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ISSP International Social Survey Programme

18 Changing public views of gender roles in seven nations, 1988–2002

Michael Braun and Jacqueline Scott

Abstract

The paper analyzes the change of gender-role attitudes from 1988 to 2002 along two dimensions: the consequences of female labor-force participation for the children and a general gender ideology. Both dimensions are measured by two core items which can be regarded as equivalent across countries. We focus on those countries for which we have data for all three points in time (1988, 1994 and 2002), i.e. Austria, West Germany, Great Britain, the United States, Ireland, the Netherlands and Hungary. While in countries that have established long-time series for gender-role attitudes a liberal trend could be demonstrated to operate at least from the 1970s to the 1990s, scholars are discussing a possible trend reversal in more recent times. Actually, what the most recent ISSP data show is less a trend reversal than a leveling off of the liberal trend. This is particularly true of Great Britain and the United States, which were already characterized by less traditional attitudes; whereas in most of the countries with more traditional attitudes the liberal trend is continuing (in particular: Austria and West Germany). The leveling off in Great Britain and the United States cannot be explained as a methodological artifact, i.e. a ceiling effect, as Scandinavian countries have far lower levels of traditionality. Hungary appears to be a special case, with traditional attitudes coming to the fore after the collapse of socialism but now becoming more liberal. A wider look at the development of other post-socialist societies suggests that there is a marked liberal trend, particularly in countries where attitudes have been most traditional. Unfortunately, ISSP data do not allow us to examine whether most former socialist countries experienced a temporary traditional blip, in the wake of the breakdown of socialism. A main focus of our paper is to understand the importance of cohorts for attitudinal change. We examine how much change is due to aging or period effects that influence all cohorts in a similar way, and how much is due to cohort replacement.

1 The decline of the male-breadwinner system

The male-breadwinner system has been in decline for at least half a century, throughout Europe and beyond. Between 1960 and 2003 women's activity rates relative to men's activity rates increased from 44 percent to 79 percent in the then fifteen member countries of the EU (MacInnes 2006). The shift from the male breadwinner and female carer model to double-income and single-parent households has transformed the established ways of distributing work between men and women.

We know from previous research that attitudes have become steadily more supportive of women's dual work and family roles (Haller, Höllinger and Gomilschak 2000; Scott 1990; Scott, Alwin and Braun 1996). However, there is a suggestion of a more recent backlash (e.g. Faludi 1991; Greer 2000; Hakim 1999; Oakley and Mitchell 1997; Scott 1999). This might be triggered by rising unemployment, as in Germany in the wake of reunification (Braun, Scott and Alwin 1994), but it is also conceivable that opinions may shift as the shine of the "supermum" syndrome wears off, and the idea of women juggling high-powered careers while also baking cookies and reading bedtime stories is increasingly seen to be unrealizable by ordinary mortals.

In this chapter we examine fourteen years of attitudinal change in gender roles. The ISSP data allow us to examine attitude trends at the aggregate level, with surveys in Austria, West Germany, Great Britain, the United States, Ireland, the Netherlands and Hungary conducted in 1988, 1994 and 2002. Unfortunately, the interpretation of such trend data is problematic because it is impossible empirically to disentangle whether change is due to what are called period effects, or to the aging process, or to cohort effects (Alwin and Scott 1996). However, theoretical considerations can guide interpretation. Cohort effects can change the overall structure of attitudes as older generations, whose views were formed in a different era, die off and are replaced by younger ones with perhaps more "modern" (egalitarian) attitudes. At the population level there have been significant changes in employment behavior and in education, and both are likely to have a profound effect on attitudinal shifts across time.

If there is one common trend characterizing postwar OECD labor markets, it is the feminization of the labor force (Boeri, Del Boca and Pissarides 2005). Of course, former state-socialist countries are an exception; and, as Panayotova and Brayfield (1997) point out, men and women both had to work because a one-wage family was financially unfeasible (employment rates through the 1970s and 1980s were about 70 percent for both men and women). Table 18.1 shows Hungary as the only country in our study where female inactivity rates have increased. In the other six countries, there has been a marked decrease in women's economic inactivity since the early 1980s, whereas male employment has mostly tended to hold steady or show a modest decline.

The feminization of the labor force may also negatively affect fertility rates, which have fallen off markedly from 1980 to 2000 (with the exception of

Table 18.1. Inactivity rates of men and women of the age group 25–54 years (1980–2000)

	<i>Men</i>		
	1980	1990	2000
Austria	4.3	5.8	6.2
West Germany	5.3	7.9	4.2
Great Britain	3.0	5.2	8.4
United States	5.8	6.6	8.4
Ireland	4.6	8.2	8.4
Netherlands	6.9	6.6	6.6
Hungary	4.9	6.8	15.6

	<i>Women</i>		
	1980	1990	2000
Austria	40.0	36.4	23.7
Germany	43.4	35.3	23.1
Great Britain	38.9	27.1	24.1
United States	36.0	26.0	23.2
Ireland	71.1	54.6	37.0
Netherlands	63.3	41.5	27.6
Hungary	23.0	21.0	30.0

Source: International Labour Office (2002).

