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Reflexion

Gender equality and fertility intentions revisited: Evidence from Finland

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Gender equality and fertility intentions revisited: Evidence from Finland

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Abstract

Stimulated by the recent debate on gender roles and men's fertility behaviour (Puur et al. 2008; Westoff and Higgins 2009; Goldscheider, Oláh and Puur 2010), we present evidence from Finland as a country well into the second phase of the so-called gender revolution. We examine how gender role attitudes relate to childbearing intentions at the onset of family life, intentions to have many (3 or more) children, and high personal fertility ideals among low-parity men and women. Gender equality attitudes are measured for both the public and the domestic sphere and the influence of work and family orientation is controlled for. Finding signs of a U-shaped association among men, we conclude that both traditional and egalitarian attitudes raise men's expected fertility compared to men with intermediate gender attitudes and independently of family values. Among Finnish women the impact of gender attitudes is smaller and more ambiguous.

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1. Introduction

Gender and gender equity represent an important challenge for fertility research. Gender shapes reproductive strategies, be it through mate choice and parental investment (Trivers 1972), power relations within the household (Folbre 1983), or more general notions of gender ideology (Philipov 2008). Differing views exist as to whether increased gender equity will make people wish for more or fewer children. Historically, traditional family arrangements have correlated with higher numbers of children. During the first demographic transition to smaller families women became much more equal with men. However, at the same time the provision of child care from kin diminished and parents were increasingly removed from the family sphere, intensifying the stress of women's double burden of combining wage and domestic work (Goldscheider 2000). The second demographic transition witnessed even smaller family sizes while recent years have seen a recuperation of fertility in the most developed societies, which also score high in gender equity (Myrskylä, Kohler, and Billari 2009).

Several studies predict that fertility will increase as gender equity within families advances. For instance, influential articles by Peter McDonald (2000a and 2000b) proposed that the imbalance between high gender equity in institutions such as education and market employment and lower level of equity in family life have contributed to low fertility in advanced countries. Once the 'gender revolution' is completed fertility should rise (see also Rindfuss, Brewster, and Kavee 1996; Puur et al. 2008; Goldscheider, Oláh, and Puur 2010). This may indeed be one explanation for the recent reversal in fertility decline (Myrskylä, Kohler, and Billari 2009). However, the actual impact of family gender equity and egalitarian values on fertility is unclear, although it is crucial for understanding demographic prospects and "the male role in Europe" in the 21st century (Puur et al. 2008).

Of special interest in European demographic research has been the relationship between the fertility intentions of men, women, and couples, and actual childbearing (Oláh 2003; Puur et al. 2008; Philipov 2009; Westoff and Higgins 2009). In particular the role children play in men's lives and the impact of gender equity on fatherhood has been discussed in numerous recent studies (Thomson, McDonald, and Bumpass 1990; Thomson 1997; Thomson and Hoem 1998; Rosina and Testa 2009). Egalitarian women can reasonably be expected to opt for either 'no families' or 'new families' (Goldscheider and Waite 1991). If their double burden is alleviated – due to work and family reconciliation policies or due to men acquiring a larger share of household tasks – a positive influence of gender equality on women's childbearing prospects can be presumed. But why should gender egalitarian attitudes increase men's fertility aspirations, since equality means more, not less domestic work for them? Both indirect and direct explanations have been suggested. If egalitarian men are more willing to

share domestic and childcare tasks, this may increase their partners' desire to have children. Egalitarian men may also attach more importance and meaning to family life and fatherhood than traditional men do. Hence, 'doing family' or strong family orientation of egalitarian men could compensate for the costs of domestic and caring responsibilities and increase men's fertility intentions (e.g. Goldscheider 2000; Puur et al. 2008:1887). However, not all egalitarian men are highly family-oriented, while men with traditional gender attitudes may also prioritize family life.

This article is stimulated by the recent debate on the relationship between traditional and egalitarian gender roles and fertility, focusing particularly on men's attitudes to gender equality and having children (Puur et al. 2008; Westhoff and Higgins 2009; Goldscheider, Oláh, and Puur 2010). We present evidence from Finland as a country with a relatively high level of gender equity in both public and private life and thus well into the second phase of the gender revolution. The relationship between egalitarian attitudes and fertility intentions of women and men with no children or only one child is investigated. We examine how egalitarian attitudes relate to childbearing intentions at the onset of family life, intentions to have many (3 or more) children, and high personal fertility ideals among men and women with no or only one child. Men's responses are compared with data on women, as information about both sexes is needed in order to understand the link between gender relations and fertility.

2. Previous findings on gender equity and fertility

Attitudes to gender equality in low fertility societies have been claimed to correlate with higher numbers of children, both on the social and individual level, but the existing evidence is somewhat contradictory. The impact of gender equality typically varies by sex and parity, depending on the national and social context and on measurements of gender equality.

Kaufman (2000), in analyzing the 1987/1998 and 1992/1994 waves of the United States National Survey of Families and Households, found that while egalitarian women are less likely to intend or actually have a child than traditional women, for men the opposite is the case. However, Torr, and Short (2004), examining the same data, found evidence of a U-shaped curve in the predicted probabilities of a second birth by division of household labour at the individual level. Here, therefore, both 'traditional' couples, where women contributed most to domestic chores, and 'modern' couples, who shared domestic tasks more equally, were more likely to have a second child than the intermediate group of 'partial-sharers'.

