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Research Article

**What is your couple type? Gender ideology,
housework-sharing, and babies**

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What is your couple type? Gender ideology, housework-sharing, and babies¹

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Abstract

BACKGROUND

It is increasingly acknowledged that not only gender equality but also gender ideology plays a role in explaining fertility in advanced societies. In a micro perspective, the potential mismatch between gender equality (i.e., the actual sharing taking place in a couple) and gender ideology (i.e., attitudes and beliefs regarding gender roles) may drive childbearing decisions.

OBJECTIVE

This paper assesses the impact of consistency between gender equality in attitudes and equality in the division of household labour on the likelihood of having another child, for different parities.

METHODS

Relying on two-wave panel data of the Bulgarian, Czech, French, Hungarian, and Lithuanian Generations and Gender Surveys, we build a couple typology defined by gender attitudes and housework-sharing. The typology identifies four types of couple: 1) gender-unequal attitudes and gender-unequal housework-sharing; 2) gender-equal attitudes and gender-unequal housework-sharing; 3) gender-unequal attitudes and gender-equal housework-sharing; 4) gender-equal attitudes and gender-equal

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housework-sharing. The couple types enter into a logistic regression model on childbirth.

RESULTS

The impact of the typology varies with parity and gender: taking as reference category the case of gender-equal attitudes and gender-equal division of housework, the effect of all the other couple types on a new childbirth is strong and negative for the second child and female respondents.

CONCLUSIONS

The consistency between gender ideology and actual partners' housework-sharing is only favourable for childbearing as long as there is gender equality in both the dimensions.

1. Introduction

In the last few decades most developed countries have witnessed a dramatic change in gender roles and attitudes. Whereas some European countries, most notably the Nordic ones, have moved peremptorily towards gender egalitarianism both in the public sphere (i.e., the education system and the job market) and in the private sphere (i.e., the housework and childcare gender role-set), other countries appear to have experienced substantive changes in the first sphere but less in the family sphere, a feature epitomised as the “stalled gender revolution” (Hochschild and Machung 1990). Recent studies suggest that gender equality at the family level is also linked to reproductive behaviour, and stronger gender equality appears to be associated with higher fertility (e.g., Neyer, Lappgård, and Vignoli 2013; Oláh 2003; Duvander and Andersson 2006). Higher gender equality may very well lead to higher fertility; more important however, as one moves away from the male breadwinner model, is the potential mismatch between gender equality (i.e., the actual sharing taking place across genders) and gender ideology (i.e., the “attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights, and responsibilities of women and men in society”; Kroska 2007). The mismatch between the two might result in “unfulfilled expectations”, and such a feeling of disappointment may lower fertility. To exemplify, if the woman has liberal attitudes towards gender roles (i.e., she has an egalitarian ideology regarding gender roles and gender relations in the couple), and the man does not fulfil her expectations through sharing household tasks, she might derive lower satisfaction from the partnership, which in turn may lower the chances for the couple agreeing on having children, which presumably lowers overall fertility (Mencarini and Sironi 2012; Aassve et al. 2014a). There is some evidence suggesting

that, indeed, inconsistency between attitudes toward couples' sharing of tasks and actual division of housework reduces the likelihood of continued childbearing even in a high gender-equal society like Sweden (Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Brandén 2013).

Our analysis follows up on these ideas and tackles the issue directly. Our hypothesis is that the mismatch between actual gender division of housework with respect to attitudes and beliefs regarding gender roles matters for explaining childbearing outcomes. We hypothesize that an inconsistency between gender ideology and partners' actual gender division of household chores has a negative impact on childbearing behaviour. The analysis is made on a sub-set of European countries based on the Generations and Gender Surveys (GGS) in which information concerning gender ideology and sharing behaviour at the household level is available and with two waves of the panel survey. The countries with such information are Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, and Lithuania. Controlling for country differences and separating the model by gender and parity, we show how a couple's typology (defined by the consistency between gender attitudes and actual gender housework-sharing) differs in the rate of fertility progression from one survey wave to the other.

2. Theoretical background and literature review

2.1 Gender equality and fertility

It is now increasingly acknowledged that gender equality (i.e., equal outcomes for men and women in both the public and private spheres) plays a role in explaining the fertility differentials in advanced countries. For instance, Myrskylä, Kohler, and Billari (2011) argue that the recent upswing in fertility observed for highly developed countries can be explained by the way countries differ in gender equality. In other words, fertility appears lower in those countries where gender equality is low. The numerous studies considering the effect of gender equality on fertility tend to differ in that they use different measures of gender equality, the key disparities coming from some focusing on objective measures of country institutions, whereas others focus on actual sharing taking place within couples.

As for the macro perspective, Mills (2010) tested the impact of six indices representing various dimensions of gender equality on fertility intentions. Only two of them proved to be significantly linked to fertility. The Gender-related Development Index (GDI), an index introduced by the United Nations Development Program in 1995 that reflects educational attainment and income corrected by the existing gender inequalities, was found to be positively associated with fertility intentions. On the other hand, the European Union Gender Equality Index (EU-GEI), which measures the equal

sharing of paid work, income resources, and decision-making power and time (including childcare and leisure time) in a country, was found to be correlated with lower fertility intentions. These opposing effects are not necessarily contradictory, because the GDI portrays gender equality from a macro perspective as it reflects gender equality in a society, whereas the EU-GEI is a summary measure representing gender equality as it is aggregated from the couples' actual behaviour.

