideals or they referred to the fact that they did not have clear ideals to start with. In two cases the women felt constraints when going back to work after the maternity leave. In the first case the mother wanted to prolong her maternity leave by taking an unpaid leave. Yet, her employer did not enable her to do that whereon she quit her job. In the second case the mother’s employment rate was lowered by her employer when she came back to work. The reason given for this was that it was too much effort for the employer if she still had to express breast milk during her working hours. This led to her looking for another job and eventually changing job as she could not afford working so few hours. Two fathers changed their job as well because they were not able to reduce their working hours, plus other conditions did no longer please them. On a normative level some couples accounted of comments that they received from friends or acquaintances about their division of work. They went both ways, so either criticizing that the mother or father would not spend enough time with their children or disapproving of how traditionally the couple had divided their paid and unpaid work. Further, the couples criticized Swiss family policies during the interviews. Especially the lack of paternal leave and the short duration of the maternal leave were criticised as being outdated. Parents also think that it

should be more accepted to work part-time in men-dominated sectors. Due to the fact that the scarcity and high costs of Swiss childcare facilities are such a prominent argument in public and scientific debates around the compatibility of family and work, it is surprising how rarely this was mentioned as a constraint in the interviews. A few parents did mention that it would be very expensive to outsource more childcare or that the opening hours of the childcare facility would not meet their needs, but these were never the main reasons that kept them from dividing paid and unpaid work differently.

It is interesting to see that the interviewed couples on the one hand said that they were very satisfied with their division of labour and were not restricted in their choice of a family and work model. But on the other hand, they accounted clear hurdles that made it difficult for women to participate on the labour market and for the father to take over an active role at home. But when are such hurdles experienced as tension and when do parents feel free to put their wishes into practice?

To answer this question, it is helpful to look at the situations when such a tension between their role as father or mother and their role as an employee was revealed through their narrative. Girardin et al. (2016, 155–56) refer this tension in their study mainly to mothers and describe how the goal of pursuing a career sometimes stands in conflict with being a good mother and therewith puts the mother in a difficult situation where she needs to contrast both of her aims. Also, in the interviews, situations of a dual goals conflict were mainly expressed by women. It seems like the interviewed women have all prioritized the role as a mother in order to reduce the tension. For instance, they have all reduced the number of working hours after the maternity leave ended. Such a decision is often justified by wanting to have a less stressful daily life or by wanting to be more present in their children's life.

“W: I also organize everything, like who looks after the kid when and where, and I prepare all the things. There's a lot to do. And it's exhausting. When I work then I have to get everything ready beforehand. [...] That's why I don't want to work more days than I do at the moment. Because you're not done working in the evenings, it takes another two hours until he [child] is in bed. Then I'm usually dead and glad that I have a day off the following day.” (Interview 10)

Yet, a decision to reduce the hours of work does not necessarily come along with the feeling of tension or regret. Most of the interviewed women did not explicitly voice that they feel such a tension between their role as a mother and their role as an employee. Some said that they did

not want to work at a higher employment rate as they do not have career ambitions, or their profession would not provide much promotion prospects anyway, and financially it was not necessary to work more.

“W: Both of us are not really career types. That’s why it was not bad for me to stay at home with the kids. I’ve never found it boring or anything. [...] Me, I didn’t have to make any sacrifices to stay at home with my children.” (Interview 8)

In such cases it seems like the women did not face any constraints as their practice is according to their values. For other interviewed mothers, the tension between the role as a mother and the role as an employee was reduced because their part-time employment did not exclude having a career. For some this was just because taking over responsibilities did not require working full-time. In two other cases, the mothers had the possibility of sharing their job with someone else and with that they could hold higher positions and more responsibilities than without the job sharing. Thus, they did not feel as if they had to make a compromise, which lowered the tension between the role as a mother and the role as an employee. Especially in such cases, working part-time was described as a luxury.

“W: I would not want to take over a position as manager when working less than 80%. I think I couldn’t live up to it when working part-time. The solution now, the co-managing the business, seems perfect for my situation. I can take over a management function but still only work 50%. [...] In our case it was never really an option that we both work 80%. We did not want that because at least one of us should be there for the child.” (Interview 5)

However, there are still two cases left where working part-time did entail career losses for the woman that she regretted. Both women were well aware of these negative consequences in advance but still prioritized their role as a mother over pursuing a professional career. Interesting to see here is that the career loss was described as “worth it”.

