Changing families, unchanging attitudes: The effect of family transitions on gender role attitudes in Sweden

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ABSTRACT

Sweden is a society known for its emphasis on gender equality. Yet, previous research finds that attitudes are affected by life course transitions. Given the prevalence of cohabitation and later marriage and childbearing, this study examines the effect of family transitions on changes in gender role attitudes. We ask whether egalitarian attitudes can withstand changing family dynamics in Sweden. Using longitudinal data from the Young Adult Panel Study, we find few effects of family transitions on changes in gender role attitudes in Sweden. Across 20 regression models and 35 coefficients related to union and child transitions, there are only four significant findings. We conclude that the gender roles of Swedish young adults are fairly immune to union and parenthood transitions.

Keywords: Gender role attitudes; marriage; divorce; childbearing; Sweden
1. Introduction

It is well known that Western countries have experienced rapid changes in family patterns as well as attitudes toward gender equality. On the one hand, Billari and Liefbroer (2010) propose a “new European pattern” that features late, protracted, and complex transitions, including high rates of cohabitation and late entry to marriage and childbirth. On the other hand, there is a “coming reconfiguration of the value system to give higher priority to caregiving in relation to productive work” (Giele & Holst, 2004, p. 19), which moves gender ideology more and more towards equality. Furthermore, family transitions are strongly related to attitudes and ideals (Axinn & Thornton, 2000; Surkyn & Lesthaeghe, 2002). Several studies examine the effect of gender role attitudes on family behavior. Fewer studies consider the effect of behavior on attitudes. Moors (2003) asserts “that re-socialization takes place after family formation. Structural changes generate values and attitudes as well” (p. 201). In this sense, it is important to consider how adult experiences influence gender role attitudes (Zuo & Tang, 2000). More specifically, changing family patterns such as increases in cohabitation along with delayed marriage and childbearing may contribute to the decline in traditional values, prompting greater acceptance of gender equality (Bumpass, 1990).

Even among Western countries, Sweden is notable in its emphasis on gender equality. Sweden provides a unique context given specific government efforts to promote gender equality (Oláh & Bernhardt, 2008). Specific family policies related to childcare and parental leave encourage women’s greater participation in employment and men’s greater participation in childrearing, goals that promote gender equality (Earles, 2011). In addition, men and women hold generally positive attitudes toward gender equality at home (Bernhardt, Noack, & Lyngstad,
While evidence from the U.S. indicates that individuals who marry and have children become more traditional in their attitudes, does this hold for Sweden? In other words, how strong are egalitarian attitudes in Sweden? Can they withstand changing family dynamics such as marriage and children?

This study examines the influence of family transitions, including marriage, divorce, and childbearing, on changes in gender role attitudes. While much of the previous research utilizes cross-sectional data and examines a limited set of transitions and gender role attitudes, our use of the Swedish Young Adult Panel Survey allows us to address these issues on a longitudinal basis. First, we have survey data from two waves, spanning six years during young adulthood, in which individuals are undergoing various family transitions. We are thus able to directly test whether changes in family status result in changing gender role attitudes. Second, this study goes beyond previous research in considering multiple measures of gender role attitudes. We consider gender equality across four dimensions: society-level, work, family, and work-family intersections. We also have detailed data on union formation and dissolution as well as childbearing. Finally, our focus on Sweden allows us to determine whether gender role attitudes are stable or not in a highly egalitarian country.

2. Background and hypotheses

2.1 Gender role attitudes

contract. A gender contract prescribes specific roles and statuses for men and women in different social spheres. The “official” contract consists of public policies, specifically aimed at female labor force participation, “everyday” contract consists of individuals’ behavior, and “normative” contract consists of gender role attitudes. The “official” contract in Sweden is the “dual-earner/state-dual carer” model in which policy encourages not only female employment but also shared child care. The “normative” contract is a weak “male-breadwinner model” (Lewis, 1992), in that there is little and decreasing support for traditional gender roles (Esping-Andersen, 2009). Motiejunaite and Kravchenko (2008) found, for example, that Sweden became less supportive of traditional gender roles between 1994 and 2002. Baxter and Kane (1995), comparing the US, Canada, Australia, Norway and Sweden, found the greatest level of egalitarianism in gender attitudes in Scandinavia, particularly Sweden. Finally, the “everyday” contract is dominated by the “dual-earner” family model in which the most common family arrangement is for both partners to work full-time.

