



Wittgenstein Centre

FOR DEMOGRAPHY AND
GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Fertility intentions of women who out-earn their partners

Family dynamics, fertility choices, and family policy

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Motivation

- Fertility intentions are the strongest predictors of reproductive behaviour, (Schoen et al.1999) and crucial for understanding fertility trends
- The role of gender roles in the reproductive decision-making has been under-investigated
- The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) and the Traits-Desires- Intentions-Behaviour (Miller 1994) do not explicitly refer to the role of gender-related factors in shaping individual reproductive intentions

Micro Economic Theory on Fertility

- Income effects: higher income, higher fertility (possibility outsourcing childcare)
- Substitution effect: higher income, higher quality of children but constant demand of children
- Opportunity costs: higher income, lower fertility

Implication of Economic Theory of Fertility

1. Any reduction in the cost of children or any increase in income is expected to increase the demand for children
2. Quality-quantity tradeoff: an increase in income may result in children of higher quality (i.e., higher cost) rather than an increasing demand for children

The Role of Relative Earnings

- On average 13% of couples in Europe are such that women earn more than their partners
- Cross-country differences ranging from 7-9% in Slovakia, Czech Republic and Germany to 17-21% in Slovenia, UK and Denmark (Vitali and Mendola 2014)
- Research question: Which implications for fertility behaviours and intentions?

Relevant factors

- Masculine ideology (Coughlin et al. 2012)
- Gender deviance neutralization (Lui 2013; Schneider 2011)
- Lower marital quality and higher risk of union dissolution (Brennan et al. 2001; Rogers et al. 2001)

Challenges

- Female-breadwinner families may be linked to failures of men in the labour market (Bettio et al. 2012; Drago et al. 2005)
 - We may be measuring the role of male unemployment (hence household income loss) on fertility intentions
 - Hence we control for economic difficulty:
 - To what extent had to manage on a lower household income in the last 3 years on a 7-point scale from “not at all” (0) to “a great deal” (6); we code 5 and 6 as “economic difficulties”

Data

- European Social Survey, round 5 (2010-2011)
 - Cross-sectional, we can do better with longitudinal data
- Sub sample of individuals aged [18-45], currently co-residing with a heterosexual spouse or partner, and such that none of the partners is retired, in education, disabled or in military service
- About 3,500 men and 4,500 women

Method

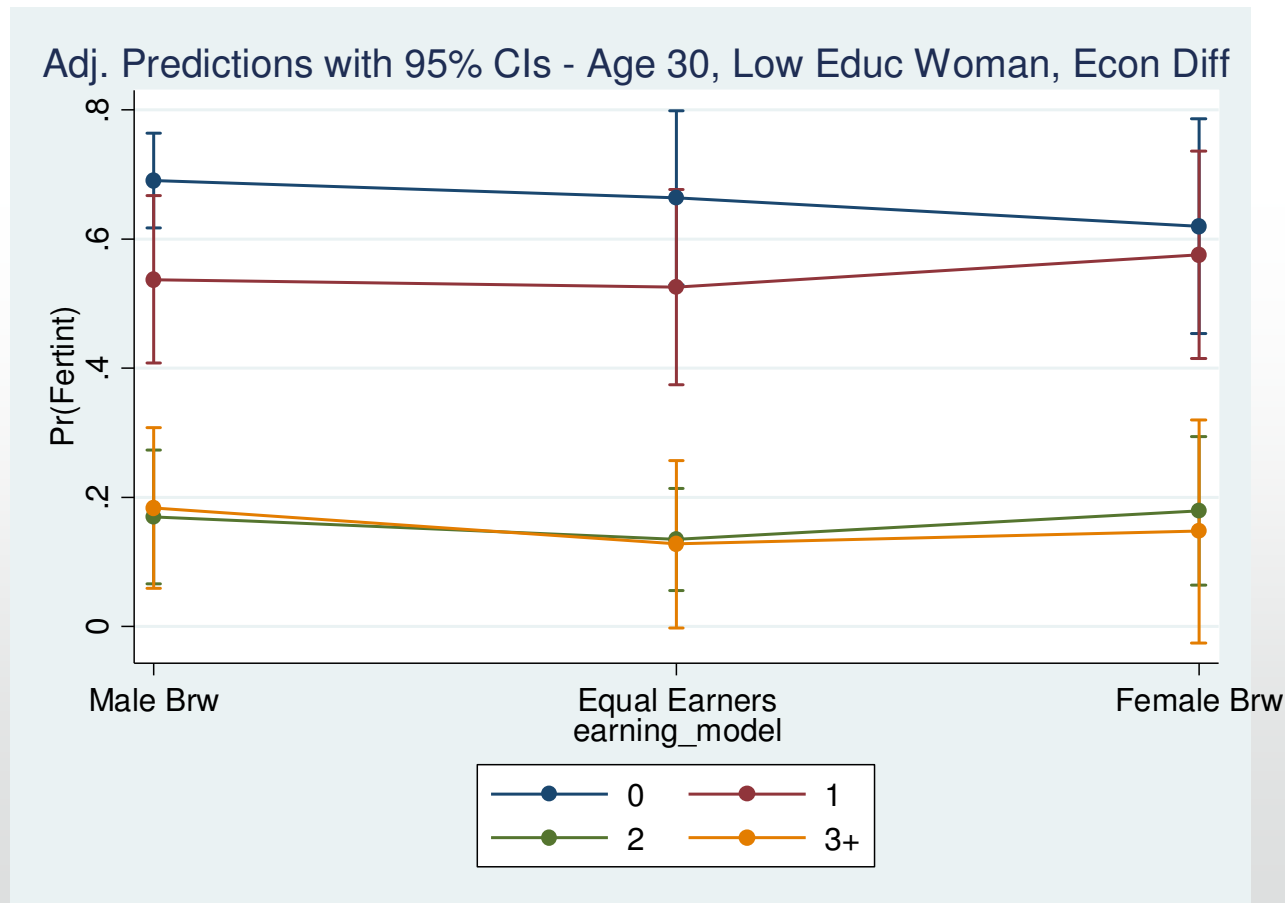
- Logistic regression, separate models for men and women
- Dependent variable: Probability of intending to have a child in the next 3 years
- Explanatory variables:
 - **Earning Models:** Male Bwr (ref.), Equal Earners, Female Bwr
 - N. Children (0, 1, 2, 3+)
 - Interaction b/e earning model & N. children
 - Experienced econ. difficulty in the last 3 years
 - Other controls: age, age², educational attainment

