

# First the children, then the employed: Deprivation and intra-household inequality in Europe

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# BACKGROUND

Households do not equally share resources among their members

In Europe generally...

Within couples Men > Women (Bennet, 2013)

Between generations Children > Adults (Gabos et al. 2011)

Gap: We know little about the factors that shape intra-household distribution of resources

## Why study intra-household inequality

- Poverty measured at the household level: miss-estimating poverty
  - Child poverty
- Under-estimating inequality
  - Gender
  - Age?
- Understanding intra-household processes of resource allocation to design appropriate policies

## Conflicting narratives on child poverty



# METHODS

- SILC 2014 ad-hoc module Material Deprivation → Currently 2021 available
- 22 European Countries (No register countries, No UK, IE, MT)
- Sample: **37,917** households with children

## Children

Main and Bradshaw (2016)

	Deprived	Not Deprived
Adults	Deprived	Protected/Only Ad
	Exposed/Only Ch	Not deprived

### SILC data, some limitations

- X-sectional (ad-hoc modules)

- Heterosexual couples (only 20 same sex couples recorded, 2 with children)

- Children are assigned to a single household

  - Children with shared custody are likely to be members of multiple households

  - Adults may have children in other households (no info)

### Collection child data (ad-hoc module)

- Children aged 2-15

- No information on individual children: unable to compare siblings/step-siblings

- Adult respondents for child items (Lau et al., 2019; Main, 2019)

  - Knowledge of child access to resources

  - 'Do not want'

# Material Deprivation indicators EU-SILC 2014

Short label	Questionnaire wording
<i>Child items</i>	
New clothes	Some new not second hand clothes
Shoes	Two pairs of all-weather shoes
Fruit and vegetables	Fresh fruit and vegetables daily
Meat	One meal with protein daily
Books	Books appropriate for their age
Outside games	Equipment for outdoors activities (e.g. bike, rollers)
Toys	Toys to play inside (educational toys, board games, computer games)
Leisure	Take part in leisure activities (sport, music)
Celebrations	Celebrations on special occasions
Friends	Having friends over from time to time
Holiday	A week holiday away from home
<i>Adult items</i>	
Clothes	Some new not second hand clothes
All weather shoes	Two pairs of all-weather shoes
Friends	Having friends or family over monthly
Leisure	Take part in leisure activities (cinema, sport, music)
Money for self	A small amount of money to spend on one-self
Internet (personal)	Internet connection for personal use

# FINDINGS



# Households prioritise children's needs

Consistent across Europe

Prevalence of deprivation:

Central vs Eastern Europe

Greece

TABLE 3. Intra-household deprivation patterns by country (% households with children). Full index 2+ threshold

	Congruous Deprived	Incongruous Protected	Incongruous Exposed	Congruous Non-deprived	Total
RO	55	14	8	23	100
BG	52	13	8	27	100
HU	34	18	3	45	100
EL	23	25	2	50	100
RS	23	23	3	50	100
LV	22	16	5	57	100
LT	15	22	2	61	100
PT	19	11	4	65	100
CY	18	10	6	66	100
ES	16	13	3	68	100
IT	14	15	2	68	100
PL	13	14	4	69	100
SK	15	9	5	71	100
HR	10	12	2	76	100
DE	7	14	2	77	100
BE	11	10	1	78	100
FR	8	13	1	78	100
AT	9	11	1	79	100
EE	7	7	3	83	100
CZ	8	6	2	84	100
CH	3	9	0,5	87	100
LU	4	7	1	88	100
Total	15	14	3	68	100

