

Why do women get a lower pay-off to occupational prestige than men?

An analysis of the gender wage gap by occupational prestige and family obligations.*

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Charlotta Magnusson

Swedish Institute for Social Research, (SOFI)

charlotta.magnusson@sofi.su.se

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Abstract

Studies have shown that women receive lower wage returns to attained occupational prestige than do men. Studies also show that family responsibilities affect men and women differently which may be one major cause of women's wage penalty.

In this article I examine if the gender difference in wage return for attained occupational prestige can be explained by diverse family obligations for men and women and if gender differences in work characteristics, which are difficult to combine with family duties, account for some of the gender wage gap in returns for attained occupational prestige.

If women's family obligations are one major cause of women's drawback the negative interaction between women and occupational prestige with regard to wages would be larger for mothers and married/cohabiting women than for single women without children.

Results show a gender wage gap between married/cohabiting men and women with children which grows with occupational prestige. However, this interaction between gender and prestige is insignificant among single women and men and for couples without children. Further, when controlling for time consuming work the gender wage gap for couples with children according to occupational prestige narrows, especially in occupations with high prestige.

Keywords

Gender wage gap, occupational prestige, motherhood penalty, work-family balance, work characteristics

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Introduction

The gender difference in occupational prestige is rather small (for a review see Warren et al., 1998) and studies have shown that prestige does not account for much of the gender wage gap (Magnusson 2009; Suter and Miller 1973). However, the wage returns to occupational prestige is higher for men than women. Even though women and men achieve similar occupational prestige, the pay-off to prestige is higher for men (Magnusson, 2009; Roos 1981). Suter and Miller (1973) assert that an extensive part of the gender wage gap could be caused by women not getting as high income as men with equal occupational prestige. Thus, the gender difference in economic returns to prestige seems to cause gender wage inequality. The present paper examines how family situation affect the gender gap in wage returns to prestige. I study if the gender gap in pay-off to prestige differs across family status and if gender differences in achieving work characteristics that are difficult to combine with family responsibilities is one mechanism that could account for some of the wage gap.

Two main kinds of theories are commonly used to explain earnings differences between men and women; supply-side theories which focus on differences in individual mechanism and demand side theories which focus on structural constraints in the labour market such as discrimination (Glauber 2007). In addition, the family context has been suggested as an important factor to consider in explaining the gender wage gap (Hinze 2000; Polachek 2004). Having a family usually has a positive impact on men's careers but usually hampers women's careers (Correll et al 2007; Hinze 2000). While marriage seems to result in higher wages for men (Bardasi and Taylor 2008; Korenmen and Neumark 1992; Richardson 1997) women's wages seem to be little or negatively associated with living in a partnership (Korenmen and Neumark 1992; Regnér and Isacson, 2008). Several studies show a wage penalty for mothers (Budig and England 2001) but men seem to be unaffected or positively affected by having children (Glauber, 2008; Polachek 2004). Thus, family status seems to have different outcomes for men and women in the labor market and may account for a vital part of the gender wage gap.

Magnusson (2009) finds that the gender difference in pay-off to prestige is especially pronounced in the upper part of the prestige distribution. It is possible that the penalty for women's family responsibilities is larger in prestigious occupations since such occupations often have more characteristics that collide with family obligations. Prestigious occupations are, compared to occupations with lower prestige, more likely to include high demands on "loyalty" to the organization and constant availability, e.g., working non-agreement overtime,

taking part in organizational arrangements outside regular hours, travelling on business, and so on. These kinds of work characteristics may be of great importance for wage growth. Given that women still have the main responsibility for family obligations, time consuming work characteristics could be hard to manage for women with a family. In the end this may result in a reduced possibility for women to make a career and achieve higher wages in general and in prestigious occupations in particular. The present paper investigates, (a) if the gender gap in economic pay-off to prestige differs across family status, and (b) if women are less likely than men to have career-orientated jobs within occupational prestige categories which in the end lead to lower wages for women.

The paper is organized as follows. Below, theory and previous research is discussed. In the following part I introduce data and descriptive results. Thereafter the results from regression models are reported. Conclusions are discussed in the final section.