Studies derived from the Population Policy Acceptance Study (PPAS) conducted in fourteen European countries between 2000-2003 concluded that men with more

egalitarian attitudes toward gender equity have higher fertility intentions. Puur et al. (2008:1898), after controlling for several demographic and socio-economic characteristics, found that “egalitarian attitudes tend to be associated with higher fertility intentions” as well as with higher realized fertility in all studied eight countries (Austria, Estonia, East and West Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Poland). In a more in-depth regional analysis of the PPAS data for Austria, Tazi-Preve et al. (2004) found that a traditional division of household labour clearly diminished people’s wish to have a(nother) baby, with the inverse being the case in more egalitarian partnerships.

On the other hand, using panel data from Gender and Generations Survey (GGS) in Hungary, Spéder and Kapitány (2009) found that traditional gender role orientation significantly correlated with having a second and third child among both men and women, while no relation was found between egalitarian attitudes and having the first child. A study by Philipov (2008), using the same PPAS data set as Puur et al. (2008) and with almost the same set of countries, looked at several dimensions of gender egalitarian attitudes but found no clear association between them and fertility aspirations. Only attitudes concerning the ultimate societal role of women and men correlated with intentions to become a parent, while attitudes towards working mothers and meaning of paid work for women had no impact at all.

In Spain and Italy, data from the European Community Household Survey suggests that where fathers play a substantial role in care activities with the first-born of young couples, the transition to a second birth is faster (Cooke 2003). Similarly, using the Italian ISTAT Survey on Births, Pinnelli and Fiori found that fathers’ participation in domestic labour and childcare significantly increased the intention to have a second child for working women. This factor had no influence on intentions to have a third child or on the fertility intentions of non-working women (Pinnelli and Fiori 2008).

Completing this corpus of ambiguous evidence, Westoff and Higgins performed a quasi-parallel analysis to Puur et al. using the European/World Values Survey (EWVS), extracting data from seven of the eight countries examined by Puur et al. but focussing on childbearing behaviour. They observed similar results with regard to the geography of attitudes towards gender equality. However, they found that while “fertility is higher at the egalitarian end of the scale in Puur et al. ...for every country without exception, we found an opposite relationship” (Westoff and Higgins 2009:68). Indeed, upon analysis of an expanded data-set of all developed countries in the EWVS, Westoff and Higgins “encountered a statistically significant negative relationship between egalitarian attitudes of men and the number of children ever born for 17 of the 31 countries”, with the slope of the other 14 countries also being uniformly negative even if not statistically significant (Westoff and Higgins 2009:70).

Different measures of fertility further complicate the picture. For instance, the recent discrepancy between the results obtained by Puur and his colleagues (2008) and those obtained by Westoff and Higgins (2009) can be due to the former focussing mainly on the expected fertility and the latter looking at the achieved fertility. The terminology is also often unclear. Egalitarianism is typically equated with feminism (King and King 1986); support for polarised gender roles is often called traditional, while support for equal gender roles is labelled modern. This is problematic, since the content of "traditional" may vary and all that is "modern" is not gender equal (Therborn 2004).

Finally, a crucial reason for conflicting evidence is due to different measures of gender equity (Goldsheider, Oláh, and Puur 2010). It is not clear what aspect of gender relations is the most critical considering fertility behaviour, or how societal context shapes the association. While some measures of gender equity are related to fertility in some societies, other aspects of gender relations may be more relevant in others. Also the formulations of survey questions vary (Westoff and Higgins 2009:72.) This dilemma is found at the core of the debate between Puur et al. (2008) and Westoff and Higgins (2009). Puur et al. study three statements about men as fathers and family members: "It is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes out to work", "Family life often suffers because men concentrate too much on their work", and "For a man the job should be more important than the family." As they stress, the response to these statements is likely to relate directly to men's choices in family life. However, the focus means that they may measure attitudes to child care or the strength of family values, rather than gender equality per se. Westoff and Higgins (2009:67-68) looked at five other questions, related to gender equality in education and the labour market (three questions), the importance of motherhood for women, and the acceptability of single motherhood (one question each). The advantage of these questions is that they reflect equality more broadly. Their obvious disadvantage, however, is that they do not address fatherhood or gender relations within the family at all. In our study we overcome these limitations by measuring attitudes to gender equality both in the public and the domestic spheres and by controlling for the influence of work versus family orientation on gender equity.

3. Gender equity and fertility in Finland

Finland rather stands out in a European context with its combination of high numbers of full-time working women and relatively high fertility. When working time is taken into account, Finnish women's labour force participation rates are among the highest in Europe (OECD Labour Force Statistics 2010). The labour force participation of Finnish

women in fertile ages is close to that of men and the educational attainment of women is higher than that of men in all working age groups (Statistics Finland 2010a; Statistics Finland 2004).

Reconciliation of work and family has been one of the central targets of Finnish family policy. The mother or father can stay at home with an earnings-related allowance until the baby is about eleven months old. An extensive and affordable day care system was developed during the 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s. All families with below school-age children are entitled to a place in a kindergarten on demand, irrespective of the employment status of the parents. If parents with a below-three-year-old child do not wish to choose public day care, either of the parents can take home care leave with a flat allowance rate. Home care leave is very popular and currently almost 80% of families with children below three years of age use it at least for some period of time (Lammi-Taskula 2007).

While social policy has considerably relieved women's double burden by providing care arrangements for children and the elderly, the gender revolution is by no means complete in Finnish families. Men have gradually increased their participation in domestic work and especially in child care, but women continue to perform a larger share of household chores. In many cases the more equal division at home is a result of well-educated or younger women reducing or outsourcing housework, not of men doing more. (Niemi and Pääkkönen 2001; Miettinen 2008.) Although parents have been entitled to share parental leaves as they wish since 1985, fathers' use of child care leave has started to increase only recently, particularly after the introduction of father-specific provisions (the so called 'daddy-month') (Lammi-Taskula 2007).