“W: I guess before having children I imagined that my career would be in a different place than it is by now. But you can’t really imagine what it will be like with children, I think. You can have all kinds of intentions. Then it turns out differently anyway and you need to adjust. [...] So [in my job] having a family is a big handicap. [...] Without kids I would certainly have done a lot more and I would be in a different place now. That’s the price I paid personally. But I liked paying that price. Nonetheless, it stays a fact that you need to cut back.” (Interview 4)

This coincides with the results of Girardin et al. (2016, 156–58) that some mothers assume that having both a career and a family is not possible and therewith stepping back from their professional life is seen as less a sacrifice. In consideration of what they believe is realizable, they seem to adjust their preferences in hindsight. Such an adaptive preference formation helps them to reduce frustration that occurs if their practice does not coincide with their values (Elster 1983, 25, 109–10; Grunow and Veltkamp 2016, 14)

Of course, men also have to balance their goal of being a good father and being a good employee. But only few times the interviewed men described a feeling of tension related to that. More often, they expressed that they were still able to live up to their role as dad in the evenings, weekends and by having flexible work hours. Although they talked about the children being very focused on the mother, this was mostly seen as a “natural” thing. Similarly to the mother’s case, this can either be interpreted as the father’s practice being in line with his values. Or such a statement illustrates a resignation that helps the father to handle the tension caused by wanting thing that he cannot attain (Grunow and Veltkamp 2016, 14).

Concludingly, in some cases the parents’ preferences do not seem to deviate much from the norm, which is why they do not feel restricted by the institutional and normative context. Other parents do face constraints but have ways to overcome them and therewith they feel a weaker tension of the dual goal conflict as they are able to combine both family and work better. Ways to overcome constraints depend heavily on the resources and possibilities couples have. Often it is grandparents or job arrangements that allow them to combine both family and work. Also, in many cases either the woman or the man changed their job in order to overcome the constraints they were facing. These solutions to lower the tension of the dual goal conflict heavily depend on the resources a couple has, it is therefore not far-fetched to call it a luxury situation. Last but not least, there are interviewees that take it for granted that a sacrifice is needed. They think that an issue is beyond their control or the cost of changing it are excessive. It seems more reasonable to accept how prevalent norms and institutions are and adjust the own preferences according to them.

This can at least partly explain why parents forgo the effort of countering gender traditional norms and institution. It stays questionable, however, if it is just because of their limited awareness of the influence of the underlying gender structure that couples do not feel restricted in their choice of a fitting family and work model? And lastly, how will their satisfaction with the

one-and-a-half-earner model change as soon as long-term consequences, that were greatly neglected, start playing a role?

6 Conclusion and Discussion

When studying how highly educated Swiss couples decide to live in a one-and-a-half-earner model it was first illustrated how paid and unpaid work is divided within this model. In line with the Swiss average, all the interviewed mothers reduced their working hours with the arrival of the first child and were from there on employed part-time and bore the primary responsibility for the housework and childcare. Few of the mothers raised their employment rate by 10-20% when their children grew older. About half of the fathers reduced their working hours within the first couple of years after the birth of the first child and now work at an employment rate of 80% or higher. Noticeably, all families cover parts of the childcare and housework tasks by flexible working hours and it is very common for the grandparents to look after the children regularly.

The analysis has shown that the interviewed couples started talking about their future division of labour before the arrival of the first child. Explicit negotiations, however, were rare. To a great part the soon-to-be-parents assumed that they and their partner would share the same ideals and therefore they did not feel the need to discuss the planned division of paid and unpaid work explicitly. At the same time, it seemed hard if not impossible to them to plan a division of work in advance. They took things as they came, did not plan too much in advance and agreed on many things implicitly. By doing so, assumptions stayed unquestioned which left much room for the influence of prevalent norms and institutions.

These prevalent norms and institutions proved to be highly gendered. How the couples argued for their division of labour was to a big extent based on gendered differences in preferences, abilities, professions and most clearly concerning gendered idea of motherhood and fatherhood. By using the theory of the gendered master status of Krüger and Levy (2000, 2001), it was shown how gender, as a dominant category overshadowing other personal characteristic such as professional standing, shapes women's and men's life paths differently. Many reasons for dividing tasks gender-traditionally, for example, lead back to the different female and male career choices. These differences are reinforced in the transition to parenthood. Most prominently, the short maternal leave and the lack of a paternal leave in Switzerland strengthen the

segregation of male and female gender roles. The limited awareness of the influence of underlying gender structures, however, prevents parents from countering such norms and institutions. As previous research shows, an explicit strategy would be needed to challenge them (Sullivan 2004; Wiesmann et al. 2008).