A common definition of an attitude is the one formulated by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), namely a pre-disposition to respond to a particular object in a generally favorable or unfavorable way. The “object” or “preferred end-state” (Moors, 1997) in this particular case is the individual’s notion about how a cohabiting couple ought to share housework, childcare and/or providing roles. Egalitarian attitudes imply that the man and the woman in a couple are equally involved in paid work outside the home, and that they share housework and childcare. McDonald (2000) refers to this as “gender equity,” while Esping-Andersen (2009) talks about “gender equalization.” We prefer to think of this as the result of the second, or familistic, half of the gender revolution (Goldscheider & Stanfors, 2011), where in the first stage women joined men in the new opportunities for self and family support in the labor market, and the second half, just

Two widely cited works (Berk, 1985; West & Zimmerman, 1987) introduce the concept of “doing gender,” meaning “creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential or biological” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 137). One important arena for this is the gender division of labor, both paid and unpaid. Thus, “gender is a powerful ideological device, which produces, reproduces and legitimates the choices and limits that are predicated on sex category” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 147). The views that individuals hold with regard to the proper roles of men and women, in the public and in the private (domestic) sphere, can therefore be assumed to have an important bearing on many dimensions of the lives of individuals and families, and thus of the social structure of society.

Attitudes, or value orientations, can be more or less stable over time. Schwarz (2007) discusses whether people ‘have’ enduring attitudes or construct automatic and deliberate evaluative judgments on the spot. According to Moors (1997, p. 3) “important transitions in the life-course imply re-socialization of value orientations.” In examining support for gender equality, Bolzendahl and Myers (2004) draw on interest-based and exposure-based explanations. Interest-based explanations of attitudes focus on individual benefits, suggesting that those who personally benefit from gender equity will be more likely to have more egalitarian attitudes. It seems clear that women would benefit more from gender equity and therefore have more egalitarian attitudes. It is less clear whether men and women experience marriage, divorce, and childbearing differently in such a way that one group would be more or less likely to experience a change in attitudes. For example, while several studies have found a positive effect of marriage
on well-being (Gove, Style, & Hughes, 1990; Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1990; Waite, 1995), this benefit is generally greater for men than women. If this is the case, getting married may affect men’s gender role attitudes more than women’s attitudes. A second explanation of attitudes toward gender equality is exposure-based, which suggests “that individuals develop or change their understanding of women’s place in society and their attitudes toward feminist issues when they encounter ideas and situations that resonate with feminist ideals” (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004 p. 761-762). For example, Pitt and Borland (2008) assert that unmarried men nowadays are responsible for taking care of their own households, including traditionally female tasks, and this exposure to non-traditional roles will lead to greater acceptance of egalitarian attitudes. In the current study, we are interested in the potential effect of exposure to different family forms through partnership and childbearing transitions.

2.2 Childbearing, partnership formation/dissolution and attitudes

There is a vast literature on attitude change, as well as on the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, mostly by psychologists or social psychologists (for reviews of this research area, see Eagly & Chaiken, 2005; Petty, Wegener, & Fabrigar, 1997; Tesser & Shaffer, 1990). Thus, there is some evidence that individuals adapt their attitudes to life course experiences. For example, Cunningham and Thornton (2005a, 2005b) find that union formation and dissolution can affect attitudes towards these family roles. Lesthaeghe and Moors (2002) find that those who cohabit and those who have experienced the dissolution of a cohabiting or marital partnership hold value orientations that are less conformist while those who are married hold more conformist attitudes. Cunningham et al. (2005) also find a negative relationship
between egalitarian attitudes and early marriage and parenthood. While it is not always clear what the mechanisms are behind behaviour’s influence on attitudes, there seems to be considerable empirical support for an important effect in this direction (Clarkberg, 2002).

Gender role attitudes have been the focus of substantial research, primarily among sociologists, for the past fifty years or so (Tallichet & Willits, 1986, Zuo & Tang, 2000). However, there seems to be very few studies of how changes in family status, such as childbearing and partnership formation/dissolution, affect gender role attitudes. One important reason for this is of course the relative scarcity of longitudinal data, which include information on attitudes for at least two occasions, as well as information on intervening demographic events. Two recent exceptions are the papers by Corrigall and Konrad (2007) and Cunningham et al. (2005). The former examines the impact of early gender role attitudes on later career outcomes for women and men, as well as the impact of marriage, children and labor market outcomes on changes in gender role attitudes. Finding that children were negatively associated with later gender egalitarianism for both women and men, they concluded that gender role attitudes are adjusted to accommodate situational constraints. Cunningham et. al. (2005), using data from a 31-year panel study, investigate the reciprocal relationship between individuals’ gender role attitudes and, for example, entry into marriage and marital parenthood. They found little evidence that factors shaping men’s and women’s attitudes differed. Neither did their results support a hypothesis that entry into marriage should influence individuals’ gender role attitudes.

