

L I V E S  
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**TITLE**

I wouldn't have stopped  
working if I had known our  
couple turned that way

A Biographical Account of  
Labour Force Participation and  
Conjugal Love

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**Research Paper**

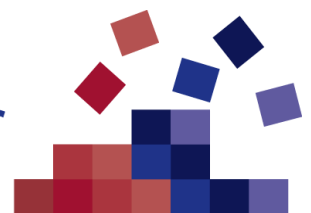
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## **A b s t r a c t**

This study examines how men and women's subjective evaluation of their work trajectories after childbirth influence their perceptions of conjugal love. Data are drawn from the study "Social Stratification, Cohesion and Conflict in Contemporary Families" (Widmer et al., 2003a). The results show that having a discontinuous and reduced work trajectory decreases women's declared level of conjugal love, especially if the interruption is perceived as a sacrifice. Women's feelings of love also depend on the way in which their male partners consider their own work trajectories. Men's feelings of love are much less sensitive to their own and their partners' work trajectories. The results are discussed within the life course perspective.

## **K e y w o r d s**

Occupational trajectories | Work | Intimacy | Love | Marital satisfaction

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## **1. Introduction**

Labour participation and conjugal life are two major paths to the construction of the self in contemporary societies. Paid work provides a sense of personal identity, since it has become one major form of social integration (Castel, 1995). Conjugal relationships have the same identity function in the private sphere as individualisation trends have put more emphasis on the family as a means of self-development (de Singly, 2001). In various ways, instrumental and expressive functions (Parsons & Bales, 1955) have become highly intertwined in advanced capitalistic societies. Work, like love, has a true importance for the social and emotional stability of individuals (Hochschild, 1983), and love, like work, has some undeniably “instrumental” dimension, as it provides an access to a variety of financial and social resources and domestic services. It follows that some kind of systemic linkage should exist between love and work. However, no compelling empirical evidence supports the hypothesis that a strong link connects conjugal love and the distribution of paid and domestic work between spouses or partners. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether or not conjugal relationships and work support or, on the contrary, weaken each other.

The interdependencies between work and love form a crucial nexus to understanding the future of long-term intimate commitments and the stability of self-identity. In this respect, a large number of studies identify gender inequalities in household and paid work as main factors of conjugal conflicts and conjugal dissatisfaction. We intend to approach the effects of such inequalities within a life course perspective. We hypothesise that the overall pattern of social participation in both paid work and domestic work over time plays a key role for understanding conjugal conflict and the persistence or weakening of conjugal love. In that respect, one should stress that women’s and men’s involvement in domestic work and paid work continue to be distinct in a large number of European countries, including Switzerland (Mingues & Ballesteros, 2007; Suter, 2008). The birth of the first child often marks a turning point in the differential participation of men and women in family and occupational activities. Thereafter, the trajectories of men and women strongly diverge (Le Goff et al., 2009). When partners become parents, women take on a large number of new domestic tasks, be they directly related to child-care or not, whereas for men there is usually little change. Therefore, the supplementary domestic tasks lead to an unequal division of family work between partners. Even if they plan to share the tasks equally, women do the largest part of the domestic tasks after the child is born (Le Goff et al., 2009). The transition to parenthood is thus a critical time for occupational careers and domestic work. It is also a crucial time for conjugal love as conjugal interactions significantly decrease in that transition (Rollins & Feldman, 1970; Lupri & Frideres, 1981; Van Laningham et al., 2001; Widmer et al., 2003a). Therefore, we expect that the way in which the occupational dimension of this transition is experienced by women and men will have an impact on their intimate feelings toward their partners.

## **2. Conjugal Satisfaction, Domestic and Paid Work**

The tenants of individualisation theory emphasise the impact of an unequal division of domestic labour between men and women as a main cause for conjugal problems and breakups of contemporary couples. By the expansion of the labour market since the 1960s, large numbers of women are employed nowadays (Greenstein, 1990). Although women are currently more active on the labour market than in the past, men's contribution to housework is still low. Many women do not understand or accept this unequal investment in household tasks anymore (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) and the issue of the work-family balance has appeared on the political agenda of various Western countries.

The results of empirical studies on couple satisfaction in relation to work, however, remain for the most part inconclusive. The 1988 "National Survey of Families and Households", which was conducted in the United States (Blair, 1993; Schoen et al., 2002; Sayer et al., 2011), examines the effects of husbands' and wives' paid work on marital satisfaction. No significant results are found for wives or husbands with regard to employment factors. Some other studies stress that relationships survive best if partners follow social norms by adopting a traditional division of paid work, where men do more and women do less (Sayer et al., 2011). Research, however, fails to provide empirical evidence about the impact of paid work participation of partners on conjugal love.

