

Children first? Intra-household inequality in reconstituted couple households

This is the author's original manuscript of the paper. Please cite the published version.

Lanau, A. (2021) Children first? Intra-household inequality in reconstituted couple households, *Journal of Family Issues* [Online first]

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0192513X211055112>

Abstract:

An increasing number of children are growing up in reconstituted households, formed by a couple and a non-common child. Reconstituted households tend to be poorer, which is associated with worse behavioural and developmental outcomes. Additionally, there is evidence that non-common children receive less economic support from their parents upon leaving the parental home. Using age-specific deprivation data collected in the 2014 European Survey on Income and Living Conditions this article compares the allocation of resources in reconstituted and intact couple households. It shows that indeed, children in reconstituted households are more likely to be deprived compared to those in intact households. However, it finds no evidence that reconstituted households are less likely to prioritise children. The findings hold across welfare regimes. Women are more likely to go without compared with men, although differences are small.

Children first? Intra-household inequality in reconstituted couple households

Introduction

Raising divorce and remarriage rates mean that reconstituted households, formed by a married, registered or cohabiting couple and at least one non-common child, are becoming increasingly common (UNECE, 2011). Children in reconstituted households tend to have poorer academic outcomes and experience lower well-being, compared to children in two-parent households (Francesconi et al., 2010; Ram & Hou, 2003). The redistribution of resources following separation, divorce or widowhood have a social and economic impact on individuals and their households. It is also likely to have an impact on resource allocation between the (parent and non-parent) members of the couple.

The majority of research on intra-household inequality has focused on couples and finds that women have less access to household resources compared to men (Bennett, 2013). As a result, household measures under-estimate poverty among women as well as the extent of gender inequality. Research on inequality between generations has generally found households to prioritise children, although with variations both between and within countries (Gábos et al., 2011; Lanau & Fifita, 2020; Main & Bradshaw, 2016). To date, relatively little attention has been given to the factors that may explain such variations.

Children and young adults in reconstituted households, regardless of whether they live with one or two biological parents, tend to have lower educational attainment and a higher risk of anti-social behaviours than children in intact households (Sanner et al., 2018; Sweeney, 2010). These poorer outcomes have been associated with the financial and emotional impact of divorce and/or bereavement on children as well as the impact of re-partnering on children (Thomson & McLanahan, 2012; van Eeden-Moorefield & Pasley, 2013). Indeed, the negative effect of divorce decreases when the mother has high resources, suggesting that more advantaged households may be able to protect children

from the negative effects of divorce (Fischer, 2007; Grätz, 2015). However, others find family instability to also play a part in explaining the negative outcomes of divorce (Thomson & McLanahan, 2012). For example, Sweeney (2010) finds a positive association between the cumulative number of changes experienced during childhood and negative outcomes during childhood and early adulthood. Growing up in a reconstituted household is associated with an increased risk of poverty and emotional behavioural issues.

Re-partnered couples tend to follow more individualised patterns of resource sharing compared to first partnerships (Bennett, 2013; Vogler, 2005). A recent study in the US found cohabiting and married couples with non-common children are less likely to pool their resources compared to those with common children only (Eickmeyer et al., 2019). Reduced pooling is likely to have an impact on children access to resources, particularly where only one of the members of the couple (usually the woman) identifies as a parent to the children in the household.

However, evidence in this respect is limited. Data that allows identifying individual outcomes is rare, and where it exists sample size tends to be an issue. Using a pooled sample for 22 European this paper examines the intra-household allocation of resources between children and adults, and between adults, in reconstituted and intact couples across welfare regimes. In doing so, it addresses the following questions. Do reconstituted households show different patterns of resource allocation than intact households? How does it intersect with gender? And finally, are there geographical variations in the observed patterns? In doing so it advances research on the determinant of intra-household inequality and provides novel evidence on the processes of intra-household allocation in reconstituted households and their consequences for child poverty.

Background

Research on intra-household inequality has chiefly focused on (heterosexual) couples and found women to have less access to household resources compared to men even when resources are pooled (Bennett, 2013; Karagiannaki & Burchardt, 2020; Lott, 2017). Additionally, women's access to resources is positively associated with their economic contribution to the household. In contrast, the presence of children appears to increase gender inequality within the couple. Women have less individualistic spending patterns and are more likely to reduce their own spending when there are children in the household (Bennett, 2013; Dema Moreno & Diaz Martínez, 2017). Children's expenses tend to be covered by mother's salaries (Lott, 2017; Pahl, 2005). Similarly, the administration of pooled resources by the mother has been associated with better children's outcomes (Kenney, 2008). Given that pooling is positively associated with children access to resources, and reconstituted households are less likely to pool their resources, children growing up in reconstructed household may have less access to resources than their peers in intact households.