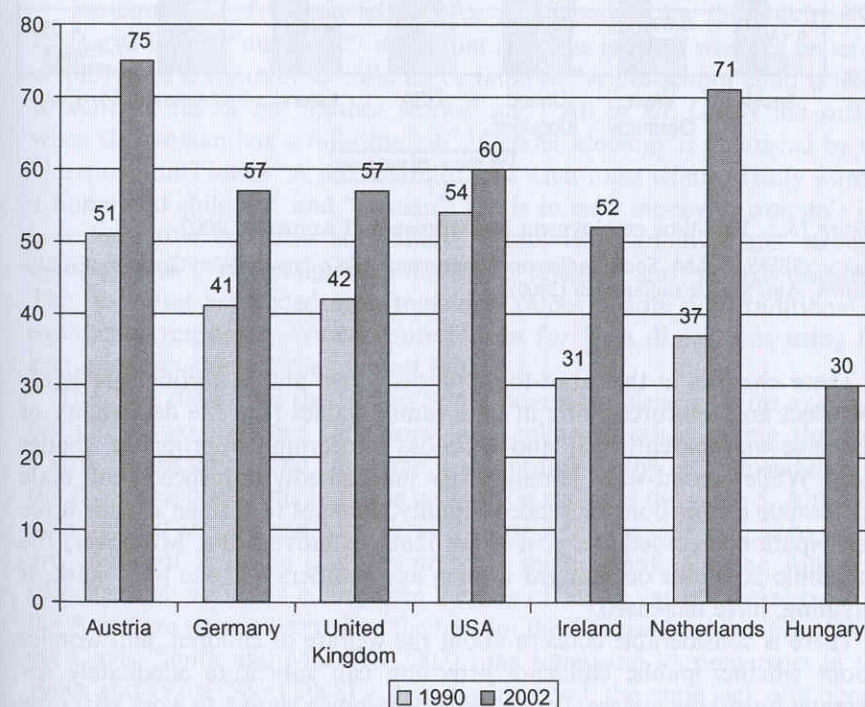
the United States and the Netherlands), as can be seen in Table 18.2. With the exception of the United States, all fertility rates are now well below population-replacement levels. There is a dispute in the literature about whether female participation and fertility are positively or negatively correlated (e.g. Kögel 2004). However, policy-makers remain concerned to find ways of reversing the fertility decline in order to improve the dependency ratio – i.e. the proportion of workers relative to welfare recipients. This is a cause of great concern as population aging is a strain on the welfare systems of most Western industrial nations.

Maternal employment rates vary markedly from country to country. We can see in Figure 18.1 the increase in mother's employment between 1990 and 2002 for those with children under 6. In all countries the proportion has risen over time, with participation in 2002 highest in the Netherlands and Austria and lowest in Hungary (there are no comparative data for Hungary in 1990). In many European countries part-time work is one way for women to juggle work and family responsibilities. Figure 18.2 shows that, in 2002, the proportion of men and women who work part-time varies greatly between countries, with the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany and Austria having relatively high levels of female part-time work. By contrast,

Table 18.2. Total fertility rates for selected countries (1980–2000)

	1980	1990	2000
Austria	1.62	1.45	1.34
Germany	1.56	1.45	1.38
Great Britain	1.90	1.83	1.65
United States	1.84	2.08	2.06
Ireland	3.25	2.11	1.89
Netherlands	1.60	1.62	1.72
Hungary	1.92	1.84	1.32

Source: OECD (2008).

*Figure 18.1.* Mothers in employment in 1990 and 2002 with children under 6 years

Source: OECD (2005).

part-time work is rare in both the United States and Hungary (partly because of the costs incurred for healthcare insurance). The Netherlands has the highest proportion of men in part-time work, some of whom are fathers who work fewer hours in order to participate more fully in family care (Knijn and Selten 2002).

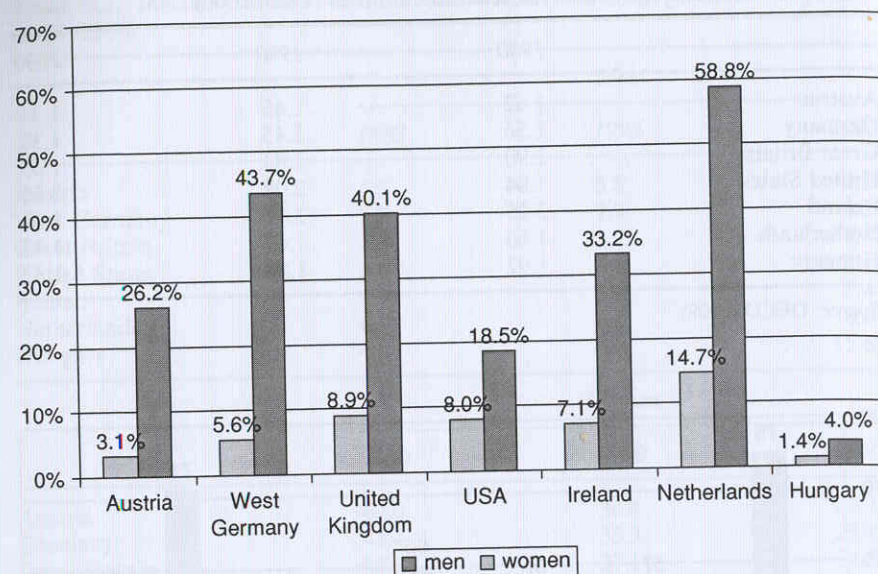


Figure 18.2. Part-time employment rate of men and women in 2002

Source: GESIS-ZUMA, Social Indicators Department (2008); data for West Germany: GESIS-ZUMA, Abt. Soziale Indikatoren (2008).