Source: SILC-2014

# Households prioritise children's needs

Regardless of the measure and threshold used

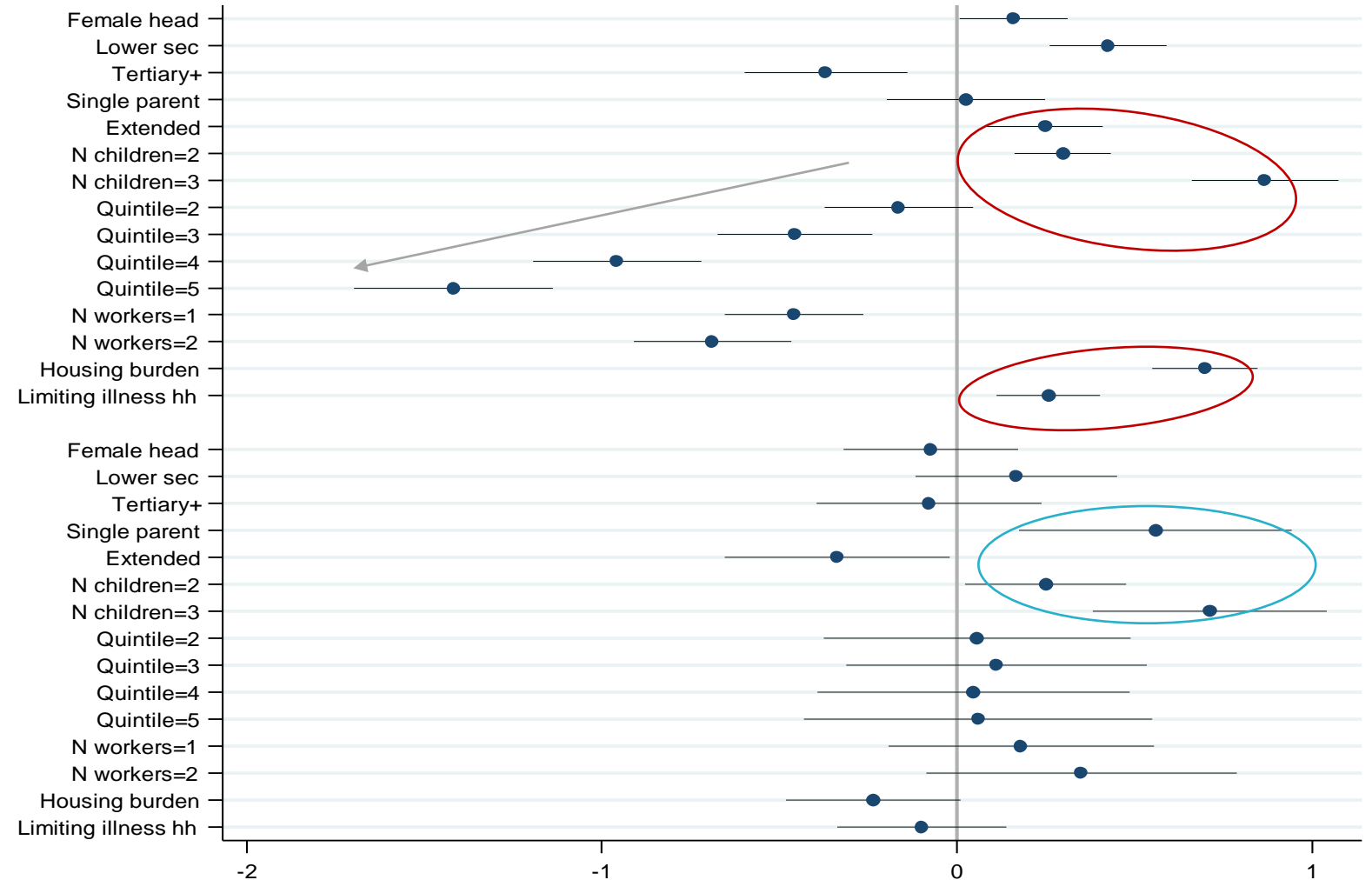
TABLE 2 Intra-household inequality patterns by threshold (% of households with children 2-15)

	Threshold	Congruous Deprived		Incongruous Protected		Incongruous Exposed		Congruous Non-deprived	
	1+	26	[25-26]	13	[13-14]	5	[5-6]	56	[55-57]
	2+	15	[15-16]	14	[13-14]	3	[2-3]	68	[67-69]
Full index	3+	10	[10-11]	11	[10-11]	2	[2-3]	77	[76-77]
	4+	6	[6-7]	6	[6-7]	3	[3-3]	84	[84-85]
4 item index	1+	17	[16-17]	18	[17-18]	2	[2-2]	64	[63-64]
	2+	8	[8-9]	14	[14-15]	1	[1-1]	76	[75-76]

Source: EU-SILC 2014

# No differences by social origin

Partially poverty: Congruous deprived households tend to be poorer than protected or exposed



Multinomial regression

Ref: Protected (Adult only Dep)

# No differences between intact and reconstituted households (couple HH only)

Table 3. Intra-household deprivation patterns CHH (%)

	All Dep	Adults Dep	Child		Total
			Dep	Not Dep	
Intact	11	12	2	75	100
	44	47	9	-	100
Reconstituted	16	16	3	65	100
	46	47	7	-	100
Total	11	12	2	75	100
	44	47	8	-	100

Source: Lanau, A. (2021) 'Children first? Intra-household inequality in reconstituted couple households', *Journal of Family Issues*, 44(4), 891–90 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X211055112>

# Who sacrifices?

Parents (mothers)

Unemployed and part time workers (women)