Studies on sharing between children and adults find that households tend to prioritise children needs, with adults sacrificing their own needs when necessary to cover the needs of children in low, middle and high-income countries (Main & Bradshaw, 2016; Mood & Jonsson, 2016; Ridge, 2002; Zamora-Sarabia et al., 2019), although it is not a universal trait and some studies find children to be at a disadvantage (Brown et al., 2018; Mangiavacchi & Piccoli, 2011). Comparative analyses in Europe have shown country variations in the intra-household allocation of resources (Gábos et al., 2011). The factors that shape between-country differences in intra-household inequality are still little understood, with economic, cultural and social factors all likely to influence household resource allocation (Lanau and Fifita, 2020).

Countries in the EU-SILC are diverse in terms of political and demographic characteristics. Deprivation also rates vary by country, with Eastern European countries with lower income per capita generally showing higher deprivation rates (Gábos et al., 2011; Guio et al., 2012; Nolan & Whelan, 2011). Thus it can be expected that intra-household patterns vary geographically. One of the key advantages of the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) is the potential for analysing cross-national variations. To allow sufficient sample for analysis, while still exploring international variability, countries have been grouped into three welfare regimes, an approach widely used in the family literature (e.g. Albertini et al., 2016; Neilson & Stanfors, 2014): Western European or Continental, Southern European and Eastern European. The Scandinavian countries as well as the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland were excluded from the analysis due to specificities in data collection. The three regimes differ both in deprivation levels and the prevalence of reconstituted couple households. The poorest countries tend to have higher levels of child deprivation. Thus, child deprivation is lowest in Western Europe and highest in Eastern Europe with the Southern European countries somewhere in between, although there are also important variations within regimes, with countries such as Slovenia and Czechia with below-average child deprivation rates (Guio et al., 2020). Reconstituted couple households are most common in Western Europe, compared to Southern and Eastern Europe, where co-residence with extended family is more common, particularly but not only in case of economic difficulty e.g. following a divorce (Albertini et al., 2016; Amorim, 2019).

Evidence on the prioritisation of children in reconstituted households has largely focused on adult children. Studies in the US have shown that on leaving home children of re-partnered parents receive less (financial) support than those of intact families (Henretta et al., 2014, 2018; Kalil et al., 2014; López Turley & Desmond, 2011). In the Netherlands

(Houdt et al., 2020) examined the forms of support provided to adult children and found mothers and stepfathers to provide more forms of support than fathers and stepmothers, suggesting that the gender of the (step)parent matters. Comparatively little is known regards to differences in expenditure or investment during childhood. Research on non-resident fathers finds that they tend to make smaller financial contributions than resident fathers, particularly after re-partnering (Tach et al., 2014; Thomson & McLanahan, 2012). In Finland Antfolk and colleagues (2017) find found more willingness to invest in biologically related children compared to non-related children, which could result in less access to resources for non-biological children. Based on this literature the following hypotheses are formulated: *H1 Children in intact households are more likely to be prioritised than children in reconstituted couple households. H2. Adult women are more likely to be deprived compared to adult men.* With regards to cross-national variations, the expectation is that *H3.1 all three regimes will prioritise children over adults. H3.2 Reconstituted households are expected to be poorer across regimes, with larger penalties in Eastern and Southern Europe,* where such households are less common and overall deprivation rates higher.

Methods

Research on intra-household inequality has tended to take one of two approaches: the analysis of expenditure or the analysis of individual deprivation. A key advantage of expenditure data is that it is regularly collected (usually to calculate consumer prices) and widely available. The main disadvantage is that it often offers limited detail on who benefits from household expenditures. Generally, only a few items (chiefly clothes and shoes) are disaggregated by age and or gender. This means that conclusions about how households distribute resources rely on the information on a small subset of items. Another limitation is that it does not account for differences in need between household

members or in the cost of items. Deprivation measures overcome these limitations by measuring the ability of households and/or individuals to afford a range of items widely identified as necessities (socially perceived needs) (Guio et al., 2012; Mack and Lansley, 1985), thus these reflects the ability to cover necessities as opposed to the cost of items, and are often viewed as better measures of living standards than either income or expenditure (Whelan, Layte and Maître, 2002).

