

Institut de Démographie de l'Université Paris 1

# Motherhood, Fatherhood and Job Careers in France

Maternités, Paternités et carrières d'emploi  
en France

(fin du XXe siècle - début du XXIe)

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# Plan of this presentation

- Contexts of this research
- Research questions
- Empirical Data
- Methodologies
- Main résultats
- Further questions and research

# Contexts of this research (1)

## Characteristics of 1990s-2000s decades

- Relatively high fertility rates in France
- Delayed births
- Employment Crisis and reduction of long term jobs
- Strong Demands towards more balanced parental roles between men and women
- « New Fathers » Figures
- Long term increase of educational levels...  
...more pronounced among women

# Contexts of this research (2)

## Scientific Context

- Rise of longitudinal research in sociology et economics (panel) in France : esp. transition to adulthood (Galland, Battagliola et *alii*, Mauger, etc.)
- Scale-systems/interrelationship systems : (re)think family and childcare among various groups (kinship groups, political or local communities) at various scales
- Rise of economic sociology and ethnographics : studying how households and kinship groups mobilize to care for their dependant members (F.Weber)
- Time Use Studies (and data) dealing with familial/parental time and with the articulation between working time and time out of work
- Vision of « democratic » family as a group of individuals aiming at their self-fulfilment (de Singly)
- New perspectives on childhood and infancy (Ariès, Zelizer)



# Research questions: First child as a critical moment in life course

- Socialisation of parents to parenting, adaptations of life style and housing conditions
- Vision of family as built by its everyday's material, social and emotional functioning
- In which and under which material conditions do men and women have their first children in late XXth century France?
- How do these « parental careers » interact with their own job careers? Eventually, how do they face unemployment or unstable status issues?

# Empirical data from 1999-2001 fieldwork

- Comprehensive interviews with parents near Paris and in Province in various social contexts...
- ... with mothers and couples
- ... older and younger children aged 0 to 10
- Interviews with care professionals and institutionnal representatives for local policies: nursery nurses, midwives, infant school teachers and employees, childminders, small municipalities' mayors, a.s.o.

# Empirical data from French Labour Force Surveys 1990-2002

- Rotating sample of geographical with 3 interrogations : ca 75000 households, 150000 adult individuals a year
- Table of the household offers the possibility to detect the arrival of a first or new child
- 10000 such sequences 1990-2002 in the sample
- Main issue: how do occupational status (State Permanent Employee, Employed with an open-ended contract, self-employed, employed with a fixed term contract, other precarious status,

# Methodologies

- Employment issue appeared central in our ethnographic evidence, especially when the father's presence was at stake
- Statistical work structured our main results
- Results from ethnographic fieldwork were further elaborated in line with our statistical results to complete our interpretations and make further hypothesis on what aspects were not observed in LFS (organisation of child care and everyday life, notion of parental work, role of kinship members)
- Occupational situations were compared by building comparable (counterfactual) samples of childless women and men.



