Gender and Intra-Household Entitlements: a Cross-National Longitudinal Analysis

GenIX advisory meeting
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Objectives of the project

• Policy:
  – usually assumes away intra-household inequalities
  – looks at immediate effect on household budget rather than the opportunities it creates for individuals within it

• Research shows that these are false and limiting assumptions

• To consider full impact of any policy
  – need also to consider effects on intra-household inequalities and processes
  – need to develop method of evaluating such effects
  – use it to evaluate the effect of existing policies and those under consideration

• Results should help improve policy making in
  – meeting policy makers’ existing goals better
  – redressing inequalities within households
  – tackling gender inequalities more generally by recognising how they are affected by household behaviour
Research questions

- What makes access to household resources more or less useful in improving the opportunities (capabilities) of individuals within households?
  - Different types of resources – e.g. both money and time
  - Gendered household members (couples)
- Focus on potential inequalities
- Not just immediate distributional impact but also
  - Effects on roles, relationships and life-course opportunities inside and outside the household
    - Eg employment and caring roles
  - Feedback effects through the decision making power within households
- Existing research shows these to be key in explaining gender inequalities more widely
- Cross national comparison will enable the effects of different policy contexts to be explored
GeNet project

• This project grew out of GeNet: similar aims with 3 strands
  – Interviews
  – Quants
  – Policy simulation

• Some findings
  – Togetherness vs. autonomy
  – Tax system redistributes better when male is lower earner

• GeNet project very successful but some inherent limitations from just looking at
  – One country limited variation in policy relevant variables: need to use other countries’ experiences
  – Just financial resources (and feelings about the opportunities these give) not other resources, particularly time

• Will extend just the quant part
  – Already have some Euromod simulation results re tax system
  – Don’t have the resources to do interviews in every country
  – Quant part had innovative methodology which makes it particularly suitable for cross-national analysis
GeNet quants framework

• Representative BHPS data: couples’ views over time could be matched to analyse common and differing influences on man’s and woman’s satisfaction with household income
  – Longitudinal analysis of the influence of individual and household level factors on man’s and woman’s satisfaction with their household income
• Average satisfaction answers influenced by determinants of ‘household entitlement’ (i.e. total access/command over resources – size of the pie)
• Relative partners’ satisfaction answers influenced by determinants of ‘relative entitlement’ (i.e. relative command over household resources – share of the pie); relative command influenced by:
  – Financial situation in case of breakdown (fall-back position)
  – Perceived contribution to household resources
  – Identity / claims / own interests
Conceptual framework

- Household entitlement to financial resources
  - Relative entitlement to household financial resources
  - Average partners’ satisfaction with household income
  - Relative partners’ satisfaction with household income
  - Overall satisfaction (average and relative)
  - Adaptation
  - Expectations
  - Social comparison
  - Altruistic views / Other satisfaction domains spill-over

- Socio-economic environment (employment, income levels, prices)
- Individual/household variables: income, assets, employment status, human capital, children, household and caring tasks
- Public policies
- Gender norms (Gender role attitudes, family laws)
- Current and potential perceived contributions to household resources
- Perceived financial situation if breakdown (fall-back position)
- Identity/interests / sense of entitlement and aspirational claims
- Social comparison
- Other satisfaction domains spill-over
GeNet results – quants

- Common influences (household entitlement) – e.g.:
  - Both lose satisfaction with their common household income if either man or woman becomes unemployed (or works less than full-time or increases housework time)

- But common influences are gendered – e.g.:
  - Man’s unemployment (etc.) affects satisfaction with household income more than woman’s unemployment

- Where do such common gendered influences come from?
  - Recognition of external constraints?
  - Gender norms?
GeNet results – quants (3)

• Differing influences (relative entitlement) – e.g.:
  – By being unemployed either partner loses more satisfaction with their household income than the other

• Differing influences are gendered too – e.g.:
  – Having young children decreases the woman’s satisfaction with household income more than the man’s
  – If the woman earns more than 75% of total earnings, her satisfaction with household income increases, but that is not the case for the man if he earns more than 75%

• What do the differing views illustrate?
  – Different views on same household income (accounting for differences in personality and other subjective states)
  → we assume it is indicating access/command over household resources (‘entitlement’)
  – Such power might depend on
    • assessment of individual situation if couple breaks down or
    • perceived contributions to common household resources
GeNet results – quants (4)

- Common influences may reinforce gender inequalities if partners act upon their shared views (long term deleterious consequences for women)
- Differing views illustrate differential access to household resources
- Conditions that give rise to better access to household resources are unequally distributed in society between men and women (employment, pay, care work, etc.)
  \[ \Rightarrow \] Vicious cycle to be broken
- Challenge gender norms / economic constraints leading to these inequalities
GenIX – what we will do

- Analyse those gender norms / economic constraints by:
  - Examining the impact of cross-national institutional and policy changes on intra-household (gendered) entitlements
  - Exploring the policy lessons that can be learned from them. For example, how to:
    - ensure that policies are enhanced rather than undermined by intra-household effects
    - reduce gender inequalities within and beyond households
    - avoid policies which would worsen such inequalities
How?

