

Mums the word! Cross-national effects of maternal employment on gender inequalities at work and at home ^[1]

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Source: Harvard Business School

Format: Report

Publication Date: 31 Jul 2015

AVAILABILITY

PDF report ^[2]

Abstract

Our research considers how inequalities in public and the private spheres are affected by childhood exposure to non-traditional gender role models at home. We test the association between being raised by an employed mother and adult men's and women's outcomes at work and at home. Our analyses rely on national level archival data from multiple sources and individual level survey data collected as part of the International Social Survey Programme in 2002 and 2012 from nationally representative samples of men and women in 24 countries. Adult daughters of employed mothers are more likely to be employed, more likely to hold supervisory responsibility if employed, work more hours, and earn marginally higher wages than women whose mothers stayed home fulltime. The effects on labor market outcomes are non-significant for men. Maternal employment is also associated with adult outcomes at home. Sons raised by an employed mother spend more time caring for family members than men whose mothers stayed home fulltime, and daughters raised by an employed mother spend less time on housework than women whose mothers stayed home fulltime. Our findings reveal the potential for non-traditional gender role models to gradually erode gender inequality in homes and labor markets.

Region: International ^[3]

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