It is insofar surprising that the interviewed couples do not aim more explicitly at countering a gender traditional division of work as previous research shows that a high level of education tends to be associated with more gender egalitarian ideals and a more gender equal division of paid and unpaid work (Davis and Greenstein 2009). Yet, in the next part of the analysis the muddling-through process (Kirchler 1993; Lindblom 1959; Park 1982) helped explaining why the interviewed couples took most decisions implicitly. When dividing paid and unpaid work, the couples focus on short-term and incremental decision-making. This has to do with the fact that they are dealing with a great number of decisions, yet only have a limited cognitive capacity to grasp the issues at hand. Prioritizing decisions that are relatively easy to make and changing things only step by step allows them to avoid conflict and to save cognitive effort. More abstract and long-term decisions with uncertain outcomes are therefore commonly put off. Such a process explains why risks related to the one-and-a-half-earner model are only marginally included in the decision-making of the interviewed couples. This confirms what Bonoli et al. (2016) presumed, that the woman's risks in terms of economic vulnerability and social recognition often seem to be too abstract and not enough pressing to deal with.

The final section of the analysis answered the question why the interviewed couples can, on the one hand, say that they were not restrained in the choice of their family and work model but, on the other hand, account clear hurdles that made it difficult for the mother to participate on the labour market and for the father to take over an active role at home. The first answer is that some couples' ideology does not deviate much from the norm. Even if structural factors might have incentivised the mother to reduce her hours of work, this did not necessarily come along with the feeling of tension or regret. Consequently, these couples were able to realize a family and work model according to their preferences and they did not feel restricted by the structural context. Secondly, some parents who did strive for a less traditional division of labour had the possibility to overcome the constraints that they were facing. Special job arrangements, unpaid paternity leave or outsourcing childcare privately allowed them to divide work more gender-equally. The last group of interviewees showed a feeling of resignation. They felt like the costs of living in a more gender equal model were excessive, respectively they did not have the means

to overcome the constraints they were facing. Therefore, they accepted the fact of living in a one-and-a-half-earner model. It seems as if in such cases people downgraded their wishes in hindsight to reduce the tension caused by wanting things that they cannot attain (Elster 1983, 25, 109–10; M. Evertsson and Grunow 2016, 14).

All in all, the results of this study coincide with previous research showing that Swiss couples are influenced by structures of opportunities and constraints in their choice of a family and work model (Girardin et al. 2016; Le Goff and Levy 2016). Especially the fact that gender differences are reinforced with the arrival of the first child was confirmed by the interviewed couples (Bühlmann, Elcheroth, and Tettamanti 2009; Giudici and Gauthier 2009). However, as Levy (2016) mentioned, the influence of contextual factors on the division of paid and unpaid work is underestimated by the couples in this study as well. Although parents criticize Swiss family policies, they do not see them as the reason for their own gendered division of work. This corresponds to what L. Evertsson and Nyman (2009; Nyman and Evertsson 2005) have shown for couples' decision-making in Sweden. Instead of negotiations, rituals and routines tend to define the way things are done, and couples perceive their actions as a result of personal decisions without taking into account the gendered structure that underlies them. This further helps to explain why the interviewed couples do not feel very constrained. As it is not possible nor the aim of this study to determine how gender traditional or gender egalitarian the interviewed couples are, it cannot be assessed how much the values and the practices of the interviewees really differ. But it can be assumed that the lack of gender consciousness has lowered the couples' expectations of gender equality (Sullivan 2004) and therewith reduced their experienced tension between values and practices. Nonetheless, the feeling of tension was sometimes expressed explicitly or became visible through the narratives of the interviewees. Yet, not all interviewees had the same possibilities to overcome the constraints they were facing. This is insofar problematic as combining the goal of being a good parent and a good employee depends partly on the specific circumstances a couple lives in and the resources they have at hand. Additionally, it is problematic that the couples' evaluation of their situation focuses so much on their present situation, thereby underestimating the long-term consequences of the one-and-a-half-earner model. There is a chance that, 20 years from now, the interviewed couples will not be as satisfied with their division of labour as they are now. The consideration, that the woman as the typical secondary wage-earner and part-time employee is financially dependent on her partner and that she is, especially in case of a divorce and with a low-paid job, at risk of old age

poverty (Bonoli et al. 2016), is greatly excluded when couples assess their current family and work model. At the same time, it is not really considered what long-term effects the father's primary focus on the field of paid work has on his relationship to the child.