Those studies focusing on the micro-level of sharing of household tasks (i.e., actual division of household work) tend to find a positive association of gender equality with both fertility intentions and fertility behaviour (e.g., Cooke 2008; Mills et al. 2008; Oláh 2003; Tazi-Preve, Bichlbauer, and Goujon 2004; Torr and Short 2004). The burden of domestic care more frequently lies with the female partner even in the most advanced societies, but is nevertheless mitigated by several couple characteristics. For instance, being part of a dual-earner couple and the time spent by the woman in the labour market affect the extent to which women are able to undertake childcare tasks and household work (Gershuny, Bittman, and Brice 2005; Tanturri and Mencarini 2009). Tazi-Preve, Bichlbauer, and Goujon (2004) tested whether an unequal distribution of household chores and childcare duties had a negative effect on the desire to have children. Gender-equal men expressed stronger desires for children compared to men living in households where sharing took a more traditional pattern. This is in contrast to Torr and Short (2004), who found that both gender-equal couples and couples subscribing to a highly traditional division of household work had higher likelihood of progressing to a second child, thereby reflecting a U-shape relationship. Mills et al. (2008), while analysing Italy and the Netherlands, showed that an unequal division of household work had a negative impact on women's fertility intentions only when they already bore a heavy load in terms of work hours and childcare, in particular if they were working women in Italy (as had previously been shown for the Italian context by Mencarini and Tanturri 2004).

Nordic countries perhaps represent an exception regarding the link between gender equality in housework and childbearing. A study set in Sweden revealed that while the correlation between couples being more gender-equal in terms of housework-sharing and childbearing was positive, this effect disappeared when controlling for demographic variables such as age and parity (Nilsson 2010). One possible explanation for this is that the impact of gender-equal housework division on childbearing is mitigated by the effects of successful family policies (Oláh 2003). Indeed, family-friendly services and policies matter for fertility and probably correlate with the extent that household tasks are shared. When comparing Italy and Spain during the 1990s by means of the European Community Household Panel, Cooke (2008) concluded that increased equality in women's employment increased not only the degree of equality within the home but also the likelihood of having a second birth. More specifically,

access to private childcare significantly increased the chance of childbearing in Spain, whereas a larger amount of childcare carried out by the father produced the same effect in Italy, particularly among employed women. The characteristics of the fathers may also influence fertility through gender equality in the household. Sullivan, Billari, and Altintas (2014) showed that the larger contribution of younger, more highly educated fathers to childcare and domestic work in very low-fertility countries was likely to facilitate an upturn in fertility.

2.2 Gender ideology and fertility

Gender ideology, referring to “attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights, and responsibilities of women and men in society” (Kroska 2007), can range from traditional gender ideologies emphasizing the value of distinctive roles for women and men (with men fulfilling their family roles through breadwinning activities and women through nurturing, homemaking, and parenting activities) to egalitarian ideologies regarding the family, which, by contrast, endorse and value men's and women's equal and shared breadwinning and nurturing family roles (Kroska 2007). Gender ideology is therefore a set of attitudes and beliefs regarding gender roles and the nature of gender relations, which can be measured in family surveys by batteries of questions about gender role-sets.

Several studies look at the role of gender attitudes, the focus being especially on the extent to which gender ideology determines division of household work. The vast majority of studies support the idea that gender ideology to some extent affects actual division of household work, whereas the former, in turn, is driven by the influence of social networks and the cultural and institutional context where couples live (e.g., Blair and Johnson 1992; Greenstein 1996; Coltrane 2000).

Only more recently have studies focused on the way gender ideology may also affect childbearing decisions. Here the evidence is more mixed, a feature largely driven by the use of different measurements (Mills et al. 2011). Puur and colleagues (2008), using data from the 2001–03 surveys of the DIALOG project, conducted a comparative analysis of men in Austria, Estonia, East and West Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Poland. Their results showed that more egalitarian men – in terms of opinions about and attitudes towards gender equality – desired to have, and actually had, more children than traditional men. In response to that finding, Westoff and Higgins (2009) replicated the analysis by using the same country data (except East Germany), but from the European/World Values Surveys. In contrast to Puur et al. (2008), they reported a negative association between men's egalitarian attitudes and fertility. As Goldscheider, Oláh, and Puur (2010) explained, the contrast in those

findings was to a great extent driven by differences in the way gender ideology was measured: Puur et al. (2008) relied on opinions on the man's and the father's role in the family, whereas Westoff and Higgins (2009) used opinions on the role of the woman in society and her choice between work and children. As already highlighted in an extensive literature review by Coltrane (2000) on household labour, gender attitudes tend to better predict men's participation in housework than women's. Furthermore, gender ideology may matter differently for men and women: Kaufman (2000) showed that egalitarian women were less likely to intend to have a child and to actually have a child than traditional women, whereas egalitarian men were more likely to intend to have a child than traditional men. Miettinen, Basten, and Rotkirch (2011) found that men with either traditional or egalitarian attitudes had higher fertility intentions and desires compared to men with intermediate gender attitudes, independently of their family values.