How do Finnish gender role attitudes appear in a European context? We used data from the European Value Survey in 1999 (also employed in Westoff and Higgins 2009) to compare 30 European countries. Table 1 shows the ranking of a summary index of gender equity attitudes based on seven items measuring different aspects of gender roles. According to this measure Finland as well as the other Nordic countries belonged to the top five in men's attitudes (Table 1, includes only top 13 countries).

Table 1: Country measures for gender equity from the European Value Survey, 1999

	Distribution (%) of men in each category			Mean (1=traditional attitudes, 4=egalitarian attitudes)	
	Traditional	Intermediate	Egalitarian	Men	Women
Denmark	11	24	65	2.6	2.7
Sweden	15	33	52	2.6	2.9
Iceland	7	40	54	2.5	2.8
Netherlands	12	35	53	2.5	2.7
Finland	12	39	49	2.5	2.6
Spain	17	36	46	2.5	2.5
Ireland	19	43	38	2.4	2.5
Slovenia	23	40	37	2.4	2.6
Great Britain	27	34	40	2.4	2.5
Belgium	29	32	39	2.3	2.5
Germany	31	32	37	2.3	2.5
Croatia	30	34	37	2.3	2.4
France	33	34	32	2.3	2.4

Notes: European Value Survey 1999, men and women aged 20-69 years. Gender equity: Cronbach alfa .59.

- Variables:
1. When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women;
 2. Do you think that a woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled or is this not necessary;
 3. If a woman wants to have a child as a single parent, but she doesn't want to have a stable relationship with a man, do you approve or disapprove;
 4. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work;
 5. A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works;
 6. A job is alright but what most women really want is a home and children;
 7. Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.

Although far from absolute, equality Finland and the other Nordic countries can thus be said to be well into the second phase of the gender revolution. Finland is also a country with comparatively high fertility ideals and numbers. Voluntary childlessness is low, and few Finns favour the one-child family (Miettinen and Rotkirch 2008). The mean ideal family size among Finnish young women is well above the European average: almost every second woman wanted to have three or more children – more than in any other country in Europe. Indeed, the ‘gap’ between desired and actual fertility is highest in Finland among the European countries (Goldstein, Lutz, and Testa 2003), mostly due to high levels of involuntary childlessness.

In a European perspective Finland has high numbers of childless men and women but also more parents with three or more children. Of today’s 35 year-old Finns, one in four women and two in five men are childless. While two children remain the social

expectation and median number of children, today's growing fertility rates are largely due to an increase in higher parities. Indeed, the proportion of families who have at least three children has been growing since the 1970s. Socio-economic position is related to men's but not to women's numbers of children, so that men with higher education and income are less likely to remain childless and more likely to have several children. Childlessness is most common among the highest educated but also among the least educated women, while the numbers of children among mothers is not strongly related to educational level (Miettinen and Rotkirch 2008).

The total fertility level in Finland has fluctuated around 1.8-1.9 since the end of 1980s, being 1.85 in 2008 (Statistics Finland 2010b). The adjusted TFR for Finland for 2005-2007 was 1.93, while the completed cohort fertility for women born in 1968 was 1.90 children per woman (VID/IASA 2010). Thus the gradual increase in age at first birth has not been followed by decreasing fertility and the 2000s witnessed a slight increase in period TFR. This recuperation of fertility has been attributed to high levels of development, including high gender equality and probably the impact of the family-friendly social policies outlined above (Myrskylä, Kohler, and Billari 2009). However, it is unknown how structural or attitudinal equality of Finns interact with their childbearing behaviour.

4. Data, methods, and research questions

The Finnish Well-being and Social Relationships Survey (*Hyvinvointi ja ihmissuhteetkysely*) was conducted by the Family Federation of Finland in 2008 among 7000 25-44 year-old men and women who had no children or only one child, and received a 44% response rate (Miettinen and Rotkirch 2008). The study focussed on low parity adults in order to better capture factors related to the postponement of parenthood and decreasing fertility. Although our data exclude parents with two or more children we believe it to suffice to investigate the link between gender attitudes and fertility intentions. Partly due to the postponement of parenthood, childless or one-child adults represent about 60% of women and 70% of men in this age group (25-44 year olds) in Finland. The questionnaire asked about various aspects of personal and marital well-being, attitudes and expectations towards work, family, and social relationships, as well as childbearing ideals and intentions. In the present paper we restrict the analysis to 25-39 year-old men and women.

Fertility intentions are good predictors of further childbearing, although their validity decreases when moving from expectations and plans concerning the immediate future towards more abstract fertility desires (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Swicegood 1988; Schoen et al 1999; Quesnel-Vallée and Morgan 2003). The factors influencing fertility

intentions can also explain actual childbearing choices (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Swicegood 1988). We study the intention to have a(nother) child (the intention to become a parent among childless respondents and the intention to have a next child among one-child parents), the intention to have many children (intentions to have three or more children), and the ideal of having many children (having three or more children as a personal ideal). We expect to find a link between gender attitudes and fertility intentions during the critical phases of family formation in Finland; that is, regarding first the decision to become a parent, and second regarding an orientation to above-average fertility (measured as the intention to have more than two children).

Fertility intentions were obtained by asking if the respondent planned to have a(nother) child sometime in the future (No/Don't know/Yes/Currently pregnant or Partner pregnant). Respondents who did not know were combined with those who answered 'no'. Pregnant couples were excluded. The intended (expected) number of children was obtained by asking how many children the respondent planned to have altogether (including current children). Fertility ideals were measured by asking respondents to tell their personal ideal number of children.

