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# Just Like Mom? The Intergenerational Reproduction of Women's Paid Work

Anne E. van Putten, Pearl A. Dykstra and Joop J. Schippers

Given the increasing female labour force participation rates in recent decades, the question arises as to whether the daughters of working mothers show different job patterns than the daughters of homemakers. Using data from a sample of 3,169 adult women in the 2002–2004 wave of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study, we find that women who were raised by a working mother work about two more hours per week than those raised by a homemaking mother. The likelihood that women are currently in the labour market is not affected by their mother's past labour force participation. Women's own educational achievement and the presence of children younger than 12 are the strongest determinants of their participation and work hours. Our findings add to the growing evidence that parental behaviours during childhood have long-reaching consequences for children's behaviours, also in the realm of paid work. This provides a useful explanation for the persisting gender gap in work hours across Europe, in addition to the conventional explanations of education, occupational history and family formation.

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## Introduction

A persistent gender-stereotypic pattern characterizes the distribution of paid and unpaid labour in European and other developed countries. Despite the remarkable increase in women's labour market participation since the 1960s, especially among married women with children (Hartog and Theeuwes, 1985; Mincer, 1985; Pott-Buter, 1993), women's work hours continue to lag behind those of men. This has been termed the 'part-time divide' (Rosenfeld and Birkelund, 1995; Fagan and Rubery, 1996). In the Netherlands, the proportion of full-time working women of all women in the labour force is especially marginal, making the Dutch gender gap in work hours the largest in Europe (SCP, 2000; Plantenga and Remery, 2006; European Commission, 2007). Dutch women's work hours have not increased at all over time (Román *et al.*, 2007). The gender stereotypical labour division of the male breadwinner

household has developed into the one-and-half earner household in which women continue to bear the prime responsibility for childcare and housework, and men for the provision of income (Den Dulk, 2001). Consequences are not only an income gap between men and women, but also a gender imbalance with regard to secure and long-term jobs, and representation at levels of governmental, judicial, and economic decision making (Reskin, 1993; de Ruijter *et al.*, 2003). With its comparatively large gender gap in work hours, the Netherlands can be regarded as the prototypical example of the part-time divide in Europe.

The present article aims to move beyond conventional explanations of women's labour market behaviour by not only focusing on the importance of women's educational, occupational, and family-formation histories, but by also including measures of their mother's past labour market behaviour. Despite the usefulness of education, occupation, and childbirth

in accounting for the rise in women's labour market participation across Europe (Drobnic *et al.*, 1999; Jansen and Kalmijn, 2002; Román *et al.*, 2007), these conventional explanations do not suffice when we want to explain why women's *work hours* continue to be limited. As women today are less often married, give birth to fewer children and are higher educated than ever before (van Nimwegen and Beets, 2006), they should be working *more* hours than previous generations. Yet, recent work in the Netherlands shows that the work hours of women aged 30–50 hardly vary across birth-cohorts (Román *et al.*, 2007). Women's work hours also hardly vary with their educational level. Given that the conventional adagio 'education, occupation, and family-formation' accounts for only part of the variation in work hours among women, we turn to another, supplementary, explanation for women's work hours. More specifically, in view of the persisting gender differences in paid work over time, we wonder whether the labour patterns of women are in part the product of an intergenerational reproduction process. The socialization literature has found relationships between the gender-role attitudes of mothers and daughters and also showed that the maternal labour market behaviour can affect the future beliefs of children (Glass *et al.*, 1986; Moen *et al.*, 1997; Wrigth and Young, 1998; Cunningham, 2001a). In the stratification or social mobility literature, many studies have found that women's occupational status does not only depend on their own educational achievement but also on their mother's educational and occupational trajectories (Rosenfeld, 1978; Stevens and Boyd, 1980; Kalmijn, 1994; Aschaffenburg, 1995; Korupp, 2000). However, few studies have explored the question whether women's *work hours* today can be traced back to their mother's past labour market participation. Perhaps there has not been enough variation among women previously regarding whether they were raised by a working mother or not. However, with the steady increase of married women's labour force participation since the 1960s, today's adults have grown up with a working mother on a larger scale than previous generations, and their number continues to increase. This allows us to compare the labour market behaviours of women who grew up with a working mother and those who did not.

In the present study, we aim to contribute to the existing literature in three ways. Firstly, we combine explanations from the two distinct literatures on socialization and stratification. This can be regarded as a contribution to both literatures, especially to the literature on stratification, which is marked by a strong emphasis on empirical findings. The combination of

perspectives also allows for a more inclusive analytical approach. Unlike stratification studies, we control for demographic characteristics such as partner-relationship and age of children in our models, and unlike socialization studies we control for employment history. Secondly, we contribute to the socialization literature, specifically in the area of behavioural role modelling, by focusing on mother's and daughter's labour market *behaviour* rather than attitudes. To the stratification literature we add insight into the importance of mother's labour force participation for women's *work hours*, rather than women's occupational status. Finally, we employ a more recent and inclusive sample of women in our analyses than previous work has done, which allows us to separate parental home and demographic career effects.