2.3 Gender ideology – gender equality mismatch and fertility

An important point to be made is that gender equality has both macro and micro components. The macro perspective refers to the institutions that society provides in order to ensure equality across genders, and this means infrastructure such as childcare provision and national policies ensuring that men and women are treated on equal terms concerning education, work, and careers. The micro perspective refers to the family sphere, as there can be no gender equality when there is no equal sharing of household tasks. In the predominantly male breadwinner model of the 1960s and 1970s, fertility might have been high because there was no mismatch between gender ideology and equality – despite the low gender equality.

Consequently, a successful transition to an egalitarian society depends on the macro perspective (i.e., diffusion of institutions at the national level) and the micro levels, the latter meaning increased willingness of partners to share household tasks. As is argued in Aassve, Fuochi, and Mencarini (2014b), the speed of this diffusion may be closely linked to long-standing and deeply rooted cultural differences across countries. This relates to the fact that gender ideology may very well be gender-specific. In other words, men and women may differ in the way they evaluate gender roles. Despite societal institutions evolving, thereby enabling gender equality, there might still be a gender ideology–gender equality mismatch in the family sphere, which is maintained through persistency in those norms. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that, despite the transition towards egalitarianism, there will necessarily be heterogeneity at the micro level. A society dominated by the male breadwinner idea may still have individuals and couples that have rather gender egalitarian attitudes. Likewise, gender

egalitarian societies may also consist of couples that subscribe to the male breadwinner idea.

Gender ideology and gender equality in the private sphere do not necessarily go hand in hand. According to Press and Townsley (1998), changing social perceptions of the appropriate domestic roles result in reporting biases that do not automatically correspond to actual changes in the division of housework. Furthermore, women are more likely to respect the declared appropriateness of gender sharing of home tasks than men (Baxter 1997). This suggests that couples will differ in the combination between gender equality in attitudes and the actual division of household work. This is an important element because even in highly egalitarian societies some will nevertheless have very conservative attitudes towards gender roles. The key question is whether this combination of ‘declared’ and ‘acted’ gender equality has an impact on childbearing decisions.

Esping-Andersen (2009), making a compelling case for why gender equality may matter for observed fertility levels across advanced societies, points out that consistency between gender ideology and actual equality may not be in place as societies transition from the male breadwinner model to an egalitarian model. As further explained by Aassve, Fuochi, and Mencarini (2014b), in the path of “women's revolution” for some countries there might be a transitional phase, when gender ideology is changing (in the sense that women's preferences are shifting, possibly as a result of educational expansion among women) and fertility will become lower as long as institutions do not adapt accordingly.

The idea that such mismatch between gender ideology and gender equality might affect couples' decision-making with regard to childbearing and hence drive overall fertility levels derives from the work of McDonald (2000; 2006; 2013), who argues that it is not necessarily gender equality per se that matters for fertility: rather it is what he calls the gender equity and equality gap (see also Neyer, Lappegård, and Vignoli 2013). The concept of gender equity refers to “fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs, that may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities” (UNESCO 2000). It is distinct and different from the concept of gender equality – which is more straightforward in the sense that it can be measured simply by comparing outcomes for men and women in areas such as education, employment, wages, participation, health, and so on – but also from the concept of gender ideology, which does not implicate any concept of perception of fairness of gender treatment (Mencarini 2014a, 2014b). It is important to be aware that gender equity is not the same as gender ideology in the sense that the latter term does not explicitly include a value judgement on what is considered fair or not.

What is clear from the current literature is that very few consider both gender ideology and gender equality when trying to understand the effect on fertility. The study by Miettinen (2008) makes a step in this direction by focusing on women's satisfaction with housework-sharing (and its role in childbearing). Studies directly integrating both actual sharing behaviour and gender ideology as determinants of fertility are very few. To the best of our knowledge the only study so far is by Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Brandén (2013). Relying on the Swedish Young Adult Panel Study (YAPS), the authors combine attitudes towards sharing of childcare and housework declared before parenthood. These measures are then compared with the actual sharing of domestic tasks reported four years later. Their findings support the idea that inconsistency between these two measures reduces the likelihood of childbearing.

3. Data and measurement

3.1 GGS data

The data used in our empirical analyses are from the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP), a data source of nationally comparative surveys whose core topics are fertility, partnerships, gender and intergenerational relations, and paid and unpaid work. Our sample is derived from the two waves of the Bulgarian, Czech, French, Lithuanian, and Hungarian surveys. The first wave of the data was collected in 2004 in Bulgaria, in 2005 in France and the Czech Republic, in 2006 in Lithuania, and between the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005 in Hungary. The second wave was collected three years later for all the countries except Hungary (four years later). Whereas other national GGP surveys also offer two observational points in time, only these five surveys offer satisfactory variables regarding gender attitudes and the division of household work, on which our couple typology is built.⁶ Information concerning division of household tasks is only available for co-residing partners: thus couples in which the partners are not living together are excluded. Moreover, we include only individuals who live with the same partner in the two waves. Homosexual couples are excluded. The resulting sample is further restricted to include only women aged up to 45 years. The total number of observations in the cleaned sample is thus 9,326.

⁶ In particular, the German dataset had a different range of response values in the variables regarding housework compared to the other countries; the Dutch dataset missed one variable regarding housework and seven variables on gender attitudes that we needed to build the couple typology; the Australian one missed many items on attitudes, and the Georgian one had a sampling strategy with respondent replacement, which impeded the proper exploitation of the panel dimension.