The impact of the sexual division of domestic work on marital satisfaction is better documented. Women who do much more housework than their partners are less satisfied with family arrangements (Stevens et al., 2001) and satisfaction with the division of household labour is positively correlated with marital happiness (Suitor, 1991). The division of household labour becomes more traditional due to the transition to parenthood and this leads to conflict and negative feelings towards the partner, especially for women (Wright et al., 1994). There is however scarce empirical evidence about this effect, which is rather marginal in most studies.

The inconsistent results concerning the effects of the actual division of paid and unpaid labour between men and women may be related to fairness issues and the gender ideology of partners. The "Study of Marital Instability over the Life Course", based on a sample of married individuals in the US (Amato & Booth, 1995), finds that women who develop egalitarian gender roles over time experience a declining marital quality. For men, an increase in egalitarian gender roles strengthen marital quality (Amato & Booth, 1995). Using the same data another study analyses the impact of the perceived fairness of the division of household labour on marital happiness. A perception of the distribution as unfair results in lower levels of marital happiness (Frisco & Williams, 2003). A study of 550 employed and married US women (Wilkie et al., 1998), whose husbands were also interviewed whenever possible, finds that men have more traditional gender attitudes than women. However, husbands who adhere to an egalitarian gender role ideology and prefer to share

housework tasks are more satisfied with their relationships than other husbands (Wilkie et al., 1998). Fairness issues are, of course, related to the norms and values held by partners. The influence of gender role ideologies on marital satisfaction is stressed in a study using a US sample of 61 married couples (Zvonkovic et al., 1994). Wives' gender role ideologies are correlated with their own and their spouse's satisfaction. Gender role ideologies of men are only correlated with women's satisfaction and not with their own satisfaction. In this study, a traditional gender role ideology is associated with a higher level of marital satisfaction. These and similar results suggest that the perception of fairness, linked with the gender ideology of partners, is more important to understand conjugal love than the actual participation in paid work or the division of household tasks *per se* (Frisco & Williams, 2003).

### **3. Occupational Careers of Women and the Transition to Parenthood**

Overall, researchers stress the modest impact of the actual division of paid and household labour on wives' happiness and stress the importance of partners' views on fairness within the couple for conjugal love (Amato & Booth, 1995; Vannoy & Philliber, 1992; Wilkie et al., 1998). Thus, contrary to largely shared expectations; the empirical results available so far do not support the hypothesis that the weakening of conjugal love stems from a gendered division of household and paid work. However, one may still think that conjugal dissatisfaction stems from gender issues, if considered in the long run of the joint life history of partners. Conjugal love may be related with contradictory life projects and biographical tensions between partners, rather than with decisions about who does what in the couple, considered at a single point in time, with no reference to the past.

Indeed, the division of household labour at any precise time may play a marginal role in individuals' self-concept and biography, since it takes on a different meaning according to their life perspectives. According to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002), expectations of equality in the household division of labour are embedded in biographical changes, which lead more and more women to experience alternatives to the home-maker life trajectory (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Despite their overly optimistic tone about the increasing presence of women in career jobs (Widmer et al., 2003b), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim provide a valuable suggestion for research on the determinants of conjugal love. Rather than focusing on the division of paid and household labour between the partners at a single point in time, research should pay attention to the various meanings of paid and domestic work, depending on the overall life course and projects that both partners develop during their joint lifetime.

In this respect, there is some evidence to suggest that life trajectories matter in the way in which division of household labour influences partnerships (Suitor, 1991). Indeed, the transition to parenthood is a crucial factor influencing conjugal stability (Lupri & Frideres, 1981; Orbuch et al., 1996; Umberson et al., 2005). New tasks, especially those related to child-care, are usually done by women. Even if women do not support the traditional division of domestic and paid work, the

division of household chores becomes much more gendered after the birth of the first child (Le Goff et al., 2009). If this life transition is interpreted by individuals, especially women, as a negative turning point in their professional careers, they may develop disappointment and unfulfilled expectations which result in reduced levels of declared conjugal love (Stähli et al., 2009). Therefore, life course trajectories must be considered as a key element when dealing with the interrelation between work and love, as fairness issues may primarily concern the life projects of partners, rather than the daily division of domestic and paid work. The transition to parenthood is likely to be a benchmark in that regard, as it creates a new organisation of paid and family work with consequences felt by both partners for many years thereafter. This is especially true for the Swiss context. Labour force participation of women rose since the 1970s in Switzerland as in other industrialized countries, but it is still low compared to other Western countries. Furthermore, part-time employment of women has increased (Buchmann et al., 2004). In 2011 only 56% of women worked full-time (compared to 87% of men, FSO, 2012). The family configuration is an important factor in the labour force participation of women (Buchmann et al., 2002, Widmer et al., 2003b). The presence of young children is a reason to interrupt or to definitively stop working for many women in Switzerland. Additionally, gender role attitudes are a key dimension for the temporary or final interruption of paid work. In Switzerland women are usually responsible for child-care and housework and they usually interrupt their labour force participation for several years following the transition to parenthood. A study by Buchmann and colleagues (2002) shows that about two years after interruption only 25% of women had started working again. After eight years only half of the women had started again. Interruption of women's labour force participation due to child birth is a quite usual phenomenon in Western societies but the case of women in Switzerland is interesting as the length of interruption is much longer than in other countries. If women go back to the labour market they usually work part-time, which is much more frequent for women in Switzerland than in other European countries (FSO, 2008). 83% per cent of female part-time worker are mothers with at least one child younger than seven years (FSO 2012). This was explained as a consequence of lack of child-care institutions in Switzerland and of the normative role of women as child carers (Buchmann et al. 2002). A report of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office about family life stressed that women are often underemployed and mothers in part-time and underemployed work conditions want to work more hours. The family model usually chosen by couples in Switzerland (e.g. men full-time, women part-time or at home) therefore does not correspond to the preferred model, which can lead to dissatisfaction and frustration in the relationship.