Results, Women

fertint	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1.econdiff	-.1090515	.1034194	-1.05	0.292	-.3117497	.0936467
edu_donna						
Medium	.3394648	.1366061	2.48	0.013	.0717217	.6072079
High	.7256103	.1158171	6.27	0.000	.4986131	.9526076
earning_model#children						
Male Brw#1	-.6513264	.1491799	-4.37	0.000	-.9437137	-.3589391
Male Brw#2	-2.388927	.2755805	-8.67	0.000	-2.929055	-1.8488
Male Brw#3+	-2.291456	.3132118	-7.32	0.000	-2.90534	-1.677572
Equal Earners#0	-.1221811	.2043547	-0.60	0.550	-.522709	.2783467
Equal Earners#1	-.6991775	.1936548	-3.61	0.000	-1.078734	-.3196211
Equal Earners#2	-2.658404	.2263617	-11.74	0.000	-3.102065	-2.214743
Equal Earners#3+	-2.723223	.4064971	-6.70	0.000	-3.519943	-1.926503
Female Brw#0	-.3108321	.2132769	-1.46	0.145	-.7288471	.1071829
Female Brw#1	-.4951067	.2299467	-2.15	0.031	-.9457938	-.0444195
Female Brw#2	-2.324857	.2763831	-8.41	0.000	-2.866558	-1.783156
Female Brw#3+	-2.559114	.5174084	-4.95	0.000	-3.573216	-1.545012
agea	.7570551	.0959512	7.89	0.000	.5689943	.9451159
agea2	-.0139731	.001437	-9.72	0.000	-.0167896	-.0111567
_cons	-9.224643	1.606715	-5.74	0.000	-12.37375	-6.07554