Whereas these surveys provide relatively rich information about household members, in particular about the respondent's partner and children, it is important to keep in mind that partners are not interviewed. The respondent's perspective is maintained throughout the questionnaire, so that the respondents report all information about the partners. This has important implications for our measure of gender ideology on the one hand and sharing of tasks on the other. For the latter, the respondents answer to what extent the partners share, whereas their replies regarding gender attitudes refer to the respondent only. In this sense there is a potential asymmetry when mapping information from the respondent's to the couple's perspective. This is an important caveat of our analysis: on the one hand, the respondent might be biased in the way he or she reports sharing of household tasks, and men are less likely to report that their partners contribute significantly more to housework than they do, compared to their partners' self-declared amount of housework. Consequently, men may tend to overestimate their contribution to domestic labour (Kiger and Riley 1996). On the other hand we cannot establish the gender ideology of the partner, which may matter for the extent to which disagreement arises within the couple.

3.2 Typology of couples

Our dependent variable is defined as a binary variable taking the value 1 if the couple has a child between the two waves, zero otherwise. In the regressions we include a wide range of control variables capturing age, employment, education and financial situation of the members of the couple, marital status, and satisfaction with the relationship with the partner. The key explanatory variable, however, is the couple typology, which we build from a combination of gender ideology (i.e., attitudes regarding gender roles) and information about the extent that household tasks are shared between partners. Attitudes towards gender equality derive from eight items, selected according to their sensitivity to issues regarding gender equality inside the couple, the family, and society. Questions are items of agreement on a Likert-like 5-point scale. The first two items belong to the theme of gender equality inside the couple relationship ("In a couple it is better for the man to be older than the woman" and "If a woman earns more than her partner, it is not good for the relationship"). Then there are another three items on the issue of gender equality within the family ("If parents divorce it is better for the child to stay with the mother than with the father", "When parents are in need, daughters should take more caring responsibility than sons" and "A child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily"). The final three items refer to the issue of gender equality within society ("When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women", "A woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled" and "A man has to

have children in order to be fulfilled”). These last two questions do not refer to gender equality attitudes directly and do not compare men and women, if taken alone, but they compensate each other when considered together, as happens with our attitudes index. Furthermore, they do show strong association with the other items, suggesting that agreement with these statements reflects more traditional attitudes – also for what concerns gender roles.⁷

For the division of housework the question is framed as follows: “Please tell me who does the following tasks in your household” where the items on routine household work include: preparing daily meals, washing the dishes, shopping for food and doing the vacuum-cleaning. The possible answers are “always respondent”, “usually respondent”, “respondent and partner about equally”, “usually partner”, “always partner”, “always or usually other persons in the household” and “always or usually someone not living in the household”. We include these last two response values in the category “respondent and partner about equally”, assuming that the decision to outsource household labour represents ability and willingness to reduce the partner’s workload.⁸

The first step in creating the couple typology consists of summing up the scores from the items on attitudes. Scores range from 1 (strongly agree), meaning low attitude toward gender equality, to 5 (totally disagree), meaning high attitude toward gender equality. As there are eight items, the index spans in the interval [8, 40], where 8 reflects the lowest possible value of attitudes towards gender equality (i.e., highly conservative) and 40 refers to the maximum level of gender-equal attitudes. In the second stage we measure the extent to which the distribution of housework between the members of a couple is gendered. Initially the index is built by adding scores from -2 to +2, where -2 is assigned to the answer that a specific task is always performed by the woman inside the couple, -1 if the woman usually does that task, 0 if the partners equally share the task, +1 if the man usually does the task, and +2 if that task is always performed by the man. An important element of constructing the ‘sharing index’ in this way is that we allow for compensation between duties, meaning that tasks are given the same weights and are perfectly substitutable. In other words, cooking can be compensated by the activity of food shopping or cleaning. Given that we use four items, the sharing index is in the range [-8, +8], where -8 represents a situation where the woman does all of the housework, while at the other extreme an overall score of +8 suggests a couple in which the man does all of the housework.

⁷ The reliability of this set of items on gender attitudes is tested through Cronbach’s alpha for each country, whose score is 0.59 for Bulgaria, 0.68 for Czech Republic, 0.65 for France, and 0.57 for Hungary and Lithuania.

⁸ Cronbach’s alpha for the items on the division of household tasks is 0.77 for Bulgaria, 0.75 for Czech Republic, 0.57 for France, 0.70 for Hungary, and 0.74 for Lithuania.

In order to dichotomize both indices, here “low attitude toward egalitarianism” refers to scores from 8 to 24 of the index on attitudes, 24 being the midpoint of the interval 8–40, and “gender-unequal sharing of household work” refers to scores from -8 to 0 of the index on housework. As already mentioned, the burden of unequal sharing lies predominantly on women, and as a result the very few cases of men experiencing unequal sharing against them were collapsed into gender-equal sharing.