The paper exploits the 2014 ad-hoc material deprivation module of the EU-SILC. The module is unique in that it collected material deprivation data for children as well as individual adults in the household, enabling the study of intra-household inequality. The analysis is limited to heterosexual couples with children (N households=22.157; N adults= 45.708), as only two same-sex couples with children were identified. Focusing on couples allows reducing variability by excluding three-plus and single adult households which are likely to have different sharing patterns.

Households with at least one child not common to both partners are labelled as reconstituted households (n=901). Parenthood is self-defined and may include both biological and adopted children. This means that some reconstituted families may not be captured by the data if the new partner had adopted or reports children as their own (van Houdt, 2021). In the survey, children are assigned to a single household, meaning that it is not possible to assess the potential effect of post-separation custody arrangements. Approximately 80% of those who live with one parent live with their mother, and 20% with their father.

Table 1 shows key characteristics of intact and reconstituted households. Reconstituted households are more likely to be income poor and to experience difficulties to make ends meet than intact households. They are also more likely to be households with three or more children, somewhat more likely to be female-headed, and couples are less likely to

be married, all three being factors associated with increased risk of poverty (Guio et al., 2020; Nolan & Whelan, 2011).

Table 1. Characteristics of intact and reconstituted couple households

		Intact	Reconstituted	Total
Number of children	1	36	35	36
	2	51	41	50
	3+	13	24	14
Head	Male	75	70	75
	Female	25	30	25
Married	No	15	49	17
	Yes	85	51	84
Financial Strain	No	72	66	72
	Yes	28	34	28
Income poverty	No	84	77	84
	Yes	16	23	16
Welfare Regime	West	43	60	44
	South	33	26	33
	East	23	14	23

Source: EU-SILC 2014

For the analysis of intra-household inequality, two age-specific indices are built. The use of separate child and adult indices in the EU-SILC recognises that some needs (e.g. in terms of nutrition, education and so on) are age-specific. Furthermore, by relying on the age-specific items, collected at the individual/child level, it is possible to explore intra-household inequality.

Children and adults are considered to be deprived of an item if they do not have it because it cannot be afforded (as opposed to because it is not wanted) i.e. ‘enforced deprivation’ (Guio et al., 2012; Main & Bradshaw, 2016). The child index is the sum of enforced deprivation on 11 child-specific items reflecting material and social necessities

(Cronbach's alpha, 0.843, see Appendix 1 for the list of items). The reference adult replies for all children (aged 2-15) in the household. Thus, it is not possible to identify differences between children in the household. Furthermore, the identification of child deprivation relies on the reference adult knowing and accurately reporting children preferences and access to resources. Research in the UK (Main, 2019) concludes that children and adults agree on whether children have access to items, although children are more likely than adults to identify social aspects as necessities.

The adult index is the sum of six individual deprivation items (Cronbach's alpha, 0.816). To enable comparisons between children and adults, a summary index is created where all adults are considered as deprived if any adult in the household is deprived. This mirrors data collection on the child items (Guio et al., 2012). To assess the robustness of the results two thresholds (lacking 2+ and 3+ items) are used throughout. One item thresholds are too sensitive to variations in a single item, while when more severe thresholds are used, deprivation levels in Western Europe are too low to allow for analysis.

To assess the intra-household allocation of resources between children and adults, and following the deprivation literature (Lanau & Fifita, 2020; Main & Bradshaw, 2016) households are classified into four categories according to whether children and/or adults are deprived (both deprived, only children are deprived, only adults are deprived, none deprived). Multinomial logistic regression is used to identify the predictors of intra-household allocation of resources. The final section explores gender inequality within the couple through bivariate analysis and logistic regression models. Analyses are conducted using complex samples (Goedemé, 2013).

Results

Child deprivation in intact and reconstituted households

Child deprivation rates range between 6% in Western Europe, 15% in the South and 25% in Eastern European countries (Table 2). Children in reconstituted households are more likely to be deprived than their peers in intact households. Overall 18% of children in reconstituted households are deprived compared to 13% in intact households.