Women and men in the Swedish labour market

Sweden is commonly characterized as having a dual earner family policy model. In this model the state supports female labour force participation by providing public day care service and paid parental leave (Korpi, 2000). The female employment rate in Sweden is high: 77 percent of all women in the ages 16 to 64 years were employed in 2000. Yet, there are differences between men and women in the labour market. A large share of the women with children works part-time. In 2003 the female part-time share was 33 per cent of all women (age 20-64) while 9 per cent of all men work part-time. Among parents, with children aged 0-17, only 3 per cent of the fathers work part-time while a quarter of the mothers work part-time (Statistics Sweden). Mothers use about 80-90 percent of all parental leave, although the father's use has slowly risen (Sundström and Duvander 2002). In 2001, the fathers used 14 per cent of all parental leave days and mothers used the remaining 86 per cent. Thus, women's absence and interruption from work for child rearing is much higher than men's. When women become mothers their paid working hours decrease considerably while men's working hours are almost unaffected (Boye 2008; Kennerberg 2007). The reverse is seen at home. When men and women become parents, women increase their time spent on unpaid housework and perform about twice as much as men (Statistical Yearbook of Sweden 2004).

Some researchers have emphasized that the dual earner family policy model not only leads to gender equality in the sense that most women are economically active, but also to some extent has inegalitarian consequences where female employees are punished by inferior

career prospects relative to men (Halldén 2009; Mandel and Semyonov 2005). Countries with family friendly interventions are to a larger extent than other countries associated with a highly sex segregated labour market and a large under-representation of women in supervisory positions (Mandel and Semyonov 2005).

Theory and previous research

Theories of the relation between family situation and wages.

Supply side theories explain women's penalty for having a family with gender differences in individual productivity which derive from a gender division of paid and unpaid work (Glauber 2008). These theories assert that women, when they become mothers, "choose" to invest more of their effort in the unpaid work (Glauber 2007). When women become parents they tend to increase the amount of time they spend on unpaid work and decrease the amount of time they spend in paid work (Sanchez and Thomson 1997). This gender division of work in the end results in gender differences in productivity.

Neoclassical theory predicts that investment in human capital (such as labor force participation and acquired training both in school and on-the-job) increases productivity and determines wages (Becker 1967). In the *hypothesis of specialization* Becker asserts that there is a rational division of human capital investment between men and women to make the most of family life and income. Women allocate their effort to the non-market and men put their effort mainly in capital saleable on the labour market (Becker 1991). Becker (1991) claim that women with family responsibilities have lower "energy" available for the market than men. While men have time for leisure and non-market activities women spend lots of the non-market time on child care and households duties. Women's unpaid work steals energy from paid work which reduces women's productivity in paid work compared to men with a family. Child care and other family responsibilities may also take time from women while working, such as arranging and planning family life, worrying about their children, leave to take care for sick children etc. According to this theory, women's focus on family life reduces their productivity. Becker argues that this gender difference in productivity can explain a large part of the gender gap in wages (Becker, 1991; Budig and England, 2001). For men, the hypothesis of specialization predicts the wage for married men to be higher than single men's. Since the wife specializes and stand for the duties in the household, married men get more time to specialize and increase their productivity in the market compared to single men (Becker 1991).¹

Family responsibilities also reduce women's access to jobs that require working non-agreement overtime and travelling on business (usually high prestige jobs) since such job characteristics are almost impossible to combine with a main responsibility for family life (Becker 1991; Budig and England 2001). Further, given that family obligations reduce women's effort and since high prestige occupations usually are jobs with large demand for effort it is plausible to assume that the penalty for having a family should rise with women's year of education (cf. Anderson, et al. 2002).