One should not shift the whole responsibility upon the individual couples and expect them to undertake the effort of having an explicit strategy to counter prevalent norms and institutions. It is understandable that they decide to divide tasks gender-traditionally if, for example, the woman has a job that allows her to work part-time with taking fewer losses than the man. Rather, the structural problem behind such patterns needs to be recognized. Swiss couples do face constraints when choosing a family and work model. Many of them are embedded in our gendered courses of life and therefore harder to identify. This institutional and normative context promotes a family and work model that bears disadvantages for the woman and brings additional strains for both the mother and the father who choose an alternative way of dividing paid and unpaid work. However, some of the interviewees found ways to overcome the constraints. Hence, providing such possibilities to all parents and reducing the constraints that they are facing would enable couples to attain their preferred family and work model. The interviews showed, for example, that payed paternal leave helps the father to take on an active role in childcare in the long run. At the same time, the interview data suggests that the short maternal leave in Switzerland leads mothers to reduce their activity on the labour market in the long run as they are not ready to go back to work so early after the birth of their child. Further, the interviewees made it clear how crucial flexible childcare supply was for them to successfully combine family and work. Many fell back on the grandparents as they were able to step in spontaneously or look after the children when the latter were ill. Flexibility seems to be crucial on the labour market as well. Here, parents consider that flexible working hours greatly facilitate the combination of work and family. By creating part-time jobs that allow moving up the career ladder, one could lower the constraints that parents are facing as well. As simple as such exemplary solutions may sound, it is crucial to further explore the complex effect of specific family and labour market policies in the Swiss context. Flexible working hours alone, or the possibility to bear a lot of responsibilities in a part-time employment, are, for example, not a satisfactory solution if they entail a double burden that needs to be carried by one individual alone.

Next to such institutional approaches, it is crucial to address the issue on a normative level as well. Gender consciousness and an awareness of the risks of a part-time employment need to

be raised both in institutions, on a political level and in the public in general. The interviews showed that individual awareness can lead to an explicit strategy that counters prevalent norms and institutions and leads to a more gender equal family and work model. Many of the couples in the sample have adjusted their division of work to make it more equal. This is a step in the right direction. More awareness is needed when it comes to the long-term consequences of the one-and-a-half-earner model. Couples have to include those factors in their decision-making process in order to prevent the woman's risk of old age poverty. To move towards more gender equality on a societal level, the individual costs of living in a gender equal family and work model need to be lowered. This can only be done by raising the acceptance of mothers as workers and of fathers as carers. Ultimately, the way we are socialised, and the way we socialise our children, needs to be changed in order to reduce the differentiation between the courses of life of women and men.

6.1 Limitations

To begin with, it is important to remember that this study is based only on 10 interviews. The results can therefore not be generalized and only apply to the studied context. All interviewed couples live in a heterosexual relationship, have a high level of education, live in the Canton of Berne and were chosen because of their specific division of labour. Thus, their perceptions might differ from what other Swiss couples with a different background experience.

The basic assumption of this study, that highly educated couples tend to have a more gender-egalitarian division of work, can be called into question. Usdansky (2011), for example, shows how social structure can work the other way around and incentivize well educated couples to live in a more traditional model than their gender egalitarian attitudes would give reason to expect. Some results of this study show into the same direction. For example, flexible working hours, that often come with managerial careers, were used to argue against the necessity of reducing the father's working hours. Or a high income only made it possible that the woman worked part-time. It is therefore important to take into account that the education level of the couples was only used as a criterion in the sampling process. With the data of this study nothing can be said about the influence of education on the gender ideology and on the family and work model couples choose. Comparative data of couples with different education levels would be necessary for that. Further, only interviewing highly educated couples might have biased the

results of this study. It is likely that these couples also have an above-average amount of resources at their disposal to overcome constraints that they are facing.