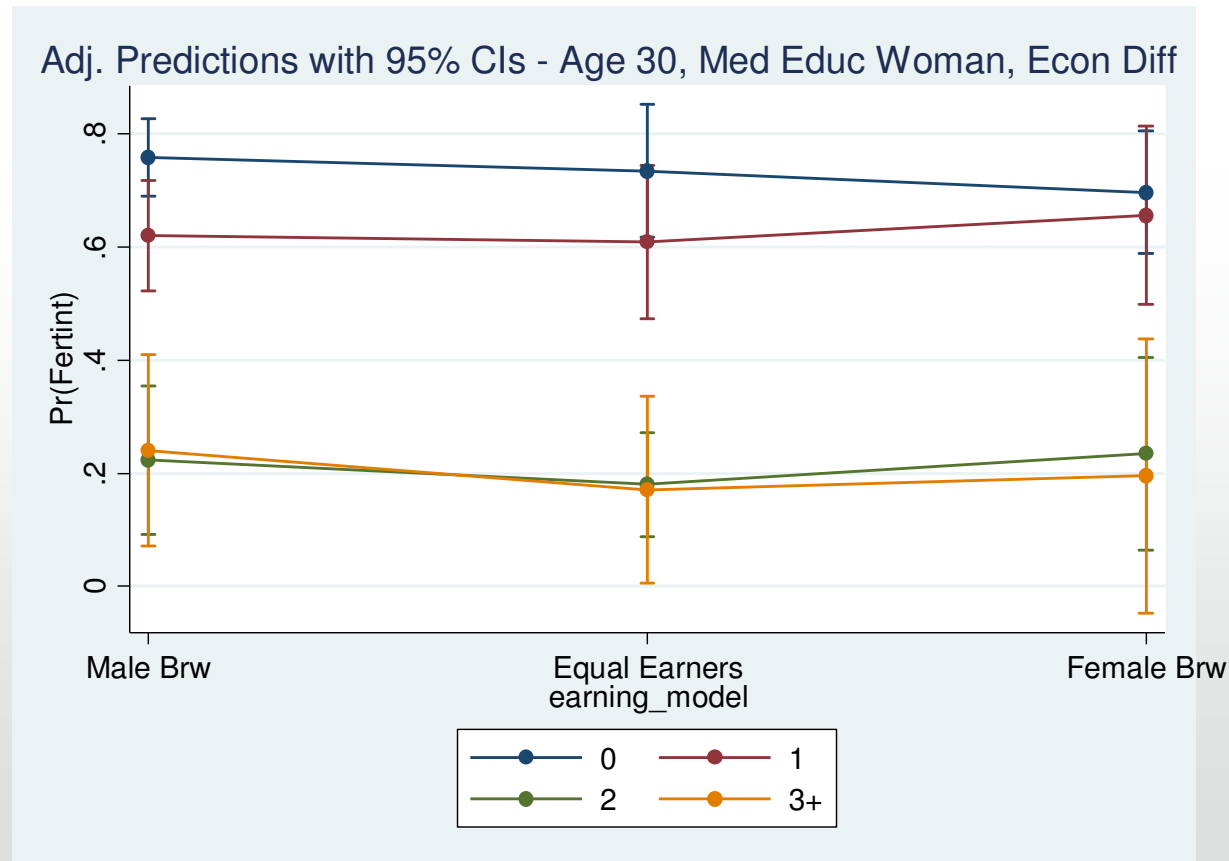
Predicted Probabilities of being in each earning model by parity