Other studies find that married men and women are less supportive of equality in gender roles and family responsibilities (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004) and more supportive of traditional family roles (Gubernskaya, 2010). Based on longitudinal data, Barber and Axinn (1998) and Moors (2003) find that women become more traditional when they get married. On the other hand,
divorced women are more egalitarian than married women (Forste & Heaton, 2004). These studies tend to focus on women and in the case of Barber and Axinn marriage at a very young age (by 23). However, marriage and divorce may affect men differently as egalitarian men tend to experience higher levels of marital stability and divorced men are more traditional (Forste & Heaton, 2004; Kaufman, 2000).

Studies that focus on unmarried individuals generally find that this status is associated with more liberal attitudes (Pitt & Borland, 2008; Waite, Goldscheider, & Witsberger, 1986). These researchers argue that living independently creates an opportunity to move away from traditional roles and therefore develop more egalitarian attitudes. Unmarried women experience increasing non-traditionalism (Waite et al., 1986). While Waite et al. (1986) find no effect of living independently on men’s gender role attitudes, they suggest that men are expected to be more independent. However, almost twenty years later, Pitt and Borland (2008) find that living independently does have a liberalizing influence on men’s gender role attitudes.

Several studies find a relationship between having children and more traditional attitudes (Cunningham et al., 2005; Davis, 2007; Fan & Marini, 2000). Indeed, married parents tend to hold the least egalitarian attitudes (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Nevertheless, there is some suggestion that the relationship between children and feminist attitudes is changing, at least among women. Bolzendahl and Myers (2004) find that American women with children in the late 1990s held more liberal attitudes toward gender roles and family responsibilities than childless women. They suggest that this finding supports interest-based explanations in that women with children would benefit from a more equal division of labor. In addition, Dribe and Stanfors’ (2009) recent study of parenthood and division of labor in Sweden finds that parenthood has become more influential in men’s lives. Whereas in the early 1990s parenthood had no significant effect on Swedish men’s
paid work or housework, in the early 2000s, fatherhood had a similar effect as motherhood in decreasing work time and increasing housework time.

In this paper we are able to study change (or stability) in gender role attitudes among young adults in Sweden, arguably one of the most gender-equal societies in the world (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2008). Since we have longitudinal data, we can study change over time for the same individuals. We focus on family transitions as the main explanatory variable, i.e. union formation and dissolution, as well as the transition to parenthood. As these transitions are of fundamental importance in the lives of individuals, we hypothesize that there will be some impact on their value orientations with regard to gender equality, in particular in the domestic sphere. Nevertheless, countries with more liberal welfare regimes experience a smaller effect of family change on attitudes than more conservative gender regimes (Gubernskaya, 2010) and thus the effects might be rather weak in a gender-equal society like contemporary Sweden.

3. Data and methods

3.1 Data

Data for this research come from the Young Adult Panel Study (www.suda.su.se/yaps). This is a mail questionnaire survey with three waves (1999, 2003, 2009), and the sample is drawn from individuals born in Sweden in 1968, 1972, 1976, and 1980, and so concentrates on young adults in the prime ages for cohabitation, marriage, and childbearing. The sample for this study consists of all those who participated in both the second and third waves, and the sample size
varies by analysis and is based on union and parenthood status. In 2003, there were 649 single individuals, 691 cohabiting individuals, and 335 married individuals. Regardless of union status, there were 1137 individuals with no children in 2003.

3.2 Variables

Our focus is on change in gender role attitudes among young adults experiencing union and child transitions. As such, our dependent variable is gender role attitudes in 2009, controlling for gender role attitudes in 2003. We have several measures of gender role attitudes. First, we consider the ideal family arrangement for a couple with preschool children. Responses included, “both work and share family tasks equally,” “both work but the woman works part-time,” “the man works while the woman takes care of home and children,” and other responses. We created a dichotomous variable, ideal family situation, in which those who said both should share roles equally will be compared to all others. Second, attitudes toward family leave are measured with the statement: “Parents should share parental leave equally.” Responses range from ‘don’t agree at all’ (1) to ‘agree completely’(5), but the variable is dichotomized (5=strongly agree versus all others). Third, we measure gender equality in terms of family roles with the average value of three items: “The woman should take the main responsibility for housework” (reverse coded), “The man should be the main supporter of the family” (reverse coded), and “It is as important for a woman as for a man to support herself.” This variable is labeled division of labor. Higher scores indicate more egalitarian attitudes, but again the variable is dichotomized (strongly agree versus all other). Fourth, we measure gender equality in terms of work roles with the average value of two items: “Men can do as well as women in caring jobs” and “Women can do as well
as men in technical jobs”, and label this variable *job equality* and dichotomize it in the same way as before. Finally, we measure general gender equality with the statement, “A society where men and women are equal is a good society”. We label this dichotomized variable, *equal society*. Because young adults in Sweden tend to have highly egalitarian attitudes, we have dichotomized all measures of gender role attitudes to distinguish those who are extremely egalitarian versus others.