A related explanation to women's lower wages is that predominantly female jobs are "mother friendly jobs". That is, these occupations have working arrangements, such as part-time employment or flexible hours, which make it easier to combine family life with employment but result in lower wages. According to this, women tend to choose working arrangements that are compatible with having the main responsibility for children ahead of working conditions that will maximize their earnings. However, the support for that women's job should be more mother friendly is rather weak (England 2005; Glass and Camarigg 1992). In line with the mother-friendly hypothesis is, what Wright, et al (1995) labels as the, *self-selection hypothesis*. The self-selection hypothesis implies that women in similar employment situation to men and with comparable individual characteristics to men choose, because of their family obligations, to abstain from supervisory positions. This choice to withdraw from supervision, made by women themselves, may also be true for other job characteristics that are difficult to combine with family commitment as well, such as working overtime and business journey. However, Wright et al. (1995) find that the self-selection has small significance in most of the countries in their study.

However, what's appears to be an individual choice (self-selection) could also be a form of discrimination from the demand side. The employers could see children as a signal of women as more committed to family obligations (or belonging in the "mommy track") (Wright et al. 1995). From this point of view, employers may discriminate against mothers in different labour market situations such as in hiring, promotion, access to on-the-job training and in wage-setting processes etc. (Glauber 2007). One explanation on demand side to that family life affect men and women's working life differently is the idea that cultural assumptions of men and women influence and arrange organizational rewards (Acker 1990; Glauber 2008). This view asserts that there exist theoretical assumptions of the "ideal worker" who is totally committed to work and free from family obligations. This "ideal worker" is in general equal to a male worker. As Acker (1992) argues: there are two types of workers, "those, mostly men, who, it is assumed, can adhere to organizational rules, arrangements and

assumptions, and those, mostly women, who, it is assumed, cannot, because of their obligations to family and reproduction” (Acker 1992:255). This kind of reasoning could lead employers to invest more in male employees than in female employees. Glass (1999) asserts that workplaces construct profiles over which kind of worker who will be seen as a promising and an able worker (e.g. free from care giving responsibilities, constantly available for work, geographically mobile and stably married). Workers who not fit in to the profile are disadvantaged. Since women still perform the major part of the unpaid work they do not fit in to the profile of the ideal worker and thus they may be disadvantaged in working life. Employers may be less likely to admit women into jobs that require constant availability, non agreement overtime work and business journeys - work characteristics that are of importance for the career and high wages.

In *statistical discrimination* women are paid less because their sex is associated with potential motherhood. This model is connected with economic reasoning on information costs and uncertainty. To save time and money in hiring or in wage setting processes employers treat female employees as a group and do their judgments based on women’s average productivity and not on their individual characteristics (Bielby and Baron 1986; Phelps 1972). In this view all women (below a certain age) are potential mothers and are therefore assumed to take parental leave and be less productive than men because of their motherhood. Mandel and Semyonov (2005) emphasize that in countries with family-friendly policies, where it is easier for parents to combine family with work life by working part-time, and take long parental leave like in Sweden, it is more likely that women are disadvantaged in the upper echelons of the labour market. The reason is that the division of labour in the household usually results in mothers rather than fathers making use of family-friendly benefits which tends to increase employers’ discrimination against mothers.

Previous findings on the relation between family situation and wages

Several studies show that the effects on working life of having a family differ between men and women (Korenmen and Neumark 1992; Lou, 1996; Richardson 1997). Regnér and Isacsson (2008), for example, compared wages among singles and couples at three points in time with longitudinal Swedish data and controlling for education and age. Women who were cohabitating at all three occasions had lower wages than women who were singles on all three occasions. Women who first were singles and then became cohabiting had lower wages at the occasion when they were cohabitating compared with single women at all three years. However, when these women were single they had higher wages compared to women who

were singles on all three occasions. For men the pattern was reversed. Men who were in a relationship at all years had higher wages than men who were singles on all occasions. Further, men's wages increased when they went from being single to a relationship. To sum up, women lose wages when entering a relationship while men gain.