Less sacrifice

Young

Old

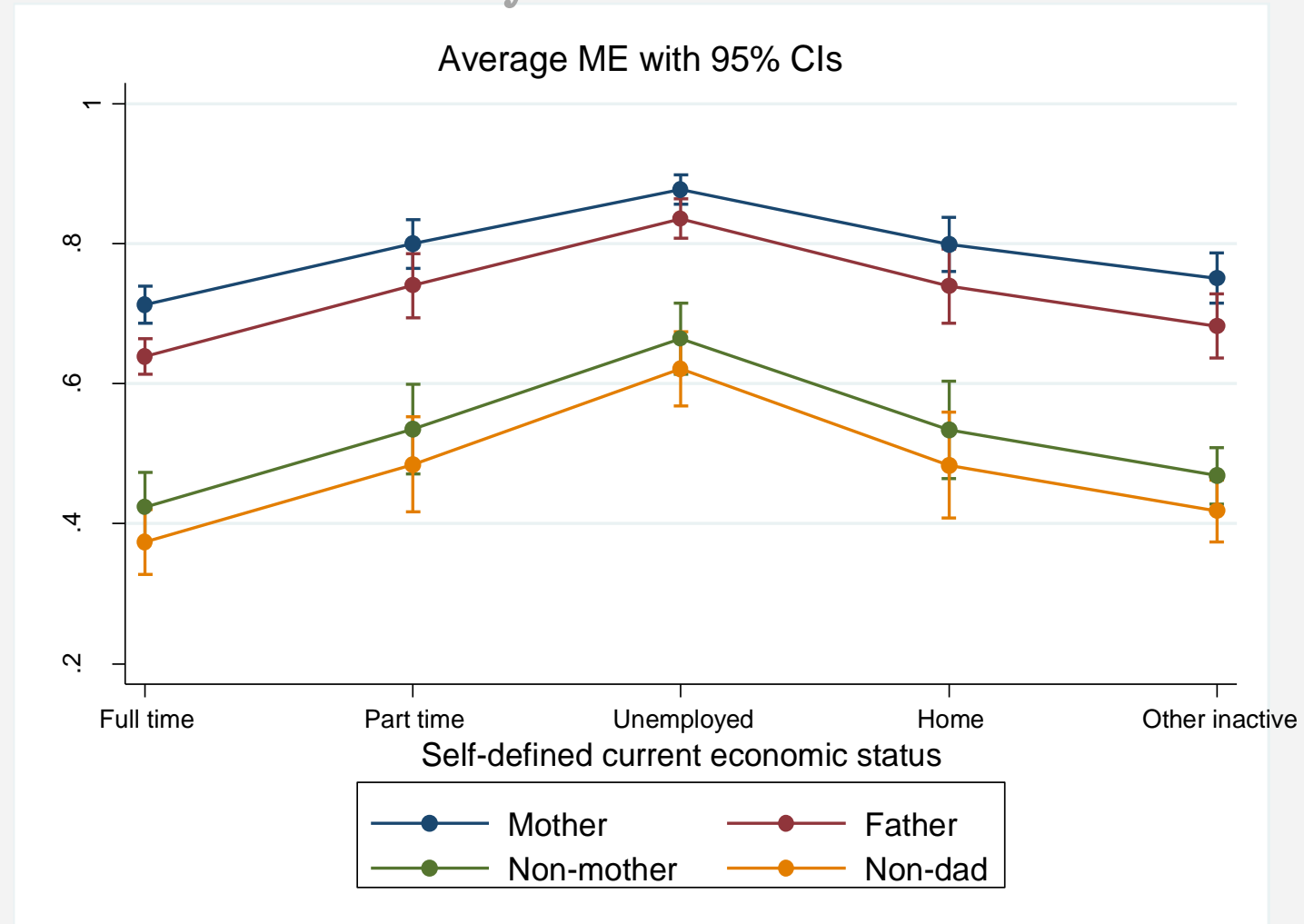
Table 4 Predictors of individual adult deprivation

	Deprived (%)	CI (95%)	LR
Mother	78	[76-80]	+
Father (ref)	68	[65-70]	
Woman no children	49	[45-53]	-
Man no children	44	[40-48]	-
16-25	40	[36-43]	-
26-35	71	[68-74]	-
36-45 (ref)	74	[72-76]	
46-56	70	[67-73]	
56+	60	[56-64]	
Full time (ref)	64	[62-66]	
Part time	77	[73-80]	+
Unemployed	81	[78-83]	+
Homemaker	77	[72-81]	+
Other inactive	50	[46-53]	
No illness	66	[64-68]	
Illness	69	[66-71]	
Total	66	[65-68]	

Source: EU-SILC 2014

# Parenthood and economic status as key predictors

Average Marginal Effects: Probability of 'sacrifice'



Source: EU-SILC 2014

## In sum

Households prioritise children over adults

- Across countries
- Predictors of disadvantage predict consistent deprivation but not 'exposure'

Who goes without?

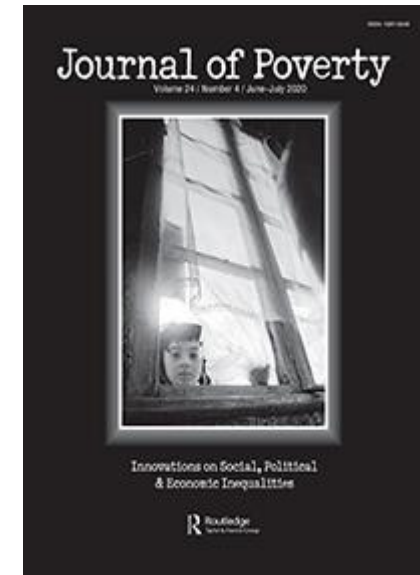
Parents, particularly mothers

Unemployed

Part time workers

# Thank you

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Lanau, A. (2022). 'First the Children, then the Employed: Deprivation and Intra-household Inequality in Europe', *Journal of Poverty*, 27(4), 331–349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2022.2065561>

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