It is discussable if the couples' accounts adequately reflect the actual decision-making process. A long-term study gathering data at different moments during the transition to parenthood would bear more significance. Interviews in hindsight reflect rather how couples today feel about the past than how their actual feelings were during that time. Their statements are very prone to adaptive preference formation (Elster 1983, 25, 109–10), meaning that they adjust their preference retrospectively to reduce tension of goals that they could not attain. If the interviewed couples really did adjust their preferences retrospectively, this would mean that their choice was more restrained than expressed, which would, in turn, make the issues at stake even more significant. This limitation is further increased by the fact that the analysis is based on joint interviews. As mentioned in the methods chapter, an individual might feel less free to express his or her views in the presence of their partner than when interviewed separately. This is why it is preferable to combine both joint and separate interviews if the scope and the resources of the study allow to do so.

Concerning the deviating cases that were already mentioned as possible weaknesses in the methods section, I believe that they have not biased the result of this study. All of the arguments made are based on several cases of the sample whereby no single case carries too much weight. Rather the deviating socio-demographic background of some couples was enriching for the analysis as it provided additional information.

Finally, I believe that the field of housework was neglected to some degree in this study. Although summarized together with childcare under the term of unpaid work, it was only marginally addressed in the interviews. Couples had a hard time reasoning for a certain division of household tasks. It seems as if such decisions are taken even more implicitly than when dividing childcare and paid work. The field of housework seems generally less covered by research. However, I think it would be of special interest to explore it further, as biological arguments that are used to reason for a gendered division of childcare, such as breastfeeding, can no longer be applied when it comes to the gendered division of housework.

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8 Appendix

Appendix 1 - Interview Guide (translated from German)

- Personal introduction
- Introducing research
- Aim and procedure (recording, publication)
- Conditions (Voluntariness, withdrawal, confidentiality and anonymity)
 - Hand out an information sheet
 - Get consent (only orally)
- Interview very open, to hear their view and experiences
- Your choice how much you say (f.e. if too personal)
- Questions?

START: Record

	Question	Information	Clarification
BACKGROUND	To start with, can you please tell me a bit about both you and your family...	age job (position, income) education marital status children (age, school, care) place of domicile ...	Why (not)?
	How do you divide paid and unpaid work nowadays?	Hours of work Division of housework and childcare	
PAST	How did you divide your work before you had children?	Housework/childcare/employment rate	What do you mean with that?
	How did you decide on this division?	Decision-making process (disagreements?)	
	What was back then your idea of an ideal division of work when having children?	Transition/maternal/paternal leave	Can you take that a little further?
	How did the division of work change with the arrival of the first child?		

PRESENT	<p>How did your current division of work come about?</p> <p>How satisfied are you with this division?</p> <p>How do you still discuss your division of work today?</p>	<p>Decision-making process</p> <p>Values</p> <p>Context/constraints</p>	<p>Can you give me an example?</p> <p>I haven't quite understood that yet.</p>
FUTURE	<p>Finally, a look into the future...</p> <p>How would you like your division of labour to look like in in the future?</p> <p>How likely is such a division going to happen?</p>	<p>decision-making process</p> <p>Values</p> <p>Context/constraints</p>	
	<p>Okay, from my side that would be it. Is there anything else that you would like to address?</p>		

STOP: Record

- Thank you
- What's next: Transcription, Analysis, Publication
- Contact details for questions and concerns

Appendix 2 - Declaration of Consent (translated from German)

Research project: Master's thesis Selina Furgler

Institution: Institute of Sociology, Lund University, Sweden

I hereby agree to an interview. I agree that the interview will be recorded, transcribed, anonymized and evaluated. I have been informed about the procedure for the evaluation of the interviews, including: the interview transcripts will not reach the public, the transcripts will be anonymised, the recorded audio file will be erased with publishing the thesis, names and telephone numbers will be deleted when publishing the thesis.

Furthermore, I agree that individual details that are taken out of context and cannot be linked to my person may be used as material for scientific purposes within the framework of the research project.

I am aware that participation in this interview is voluntary and that, at any time, I have the opportunity to terminate the interview and withdraw my consent to a recording and transcription of the interview without any consequences.

Contact information researcher:

Selina Furgler

+41793772853 (WhatsApp only)

+46769375495 (by phone only)

selinanoemi.furgler@gmail.com

Contact information Lund University supervisor:

Kjell Nilsson

Senior lecturer

Department of Sociology

Lund University

PB 114

221 00 Lund

Sweden

+46462224268

Appendix 3 - Interview Request (translated from German)

Hello!