## Research Question

The central research question we address in this article is: do daughters who were raised by working mothers work more hours in adulthood than daughters of homemaking mothers? We ground this question in two distinct empirical literatures, namely the literature on socialization, and the literature on stratification. The analyses are based on the first wave of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS), a nationally representative survey held between October 2002 and December 2004 (Dykstra *et al.*, 2005), from which we selected 3,169 adult women.

By focusing on mother's and daughter's labour market behaviours we do *not* imply that only mother's and daughter's behaviours are gender-stereotypical. We limit our analyses to women primarily because there is too little statistical variation in the labour market behaviour of fathers and sons. Given that fathers who did not participate in the labour market tended to be unemployed or physically unable to work rather than homemakers, they cannot be compared with non-working mothers. Moreover, non-working fathers form such a marginal category that little can be drawn from a comparison with working fathers. When it comes to sons, the presence of part-time working men<sup>1</sup> merely implies a divide between men working on contracts of 4 or 4.5 days per week versus men working on 5 day contracts. This differs fundamentally from the variation in daughters' work hours, which ranges from contracts for 1 day per week to 5 days.

## Theoretical Framework

In the following, we will draw from the literatures on socialization and stratification to develop an integrated

socio-economic perspective on the relationship between mother's and daughter's labour market behaviour. We start with notions from the literature on socialization, where we discuss that working and non-working mothers not only pass on different beliefs to their children about the roles of women as workers, spouses, and mothers, but also set different behavioural examples. Secondly, the stratification literature explains how working mothers can equip their children with more (valuable) resources for labour market entry and career pursuit than non-working mothers.

### Socialization Literature

Men and women not only develop differently because of biological determinants, according to the socialization literature they are primarily *taught* to behave differently by their social environment. Parents are regarded as the most important socializing agents, and childhood as the formative period in which behavioural preferences take shape, and in which later behaviour is rooted (Block *et al.*, 1973; Bandura, 1977; Chodorow, 1978; Witt, 1997). Empirical research on the socialization of men and women into gender-specific roles is marked by a strong focus on *attitudes*. Cross-sectional and longitudinal studies in the United States and Great Britain find positive relationships between the gender-role attitudes of mothers and daughters (Acock and Bengtson, 1978; Glass *et al.*, 1986; Starrels, 1992; Moen *et al.*, 1997; Cunningham, 2001a; Burt and Scott, 2002). Other American studies show that adolescent children of working mothers tend to have more egalitarian gender-role attitudes than children of non-working mothers (Thornton *et al.*, 1983; Booth and Amato, 1994; Wrigth and Young, 1998). Based on these studies, we can conclude that the daughters of working mothers think it more acceptable and desirable for women to work than the daughters of non-working mothers.

Within the rather broad spectrum of the socialization literature, research on behavioural role modelling focuses on the reproduction of gendered *behaviours* across generations. Children are thought to learn from their parents' behaviour from very early on, and to perform behaviours similar to their parents' in adulthood (Bandura, 1977; Cunningham, 2001a, b; Denuwelaere, 2003; de Valk, 2004). Daughters of working mothers are not only expected to have more egalitarian attitudes towards women's work than daughters of non-working mothers, but also to *behave* in a more gender-egalitarian way. Daughters of working mothers have witnessed their own mother combining paid and family work, and were physically part of their

mother's combination strategy as children. They were more likely to help out with chores than daughters of non-working mothers, and their fathers were likely to perform more housework and childcare than sole-breadwinner fathers. In this way, the daughters of working mothers are more likely to have learnt from an early age that not just mothers are responsible for the household but other family members are too. They also have had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the world of paid work not only through one, but through two parents (provided both were present). In contrast, when daughters of non-working mothers want to combine raising a family with a paid job, they do not have these experiences and cannot resort to similar work-family strategies as their mothers, nor take their mother's example as a starting point from which to develop their own strategy. The mechanism of behavioural role modelling has been applied to the areas of housework and family formation (Barber, 2001; Cunningham, 2001a, b; Denuwelaere, 2003; de Valk, 2004), but we have not found empirical studies within the socialization literature that apply the mechanism to women's paid work.

### Stratification Literature

The literature on stratification or social mobility addresses another mechanism through which women's labour market behaviour can be reproduced, by pointing at resource transfers from parents to children (Blau and Duncan, 1967). Several studies suggest that working mothers transfer work-related resources to their children that homemaking mothers do not have, or have to a much lesser extent (Menaghan and Parcel, 1991; Kalmijn, 1994). These maternal resources are found to foster daughter's labour market participation, work hours, and their occupational success. In the first place, several British and American studies in the 1960s and 1970s found that the daughters of working mothers participated more often in the labour force than the daughters of homemaking mothers (Almquist and Angrist, 1970; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1971; Bielby, 1978; Kaufman and Richardson, 1982). Because these studies report on college women and their mothers at the very start of women's large-scale entry into the labour market, it is also possible that the found relationships reflect class inheritance effects more than the reproduction of gender-egalitarian behaviour we are expecting to observe today. More recently, two Dutch studies have shown that adult daughters whose mothers worked, more often have paid work themselves (Sanders, 1997) and less often scale back from part-time work to homemaking

(Hendrickx *et al.*, 2001). A drawback of these two studies is that they are restricted either to women with children of their own, or to married women, disallowing the separation of parental home and demographic career effects.