We measured gender equality with nine questions relating both to gender equality in the public and in the private sphere and to men as breadwinners, spouses, and fathers. We included measures of family and work orientation as separate dimensions in order to study if gender attitudes have an independent impact on fertility desires after controlling for these two factors.

'Gender role attitudes' were measured with nine statements:

1. Companies and the economy in general would benefit if there were more women in managerial positions,
2. Men are more committed to their work than women (reversed),
3. In general, men are more suitable for leading political positions than women (reversed),
4. Men should do half of the housework,
5. Men should always bear the main responsibility for the livelihood of the family (reversed),
6. Equality between the sexes has already been achieved in Finland (reversed),
7. Nobody can take care of a small child as well as his/her mother does (reversed),
8. A father can take care of a small child as well as the mother does,
9. In a good relationship, it is important that partners share the responsibility for the livelihood of the family.

Each answer was categorized with a Likert scale of five increments from ‘completely agree’ to ‘completely disagree’, and an additional category for not having an opinion. Some questions were reversed so that the higher score of the composite variable indicates more equal attitudes towards gender roles. For the analysis the gender ideology measure was divided into three categories: traditional, intermediate, and egalitarian gender role attitudes. We used somewhat different breaking points for men and women to obtain three groups, with at least a fourth of the respondents falling into the extreme positions.⁴

The items we chose to measure gender equity partly differ from the ones used by Puur et al. (2008) and Westoff and Higgins (2009). In particular, compared to the gender attitude measure used by the latter, our variable included several items considering men’s and women’s roles in the family. We agree with Goldscheider et al. (2010) that questions which specifically address family roles are more important when we consider childbearing decisions than, for example, questions relating to women’s position in society in general. However, as we also believe the latter is important when measuring gender equity, we included both these aspects in the composite variable. We also analysed the impact of the family and public gender role dimensions separately by separating attitudes towards women’s role in the public sphere from attitudes towards gender roles in the family but found no marked differences between them among women. The strength of the separate attitude measure varied somewhat among men, depending on the fertility dimension we were analysing, but the direction of the impact was similar to that of the composite variable. We chose to use the composite variable for simplicity and because of the higher initial validity of the composite measure (Cronbach’s α .67), indicating that it does capture latent attitudes towards gender roles.

We controlled for other ideational factors associated with childbearing including work orientation, family orientation, number of siblings, and religiousness. We wanted to distinguish between the contribution of family orientation and that of gender equality, as strong family orientation may reflect traditional attitudes which do not overlap with gender equity attitudes, and both may contribute separately to men’s and women’s motivations as parents. In a similar fashion we separate work orientation from gender attitudes.

‘Family orientation’ was created from five items concerning the centrality of children for the family and personal well-being (Cronbach’s α .60), namely:

⁴ For men, the cut-off levels were traditional=1-3.00, in-between=3.01-3.75 and modern=3.76-5. For women, 1-3.59; 3.60-4.24 and 4.25-5.

1. Only children make a family,
2. A person who doesn't have children is selfish,
3. The relationship with your own children is the closest relationship one can have,
4. One can be perfectly happy even if one doesn't have children (reversed),
5. It is your duty towards society to have children.

'Work orientation' was created from five items concerning the importance of work and career in life and commitment to work (Cronbach's α .76). These items were:

1. The most important thing in my life concern my work,
2. Work has a very central place in my life,
3. Career advancement is very important to me,
4. I am very committed to my work,
5. My goals in life are mostly related to work.

Work orientation was then divided into three classes measuring low, intermediate, or high work orientation.

Religiousness was estimated by asking "How important is religion in your life?" on a four-grade scale. Number of siblings was reported by respondents in the question "I had ___ siblings in my childhood home." Both religiosity and number of siblings are known to correlate with higher fertility. The effect of childhood family size on adult fertility may follow different pathways including inherited genetic predispositions, but here we understand it to be a mainly environmental and ideational influence.

Independent variables controlling for structural factors include age, partnership status (no union/in union), number of children (0/1), education (divided into lower vocational or less, middle level vocational, and university level education), and household income. In two-adult households the income of both partners were combined and divided by two. Descriptive statistics for these variables can be found in Appendix I.

We used logistic regression models to examine each childbearing intention separately among men and women by parities. The first set produces the effect of all independent variables separately. Model I produces the combined effect of all ideational variables and Model II the effect of all structural variables. The third model provides the combined effect of all structural and ideational variables including gender equity. Table 3 in the text displays the values of the coefficients for gender attitudes retrieved from the model including all variables. The logistic regression tables can be found in Appendix II.

We study three research questions:

- Q1. How do traditional and egalitarian gender attitudes relate to men's and women's intentions to have children in Finland?
- Q2. How is the impact of gender attitudes related to the fertility dimension under study (decisions concerning the near future versus more abstract ideals and intentions)?
- Q3 Do gender egalitarian attitudes correlate with fertility intentions independently from family or work orientation?

We expect any link between egalitarian attitudes and fertility intentions to be more apparent in the critical steps in family formation in today's Finland, that is, first the intention to have children at all, and then the intention to have many children.

5. Descriptive results

More than every second childless Finn aged 25-39 intends to have a child in the future (Table 2), among one-child parents, over two thirds expect their family to grow. The descriptive statistics show no clear overall relationship between gender role attitudes and intentions to have a child.

Egalitarian childless men intend to have a first child and to have three or more children somewhat more often than other men. Among men with one child, however, traditional men intend to have a second and a third child more often than other men.

Concerning the intended overall number of children, men with traditional attitudes score highest among both childless men and one-child men. However, the association of gender equity with men's fertility intentions appears slightly U-shaped among childless men, since egalitarian childless men exhibit the second highest expectations.

On the other hand, concerning the ideal personal family, size decreases with more egalitarian attitudes.