• Analyse longitudinal household data sets:
  – from three different countries: UK, Germany and Australia
  – from EU-15 but with less detailed and not so recent data
• Gather regional and cross-national institutional information from appropriate data sources
• Construct policy relevant indicators related to:
  – Employment and earnings (m/f employment rate, hours, gender pay gap)
  – Parental leave (incl. maternity and paternity leave)
  – Childcare (coverage and costs)
  – Tax-Benefit system
  – Others???
Why these policy variables?

• Employment and earnings
  – Crucial to concerns about poverty and child well-being
  – Gendered opportunities for paid work (and hours) affect relative position within couple (see GeNet results)
  – Gender pay gap => relative contribution of men and women, work incentives for second earners

• Parental Leave (incl. maternity/paternity leave) and care leave
  – Available to/taken by women: length, pay and conditions affect women’s attachment to labour force and their income/career prospects relative to men’s
  – Available to/taken by men: could reduce such inequalities
  – Both affect gendered patterns of caring and thus long-term gender roles in both employment and caring
Why these policy variables? (2)

• Child care
  – Cost and availability of formal childcare affect employment especially by women
  – May affect gender roles in parenting
  – Financial support for childcare may affect intra-household entitlements

• Tax-Benefit system
  – Effective tax rate of first/second earners
  – Benefits for those not in employment
  – Both may affect
    • employment/care incentives
    • intra-household entitlements
Why the UK, Germany and Australia?

• All have household panel data:
  – with relevant socio-economic and attitude data at individual and household level
  – for a long enough period
    • UK – BHPS (runs from 1991)
    • Germany – GSOEP (runs from 1984)
    • Australia – HILDA (runs from 2001)

• Additional questions can be used to explore further some of our theoretical assumptions:
  – GSOEP – question on satisfaction with personal income in addition to that with household income
  – HILDA – questions about fairness in the division of housework and childcare, and questions about who makes major decisions

• Have different welfare and labour market systems and hence differ in policy relevant indicators
UK – overview

• Increasingly residual welfare state (focus on poverty) and market-based services
• Highest maternal employment rate for mothers with young children
  – In 2005, 52.6% with children < 2 years and 58.3% with children 3-5 (OECD, 2007).
• Fathers in couple families tend to work full time and mothers work part time
• Gender wage gap is high, mainly due to a high proportion of very low paid part time women workers
• Very low paid maternity leave of up to 39 weeks (6-week earnings related) and paternity leave of up to 2 weeks
• Childcare costs are among highest in Europe
  – In 2004, childcare costs amounted to 24-26% of average wages (OECD, 2007).
• Higher spending on families than 2 other countries (3.4% of GDP), mainly in the form of cash (2.3%)
Germany – overview

• Less residual welfare state but larger reliance on family and contributory benefits than UK
• Lowest maternal employment rate for mothers with children < 2 years (36.1% in 2005). High female part-time employment (as UK)
• High gender pay gap (higher than UK for FT workers)
• 100% paid maternity leave of up to 14 weeks; long paid parental leave of up to 14 months (incl. 2 month daddy leave) – flexibility of pay and length
• Lower childcare cost than in the UK but limited availability for 0-3 (much higher for 3-5)
  – In 2004, childcare costs amounted to 7-9% of average wage.
• Lower family spending than in the UK (2.9% of GDP), more evenly spread across cash, tax breaks and services
Australia – overview

• Anglo-Saxon system (residual) but significant differences with respect to treatment of the family.
  – Universal household means testing that reach higher up income levels (hence sometimes called affluence testing)
• Maternal employment rate lower than UK but higher than Germany (though similar part time rates as the other 2 countries)
• Lower gender wage gap
• Statutory unpaid parental leave of up to 52 weeks (some employers pay maternity leave) – plans for paid maternity leave
• Childcare costs are high. Provision mainly private and monopolised
  – In 2004, childcare costs amounted to 22% of average wage.
• Family spending amount to 2.2% of GDP (lowest of 3 countries), mainly in the form of services (1.6% of GDP)
EU-15 : use of ECHP data

- Comparative analysis for 15 EU countries from ECHP
  - provides harmonised socio-economic information
  - offers more variation in welfare regimes (e.g. allows us to look at Nordic countries)
  - However study is less detailed and only runs from 1994 to 2001
  - EU SILC (follow-up of ECHP from 2003) doesn’t have information on satisfaction
Role of Advisory Group

• Experts in policy areas where our results may be of interest
• Would like your help with policy issues for which our findings might be relevant
• Now and later:
  – Alert us to relevant issues coming up on political agendas
  – Use your knowledge of policy shifts in the past, UK or elsewhere, whose effects might be worth exploring
  – Help us plan a strategy for raising the interest of policy makers in our results
• Later:
  – think through implications of our findings for particular policy issues
  – help us think about specific ways of disseminating our findings