Table 2. Child deprivation rates in intact and reconstituted households across welfare regimes

	Intact	Reconstituted	Total
West	5	9	6
South	15	24	15
East	24	48	25
Total	13	18	13

Source: EU-SILC 2014

There are however wide variations across welfare regimes. Differences between regimes are larger than between households within a regime. However, children in reconstituted households in Eastern Europe are particularly vulnerable: 48% are deprived, double the figure observed in intact households. For Western and Southern Europe, the ratio is smaller, at 1.6 and 1.7 respectively. The use of a 3+ item threshold results in lower deprivation rates, but the patterns observed are unchanged and does not alter the conclusions.

Age and intra-household inequality

To identify intra-household inequality between adults and children households have been classified according to child and adult deprivation: both children and adults are deprived, only adults are deprived, only children are deprived and neither adults nor children are deprived. Table 3 presents the descriptive results for the whole sample and by welfare

regime. As expected, deprivation is the lowest in Western Europe, where 17% of households experience some deprivation. Eastern Europe has the highest prevalence of deprivation (34%), in 19% of households both children and adults are deprived. Southern Europe is somewhere in the middle with 29% of households having at least one deprived member, while in 13% of households both adults and children are deprived. In line with the findings from previous literature, the prioritisation of children needs is apparent across regimes. Adults only deprivation is relatively common: in 12% of households only adults are deprived, the figure ranges between 11% in Western and Eastern Europe and 14% in Southern Europe. In contrast, it is rare for children to be deprived while adults are not deprived, it is observed in 2% of households.

Table 3 Intra-household inequality in by welfare regime (% couple households)

Welfare Regime	Both Dep	Dep Adult	Dep Child	Not Dep	Total
West	5	11	1	83	100
South	13	14	2	71	100
East	20	11	5	64	100
Total	11	12	2	75	100

Source: EU-SILC 2014

Aggregate estimates can mask inequality between households. Table 4 describes the intra-household allocation of resources in intact and reconstituted households. The patterns for intact households closely mirror those of the whole sample, however, adults and children in reconstituted households have an increased risk of deprivation. In 75% of intact households no members are deprived, the figure is reduced to 65% in reconstituted households. Child only deprivation is extremely rare in both reconstituted and intact households (2-3%). With the 3+ threshold, child only deprivation is 2% for both groups. Thus, the descriptive results do not match the initial hypothesis that suggested a lower

prioritisation of children in reconstituted households. Figures for welfare regimes largely match this pattern, although the low prevalence of reconstituted households in Eastern and Southern Europe does not allow to confidently assess differences across regimes.

Table 4 Intra-household inequality in intact and reconstituted households

Household	Adult		Child		Total
	Both Dep	Dep	Dep	Not Dep	
Intact	11	12	2	75	100
Reconstituted	16	16	3	65	100
Total	11	12	2	75	100

Source: EU-SILC 2014

To further assess whether there are significant variations in intra-household patterns of inequality between intact and reconstituted household and across regimes, Table 5 below reports the results of a multinomial regression model. The dependent variable is intra-household resource allocation between children and adults. In addition to welfare regime and household configuration (intact or reconstituted) the regression controls by known predictors of deprivation (head's educational attainment and income poverty status). To better reflect the factors associated with intra-household inequality rather than deprivation itself the reference category are households where adults are deprived but children are not.

The model presented here corresponds to the pooled sample, as the results were consistent across regimes. In all three welfare regimes, reconstituted households are less likely than intact households to be in the non-deprived category. This is consistent with the higher risk of poverty and deprivation rates experienced in reconstituted households. No significant effects are observed for child only deprivation. The findings are robust to the use of a more severe 3 items threshold, although some effects become non-significant.

Thus, there is no indication of differences in the allocation of resources between intact and reconstituted households.