There is a slight trend for egalitarian women to plan more children. Childless women with traditional gender values have high personal fertility ideals but, interestingly, low intentions to actually have children. Women with intermediate gender attitudes plan most strongly to have a child and also to have many children. By contrast mothers of one child exhibit a U-shape effect in their intended numbers of children, so that egalitarian mothers report both the highest ideal and intended number of children among all female respondents.

Table 2: Intention to have a(nother) child, intended number of children and personal ideal number of children by gender role attitudes, Finnish 0 and 1 parity men and women aged 25-39 years, Finnish Well-being survey 2008

		Intends to have a(nother) child, %	Intends to have 3+ children, %	Personal ideal 3+ children, %	Personal ideal number of children, mean	Intended number of children, mean
Men,	Traditional	52	20	28	2.17	1.90
0 children	Intermediate	51	15	17	1.84	1.59
(N 479)	Egalitarian	55	23	21	1.82	1.70
Men,	Traditional	69	39	38	2.39	2.41
1 child	Intermediate	68	19	23	2.16	2.10
(N 497)	Egalitarian	67	27	22	2.09	2.11
Women,	Traditional	52	17	27	1.95	1.58
0 children	Intermediate	67	24	25	1.94	1.85
(N 570)	Egalitarian	58	20	25	1.80	1.66
Women,	Traditional	66	32	32	2.28	2.25
1 child	Intermediate	64	31	30	2.23	2.18
(N 591)	Egalitarian	64	34	35	2.39	2.34

On the basis of these descriptive statistics, traditional gender ideology slightly increases childbearing intentions and ideals among Finnish men. However, egalitarian childless men have higher fertility intentions than do intermediate men, and intend to have three or more children more often than traditional men. Partnership status may partly explain these different associations between fertility intentions and gender equality. Below we explore how childbearing ideals and intentions relate to gender ideology when we control for partnership and other factors.

6. Regression section

We used logistic regression analysis to examine whether gender role attitudes have an impact on fertility intentions when controlling for other factors known to influence childbearing. The results of the logistic regression analysis for men and women are summarised in Table 3 below. The complete logistic regression tables, including all models, can be found in Appendix Tables A2 and A3. The effects of the variables on the intention to have a first child (among childless respondents) and on the intention to have a second child (among one-child parents) are shown in Appendix Table A2. Appendix Table A3 presents the intention to have three or more children as well as the personal ideal to have a large family. In what follows we focus on the impact of gender attitudes in explaining men's fertility intentions.

On the whole, gender role attitudes were not significantly associated with the intention to have the first child once we control for other factors. The effect on the

intention to have a second child is even less marked, as we expected (Table 3). Finnish parents exhibit a strong motivation to have a sister or brother to the first child and this appears to override other ideational motives for childbearing.

Descriptive statistics (Table 2 above) showed that gender role attitudes had a slightly U-shaped association with childbearing intentions among childless men but an inverse U-shape association among childless women. Multivariate analysis of the intention to have the first child provides some support for this observation.

Among men both traditional and egalitarian gender role attitudes are positively associated with the intention to start childbearing when compared to men holding intermediate attitudes, although the result does not reach statistical significance. The impact of egalitarian attitudes is even more accentuated, if again not significantly, when other variables are included in the model (Table A2).

However, there was a clear and significant impact of gender attitudes concerning more abstract fertility desires, or the ideals and intentions to have three or more children (Tables 3 and A3). Traditional gender attitudes increase men's 3+ fertility intentions and ideals. Egalitarian men do not differ significantly from traditional men, while intermediate attitudes significantly diminish men's higher fertility intentions and ideals.

The descriptive section showed women's egalitarian attitudes to be related to higher fertility aspirations, particularly among mothers. In the multivariate analysis, women's egalitarian attitudes exhibited a positive but non-significant association with higher fertility intentions and this was stronger among mothers. No evident association was found between gender attitudes and higher fertility ideals.

Table 3: The impact of gender attitudes on the intention to have a(nother) child, to have three or more children, and on personal ideals of three or more children, Finnish 0 and 1 parity men and women aged 25-39

		Intention to have a child, childless respondents	Intention to have another child, one-child respondents	Intention to have 3+ children	Personal ideal of 3+ children
Men	Traditional	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Intermediate	.733	.714	.473**	.610*
	Egalitarian	1.206	.727	.893	.712
	Traditional	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Women	Intermediate	1.552	.953	1.239	.938
	Egalitarian	1.224	1.019	1.454	1.157

Note: For values of the coefficients from the Model III controlling for structural and attitudinal variables, see Tables A2 and A3.

The higher childbearing intentions of egalitarian men in the descriptive statistics could have been presumed to stem partly from them living in a union more often than traditional men. However, the impact of egalitarian gender attitudes on men's intentions

did not change markedly when we controlled for partnership. By contrast, inclusion of partnership status into the models diminished the positive impact of intermediate gender attitudes on women's fertility intentions (Table A2). The lower parenthood intentions among egalitarian and traditional women are thus partly related to a higher proportion of them living alone.

We were interested in whether strong family orientation and low work orientation would raise fertility intentions independently of gender attitudes. Indeed, strong family orientation correlated consistently and significantly with men's and women's intentions to have a first child (Table A2). Orientation towards work had an inversed U-shape association with the intention to start childbearing for both sexes. People with high career ambitions, but interestingly also those who do not consider work very important, are less likely to opt for parenthood compared to those with intermediate attitudes to the importance of work. As expected, family orientation (as well as other ideational variables) exhibits no significant association with the intention to have a second child.

