# The effect of women’s family trajectory on their later-life personal income in comparative perspective[[1]](#footnote-1)

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*Abstract*

The most important family life event affecting women’s labour market behaviour is having a child. Research shows that after child birth women on average have lower employment participation and work less hours, therefore they experience a loss of income. Most studies regard only short-term effects, while less is known about the long-term effects. However, women’s decision to quit their job or reduce their working hours does not only lower current income, but also compromises their future earnings.

We expect that multiple aspects of women’s family trajectory might be relevant to explain their later-life income. Therefore we combine fertility history which includes the number- and timing of births with partnership history which covers the start- and ending of cohabitation. Furthermore, we might expect that the effect of family trajectory differs by socioeconomic status (i.e. educational level). Lower educated women are more likely to interrupt their career or reduce their working hours than higher educated women, because of financial reasons or more traditional gender role attitudes. Last, we expect that the country context might be relevant. If they live in a country with generous public childcare provision, women’s later-life income might depend less on their family trajectory.

Against this background, the present study will address three research questions. First, what is the association between family trajectory, i.e. the combined fertility- and partnership history, and later-life (50-65) personal income among women? Second, to what extent is this association moderated by socioeconomic status? Third, to what extent do these associations differ by country?

To answer our research questions, we will use data on 16 Western countries from the first wave of the Generations and Gender Surveys, which includes partnership- and fertility histories. We summarize the family trajectory into one typology using sequence analysis.

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