These changes in the labor-force participation and in fertility are likely to reflect and reinforce shifts in both family values (e.g. the desirability of marriage and parenthood) and attitudes concerning appropriate gender roles. While second-wave feminism has undoubtedly influenced both male and female conceptions of gender equality, changes in women's labor-force participation preceded the post-1960s feminist movements. Moreover, the economic pressures on married women and mothers to be in paid work, if anything, have increased.

There is considerable concern about the welfare of children, and worries about whether public childcare provision can substitute adequately for parental (primarily maternal) care. Whether women choose to work part time in order to juggle family and work roles, or whether lack of childcare alternatives and a traditional gendered division of labor within the home leaves them no choice, is something that is far from clear.

In this chapter we look at different aspects of gender-role change. First, we examine the direction and extent of attitudinal change. We investigate whether there is any indication of a backlash and whether there has been a convergence towards greater egalitarianism in attitudes across Europe and the United States. Then we explore how far the different theoretical explanations of social change in attitudes towards gender egalitarianism are or are not supported in the different countries.

2 Data and methods

We use data of the three waves of the ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles module which was fielded in 1988, 1994 and 2002 (Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung 1990, 1997, 2004). We focus on those countries for which we have data for all three points in time, i.e. Austria, West Germany, the United States, Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands and Hungary. From the gender-role battery we select the two main dimensions: the consequences of female labor-force participation for the children and a general gender ideology (thus neglecting the economic consequences dimension). Though there are three items per dimension which could be compared across the three waves, we measure both dimensions by only two core items which can be regarded as equivalent across countries.

Consequences of female labor-force participation for the children are measured by the "nurturant" items that raise the issue of whether maternal employment is harmful to children or families "A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works" and "All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job". Gender ideology is measured by the "instrumental" items "A job is alright, but what most women really want is a home and children" and "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family". Response alternatives are "strongly agree", "agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree". The responses are coded such that high values denote non-traditional or egalitarian responses. We compute indices for both dimensions using the non-missing values of the relevant items.

The 2002 data from the United States pose a problem in so far as – by a mishap – two response categories were collapsed when saving the data ("strongly disagree" and "disagree"). According to the recommendation in the ISSP codebook, this response category is assigned the value 5. Although data are not strictly comparable with those from the previous surveys, we are confident that the error incurred is rather small, for the following reasons: first, with this coding, the leveling off of an earlier liberal trend in the American data, observed on the basis of the General Social Survey (GSS, see Davis, Smith and Marsden 2007) time series and its precursors in the 1960s and 1970s (Scott 2008) is preserved; second, the same lack of a liberal trend is observable in other Anglo-Saxon countries, too (with the notable exception of Ireland). Nevertheless, the American data should be treated with some caution.

In addition, work status of the spouse/partner was not collected in the Netherlands in all surveys. As a consequence, the theoretically important variable measuring labor-force participation of the partner could not be constructed for male respondents. We decided to estimate slightly different models in the Netherlands. Again, we are confident that the error is not dramatic, as the strongest effect in the other countries pertains to the own labor-force participation for the woman.

We represent the years the surveys were conducted by two dummy variables for 1994 and 2002. As we have only three time points, and they are not evenly spaced, using a linear time indicator is not warranted. Cohorts are also represented by dummy variables, as we cannot assume a linear relationship of the two gender-role indices with the age variable. We start with the birth cohort 1959–70, the members of which were 18–29 years old in 1988, and continue in ten-year intervals through to the cohort born before 1929. We add a younger cohort in 1994 (which comprises six birth years, matching the time lapse between the first and the second surveys) and another one for 2002 (which comprises eight birth years). These two additional cohorts are used only for the descriptive analysis, and not for the multivariate models. In the latter, only those birth cohorts are included for which we have data for all three surveys. In the multivariate analyses we use, in addition to year of survey and cohort, the following variables: education is measured by two dummy variables for intermediary education (intermediary and upper secondary education) and high education (at least some university studies), and those with only lower secondary education form the baseline. “Never married” is a dummy variable contrasting the never married with all the other marital status categories. “Female” is a dummy variable (with men as the baseline category). “Woman working” measures for a female respondent whether the respondent has either a full-time or a part-time job (all the others form the baseline); for a male respondent, it measures whether his spouse or partner is in the labor force. We also include an interaction effect between female and woman working. Finally, we use three dummies for religion: “other religion”, “Protestant” and “no religion”, where Catholics form the baseline.

In the following, we shall first present the mean values for the seven countries as they change from 1988 to 2002. We shall then look at single cohorts in these countries and how their attitudes have changed over time. Finally, we shall look at variables which can be assumed to be the drivers of social change. For each of these questions, we shall present evidence for the consequences of female labor-force participation and gender ideology in turn.