Family orientation also affected plans of third or subsequent children (Table A3). Strong family orientation correlates positively with 3+ parity intentions for both sexes, and with high fertility ideals among men. While traditional gender role attitudes have an ambivalent, non-significant impact on women's 3+ aspirations, strong family orientation shows an unequivocal linear effect.

Strong work orientation decreased intentions to become a parent among both men and women (Table A2) and was associated with lower fertility expectations among women (Table A3).

Partnership status appears to have almost no effect when we examine higher fertility intentions. This is plausible since for many young adults in our data the decision to have the third child (or more than three) is still distant and less dependent on structural barriers than the decision to have the (next) child in the near future.

We also found a statistically significant interaction effect of education and gender attitudes on the fertility intentions of childless respondents (results not shown). Educational attainment moderated the impact of gender attitudes on parenthood intentions so that egalitarian attitudes increased parenthood intentions among men with low and middle level education. By contrast egalitarian academic men had lower fatherhood intentions. The inversed U-shape relation between childbearing and gender role attitudes among childless women (Table 3) was evident among women with low or middle level education. Among academic women traditional gender attitudes increased parenthood intentions when compared to women with intermediate or egalitarian attitudes.

In sum, we found some evidence that egalitarian attitudes increase men's risk to become a father when controlling for structural and ideational factors, although traditional attitudes also slightly raised that risk and neither result was statistically

significant (Q1). The impact of gender attitudes is stronger for overall fertility desires (Q2), and here we found a U-shaped curve among men but not among women: compared to both traditional and egalitarian men, intermediate men desire large families significantly less often. As expected, the impact of gender ideology (and other ideational factors) was discernible both in the transition to parenthood and regarding plans to have three or more children, but least pronounced concerning the transition to a second child, which is a very common event in contemporary Finland. Separating family values from gender equality shows that both have an independent effect, with the former being a stronger and more consistent variable except regarding men's 3+ fertility intentions (Q3).

7. Discussion

The ongoing discussion on men, gender equity, and fertility involves many different views and approaches. Theories of the incomplete gender revolution suggest that gender equity should today boost fertility, particularly in societies where the equality is reaching into families (Goldscheider and Waite 1991; McDonald 2000a and 2000b; Puur et al. 2008). Other scholars claim that for different reasons, such as the double burden of egalitarian men or the pro-family values of traditional men, men favouring gender equity will probably have fewer children than other men do (Westoff and Higgins 2009). Finally, previous studies have found that both traditional and egalitarian gender attitudes can contribute to higher fertility. A clear role division between the spouses, whether egalitarian or polarised, may improve their 'team work' and facilitate everyday coping, while "transitional couples struggle most with the balance between work and family" (Torr and Short 2004:123).

How do attitudes toward gender equity shape the fertility intentions of men and women in Finland, a country well into the second phase of the so-called gender revolution? We have analysed fertility ideals and intentions among adult Finnish men and women with no or only one child. Inspired by the recent debate on men's fertility intentions and gender equality, we wanted to use broader measurements of gender equality and to pay special attention to the independent contributions of work and family orientation alongside gender equity.

Our results showed that men's gender attitudes were in some cases related to the intention to have the first child, although these associations did not reach statistical significance. Support for gender equality was associated with higher fertility intentions among childless men. By contrast, women with intermediate gender equity attitudes were more likely than other women to opt for parenthood.

The impact of gender ideology significantly influenced men's overall fertility ideals and plans, so that traditional men were more likely and men with intermediate attitudes least likely to wish for and plan many children.

Thus the evidence from Finland presented here gives some slight support for Puur et al. (2008), in the sense that egalitarian men appear most eager to become fathers. Particularly, when compared to intermediate men, egalitarian men had higher parenthood intentions as well as overall fertility expectations. However, traditional attitudes also clearly boost men's fertility ideals in the direction found by Westoff and Higgins (2009). Although Finland can be said to be a country relatively far into the second gender revolution, with developed family-friendly social policies promoting paternal involvement in child care, traditional men still favour having children more than other men do.

The stronger effect found for egalitarian values by Puur et al. (2008) than in our study (and others) may, however, be due to different measurements. As the authors acknowledge in their response to Westoff and Higgins (Goldscheider, Oláh, and Puur 2010), some of their questions used for measuring gender egalitarianism probably measured what we have here called family orientation. This would be especially true for the statements "Family life often suffers because men concentrate too much on their work" and "For a man the job should be more important than the family". We controlled for family and work orientation and found that egalitarian attitudes still raised intentions to become a parent. Family orientation, in turn, correlated consistently and significantly with men's and women's intentions to have a first child, and with men's higher fertility intentions. The independent effect of both gender attitudes and of family orientation on men's fertility intentions remained when controlling for other ideational and structural variables.

As in many previous studies, the impact of gender attitudes depended on what fertility component was examined. Gender attitudes had more impact on higher fertility intentions (among men) than on the proximate and more concrete decision to have the next child. As such, studies of mean expected or ideal numbers of children may detect stronger relations between equality and fertility than those analysing parity-specific childbearing behaviour. We also suggest that gender egalitarianism may influence the number of children, especially through the timing of parenthood. While egalitarian men are almost as likely as traditional men to opt for parenthood and large families, they may start having children at a later stage than other men do.

Our study has several limitations. An obvious shortcoming is our data only refers to men and women at parity 0 and 1. However, this sample reflects the family structure of the majority of the age group in question. Another limitation is that we did not study actual fertility outcomes. General family size preferences are known to be relatively weak predictors of subsequent behaviour, especially when respondents are asked about

preferences concerning several parities beyond their current one. Nevertheless, in order to understand how gender attitudes relate to fertility intentions, the inclusion of more abstract ideals and plans is warranted. In our next study we hope to be able to link these survey data with childbearing outcomes of respondents through birth register data.