This study seeks to understand the influence of union and family transitions on changes in gender role attitudes. Our main independent variables are measured as transitions between 2003 and 2009. Union formation and dissolution is measured by starting with the respondent’s union status in 2003. Those who were single in 2003 could make the following transitions: cohabiting in 2009, married in 2009, cohabited and broke up by 2009 (and any other multiple transitions). Those who remained single throughout the time period were placed in the reference category. Those who were cohabiting in 2003 could make the following transitions: married their partner by 2009 and broke up with their partner by 2009 (including those who broke up and entered other unions, which may themselves have broken up). Those who remained cohabiting with their same partner from 2003 were placed in the reference category. Finally, those who were married in 2003 could have divorced their spouse. Since there were so few divorces, all respondents who split with their spouse regardless of subsequent transitions were put together. Those who remained married were placed in the reference category. Therefore, the reference category consists of those respondents who did not experience any union transition between 2003 and 2009. Transition to parenthood was measured using information on the timing of the birth of children. Those respondents who were childless in 2003 and had a first child between 2003 and 2009 were coded as having a child.
We control for gender, cohort (1972, 1976, and 1980, with 1968 as the reference category), college degree, and income (logged). We also control for gender role attitudes as measured in 2003.

3.3 Analytical strategy

In order to analyze the effect of family transitions on gender role attitudes, we used logistic regression, as all our outcome variables are dichotomous. By controlling for gender role attitudes in 2003, we are able to model change in gender role attitudes. Given our five attitudinal variables and our four main independent variables, we ran 20 models. Each transition was modeled separately given different groups were at risk of different transitions. More specifically, models were run for each of the five attitudes for those who were single in 2003 (and could have cohabited, married, formed and dissolved a union, or remained single), those who were cohabiting in 2003 (and could have married their partner, separate from their partner, or remained with their partner), those who were married in 2003 (and could have separated from their spouse or remained married), and those who had no children in 2003 (and could have had a first child by 2009). We also tested a series of interactions between gender and family transitions and report on these results when significant.

4. Results

4.1 Attitudes toward gender roles in 2003 and 2009
Table 1 shows proportions of those who are extremely egalitarian (i.e., those who have completely agreed with the attitudinal statements). Not surprisingly, Swedish young adults hold very egalitarian ideals. On all dimensions of gender role attitudes, a majority favor egalitarianism. For example, 75 percent of young adults agree completely that “a society where men and women are equal is a good society.” Our sample has even stronger feelings about job differentiation, with 83 percent agreeing completely that “men can do as well as women in caring jobs” and “women can do as well as men in technical jobs.” A clear majority also think that work and family roles should be shared, with 71 percent of individuals not agreeing at all with the statements that “the woman should take the main responsibility for housework” and “the man should be the main supporter of the family.” In addition, 79 percent believe that the best situation for a family with preschool children is for both partners to work and share family tasks equally. Another 15 percent think the best situation is for both to work but the woman to work part-time, while only a handful thinks other situations are ideal. The greatest variation comes in attitudes toward parental leave. While a majority agrees that “parents should share parental leave equally,” only 36 percent agree completely and almost one-fifth do not agree with equal parental leave on some level.

Comparing the means of gender role attitudes in 2003 and 2009, we find that in general young Swedish adults’ attitudes became even more egalitarian in this time period. The largest change in attitudes concerns peoples’ perceptions about the ideal situation for a family with preschool children. Similarly, attitudes concerning women and men’s responsibility for home and financial support as well as men and women’s ability to do non-traditional jobs became significantly more egalitarian over time.