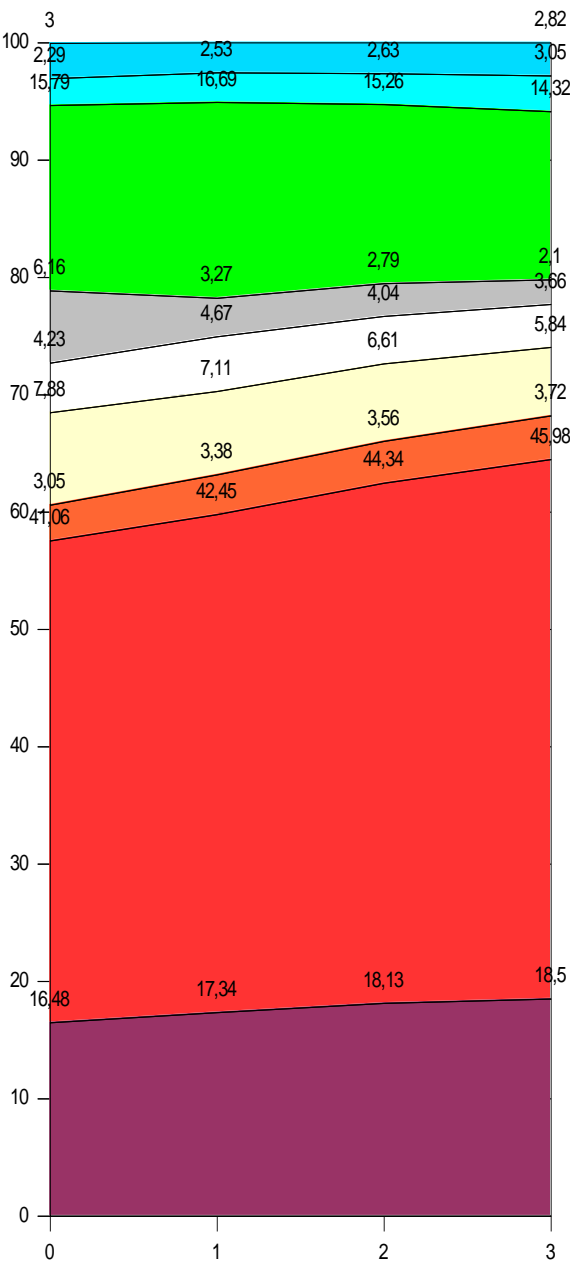


# Main results

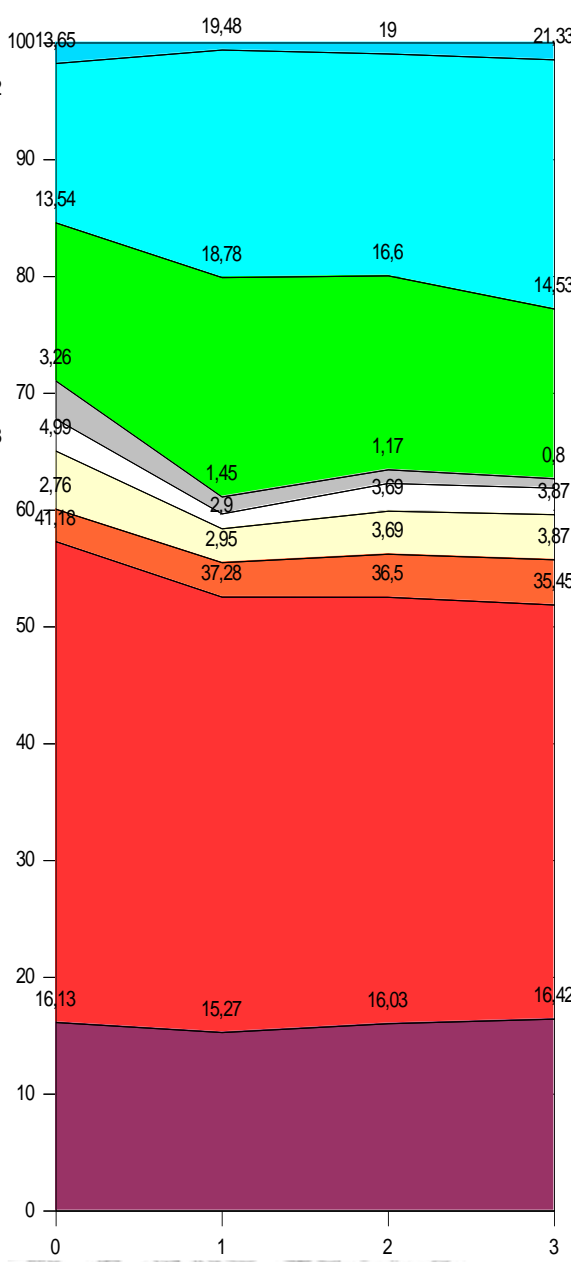
- Almost no child without a mother in the same household
- About 10% with no father in the same household
- Inactivity among mothers appears and rises with 1st child and even more with subsequent children.
- Fatherhood select men with a long term status: if deprived from such a status, men try to reach it or do rely on different assets
- Relocations are relatively rare and can be observed among sooner parents, and when housing conditions or its environment may appear as « problematic »