Past research indicates a motherhood wage penalty (Budig and England 2001; Glauber 2007). Even after controlling for labour market experience a direct negative unexplained effect of children remains (Waldfogel 1997). Budig and England (2001) find, on American data, a wage penalty for motherhood of 7 percent. Lesser job experience and employment breaks can explain one-third of the penalty. Correll et al. (2007) find that employers tend to discriminate mothers in hiring processes. Further they showed in a laboratory experiment that evaluators tend to rate mothers less qualified and less committed to work than non-mothers. Kennerberg (2007) show that women which become mothers in 1999, compared with women without children, decreased their working time, did fewer job change, were to a lower extent promoted to high skilled job and had poorer wage trend. The same study showed that parenthood did not change men's work life considerably. Hersch (1991) finds that household responsibilities affect women's wages negatively, both by decreasing women's human capital investments and, as Hersch asserts, by a reduction in the amount of "energy" available for the market.

Prior research also shows gender differences in promotion and career mobility associated with family life. Granqvist and Persson (2005) find gender differences in career mobility to women's disadvantage. They show that women spend more time on family responsibilities compared to men which have a negative effect on their career chances. Bygren and Gähler (2007) show a strong association between family situation and women's representation in supervisory positions. They show that there is no gender difference in workplace authority between childless women and men. But when men become fathers they face better promotion chances while the promotion chances for mothers are unaffected.

Previous research on prestige, wage and family situation

According to the reported findings above men and women with similar family situation appear to face different conditions at the labour market. Women's time in family duties affects wages and career outcomes. It is possible that the consequences of having children are more challenging for women in high prestige occupations since these occupations are likely to be those with high demands on "loyalty" to the organization and constant availability. Given that women still have the main responsibilities for the family it may be more difficult for

women to be constantly available for the job organization, working unprepared overtime, travelling on business often, or leaving the home for work on short notice and so on (cf. Becker, 1991). Further, the punishment for taking time out from work in the form of parental leave or staying home with sick children might be larger in high prestige occupations since these occupations require a high degree of work commitment. For instance, Waldfogel (1997) finds that the wage penalty for motherhood tends to rise with education level. Anderson et al. (2002) assert that it is possible that absence from the labour market and a depreciation of human capital followed by the interruption result in higher punishment for highly skilled women compared with low-skilled women. Their results show that low-skilled women do not suffer a wage penalty for becoming mothers compared with non-mothers in the same educational level. While the wage penalty for having more than one child is about 15 per cent for college graduated women. However, another study by Anderson et al (2003) show that the motherhood penalty is largest for high school graduates. Studies have also shown that men are more likely to allocate higher positions compared to women given similar occupational prestige (Halaby 1979; Wolf and Fligstein 1979). Malkiel and Malkiel (1973) analyzed one single organization with highly educated professional employees and showed that women, given the same individual characteristics as men, assigned lower job levels compared with men. Malkiel and Malkiel interpreted these results as a support for a form of discrimination. The weakness of this study is the small sample, on the other side; they compare a relatively homogenous group of highly educated and career orientated men and women. Given the same organization and similar individual characteristics they find a gender differences in the allocation of job levels which gives women lower wages. Roos (1981) finds that women's return for similar occupational prestige is substantially lower than men's. She also shows that the gender wage gap is higher in well-paid occupations, net of prestige. Thus, for women who reach high paid occupations the economic returns relative to men's are much lower. One reason is that women to a lesser extent than men exercise authority in these occupations. So given similar prestige in high paying occupations women do not hold positions that generate the highest economic returns. Also, Magnusson (2009) shows a gender difference in wage return for attained prestige which is greater in the upper part of the prestige distribution. Albrecht et al (2003) find that the gender wage gap is pronounced at the top of the wage distribution but modest at the bottom of the wage distribution and interpreted these results as a support for a significant glass ceiling in Sweden. Likewise, Evertsson et al. 2009 show that the gender wage gap in Sweden is greatest among highly-educated.

Taken together, it might be more problematic for women with family obligations in high prestige occupations to achieve highly paid positions and promotions compared with men in the same family situation and with women without children.

Predictions

According to theory and previous findings the following predictions are made:

- 1) The gender wage gap given the same attained occupational prestige is expected to be larger between couples than between singles.
- 2) The gender wage gap given the same attained occupational prestige is expected to be larger between couples with children than between childless couples.
- 3) A control for work characteristics which are difficult to combine with family responsibilities is expected to decrease the gender difference in returns for attained occupational prestige among couples with children.