In addition to studies reporting on mother's and daughter's labour force participation, various stratification studies suggest that the occupational status of mothers and daughters are also related. Although these studies do not analyse the relationship between mother's labour market participation and daughter's work hours, they are instrumental in showing that the labour market behaviour of mothers affects the labour market outcomes of daughters. Added to the empirical evidence that the daughters of working mothers more often have paid work, these studies provide clues as to how the labour market behaviours of mothers and daughters are related. A comparative study of the Netherlands, Germany, and the USA finds that daughters of working mothers achieve a higher occupational status than daughters of homemaking mothers (Korupp, 2000). The same study also indicates that the higher the occupational status of mothers is, the higher the occupational status of daughters is. Earlier studies in the USA, Australia, the UK, and Ireland report similar findings (Treiman and Terrell, 1975; Hayes and Miller, 1989; Aschaffenburg, 1995; Crook, 1995), and some authors conclude that the mother's influence on daughters' occupational status is greater than the father's, or more important for daughters than for sons (Rosenfeld, 1978; Stevens and Boyd, 1980; Khazzoom, 1997). A drawback of all of these studies is that they do not control for the demographic characteristics that have been found to affect women's occupational success, such as having a partner, being married, and presence and number of infant children (Dykstra and Fokkema, 2000).

Based on the empirical findings of the mentioned studies and based on the few studies that provide a theoretical framework (Kalmijn, 1994; Aschaffenburg, 1995; Korupp, 2000), we can think of three types of resources that working mothers transfer to their daughters on top of resources related to their education. Firstly, working mothers can share their *human capital* by teaching their children skills and behavioural codes that facilitate future entry into particular labour market sectors and occupational levels. One can think of learning how to address different people properly, how to convincingly present one-self both physically and verbally, how to negotiate, how to behave in a team or take up a leader-role, and how to combine family life with paid work. Daughters with these skills are more likely to enter and navigate the labour market

successfully than daughters without (or with lesser developed) skills, and to continue investment in their professional development. Consequently, the daughters of working mothers are more likely to enter jobs at higher occupational levels that require a larger time investment per week than average, and to pursue these jobs after marriage and childbirth. So, the daughters of working mothers are more likely to participate in the labour market and to work more hours than the daughters of non-working mothers. Secondly, working mothers can share the *social capital* of their professional network with their children. The literature on social networks suggests that social contacts can provide access to useful information, services, and commodities, and even jobs (Lin *et al.*, 1981; de Graaf and Flap, 1988; Marsden and Hurlbert, 1988; Furstenberg, 2005). In this way, the daughters of working mothers are at an advantage over daughters whose mothers do not have such a professional network and consequently have no access to such resources. Such resource transfer can play a crucial role from early on in the daughters' career, when daughters obtain a first internship or summer job through their mother's contacts. Following the same argument as about mother's human capital, it is likely that the daughters of working mothers experience fewer barriers to (full-time) labour market participation because of their mother's social capital. Finally, working mothers have *financial capital*, namely their income. The transfer of this resource proves somewhat more difficult to distinguish from the transfer of educational resources—both theoretically and empirically. Although working mothers (especially those with a partner) may have more money to spend on their children than homemaking mothers,<sup>2</sup> these expenditures are likely to primarily feed into their children's labour market behaviour *indirectly*, via children's educational development. The income that working mothers generate allows them, in addition to their partners' income, to provide better means for their daughters to study quietly at home, tools to enhance the daughter's learning process such as computers, internet connection, and books, and supplementary schooling opportunities, such as private lessons or a study year abroad. As these resources all promote daughter's educational development, they are likely to result in better start-positions at daughter's labour market entry, and as explained previously, a larger likelihood of entering the labour market, higher occupational achievement in the long run, and thus a larger likelihood to remain in the labour market and to have jobs requiring more work hours than average.

## Hypotheses

Based on the literature about behavioural role modelling and resource transfers we arrive at four hypotheses. Firstly, the literature on behavioural role modelling suggests that daughters partly model their own behaviour in adulthood on the behaviour of their mothers in childhood. Thus, daughters raised by working mothers are more likely to participate in the labour force in adulthood than daughters raised by non-working mothers (*hypothesis 1*). The literature on behavioural role modelling also suggests that the daughters of working mothers behave in a more gender-egalitarian way than the daughters of non-working mothers. In the present context, this means working full-time, as the majority of women works about 3 days per week. Therefore, we hypothesize that daughters raised by working mothers work more hours per week than daughters raised by non-working mothers (*hypothesis 2*). The literature on stratification also provides arguments that lead to hypotheses one and two. Due to the transfer of mother's human, social and financial capital, the daughters of working mothers are more likely to participate in the labour market and to work more hours than the daughters of non-working mothers.

As we have pointed at in the 'Introduction' section, after taking into account the conventional explanations of education, employment history, and demographics, there is more variation left to explain in women's work hours than in women's labour force participation. For this reason, and given the change in cultural significance of women's labour market participation over time, we hypothesize that the daughter's work hours will have a stronger relationship with mother's participation than the daughter's participation will have (*hypothesis 3*).