#### 4. Summary and Hypotheses

Figure 1 summarises the set of hypotheses that we draw from these considerations.

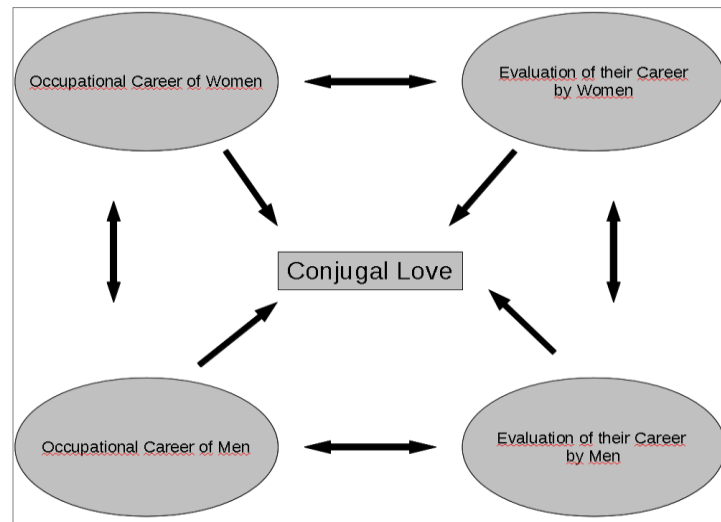


Figure 1. Hypothesised links between occupational careers and conjugal love

Overall, we hypothesise that the occupational trajectories of women that fall short of their promises lead to fairness issues within couples and that these potentially endanger conjugal love. Women who significantly reduced their participation in paid work during the transition to parenthood are likely to feel less in love with their current partner as they experienced a major shift in their social identity, whilst bearing the brunt of the reorganisation of daily life created by this transition. Those who also felt that this shift represented a sacrifice that they themselves made for the sake of the family are hypothesised to present even stronger feelings of dissatisfaction in their conjugal life. This effect will hold when lifestyle preferences of women are controlled for (Hakim, 2002, 2003). In other words, we believe that women's preferences, as a post-hoc adaptation to their actual life courses, are not strong enough to erase all traces of the professional identity that they developed before the transition to parenthood.

It is notable that the literature on the impact of paid work on marital satisfaction and work-family balance usually only take women into consideration. This gender bias is interesting in itself, as it shows that most research assumes from the start that only women face such problems (Blair, 1993; Kluwer et al., 1996; Saylor et al., 2011). We feel, however, that it is important to include men's careers as predictors of women's love, as well as to consider women's careers as predictors of men's love, as the work and love of both partners are linked together throughout their joint life courses (Elder et al., 2003). The male identity as the breadwinner is preserved when the woman follows a homemaker life trajectory, a situation that frees the man from domestic tasks in the long run, and that may, therefore, increase his declared level of conjugal love. Many women play an

active part in this script: women are more satisfied if their male partners are in the labour market (Schoen et al., 2002). It is, however, true that women's marital satisfaction also increases in line with the hours that their partner spends on domestic tasks (Stevens et al., 2001).

The causal direction between work trajectories and conjugal love is to some extent addressed by our research design. Indeed, the changes in work trajectories refer to the past (retrospective questions about change) and the feeling of being in love and being satisfied referred to the moment of the interview.

## **5. Data**

The data used here are drawn from the study "Social Stratification, Cohesion and Conflict in Contemporary Switzerland", based on a representative survey of 1,534 married and unmarried couples living in Switzerland (Widmer et al., 2003a). The study's primary goal was to examine how conjugal functioning is influenced by the partners' social status and position in the life course. The sample for the project was drawn randomly using a non-proportional stratified design based on the three major linguistic areas of Switzerland. The first wave data collection took place between October 1998 and January 1999. In 2004, a second wave of interviews was organised, but, due to financial constraints, this was limited to interviews with women. The subsample considered here focuses on 807 couples with at least one child of any age living with them. The specific profile of this subsample is as follows: women's mean age is 39 years and men's mean age is 42, the mean duration of their relationship is 15.5 years, the mean number of children is 2.25.