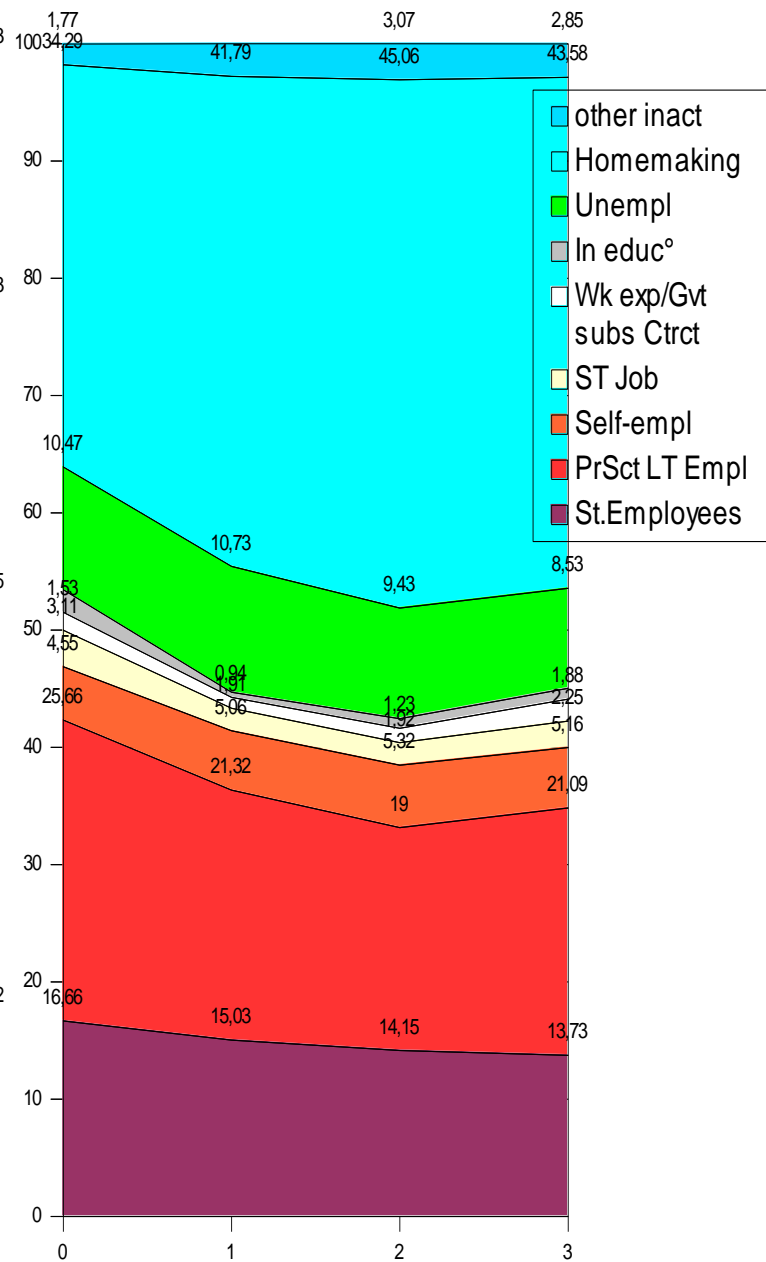
Occupational status,  
childless women



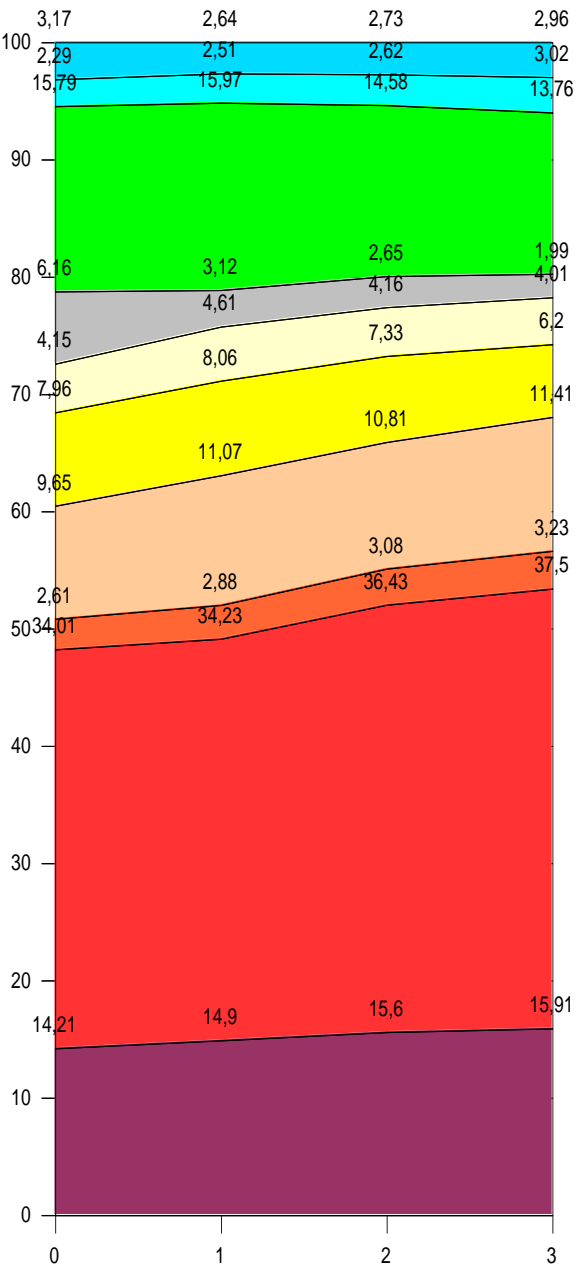
Mothers' occupational status,  
after first child birth



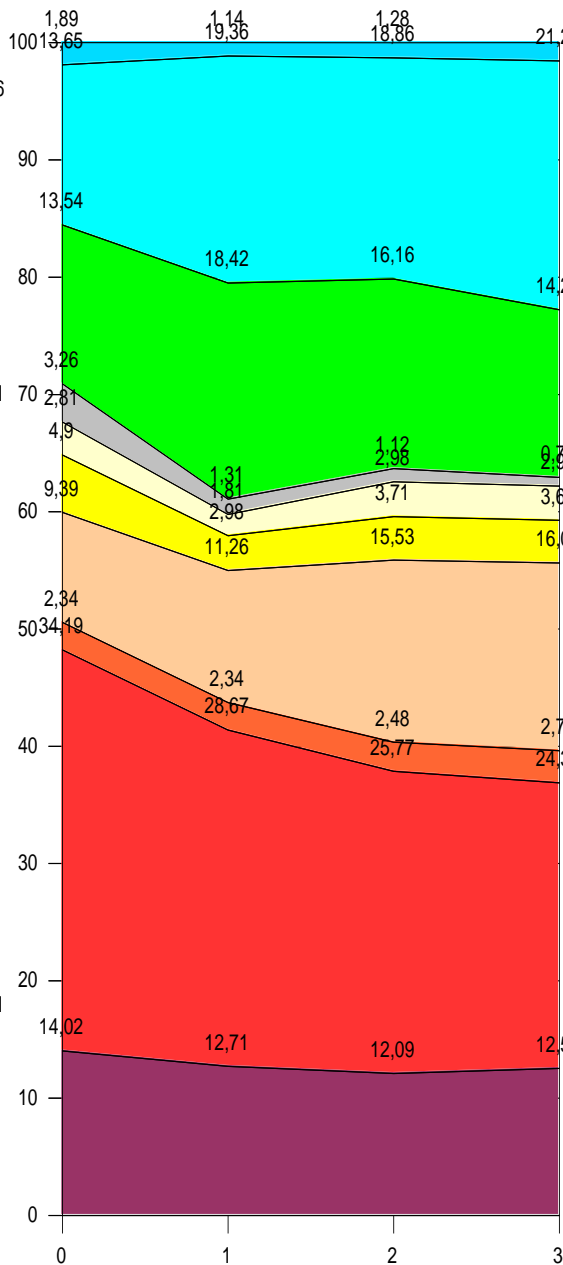
Mothers' occupational status,  
after subsequent children's births



