

The USC Department of Sociology Presents:
Fall 2013 Emory S. Bogardus Research Colloquium Series
Co-Sponsored by the USC Population Research Center

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Friday, December 6th, 2013

Time: 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Location: HSH 201

Refreshments will be provided.

The Parity Penalty in Life Course Perspective: Motherhood and Occupational Status in 13 European Countries

Research has documented a wage penalty for mothers as compared to childless women. We demonstrate that there is also an occupational status penalty to motherhood. Interrogating supply- and demand-side explanations of the motherhood penalty from the life course perspective, we formulate and test original hypotheses about both the short-term and long-run career implications of parity-specific births. We analyze longitudinal data from the European Community and Household Panel for thirteen European countries and eight time points between 1994 and 2001. Our fixed effects models show that the status losses for a first birth are not just short-term, but cumulate over the career. The timing of a birth in a woman's life course matters only for older women, who experience a significant penalty to third births. Although the personal strategies that women use to minimize the career costs of motherhood (such as having only one child) prove ineffective, our cross-national evidence shows that public policies may minimize the motherhood penalty in occupational status.