[Table 1 about here]
4.2 Union and child transitions between 2003 and 2009

In 2003, 38.4 percent of our sample was single, 41 percent was cohabiting, and 20.6 percent was married. While there was a good deal of stability in status, there were also transitions, and sometimes multiple transitions. Among those who were single in 2003, 32 percent entered a cohabiting union (and remained in this union), 13 percent got married (mostly via cohabitation first), 14 percent entered a union and broke up at least once, and 41 percent remained single throughout the time period. Among those who were cohabiting in 2003, 36 percent married their partner from 2003, 19 percent split with their partner, and 45 percent remained with their partner. Only 10 percent of those who were married in 2003 split with their partner by 2009. Finally, 48 percent of those who did not have a child in 2003 had their first child by 2009.

4.3 Multivariate results

Logistic regression models of gender role attitudes in 2009 controlling for gender role attitudes in 2003 were run. As such, models indicate change in gender role attitudes between 2003 and 2009. Separate models were run for each of five measures of gender role attitudes. In addition, in order to examine the effect of union transitions separate models were run for those who were single in 2003, those who were cohabiting in 2003, and those who were married in 2003. Finally, a model was run for those childless in 2003 to examine the effect of having a first child between 2003 and 2009 on changing attitudes. In total, there are 20 regression
models. In the interest of space, Table 2 shows the coefficients only for the union and child transition variables. However, in addition all models control for gender, cohort, education, income, and attitude in 2003. The model that examines transition to parenthood also controls for marital status.

[Table 2 about here]

The main finding is that there are surprisingly few significant findings. Of the 20 regression models, only three union transition coefficients are significant plus one of the parenthood transitions coefficients. First, those who were single in 2003 and married by 2009 (and stayed married) were significantly less likely than those who remained single to become more egalitarian with regards to the best situation for a family with preschool children. In other words, those who married became less likely to think that the best situation for a family with preschool children is for both partners to work and share family tasks equally. Second, those who were cohabiting in 2003 and broke up with their partner by 2009 became more egalitarian in terms of job equality than those who remained cohabiting with their same partner. Those who broke up were 2.8 times as likely as those staying together to completely agree that both men can do caring jobs and women can do technical jobs. Third, married individuals who separated or divorced by 2009 became more egalitarian with regards to parental leave. Specifically, those who dissolved their marital unions were 2.3 times as likely as those remaining married to agree that parents should share parental leave equally. There is a significant interaction between gender and divorce in the general gender equality model. Women who divorced between 2003 and 2009 became significantly more likely to agree that an equal society is a good society than men who divorced.
Apart from these three findings all other union status variables were insignificant. There was no effect of entering into a cohabiting union or marrying a cohabiting partner. In looking at the effect of having a first child on attitudes, we find only one significant coefficient. Having a child is negatively related to change in parental leave attitudes. Specifically, those who had their first child between 2003 and 2009 were 37 percent less likely to completely agree that couples should equally share parental leave. In addition, there is one significant interaction between gender and having a first child. Women who had a first child between 2003 and 2009 became significantly more egalitarian in their attitudes toward job equality compared to men who had a first birth.

While not shown, the control variables had some significant effects on changes in gender role attitudes. Education had the most consistent effect, showing a significant coefficient in 15 of 20 models. In all cases, those who have a college education became significantly more egalitarian than those with less education. Gender had little impact on change in attitudes, but there are a few exceptions. In the single, married, and full models, women were significantly more likely than men to become more egalitarian in terms of the division of labor. In the cohabiting and full models, women were significantly more likely than their male counterparts to become more egalitarian in regards to job equality. Income logged had few significant effects on changing gender role attitudes. Those with higher income became significantly less egalitarian in their attitudes toward job equality and gender equality within the larger society than those with lower income (in the full and cohabiting models). However, married individuals with higher income actually became more egalitarian in their attitudes about parental leave than those with lower income. Cohort did not have any consistent effect on changes in gender role attitudes.
5. Conclusion

In this study of how family transitions affect gender role attitudes in gender-equal Sweden, we find little evidence that important life-course transitions, such as marriage, separations and childbirth, cause re-socialization of values orientations, so-called adaptation. While there already exists ample evidence of the prevalence of egalitarian attitudes in Sweden (Baxter & Kane, 1995; Bernhardt, Noack, & Lyngstad, 2008; Motiejunaite & Kravchenko, 2008), our study provides evidence that these egalitarian attitudes are fairly stable.