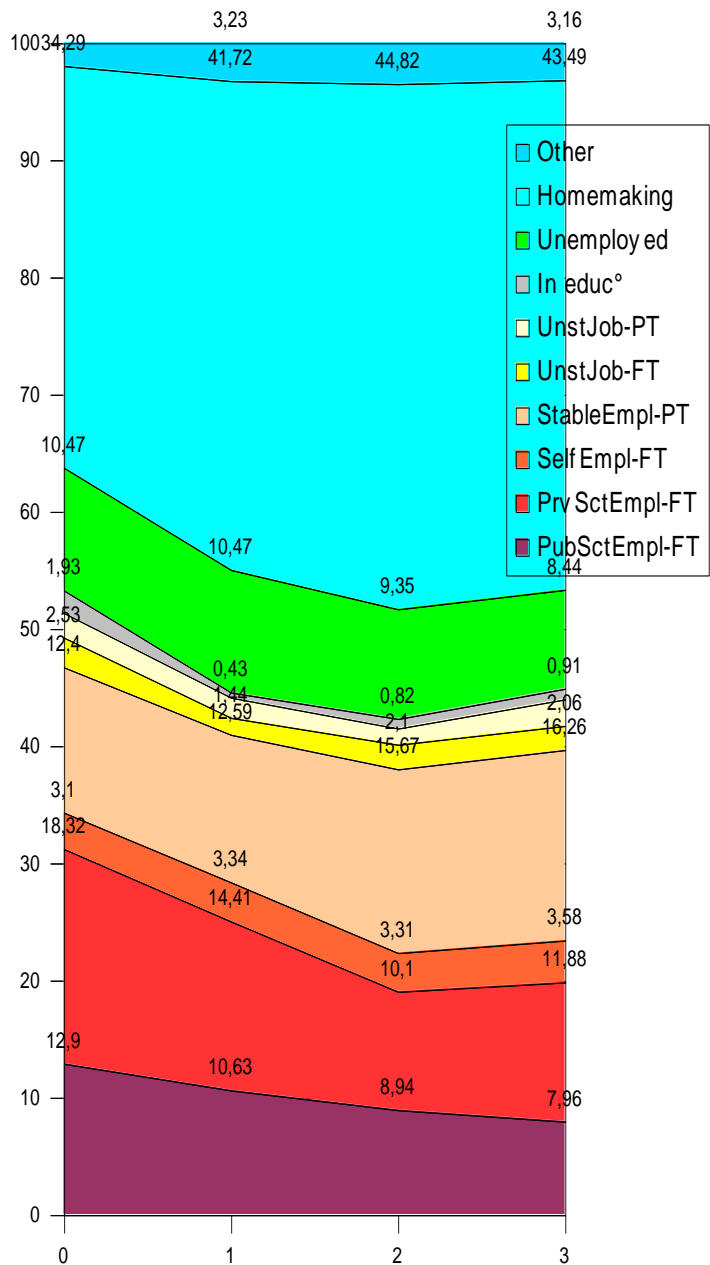
Occupational status, childless women



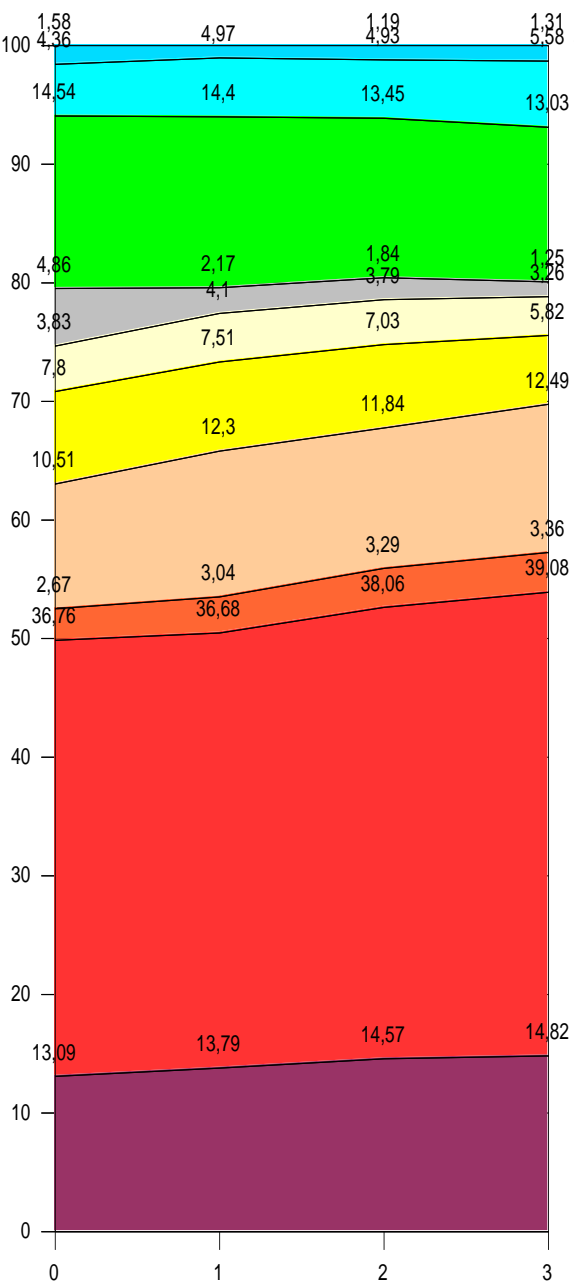
Mothers' occupational status, after first child birth