3 Results

Country differences in trends

Regarding people's views about the consequences of women's labor-force participation, i.e. whether pre-school children or the family suffer if the mother is gainfully employed, the United States was the most egalitarian country in 1988, with Great Britain and Ireland next (Table 18.3). In 2002, these three countries are still ranking first, and the differences between them have largely vanished, with most change in the liberal direction having occurred in Ireland. In addition, the distance to Austria and West Germany has clearly been reduced. In the Netherlands a very weak liberal trend can be observed,

Table 18.3. Means of consequences of women's labor-force participation by country and survey

	1988	1994	2002
Austria	2.1	2.2	2.4
West Germany	2.3	2.3	2.8
Great Britain	2.9	3.1	3.1
United States	3.2	3.2	3.2
Ireland	2.8	2.9	3.2
Netherlands	2.7	2.9	2.9
Hungary	2.3	2.1	2.4

Note: Scale from 1 through 5. Higher values denote non-traditional attitudes.

Table 18.4. Means of gender ideology by country and survey

	1988	1994	2002
Austria	2.6	2.8	3.3
West Germany	2.9	3.2	3.5
Great Britain	3.3	3.4	3.4
United States	3.2	3.3	3.4
Ireland	2.9	3.1	3.4
Netherlands	3.3	3.4	3.5
Hungary	2.5	2.1	2.5

Note: Scale from 1 through 5. Higher values denote non-traditional attitudes.

and in Hungary a traditional trend (we cannot speak of a trend reversal here, as we do not know what happened before 1988) with an ensuing liberal trend since 1994. Actually, there has not been any change from 1988 to 2002 in the United States, and small changes in Great Britain and the Netherlands are observable only between the first two surveys. By contrast, in Austria, West Germany and Ireland most of the change has taken place between 1994 and 2002.

With regard to gender ideology, change is slightly stronger in some countries. Great Britain and the Netherlands were the most egalitarian countries in 1988, immediately followed by the United States (Table 18.4). In 2002, the Netherlands share the first place with West Germany, which was markedly more traditional in 1988. Three countries – the United States, Great Britain and Ireland – are ranking second. Austria has also considerably gained ground, and the only remaining traditional country is Hungary. As far as the size of change between 1988 and 2002 is concerned, the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands show only minor differences, though these are all in an egalitarian direction. Austria, West Germany and Ireland show a considerable liberal trend which is nearly evenly spaced between 1988 and 2002. As was the case for the consequences dimension, the trend in Hungary is curvilinear.

Gender-role attitudes differ depending on the issue, but the notion that there has been a steady increase in favor of women's instrumental roles and a move away from positions that endorse women's primary nurturant responsibilities is a myth. Particularly on those issues that best tap mounting concerns about the work-family balance, there is a clear indication that women's changing role is viewed as having costs both for the woman and for the family. Nevertheless there is little evidence to support those who talk of gender-role backlash.

Intracohort change and cohort replacement

Table 18.5 presents the mean values of the consequence dimension for the single cohorts over time. The general pattern over all of the Western countries considered here is (with some exceptions) one of little intracohort change, where some of the cohorts have experienced a liberal trend, but others seem to have become slightly more traditional over time. At all points in time, there are small differences between cohorts. Cohort replacement does play some role, with the new cohorts mostly holding either less or similar traditional attitudes to those of their predecessors.

There are some minor differences between the countries. In Austria, Great Britain and the United States, there is very little intracohort change, but the new cohorts in 2002 are less traditional. In West Germany and Ireland, there is more intracohort change, but the new cohorts are not less traditional than their predecessors.

With regard to gender ideology, we observe more marked change, and the general pattern over all of the Western countries is different from that for the consequences of women's labor-force participation (Table 18.6). There is little intracohort change, but it is mostly in a liberal direction. In 1988, there were clear differences between all cohorts. In 2002, however, nearly all cohorts born after the Second World War are indistinguishable among each other in their egalitarian attitudes. In such a constellation, intracohort change and cohort replacement have played their role, though new cohorts are only slightly less traditional than their immediate predecessors.

This general pattern holds with some exceptions for all of the Western countries. In Britain and the United States, there is virtually no intracohort change between 1988 and 2002. In Austria in 1988, all cohorts born since the Second World War were on a similar level, sharply different from the two older cohorts. Intracohort change 1988 and 2002 was strong in all cohorts but the oldest one. Finally, in the Netherlands, attitudes have changed little since 1988, with only the two oldest cohorts becoming more egalitarian. Hungary shows only small intercohort differences: .6 in 1988 and 2002.

