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Untraditional couples in a neo-traditional setting

Which women perform as much paid work as their partner?

Abstract:

An equal division of paid and unpaid work is a central political ambition in Norway. Yet, couples' division of paid work has been less studied than their division of unpaid work. This paper shows that women seldom work more than their partner, but equal sharing is now increasing. Still, about half of all women spend less time than their partner on paid labour. When the woman works most, the partner often has health problems, is unemployed or retired. Women with an untraditional arrangement are often well-educated, have no young children, are self-employed, leaders, or have a partner in the public sector. Nurses often work less than their partners, as do women who have young children, health restrictions or a partner who works in the private sector, is self-employed or a leader.

Keywords: Dual-earner couples, female labour supply, gender equality.

JEL classification: J22, J24, J45

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Introduction

Norwegian work-family policies aim at promoting an equal division of paid and unpaid work between women and men. An important goal is to facilitate and enhance women's labour market participation as well as to increase men's involvement at home. However, while a large number of studies have examined the division of housework and childcare in Norwegian couples (e.g. Kitterød 2002, Kjeldstad and Lappegård 2009), less attention has been directed at the division of paid labour. Certainly, there are numerous studies of the factors affecting women's labour supply, but the partners' relative time inputs in the labour market have rarely been explored. Given the great demand for female labour in Norway, and the political stress on the so-called dual-earner model, this is remarkable. In this paper, we examine the division of paid labour among couples in Norway, with a particular focus on what characterises the rather small group of couples in which the female part works more hours than her male partner, as well as the somewhat larger group of couples in which both partners work approximately the same number of hours. We explore the possible effects of characteristics of each partner as well as of the couple.

There has been a significant rise in women's labour market participation in Norway in recent decades, and in the younger generations women now take more education than men. Extended parental leave rights combined with improved supply of affordable and high quality childcare have facilitated women's employment, and although women still spend more time on housework and childcare than men, there has been a certain increase in men's family work (Vaage 2002). Moreover, the cultural climate in Norway is now more supportive of women's full-time work than only a decade ago. Women's employment rate is at present only marginally lower than men's (84 and 90 percent respectively for people 25-54 years of age, according to Statistic Norway's Labour Force Survey), and increasing proportions of women work full time. Nevertheless, part-time work is still common for women, particularly when there are children in the household. There has been a decline in women's short part-time work (less than 20 hours per week) in recent decades, but even now nearly half of all partnered mothers work less than full hours, and by far the most of this is voluntary part-time (Kjeldstad and Nymoen 2009, Rønsen and Kitterød 2009). Moreover, women seldom work long hours. On the other hand, men rarely work part time and often have long hours.

Hence, despite the ideal of dual earning and equal sharing, there may still be gendered norms regarding breadwinning in Norway. Alongside the political ambition of dual earning, there is a strong focus on parental choice concerning the combination of paid labour and family work, exemplified by

the implementation of the cash for childcare reform in the late 1990s. Although the discourse on parental choice has been presented in gender neutral terms, the policies seem to have gendered effects in that women more often than men curtail their paid working hours when children arrive (Skrede 2004, Ellingsæter and Leira 2006). Men are still expected to be good breadwinners, whereas women face norms of comprehensive caring and often experience more freedom of choice in deciding their working hours. The Norwegian Work Environment Act lays down parents' right to reduced working hours, unless this is of serious inconvenience to the employer. In addition, the Norwegian labour market is strongly gender segregated. Men often work in professions in which long hours are common and reduced hours discouraged, whereas women are concentrated in professions with less long hours and more part time (Abrahamsen 2000).

A considerable proportion of couples have a so-called "neo-traditional" practice where priority is given to men's work efforts, and women take the role of co-providers. Previous descriptive analyses of couples' working hours indicate that equal sharing of paid work has become fairly common in Norway, but women rarely work longer hours than their partner. The exact proportions are of course sensitive to the definitions used. Given the demand for increased female labour participation, as well as the fact that part-time work may have negative effects on women's career, income and pension disbursement, we argue that it is important to identify the factors that promote a more equal input of paid work among both partners in a couple, and also factors that characterise the so-called "role-reversal couples" (Tyre and McGinn 2003) where the female part works most. Our analysis is based on the survey *LOGG – Survey on Life course, Generation and Gender 2007*. We look at couples where the female part is 25-54 years old, i.e. the age group where most people have finished their education and few have yet retired. The analysis comprises both women with and without children in the household, and both formally married and cohabiting women are included. Hopefully, the study will give a better understanding of the factors hindering and promoting women's labour supply, at least in a period of strong economic activity, which characterised Norway in 2007.

Relevant theories and perspectives

Whereas sociological research on couples' division of unpaid domestic work has developed several well-defined theories that have been tested and discussed in a vast number of studies (for instance Greenstein 2000, Bittman et al. 2003), theories on the partners' allocation of paid work are fewer and less well-defined, at least in sociological research. We do not aim at testing a number of clearly formulated theories in this paper, but rather try to clarify the relevance of some selected perspectives. One of the most central theories in explaining couple's division of labour is Gary Becker's theory on

comparative advantages (Becker 1991). The key assumption is that the individual members of the family pool their resources and take decisions in order to maximize the joint family utility. According to the theory, the decision on how to allocate market work and domestic work between the partners is taken by comparing the husband's marginal productivity in market and domestic work with the wife's marginal productivity in the same areas. One interpretation of this is that the woman's labour market participation is negatively affected by the husband's resources and positively affected by her own resources. The opposite is true for the husband's labour supply. Usually, the partners' marginal productivity in market work is measured by the relative wages of the spouses. In this paper, we use the partners' educational attainment as a proxy for their labour market resources as we lack good information on their wages.

Being in good health may also be looked upon as a type of labour market resource, as sickness and health limitations may reduce the partners' labour supply and good health facilitates full-time work. Hence, including the partners' health in the analysis may shed additional light on the comparative advantage perspective.

In a more sociological interpretation, the partners' labour market resources, particularly their educational attainment, are seen as a type of social capital that affects their spouse's labour supply positively (Bernardi 1999). It is assumed that the partners may provide each other with skills, network resources and knowledge, and thereby help each other to find good jobs and enhance their labour supply. According to this theoretical tradition, having a resourceful partner would facilitate people's employment and increase their labour supply. In a more specialized version of this theory, education is seen as an indicator of norms and values. Since highly educated men usually have more modern views on women's work and family role than the less educated, it is hypothesised that they are more supportive of the wife's employment. It may therefore be expected that women with well-educated husbands have higher employment than other women, regardless of their own educational level. When it comes to women's own education, we know that well-educated women have higher employment rates and longer working hours than the less educated. This is consistent with the assumption of economic theory that long education leads to higher wages, which result in higher employment. It is difficult to investigate all these associations in the same model. In this paper we look at the effect of the partners' relative educational level, as well as of the women's educational attainment. We expect that women seldom work more than their partner when they have less education than their partner, whereas the opposite is true when the woman has more education than her partner. We also expect that

highly educated women more often than others work as much as, or more than, their partner, irrespective of their relative educational level.