Table 1 shows country differences in the mean of both the index portraying gender equality in the attitudes of the respondents, and the index of gender equality in the couple’s division of household work. Not unexpectedly, France is the country with the highest average gender equality both in the reported attitudes and in the actual division of household labour. Bulgaria and Hungary are far behind France on the path of gender equality. This is especially the case for the attitudes index, and we see that the Hungarian sample in particular scores low on attitudes. Three additional unsurprising findings can be seen in Table 1. First, women do far more housework than men (as testified by the negative signs in the scores). Second, on average female respondents declare a more gender unequal division of household labour than their partners (as it stands out comparing in magnitude the last two lines in Table 1). Third, there is a wider gap between the levels of housework division reported by female and male respondents than between their reported attitudes toward gender equality. This fact seems to anticipate the mismatch between gender ideology (measured by attitudes) and gender equality (measured by the actual sharing) that will be analysed in our regression analysis. It is possible that some men who declare gender equal attitudes, but do not comply with what is asserted, may prefer to report a higher contribution to the household work than is actually the case. Or, an alternative interpretation, it could be that women feel the need to emphasize their effort in domestic work, while their expressed opinions on gender equality do not follow through.

Table 2 presents the proposed classification of couples in types. In the type named “Consistent inequality”, couples are characterised by gender-unequal division of housework (mostly done by women) and gender-unequal attitudes. “Consistent equality” is our second type, characterised by gender-equal division of housework (i.e., the man does not do less than the woman) and gender-equal attitudes. “Inconsistency 1” is the combination of gender-unequal division of housework and gender-equal attitudes, whereas “Inconsistency 2” is the combination of gender-equal division of housework and gender-unequal attitudes. Table 3 gives the percentage distribution of these four couple types for the five countries of our dataset.

Table 1: Description of the indices of gender ideology and gender equality by country

Gender ideology and equality	Bulgaria	Czech R.	France	Hungary	Lithuania
	N=3,386	N=656	N=1,797	N=2,881	N=606
Average Index for gender equality in the attitudes, female respondents (range: [8,40])	20.9 (0.09)	21.9 (0.23)	26.4 (0.17)	19.4 (0.12)	23.1 (0.22)
Average Index for gender equality in the attitudes, male respondents (range: [8,40])	20.8 (0.11)	21.6 (0.28)	26.2 (0.18)	19.7 (0.14)	22.6 (0.21)
Average Index for gender equality in housework, female respondents (range: [-8,+8])	-3.9 (0.06)	-4.1 (0.14)	-3.2 (0.09)	-4.2 (0.06)	-3.7 (0.17)
Average Index for gender equality in housework, male respondents (range: [-8,+8])	-3.2 (0.07)	-2.4 (0.17)	-2.2 (0.1)	-3.1 (0.07)	-3.2 (0.16)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 2: A typology of couples

Division of household chores	Level of gender equality in the attitudes as reported by the respondent	
	Below the midpoint	Above or equal to the midpoint
Gender-unequal	Consistent Inequality	Inconsistency 1
Gender-equal	Inconsistency 2	Consistent Equality

Looking at Table 3, we see that Bulgaria and Hungary are very similar and that the Czech Republic and Lithuania are very similar to each other and not completely different from Bulgaria and Hungary. In these countries the majority of couples are of the ‘Consistent inequality’ type, suggesting that the male breadwinner model is still highly prevalent. Interestingly, the ‘Consistent equality’ group is extremely small in Bulgaria and Hungary, but somewhat larger in the Czech Republic and Lithuania. For the Inconsistency 1 type (i.e., the couple has egalitarian attitudes, but the woman is bearing the brunt of the household work), we find much higher frequencies. Not surprisingly, France very much stands out. The ‘Consistent inequality’ couple type is considerably lower than is the case for the other countries, but here most interesting is the group Inconsistency 1, which stands at 53%. Thus, a large proportion of the French sample reports having gender-equal attitudes, but the majority of their household work nevertheless falls on women. Moreover, only 18% of the French sample reports consistent gender equality.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of couple types

	Bulgaria N=3,386	Czech R. N=656	France N=1,797	Hungary N=2,881	Lithuania N=606
Consistent inequality: gender-unequal division of housework, gender-unequal attitudes	67	58	25	71	48
Inconsistency 1: gender-unequal division of housework, gender-equal attitudes	22	26	53	17	34
Inconsistency 2: gender-equal division of housework, gender-unequal attitudes	8	9	4	9	9
Consistent equality: gender-equal division of housework, gender-equal attitudes	3	7	18	3	9
	100	100	100	100	100

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive results

Table 4 reports descriptive statistics of the variables involved in our regression models. Concerning the household characteristics, given the lack of information on household income our proxy variable is a question asking “A household may have different sources of income and more than one household member may contribute to it. Thinking of your household’s total monthly income, is your household able to make ends meet...” with answers from “with great difficulty” (value 1) to “very easily” (value 6). Relationship quality is measured on a 0–10 scale, following the question “How satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner/spouse?” Concerning the partners’ characteristics, education is measured according to ISCED levels, while employment is asked through a question on the type of current work and daily activities. In our sample, employed people are individuals with a job and regular earnings, and include therefore all those employed and self-employed, those momentarily on maternity leave, paternal leave, or childcare leave, those working in a family business or farm, and those in military or civil service. Students, the retired, homemakers, and other individuals unable to work are excluded from the category of employed people. In the regression models, education is represented by a dummy taking value 1 if the person is a graduate, whereas employment is coded by a set of three dummies representing unemployment, individuals working from 1 to 39 hours per week, and those working at least 40 hours per week.