The different trajectories and speed of change in the different countries begs for further analysis of the underlying drivers of social change. There has been a wealth of theoretical and empirical work, particularly in the United States, which has highlighted potential factors that influence social change

Table 18.5. Means of consequences of women's labor-force participation by cohort and survey in the single countries

Austria				West Germany			
	1988	1994	2002		1988	1994	2002
1977-84			2.7	1977-84			3.1
1971-6		2.3	2.6	1971-6		2.5	3.0
1959-70	2.3	2.5	2.5	1959-70	2.8	2.6	3.0
1949-58	2.2	2.5	2.4	1949-58	2.5	2.5	2.8
1939-48	2.1	2.1	2.3	1939-48	2.3	2.2	2.7
1929-38	1.9	2.0	2.0	1929-38	2.1	2.0	2.2
before 1929	2.0	2.0	1.9	before 1929	2.0	1.9	2.4
Great Britain				United States			
	1988	1994	2002		1988	1994	2002
1977-84			3.5	1977-84			3.6
1971-6		3.5	3.4	1971-6		3.6	3.5
1959-70	3.3	3.3	3.2	1959-70	3.4	3.4	3.3
1949-58	3.3	3.3	3.0	1949-58	3.4	3.2	3.2
1939-48	2.9	3.1	3.0	1939-48	3.3	3.1	3.1
1929-38	2.5	2.8	2.9	1929-38	2.9	3.1	2.8
before 1929	2.5	2.8	2.6	before 1929	2.7	2.6	2.9
Ireland				Netherlands			
	1988	1994	2002		1988	1994	2002
1977-84			3.5	1977-84			3.1
1971-6		3.4	3.3	1971-6		3.2	3.2
1959-70	3.2	3.4	3.4	1959-70	3.0	3.2	3.0
1949-58	3.0	3.2	3.3	1949-58	3.0	3.0	2.9
1939-48	2.9	2.7	2.9	1939-48	2.7	2.7	2.8
1929-38	2.4	2.5	2.9	1929-38	2.6	2.6	2.6
before 1929	2.3	2.3	2.8	before 1929	2.2	2.5	2.5
Hungary							
	1988	1994	2002				
1977-84			2.7				
1971-6		2.7	2.7				
1959-70	2.8	2.3	2.4				
1949-58	2.5	2.1	2.4				
1939-48	2.3	2.0	2.2				
1929-38	2.1	1.9	2.2				
before 1929	2.0	1.8	2.2				

Table 18.6. Means of gender ideology by cohort and survey in the single countries

Austria				West Germany			
	1988	1994	2002		1988	1994	2002
1977-84			3.7	1977-84			3.9
1971-6		3.3	3.5	1971-6		3.5	3.8
1959-70	2.9	3.4	3.5	1959-70	3.6	3.6	3.9
1949-58	2.8	3.1	3.4	1949-58	3.3	3.5	3.7
1939-48	2.7	2.8	3.2	1939-48	3.0	3.0	3.4
1929-38	2.1	2.4	2.8	1929-38	2.6	2.7	2.7
before 1929	2.3	2.2	2.5	before 1929	2.2	2.3	2.6
Great Britain				United States			
	1988	1994	2002	1988	1988	1994	2002
1977-84		3.8		1977-84			3.7
1971-6		3.8	3.8	1971-6		3.6	3.5
1959-70	3.8	3.7	3.7	1959-70	3.5	3.7	3.6
1949-58	3.7	3.7	3.6	1949-58	3.5	3.5	3.5
1939-48	3.4	3.3	3.3	1939-48	3.4	3.4	3.3
1929-38	3.0	3.0	3.0	1929-38	3.0	3.2	2.9
before 1929	2.5	2.7	2.5	before 1929	2.6	2.6	2.6
Ireland				Netherlands			
	1988	1994	2002		1988	1994	2002
1977-84			3.8	1977-84			3.6
1971-6		3.7	3.7	1971-6		3.8	3.7
1959-70	3.3	3.5	3.7	1959-70	3.8	3.7	3.6
1949-58	3.2	3.3	3.5	1949-58	3.6	3.6	3.6
1939-48	3.0	2.9	3.2	1939-48	3.3	3.3	3.3
1929-38	2.5	2.5	2.8	1929-38	2.9	2.9	3.2
before 1929	2.3	2.3	2.6	before 1929	2.5	2.6	2.8
Hungary							
	1988	1994	2002				
1977-84			2.8				
1971-6		2.4	2.7				
1959-70	2.7	2.3	2.7				
1949-58	2.7	2.3	2.6				
1939-48	2.5	2.2	2.4				
1929-38	2.4	2.0	2.3				
before 1929	2.1	1.7	2.2				

in this area, including generational or birth cohort effects, educational advances, gender, changes in women's labor-force participation, changes in partnership formation and different religious traditions (e.g. Thornton, Alwin and Camburn 1983; Mason and Lu 1988; Bumpass 1990). In the next section we put some of the competing explanations of social change in gender-role attitudes to the test, by analyzing the predictors of such change in the countries under investigation.

What are the drivers of attitudinal change?

So far we have only looked at global change in the different countries and within cohorts. While we could to some degree differentiate between intra-cohort change and cohort replacement as the drivers of overall change, it is not possible to get a comprehensive picture on what is going on in the different countries without using multivariate analysis. This also applies when our aim is to gauge better the ranking of countries. We address two questions. First, if we control for the cohort composition of the different countries, are the conclusions we have drawn about the kind of underlying trends still valid? Second, how far is attitudinal change due to changes in other things that influence gender-role attitudes, such as women's employment, education and religion?