In spite of generous parental leave rights and a high coverage of affordable and high quality childcare, many Norwegian couples still find it too demanding with two full-time jobs, especially when they have small children. Therefore, one of the partners, most often the mother, may limit her labour market participation somewhat. A recent study reveals that men, too, tend to cut down on their paid hours to some extent when there are children in the household (Dommermuth and Kitterød 2009), but these reductions are far more modest than those undertaken by women. Moreover, it is first and foremost men with very young children who limit their paid hours. We explore the effects of the age of the youngest child in the household and expect that women with small children more seldom than others work as much as, or more than, their partner in the labour market.

We also assume that equal or untraditional sharing of paid work is more common in younger than in older age groups. Since young people more often than the older ones have grown up in a dual-earner family, they probably have more positive attitudes towards women's paid labour. We therefore expect to find more equal or unconventional arrangements among younger women. However, it could also be that the oldest women work long hours in order to compensate for modest time inputs in the labour market when they had small children, when there was a lack of kindergartens and after school programmes. We also look at the age difference between the partners, but are not quite sure what relationship to expect. Being older than her partner may give women more responsibility for the economic provision and imply longer working hours than the partner. Having an older partner may, on the one hand, imply that the partner has achieved his ambitions in the labour market and therefore is more willing to support his wife's career than younger men. On the other hand, if the older partner has started to scale back his labour market participation, the woman may feel obliged to reduce her own hours in order to spend time with her husband.

Because there are significant regional variations in norms and practices regarding women's labour force participation in Norway, we explore possible differences between provinces. In particular, it seems that norms and practices are more traditional in the Southern part of the country than elsewhere (Magnussen et al. 2005), a fact that is corroborated by an index of gender equality, prepared by Statistics Norway (<http://www.ssb.no/likekom/>). On the other hand, some of the municipalities in the Northern part of the country have very high scores on this index, indicating a high level of gender equality.

Like the other Scandinavian countries, Norway has a highly gender segregated labour market with high percentages of women in the public sector and in education, health and social work, and men concentrated in the private sector and in manufacturing and finance. Previous research has shown that typical female and typical male jobs are often characterised by different “work-cultures” and different practices regarding part-time, full-time and overtime work (Kjeldstad and Nymoen 2004, Abrahamsen 2002). Long hours are more widespread in typical male jobs than in typical female jobs, whereas part time is most common in typical female jobs. We also know that self-employment is more common among men than among women, and that self-employed people usually work longer hours than employees. Hence, the partners’ type of work will probably be important when couples consider how much time each partner should spend on paid labour. We therefore investigate possible effects of variables capturing sector and type of work, both by looking at field of education and by looking at the partners’ work characteristics and their occupations.

Data

The analysis is based on *LOGG – Survey on Life course, Generation and Gender 2007*- a large survey of people’s lives and activities at various stages of the life course, undertaken by Statistics Norway and the research institute NOVA (Brunborg et al. 2009). Information on employment, health, family, household and childcare and various other topics was collected from individual women and men 18-79 years of age. The information on employment is fairly detailed. Respondents were also asked to give information about their household members, and especially about their partner. In this paper we make use of the respondents’ information on their partner’s employment, working hours, job characteristics and occupation, as well as on their partner’s health. The survey is supplemented with information from various registers, for instance on the respondent’s and the partner’s level and field of education. LOGG has a larger sample than most other Norwegian surveys, which allows us to look at various sub-groups and still include a large number of explanatory variables in the analysis. The rich information about the respondent’s partner also makes LOGG particularly suitable for our purpose.

We utilise a sub-sample of female respondents 25-54 years of age, who live with a partner. Both formally married and cohabiting women are included. However, we exclude those with children below two years of age because the question on working hours asked in the survey is not particularly suitable for parents with very young children. The question captures usual weekly working hours for the respondent and her partner. As most parents take shorter or longer periods of parental leave during the child’s first two years, it is not entirely clear how to interpret their information on usual working hours. This leaves us with a sub-sample of 2,571 partnered women.

Our dependent variable is constructed from women's reports on their own and their partner's usual weekly working hours. Both main and secondary jobs (if any) are included.

Definition of traditional, equal and untraditional sharing of paid work

It is not obvious what should be regarded as traditional division, equal sharing and untraditional division of paid work in a couple. One may look at the absolute or relative differences between the partners' working hours, and the cutting points used to delineate equal sharing from traditional or untraditional arrangements are not clear a priori. In this paper, we look at the absolute differences between the partners' working hours and discuss three different definitions of equal sharing.

According to the first one, the partners are said to share equally if they work exactly the same number of hours per week. The second definition says that the partners share equally if they work the same number of hours plus/minus two, which means that they share unequally if one of them works at least three hours more than the other. The third definition, which is used in the multivariate analyses, says that the partners share equally if they work the same number of hours plus/minus four. Hence, a difference of at least five hours means unequal sharing.

In studies of couple's allocation of unpaid domestic work, partners are usually regarded as sharing equally even if none of them spend any time on a certain chore. We also allow for this definition of equal sharing by first looking at the allocation of paid work among all couples, irrespective of the partners' employment. Next, we look at couples where both partners have employment as their main activity and thereby exclude couples where one of the partners is mainly a student, a homemaker, unemployed or retired. Finally, we look at couples where both partners have employment as their main activity, and where the male part works at least 35 hours per week.

Independent variables

We include the following independent variables in the multivariate analyses:

Respondent's education: We use a combination of the level and field of the respondent's education. Her educational level is supposed to capture her labour market resources and also her attitudes towards gender equality (Ellingsæter et al. 1994), while field of education is supposed to indicate the type of job she performs. We distinguish between four levels of educational attainment; primary school, secondary school, and short and long university education (1-4 years vs minimum 5 years). The

expectation is that highly educated women more often than others spend as much time as their partner, or more time than their partner, on paid work. We define field of education only for those with a short university education. Most professional trainings such as nurses and school teachers fall in this category. We are particularly interested in the group with medical and social education, since part-time work is especially common among nurses and other health workers. For women with long university education there are too few observations to split by field.

Partners' education: We look at the relationship between the partners' educational attainment, distinguishing between couples where the partners have the same educational level, couples where the male part has most education and couples where the female part has most education. We differentiate between four levels of education in constructing this variable, namely primary school, secondary school, and short and long university education. Unfortunately, the data provides less precise information on the partner's than on the respondent's education,¹ and we lack information on education for about ten percent of the partners. A category for "unknown" is therefore included in the analyses.

Respondent's health: Respondents were asked whether they were curtailed in their daily activities because of bad health, psychological problems or disability. Those who gave a positive answer are defined as having health restrictions in our analysis.

Partner's health: We use a somewhat different measure for the partner's health than for the respondent's health. Respondents were asked whether any of their household members had a long-lasting disease, chronic health problem, disability or psychological problem. Those who reported such problems for their partner, are here defined as having a partner with health problems.²

Children: We distinguish between those with no children below 20 years of age in the household, those with a youngest child 2-6 years of age, those with a youngest child 7-12 years of age and those with a youngest child 13-19 years of age in the household. The expectation is that younger children imply a more traditional allocation of paid work between the partners.

¹ Data on education was added to the survey data from Statistics Norway's educational register for the respondent and most of the partners. When the partner could not be identified in this register, the respondent gave some information on his educational level.

² Those who reported such health problems for one of the household members, were asked what type of health problems of disability this was, and also to what degree the person in question was limited in his or her daily activities because of this health problems. Regarding the respondents' health, the question on health limitations was asked to everybody, not only those who reported a long lasting or chronic disease.