- **Women, low education**



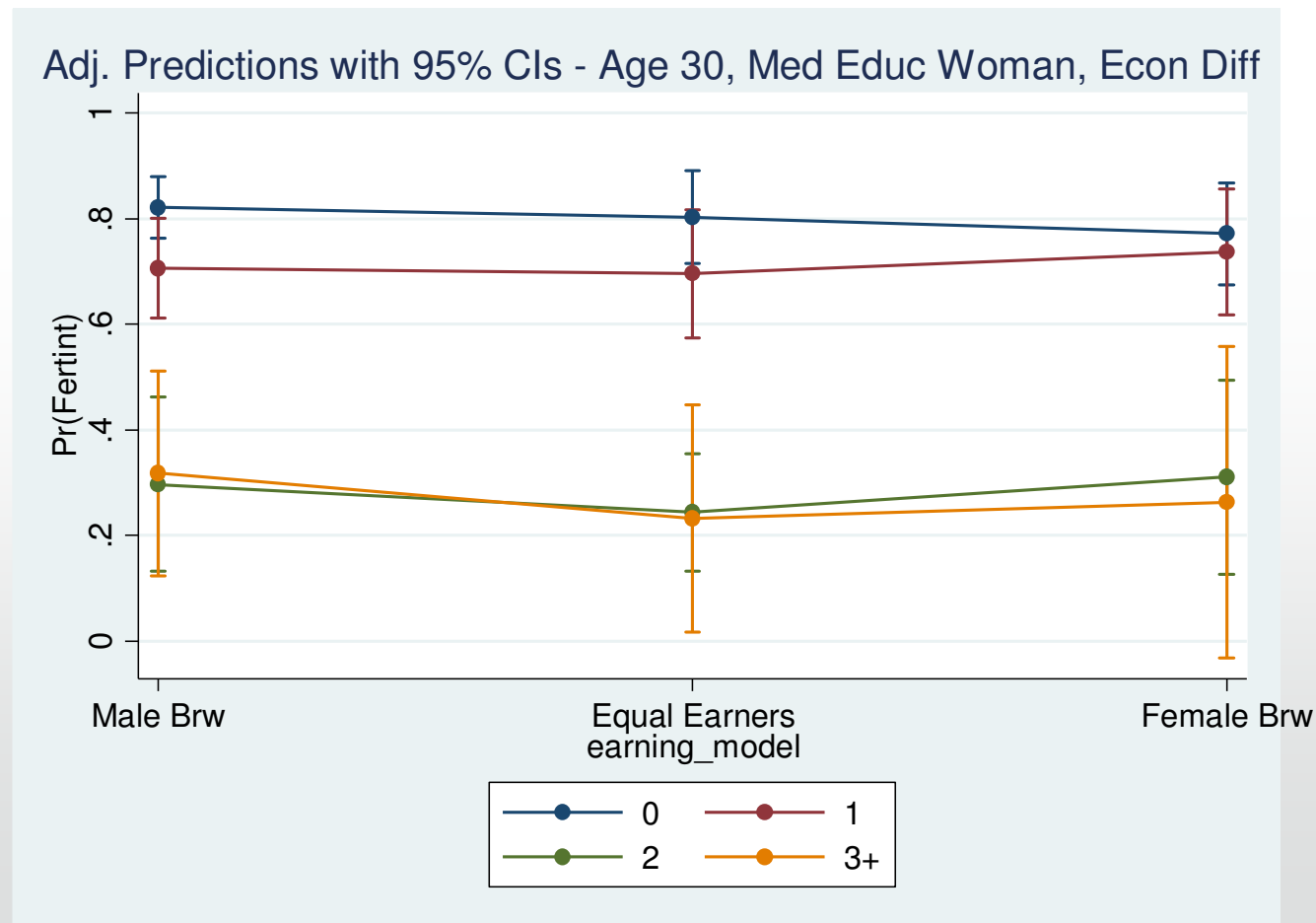
Predicted Probabilities of being in each earning model by parity