To conclude, our findings indicate a tentative U-shaped association between gender attitudes and fertility among Finnish men. Traditional but also egalitarian attitudes raise men's fertility intentions, especially related to above-average numbers of children. Among Finnish women the impact of gender attitudes is smaller and more ambiguous. Unlike most other previous research, we found that Finnish women with traditional gender attitudes did not wish for more children than did other women. Instead, mothers with egalitarian values showed signs of having higher childbearing ideals and intentions. This can be interpreted as support for the claim that equally sharing couples more often have a second child (Torr and Short 2004). In regression analyses gender attitudes did not affect women's childbearing intentions. Women's educational level, income, family, and work orientation were more important for their fertility intentions than were their gender role attitudes. Gender equity may thus affect men's and women's fertility aspirations in contradictory ways. We should also remember that egalitarian Finnish fathers of one child were not exceptionally eager to have two or more children. Factors not included in this analysis, such as personality traits and partnership satisfaction, which may interact with gender equality, may also be at play here and would merit inclusion in future studies.

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APPENDIX I – Summary Statistics

Table A1: Summary statistics of 25-39-year old Finnish men and women with no children or only one child, Finnish Well-being Survey 2008

		Men		Women	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Intention to have (more) children	Yes	415	59.8	676	62.2
	No	279	40.2	410	37.8
Intention to have 3+ children	Yes	115	22.4	201	25.4
	No	398	77.6	589	74.6
Personal ideal to have 3+ children	Yes	139	22.8	262	27.5
	No	471	77.2	690	72.5
	Traditional	177	25.5	307	28.3
Gender role attitudes	Intermediate	334	48.1	537	49.5
	Egalitarian	183	26.4	242	22.3
	25-29	256	36.9	492	45.3
Age	30-34	239	34.4	316	29.1
	35-39	199	28.7	278	25.6
	0	352	51.2	541	50.2
Number of own children	1	335	48.8	536	49.8
	No union	206	29.7	307	28.3
Partnership	Living in union	488	70.3	778	71.7
	Low (ISCED 3)	287	41.5	292	27.0
Education	Middle (ISCED 4/5B)	211	30.5	427	39.5
	High (ISCED 5A/6)	193	27.9	364	33.5
	Lowest q.	887 e/mth	23.9	860 e/mth	24.4
Mean net income in household income quartiles	2 nd	1461 e/mth	23.5	1449 e/mth	28.7
	3 rd	1856 e/mth	31.4	1845 e/mth	29.3
	Highest q.	2678 e/mth	17.9	2716 e/mth	13.4
(Proportion of respondents in the quartile)	Missing	-	3.3	-	4.2
	0	64	9.5	90	8.6
	1	297	44.2	456	43.8
Number of own siblings	2+	311	46.3	495	47.6
	Important/In-between	181	26.2	390	36.1
	Not important	510	73.8	691	63.9
Religion	Low	180	26.6	312	29.5
	Intermediate	388	57.4	599	56.6
	High	108	16.0	147	13.9
Work orientation	Weak	386	56.8	765	71.4
	Strong	293	43.2	307	28.6
Family orientation		293	43.2	307	28.6
Total		694	100.0	1086	100.0

APPENDIX II – Logistic Regression

The tables can be read in the following way. The first set (bivariate estimates) presents the non-controlled effects of all variables. Next, model I produces the combined estimates of the ideational variables. Model II (in the same column as model I and below it) shows the combined estimates of the structural variables. Third, model III incorporates both ideational and structural variables in the same model. From the point of view of this paper the third model allows us to examine the impact of the gender attitude variable when the impact of other variables is controlled for.

Table A2: Logistic regression models analysing the risk of intention to have the first child (among childless persons) and the second child (among one-child parents). Finnish 0 and 1 parity men and women aged 25-39 years, Finnish Well-being Survey 2008

	Men	1 st child			2 nd child		
		Bivariate	Model I	Model III	Bivariate	Model I	Model III
<i>Gender role attitudes</i>	Traditional	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Intermediate	.755	.709	.733	.774	.836	.714
	Egalitarian	1.005	1.156	1.206	.753	.779	.727
	0	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Siblings</i>	1	1.490	1.904	1.761	.694	.732	.778
	2+	1.722	1.863	1.675	1.019	1.061	1.155
<i>Religion</i>	Important/in-between	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Not important	.851	.955	.868	1.093	1.013	.979
	Intermediate	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Work-orientation</i>	Weak	.546**	.565*	.606	.863	.823	.621
	Strong	.683	.556+	.639	1.193	1.108	1.222
<i>Family values</i>	Weak	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Strong	1.661*	1.737*	2.326**	1.242	1.144	1.181
			Model II		Model II		
<i>Age</i>	25-29	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	30-34	.842	.836	.769	.709	.672	.664
	35-39	.469***	.539**	.446*	.279***	.295***	.372**
<i>Partnership</i>	No partner	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Partner	4.007***	3.765***	4.588***	5.651***	5.572***	9.013***
<i>Education</i>	Low	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Middle	1.333	1.063	.915	.986	1.234	1.264
	University	1.811*	1.641+	1.844+	1.372	1.673+	1.212
	Lowest quartile	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Household income</i>	Second quartile	1.793+	1.590	1.449	1.497	1.612	1.517
	Third quartile	2.043*	1.744+	1.644	.696	.798	.543
	Highest quartile	1.644	1.616	1.508	.533+	.645	.519
	Missing inf.	1.537	1.773+	2.074	.525+	.579	.692

Notes: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

Table A2: (Continued)