Age: We distinguish between women in the age groups 25-34 years, 35-44 years and 45-54 years. The expectation is that younger women more often than the older ones work at least as much as their partner. We include also a variable for the age difference between the partners in the analyses, discriminating between respondents who are the same age as their partner, those who are at least five years younger than their partner and those who are at least five years older.

Province: We distinguish between seven geographical areas and choose the capital and its surroundings (Oslo and Akershus) as the reference group. We split the South-Eastern part of the country in two, namely Agder and Rogaland, because traditional gender norms and practices are particularly common in Agder. We assume that women in Agder more seldom than other women perform as much as, or more, paid work than their partner, whereas the opposite is expected for the Northern part of the country (Northern Norway). Splitting Agder and Rogaland reduces the number of observations in these categories. Hence, only strong effects will show statistical significance.

Main activity: We differentiate between respondents who see employment as their main activity, and those who do not. Those who did not consider themselves as mainly employed chose one of the following alternatives: student, unemployed, disability pension, retired, housework and childcare, military service, other. A similar dummy was constructed for the partner. The expectation is that women with a partner who do not have employment as his main activity, more often than others work as much as, or more than, her partner. The opposite relationship is expected when the respondent herself do not see employment as her main activity.

Employment relationship: We discriminate between couples where both partners are employees, couples where the respondent is an employee and the partner self-employed, couples where the partner is an employee and the respondent self-employed, and couples where both partners are self-employed. We expect that female employees with a self-employed partner less often than others work as much as, or more than, their partner. The opposite is expected when the respondent, and not the partner, is self-employed.

Sector of work: We distinguish between couples where both partners work in the public sector, couples where the respondent works in the public and the partner in the private sector, couples where the respondent works in the private and the partner in the public sector, and couples where both partners work in the private sector. We assume that publicly employed women with a partner in the

private sector less often than others work as much as, or more than, their partner. The reverse pattern is expected for women in the private sector with a partner in the public sector.

Leadership: We differentiate between couples where none of the partners are leaders, couples where the partner is a leader and the respondent not, couples where the respondent is a leader and the partner not, and couples where both partners are leaders. Leadership was captured by the question: Do you (your partner) conduct or coordinate other people's work? A significant proportion gave a positive answer. We anticipate that when the partner, but not the respondent, is a leader, women less often than otherwise work as much as, or more than, her partner. The reverse relationship is expected when the respondent, and not the partner, is a leader.

Flexible working hours: Assuming that flexible hours facilitate full-time work and long hours, we distinguish between couples where none of the partners have flexible hours, couples where the partner, but not the respondent has flexible hours, couples where the respondent, but not the partner has flexible hours, and couples where both partners have flexible hours.

Occupation: Based on the Norwegian Standard Classification of Occupations,³ we differentiate between seven occupational groups for the respondent, namely professional and practical nurses, other health and social work, leaders and academic workers, other university professions, clerical work and sales and services, and finally a residual group of "other occupations". These groups are particularly suitable for classifying women's occupations, but for the sake of comparison we use the same groups for the partner. As a certain number of observations, particularly among the partners, lack information on occupation, we include a dummy for "unknown occupation" in the analyses. Because occupation is closely correlated with employment relationship, public/private employment, leadership and flexible hours, and also with respondent's type of education, we do not include these variables in the same model, but rather run two separate models.

Results

All partnered women 25-54 years of age

We start by presenting results for all couples, irrespective of the partners' employment status and main activity. Table 1 shows frequencies for the number of weekly working hours among women and men

³ The standard is based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations - ISCO-88, prepared by ILO. EU has developed a version of this standard ((ISCO-88(COM)), which is the base for the Norwegian standard.

separately. Please recall that the sub-sample comprises married and cohabiting women 25-54 years of age, who do not have children below 2 years in the household, and that both employed and non-employed individuals are included. Women usually spend an average of 31.2 hours per week on paid work, whereas their partners spend an average of approximately 39.6 hours. Non-employment and short part-time work is more common among women than men, whereas long working hours are less common.

Table 1. Weekly working hours among women and men. All, irrespective of the partners' employment activity. Percent

	0 hours	1-24 hours	25-34 hours	35-44 hours	45 hours +	Average	N
Women	11	13	18	46	11	31.2	2571
Men	6	2	2	61	29	39.6	2571

In table 2 the perspective changes from individuals to couples. We look at the partners' relative sharing of paid labour and estimate the proportion of traditional, equal-sharing and untraditional couples, defined as couples where the male part works most, couples where the partners work about the same number of hours, and couples where the female part works most. Following our first definition, saying that equal sharing requires the partners to work exactly the same number of hours, 62 percent of the women work less than their partner, 20 percent work precisely as much as their partner and 18 percent work more. Using a somewhat wider definition of equal sharing, namely that the partners work the same number of hours plus/minus two, we find that 29 per cent of the women live in an equal-sharing couple, and 15 percent work more than their partner. Broadening the definition of equal sharing to involve the same number of working hours plus/minus four, as much as one third of the women live in an equal-sharing couple, while only 13 percent work longer hours than their partner.

Table 2. The relationship between the partners' working hours, based on different definitions. All couples, irrespective of the partners' employment activity. Percent

Definitions	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most	N
At least 1 hour difference	62	20	18	2571
At least 3 hours difference	56	29	15	2571
At least 5 hours difference	52	35	13	2571

We argue that the third definition is most relevant for the purpose of this paper. In order for the partners to take notice of the difference between their working hours, the discrepancy needs to be of a certain size. People who work at least five hours more or less than their partner will most likely ascribe some importance to this. Five hours do make a difference when it comes to time available for housework, child care and leisure activities.

It is still rare that women work longer hours than their partner in Norway, but equal sharing of paid work seems to be rather common. However, more than half of the couples still have traditional arrangements with the male part spending most time in the labour market. An important aim of this paper is to disentangle the characteristics of the equal-sharing and non-traditional couples. Table 3 provides some initial information on this, showing frequencies for the partners' main activity, health and age by the couples' division of paid work. Not surprisingly we see that when a woman works longer hours than her partner, a significant proportion of the partners do not have employment as their main activity, one out of five has a chronic disease and a similar proportion is at least 55 years old. 18 percent of the men in these couples have disability pension, 5 percent are students, 7 percent are unemployed, 4 percent are retired and only 1 percent has housework and childcare as their main activity. These men may perform some paid work, but the amount is too modest to be counted as their main activity. Hence, it seems that in a sizeable proportion of the unconventional couples, the unusual division of paid labour is due to men's health problems, retirement or unemployment, rather than to women working very long hours. This is consistent with findings in American studies on partners' relative income (Winkler et al. 2005, Raley et al. 2006). It may be questioned whether these couples should really be characterised as untraditional. Looking at women who work less than her partner we see that 77 percent have employment as their main activity, whereas the rest are either students, unemployed, disabled or homemakers. None of the women are retired, which is what we should expect given the age limit of the sub-sample.

Table 3. The partners' main activity, health and age in couples where he works most, with equal sharing and where she works most. All couples, irrespective of the partners' employment activity. Percent.