It is important to consider the different sizes of cohorts and, in particular, the change of size over time. For example, the cohort born before 1929 was bigger in 1988 than in 2002. In addition, some of the countries experienced considerable change in their age distribution owing to reduced fertility. This matters; for instance, in West Germany, the youngest cohort in 1988, born between 1959 and 1970, is much larger than the youngest cohort in 2002, born between 1977 and 1984. (This is due both to decreases in fertility and to the shorter timespan involved.) In addition, it is important to control for changes in the composition of the population in terms of women's increasing participation in the labor force, the expansion of higher education and changes in secularization. To the extent these variables are influential, we shall have a better understanding of the intermediary mechanisms associated with gender-role attitudinal change.

Table 18.7 shows separate regressions for the seven countries of the consequences dimension on the year of the survey, the cohorts, education, marital status, gender, whether the woman is working, an interaction effect of working woman and gender and religion. In these regressions, the new cohorts added in 1994 and 2002 are not included.

The coefficients for the years of the survey show that, under control of the other variables, there is no clear liberal trend discernible for *both* years for any country. West Germany and Ireland show a liberal trend for 2002 and Great Britain for 1994. Austria does not show any trend at all. The Netherlands shows a trend in the liberal direction in 1994, but a trend reversal thereafter. The United States shows a trend in a traditional direction for both

Table 18.7. Regression of consequences of women's labor-force participation (respondents younger than 24 in 1994 and younger than 32 in 2002 excluded, unstandardized coefficients)

	<i>A</i>	<i>WG</i>	<i>GB</i>	<i>US</i>	<i>IRE</i>	<i>NL</i>	<i>H</i>
1994	-.00	-.08*	.15*	-.11*	-.05	.09*	-.31*
2002	-.07	.26*	.02	-.21*	.18*	-.08*	-.07
1959-70	.25*	.54*	.53*	.47*	.74*	.42*	.47*
1949-58	.23*	.40*	.39*	.35*	.65*	.40*	.26*
1939-48	.11	.21*	.24*	.29*	.31*	.28*	.16*
1929-38	.03	.06	.06	.15*	.16*	.24*	.08
Intermediary education	.23*	.16*	.00	.21*	.02	.11*	.17*
High education	.67*	.41*	.05	.36*	.25*	.56*	.35*
Never married	.04	.16*	-.07	.14*	-.01	.13*	.17*
Female	-.01	.01	.14*	.17*	.06	.13*	.05
Woman working	-.01	-.02	.08	.15*	.01	—	-.02
Female*woman working	.37*	.37*	.19*	.25*	.33*	.38*	.13*
Other religion	-.20	-.18*	-.27*	-.01	-.14	-.19*	.27*
Protestant	.18*	.05	-.04	.02	-.28*	-.06	-.02
No religion	.34*	.21*	.06	.20*	-.00	.25*	.33*
Constant	1.79*	1.87*	2.51*	2.38*	2.28*	1.93*	1.93*
Explained variance	9.9	13.5	8.8	8.5	13.0	17.7	9.4
N	3355	5736	3728	3594	2719	4238	3913

A = Austria, *WG* = West Germany, *GB* = Great Britain, *US* = United States, *IRE* = Ireland, *NL* = Netherlands, *H* = Hungary.

* $p < .05$.

points in time. Finally, the regression for Hungary shows the curvilinear trend. The traditional trend observed in the United States – in combination with the actually stable mean value on the consequence dimension over the three time periods – suggests that the Americans should have developed more liberal attitudes over the years, given the change in the socio-demographic composition of the population.

The cohorts work in roughly the same direction and with comparable strength in most of the countries. Partial exceptions are Austria, where the three oldest cohorts are not distinct, and West Germany, Great Britain and Hungary, where the second-oldest cohort is not different from the oldest. The effect of education is also similar in most countries, with the exception of Great Britain (no effect of education) and Ireland (only high education distinct from low education). Never-married people are somewhat more egalitarian in four countries, and women only in three countries. The main effect indicating whether the woman in the household is working for pay is significant and positive in the United States only. However, the interaction is significant in all countries. It indicates that the effect of the woman having a paid job is bigger for a woman herself than for a husband of a working

Table 18.8. Regression of gender ideology (respondents younger than 24 in 1994 and younger than 32 in 2002 excluded, unstandardized coefficients)

	<i>A</i>	<i>WG</i>	<i>GB</i>	<i>US</i>	<i>IRE</i>	<i>NL</i>	<i>H</i>
1994	.04	.09*	.01	-.06	.08	-.04	-.39*
2002	.26*	.33*	-.06	-.19*	.24*	-.12*	-.07
1959-70	.62*	1.00*	.84*	.71*	.84*	.80*	.24*
1949-58	.48*	.84*	.76*	.58*	.75*	.81*	.23*
1939-48	.40*	.59*	.52*	.48*	.47*	.59*	.12*
1929-38	.09	.31*	.39*	.30*	.17*	.35*	.13*
Intermediary education	.43*	.45*	.26*	.39*	.21*	.37*	.33*
High education	.99*	.76*	.42*	.81*	.66*	.75*	.77*
Never married	.11*	.14*	-.08	.10*	-.03	.07*	-.02
Female	.24*	.12*	.20*	.09	.13*	.13*	.17*
Woman working	.14*	.03	.17*	-.03	.05	—	.15*
Female*woman working	.15*	.27*	.17*	.36*	.22*	.24*	.08
Other religion	-.61*	-.45*	-.10*	-.09	-.10	-.18*	.03
Protestant	.13	.11*	.01	-.06	-.07	-.11*	.02
No religion	.33*	.35*	.15*	.19*	.27*	.17*	.25*
Constant	1.81*	1.93*	2.34*	2.28*	2.06*	2.27*	1.91*
R square	24.2	28.3	26.5	20.3	26.2	29.9	17.7
N	3354	5736	3749	3594	2731	4266	3917

A = Austria, *WG* = West Germany, *GB* = Great Britain, *US* = United States, *IRE* = Ireland, *NL* = Netherlands, *H* = Hungary.