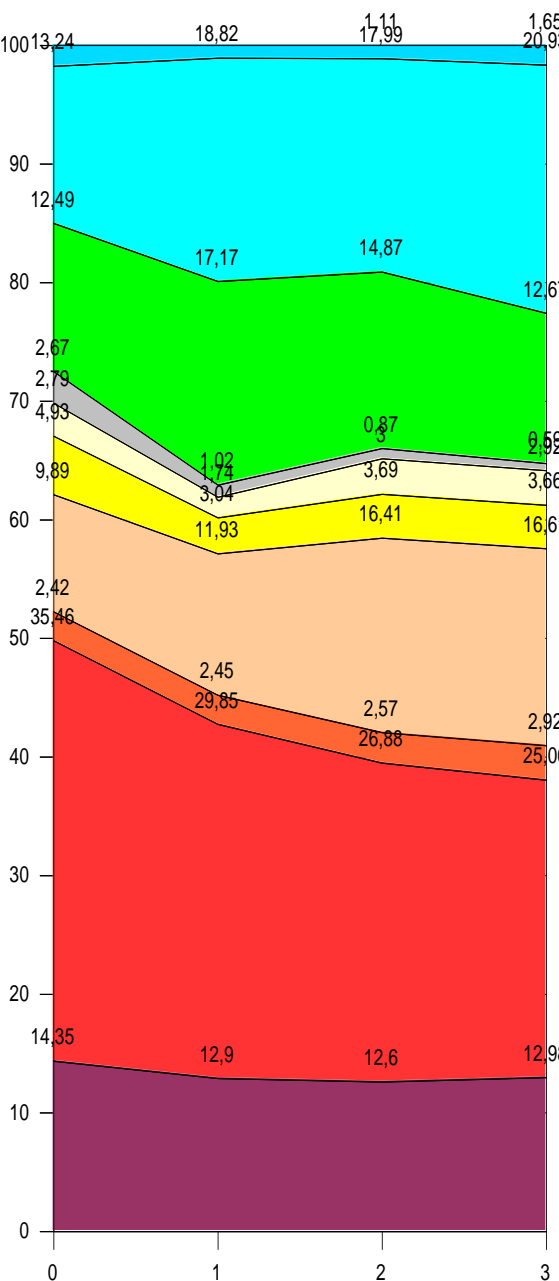
Mothers' occupational status, after subsequent children's births



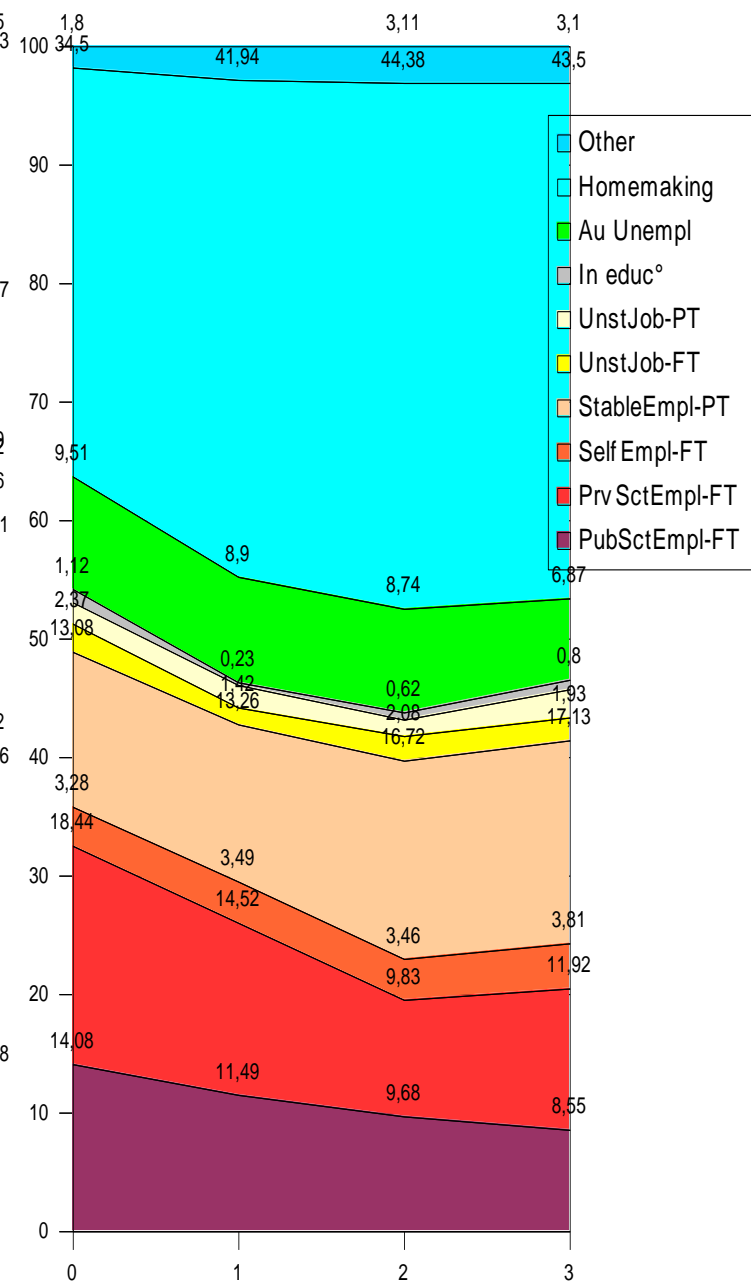
Occupational status of women, when childless and in couple