	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most	All
Partner's main activity				
Employed	99	96	61	93
Student	1	0	5	1
Unemployed	-	1	7	1
Disability pension	0	2	18	3
Retiree	0	0	4	1
Housework and childcare	0	-	1	0
Other	0	1	5	1
Partner's health				
Chronic disease	7	9	22	9
No chronic disease	93	91	78	91
Partner's age				
25-34 years	14	15	12	14
35-44 years	37	35	31	36
45-54 years	40	36	37	38
55 years +	9	13	19	12
Respondent's main activity				
Employed	77	96	98	87
Student	6	0	1	3
Unemployed	1	0	0	1
Disability pension	8	2	0	5
Housework and childcare	5	0	0	3
Other	3	1	-	2
Respondent's health				
Health limitations	23	10	11	17
No health limitations	77	90	89	83
Respondent's age				
25-34 years	21	23	17	21
35-44 years	41	39	41	40
45-55 years	38	37	42	38
N	1329	900	342	2571

In order to gain further knowledge of the characteristics of equal-sharing and unconventional couples, we have run a multinomial regression, estimating the odds of women spending as much time as her partner on paid labour rather than having a traditional arrangement, and the odds of women working more than her partner rather than having a traditional arrangement. Because the analysis comprises both employed and non-employed individuals, we do not include any characteristics of the partners' jobs. The results are shown in table 4. Odds-ratios significant at the 0.05 level are written in bold and those significant at the 0.10-level are written in italics.

Table 4. Multinomial logistic regressions of whether the female part works as much as her partner, or more than her partner. Reference: The male partner works most. Odds-ratios.¹ All couples, irrespective of the partners' employment activity

	Equal sharing vs male most		Female most vs male most	
	Odds-ratio	Chi-square	Odds-ratio	Chi-square
Respondent's education (ref: secondary school)				
Primary school level	0.95	0.16	0.50	7.91
University, short, humanities	1.10	0.17	0.82	0.23
University short, teacher	1.75	11.49	<i>1.54</i>	2.84
University short, economy and administration	1.59	4.24	1.56	1.60
University, short, medical and social	0.89	0.56	0.53	4.80
University, short, other	1.13	0.21	<i>1.95</i>	3.66
University, long	1.83	9.77	2.48	11.01
Unknown	1.16	0.22	0.79	0.18
Partners' education (ref: respondent shortest)				
Same level	1.06	0.22	1.10	0.18
Respondent longer than partner	1.04	0.06	1.07	0.07
Unknown	1.30	1.79	1.88	4.10
Respondent's health restrictions				
Yes	0.50	21.13	0.53	6.18
Partner chronic health problem				
Yes	1.63	7.55	1.80	4.96
Children (ref: none)				
Youngest child 2-6 years	0.45	29.64	0.37	15.02
7-12 years	0.52	19.22	0.74	1.68
13-19 years	0.68	6.85	0.74	1.69
Respondent's age (ref: 25-34 years)				
35-44 years	0.98	0.01	1.78	5.16
45-54 years	0.92	1.26	1.31	4.23
Age difference (ref: same age)				
Partner at least 5 years younger	1.24	0.39	0.83	0.11
Partner at least 5 years older	1.15	1.73	1.54	6.86
Province (ref: Oslo and Akershus)				
Eastern Norway except Oslo and Akershus	1.07	0.20	1.21	0.61
Agder	0.83	1.06	0.69	1.38
Rogaland	1.12	0.31	1.07	0.03
Western Norway	1.12	0.51	1.63	4.00
Trøndelag	1.04	0.05	1.00	0.00
Northern Norway	1.68	8.42	<i>1.77</i>	4.01
Respondent's main activity (ref: employment)				
Other	0.06	80.50	0.00	110.17
Partner's main activity (ref: employment)				
Other	31.55	55.54	>999.99	178.58

¹ Odds-ratios significant at the 0.05 level are written in bold and those significant at the 0.10-level are written in italics.

In accordance with the results in table 3, table 4 demonstrates that the odds of equal and untraditional sharing of paid work decrease significantly when the respondent does not see employment as her main activity and increase drastically when the partner is not mainly employed. Likewise, the odds of equal and untraditional sharing are reduced when the respondent herself has health problems, and raise when the partner has health problems. Concerning the respondent's educational level, we see that consistent with our assumption, women with a long university education are more likely to work as much as their partner, or more than their partner, than the reference group (secondary school), whereas women with primary school are less likely to have an untraditional arrangement. Looking at women with a short university education, we find significant differences between various fields. Having a short university education in teaching or in economics and administration increases the odds of equal sharing of paid work compared to the reference group. Having a short university education in teaching also increases the odds of untraditional sharing, and the same is true for women with certain others types of short university education. However, women with a short university education in medical and social subjects have lower odds of untraditional sharing than women with secondary school.

The effect of the partners' relative education is unclear as the only significant effect is found for those with unknown education. Our assumption that a woman with longer education than her partner often works as much as, or more than, the partner, is not supported. However, this needs to be researched further with more complete data on partner's education.

Consistent with our assumption, there is a strong negative association between equal and untraditional division of paid work and having children in the household. It is particularly very young children that lower the odds of an untraditional arrangement.

Contrary to our supposition, women 35 years or older are more prone to work longer hours than their partner compared to the youngest ones. As far as equal sharing of paid work is concerned, there are no significant differences between age groups. Having a partner who is at least five years older than herself, increases women's odds of working longer hours than her partner. As previously mentioned, one possible explanation of this may be that older partners prioritize their wife's career over their own. An alternative explanation may be that these partners have poorer health than their wife and therefore work less. Even though partner's health is included in the model, there may be health problems that are not captured by this variable.

As expected, women in the Northern part of the country have higher odds of equal or untraditional work arrangements than other women, and somewhat unexpectedly, women in the Western part of the country have higher odds of unconventional sharing than other women. Contrary to our assumption there is no significant negative effect of living in Agder. The estimates have the anticipated sign, but due to the small number of observations in this group, we need strong associations to gain statistical significance.

Both partners have employment as their main activity

We now turn to couples where both partners have employment as their main activity. This means that students, retirees, disabled people and homemakers are left out of the analysis, which leaves us with 81 percent of our original sub-sample. Obviously, the average number of working hours is higher in this new sub-sample than in the former one. Women and men spend an average of 35.7 and 42.2 hours per week on paid work respectively (table 5). When we utilise the rather broad definition of equal sharing implying that the partners work the same number of hours plus/minus four, we find that 41 percent of the women perform as much paid work as their partner, and 10 percent perform more work than their partner (table 6). It is worth noticing that the difference between the partners’ working hours is larger when the male part works most, than when the female part works most. In a traditional couple the man works an average of 15.6 hours more per week than his partner. In an untraditional couple the woman works an average of 12.4 hours more per week than her partner. However, the average weekly hours among women in untraditional couples are higher than the average weekly hours among men in traditional couples, 49.2 versus 46.0 hours, and the average weekly hours among men in untraditional couples is much higher than the average weekly hours among women in traditional couples, 36.8 versus 30.4 hours. This means that the couple’s total hours are significantly higher in untraditional than in traditional couples.