Finally, we hypothesize that daughter's participation and work hours will be less strongly related to mother's participation than the conventional predictors education, occupational history, and family formation (*hypothesis 4*). One reason for this hypothesis is the increase in women's labour force participation over time and hence the decline of women's participation as a marker of gender-egalitarian behaviour. Secondly, the time-span between childhood and the moment of interview is much longer than the time-span between finishing education or family formation and the moment of interview. As time proceeds, maternal influences will increasingly compete with the influence of significant others such as the partner and of life experiences such as the daughter's educational trajectory, both of which

are likely to gain importance from adolescence onwards. A third reason is that part of the maternal impact on daughter's labour market behaviour is likely to operate via daughter's educational achievement. This will strengthen the relationship of daughter's labour market behaviour with her own educational achievement and weaken the relationship with the mother's past labour market participation. Finally, there is the relatively limited variation in women's participation compared with the variation in their work hours.

## Data and Sample

We analysed data from the first wave of the NKPS, a national survey on family relationships, held between October 2002 and December 2004 (Dykstra *et al.*, 2005). The data are based on a random address sample of individuals living in private households in the Netherlands. The overall response rate is 45 per cent, which is similar to the average response rates of other large-scale family surveys in the Netherlands (Ultee and Ganzeboom, 1992; de Graaf *et al.*, 1998). The 48 per cent response rate of women is somewhat higher than men's response (42 per cent). We first selected all female key-respondents between the ages of 18 and 64 who either have paid work or are housewives ( $n=3,468$ ). Women who are unemployed ( $n=116$ ), students ( $n=69$ ), chronically ill or handicapped ( $n=242$ ), retired ( $n=68$ ), or for other reasons outside the labour force ( $n=28$ ) were excluded from the analyses because their labour market behaviour cannot be classified as either gender-stereotypic (homemaker) or gender-egalitarian (worker) (Hendrickx *et al.*, 2001). We excluded 23 women who differ <15 years in age with their mother, and 6 women whose answers could be classified as extreme and influential data points, based on the evaluation of Pearson residuals, deviance residuals, and leverage values for the logistic regression analyses, and on the evaluation of studentized residuals, leverage values, Cook's D and DFITS values for the OLS regression analyses. The selected 3,169 women constitute the group of adult daughters in our analyses who reported on both their own paid work at the time of interview and on their mother's paid work in their own childhood and on all other variables included in our analyses.<sup>3</sup> Although retrospective information can be distorted by memory flaws or by the current situation of the respondent, it tends to be sufficiently reliable, especially when addressing tangible activities such as paid work (de Vries, 2006).

## Methods

We analysed two distinct aspects of the daughters' labour pattern, namely their participation and their hours of paid work. Because only working daughters have a valid score on the number of hours worked, the 2,505 daughters in the analyses on work hours possibly form a selective subsample of our research population, which can lead to biased estimates (c.f. Heckman, 1979; Maddala, 1983; Bekkers, 2004; Vlasblom and Schippers, 2005). By using the Heckman two-stage regression procedure, we verified whether the correlation between the chance on participation and the worked hours differed significantly from zero (results not shown). This not being the case, we proceeded with estimating separate logistic regression models for daughter's participation and OLS regression models for daughter's hours of paid work.

## Models

We estimated two models for daughter's participation and daughter's work hours, first a baseline model including the conventional predictors of daughter's labour market behaviour and secondly a full model adding the maternal characteristics. The baseline model included: daughter's age, education, years in the labour market, partnership status (single, cohabiting, living apart together (LAT), married), and total number of biological, step- and adopted children by age of the youngest child. In the full model mother's education and mother's labour force participation during the daughter's childhood were added to the baseline predictors. This model sequence allows us to verify whether mother's labour market behaviour adds anything to the conventional explanations for women's labour market behaviour, such as daughter's own education and demographic characteristics. A second set of analyses were conducted separately for the subsample of 2,194 women with a partner. These analyses included information on the partner's level of education and income. In these analyses, we only distinguish between married and non-married women, instead of four types of partner-statuses.

## Measurements

### Dependent Variables

Table 1 presents means, ranges, and standard deviations for the variables employed in the multivariate analyses. We used two dependent variables to assess

the extent of women's gender-stereotypical labour market behaviour. The first is the dummy variable for *participation* indicating that daughters have a paid job (score 1), with homemaking daughters as the reference category. The second dependent variable is the *factual number of hours*<sup>4</sup> that daughters weekly work for pay, provided they have paid work.

### Independent Variables: Daughter's Childhood

Mother's labour market behaviour during the childhood of her daughter was measured with the retrospective question to the daughter: 'did your mother have a paid job during the period before your 15th birthday?' (Dykstra *et al.*, 2005). Based on this question, we constructed a dummy indicator of whether the daughter's *mother had a paid job* at the time. Mothers received a 0-score if the daughter answered that their mother was mostly without work during that period or only occasionally worked for pay ( $n=2,479$ ), and a 1-score if the daughters said their mother worked most of the time ( $n=690$ ). For the sake of brevity, we use the terms 'working' and 'non-working' mothers in the remainder of the article, although strictly speaking this distinction is less clear-cut. We also included *mother's highest achieved level of education* in our analyses. We expressed the 10 levels of education in effective years of schooling, ranging from incomplete elementary (5 years) to post-graduate education (19 years).