## **6. Dependent Variables**

To measure feelings of love, the first wave respondents were asked to grade the statement "we feel in love". Response categories range from very true, quite true, quite false, to very false. Answers were dichotomised between "very true" and "others", as 51% of men and 46% of women responded "very true". Conjugal dissatisfaction in the first wave was measured by asking: "Overall, considering your way of going along, your intimate life and the communication between you and your partner, how would you rate your relationship?" with five response categories ranging from "really bad" to "really good". Because of the highly unbalanced distribution of responses to this question, we split the sample between "really good" and "others", as previous research shows that this split produced strong correlations between the dissatisfaction scale and other measurements of conjugal satisfaction (Widmer et al., 2003a). The number of men and women who are not really satisfied is almost the same (53% of women and 52% of men). Break-ups were measured by a second wave question asking whether or not women had split up with their partner from wave one. Nine percent of women answered that they were divorced or separated from their partner of wave one. Missing values from the second wave are not statistically associated with any of the variables of wave one considered in this article.



To test whether the binary dependent variables are associated with each other, Gamma correlation coefficients were used, as the dependent variables are ordinal (Table 1). Relatively strong correlations exist between both partners' dissatisfaction and being in love, these appreciations forming a common evaluation "package" of the couple's relational situation. This package is not, however, systematically associated with couple separation.

Table 1. Correlation of dependent variables (Gamma)

<b>Gamma correlation</b>	<b>Less in love</b>	<b>Women Dissatisfaction</b>	<b>Less in Love</b>	<b>Men Dissatisfaction</b>
Dissatisfaction women	0.66***	-	-	-
Less in Love men	0.53***	0.50***	-	-
Dissatisfaction men	0.48***	0.58***	0.64***	-
Separation	0.15	0.44***	0.18	0.50***

Does the correlation of being in love and being satisfied hold over various age groups? In general, feelings of love and satisfaction with the relationship decreases in older age groups for men and women, but feelings of love decrease to a greater degree. The correlation between feelings of love and satisfaction is high among all age groups for men and women. Interestingly, for women there is a U-shape curve of satisfaction by age. The Gamma coefficient decreases first but in the older age it increases again.

## 7. Independent and Control Variables

Independent variables include measures of occupational careers, subjective evaluation of careers, lifestyle preferences, household task sharing and control variables. The distributions of the variables are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of explanatory variables (%)

	<b>% (N=807)</b>
<b>Labour force participation after child-birth, women</b>	
Maintained, Currently Active	14
Reduced	34
Interrupted	21
Not Currently Active	31
<b>Feeling of Sacrifice, Women</b>	
Yes	39
No	61

<b>Current Feeling of Career Limitations, Women</b>	
Yes	33
No	67
<b>Labour force participation after child-birth, Men</b>	
Maintained, Currently Active	75
Others	25
<b>Current Feeling of Career Limitations, Men</b>	
Yes	8
No	79
Missing	13
<b>Lifestyle Preference, Women</b>	
Work-centred	13
Adaptive	30
Home-centred	57
<b>Household Task Sharing</b>	
Man more than women	6
Man and woman more than 1 hour and equal	11
Man more than 1 hour and woman more than man	50
Man less than 1 hour and woman more	34
<b>Level of Education, Woman</b>	
Low	37
Medium	46
High	17
<b>Level of Education, Man</b>	
Low	12
Medium	67
High	21
<b>Age of Youngest Child</b>	
Preschool (less than 6 years old)	37
School (6 to 16 years old)	50
Post-school (over 16 years old)	13
<b>Couples' Nationality</b>	
Both Swiss	70
One Swiss and the other one socialised in Switzerland	6
One Swiss and the other one socialised in a Western country	9
One Swiss and the other one socialised in another country	3
Both foreigners	7
Missing	5

In order to measure women's career trajectories, various predictors are available. Participation in paid work was measured by asking women and men whether they had reduced or interrupted their participation in paid labour because of their children, at any earlier point in time. In combination with their actual paid activity status, we computed a variable to describe the occupational and family life course of women according to four alternative situations: never reduced or interrupted paid work (working career, 14% of women), reduced paid work at some point (combined careers, 34% of women), stopped paid work for children, but currently active (interrupted careers, 21% of women), and completely stopped paid work and currently at home or never worked before (homemaker, 31% of women). These four configurations are an approximation of the four trajectory types that were found in a longitudinal analysis of retrospective data (Widmer et al., 2003b). The data show that all women in the sample do take on the homemaker role to some extent, but not all of them exclusively. It is important to note that these four sequences of labour force participation do not constitute an ordinal scale. Maintaining, reducing, interrupting-and-returning, or stopping definitively do not represent unequal "proximity to the labour market" positions, which may be reinforced or weakened by some predictors in a linear way. Rather, they correspond to different types of trajectories that must be considered as a categorical covariate (Stähli et al., 2009). Only a few men interrupted or reduced their labour force participation or quit working due to family commitments. Therefore, these three categories were merged together and distinguished from the continuous working career. 75% of men continued working after the birth of a child and 25% had another trajectory.