Table 5. Weekly working hours among women and men in couples where both partners have employment as their main activity

	1-24 hours	25-34 hours	35-44 hours	45 hours +	Average	N
Women	13	21	53	13	35.7	2110
Men	1	2	64	32	42.3	2110

Table 6. The relationship between the partners' weekly working hours among couples where both partners have employment as their main activity. Average weekly working hours among respondent and partner in each group

	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most
Frequency for the couple's sharing	49	41	10
Average working hours			
Respondent	30.4	38.9	49.2
Partner	46.0	39.3	36.8
Couple	76.4	78.2	86.0
N	1037	866	207

In examining the characteristics of couples with equal or untraditional sharing of paid work, we now add some variables for the partners' employment in the multivariate model. Again, we run a multinomial regression with women in traditional couples as the reference category. The results are presented in table 7a. The bivariate relationships are shown in Table A1. Concerning the respondent's education we find some of, but not all, the same effects as in table 4. Again we see that a short university training as a teacher increases the odds of working as much as the partner, and that primary school education and short university education in medical and social subjects reduces the odds of working more than the partner. Long university education increases the odds of working more than the partner, but not the odds of equal sharing. The relationship between the partners' education shows no significant effects. We also see the expected negative effect of the respondent's health restrictions and the positive effect of the partner's health problems, although the association between partner's health and unconventional sharing of paid work is not statistically significant.

Table 7a. Multinomial logistic regressions of whether the female part works as much as her partner, or more than her partner. Reference: The male partner works most. Couples where both partners have employment as their main activity. Odd-ratios.¹

	Equal sharing vs male most		Female most vs male most	
	Odds-ratio	Chi-square	Odds-ratio	Chi-square
Respondent's education (ref: secondary school)				
Primary school level	0.90	0.52	0.53	5.94
University, short, humanities	1.06	0.05	0.85	0.15
University short, teacher	1.53	5.56	1.27	0.72
University short, economy and administration	1.31	1.23	1.18	0.18
University, short, medical and social	0.76	2.55	0.38	8.72
University, short, other	1.18	0.36	<i>2.02</i>	3.38
University, long	1.29	1.52	<i>1.71</i>	3.17
Unknown	1.03	0.01	0.74	0.25
Partners' education (ref: respondent shortest)				
Same level	1.10	0.47	1.08	0.10
Respondent longer than partner	1.14	0.65	1.07	0.06
Unknown	1.29	1.45	1.58	1.87
Respondent's health restrictions				
Yes	0.40	29.31	<i>0.62</i>	3.37
Partner chronic health problem				
Yes	1.55	5.09	1.37	1.03
Children (ref: none)				
Youngest child 2-6 years	0.44	26.84	0.36	13.58
7-12 years	0.51	17.59	0.69	2.07
13-19 years	0.71	5.01	0.73	1.60
Respondent's age (ref: 25-34 years)				
35-44 years	0.89	0.61	1.34	1.21
45-54 years	0.85	4.19	1.12	0.61
Age difference (ref: same age)				
Partner at least 5 years younger	1.52	1.20	1.24	0.13
Partner at least 5 years older	1.16	1.81	1.53	5.64
Province (ref: Oslo and Akershus)				
Eastern Norway except Oslo and Akershus	0.99	0.01	1.19	0.45
Agder	0.76	2.14	<i>0.56</i>	2.73
Rogaland	1.10	0.21	0.98	0.00
Western Norway	1.03	0.03	1.39	1.58
Trøndelag	0.94	0.12	1.00	0.00
Northern Norway	1.48	4.11	1.43	1.28
Self-employed (ref: none)				
Partner, but not respondent	0.49	15.38	0.75	0.84
Respondent, but not partner	0.69	1.20	4.26	15.23
Both self-employed	0.90	0.07	1.89	1.25

Table 7a (cont.)

	Equal sharing vs male most		Female most vs male most	
	Odds-ratio	Chi-square	Odds-ratio	Chi-square
Public/private (ref: both public)				
Partner private, respondent public	0.54	16.82	0.71	1.91
Respondent private, partner public	0.77	1.19	1.44	1.21
Both private	0.60	10.25	0.51	6.24
Unknown	0.47	3.89	0.48	1.17
Leader (ref: none)				
Partner, but not respondent	0.54	19.64	0.49	7.52
Respondent but not partner	1.22	1.29	2.27	10.03
Both	0.94	0.16	1.06	0.06
Unknown	0.83	0.52	0.60	1.25
Flexible working hours (ref: none)				
Partner, but not respondent	0.94	0.14	0.96	0.02
Respondent, but not partner	1.14	0.56	<i>1.73</i>	3.65
Both	1.07	0.28	1.11	0.15
Unknown	1.10	0.17	0.80	0.23

¹ Odds-ratios significant at the 0.05 level are written in bold and those significant at the 0.10-level are written in italics.

Like table 4, table 7a demonstrates a strong negative effect of having children in the household, particularly of having small children. Concerning women's age we see a significant negative effect of being in the oldest age groups when it comes to equal sharing, but no effect for untraditional sharing. As for the age difference between the partners we find that women who are at least five years younger than their partner have higher odds than others of working more than their partner. Like table 4, table 7a shows that women in the Northern part of the country more often than women in the reference group (Oslo and Akershus) work as much as their partner, and also more than their partner although the latter estimate is not statistically significant. There is no significant effect of living in Agder when it comes to equal sharing of paid work, but the association has the expected sign. There is, however, a significant negative effect of living in Agder when it comes to women working more than her partner.

Looking at the characteristics of the partners' jobs, a number of expected effects emerge. Female employees with a self-employed partner have lower odds than the reference group (both employees) of working as much as their partner. Self-employed women with an employed partner, on the other hand, have much higher odds of working more than their partner. Women working in the public sector with a partner in the private sector have lower odds than the reference group (both public sector) of working as much as their partner, and the same is true when both partners work in the private sector. Hence, a man working in the private sector tends to have a partner who works fewer hours than

himself irrespective of what sector his partner works in. However, there is no effect of the woman working in the private sector and her partner in the public sector. Unfortunately, some women did not answer the question on sector of partner's job, and although these are few (2 per cent) the unknown-group shows a significant effect in the analysis. The effects of sector of work must therefore be interpreted with some caution. Having a partner who is a leader while not being a leader herself, reduces the odds of a woman working as much as, or more than, her partner. On the other hand, a woman who is herself a leader whereas her partner is not, more often than others works longer hours than her partner. Finally, respondents who have themselves flexible working hours, while their partner has not, have higher odds of working more than their partner. This supports our assumption that flexible hours facilitate long hours, although there is no effect of the partner having flexible hours.

In a separate regression we investigate the possible effects of the respondent's and the partner's occupations. Because of the strong correlations between both partners' occupations on the one hand and the employment related variables on the other, the latter variables are excluded from this analysis. The respondent's education is also excluded because of the strong association between occupation and level and type of education. All the other variables from table 7a are, however, included in the analysis. Ideally we would prefer to combine the partners' occupations and investigate differences between for instance couples with a female nurse and a male leader on the one hand and couples with a male nurse and a female leader on the other, but due to the low number of observations in some of the occupational categories we look at effects of each partner's occupation separately. The results are shown in table 7b. Only the effects of the partners' occupations are shown. The effects of the other variables (difference between the partners' education, respondent's and partner's health, children, respondent's age, age difference between the partners and province) are approximately identical with those displayed in table 7a. As for the respondent's occupation we see that professional and practical nurses more seldom than the reference group (teachers) work as much as their partner or more than their partner. The same is true for clerical workers and those working with sales and services. Other health and social workers have lower odds of working more than their partner, but not of equal sharing of paid work. Leaders and academic workers more often than others work as much as their partner or more than their partner. This corroborates the findings from table 7a although being a leader is defined more narrowly in table 7b.