Looking at the descriptive statistics, the ability of the household to make ends meet seems more compelling in Bulgaria than in the other countries, especially compared to France and Lithuania. Marriage is far more widespread in Bulgaria and Lithuania, with the lowest rate of 67% for France, whereas the average number of children ever born in these country samples does not vary much. Interestingly, over the period covered by our panel, 24% of couples from the French sample reported new childbearing, against 22% in Hungary, 19% in the Czech Republic, 17% in Lithuania, and only 13% in Bulgaria.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics. Mean or frequency of model covariates by country

	Bulgaria	Czech R.	France	Hungary	Lithuania
Household and couple characteristics					
The household is able to make ends meet (range: [1,6]) – mean	2.2 (0.02)	3.1 (0.05)	3.5 (0.03)	3.3 (0.01)	3.5 (0.04)
Couples with a new childbirth between the two waves (%)	13	19	24	22	17
Mean number of children ever born	1.7 (0.02)	1.7 (0.04)	1.7 (0.03)	1.6 (0.02)	1.6 (0.04)
Married couples (%)	87	86	67	82	90
Relationship quality (range: [0,10]) – mean	8.8 (0.03)	8.8 (0.06)	8.6 (0.03)	8.9 (0.03)	8.5 (0.06)
Woman's characteristics					
Employed (%)	70.5	87.5	80.1	83.4	82.3
Average number of hours worked (for employed)	42.6 (0.22)	40.6 (0.40)	34.4 (0.29)	39.1 (0.22)	39.2 (0.51)
Graduated (%)	23.4	35.4	40.6	21.7	14.0
Mean age (in years)	34 (0.11)	34 (0.24)	35 (0.15)	34 (0.12)	34 (0.28)
Man's characteristics					
Employed (%)	74.7	94.1	92.1	88.2	91.1
Average number of hours worked (for employed)	46.1 (0.27)	48.2 (0.42)	42.6 (0.30)	44.9 (0.22)	43.8 (0.52)
Graduated (%)	14.3	26.6	33.2	17.3	15.7
Mean age (in years)	38 (0.12)	37 (0.28)	37 (0.18)	37 (0.15)	37 (0.30)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

The satisfaction of the couple relationship is quite high and homogenous across the five countries. In the age range selected, employment rates are quite high, with slightly different patterns for men and women. Unemployment is more widespread in Bulgaria,

while the highest level of female employment is found for the Czech Republic, together with the highest level of male employment. The average number of hours worked by women does not follow exactly the employment patterns when compared to men. Employed women work for more hours in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, suggesting that in France part-time work is more common than in the other countries, as already found in the literature (Aassve, Fuochi, and Mencarini 2014a). In the end, education levels are the lowest in Lithuania for women and in Bulgaria for men. The highest diffusion of high education levels are, as expected, in France for both sexes.

4.2 The effect of couple typology on childbearing

As can be seen from Table 5, we made estimations separately by parity and respondents' sex. Parity zero refers to the transition to having a first child, whereas parity one refers to the progression to a second child, and parity greater than 1 refers to any higher order birth. As for the four couple types, the reference category is that referring to egalitarian attitudes and gender-equal sharing (i.e., “Consistent equality” type). Thus, the three couple types reported in Table 5 represent deviations from that category. Robust standard errors are estimated, thereby adjusting for the country clustering.

Three major results are immediately evident from Table 5. First, we find that the coefficients of the couple types differ in significance and magnitude for men and women. Secondly, the typology matters, mainly and more significantly, for parity one, whereas it has no impact for the onset of childbearing (i.e., parity zero), while, when considering birth orders over the second parity, it has an impact only for men, and with a reversed sign. These results are consistent with the literature that identifies specifically the (reorganisation of the) gender division of labour after the first child as salient for subsequent fertility (e.g., Oláh 2003; Torr and Short 2004).

Compared to the reference couple type “Consistent equality” (i.e., egalitarian ideology and gender-equal housework-sharing), the three other couple types are all significant and show a negative impact on the likelihood of having another child between the waves, for female respondents and the progression to the second birth. This implies that women with gender-unequal attitudes, or with gender-unequal housework-sharing, or with both characteristics together, are less prone to have a second child than women with gender-equal attitudes and gender-equal housework.

Explanations can be made for each different couple type. We start with the “Inconsistency 1” type, the reasoning for which is straightforward. This category consists of couples where the respondent declares gender-equal attitudes, but the household work is gender-unequal, with women doing the bulk of the housework.

Focusing on the female sample first, where the effect on having a second child is clearly negative, one would argue that women here strongly disagree with the male partner. Women might be experiencing a feeling of disappointment due to unfulfilled expectations since they have a gender-equal ideology, but at the same time in actuality have to cope with a traditional sharing of housework. This kind of mismatch is likely to decrease the likelihood of further childbearing.