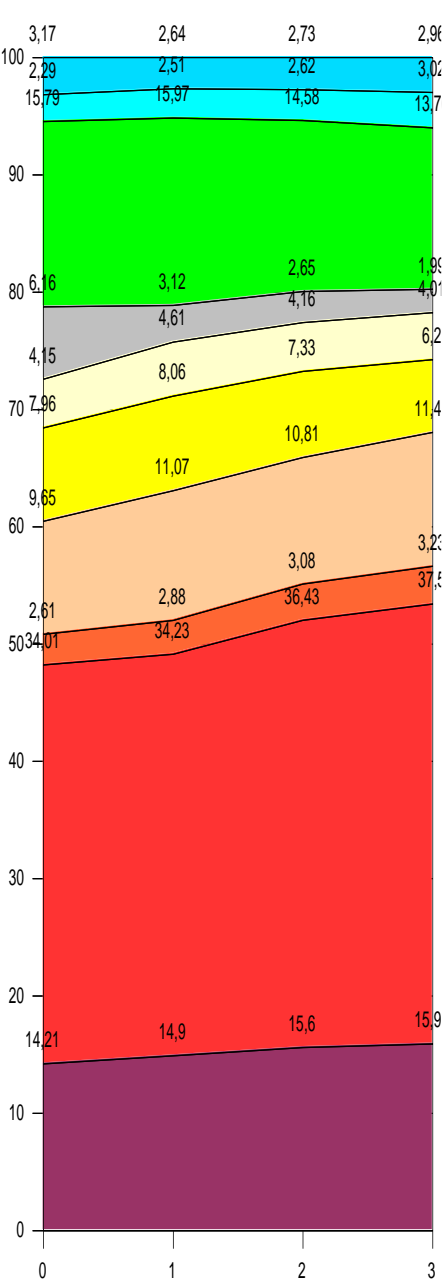
Mother's occupational status after first child's birth, still in couple



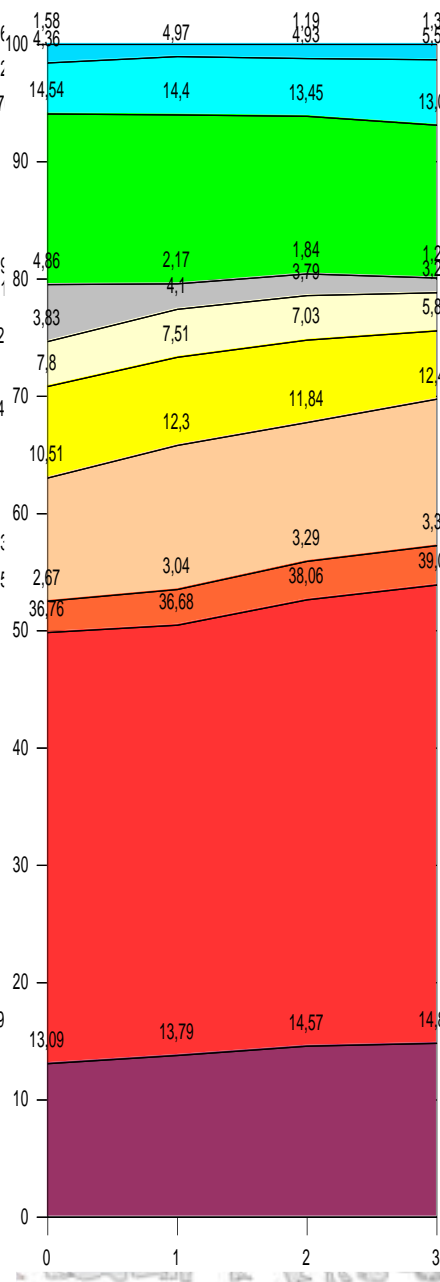
Mother's occupational status after subsequent child's birth, still in couple