Table 7b. Multinomial logistic regressions of whether the female part works as much as her partner, or more than her partner Reference: The male partner works most. Couples where both partners have employment as their main activity. Odd-ratios.¹

	Equal sharing vs male most		Female most vs male most	
	Odds-ratio	Chi-square	Odds-ratio	Chi-square
Respondent's occupation (ref: teaching)				
Professional and practical nurses	0.44	19.44	0.25	16.14
Other health and social work	0.80	1.47	0.48	5.11
Leaders/academic workers	<i>1.39</i>	3.03	2.39	10.28
Other university professions	1.09	0.20	1.07	0.05
Clerical work, sales and services	0.55	11.26	0.44	7.22
Other occupations	0.95	0.05	0.83	0.24
Unknown	<i>1.64</i>	2.75	1.60	1.13
Partner's occupation (ref: teaching)				
Professional and practical nurses, other health and social work	0.78	0.55	0.83	0.14
Leaders/academic workers	0.36	18.54	0.30	11.14
Other university professions	0.47	9.71	0.41	6.10
Clerical work, sales and services	0.76	1.06	1.00	0.00
Other occupations	0.43	12.82	0.39	7.19
Unknown	0.68	1.93	0.33	5.82

¹ Odds-ratios significant at the 0.05 level are written in bold and those significant at the 0.10-level are written in italics.

² The following independent variables are also included in the model: Difference between the partners' education, respondent's and partner's health, children, respondent's age, age difference between the partners and province.

Due to the small number of nurses and health and social workers among men, we have collapsed these two categories for the partner's occupation. Compared to the reference group (the partner is a teacher) women have lower odds of equal or untraditional sharing of paid work when the partner is a leader or an academic worker or hold another university profession. Given that men in such occupations often work long hours, this is what we should expect. Equal or untraditional sharing of paid work is also less common when the partner belongs to the rest group "other occupations", which mainly includes jobs in the primary industries, transport and manufacturing, craft and trade workers and jobs with no educational requirements. We also see a significant negative effect on equal sharing when the male partner's occupation is unknown. As this pertains to as much as 154 observations (see Table A1), the effects of partner's occupation must be interpreted with some caution.

Both partners have employment as their main activity and the male part works full time

We now turn to couples where both partners have employment as their main activity, and where the male part works at least 35 hours per week. This means that we exclude the rather small group of respondents with a part-time working partner, and also those with a partner with short full-time work. Hence, in this sub-sample unconventional sharing of paid work is not due to men working short hours, but to women working long hours - at least 40 hours per week. In this new sub-sample, which comprises 78 percent of our original sub-sample, women work an average of 35.8 hours per week, and their partners work an average of 43 hours per week (table 8). 50 percent of the women work at least 5 hours less than their partner, 42 per cent work approximately as much as their partner and 8 percent work at least 5 hours more than their partner (table 9). Again we see that the difference between the partners' working hours is larger in couples where the male part works most (15.7 hours) than in couples where the female part works most (11.8 hours), and also that the partners' average hours are significantly longer among untraditional than traditional couples.

Table 8. Weekly working hours among women and men in couples where both partners have employment as their main activity and the male partner works at least 35 hours per week

	1-24 hours	25-34 hours	35-44 hours	44 hours +	Average	N
Women	12	21	54	13	35.8	2031
Men	-	-	67	33	43.0	2031

Table 9. The relationship between the partners' weekly working hours among couples where both partners have employed as their main activity and the male partner works at least 35 hour per week. Average weekly working hours among respondent and partner in each group

	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most
Frequency for the couple's sharing	50	42	8
Average working hours			
Respondent	30.5	39.2	51.9
Partner	46.2	39.6	40.1
Couple	76.7	78.9	92.0
N	1026	845	160

The multinomial regressions of what characterises women who work as much as, or more than, their partner (table 10a), reveal almost the same results as the analyses reported in table 7a. This is what we could expect given that the analyses comprise almost the same number of observations. Only some 79

respondents were left out in table 10a compared to table 7a. What is new in table 10a is that we see a significant negative effect of living in Agder when it comes to women working the same number of hours as her partner, but not when it comes to working more than her partner. Both associations have the expected sign, though, and the latter one is fairly strong, but probably lacks significance due to the small number of observations. Also when we look at the effects of the partners' occupations we see almost the same results in table 10b as in table 7b. The bivariate associations are shown in Table A2.

Table 10a. Multinomial logistic regressions of whether the female part works as much as her partner, or more than her partner. Reference: The male partner works most. Couples where both partners have employment as their main activity and the male partner works at least 35 hour per week. Odd-ratios.¹

	Equal sharing vs male most		Female most vs male most	
	Odds-ratio	Chi-square	Odds-ratio	Chi-square
Respondent's education (ref: secondary school)				
Primary school level	0.92	0.33	0.53	4.46
University, short, humanities	1.07	0.06	0.85	0.11
University short, teacher	1.58	6.22	1.44	1.33
University short, economy and administration	1.33	1.38	1.26	0.29
University, short, medical and social	0.79	1.61	0.46	4.63
University, short, other	1.15	0.27	1.84	1.94
University, long	1.26	1.20	2.17	5.73
Unknown	1.06	0.03	1.02	0.00
Partners' education (ref: respondent shortest)				
Same level	1.08	0.31	1.08	0.08
Respondent longer than partner	1.12	0.44	1.18	0.27
Unknown	1.21	0.78	2.13	4.31
Respondent's health restrictions				
Yes	0.41	27.28	0.73	1.23
Partner chronic health problem				
Yes	<i>1.44</i>	3.30	1.03	0.01
Children (ref: none)				
Youngest child 2-6 years	0.41	30.50	0.32	13.11
7-12 years	0.50	18.23	0.73	1.28
13-19 years	0.70	5.30	0.68	1.98
Respondent's age (ref: 25-34 years)				
35-44 years	0.87	0.89	1.23	0.47
45-54 years	0.83	5.21	1.15	0.83
Age difference (ref: same age)				
Partner at least 5 years younger	1.69	1.80	1.16	0.05
Partner at least 5 years older	1.17	1.89	1.38	2.62

Table 10a (cont.)

	Equal sharing vs male most		Female most vs male most	
	Odds-ratio	Chi-square	Odds-ratio	Chi-square
Province (ref: Oslo and Akershus)				
Eastern Norway except Oslo and Akershus	0.97	0.03	1.28	0.77
Agder	<i>0.71</i>	3.26	0.66	1.12
Rogaland	1.04	0.03	1.26	0.34
Western Norway	0.99	0.00	1.45	1.61
Trøndelag	0.95	0.10	1.01	0.00
Northern Norway	<i>1.45</i>	3.60	1.56	1.66
Self-employed (ref: none)				
Partner, but not respondent	0.47	16.56	0.63	1.66
Respondent, but not partner	0.66	1.41	3.91	11.20
Both self-employed	0.84	0.21	1.45	0.36
Public/private (ref: both public)				
Partner private, respondent public	0.53	17.82	0.65	2.57
Respondent private, partner public	0.82	0.65	1.18	0.19
Both private	0.60	9.95	0.54	4.36
Unknown	0.47	3.97	0.65	0.39
Leader (ref: none)				
Partner, but not respondent	0.54	19.45	0.49	5.88
Respondent but not partner	1.23	1.38	1.93	5.06
Both	0.95	0.13	1.30	0.97
Unknown	0.83	0.50	0.60	0.87
Flexible working hours (ref: none)				
Partner, but not respondent	0.93	0.18	1.06	0.02
Respondent, but not partner	1.14	0.52	2.07	5.03
Both	1.09	0.30	1.29	0.66
Unknown	1.12	0.20	0.90	0.04

¹ Odds-ratios significant at the 0.05 level are written in bold and those significant at the 0.10-level are written in italics.