The third category, the “Inconsistency 2” type (i.e., gender-unequal ideology and gender-equal household work) is less intuitive, in the sense that it is harder to understand why the partners would organise themselves in this way. Women in this category report traditional attitudes, but nevertheless live in couples where the partners share the household work. Further investigation (not displayed here) shows that, compared to the other typology categories, “Inconsistency 2” is characterised by a smaller proportion of employed men and thus by a smaller average number of hours spent by men in the labour market. On the other hand, women belonging to this couple type are more likely to be employed and work for longer hours than women in the categories “Consistent Inequality” and “Inconsistency 1”. Moreover, in the couple type “Inconsistency 2” there is a greater proportion of employed women (83%) than employed men (79%). These facts suggest that the housework-sharing of “Inconsistency 2” might be gender-equal mainly due to external constraints; for instance, labour market conditions of the couple or time availability. Perhaps, if these external conditions were different, the housework-sharing would have been more gender unequal, as gender-unequal attitudes would make us predict. These arguments suggest that “Inconsistency 2” for women is likely to be another case of “unfulfilled expectations”. Female partners would have preferred a more traditional household organisation, but they are somehow pushed to delegate household tasks as their male partners have a considerable amount of spare time. The underlying dynamics of this kind of couple cannot be determined with certainty and it might be that lower fertility derives from unobserved couple characteristics (such as economic difficulties, etc.); nevertheless, it has to be kept in mind that the frequency of this category is relatively small (and concentrated in Bulgaria and Hungary), and so does not constitute a large contribution to the overall progression to second childbearing.

The group “Consistent inequality”, representing couples where the respondent declared gender-unequal ideology and the household work was consistently gender-unequal, thus exemplifying the male breadwinner model, also associates with a lower rate of fertility progression to the second child. This result is not consistent with our initial simple gender ideology-gender equality hypothesis, since “Consistent inequality” should reflect a non-existent or a smaller mismatch between gender ideology and equality. Consequently, our results would suggest that consistency between gender ideology and gender equality is only favourable for childbearing as long as there is

gender equality. The result is important, not least because the “Consistent inequality” arrangement represents by far the largest group in all the countries but France (see Table 1), and includes 58% of the overall sample. The impact of “Consistent inequality” is consequently driven by the Eastern European countries, which make up 92% of this group. There are several possible explanations for the pattern of “Consistent inequality” observed for Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Lithuania. The Eastern European countries have experienced a remarkable fertility decline since the collapse of the Communist regime. The fall of the Iron Curtain also brought about dramatic societal upheavals. Prior to the 1990s the State provided support to families in the form of maternity leave, child allowances, and childcare facilities, and so outsourcing of traditional family activities was already in place. Consequently, one would expect gender ideology to lean towards the more egalitarian and liberal end of the scale. However, these socialist policies have undergone drastic revision in the transition period since the 1990s, reverting in the direction of the male breadwinner model (Robila 2004; Szelewa and Polakowski 2008). Moreover, the structural changes following the collapse of the socialist regimes were not accompanied by a shift to less traditional values in these societies, and this contributed to their fertility decline (Spéder and Kapitány 2014).

Table 5 also reports estimates for the control variables' effect. These results are consistent with the literature. In particular, we controlled for the age of the man and the woman of the couple, for higher education of both partners (her education being not significant, whereas his higher education has a positive effect in two models for parity 1 or higher); for the quality of the relationship (for parity zero and parity 1 in the model for the female respondent); for the occupational status of her and him in the couple (noting that his occupational status matters more often).

Table 5: Logit regressions: The impact of couple type on a new birth

Respondent	Parity 0		Parity 1		Parity>1	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
(Ref. Consistent equality)						
<i>Consistent Inequality</i>	0.28 (0.43)	0.37+ (0.20)	-0.43* (0.21)	-0.84*** (0.15)	1.05* (0.47)	-0.33 (0.68)
<i>Inconsistency 1</i> (gender-unequal housework, equal attitudes)	-0.37 (0.45)	-0.22 (0.34)	-0.40 (0.29)	-0.68*** (0.13)	0.51+ (0.28)	-0.08 (0.42)
<i>Inconsistency 2</i> (gender-equal housework, unequal attitudes)	0.26 (0.40)	0.13 (0.33)	-0.64+ (0.36)	-1.22*** (0.37)	1.09* (0.51)	-0.59 (0.54)
The household is completely able to make ends meet	0.17 (0.50)	0.19 (0.23)	0.16 (0.44)	-0.44** (0.16)	0.69 (0.48)	-0.17 (0.27)
The couple is married	0.99*** (0.16)	0.67*** (0.15)	-0.39 (0.29)	-0.01 (0.43)	-0.17 (0.57)	-0.52 (0.41)
Relationship quality	0.05 (0.05)	0.14+ (0.08)	0.06 (0.06)	0.05* (0.02)	-0.01 (0.14)	-0.02 (0.09)
Age of the woman	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.11** (0.04)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.03)
The woman is a graduate	0.12 (0.13)	0.16 (0.15)	0.16 (0.36)	0.03 (0.22)	-0.03 (0.34)	0.07 (0.29)
(Ref. The woman is not employed)						
The woman is employed and works up to 39 hours per week	0.37 (0.32)	0.62+ (0.34)	-0.28 (0.30)	0.15 (0.18)	-0.31* (0.13)	-0.09 (0.34)
The woman is employed and works at least 40 hours per week	-0.07 (0.26)	0.13 (0.36)	-0.12 (0.09)	-0.14 (0.29)	-0.57 (0.40)	-0.47* (0.22)
Age of the man	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.06+ (0.03)	-0.07* (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.04+ (0.02)
The man is a graduate	0.23 (0.28)	0.02 (0.10)	0.15 (0.31)	0.62*** (0.18)	0.42*** (0.08)	-0.10 (0.31)
(Ref. The man is not employed)						
The man is employed and works up to 39 hours per week	0.65* (0.32)	0.16 (0.31)	0.75** (0.25)	-0.17 (0.21)	-0.83* (0.34)	-0.45 (0.29)
The man is employed and works at least 40 hours per week	-0.14 (0.34)	0.75*** (0.23)	0.20 (0.17)	-0.03 (0.18)	-0.97** (0.37)	-0.16 (0.13)
(Ref. Bulgaria)						
Czech Republic	-0.99*** (0.13)	0.11 (0.09)	0.64*** (0.08)	1.35*** (0.18)	-0.75*** (0.05)	0.15*** (0.04)
France	-0.88** (0.27)	-0.07 (0.24)	1.61*** (0.29)	1.28*** (0.16)	0.95*** (0.25)	0.41 (0.31)
Hungary	-0.61*** (0.09)	-0.16* (0.07)	0.74*** (0.09)	0.63*** (0.11)	0.27*** (0.05)	0.30*** (0.08)
Lithuania	-0.94*** (0.18)	-0.43** (0.16)	0.60*** (0.11)	0.30** (0.10)	0.54*** (0.13)	0.28** (0.11)
Constant	0.94+ (0.53)	1.13 (1.00)	2.27** (0.69)	3.07** (1.05)	0.12 (0.82)	0.97 (0.63)
N	493	559	812	1151	1799	2354