- **Women**, medium education



Predicted Probabilities of being in each earning model by parity

- **Women, high education**

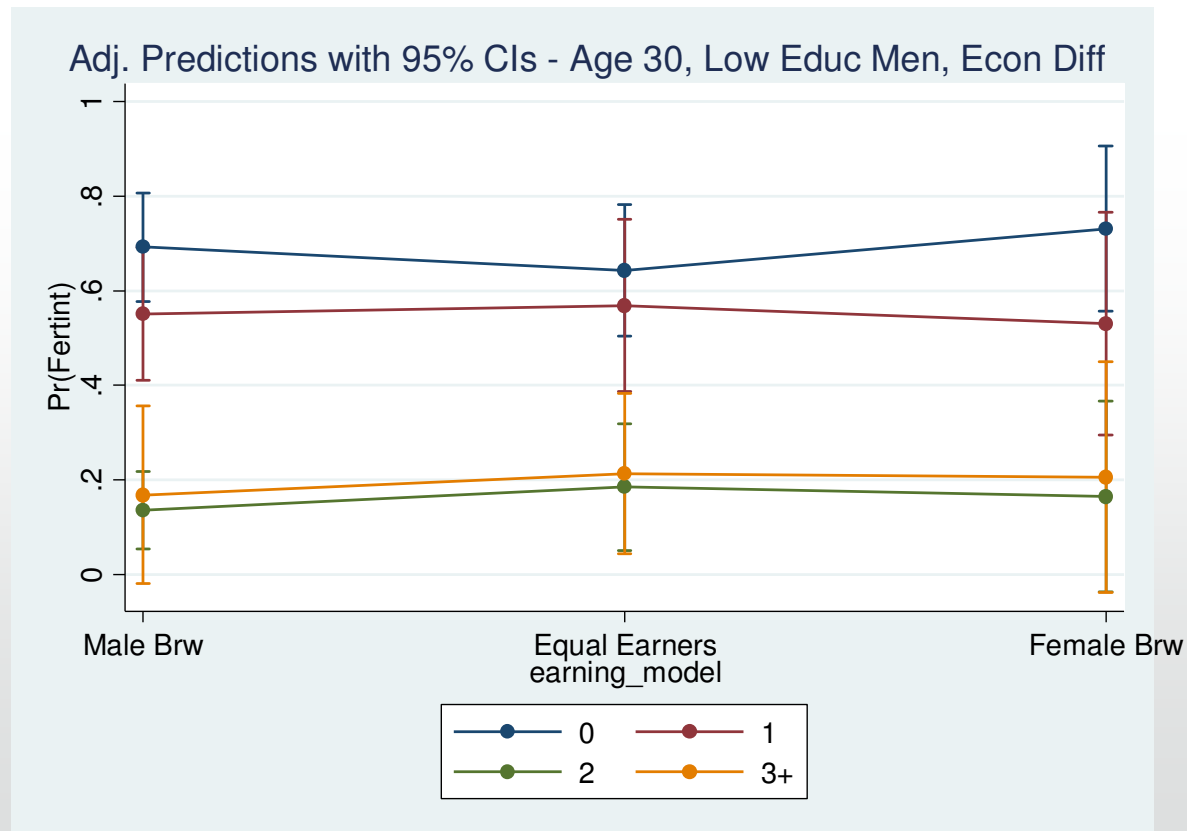


Results, Men

fertint	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1.econdiff	-.2963357	.0890221	-3.33	0.001	-.4708158	-.1218556
educ_uomo						
Medium	.1903372	.149502	1.27	0.203	-.1026814	.4833558
High	.491828	.1521049	3.23	0.001	.1937079	.7899482
earning_model#children						
Male Brw#1	-.6047843	.1935989	-3.12	0.002	-.9842312	-.2253374
Male Brw#2	-2.661451	.2716964	-9.80	0.000	-3.193966	-2.128936
Male Brw#3+	-2.408308	.486041	-4.95	0.000	-3.360931	-1.455685
Equal Earners#0	-.2221609	.1506106	-1.48	0.140	-.5173523	.0730305
Equal Earners#1	-.5338169	.3036796	-1.76	0.079	-1.129018	.0613842
Equal Earners#2	-2.293838	.3413403	-6.72	0.000	-2.962852	-1.624823
Equal Earners#3+	-2.117812	.3622198	-5.85	0.000	-2.82775	-1.407874
Female Brw#0	.1904372	.3437427	0.55	0.580	-.483286	.8641604
Female Brw#1	-.6895261	.2874095	-2.40	0.016	-1.252838	-.1262138
Female Brw#2	-2.43063	.5409264	-4.49	0.000	-3.490827	-1.370434
Female Brw#3+	-2.163843	.5411502	-4.00	0.000	-3.224478	-1.103208
agea	.7963347	.11263	7.07	0.000	.575584	1.017085
agea2	-.0133566	.0016276	-8.21	0.000	-.0165468	-.0101665
_cons	-10.7611	1.957078	-5.50	0.000	-14.5969	-6.9253

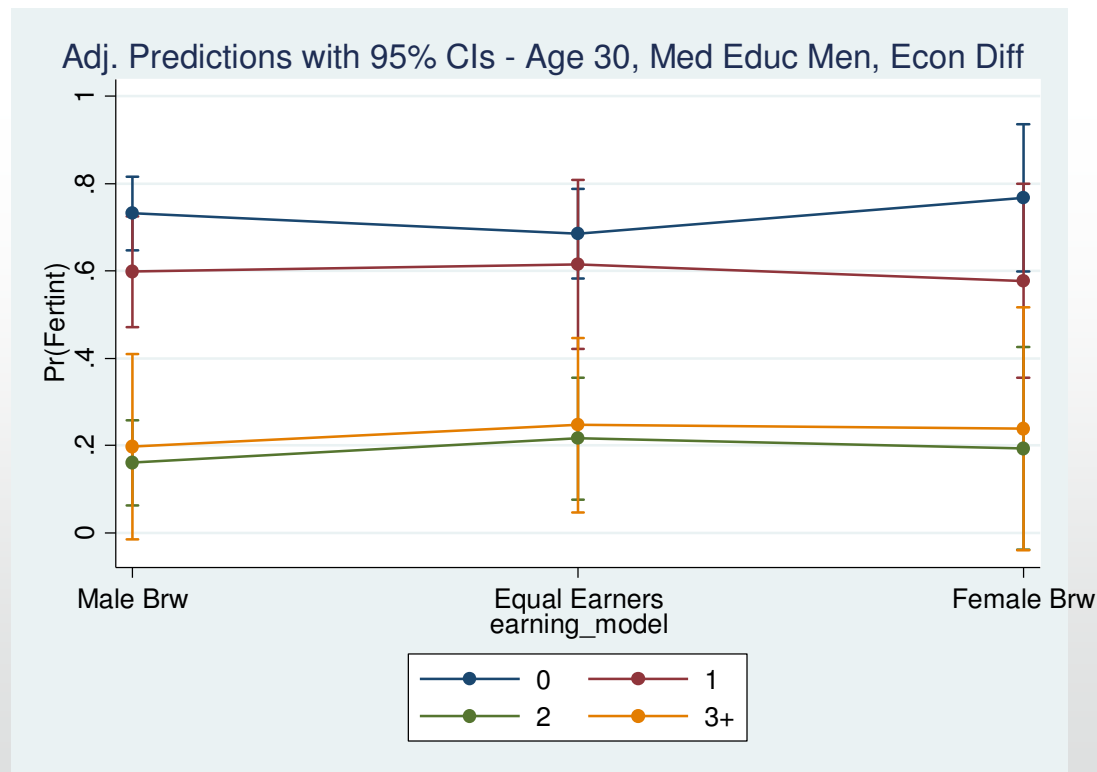
Predicted Probabilities of being in each earning model by parity