Table 5. Predictors of intra-household inequality. Multinomial Regression Model. Intra-household deprivation. Ref: Adult only deprivation

	Model 1 (2+ threshold)		Model 2 (3+ threshold)	
	B	SE	B	SE
All deprived				
Educational attainment (ref: secondary)				
Primary	0.48***	0.12	0.43**	0.14
Tertiary	-0.44**	0.14	-0.30	0.19
Income poor	0.95***	0.10	0.85***	0.12
Reconstituted	0.14	0.22	0.42	0.25
Welfare regime (ref: West)				
South	0.49***	0.13	0.63***	0.17
East	1.48***	0.12	1.90***	0.16
_cons	-1.19***	0.11	-1.63***	0.17
Child only deprivation				
Educational attainment (ref: secondary)				
Primary	0.33	0.19	0.11	0.18
Tertiary	-0.06	0.21	0.02	0.22
Income poor	-0.24	0.17	-0.28	0.16
Reconstituted	0.15	0.34	0.44	0.36
Welfare regime (ref: West)				
South	0.57*	0.24	1.18***	0.28
East	1.72***	0.22	2.54***	0.26
_cons	-2.58***	0.22	-2.85***	0.27
No deprivation				
Educational attainment (ref: secondary)				
Primary	-0.32***	0.10	-0.39***	0.11
Tertiary	0.94***	0.09	1.05***	0.11

Income poor	-1.05***	0.09	-1.22***	0.09
Reconstituted	-0.44*	0.20	-0.12	0.20
Welfare regime (ref: West)				
South	-0.16	0.09	-0.13	0.10
East	-0.22**	0.08	-0.05	0.10
_cons	1.88***	0.07	2.34***	0.09
<hr/>				
N	22157			

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, and *** $p < 0.001$

In accordance with the descriptive results, households in Southern and Eastern Europe are overall more likely to be deprived and have a higher probability of both adults and children are deprived than those in Western Europe. Furthermore, both Southern and Eastern regimes are associated with a higher probability of child only deprivation (i.e. of children in the household being deprived while adults are not).

Reconstituted households have a higher probability of both adults and children being deprived. As a result, children in reconstituted households are more likely to be deprived than children in intact households. However, the hypothesis that children in reconstituted households are less likely to be prioritised is not supported by the data. The results indicate that the higher probability of deprivation experienced by this sub-group reflects lower resources rather than differences in their allocation.

The EU-SILC deprivation questions do not allow to identify differences between children e.g. common vs non-common children. That said, given that the survey enquires whether any child in the household is deprived, less prioritisation of non-common children should translate into relatively more child only deprivation in reconstituted households. From the comparison between adult and child deprivation outcomes, there is no evidence that worse outcomes among children in reconstituted households (both non-common children and

children with step-children do worse) are associated with reduced prioritisation of (some) children in these households.

Gender and intra-household inequality

This section assesses whether living in a reconstituted household alters inequality within couples. The literature review identified both women and parents as more likely to go without and experience deprivation so that children do not (Bennett, 2013; Main & Bradshaw, 2016; Zamora-Sarabia et al., 2019). Thus, the protection of children may come at the cost of increased deprivation among mothers (H2). The results do not offer strong support for this notion. Generally, couples tend to be fairly equal in terms of deprivation. Only in 6% of households (5% with a 3+ threshold), there are inequalities between couple members. In two-thirds of these households, women are deprived while men are not, in the remaining cases it is men who are deprived. Reconstituted couples are somewhat more likely to have unequal deprivation patterns, although the differences are not significant.

Figure 2 below shows the results of a logistic regression where the dependent variable is individual deprivation and gender and household configuration are used as predictors. The model confirms that women at higher risk of deprivation – although differences are small in terms of effect size (Average Marginal Effects range between 2-3%). Reconstituted households at a higher risk of deprivation, and women in all households are at a higher risk of deprivation, but there is no significant additional risk for women in reconstituted households. In separate models, not shown, no significant effect is observed for parenthood suggesting that gender and parenthood effects may intersect, although the data does not allow to examine such hypothesis further.

Table 6 Predictors of individual deprivation. OLS Regression Model adult deprivation

	Model 3 (2+ threshold)		Model 4 (3+ threshold)	
Woman	0.11***	0.02	0.15***	0.03
Reconstituted	0.41**	0.13	0.44**	0.16
Woman*Reconstituted	0.14	0.14	-0.02	0.09
Income Poor	1.81***	0.06	1.94***	0.06
Welfare regime (ref: West)				
South	0.61***	0.07	0.60***	0.09
East	0.89***	0.07	0.95***	0.08
_cons	-2.38***	0.06	-3.06***	0.08
N	45708			

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0,01, and ***p<0.001

All in all, the results do not support the notion that intact and reconstituted households differ substantially in terms of intra-household deprivation patterns. Children in reconstituted households are more likely to be deprived because their/reconstituted households are more likely to be poor/tend to be poorer. The increased risk of deprivation persists after controlling by poverty indicators. However, there is no evidence that reconstituted households may be less likely to prioritise children. Gender inequality in deprivation in couple households are small, and that is also de case in reconstituted households, although there is some evidence of higher risk for women the effects are not statistically significant.