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses (clustered at country level).
 + p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

5. Conclusion

In this analysis we have constructed a four-category couple typology based on gender ideology and equality in household sharing using individual-level data from five European countries. As outlined in our theoretical section, the underlying hypothesis is that consistency between gender attitudes and equality in the sharing of partners' household tasks has a positive effect on childbearing outcomes, whereas inconsistency should lower fertility. As we have shown, our results only give partial support to this hypothesis. Indeed, couples who are gender-equal in attitudes and also have a higher level of sharing household chores are more likely to have a second child. In line with our hypothesis, we have found that the two types of couple that represent inconsistencies between attitudes and actual division of household labour are associated with lower fertility. However, contrary to our hypothesis, we also find consistent inequality to be associated with the lower likelihood of having a second child. This means that male breadwinner couples also, at least for the countries considered in our study, have lower parity progression.

In general, and importantly, the couple typology becomes salient only when considering the birth of the second child, whereas the couple type has no effect on the onset of parenthood. Lower progressions to second birth are prompted by inconsistency between attitudes and sharing, as hypothesised. This is a relevant result in terms of fertility behaviour, since it is well-known that one of the fundamental drivers of low fertility is the lack of progression from the first to the second child, and therefore family policies addressing the issue of gender equality may have an effect on fertility if this parity (i.e., couples with one child) is targeted.

Family arrangements corresponding to "Consistent inequality" (i.e., fully traditional families) and "Inconsistency 2" (traditional attitudes and equal sharing of housework) have a positive impact on the likelihood of a new birth only among men, and for higher fertility parity. In the case of "Inconsistency 2" this could suggest that when the family consists of a large number of children, fathers necessarily take on more of the housework. As for "Consistent inequality", the positive impact for male respondents might be driven by the fact that men will be more willing to have three or more children if the woman is doing most of the housework, and especially if they belong to a gender-traditional family.

It is interesting to compare our results with those of Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Brandén (2013), who find that, for Sweden, only women with gender-equal attitudes and gender-unequal housework (thus experiencing inconsistency) have less probability of having a child than women with equal attitudes and equal housework division. Being consistently unequal is not significantly different from being consistently equal. However their study only focuses on Sweden, a country where gender ideology and

equality have come rather far. The comparison between our results and those previous results raises an interesting idea: the effect of the gender ideology–gender equality mismatch may impact differently on fertility depending on the stage to which the society has evolved on the gender ideology and gender equality path.

Our analysis is based on five countries, with at least two different cultural patterns (i.e., France and the others). We build here a couple typology using a unique threshold, equal for all the countries, to distinguish between gender equality and gender inequality either in housework-sharing or in attitudes. It is probable that the salience of a couple typology depends on the distribution (and hence diffusion) of the groups contained within the typology. That said, it is important to bear in mind that, despite the heterogeneity across European countries, our analysis brings further support to the argument that fertility increases when gender ideology is not traditional and the woman does not bear a disproportionate amount of the household work. Since low fertility in Europe is driven by relatively high rates of childlessness and a low rate of parity progression from one to two children, these results would strongly indicate that improving equal gender opportunities should be considered very seriously, in line with those policies introduced over the last couple of decades in the Nordic countries, where fertility rates are above the European average level.

Whereas our overall results appear robust,⁹ it is important to point out a few caveats. The most relevant one is that, since we do not have information about the partner's specific attitudes, our estimation might be biased by the fact that partners differ in their reporting of gender attitudes. Another important issue arises from the fact that the male response quality is often poor and it is well known that men tend to over-report their own contribution to household-sharing (Baxter 1997). One should also emphasise that a full empirical test of the theoretical argument made would require long comparative panel data. With the two waves currently available from the GGS we are not able to address the inherent dynamic temporal argument, and we are not able to compare a larger number of countries.

⁹ We tried several specifications of the covariates, and the significance of the four types of couple was quite stable and drove us substantially to the same results. Moreover, when we specified the categories of the typology in a different way, replacing the typology in the models with the two indices of gender equality and ideology in the form of dummies and their interaction (which is equivalent to our type “Consistent equality”), we found confirmation for our current final results. A gender-equal family arrangement consistent with gender-equal attitudes affects positively the progression to a second birth.

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