### Independent Variables: Daughter's Adolescence and Adulthood

We employed a number of variables to control for individual determinants of women's labour market participation. In the first place, we controlled for *daughters' highest achieved education*, expressed in effective years of schooling, not only because of the aforementioned indirect relationship between mother's past labour market behaviour, daughter's educational achievement, and daughter's present labour market outcomes, but also because the higher women are educated, the more likely they are to participate in the labour market and to work full-time. Secondly, we included one indicator of daughter's *employment history*, namely the number of years she has been in the labour force. Women who never worked scored 0 on this variable. The longer women are in the labour force, the more skills and knowledge they have developed and the higher the potential revenue out of their labour—and the more costly every hour they do *not* work for pay becomes. Unfortunately, we could

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics, women age 18–64, their partners and mothers ( $N=3,169$ )

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
<b>Daughter</b>				
Participation	0.79	0.41	0.00	1.00
Work hours <sup>a</sup>	27.96	11.95	0.00	90.00
Age	41.24	10.95	18.00	64.00
Age 18–29 years	0.16	0.36	0.00	1.00
Age 30–49 years	0.58	0.49	0.00	1.00
Age 50–64 years	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00
Education years	12.15	2.91	5.00	19.00
Years in labour force	17.87	11.58	0.00	48.00
Non-wage income	92.80	1,272.76	0.00	70,013.00
Non-wage income (log)	0.65	1.93	0.00	11.16
Single	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
LAT	0.07	0.26	0.00	1.00
Cohabiting	0.14	0.35	0.00	1.00
Married	0.59	0.49	0.00	1.00
Number of children	1.57	1.29	0.00	9.00
No children	0.28	0.45	0.00	1.00
Youngest child age 0–3	0.16	0.36	0.00	1.00
Youngest child age 4–11	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
Youngest child age 12+	0.36	0.48	0.00	1.00
<b>Partner</b>				
Education years	12.26	3.08	5.00	19.00
Total income	1,319.26	1,339.80	0.00	20,000.00
Total income (log)	4.73	3.66	0.00	9.90
<b>Mother</b>				
Education years	9.00	2.74	5.00	19.00
Participation	0.22	0.41	0.00	1.00

<sup>a</sup>Refers to women with paid job only ( $n=2502$ ).

not include more indicators of women's employment history because the other measures in the NKPS are too crude for the purpose of this article. Thirdly, *marriage* is more strongly related to gender-stereotypic beliefs and labour patterns of men and women than other kinds of partner-relationships or being single, resulting in married women's relatively limited involvement in paid work and high involvement in housework and childcare compared with cohabiting and single women (Shelton and John, 1996; Kuijsten, 1999; Cunningham *et al.*, 2005). Consequently, we included three dummy variables indicating whether the daughter is single ( $n=620$ ), cohabiting ( $n=454$ ), or LAT ( $n=225$ ), as opposed to being married (reference category,  $n=1,870$ ). Studies on women's labour market behaviour also commonly include the number and age of children, because of the adverse effects of pregnancy and care for children on women's labour force participation (van der Lippe, 2001; Uunk *et al.*, 2005; Vlasblom and Schippers, 2005) and occupational success (Dykstra and Fokkema, 2000).

We incorporated the daughter's total number of biological, step- and adopted *children*, as well as three dummy variables indicating whether her *youngest child* is aged 0–3 (pre-school,  $n=499$ ), 4–11 (primary school,  $n=625$ ), or 12 and older (secondary or tertiary education,  $n=1,147$ ), with childless women as the reference category ( $n=898$ ). Finally, it has been shown that Dutch women with highly educated partners more often work and in higher occupational levels than other women (Bernasco, 1994; Bernasco *et al.*, 1998). It has been suggested that the relatively high family wages in the Netherlands in conjunction with the early adoption of the bourgeois ideal of in-home childcare by the biological mother (Pott-Buter, 1993) have formed a disincentive to Dutch women's full-time participation. Given the previous considerations, women's participation and weekly work hours may well be negatively related to partner income. In our models, we included both the partner's total number of effective schooling years based on highest achieved education and the partner's total monthly income.



## Daughter's Age

We controlled for daughter's age in our analyses because life phase is crucial to women's labour market outcomes. Whereas in the past many Dutch women stepped out of the labour force upon marriage or birth of the first child, nowadays women tend to downsize their work hours after childbirth (Hendrickx *et al.*, 2001; Schulz *et al.*, 2006). This is illustrated by the predominance of part-time work by women older than age 30 (Román *et al.*, 2007; SCP, 2000), which is about the average age at birth of the first child (Beets, 2006). After age 50 work hours further decrease as women approach retirement (Román *et al.*, 2007). We constructed three dummy variables indicating age-groups, namely 18–29 (reference category,  $n = 494$ ), 30–49 ( $n = 1,853$ ), and 50–65 ( $n = 822$ ). We chose to include daughter's age instead of birth-cohort because the work hours of women aged 30–50 have changed very little over time (Román *et al.*, 2007), whereas we do find variation in women's work hours by age-group.