Data, variables and analytical strategy

Data

The present study uses individual-level data from the Swedish Level-of-Living Survey (Levnadsnivåundersökningen, LNU). The Swedish Level-of-Living Surveys have been conducted regularly since 1968. In the present study the waves from 1991 and 2000 are used. Some of the analyses require separate models for family status and therefore a large amount of respondents are needed. To increase the number of respondents, the waves from 1991 and 2000 are pooled. The surveys are based on a representative 0.1 % sample of the Swedish population aged 18-75 years, about 6,700 individuals at each occasion. In LNU-2000, 5,142 respondents participated, with a response rate of 76.6 percent; the rate in 1991 was 79 percent. In the present study, the pooled sample of LNU consists of 5487 employees aged 19 to 65. The final section, where gender differences in work characteristics are analyzed, is based on data from 2000 only, since the 1991 survey lack information of these work characteristics variables. (The questions which the variables are based on are new in the 2000 wave.) In these analyses the sample is restricted to couples with children which result in 1714 respondents.

Analytical strategy

In the first section I analyse if the gender gap in pay off to prestige differs between singles, couples and couples with children.² Since it is possible that having children could have a long term effect on wages, couples are counted as having children even if their children are adults today. Interruptions and years of lower commitment to work when children are small could have a lasting negative effect on careers even for employees with grown up children. In the second section I analyze only couples with children. In these analysis a control for time consuming work characteristics are included to examine if these variables could account for some of the gender difference in pay off to prestige.

Earnings models comparing men and women usually control for a battery of individual and occupational characteristics such as education, work conditions and educational requirements. However, prestige is a measure that captures multiple dimensions of the occupational structure and occupational and individual characteristics. Prestige is highly correlated with other stratification measures, such as Duncan's SEI index, which is based on the sum of the average education and earnings in the occupations (Alestalo and Uusitalo, 1980; Ganzeboom, De Graaf and Treiman, 1992). Roos (1981) finds that prestige captures several important job characteristics that affect earnings and could largely be seen as a proxy for these variables. Thus, when including prestige in the model other dimensions that affect wages are measured as well. Since I am interested in analyzing the wage gap in pay-off to *prestige* and not the overall gender wage gap, I control exclusively for variables that affect the relation between wages and the interaction between gender and prestige.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the *logarithm of hourly wage*. In a logarithmic model, a change by one unit in the independent variable produces a percentage change in the dependent variable (Allison, 1999). For calculating per cent change the following estimation is used: $100(\exp(b)-1)$. When information on hourly wages is missing, other kinds of pay (such as daily, weekly or monthly) have been recalculated into hourly wages. The wage variable also includes bonuses, piece-rate payments; other earnings benefits and compensation for overtime (see le Grand, 1991 for a further description). In the section where LNU-1991 and LNU-2000 have been pooled the hourly wage for respondents in 1991 have been standardized according to the consumer price index.

Independent variables

Prestige is a continuous variable based on Treiman's Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS). Treiman's scale is based on national populations' subjective valuations of occupations from 60 countries which are integrated into an international scale (Treiman, 1977). Prestige when based on evaluations, captures a structural order of occupations by their general desirability (Goldthorpe and Hope 1974). Thus, occupations with high prestige often contain power and control over valued resources which individuals rank high in society (Treiman, 1977). Prestige also reflects occupations' "value to society" as perceived by individuals (Hope 1982). Studies of prestige have shown that these ratings are stable over time and place and that prestige is highly correlated with both education and earnings (Wegener, 1992). The variable prestige is continuous and ranges from 13 to 78.

The variable *Gender* is coded 1 if the respondent is a woman, zero if a man. The variable *women*prestige* is an interaction term between women and prestige and measures if there is any gender difference in wage return for attained occupational prestige. In some of the analysis for couples with children a control for the age of the children is included to see if children's age has an impact on the gender wage gap. It is plausible to suppose that gender differences in work characteristics which are difficult to reconcile with family responsibilities is larger when the children are young and the need of care is large. Four categories of child age are distinguished: children living at home 0-12 years old, children living at home 13-20 years old, children 0-20 years who are not living with the respondent and children > 20 years which includes both children who live at home and children who have moved out.