Two variables concern the subjective evaluation of occupational trajectories. The perceived effect of parenthood on their career was measured by asking respondents if their children constitute a limitation for their occupational career at the present time. If so, respondents were asked whether this change represented a large, small, or no sacrifice for them. The factor of career limitation that children represent was acknowledged by one-third of the women. For men, this number was much lower: only 10% felt limited in their career because of their children. These numbers are not surprising taking into account that 75% of men in the sample continued working after the birth of a child, whereas 39% of the women who felt limited answered that they perceive the career limitation as a sacrifice (either large or small). We did not include this variable in the multivariate analyses for men because of its overlap with the career limitation concept in their case.

We measure lifestyle preferences (Hakim, 2002, 2003) by combining two questions about career priority and the ideal role distribution between partners. Career orientation is measured by asking the partners if, at the present time, the improvement of their occupational status is a high priority, a moderate priority, or no priority at all for them. Their preference about this role distribution while living with school-age children is captured with a question with five possible answers that have been recoded into a dichotomy: preference for equality ("mother and father spend the same amount of time at home and at work"; "father stays at home more than the mother"; and

“whether the father or mother stays at home does not matter, but one of the two should stay at home”) vs. preference for a traditional role segregation (“mother stays at home, father works” and “mother works part-time”). Persons with a high career priority are considered to be work-centred whatever their ideal role distribution; 13% of the women from our sample belong to this category. Individuals who mention moderate or no career priority but an ideal of non-segregated work-family balance are considered to be adaptive. About one-third of women belong to this type. Women declaring moderate or no career priority and a preference for a segregated role distribution are classified as home-centred (in accordance with Hakim’s terminology). The majority of women are home-centred (57%). Here again, we did not use this variable for men as there are only very few cases of home-centred men so that we would lack statistical power to estimate the effect of this variable.

In addition, we measured the actual division of household labour, distinguishing couples in which the man does more domestic tasks than the woman, couples where the share is about equal, those where the woman does more than the man, and those where the woman does everything or almost everything. Answers about the amount of daily housework of men and women were taken into account and were put in relation to each other. The category where men do more housework than women shows a non-traditional share of housework, as does the category where housework is shared equally. We distinguished furthermore between couples where men do almost no housework and those where they do more than one hour per day. Even if both categories show a traditional distribution of housework, we distinguish them in order to differentiate between men who are doing at least some housework and those who are doing almost nothing. The literature shows that the satisfaction of women increases with the number of hours men spend on household labour. In half of the couples, men do more than one hour of housework per day, but women more than that. An equal share of household labour is indicated by only 11% of the couples. A non-traditional housework share, where the man does more housework than the woman, appears only in 6% of the couples. In one-third of the couples, the man does less than one hour of housework and the woman more. The traditional work share (woman more than man) is the most common pattern in the sample (84%).

Several other variables were included in order to control for possible confounding effects. Three levels of education are used: low, medium and high. Participants who finished compulsory schooling and achieved at most a short apprenticeship are grouped into the low education category. The middle level comprises all respondents who finished an apprenticeship (three to five years of vocational training after compulsory schooling). Participants with some college degree or a high-school diploma are attributed to the high level. Among women, 37% have a low level of education, 46% a medium level and 17% a high level. Among men, there are only 12% with a low level of education, 21% with a high level and 67% with a medium level of education. The age of the youngest child living in the household is included because the literature shows that it

influences couples' satisfaction (Vannoy & Philliber, 1992; Schoen et al., 2002; Frisco & Williams, 2003). We distinguish three family stages: family with a preschool child (youngest child is less than six years old, 37%), school-age family (youngest child is aged six to 16 years old, 50%), and post-school stage (youngest child is more than 16 years old, 13%). Individuals' nationality was also taken into account, with five response categories: both are Swiss (70%), one partner Swiss and the other one socialised in Switzerland (6%), the other one socialised in another Western country (9%), the other one socialised in another country (3%), and both socialised abroad (7%). A study by Nguyen et al. (2010) using the same data showed that the cultural background of couples is important for marital success. Results show that couples where both partners are Swiss have a lower risk for divorce or separation between the waves than couples where one is Swiss and the other from a non-Western country.