## Results

### Daughters' Labour Force Participation

Contrary to our first hypothesis, we find that being raised by a working mother does not affect the likelihood that Dutch women have paid jobs. The full models in the analyses on both samples of women (Tables 2 and 3, full model), show no relationship between the mother's labour market behaviour during daughters' childhood and the daughter's labour market participation in adulthood. The odds are positive but not significant. Mother's education is not directly related to daughter's participation either. Previous reverse-ordered analyses (not shown) suggested that mother's education has an indirect effect via daughter's own education. In these reverse-ordered analyses, we first included maternal characteristics and then added the conventional predictors to our models in various steps. Then, the magnitude of the coefficient for mother's education diminished and its sign turned from positive to negative as soon as we introduced daughter's education.

With regard to the conventional explanations, our results mostly confirm previous reports. The higher women are educated, and the longer they have been in the labour force, the more likely they are to have paid work. In contrast, marriage and childbirth decrease this likelihood, the more so the more children women have and the younger the children are. Women older than

**Table 2** Logistic regression estimates of the likelihood of having paid work compared with the likelihood of being homemaker, daughters age 18–64 ( $N = 3,169$ )

	Baseline model		Full model	
	Odds	SE	Odds	SE
<b>Daughter</b>				
Age <sup>a</sup>				
30–49 years	0.52**	0.12	0.51**	0.12
50–64 years	0.05***	0.02	0.05***	0.02
Education years	1.28***	0.03	1.29***	0.03
Years in labour force	1.15***	0.01	1.15***	0.01
Non-wage income (log)	0.72***	0.02	0.72***	0.02
Partnership-status <sup>b</sup>				
Single	5.48***	1.30	5.60***	1.33
LAT	8.99***	3.70	9.23***	3.81
Cohabiting	2.36***	0.54	2.37***	0.55
Number of children	0.76***	0.05	0.76***	0.05
Age youngest child <sup>c</sup>				
0–3 years	0.34***	0.10	0.34***	0.10
4–11 years	0.20***	0.06	0.20***	0.06
12+ years	0.18***	0.06	0.17***	0.06
<b>Mother</b>				
Education years			0.97	0.02
Participation			1.03	0.16
Loglikelihood	–925.11		–924.47	
Likelihood ratio $\chi^2$	1,405.93***		1,407.22***	

<sup>a</sup>Reference category: 18–29 years.

<sup>b</sup>Reference category: married.

<sup>c</sup>Reference category: childless.

\* $P \leq 0.05$ , \*\* $P \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\* $P \leq 0.001$ .

30 years are less likely to be in the labour force than women younger than 30 years of age.

### Daughters' Work Hours

We find that the daughters of working mothers work more hours than the daughters of non-working mothers, confirming our second hypothesis. The results show significant effects of mother's labour force participation in both our full sample and the subsample of partnered women (Tables 4 and 5, full model). In the full sample, women who were raised by a working mother work 1.5 hours more per week than women who were not raised by a working mother. This means that they put in about 6 per cent more time than the average work week of 28 hours. In the subsample of partnered women, this difference is almost 2 hours, about 7 per cent more than the average. The total explained variance by the models

**Table 3** Logistic regression estimates of the likelihood of having paid work compared with the likelihood of being homemaker, daughters age 18–64 with a partner ( $N = 2,194$ )

	Baseline model		Full model	
	Odds	SE	Odds	SE
<b>Daughter</b>				
Age <sup>a</sup>				
30–49 years	0.44**	0.12	0.43**	0.12
50–64 years	0.05***	0.02	0.05***	0.02
Education years	1.27***	0.04	1.29***	0.04
Years in labour force	1.15***	0.01	1.15***	0.01
Non-wage income (log)	0.78***	0.03	0.78***	0.03
Married	0.31***	0.08	0.30	0.08
Number of children	0.80**	0.06	0.80***	0.06
Age youngest child <sup>b</sup>				
0–3 years	0.46*	0.16	0.47***	0.16
4–11 years	0.28***	0.10	0.27***	0.10
12+ years	0.25***	0.09	0.25***	0.09
<b>Partner</b>				
Education years	1.00	0.03	1.00	0.03
Total income	1.10***	0.03	1.10***	0.03
<b>Mother</b>				
Education years			0.97	0.03
Participation			1.05	0.18
Loglikelihood	–720.10		–719.58	
Likelihood ratio $\chi^2$	948.59***		949.62***	

<sup>a</sup> Reference category: 18–29 years.

<sup>b</sup> Reference category: childless.

\*  $P \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $P \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $P \leq 0.001$ .

including mother's past labour market participation is about 1 percentage point higher than the models without, and test statistics indicate that the model improvement, though small, is significant in both subsamples.<sup>5</sup>

Most of our findings also support the conventional explanations for women's work hours. In both samples, we find that the higher women are educated, the more hours they work, that married women work fewer hours, and that the younger their children are the fewer hours women work. The finding that even women with teenage children work several hours less than childless women underlines the path-dependency of earlier choices regarding work hours. In our full sample, we also find that the more children women have, the fewer hours they work, but not in our subsample of partnered women. Apparently the age of children matters more to the work hours of women with a partner than how many children they have. We find no significant difference in work hours

between women younger than 30 years and those who are older. The standardized coefficients show that women's own level of education and having a child younger than 12 years are the strongest predictors of women's work hours in both samples.