The variables Business journey, Working overtime, Unpaid overtime work, and Management are all work characteristics that are difficult to combine with family obligations. Collectively these variables are called *time consuming work*. Distinguishing characteristics for the time consuming work variables are that these are difficult to combine with a main responsibility for family life and also that these characteristics in general are highly economically compensated. The variable *Business journey* is a continuous variable measuring number of sleeping accommodations yearly in connection to work. *Working overtime* indicates how often the employee works overtime (0=never/very seldom 1=about once a month 2=about once or more a week). *Unpaid overtime work* indicates if the employee gets monetary compensation for working overtime. If the employee is not economically compensated for overtime the hourly wages normally are higher because the compensation is already included in the normal salary. Because of this, the employee is expected to work overtime without extra economic compensation. That is, unpaid overtime is normally

positively associated with wages. *Number of Subordinates* is a categorical variable divided into four categories: 0, 1-5, 6-10, and 11 or more subordinates (cf. Bygren and Gähler 2007).

The variables *age* and *sector* are included as controls in some of the analyses. The control for age is important since employees' age is associated with career development. High positions usually require experience and seniority which are connected with age. The age of employees also influences the likelihood of being married/cohabitating and the likelihood of being a parent. Sector is a dummy where public sector is coded 1. The sector control is included because of the unequal allocation of men and women to different sectors, where women are over-represented in the public sector. A control for sector is needed to secure that the gender wage gap according to prestige is not caused by the unequal distribution of men and women across sectors.

Results

[Table 1 about here]

Descriptive statistics and models

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics from both the pooled (1991 and 2000) sample and the sample containing couples with children from LNU2000 only. In both samples there is a significant gender difference in average hourly wages to women's disadvantage. The gender difference in prestige is small, about one point in the pooled sample. The gender difference in prestige is somewhat larger for the sample of couples with children only. A large share of women are employed in the public sector, while men are largely employed in the private sector. In the pooled sample more women than men are living in a relationship but the difference is small. Likewise, the share of women who have children and are living in a relationship are also larger compared with men. The share of childless couples is about 14 per cent. About half of all couples with children in LNU 2000 have children in the age 0 to 12 years. Around 35 percent have children that are older than 12 years.

[Table 2 about here]

The first analysis uses pooled data from 1991 and 2000 to investigate the gender wage gap according to prestige, and its relation to family situation. The analyses in Table 2 distinguish between singles and couples. Models 1 and 2 shows a net gender wage gap of about 20 per

cent (for per cent change following estimation is used $(100(\exp(b)-1))$) for couples and a gap of about 10 per cent for singles. When controlling for prestige in model 3 and 4, the gender wage gap is practically unaffected, thus differences in occupational prestige do not seem to account for much of the gender wage gap. In model 5 and 6 an interaction between gender and prestige is included. The interaction variable is significant and negative for couples (but positive) and insignificant for singles. These results indicate that married/cohabitating women have lower wage return for the same attained prestige than married/cohabitating men. The difference does not exist among single men and women. The negative interaction between gender and prestige is still significant when controlling for age and sector (Model 7) and has increased to 0.3 per cent. For singles the interaction still is insignificant when a control for age and sector is added (model 8). Taken together, there is evidence of a gender wage gap which grows with occupational prestige for couples. The following analyses investigate if this gender wage gap differ between childless couples and couples with children.

[Table 3 about here]

Table 3 contains data on couples only and shows the relationship between gender, prestige and wages. Separate models are estimated for couples with and without children. The net gender wage gap for couples with children (model 1) is much higher than the gender wage gap for childless men and women (model 2), 21 per cent for couples with children compared with 13 for childless. A control for prestige does not affect the gender wage gap notably (model 3 and 4). The interaction term between prestige and gender for couples with children is negative and significant in model 5 and also when sector and age is controlled for (model 7). This is not found for childless couples. The interaction between prestige and gender is insignificant for childless couples both in model 6 and 8. To sum up, for couples with children the gender wage gap grows with occupational prestige. This is not found among childless couples. The next section investigates if this gender wage gap could be caused by gender differences in the distribution of time-consuming work characteristics.