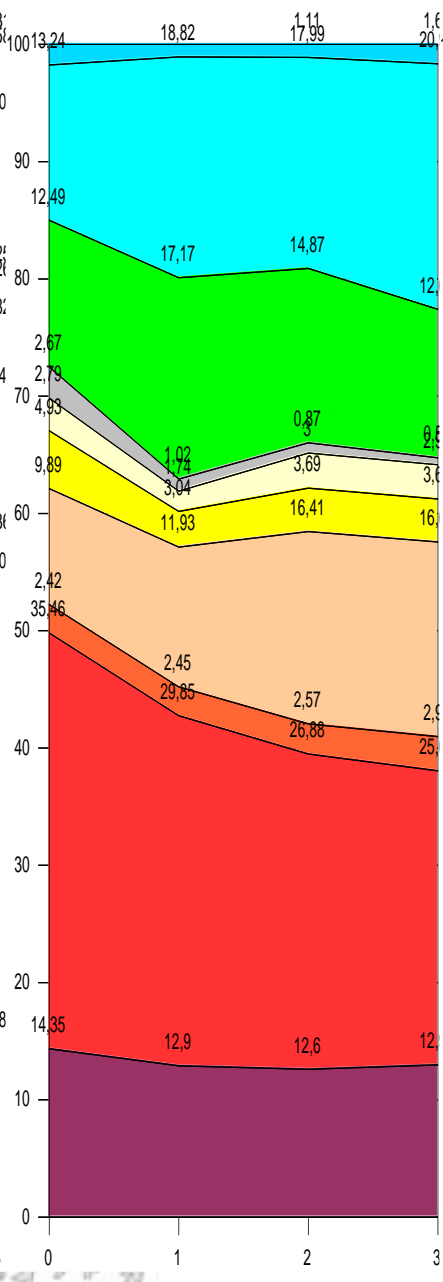
Occupational status, childless women



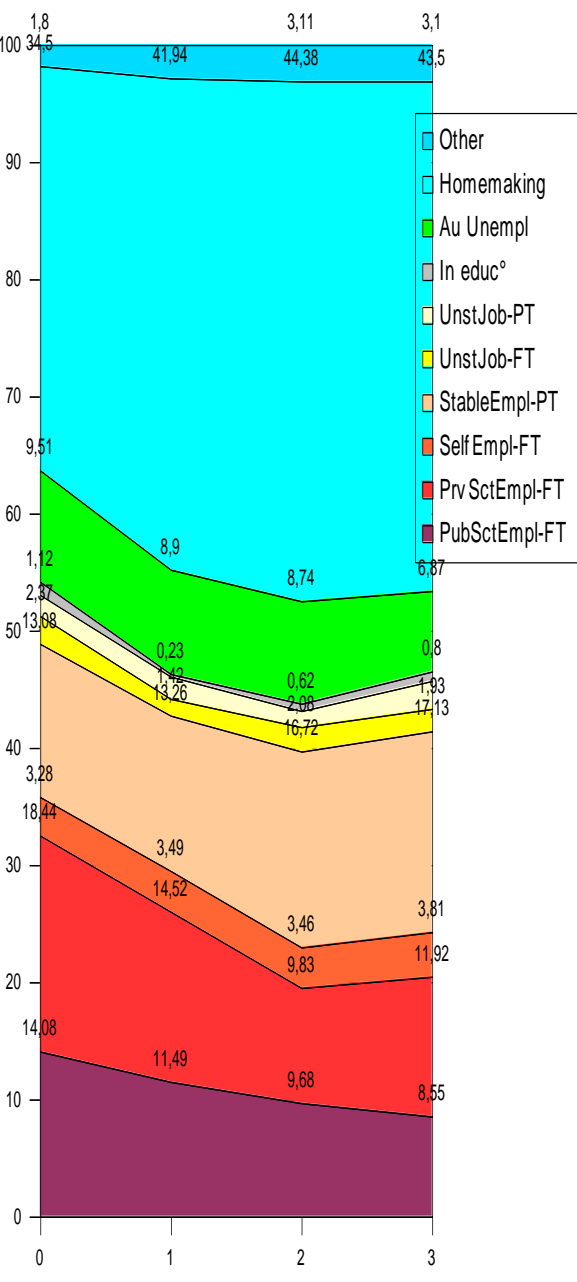
Occupational status of women, when childless and in couple



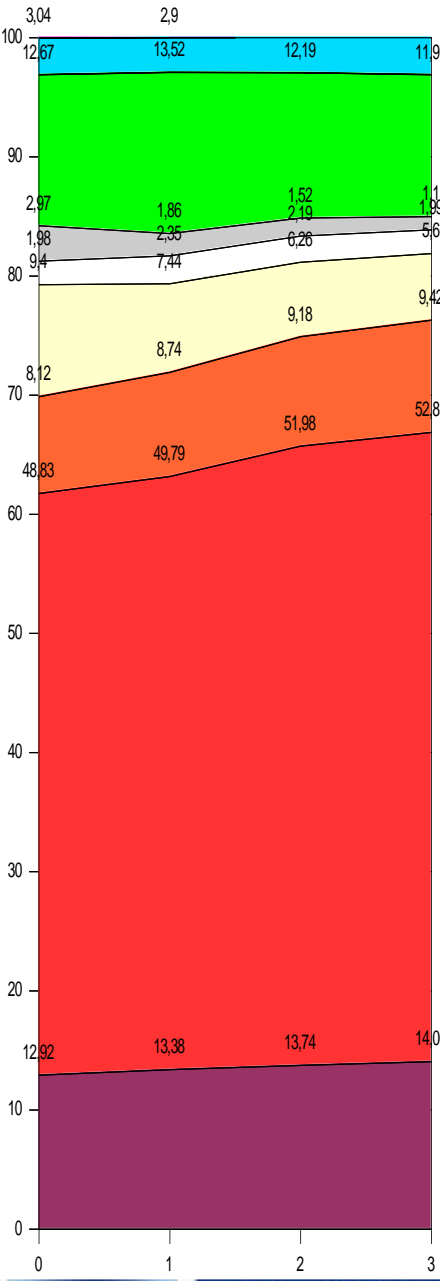
Mother's occupational status after first child's birth, still in couple



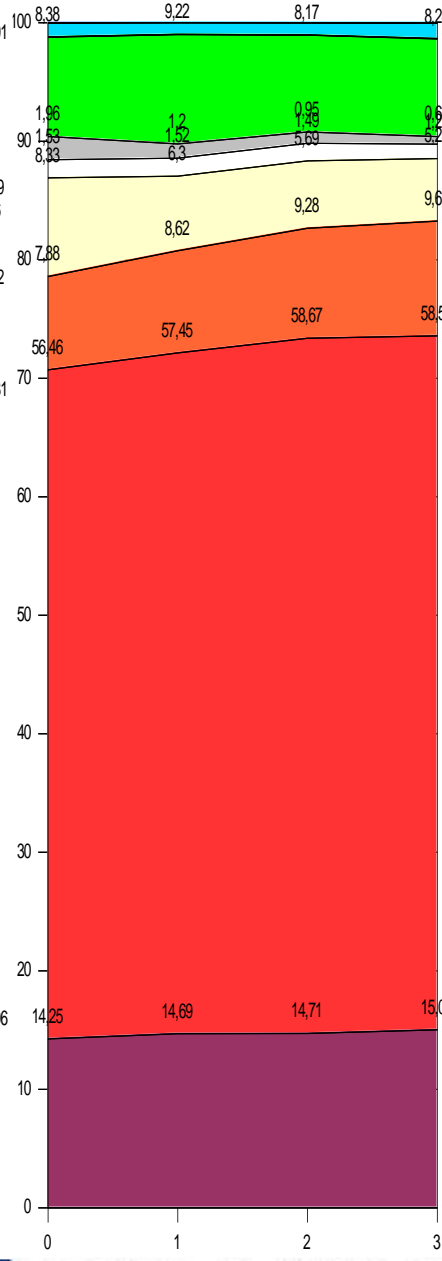
Mother's occupational status after subsequent child's birth, still in couple



