Are Men's Attitudes Holding Back Fertility and Women's Careers? Evidence from Europe[1]

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Abstract: We propose that men's reluctance to increase their participation in childcare and household chores is an important factor keeping both fertility and women's employment low in Europe. We first show that, over time, European women express a stronger desire for men increasing their participation in home production. This trend is not observed for men. We propose a toy model of the household that illustrates how men's refusal to contribute to childcare can have negative effects on both fertility and women's labor supply. Finally, we use cross-country panel data and a two-way fixed effects specification to show that countries where the gender divergence in attitudes is more pronounced display both lower birth-rates and lower female employment rates.

Keywords: Fertility, gender norms, female labor force participation.

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1. Introduction

Women's increased participation in the labor market during the 20th century was accompanied by declines in marriage and fertility rates. Despite the considerable progress, gender gaps in employment, wages and earnings are still large across countries (Blau & Kahn 2017, Kunze 2018), while fertility (and marriage) rates have remained low. Figure 1 shows male and female labor force participation rates overt time in 42 European countries. In 2022, female participation was just over 50%, while the rate was higher than 65% for men. Figure 2 shows that the total fertility rate in the same set of countries has fallen from 3 to almost 1.5 since 1960.

Existing evidence suggests that a large fraction of the remaining gender gaps in labor market outcomes are related to women working less in the market (and more in the home) after having children.[2] Many have suggested that these "child penalties" may be driven by gender norms that dictate that women should be the main caregiver (Bertrand 2020). Some also suggest that women may just have preferences for specializing in childcare (Kleven et al. 2019).

We propose a slightly different story about how gender norms may be responsible for both low fertility and stagnant labor market outcomes for women. Our focus is on men's attitudes about their own participation in home production. We formalize our hypothesis with a toy model of the household, and then test the main implications of the model using data for over 40 European countries.

We proceed in three steps. We start by showing that the increase in women's participation in the labor force during the second half of the 20th century was accompanied by an increased social acceptance of women, and in particular mothers, working in the

[2] Fernández-Kranz et al. (2013), Angelov et al. (2016), Lundborg et al. (2017), Kleven et al. (2019a), Bertrand (2020), Cortes and Pan (2024).

market. Although women are in general more supportive of female employment, men's attitudes have evolved in parallel. These changes in attitudes have been shown before.

Our novel observation is that the patterns are quite different when we consider attitudes regarding men's contribution to unpaid, domestic work. Using multiple waves of data from the European Values Study (EVS), we show that younger cohorts of women have become more and more supportive of men increasing their contribution to household chores and childcare. However, men's attitudes have not evolved in parallel. We thus document a growing gender gap in attitudes towards men's contribution to household work, where women are increasingly in favor of less specialization, while men are not.

We interpret these stylized facts as suggesting that women's preferences may not be the driving force behind their persistently high contribution to home production. In turn, while men are increasingly supportive of women's participation in the labor market, they are less favorable towards increasing their own participation in housework and childcare.

In a second step, we interpret these empirical patterns with the help of a simple model of household specialization with (a particular form of) gender norms. In our (cooperative) model, a couple makes decisions about labor supply and fertility. Each spouse derives utility from private consumption and a public good (children). Working in the market increases private consumption, while children require parental time. Because children are a public good, both partners would prefer to specialize in the market while the other partner specializes in childcare. We include two elements that may contribute to women being more likely to specialize in the home: first, men may have higher bargaining power, and second, there is a social norm dictating that men don't provide childcare.

The main prediction that we derive from the model is that, even in a situation where men and women have similar bargaining power within the couple, the social norm (men's resistance to provide childcare) can keep both fertility and women's employment low (with respect to a world without the social norm).

In our third and final step, we test this prediction using data for over 40 European countries. We run two-way fixed-effects specifications where the outcomes of interest are fertility and female employment rates (at the cohort-country level). The explanatory variable of interest is the gender gap in attitudes between men and women with regards to men's contribution to home production, in a given country and cohort (measured with multiple waves of the EVS). On top of country and cohort fixed-effects, we control for the level of our main attitudes variable, as well as for the level and the gender gap in attitudes about women working in the market.

We show that the gender gap in attitudes about men's household work is associated significantly with both low fertility and low female employment rates. Our estimates suggest that moving from the cohort-country with the lowest gender gap in attitudes to the one with the highest is accompanied by a total fertility rate that is almost 1% higher, as well as 1% higher female employment rates.

We contribute to the literature on the determinants of low fertility across countries (Bloom et al. 2024, Doepke et al. 2023, Kearney et al. 2022, Doepke and Kindermann 2019). Some recent studies in this literature have highlighted the role of "factors that determine the compatibility of women's career and family goals as key drivers of fertility" (Doepke et al. 2023). We highlight the role of conflicts over the division of labor within the household, and in particular men's contributions to home production, and make a case that the divergence between men's and women's attitudes towards specialization is

plausibly a common driver of both low fertility and persistent gender gaps in labor market outcomes.