[Table 4 about here]

Table 4 reports descriptive statistics regarding work characteristics that are difficult to combine with a main responsibility for family life for couples with children. There are significant gender differences in time consuming work for men and women.

Married/cohabitating fathers are on average away from home 14 nights per year on business journeys. The number of nights away among married/cohabitating mothers is only 2 on average. Men also work more overtime compared with women. Women have jobs with more paid overtime compared with men. As indicated by the results in Table 4 there is a significant gender difference in the number of subordinates on all levels to women's disadvantage. 34 per cent of men in couples have subordinates while only 20 per cent of women have subordinates. Overall there are significant gender differences in the distribution of time consuming work characteristics.

[Table 5 about here]

Table 5 reports the relationship between prestige, gender and wages in models for couples with children. The coefficient for the interaction term between prestige and gender is significant and negative for couples with children in model 1. Thus, the results show a gender difference in the wage return for an increment in occupational prestige. For each increase in prestige women get 0.2 percentage point's lower increase in wage than men with children. In model 2 the variables of time consuming work are included. The purpose is to examine how much of the gender wage gap in returns for prestige that depend on gender differences in the distribution of time consuming work. When adding time consuming work characteristics to the model the coefficient for the interaction term declines (a decrease from -.002 to -.001), and is no longer significant. The time consuming work variables specify the gender gap in pay off to prestige. In model 3, where controls for age and sector are added, the interaction still is insignificant and unaffected. Controls for the ages of the children (model 4) do not affect the magnitude of the interaction. Thus the age of the children seems not to affect women's lower wages according to same prestige. None of the dummies for the age of children are significant. However, when also controlling for age, sector and time consuming work (model 5) the dummy for having children in the age between 13 to 20 years living at home become significant and negative. In sum, the results show that married or cohabiting women with children receive lower wage rewards for prestige than married or cohabiting men with children. This gender differences in wage reward could, largely, be attributed to gender differences in time consuming work.³

[Figure 1 about here]

Figure 1 reports men's wage premium for attained prestige compared with women for couples with children. As can be seen in Figure 1 above, in Model 1 there seem to be a male wage premium since men's estimated wage, compared with women's with equal occupational prestige are much higher. The result presented uses men's estimated log of wage minus women's as based on the estimates from model 1 of Table 5. In the Figure the gender gap in log of wage is reported in per cent. Further, the gender wage gap grows with occupational prestige. In the most prestigious occupations men earn about 32 per cent more than women and 13 per cent more in occupations with lowest prestige. The line for Model 2 of Table 5 shows the gender wage gap when a control for time consuming works is included in the model. The gender difference is much smaller when time consuming work is taken into account (Model 2). So, when controlling for time consuming work the gender gap narrows, especially in occupations with high prestige. In the most prestigious occupations men earn now about 18 per cent more than women - a reduction of roughly 44 per cent compared with model. In the least prestigious occupations the gender wage gap has not changed considerably. It is still about 13 per cent. The interaction effect between gender and prestige is highly significant in Model 1 but insignificant in Model 2. In sum, these results indicate that gender differences in work characteristics that are difficult to combine with family obligations account for a substantial share of the gender gap in the pay-off to prestige for couples with children.

Summary and conclusion

The purpose of the present paper was to evaluate how the family situation of workers affects the gender gap in economic pay-off to attained occupational prestige. Several conclusions could be drawn from this research. First, the results clearly show that the gender wage gap for the same occupational prestige is larger among couples than among singles. This is in line with prediction 1: the gender wage gap given the same attained occupational prestige is expected to be larger between couples than between singles. Second, the gender wage gap is also larger between married/cohabitating men and women with children than between childless couples which support prediction 2: the gender wage gap given the same attained occupational prestige is expected to be larger between couples with children than between childless couples. In fact, the gender wage gap in pay-off to prestige is insignificant between single men and women and among childless couples. That is, single women and childless married/cohabitating women get the same wage compensation for similar occupational

prestige as single men and childless men in couples do. The gender wage gap in pay-off to prestige is only significant among couples with children.