- **Men, low education**



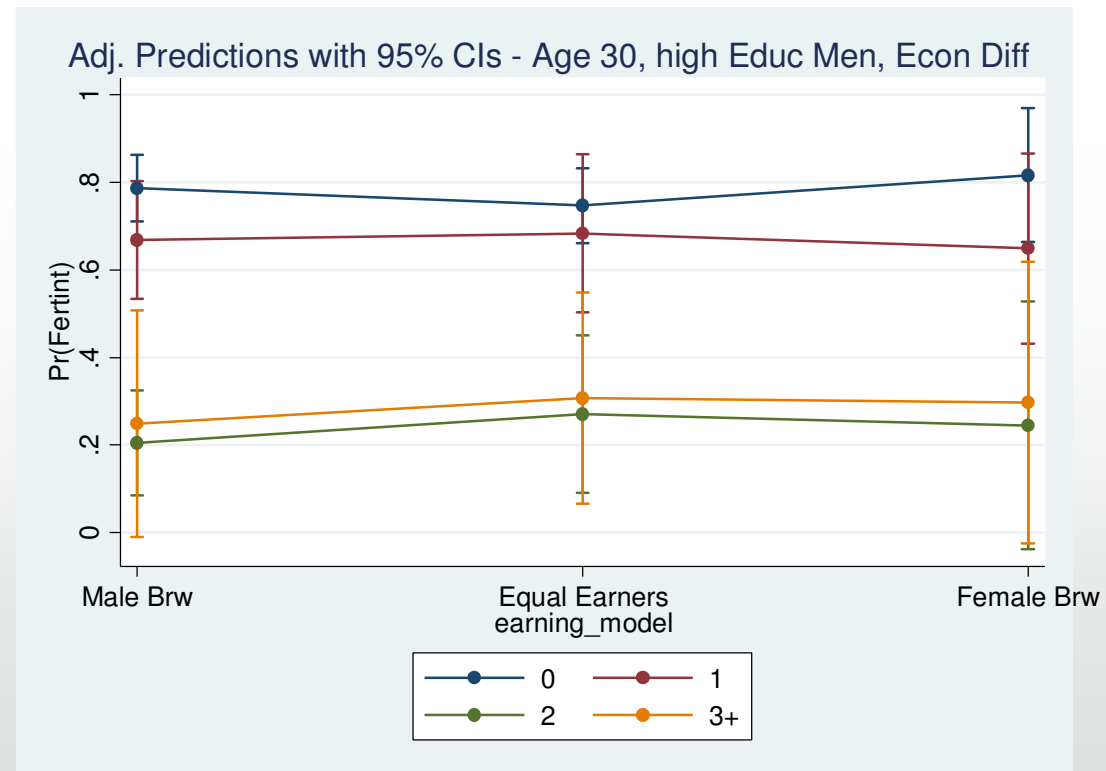
Predicted Probabilities of being in each earning model by parity

- **Men**, medium education



Predicted Probabilities of being in each earning model by parity

- **Men**, high education



Conclusions

- On the basis of ESS data, fertility intentions do not seem to be associated with the household earning model
- Women and men at parity 0 and 1 are significantly more likely to intend to have another child w.r.t. women and men at higher parities
- Average effects likely to mask country differences
- Longitudinal data needed to look more carefully into this research question