For my master thesis I am looking for young parents who are willing to talk to me about their family and work model. As far as I know, you meet my selection criteria (see below), which is why I am contacting you with this request:

Are you both as a couple willing to get together between the 16th and 21st March 2019 for an interview of about 1-2 hours? I would record our conversation and evaluate it anonymously for my master's thesis.

I am currently completing my master's degree in Welfare Policy and Management at Lund University in Sweden. For my final thesis I am dealing with the most widespread employment model in Switzerland, in which the man is the main income earner of the family and the woman is working part-time or not employed and bears the main responsibility for childcare and housework. I am particularly interested in the decision-making process that led to this model.

In my interviews I would like to talk to a group of parents that is as homogeneous as possible which is why I have defined the following selection criteria:

- Mother and father with a tertiary education level
- 1-2 children aged 6 months to 17 years (still living at home)
- Father is the main income earner of the family (at least 80%), mother is the second income earner (less than 70%) or not employed
- Family runs a household in the Canton of Berne

Do I correctly assume that your family meets these criteria? If yes, are you willing to participate in my study, and do you have time on the proposed dates?

I am happy to give you more information about my master's thesis, me or my studies. You can contact me through: selinanoemi.furgler@gmail.com; +4179 377 28 53 (Swiss number, only Whatsapp or Signal); +4676 937 54 95 (Swedish number, only by telephone).

I would be very glad if a meeting would take place. Thanks already in advance for your answer!

Best regards,
Selina Furgler

P.S.: If you know any other young parents who meet these criteria, I am happy for any hints. Thanks!

Appendix 4 - Overview Coding (translated from German)

Code	Sources	References
(Unquestioned) Ideas for division of work before birth	0	0
Working to keep it rolling	7	17
Working for diversion	6	11
Working to earn money	6	20
Working for pleasure	9	16
External childcare is exhausting	3	4
Childcare cost vs. salary	3	3
Obvious that both continue working	8	15
Obvious that he works more than her	4	6
Obvious that she works part-time	8	13
Not working too much jointly	3	4
Working part-time to reduce external childcare	5	12
Equality not the main goal	3	4
Full-time is not the goal	3	4
Descriptive Situation	0	0
Current division of work	8	12
Socio-demographic information	10	20
Responsibility household	2	4
Responsibility childcare	6	7
Explicit Decision Making	0	0
Discussing and deciding conciously	8	25
Supply of childcare facilities	2	2
External childcare because social reasons	3	4
Marriage as security	4	7
Shortterm vs longterm thoughts	4	6
Balancing the living standard	5	7
Pension fund	6	9
Saving as goal	4	7
Quitting job	5	5
Importance of leisure	3	6
Living up to father role	3	6
Factors for gendered division of work	0	0
Alternating and supporting	8	26
Increasing hours of work not possible	3	5
Gender norms and biological differences	4	6
Career ambitions	9	23
Reducing hours of work but keeping the amount of work	3	5
Reducing hours of work man vs. woman	8	19
Reducing hours of work not possible or difficult	7	12

Reducing hours of work make less interesting	6	17
Dividing according to preferences	5	11
Working part-time because job like childcare	2	2
Having little relation to the child (better with age)	5	7
Implicit decisions about the division of work (in advance)	0	0
Taking things as they come and trying out	10	35
Division come about	9	31
Incremental changes and specialisation	0	0
Working schedule and employer predetermine	6	19
Workload household and childcare	4	4
Child focused on mother	8	12
More housework because more time at home	7	9
Reducing hours of work not necessary or demanded	9	16
Dividing by time and presence	7	13
Division proved successful	1	2
Working part-time for relation to children	3	6
Working part-time for less stress	5	6
Working part-time for more time with children	4	4
Dissatisfaction leads to discussion or demand	5	19
Change brings insecurity and instability	5	15
Change is an additional effort	8	19
Change because different circumstances	8	20
Change for optimization	5	11
Satisfaction and plans for the future	0	0
Raising hours of work not necessary, enjoying part-time	7	15
Flexible employer and working hours	9	35
Children older more time for self-fulfilment	5	7
Children older more time for leisure and flexibility	5	7
Comparing and defending division of work	5	10
Support grandparents and environment	9	26