Discussion

This paper has explored intra-household inequality in intact and reconstituted households. The results are consistent with previous literature that indicates that (European) households tend to prioritise children needs. This is the case across regimes and for both

intact and reconstituted households. That said, while the focus here has been on age-specific deprivation to uncover household allocation patterns, children are also affected by the conditions of the households in which they live. Anti-poverty policies should retain a household perspective.

Children in reconstituted couples are more likely to be deprived compared to children living in intact households. Yet, both the descriptive and multivariate analysis of intra-household allocation patterns suggest that the higher risk of child deprivation in reconstituted households is associated with lower overall resources.

There is no evidence that reconstituted households are less likely to prioritise children needs. In fact, the descriptive results suggest that reconstituted households have higher rates of adult-only deprivation compared to intact households, although the difference is not statistically significant. There are several possible interpretations for such findings. The results may partially reflect methodological differences with regards to previous studies. First, adults may prioritise children's needs, with reduced investment in non-common children manifesting later in life (e.g. on leaving the parental home) (Henretta et al., 2014). Alternatively, while non-common children may receive overall fewer resources also during childhood, such difference does not translate into child deprivation. Reconstituted households may be under-reporting child deprivation. However, this seems unlikely given that reconstituted households in particular report high rates of child deprivation. Finally, it is also possible that, as reconstituted families become more common, the meaning of family and kinship is redefined, and step-parents may increasingly view and treat their stepchildren as their own (van Houdt, 2021). Future research should consider whether and under which circumstances investment in children varies over time. Similarly, collecting individual child data would allow testing for differences between siblings.

In line with evidence on gender inequality within couples, the analyses show women are at higher risk of individual deprivation, although differences are small (Guio & Bosch, 2020). Gender inequality in reconstituted households are somewhat larger than in intact households, but again the effect is not statistically significant. There is no evidence of an additional penalty for women in reconstituted households, or of a parenthood penalty, the coefficients are positive but not statistically significant. A larger sample would allow a more detailed assessment of gender and parenthood effects. Regardless, adults in reconstituted households face an increased probability of deprivation compared to adults in intact couples. The increased vulnerability in reconstituted households calls for interventions that consider the specific needs of these households. Poverty interventions should target (children in) reconstituted households, particularly in Eastern Europe.

Indeed, the gap between reconstituted and intact households is the largest in Eastern Europe, where almost half of the children in reconstituted households are deprived of two or more items. In the region reconstituted couples are less common, partially reflecting the higher prevalence of multigenerational co-residence (Amorim, 2019). The gap between intact and reconstituted households is lower in Western Europe (H3.2), but the notion that the gap reduces as reconstituted households become more common is only partially confirmed. The increased risk experienced by these households in Eastern Europe may partially reflect a selection effect, where households without family support may be at higher risk of deprivation in the first place. Notwithstanding, the biggest differences are observed between regimes rather than between intact and reconstituted households within regimes.

In all three regimes, it is rare for children to be deprived while adults are not (H3.1). However, some differences emerge that open new research questions. Adult only deprivation is most common in Western Europe and least in the Eastern bloc. Eastern

European countries show both the highest prevalence of deprivation and the highest prevalence of child only deprivation, 5% compared to 1-2% in the Western and Southern regimes. The effect persisted in the regression model, after controlling for poverty status, educational attainment and household configuration. While this finding could be interpreted as a positive association between the overall prevalence of deprivation and child only deprivation, such interpretation is at odds with research in Sweden which found a stronger prioritisation of children's needs in times of economic difficulty (Mood & Jonsson, 2016), as well as the wider evidence on the prioritisation of children in low and middle-income contexts (de Zwarte, 2016; Lanau & Fifita, 2020). Future research should further explore country variations in the intra-household allocation of resources.

The finding that households with different configurations strive to protect children from the consequences of poverty provides additional support for programmes like the European Child Guarantee, which intend to provide families in poverty with additional resources.