Third, when controlling for time consuming work the interaction effect decreased or became insignificant in models with couples with children, which supports prediction 3. Married/cohabitating mothers have, compared with fathers in relationships, to a lower extent jobs that contain work characteristics that are complicated to reconcile with family duties.

Why women are “disadvantaged” when it comes to these work characteristics has no obvious explanation. It could be because women’s work to a lesser extent contains time consuming characteristics. This would imply that occupations with a large share of women have limited promotion opportunities, or lesser demand of constant availability etc. However, Bygren and Gähler’s (2007) results that the gender differences in having supervisory positions are absent between singles but present between fathers and mothers do not support this reasoning. It also seems unlikely that women’s work lacks these work characteristics since the strength of the interaction term between gender and prestige differs between family statuses, unless women with children tend to be employed in other occupations than singles and childless women - so called ‘mother-friendly’ jobs. Earlier findings, however, indicate that “women’s jobs” are not easier to combine with family duties or associated with mother-friendly characteristics (England 2005; Budig and England 2001; Glass and Camarigg 1992). In the present paper, the hypothesis was tested using a control for share of females in the occupation which did not diminish the gender differences in return for prestige (results available on request).

The gender differences in having jobs that contain time consuming work characteristics could also be caused by men and women, when they become parents, tending to differ in preferences or tending to choose differently. It is possible that women choose to abstain from these kinds of work characteristics to get the family life to work out as the self-selection hypothesis suggests.

Lastly, men and women could be treated differently in the labour market. Thus, women could be discriminated in the allocation of time consuming work characteristics. The findings could indicate that women to some extent are restrained from job positions containing these characteristics. This would imply that given similar prestige, men with children get access to career oriented work characteristics while women with children do not, or at least not to the same extent as men, because of discrimination. Women with children could be seen as less suitable for positions with these work characteristics since they are supposed to have the main responsibility for the family.

The finding of a large gender wage gap in prestigious occupations is in line with earlier findings by Albrecht et al. (2003) where the gender gap accelerates at the top of the wage distribution. Albrecht et al. (2003) also show, when comparing Sweden with United States, that the gender wage gap in the upper tail is much higher in Sweden than in United States. Evertsson et al. (2009) also find divergence between United States and Sweden. While the gender wage gap in Sweden is largest among highly-educated, women in United States have the highest wage parity with men in the highest education group. Findings like these may support the reasoning that, besides gender equality (e.g. by increasing women's economic independence), family friendly policies could also result in disadvantages for women in higher positions (e.g. Albrecht et al. 2003; Mandel and Semyonov 2005). Hence, it is possible that the present findings are specific to Sweden (and other countries with family-friendly policies).

The present paper can not determine if the gender differences in the distribution of time consuming work are caused by gender differences in preferences, discrimination (or both), or have other kinds of explanations. Theoretically, such explanations are easily disentangled. In reality, however, individual preferences are attached to social values. Choices reflect prevalent gender praxis in society (Wright et al., 1995). Polachek (2004) talks about a *societal discrimination* where processes in society create different gender roles that disadvantage women economically. The conclusion drawn from the present findings is that there exists a gender gap in pay-off to prestige between married/cohabitating men and women with children. This wage gap is largely attributed to gender differences in the distribution of work characteristics that are difficult to combine with a main responsibility for family duties.

¹ Another explanation to men's marriage premium is selection. That is, that married men differ from single men in productivity and are selected into marriage. They may thus have unobserved characteristics that are desirable both in the labour market and the marriage market (Richardson 1997).

² Singles with children are omitted from the analysis. This choice is mainly based on the reason that I lack information on for how long these employee have been living alone with their children and how much time their children are spending with the other parent. Further, the number of single fathers with children at home in the age 0-20 years is small.

³ The analyses have also been made with control for part-time job which did not change the results.

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