Table 10b. Multinomial logistic regressions of whether the female part works as much as her partner, or more than her partner Reference: The male partner works most. Couples where both partners have employment as their main activity and the male partner works at least 35 hour per week. Odd-ratios.^{1, 2}

	Equal sharing vs male most		Female most vs male most	
	Odds-ratio	Chi-sqaure	Odds-ratio	Chi-square
Respondent's occupation (ref: teaching)				
Professional and practical nurses	0.43	22.58	0.18	18.39
Other health and social work	0.78	1.82	0.39	6.93
Leaders/academic workers	<i>1.38</i>	2.91	2.13	6.99
Other university professions	1.11	0.28	0.84	0.31
Clerical work, sales and services	0.55	11.03	0.33	10.52
Other occupations	0.97	0.02	0.53	1.97
Unknown	1.58	2.27	1.58	0.96
Partner's occupation (ref: teaching)				
Professional and practical nurses, other health and social work	0.84	0.28	1.44	0.40
Leaders/academic workers	0.36	17.78	<i>0.49</i>	2.78
Other university professions	0.47	9.65	0.58	1.58
Clerical work, sales and services	0.77	0.88	1.42	0.58
Other occupations	0.43	12.84	0.56	1.88
Unknown	0.66	2.18	0.51	1.67

¹ Odds-ratios significant at the 0.05 level are written in bold and those significant at the 0.10-level are written in italics.

² The following independent variables are also included in the model: Difference between the partners' education, respondent's and partner's health, children, respondent's age, age difference between the partners and province.

Summary and discussion

The dual-earner model with equal sharing of paid and unpaid labour among women and men is a central political ambition in Norway. While numerous studies have looked at couples' relative division of unpaid domestic work, there has been less focus on the partners' division of paid market work. This paper aims to fill this gap by investigating the characteristics of couples in which the female part works longer hours than her male partner, as well as couples where the partners put in approximately the same number of hours. Given the great demand for female labour in Norway, and the high part-time rates among women, we argue that it is important to disentangle factors that promote and hinder women's labour supply.

We do not aim at testing a number of clearly outlined theories in this paper, but rather try to shed light on some relevant perspectives. In addition to the theory on the partners' comparative advantages

measured by human capital and labour market resources, we direct attention to factors such as the strongly gender segregated labour market in Norway, the gendered norms of providing and caring, possible differences between younger and older age groups, and also between various parts of the country. The empirical analyses are based on a survey from 2007, in which individual respondents gave information about themselves and their partners. Several interesting findings emerge.

Equal sharing of paid labour is now increasing in Norway (Kitterød 2007), but women seldom work longer hours than their partner. Still, about half of all partnered women spend less time than their partner in the labour market. The exact proportions are of course sensitive to categorisations and definitions. If we define traditional sharing as men working at least five hours more than their female partner, and untraditional sharing as women working at least five hours more than their male partner, we find that 52 percent of all partnered women 25-54 years of age have a traditional arrangement and 13 percent have an untraditional arrangement. However, in a considerable proportion of the unconventional couples, the male part is a student, has health problems or is unemployed or retired. Untraditional sharing is then more due to the male partner putting in a modest number of hours in paid work, than to the female partner working long hours. When both partners have employment as their main activity, 49 per cent of the women work less than their partner, 41 per cent work the same number of hours as their partner, and 10 percent work more than their partner. It is important to notice, however, that the difference between the partners' working hours is larger in couples where the male part works most, than in couples where the female part works most.

We have not been able to test the comparative advantage perspective directly in this paper, but our analysis lends some support to this theory. Highly educated women are more prone to work as much as, or more than, their partner than are those with less education. However, we find no effect of the partners' relative educational level. Data with more complete information on the partner's educational attainment is required to investigate this further. Good health may also be regarded as a labour market resource, and consistent with our assumptions, women's health restrictions imply less equal or untraditional sharing, while men's health problems imply more equal or untraditional sharing. The gender segregated labour market in Norway seems to play a role over and above the partners' resources. Women with medical and social education at lower university level are particularly inclined to work less than their partner. Looking at respondents' occupation we see that professional and practical nurses often work less than their partner. This reflects the high part-time rates in these professions. Moreover, having a partner in the private sector implies less equal and less untraditional sharing for women. Along the same vein, having a self-employed partner while being an employee

herself, results in more traditional sharing for women, whereas self-employed women with a partner who is an employee more often than others have an untraditional arrangement. However, teacher training at the lower university level increases the odds of equal sharing of paid work for women, even though this is a typical female job in the public sector. Untraditional sharing is not particularly common for women with a teacher training, though. This indicates that women with such qualifications tend to work full time, but not very long hours.

Our assumption that small children imply more gender specialisation is clearly supported. Women with children in the household tend to have more traditional sharing of paid labour than women with no children present, and the tendency is particularly strong for those with the youngest children.

The expectation that equal or untraditional sharing of paid work is more common in younger than in older age groups, is only partly supported. Looking at all respondents irrespective of the partners' employment, we find that the youngest women (25-35 years of age) are less prone to work more than their partner than are the older women. However, looking at couples where both partners have employment as their main activity, women 45-54 years of age are somewhat less prone to work as much as their partner than are the younger ones. If this association reflects differences between generations, and not changes over the life course, we may expect more equal sharing of paid work in the years to come. Being at least five years younger than her partner seems to involve more untraditional sharing of paid work. This may be due to health problems among older partners that are not captured by our health variable, or to older partners' stronger support of their wife's career.

The presumption of regional variation in couples' sharing of paid work receives some support. Women in the Northern part of the country more often than other women perform as much paid work as their partner, and women in the Southern part of Norway (Agder) have less equal and less untraditional sharing of paid work than women living elsewhere, although some of these latter effects are only marginally significant. A larger sample would probably produce more significant results.

We believe that this paper provides new information on couples' allocation of paid labour in Norway, a topic that has previously received only modest attention in quantitative studies. However, there are many questions left to be answered. Even though our statistical analyses give some hints, we cannot disentangle the negotiations and considerations producing the observed patterns. We do not know whether the partners would have preferred a different arrangement, and if so, which of them most often has to accommodate his or her practice to the needs of their family or other circumstances. Such

questions can only be answered satisfactorily through qualitative studies. However, additional survey information on the partners' preferences would lead us a step further. It would also be useful with more complete information on both partners' education, and additional information on the job characteristics of the partners.

Considering the good access to high-quality and affordable childcare in Norway for preschool children as well as younger school children it is a paradox that a traditional allocation of paid work is still widespread among parents with children in the household. Perhaps this indicates that many parents find it too strenuous with two full-time jobs. If this is the case, it needs to be accounted for in estimates of women's future labour supply. It would be important to realize, then, that continuous full-time work for both parents during the child-rearing years is not a realistic scenario for all couples, at least not in all types of work. As long as pension credits and other work related entitlements are based on peoples' working hours, it is also important for policy-makers to understand that the dual-earner model, which is presupposed by much Norwegian social policy, is only practiced by a limited proportion of couples. If women continue to restrict their paid work when children arrive, they continue to face the risk of loosing out economically compared to their partners.