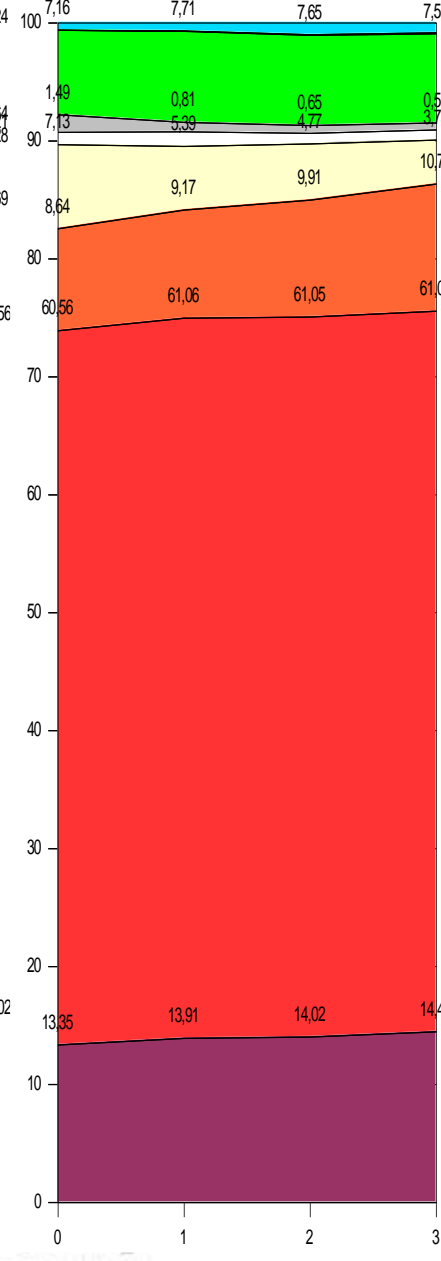
Occupational status of Men,  
when childless



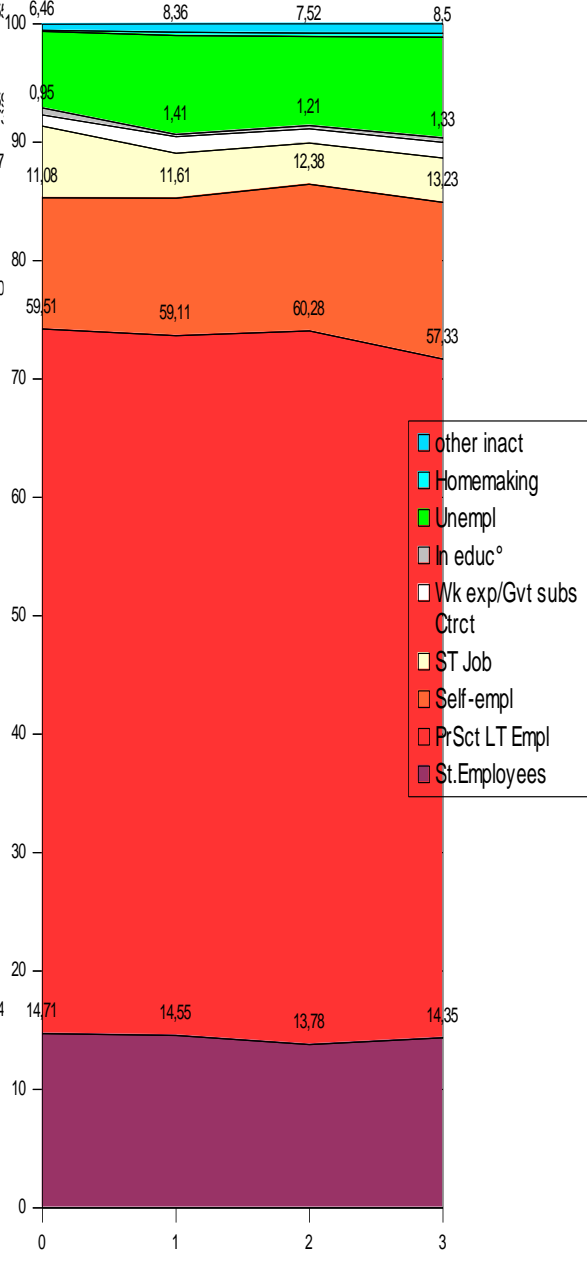
Occupational status of Men,  
when in couple and childless



Fathers' occupational status,  
after first child birth + in couple



Fathers' occupational status,  
after subsequent children's birth + still in couple



- other inactive
- Homemaking
- Unempl
- In educ°
- Wk exp/Gvt subs
- ST Job
- Self-empl
- PrSct LT Empl
- St. Employees

# Consequences

- Fathers may be visible only if in (rather stable) couple with the mother
- Men as well as women try to stabilise their professional, conjugal et residential situation to bring up their children in an « ideal » context
- Consequences of these arrangements are deeply asymmetrical : they make gender differences towards employment status stronger and also enhance unequalities among women that depend on educational level

# Further questions and research

- Fatherhood and later children
- Consequences of break-ups and divorces
- Consequences of ongoing economic precariousness
- More recent births, since 2002
- Previous periods





Thanks !

Merci !