Our finding that having a working mother affects women's work hours whereas it does not affect the likelihood that Dutch women have paid jobs, supports our third hypothesis that daughter's work hours are stronger related to mother's participation than daughter's participation is. We also find support for our fourth hypothesis that daughter's participation and work hours are less strongly related to mother's participation than the conventional predictors education, occupational history, and family formation. In both samples, we do not find a significant relationship between daughter's and mother's participation, whereas we find significant relationships between daughter's participation and the conventional predictors educational achievement, employment duration, partnership status, and number and age of children (Tables 2 and 3, full models). Moreover, the standardized coefficients in our full sample (Table 4) indicate that the relationship between daughter's work hours and mother's participation is weaker than the relationship between daughter's work hours and several of the conventional predictors, especially daughter's level of education and age of the youngest child. However, the coefficient of mother's participation is similar in size to the coefficient of daughter's number of children.

The relationship between daughters' work hours and mother's education is not as robust across subsamples as the relationship with mother's participation. In our full sample, the relationship is weak but significantly negative. In our subsample of partnered daughters, the relationship is not significant. As in our analyses of daughter's participation, previous reverse-ordered analyses (not shown here) suggest that the relationship is indirect and runs partly via daughter's own educational achievement, because the coefficient of mother's education becomes negative only when daughter's education is added to the model.

All in all our findings suggest that women's work hours are related to their mother's participation in the past, but they are even more strongly related to women's own educational achievement, their partnership, and the age of their children.

## Conclusions and Discussion

In developed countries, today's adult women have been raised by working mothers on a much larger scale than

**Table 4** OLS regression estimates of weekly work hours, daughters age 18–64 ( $N = 2,502$ )

	Baseline model			Full model		
	b	SE	$\beta$	b	SE	$\beta$
<b>Daughter</b>						
Age <sup>a</sup>						
30–49 years	0.25	0.67	0.01	0.22	0.67	0.01
50–64 years	–1.82	1.03	–0.06	–1.81	1.03	–0.06
Education years	0.92***	0.07	0.22	0.96***	0.08	0.22
Years in labour force	0.08**	0.03	0.08	0.08**	0.03	0.08
Non-wage income (log)	–1.59***	0.13	–0.22	–1.59***	0.13	–0.22
Partnership-status <sup>b</sup>						
Single	5.68***	0.58	0.20	5.70***	0.58	0.20
LAT	3.08***	0.81	0.07	3.04***	0.81	0.07
Cohabiting	4.01***	0.62	0.13	3.90***	0.62	0.12
Number of children	–0.82**	0.29	–0.08	–0.84**	0.29	–0.09
Age youngest child <sup>c</sup>						
0–3 years	–8.24***	0.83	–0.26	–8.18***	0.83	–0.25
4–11 years	–7.95***	0.87	–0.26	–7.94***	0.87	–0.26
12+ years	–3.29***	0.88	–0.13	–3.29***	0.88	–0.13
<b>Mother</b>						
Education years				–0.15	0.08	–0.3
Participation				1.54**	0.48	0.05
Constant	18.48***	1.19		19.02***	1.31	
Adjusted $R^2$	0.31			0.32		

<sup>a</sup>Reference category: 18–29 years.

<sup>b</sup>Reference category: married.

<sup>c</sup>Reference category: childless.

\* $P \leq 0.05$ , \*\* $P \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\* $P \leq 0.001$ .

women of preceding generations, as a consequence of the increase in working women since the 1960s. Nevertheless, women's work hours continue to lag behind those of men, resulting in the so-called part-time divide. In this sense, the gendered division of labour proves to be persistent. In response to this situation, we coined the question to what extent women's labour market behaviour reproduces itself from one generation to the next, and to what extent such reproduction can explain women's work hours in addition to the conventional explanations education, work history, and family formation. We studied the labour market behaviour of mothers and daughters in the Netherlands, a prototypical example of the part-time divide with its high rates of part-time working women. We expect that the outcomes of this study also shed light on the part-time divide in other European countries, especially in countries that also have a relatively large gender gap in work hours, such as the UK and Germany.

Although daughters' own level of education and the age of their children emerge as the strongest predictors of their participation and work hours, and although

mother's participation is not related to daughter's participation, our results suggest that being raised by a working mother has an impact on women's work hours. In other words: daughters of working mothers are not more often in the labour force than daughters of non-working mothers, but they do work more hours per week. This is a generic effect, applying to women of all ages, with and without partners, and with and without children. We believe it is quite striking that the mother's early labour market behaviour matters to the labour market behaviour of women in midlife, whose behaviour is linked to that of many significant 'others' in their lives apart from their mothers and to life experiences such as educational and occupational trajectories continuing long after women have left their parental home. Something is handed down from one generation of women to the next, being it through behavioural role modelling or resource transfers. This reproduction can help to explain why the gender stereotypic labour market behaviour of women proves resistant to change. The reproductive pattern suggested by our findings concurs with other research on the relevance of mother's early