* $p < .05$.

woman. Finally, while in West Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Hungary people with non-Christian religions are less egalitarian, people who are not members of a church are more egalitarian everywhere, except for Great Britain and Ireland.

Table 18.8 shows separate regressions for the seven countries of gender ideology on the year of the survey, the cohorts, education, marital status, gender, whether the woman is working, an interaction effect of working woman and gender and religion.

The coefficients for the years of the survey show that when the other variables are controlled there is a clear liberal trend discernible for West Germany for both 1994 and 2002, but for Austria and Ireland only for 2002. The liberal trend is strongest in West Germany in 2002. Great Britain does not show any trend at all. The United States and the Netherlands show a trend reversal for 2002. Finally, the regression for Hungary shows a curvilinear trend. Thus, both Americans and the Dutch should show more liberal attitudes in 2002 given the socio-demographic change which has occurred in their populations.

The cohorts work in roughly the same direction and with comparable strength in all countries but Hungary, where intercohort differences are small.

Partial exceptions are Austria where the second-oldest cohort is not different from the oldest and Ireland where both cohorts are quite close. The effect of education is also similar in all of the countries, though somewhat weaker in Great Britain. Never-married people are somewhat more egalitarian in three countries only. Women are more egalitarian in all countries but the United States. The main effect indicating whether the woman in the household is working for pay is significant and positive in Great Britain, Austria and Hungary only. However, the interaction is significant in all countries but Hungary. It indicates that the effect of having a paid job is bigger for a woman herself than for a husband of a working woman. Finally, while in West Germany, Great Britain, Austria and the Netherlands people with non-Christian religious backgrounds are less egalitarian, people who are not members of a church are more egalitarian everywhere.

Table 18.9 shows explained variance by all predictors, as well as the total and additionally explained variance by cohort and year of survey, for consequences of women's labor-force participation. The total effects are from regressions in which cohort or years of the survey are the only explanatory variables; the additional effects denote what cohorts and years explain additionally to all the other variables. Explained variance by all predictors varies considerably across countries, and so does total and additionally explained variance by cohort. The remaining explanatory power of cohorts is particularly strong in Ireland, followed by West Germany and Great Britain, but especially weak in Austria. In this country, most of the effect of cohorts is mediated by the other variables. The explained variance by year of survey is even lower, and only in Hungary it has a considerable additional effect (note that year of survey is entered as two dummy variables and so it captures the curvilinear relationship in this country).

For gender ideology, explained variance by all predictors is higher than for the consequences dimension and varies somewhat less across countries (Table 18.10). The remaining explanatory power of cohorts is particularly

Table 18.9. Explained variances of consequences of women's labor-force participation

	<i>All predictors</i>	<i>Cohorts</i>		<i>Years</i>	
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Additional</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Additional</i>
Austria	9.9	3.5	0.4	0.5	0.0
West Germany	13.5	8.4	2.4	1.3	0.9
Great Britain	8.8	6.2	2.4	0.4	0.3
United States	8.5	4.6	1.2	0.4	0.3
Ireland	13.0	9.9	4.1	1.4	0.3
Netherlands	17.7	7.0	1.6	0.6	0.4
Hungary	9.4	5.4	1.5	2.1	1.9

Table 18.10. Explained variances of gender ideology

	<i>All predictors</i>	<i>Cohorts</i>		<i>Years</i>	
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Additional</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Additional</i>
Austria	24.2	11.8	2.2	5.9	0.9
West Germany	28.3	19.0	6.1	2.1	0.7
Great Britain	26.5	20.2	5.5	0.1	0.1
United States	20.3	11.4	3.5	0.3	0.4
Ireland	26.2	18.1	6.0	3.4	0.9
Netherlands	29.9	18.1	7.3	0.5	0.2
Hungary	17.7	5.6	0.4	3.9	3.4

weak in Hungary and Austria. The explained variance by year of survey has, again, a considerable additional effect only in Hungary.

A wider look at other countries covered in ISSP

It could be argued that countries are at a different point in a cycle of attitudinal change. It may be that the shift from a conservative to a more egalitarian position reaches a peak followed by a retreat. The United States and Great Britain may be more advanced in the cycle than other countries, in showing retreat or greater awareness of potential conflicts between women's labor-force participation and family life. By contrast, West Germany and Austria show an increase in egalitarianism on both dimensions, albeit starting from a rather traditional stance.