This is consistent with Gubernskaya’s (2010) finding that family change has a smaller effect on the attitudes of those living in countries with more liberal welfare regimes, such as Sweden, than more conservative gender regimes. It may be that the “new European pattern” of adult transitions (Billari & Liefbroer, 2010) has taken root in Sweden to such an extent that these transitions no longer greatly impact broader ideals of gender equality. Indeed, Sweden may have reached what Giele and Holst (2004) refer to as “value generalization” in which cultural priorities value gender equality in caregiving as well as employment. At this stage, it would seem that values are less influenced by changes in family status.

There are, however, some exceptions to the generally small and insignificant effects of family transitions on changes in gender role attitudes. In particular, getting married led to more traditional attitudes, with about the same effect for men as for women. This is consistent with the notion that marriage encourages more conformist attitudes (Lesthaeghe & Moors, 2002). However, among the five different measures of gender role attitudes, it was only significant for the attitude on the ideal family situation for a couple with preschool children. Likewise, those who had a first child between waves became less egalitarian, but this finding was only significant
for parental leave attitudes. While several previous studies find a negative relationship between having children and egalitarian attitudes (Cunningham et al., 2005; Davis, 2007; Fan & Marini, 2000), there is some recent evidence that parenthood affects Swedish men’s behavior in a similar way as Swedish women, including increasing time on housework (Dribe & Stanfors, 2009). Given this move toward greater equality among mothers and fathers, it seems reasonable that the transition to parenthood among Swedish young adults would have little effect on changes in gender role attitudes.

The results concerning partnership breakup are also consistent with the notion that such an event would lead to more egalitarian attitudes. Those who were cohabiting in 2003 but then broke up with their partner became more in favor of gender equality in terms of work roles and those who were married in 2003 but separated or divorced their spouse by 2009 became more egalitarian regarding sharing parental leave. While these findings did not generally differ by gender, women who divorced between waves became more egalitarian relative to men who divorced. This finding is consistent with Forste and Heaton’s (2004) research that shows divorced women are more egalitarian than married women while divorced men are more traditional than married men. Nevertheless, on the whole, those who separated from their partners, whether they were single in 2003 and entered and dissolved a union, were cohabiting in 2003 and broke up with their partner, or were married in 2003 and separated or divorced their spouse, largely did not experience a large shift in attitudes over this time period.

In conclusion, there are surprisingly few effects of family transitions on changes in gender role attitudes in Sweden. The lack of significant findings is important in showing the stability of attitudes in a highly egalitarian society. It seems that the gender roles of Swedish young adults are fairly immune to union and parenthood transitions. These findings suggest two
possibilities. First, Swedish co-residential partnerships (whether married or not) are more equal, and mothers and fathers share childcare more equally (Dribe & Stanfors, 2009). Second, even in the face of life course transitions that introduce more traditional gender roles, Swedish young adults have “enduring attitudes” (Schwarz, 2007) and remain believers in gender equality.
References


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Meaning and choice: Value orientations and life course decisions. (pp. 185-215).


Table 1

Proportion egalitarian in 2003 and 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A society where men and women are equal is a good society (“equal society”)</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men can do as well as women in caring jobs and women can do as well as men in technical jobs (“job equality”)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The woman should take the main responsibility for housework and the man should take the main responsibility for support (“division of labor”)</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best situation for a family with preschool children – both parents work roughly the same hours and share the responsibility for the home and children equally (“best situation”)</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents should share the parental leave equally (“parental leave”)</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05, ** p < .01, according to two-tailed paired samples t-test

Note: All variables are dichotomous with 1 indicating complete agreement with the statement(s) with the exception of the “main responsibility” variable which is reverse coded.
## Table 2

Logistic regression models of change in gender role attitudes by union and birth transitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union status in 2003</th>
<th>Union status in 2009</th>
<th>Best situation</th>
<th>Parental leave</th>
<th>Division of labor</th>
<th>Job equality</th>
<th>Equal society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabited</td>
<td>-0.066</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.377</td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-0.885 *</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>-0.086</td>
<td>-0.325</td>
<td>-0.027</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered and dissolved union</td>
<td>0.483</td>
<td>-0.107</td>
<td>0.280</td>
<td>-0.239</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remained single (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-0.423</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.135</td>
<td>-0.370</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broke up</td>
<td>0.191</td>
<td>0.415</td>
<td>0.099</td>
<td>1.032 **</td>
<td>-0.252</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remained cohabiting (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/divorced</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.827 *</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td>0.220</td>
<td>0.449</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remained married (ref)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had 1st child between 2003 and 2009</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>-0.456 **</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>-0.332</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: controls for gender, cohort, education, income, and attitude in 2003 are included in all models. Control for union status is included in birth transition model.