## 8. Results

Two logistic regression models were run for each dependent variable, one for women and one for men, as well as a model for separation between the first and second wave, distinguishing between the first and second waves. The odds ratios are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of logistic regressions (odds ratios)

		<b>A) Less love</b>	<b>B) Dissatis faction</b>	<b>C) Less love</b>	<b>D) Dissatis faction</b>	<b>E) Separa tion</b>
<b>Reduction of labour force participation of women owing to children</b>	Maintained, currently active	0.77	1.43	0.80	0.90	1.61
	Reduced	1.53 *	1.04	1.33	1.04	3.89 **
	Interrupted, currently active	1.55	1.34	1.01	0.86	2.72
	Not currently active	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>Feeling of sacrifice by women</b>	yes	1.35	1.63 *	0.94	0.88	0.67
	no	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>Feeling of actual career limitation by women</b>	yes	1.23	1.12	1.07	1.09	1.93
	no	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>Reduction of labour force participation of men owing to children</b>	Maintained, currently active	1.54 *	1.25	0.92	0.98	1.28
	others	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>Feeling of actual career limitation by men</b>	yes	1.99 *	1.68	0.68	1.76	2.11
	no	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

<b>Life style preferences of women</b>	home centred	1	1	1	1	1
	adaptive	1.36	0.75	1.30	1.42	1.53
	work centred	1.64	1.7 *	1.7 *	1.26	5.21 ***
<b>Household task sharing</b>	Man more than woman	1.29	0.65	1.19	0.96	5.48 **
	Man and woman more than 1 hour and equal	1.24	1.46	0.80	1.18	1.57
	Man more than 1 hour and woman more than men	0.75	0.94	0.55 **	0.48 ***	1.39
	Man less than 1 hour and woman more	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	low	1.0	1.0	-	-	1.0
<b>Woman level of education</b>	medium	1.16	0.71	-	-	0.66
	high	1.78 *	0.93	-	-	0.32
	low	-	-	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>Man level of education</b>	medium	-	-	0.95	1.33	1.62
	high	-	-	1.31	1.41	1.41
	Preschool (less than 6 years old)	0.96	0.77	0.7 *	1.18	1.64
<b>Age of youngest children</b>	School (6 to 16 years old)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Postschool (over 16 years old)	-	-	-	-	-
	Both Swiss	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>Couple nationality</b>	One Swiss and the other socialised in CH	1.26	2.39 *	1.17	0.98	1.68
	One Swiss and the other socialised in another occidental country	0.43 **	1.54	0.58	0.81	0.77
	One Swiss and the other socialised in an other country	0.44	1.35	0.97	2.66	4.35 *
	Both foreigners	0.66	0.81	0.56	1.23	2.97

\*\*\* p < .001, \*\* p < .01, \* p < 0.05

Model 3A considers women's feelings of love towards their partner as the dependent variable. Here, changes in the occupational career of women after the transition to parenthood have a significant impact. A reduction of women's labour force participation increases their risk of feeling less love towards their partner. No significant effects for their feeling of career limitation and feeling to bring a sacrifice (evaluation of career change), lifestyle preferences and the division of household labour were found for feelings of love. Interestingly, the impact of men's occupational careers on women's declared level of love is also significant. Women with men who maintained full-time employment throughout the transition to parenthood feel less love than women who have partners who chose an alternative trajectory. However, when men experienced a limitation in their own occupational career, women's feelings also deteriorated. Women with high education have also a higher risk of declaring lower levels of love for their partner.

Model 3B considers the risk that women are dissatisfied with their conjugal relationship. Their occupational careers have no significant impact on marital dissatisfaction. But women who felt that they had sacrificed their career because of a child are more likely to be dissatisfied with their relationship. Lifestyle preferences also show significant effects on women's dissatisfaction: work-centred women are more often dissatisfied than home-centred women. No effects for men's work trajectories were found.

Model 3C describes the results for men's feeling of love. Interestingly, there are no significant effects of their own occupational career, or of their female partners' careers. But men with a work-centred partner have a higher risk of being less in love. A traditional division of housework where the man does at least some housework leads to more feelings of love by men than a situation where men do almost no housework.

Model 3D focuses on the effects of men being dissatisfied with their relationship. Only the gender distribution of household tasks shows significant effects on men's dissatisfaction. A traditional division of household labour leads to less dissatisfaction for men. Occupational careers of men and women and their subjective evaluation of these have no significant effects on men's level of satisfaction.

In model 3E, the likelihood of conjugal separation between the two waves of the study is considered. Women who reduced their labour force participation after the birth of a child have a higher risk of separation than women who chose another work trajectory. Indeed, the odds ratio is almost four times higher than for couples where women did not work before childbirth and were not in paid work thereafter. Interestingly, the odds ratio for separation is also high, although non-significant, for women who momentarily left the labour market but are currently in employment. In terms of lifestyle preferences, the likelihood of divorce is five times higher for work-centred women than for home-centred women. Where men do more housework than women, there is also a higher

risk of separation than in couples where there is a traditional division of household labour. No significant effects for men’s trajectories and career evaluation were found.