References

- Albertini, M., Kohli, M., & Vogel, C. (2016). Intergenerational transfers of time and money in European families: Common patterns — different regimes?: *Journal of European Social Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928707081068>
- Amorim, M. (2019). Are grandparents a blessing or a burden? Multigenerational coresidence and child-related spending. *Social Science Research*, 80, 132–144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2019.02.002>

- Antfolk, J., Karlsson, L. C., Söderlund, J., & Szala, A. (2017). Willingness to Invest in Children: Psychological Kinship Estimates and Emotional Closeness: *Evolutionary Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474704917705730>
- Bennett, F. (2013). Researching Within-Household Distribution: Overview, Developments, Debates, and Methodological Challenges. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 75(3), 582–597. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12020>
- de Zwarte, I. (2016). Coordinating Hunger: The Evacuation of Children During the Dutch Food Crisis, 1945. *War & Society*, 35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07292473.2016.1182359>
- Dema Moreno, S., & Diaz Martínez, C. (2017). The ownership and distribution of money in Spanish dual-income couples: Gender differences and the effects of some public policies. In S. Millns & S. Wong (Eds.), *Wealth and Poverty in Close Personal Relationships: Money Matters* (pp. 39–57). Routledge.
- Eickmeyer, K. J., Manning, W. D., & Brown, S. L. (2019). What's Mine Is Ours? Income Pooling in American Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 81(4), 968–978. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12565>
- Fischer, T. (2007). Parental Divorce and Children's Socio-economic Success: Conditional Effects of Parental Resources Prior to Divorce, and Gender of the Child. *Sociology*, 41(3), 475–495. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038507076618>
- Francesconi, M., Jenkins, S. P., & Siedler, T. (2010). Childhood family structure and schooling outcomes: Evidence for Germany. *Journal of Population Economics*, 23(3), 1073–1103. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-009-0242-y>
- Gábos, A., Özdemir, Ehgan, & Ward, Terry. (2011). *Material deprivation among children* (No. 7/2011; Research Note). European Commission. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9800&langId=en>

- Goedemé, T. (2013). How much Confidence can we have in EU-SILC? Complex Sample Designs and the Standard Error of the Europe 2020 Poverty Indicators. *Social Indicators Research*, 110(1), 89–110. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-011-9918-2>
- Grätz, M. (2015). When Growing Up Without a Parent Does Not Hurt: Parental Separation and the Compensatory Effect of Social Origin. *European Sociological Review*, 31(5), 546–557. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcv057>
- Guio, A. C., & Bosch, K. V. den. (2020). Deprivation of Women and Men Living in a Couple: Sharing or Unequal Division? *Review of Income and Wealth*, 66(4), 958–984. <https://doi.org/10.1111/roiw.12449>
- Guio, A. C., Gordon, D., & Eric Marlier. (2012). *Measuring material deprivation in the EU: Indicators for the whole population and child-specific indicators*. Eurostat Publications Office. <http://dx.publications.europa.eu/10.2785/33598>
- Guio, A. C., Marlier, E., Vandenbroucke, F., & Verbunt, P. (2020). *Micro- and macro-drivers of child deprivation in 31 European countries* (Statistical Working Papers). Eurostat.
- Henretta, J. C., Van Voorhis, M. F., & Soldo, B. J. (2014). Parental Money Help to Children and Stepchildren. *Journal of Family Issues*, 35(9), 1131–1153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X13485077>
- Henretta, J. C., Van Voorhis, M. F., & Soldo, B. J. (2018). Cohort Differences in Parental Financial Help to Adult Children. *Demography*, 55(4), 1567–1582. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0687-2>
- Houdt, K. van, Kalmijn, M., & Ivanova, K. (2020). Stepparental Support to Adult Children: The Diverging Roles of Stepmothers and Stepfathers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(2), 639–656. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12599>