The analysis in this paper applies to a period with high economic activity in Norway. It cannot be ruled out that we would get a somewhat different picture in times of economic recession. As employees in many private sector jobs face higher risks of unemployment than employees in the public sector, some couples would have to rely on the female part as the main provider. Hence, economic recession may result in some couples involuntarily becoming unconventional sharers of paid work.

It remains to be seen whether equal and unconventional sharing of market work will become more common in Norway in the years to come. The gender segregated labour market seems to play an important role in cementing traditional arrangements. As long as women and men continue to choose different types of education, and typical female jobs are less well paid than typical male jobs, this pattern may be hard to change. This is corroborated by the fact that many couples seem to find it too exhausting with two full-time jobs. Moreover, as many typical male jobs require very high time inputs, women may find it difficult to have a full-time job and at the same time shouldering most of the family work. It is also important to remember that many families in Norway are now quite well off economically and do not really need to have two full-times jobs. A part-time job for one of the spouses may release time for leisure activities for all family members and thereby increase the quality of life.

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Table A1. The relationship between the partners' working hours in various groups, among couples where both partners have employment as their main activity. Percent

	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most	N
All	49	41	10	2110
Respondent's education				
Primary school	56	38	6	492
Secondary school	49	40	11	549
University short, humanities	48	41	11	91
University short, teacher	41	47	12	262
University short, economy and administration	40	49	11	108
University short, medical and social	56	38	6	283
University short, other	45	40	15	85
University, long	37	48	15	191
Unknown	41	50	9	49
Difference between partners' education				
Respondent shorter than partner	54	38	7	498
Same level	50	40	10	808
Respondent longer than partner	48	41	11	568
Unknown	38	50	12	236
Respondent has health restrictions				
No	47	43	10	1870
Yes	65	26	8	240
Partner chronic health problem				
No	49	41	9	1962
Yes	45	44	11	148
Children				
None	39	51	10	607
Youngest child 2-6 years	55	38	7	480
7-12 years	54	35	11	526
13-19 years	51	39	10	397
Respondent's age				
25-34 years	45	48	8	417
35-44 years	51	39	10	916
45-54 years	50	40	10	777
Age difference				
Partner at least 5 years younger	43	49	9	39
Same age	50	41	9	1489
Partner at least 5 years older	46	43	11	576

Tabel A1 (cont.)

	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most	N
Province				
Oslo and Akershus	47	44	9	477
Eastern Norway except Oslo and Akershus	52	39	10	413
Agder	57	37	6	224
Rogaland	50	42	7	136
Western Norway	48	40	12	326
Trøndelag	54	39	7	318
Northern Norway	39	51	11	215
Employee/self-employed				
Both employees	47	44	9	1728
Respondent employee, partner self-employed	69	25	6	278
Partner employee, respondent self-employed	37	25	37	64
Both self-employed	46	42	12	40
Public/private				
Both private	50	41	9	775
Respondent private/partner public	35	45	20	131
Partner public, respondent private	57	35	8	789
Both public	35	54	11	377
Unknown	53	42	5	38
Leader				
None of the partners	43	48	9	487
Respondent not, partner leader	62	33	5	624
Partner not, respondent leader	33	48	19	290
Both leaders	46	43	11	591
Unknown	60	33	7	118
Flexible working hours				
None	47	44	9	314
Respondent not, partner flexible	59	34	7	446
Partner not, respondent flexible	39	45	16	345
Both flexible	49	42	9	890
Unknown	48	46	7	115
Respondent's occupation				
Teaching	42	47	12	288
Professional and practical nurses	65	31	4	320
Other health and social work	53	40	6	304
Leaders/academic workers	34	47	20	319
Other university professions	42	47	11	293
Clerical work, sales and services	60	34	6	374
Other occupations	47	45	8	137
Unknown	34	53	14	75

Table A1 (cont.)

	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most	N
Partner's occupation				
Teaching	34	52	14	121
Professional and practical nurses, other health and social work	33	54	13	79
Leaders/academic workers	56	35	9	469
Other university professions	49	42	8	410
Clerical work, sales and services	39	44	17	205
Other occupations	54	38	8	672
Unknown	39	56	6	154

Table A2. The relationship between the partners' working hours in various groups, among couples where both partners have employment as their main activity and partner works at least 35 hours per week. Percent

	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most	N
All	50	42	8	2031
Respondent's education				
Primary school	57	38	5	474
Secondary school	51	41	8	526
University short, humanities	50	41	8	85
University short, teacher	43	48	10	254
University short, economy and administration	41	50	9	105
University short, medical and social	56	39	6	276
University short, other	48	41	10	80
University, long	38	48	14	185
Unknown	43	47	10	46
Difference between partners' education				
Respondent shorter than partner	55	39	5	478
Same level	52	41	7	776
Respondent longer than partner	49	41	9	546
Unknown	39	49	11	231
Respondent has health restrictions				
No	66	27	7	224
Yes	49	44	8	1807
Partner chronic health problem				
No	51	42	8	131
Yes	48	44	8	1900
Children				
None	39	52	9	587
Youngest child 2-6 years	57	38	6	555
7-12 years	56	35	9	505
13-19 years	53	39	8	384

Table A2 (cont.)

	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most	N
Respondent's age				
25-34 years	45	48	6	404
35-44 years	52	40	8	876
45-54 years	51	40	8	751
Age difference				
Partner at least 5 years younger	41	54	6	37
Same age	52	41	7	1437
Partner at least 5 years older	48	44	8	551
Province				
Oslo and Akershus	48	45	8	363
Eastern Norway except Oslo and Akershus	53	39	8	398
Agder	58	37	6	215
Rogaland	52	41	7	131
Western Norway	51	40	9	308
Trøndelag	54	39	6	306
Northern Norway	40	52	9	209
Employee/self-employed				
Both employees	48	45	7	1670
Respondent employee, partner self-employed	71	25	4	267
Partner employee, respondent self-employed	42	27	31	56
Both self-employed	48	40	12	38
Public/private				
Both private	51	41	8	753
Respondent private/partner public	37	48	15	120
Partner public, respondent private	59	35	6	757
Both public	35	55	10	363
Unknown	53	42	5	38
Leader				
None of the partners	44	49	7	463
Respondent not, partner leader	63	33	4	605
Partner not, respondent leader	35	51	15	270
Both leaders	47	43	10	581
Unknown	62	32	5	112
Flexible working hours				
None	48	46	6	300
Respondent not, partner flexible	61	34	5	435
Partner not, respondent flexible	41	46	14	327
Both flexible	50	42	8	858
Unknown	49	46	5	111

Table A2 (cont.)

	He works most	Equal sharing	She works most	N
Respondent's occupation				
Teaching	43	47	11	282
Professional and practical nurses	67	30	2	307
Other health and social work	54	41	5	290
Leaders/academic workers	35	48	18	308
Other university professions	43	49	9	282
Clerical work, sales and services	61	35	5	361
Other occupations	50	46	4	129
Unknown	34	55	13	72
Partner's occupation				
Teaching	36	54	10	111
Professional and practical nurses, other health and social work	32	56	12	74
Leaders/academic workers	57	35	8	461
Other university professions	51	42	7	394
Clerical work, sales and services	40	46	14	191
Other occupations	56	38	6	649
Unknown	39	56	5	151