In order to show the interaction between the most significant effects on the dependent variables, we contrasted the two profiles of responses by grouping women who were not currently in the labour market (homemaker careers), whose lifestyle preference was home-centred, and who felt no sacrifice. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we grouped women who had interrupted their participation to the labour market or had reduced their hours after the birth of a child (combined and interrupted careers), whose lifestyle preferences were work-centred and who indicated that the reduction or interruption of paid work had been a sacrifice for them. Figure 2 shows that more than twice as many women with the second profile are to a greater amount less in love with their partner than women with the first profile. The same relation holds for conjugal dissatisfaction. For separation, the differences between the two profiles are even stronger: whereas only 1% of women with a homemaker career, a home-centred lifestyle preference and no feeling of sacrifice, separated between the two waves, about 36% of women with the other profile had separated or divorced during the same time period. Similar analyses were done for men, but their profiles did not make any difference to their likelihood of feeling less love, being less satisfied or having separated.

Overall, the results show that changes in occupational careers have an important impact on women’s feelings of love, separation and dissatisfaction. Men’s feelings of conjugal love are not altered by their partners’ occupational careers. Lifestyle preferences have an effect on women’s and men’s conjugal love and on the likelihood of divorce or separation. A traditional division of household labour has a positive impact on men’s conjugal love and satisfaction whereas a non-traditional share of household and paid work influences women’s satisfaction positively, whilst also increasing the likelihood of divorce or separation.

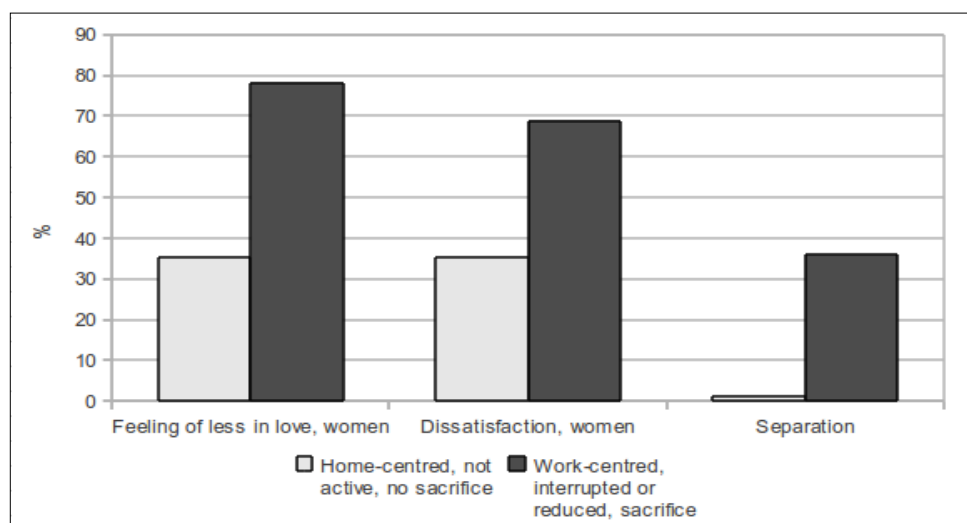


Figure 2. Interaction of oppositional profiles of women with dependent variables



## 9. Discussion

The interrelation between work and love is better understood within a biographical perspective than if considered as an issue of fairness concerning domestic and paid work that individuals and couples settle without considering their shared history. Indeed, it turns out that the overall life prospects of partners have a strong influence on various indicators of conjugal love.

Experiencing a substantial change of labour force participation in the transition to parenthood leads women to express fewer feelings of love. For women who reduced their labour force after the birth of a child the risk of feeling less in love increases. The risk to separate or divorce increases also significantly. This set of results can be interpreted in several ways, the validity of which should be assessed by future research. First, part-time jobs that often follow the transition to parenthood in Switzerland are associated with a large number of negative consequences, such as irregular schedules, fixed-term contracts, unskilled work, etc. These kinds of jobs may put individuals, be they women or men, at risk of poor quality conjugal relationships, because of the practical strains that they create. But as women hold this type of jobs more often than men, they are the main targets of their potentially negative outcomes. Secondly, women with part-time jobs may be especially likely to experience a double shift situation (Hochschild & Machung, 1990), because they are caught between paid and family work, with legitimacy in none, and a rather unclear ordering of importance between both. Compared with homemakers, women with part-time jobs may feel that they are bad mothers because of the compromises that they need to make at home in order to accommodate the demands of their jobs. Compared with full-timers, and especially with men, they may be viewed by their employers as second-class employees because of their inability to work over-time and the emphasis they might occasionally put on their family obligations. Third, to experience a significant professional disinvestment for whatever reason may create ambivalence about one's identity, self-mastery and self-concept, which in turn increases the likelihood of women being able to make marriage or partnership work in the long run. Additionally, mothers often are forced to work part-time or leave the job market after the transition to parenthood. This does not correspond to the wishes and expectations of many women, who wish to have more formal child care possibilities, especially for very young children (FSO, 2008). As women also achieve high education levels, their specialisation in the household, as described in the human capital theory, is not profitable for them (Baumgartner, 2006). The given institutional circumstances in Switzerland lead to frustration and dissatisfaction for mothers.