- Kalil, A., Ryan, R., & Chor, E. (2014). Time Investments in Children across Family Structures: *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214528276>
- Karagiannaki, E., & Burchardt, T. (2020). *Intra-household inequality and adult material deprivation in Europe* (No. 218; p. 72). CASE. LSE. https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/CASE/_new/publications/abstract/?index=6931
- Kenney, C. T. (2008). Father Doesn't Know Best? Parents' Control of Money and Children's Food Insecurity. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70(3), 654–669. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2008.00512.x>
- Lanau, A., & Fifita, V. (2020). Do Households Prioritise Children? Intra-Household Deprivation a Case Study of the South Pacific. *Child Indicators Research*, 13(6), 1953–1973. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-020-09729-5>
- López Turley, R. N., & Desmond, M. (2011). Contributions to College Costs by Married, Divorced, and Remarried Parents. *Journal of Family Issues*, 32(6), 767–790. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X10388013>
- Lott, Y. (2017). When My Money Becomes Our Money: Changes in Couples' Money Management. *Social Policy and Society*, 16(2), 199–218. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746415000688>
- Main, G. (2019). Child poverty and subjective wellbeing. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 97, 49–58. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.06.031>
- Main, G., & Bradshaw, J. (2016). Child poverty in the UK: Measures, prevalence and intra-household sharing. *Critical Social Policy*, 36.
- Mood, C., & Jonsson, J. O. (2016). Trends in Child Poverty in Sweden: Parental and Child Reports. *Child Indicators Research*, 9, 825–854. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-015-9337-z>

- Neilson, J., & Stanfors, M. (2014). It's About Time! Gender, Parenthood, and Household Divisions of Labor Under Different Welfare Regimes. *Journal of Family Issues*, 35(8), 1066–1088. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X14522240>
- Nolan, B., & Whelan, C. T. (2011). Poverty and Deprivation in Europe. In *OUP Catalogue*. Oxford University Press.
<https://ideas.repec.org/b/oxp/obooks/9780199588435.html>
- Pahl, J. (2005). Individualisation in Couple Finances: Who Pays for the Children? *Social Policy and Society*, 4(4), 381–391.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746405002575>
- Ram, B., & Hou, F. (2003). Changes in Family Structure and Child Outcomes: Roles of Economic and Familial Resources. *Policy Studies Journal*, 31(3), 309–330.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1541-0072.00024>
- Ridge, T. (2002). *Childhood Poverty and Social Exclusion: From a Child's Perspective*.
- Sanner, C., Russell, L. T., Coleman, M., & Ganong, L. (2018). Half-Sibling and Stepsibling Relationships: A Systematic Integrative Review. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 10(4), 765–784. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12291>
- Sweeney, M. M. (2010). Remarriage and Stepfamilies: Strategic Sites for Family Scholarship in the 21st Century. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(3), 667–684. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00724.x>
- Tach, L., Edin, K., Harvey, H., & Bryan, B. (2014). The Family-Go-Round: Family Complexity and Father Involvement from a Father's Perspective. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 654(1), 169–184.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716214528655>

- Thomson, E., & McLanahan, S. S. (2012). Reflections on “Family Structure and Child Well-Being: Economic Resources vs. Parental Socialization”. *Social Forces*, 91(1), 45–53. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sos119>
- UNECE. (2011). *Measurement of emerging forms of families and households*. UNECE Task force on families and households. <http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/719856>
- van Eeden-Moorefield, B., & Pasley, B. K. (2013). Remarriage and Stepfamily Life. In *Handbook of Marriage and the Family* (pp. 517–546). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3987-5_22
- van Houdt, K. (2021). Like My Own Children: A Quantitative Study of Stepparents Claiming Adult Stepchildren. *Journal of Family Issues*, 0192513X21993898. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X21993898>
- Vogler, C. (2005). Cohabiting Couples: Rethinking Money in the Household at the Beginning of the Twenty First Century. *The Sociological Review*, 53(1), 1–29.
- Zamora-Sarabia, A. L., Guterman, R. H., Sanz-Barbero, B., Gómez, A. R., & García, L. O. (2019). Child health and the possibilities for childcare in a context of poverty and food insecurity: The narratives of parents attending a self-managed foodbank in Spain. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 27(4), 953–964. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12712>

Appendix 1 Child and adult deprivation indicators in the EU-SILC 2014

Child items

Some new not second-hand clothes

Two pairs of all-weather shoes

Fresh fruit and vegetables daily

One meal with protein daily

Books appropriate for their age

Equipment for outdoors activities (e.g. bike, rollers)

Toys to play inside (educational toys, board games, computer games)

Take part in leisure activities (sport, music)

Celebrations on special occasions

Having friends over from time to time

A week holiday away from home

Adult items

Some new not second-hand clothes

Two pairs of all-weather shoes

Having friends or family over monthly

Take part in leisure activities (cinema, sport, music)

A small amount of money to spend on one-self

Internet connection for personal use