**Table 5** OLS regression estimates of weekly work hours, daughters age 18–64 with a partner ( $N=1,680$ )

	Baseline model			Full model		
	b	SE	$\beta$	b	SE	$\beta$
<b>Daughter</b>						
Age <sup>a</sup>						
30–49 years	–0.96	0.84	–0.04	–1.02	0.84	–0.04
50–64 years	–2.30	1.27	–0.07	–2.37	1.27	–0.08
Education years	1.18***	0.11	0.28	1.20***	0.11	0.28
Years in labour force	0.06	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.06
Non-wage income (log)	–1.22***	0.20	–0.13	–1.23***	0.20	–0.13
Married	–2.43***	0.65	–0.09	–2.33***	0.65	–0.09
Number of children	–0.59	0.32	–0.06	–0.61	0.32	–0.06
Age youngest child <sup>b</sup>						
0–3 years	–9.64***	0.96	–0.34	–9.51***	0.96	–0.34
4–11 years	–9.58***	1.07	–0.34	–9.50***	1.07	–0.34
12+ years	–4.98***	1.11	–0.20	–4.89***	1.11	–0.19
<b>Partner</b>						
Education years	–0.14	0.10	–0.04	–0.12	0.10	–0.03
Total income	0.12	0.09	0.03	0.11	0.09	0.02
<b>Mother</b>						
Education years				–0.13	0.10	–0.03
Participation				1.90**	0.59	0.07
Constant	21.11***	1.55		21.25***	1.68	
Adjusted $R^2$	0.28			0.28		

<sup>a</sup>Reference category: 18–29 years.

<sup>b</sup>Reference category: childless.

\* $P \leq 0.05$ , \*\* $P \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\* $P \leq 0.001$ .

labour market behaviour for children's labour market outcomes in adulthood (Sanders, 1997; Cunningham, 2001b). In this way our findings add to the body of empirical evidence pointing out that it is fruitful to expand the conventional explanations of women's labour supply with explanations at the intergenerational level, at least with characteristics of the mother.

Studying the reproductive aspect of women's labour patterns relative to its conventional determinants informs us about the extent to which there is potential for change in women's labour market behaviour. This issue is especially relevant in the context of governmental attempts to stimulate women's labour market participation in the face of population aging and its increasing demands on welfare state institutions, as stipulated by the Lisbon objectives and other EU directives (European Commission, 2007). From this perspective it is interesting to note that daughters with working mothers work about 6–7 per cent more hours than daughters who did not have a working mother as an example in their childhood. At the aggregate level, such an increase of the hours supplied by women would have substantial consequences for the

sustainability of the welfare state and the combat against future labour market shortages resulting from the ageing of the population. Most programmes seek to promote women's labour market participation by targeting the 'conventional' determinants of women's work hours, for example by expanding women's educational opportunities, reallocating taxes and benefits, and expanding the professional childcare sector. Our results suggest, however, that the success of such programmes might be dampened because they do not take into account how resistant women's work hours are to change, in part due to the intergenerational reproduction of work patterns.

Given our finding that Dutch women's labour market behaviour is reproduced across the generations, a question for future research is whether this pattern is caused by behavioural role modelling or resource transfers, or both. This would be useful information for policy programmes seeking to stimulate women's work hours. If mother–daughter resource transfers emerge as a particularly strong reproduction mechanism, such programmes could attempt to intervene in the process of resource transfers by offering external

resources to women whose mothers lack particular skills, knowledge, or network contacts. In contrast, it would be much more difficult, if not impossible, to intervene in the process of behavioural role modelling by parents. However, alternatives to the maternal role model could be offered. For example, mentors and coaches at school and at work could fulfil such a role, and young women could learn about different labour market behaviours than those practised at home by doing an internship early on in their educational career.

In future research, we would also like to address the reproductive labour market behaviour of men. With the share of part-time working men (with children) growing in several countries and especially the Netherlands, a generation of young adults that is raised by part-time working fathers is in the making. This will open up new possibilities to assess same- and cross-sex effects of behavioural role modelling, as we could compare children of part-time working fathers with children of full-time working mothers. We could also look into the relative importance of the mechanisms through which gendered-stereotypic or gender-egalitarian behaviours are reproduced. On the one hand, we would expect part-time working fathers to set a more gender-egalitarian example for both sons and daughters than full-time working fathers, but on the other hand we expect them to have fewer resources, thus potentially constraining daughters' labour market involvement.

Finally, the observed relationship between the labour market behaviour of mothers and daughters rises the question to what extent *unpaid* labour patterns are reproduced across generations. Do the daughters of working mothers perform less housework and child-care in adulthood than other women, and do the sons of working mothers perform more of these tasks compared with other men? We intend to follow up on these questions in future research.

## Notes

1. About 17 per cent of sons in our sample work part-time, which corresponds with national statistics on part-time working men in the Netherlands.
2. We assume here that working mothers dispose of a higher household income than homemaking mothers, whereas working mothers may not have a partner with an income or their partner may earn a lower income than the partners of homemaking mothers. However, as a majority of mothers in our sample was married during their

daughters' childhood, it is likely that they could dispose of a higher income than the homemaking mothers.

3. Two hundred and seventy women without a valid response on one or multiple variables were excluded.
4. This number may diverge from the amount of hours respondents are employed according to their contract.
5. Full sample:  $F(2, 2487) = 6.16$ ,  $P = 0.002$ , sample of women with a partner:  $F(2, 1665) = 5.56$ ,  $P = 0.004$ .

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