The subjective evaluation of individuals' employment careers also has an influence on their declared level of conjugal love. On average, women for whom it was a sacrifice to see their career prospects limited by the transition to parenthood have a higher likelihood of experiencing less conjugal love. This is especially likely to happen to women with a work-centred lifestyle, who more often than others feel frustrated because of the dissonance between their life projects and the occupational trajectories imposed by well-known structural constraints (i.e., lack of childcare

facilities, unfriendly work and school schedules, etc.). For men, a distinct set of effects on conjugal love was found. Men's conjugal love is not affected by what their partners feel about their own careers. In other words, when women evaluate their careers negatively, this does not affect their male partners, maybe because they consider this "normal" or at least acceptable. After the birth of a child, there are usually no large changes in men's careers, as they continue working full-time or even increase their hours of paid work.

There is a higher risk of dissatisfaction and separation for men and women when women are work-centred. This confirms the results of several other studies that found that traditional family attitudes lead to higher satisfaction, especially for men, and to a lower risk of divorce (Frisco & Williams, 2003; Zvonkovic et al., 1994). This may be especially true if the partners have developed traditional attitudes not only regarding strongly typed gender roles but also a fusion model of family cohesion that supersedes individual autonomy and the logic of self-development (Widmer et al., 2006). Swiss men declare higher levels of conjugal satisfaction when their female partners have more traditional attitudes, a situation in which they can stress their role as breadwinners and the role of their wives or partners as homemakers. This suggests that traditional family task distributions are favourable to men at the expense of women; it also implies that, for men, breadwinning brings more satisfaction and recognition than housework. On the opposite, work-centred women seem to be more assertive of their non-traditional interests, possibly because they feel less dependent on their marital situation.

Unexpectedly, the division of household labour has a significant effect on the declared level of conjugal love, but only for men. A traditional distribution of housework leads to more feelings of love and to a lower risk of relationship dissatisfaction by men. Various studies show a higher satisfaction of women with men who are active in the household (Stevens et al., 2001). Our study does not confirm this result, since no significant effect was found in this respect. However, we also found that there is a higher risk of separation for couples in which the man does more housework than the woman, although this situation is quite rare. Men may feel uncomfortable with an arrangement that endangers their role as breadwinners. This implies that traditional sex-role identities are still effectively at work in present-day Swiss couples.

Overall, the results show that an unequal division of labour between men and women is not *per se* a sufficient condition for poor conjugal love. It becomes such a condition if it is associated with frustrations concerning women's biographical sequences and uncertainties stemming from disrupted occupational trajectories. An additional problem women face is that their feelings of love are also sensitive to their male partners' work trajectories and to his feelings of career limitations. Women feel less in love if their partners maintain their labour force participation and feel some limitation in their professional careers because of their children. In other words, women's feelings depend on their male partners' satisfaction with their own occupational lives. This is not the case for men, who separate the spheres of work and love, and their conjugal satisfaction from their

female partners' occupational careers. What matters for men's feelings in the realm of conjugal intimacy is some assurance of benefitting from a stable and unequal division of family and paid work throughout their life course, probably as a safeguard against a loss of their master status (Krüger & Levy, 2001) as breadwinners and, ultimately, of their social identity.

This mismatch of expectations between men and women throughout the life course is likely to continue to produce a great number of clashes in contemporary couples in Switzerland, and elsewhere. Rather than focusing on the division of domestic labour at one point in time as a determinant of conjugal love and marital satisfaction, research should take the biographical sequences of women and men into account when dealing with the consequences of fairness issues within couples and families. As occupational careers have become a central pathway for achieving self-identity, especially in the middle and upper classes, they have also become important explanatory factors of conjugal satisfaction. It is unfortunate that almost all existing studies on the consequences of women's employment on family life focus on child development and not on marital happiness or other aspects of conjugality. Adult identity and conjugality issues would seem to represent a much more important issue in women's and men's work biographies than child well-being or parental roles.

Some limitations of this study should be mentioned. The results of our study should be replicated using longitudinal data. Even though we emphasized a life course perspective in measuring the changes of labour force participation due to the transition of parenthood, the feeling of love and relationship satisfaction are measured cross-sectionally and we cannot control for their level before the transition of parenthood took place using this dataset. Also, we did not consider the different linguistic regions of Switzerland. Overall, the German-speaking part of Switzerland is considered as more traditional than the two other parts. Therefore, differences of life style preferences of women could occur which in turn impact conjugal love in the various areas of Switzerland.

Finally, the measurement of feelings of love should be improved. Measuring love with a standardized question is questionable, as love is a very complex phenomenon which may have different meanings for different persons.

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