However, a wider look at other countries covered in ISSP – though only in the 1994 and 2002 surveys – casts some doubt on such an explanation. For gender ideology, most Scandinavian countries have still lower levels of traditionality than the countries under investigation here, and a liberal trend is visible between the two surveys: in Norway from 3.5 to 3.7; in Sweden from 3.5 to 3.8; and Denmark, for which we have data only for 2002, scores 3.9. The leveling off of the liberal trend – or the trend reversal once the covariates are taken into account – in some of the countries investigated here (the United States, Great Britain, the Netherlands) cannot be explained as a methodological artifact, i.e. a ceiling effect. Further support for this argument comes from two other countries of the liberal-regime type for which we have data only for 1994 and 2002. Northern Ireland scores 3.2 on gender ideology in both years and New Zealand 3.5.

Hungary appears to be a special case among the countries considered here, with traditional attitudes coming to the fore after the collapse of socialism but now becoming more liberal. A wider look at the development of other post-socialist societies suggests that there is a marked liberal trend from a very low level, particularly in countries where attitudes have been most

traditional. Unfortunately, ISSP data do not allow us to examine whether most former socialist countries experienced a temporary traditional blip, in the wake of the breakdown of socialism.

4 Summary and discussion

In this chapter we have looked at different aspects of gender-role change. We explored empirically various explanations of attitudinal change; in particular we wanted to discover to what extent generational differences are the main drivers of change and, if so, whether such differences are reduced once additional variables, such as education and labor-force participation, are taken into account.

We found that gender-role attitudinal change does not support a story of revolutionary change and backlash. Interestingly, however, we do find that gender attitudes seem to show a move towards greater egalitarianism followed by retreat in some countries. Of course, the fact that people's attitudes have changed relatively slowly and inconsistently does not provide any direct evidence about behavior. There is considerable commitment to the traditional gender-role divide, and there remains concern that maternal employment may compromise family and child well-being. (For similar observations regarding trends in the United States, see Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001).

In terms of our cross-national comparison of gender-role change, we found attitudes differ considerably depending on the issue. Change with regard to the perception of negative consequences of mothers' labor-force participation for the children is less pronounced than for gender ideology. In addition, in most countries less than half of the variance can be explained for the perception of the consequences compared to gender ideology. This means that countries are more homogenous with regard to the former than to the latter. However, the idea that there is near-universal support for egalitarianism is clearly a myth. The change over two decades has been much slower and more uneven than those who represent the story as one of revolutionary change followed by backlash would like us to believe. Of course, there may have been a marked change in gender-role attitudes before 1980. Nevertheless, attitudinal change on most items over the last two decades has been surprisingly modest in some countries. Interestingly, there is evidence of mounting concern about the work-family balance on items which tap the conflicts that employment and family care raise for women. There is also clear evidence that countries differ markedly in terms of their trajectories and speed of change in a way that begs additional analysis to improve our understanding of what is driving attitudinal change.

In this chapter we limited our exploration of the drivers of attitudinal change to seven countries. We found that the dominant predictor of gender-role attitudes is generation or birth cohort. Moreover, the importance of generation remains, even when controlling for differences in education, marital status, women's labor-force participation and religion. For the most part, our societies are moving towards an epoch of equalization in terms of

opportunities and constraints on men and women. However, in gender-role attitudes there is some evidence of egalitarianism reaching a peak and retreat, particularly in Great Britain and the United States. Moreover, there is still a pronounced generational lag in support for more egalitarian gender roles. It is perhaps not surprising that "old-fashioned" notions of gender difference are proving surprisingly resilient, given that new gender equalities have imposed a double burden on women, whose employment status does little to ease their burden of family care. And it remains an open question whether perceptions of strain are more pronounced in Anglo-Saxon countries where the state does little to help juggle work and family.

Is the new millennium going to bring further progress or retreat in gender-role egalitarianism? To answer this question we need to do a better job in monitoring gender-role attitudinal change than is currently the case. The existing questions are relatively crude indicators for preferences concerning the complex ways in which men and women can divide up paid and unpaid labor (see Braun 2008). Existing surveys contain little information about men's roles outside of paid work. We need to explore the disjuncture between practice and expectations concerning work and family life, which have challenged both men and women over the last few decades (Strandh and Nordenmark 2006). Are people concerned about the potential negative effects of maternal employment because caring is seen as predominantly woman's work or is it because there are no practical alternatives to the woman being the primary carer? Is it primarily men who must change in their contribution to unpaid care or will greater egalitarianism be achieved more readily by the increasing commodification of care? Existing measures are designed to tap support or rejection of the traditional gender-role divide. But the interesting issues are now about how men and women can best work together to achieve a work-family balance that meets the needs of different generations, at different stages of the life-course. To make progress in devising egalitarian interventions that the public would support, we need to know more about what gender roles people view as practical, as possible and as fair.

However, though additional items seem necessary to get a fuller picture of what is going on regarding gender roles with all their facets, much can also be gained by extending existing time series. Major change in the position of political parties has taken place in Germany, for instance, and a major restructuring of the system of extra-familial childcare is under way. In so far as state involvement in the provision of childcare is crucial for the perception of negative consequences of female labor-force participation for children, the next wave of ISSP – which is likely to be fielded in 2012 – might reveal a new ordering of countries.

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