Women		1 st child			2 nd child		
		Bivariate	Model I	Model III	Bivariate	Model I	Model III
<i>Gender role attitudes</i>	Traditional	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Intermediate	1.585*	1.730*	1.552	.883	.959	.953
	Egalitarian	1.041	1.079	1.224	.848	1.064	1.019
<i>Siblings</i>	0	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	1	.741	.675	.715	1.303	1.341	1.359
	2+	.921	.765	.792	1.465	1.395	1.510
<i>Religion</i>	Important/in-between	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Not important	.904	.871	.571*	.775	.829	1.004
	Intermediate	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Work-orientation</i>	Weak	.555**	.522**	.641+	1.193	1.080	.986
	Strong	.653+	.613+	.618+	.637	.675	.755
<i>Family values</i>	Weak	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Strong	2.235**	2.443**	2.877**	.993	.975	1.075
		Model II			Model II		
<i>Age</i>	25-29	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	30-34	.438***	.386***	.397***	.641+	.610*	.644+
	35-39	.156***	.127***	.152***	.161***	.164***	.167***
<i>Partnership</i>	No partner	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Partner	2.785***	2.680***	3.220***	2.073**	1.825*	2.195**
	Low	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Education</i>	Middle	1.198	.928	.844	1.508+	1.633*	1.766*
	University	1.353	.838	.827	1.716*	2.332**	2.871***
	Lowest quartile	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Household income</i>	Second quartile	1.253	1.298	1.253	.829	.818	.767
	Third quartile	1.946**	2.263**	2.265**	.596*	.550*	.557+
	Highest quartile	1.611	2.906**	2.669*	.583+	.600	.594
	Missing inf.	.494	.625	.665	1.187	1.033	1.391

Notes: $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A3: Logistic regression models analysing the risk of intention and ideal to have 3+ children. Finnish 0 and 1 parity men and women aged 25-39 years, Finnish Well-being Survey 2008

	Men	3+ Intention			3+ Ideal		
		Bivariate	Model I	Model III	Bivariate	Model I	Model III
<i>Gender role attitudes</i>	Traditional	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Intermediate	.462***	.483**	.473**	.514**	.618*	.610*
	Egalitarian	.750	.963	.893	.543*	.742	.712
<i>Siblings</i>	0	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	1	2.098+	1.970	2.142	1.082	1.234	1.370
	2+	3.292**	3.298**	3.624*	2.388*	2.517*	2.736*
<i>Religion</i>	Important/in-between	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Not important	.657+	.651+	.629+	.617*	.621*	.561**
	Intermediate	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Work-orientation</i>	Weak	1.052	1.084	1.178	.831	.795	.852
	Strong	1.252	1.281	1.205	1.469	1.280	1.188
<i>Family values</i>	Weak	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Strong	1.559*	1.578*	1.566+	1.832***	1.699**	1.724**
			Model II		Model II		
<i>Age</i>	25-29	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	30-34	.535**	.469***	.539*	.716	.674+	.670+
	35-39	.324***	.307***	.325***	.521**	.503**	.525*
<i>Number of children</i>	1	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	0	1.428***	1.687*	1.501	1.386+	1.731*	1.458
<i>Partnership</i>	No partner	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Partner	1.133	.830	1.158	.930	.685	.791
<i>Education</i>	Low	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Middle	.983	1.113	1.014	1.086	1.223	1.085
	University	1.738**	1.920**	2.009*	1.944**	2.147***	2.035**
	Lowest quartile	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Household income</i>	Second quartile	.602+	.629	.626	.521*	.540*	.560*
	Third quartile	.619+	.664	.579+	.617*	.599*	.528*
	Highest quartile	.717	.842	.673	.689	.651	.603
	Missing inf.	.875	.872	.863	1.122	.842	.452

Notes: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

Table A3: (Continued)

Women		3+ Intention			3+ Ideal		
		Bivariate	Model I	Model III	Bivariate	Model I	Model III
<i>Gender role attitudes</i>	Traditional	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Intermediate	1.052	1.146	1.239	.891	.951	.938
	Egalitarian	.950	1.254	1.454	.955	1.170	1.157
<i>Siblings</i>	0	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	1	.943	.922	.868	1.003	.954	1.015
<i>Religion</i>	2+	1.948*	1.961*	1.975*	1.674+	1.615+	1.686+
	Important/in-between	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Work-orientation</i>	Not important	.606**	.591**	.600**	.508***	.532***	.543**
	Intermediate	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Family values</i>	Weak	1.250	1.267	1.186	1.283	1.291	1.227
	Strong	.505*	.507*	.571+	.686	.677	.690
<i>Family values</i>	Weak	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Strong	1.451*	1.372+	1.156	1.211	1.163	1.121
		Model II			Model II		
<i>Age</i>	25-29	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	30-34	.487***	.412***	.434***	.575***	.519***	.514**
	35-39	.101***	.100***	.070***	.285***	.280***	.241***
<i>Number of children</i>	1	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	0	1.711***	1.990***	1.761**	1.341*	1.614**	1.433*
<i>Partnership</i>	No partner	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Partner	1.393+	1.092	1.210	1.071	.917	.952
<i>Education</i>	Low	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Middle	1.425+	1.846**	2.178***	1.666**	1.998***	2.097***
	University	1.208	1.768*	1.888***	1.591*	2.186***	2.170***
<i>Household income</i>	Lowest quartile	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Second quartile	.837	.802	.865	.882	.926	.972
	Third quartile	.611*	.621*	.617+	.620*	.614*	.636*
	Highest quartile	.393***	.531+	.640	.551*	.616+	.783
	Missing inf.	.809	1.079	.943	.757	.870	.851

Notes: + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