We also contribute to the active literature on the drivers of gender inequalities in employment and earnings (Blau 2024, Cortes and Pan 2024, Olivetti et al. 2024). Recent papers have highlighted the potential role of preferences and social norms in explaining the persistence of gendered patterns of within-household specialization (Bertrand 2020). However, many studies seem to attribute women's reduced labor supply after motherhood to women's attitudes and preferences regarding their role as caregivers, or to men's attitudes about women's market work (Fernández et al. 2004). We instead argue that the focus should be on men's attitudes about their own participation in household work, since more egalitarian behaviors within households require not only for women to work more in the market, but also for men to work more in the home, which they appear more reluctant to do.[3]

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we document the increasing divergence in attitudes between men and women regarding men's contribution to household work. Section 3 introduces the toy model that we use to illustrate our main mechanism: how men's resistance to participate in home production may hold back both fertility and women's employment. Then, in section 4 we show how the gender gap in attitudes about sharing of housework is associated with both fertility and female employment rates, in cross-country regressions that exploit within-country variation across cohorts. Section 5 concludes.

[3] Our mechanism is related to the one proposed by Hancock et al. (2025), who posit that "gendered rigidities in the allocation of household tasks" may be linked to low marriage rates.

2. The growing gender gap in attitudes

We start by documenting changes in attitudes about gender roles over time in Europe, stressing the differences (or lack of) between men and women. We focus on attitudes about (traditional) within-household specialization: women and men working in the market and in the home. Our main data source is the European Values Study (EVS), which allows us to pool three waves with comparable questions (1999, 2008 and 2017). We also provide descriptive evidence from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP 2002 and 2012), which includes many European countries (as well as some non-European ones).

2.1. Descriptive evidence

We first document descriptively a growing gap in attitudes between women and men, in relation to family responsibilities in the household. We use data from the European Values Study (EVS) of 2008 and 2017, and split respondents by gender and age group.

Figure 3 (Panel A) shows the fraction of men and women (by birth cohort) who agree that "sharing household chores is very important for a successful marriage." In the older cohort (those born before 1950), about 40% of men agree, and the fraction is slightly lower for women. Agreement is only marginally higher among younger cohorts of men, reaching barely 42% for those born in the 1990's. The age slope is much steeper for women, with the younger cohort reaching almost 50% of agreement. As a result, we observe a divergence in attitudes between men and women in the younger age groups, relative to the older ones.

A similar pattern is observed in Panel B, where we present the fraction of male and female respondents who agree that "men should take the same responsibility as women for childcare". Among women, agreement increases from 45 to over 50%, while for men the line is rather flat, resulting in a wider gender gap in attitudes in the younger cohorts.

While Panels A and B focus on opinions regarding the sharing of household chores and childcare between men and women, Panel C instead focuses on views regarding women's participation in paid work. We display the fraction of respondents who *disagree* that "a child suffers if the mother works". Similar to the previous two variables, women's views are more "progressive" than men's in most age groups, and the trend is positive for both men and women. However, in this case the attitudes of men and women seem to evolve almost in parallel, with men's disagreement increasing from 50 to 65%, compared with 55 to over 70% for women.

These figures suggest that younger men and women are more and more favorable to mothers' participation in paid work, but there is a gender divergence in views regarding men's participation in household work. We provide additional support for this interpretation in Appendix Figure 1. Panel A uses data from the ISSP (2002), showing an increasing gender gap in the fraction of respondents who agree that "men should do more childcare than they do now". Panels B and C show a stable gender gap across cohorts in questions regarding mothers' participation in market work in other surveys (EVS 2008 and ISSP 2012).

These figures suggest that, while there is a growing general acceptance of women's participation in the labor market, women demand that men take more responsibility in activities related to the household, while men appear more reluctant to embrace this view. We propose that men's resistance to increase their contribution to home production is an under-appreciated factor holding back fertility and marriage, as well as female employment, in developed countries. We have shown that, as female labor force participation increased over time, women's work became more socially acceptable among both men and women. Women also became more and more favorable to men and women

sharing childcare and housework more equitably. However, men's attitudes towards sharing of home production did not change in parallel.

We propose that men's stagnant attitudes regarding the sharing of household work and childcare are holding back women's labor market outcomes, as well as fertility and marriage, as women struggle to balance their goal to have both a career and a family. We provide support for this hypothesis in section 4. But first, we document the divergence in attitudes more formally by combining several waves of the EVS and estimating regressions that allow us to separate age from cohort effects.

2.2. Regression specification

To document the divergence between women and men in their views on the sharing of housework, we estimate the following regression equation (equation 1):

$$Attitudes_{i,c,t} = \beta_1 Female_i + \sum_{\tau=2}^{\Gamma} \beta_\tau Cohort \times Female_i + \phi X_{i,c,t} + \delta_\tau + \delta_c + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{i,c,t},$$

where $Attitudes_{i,c,t}$ measure the gender attitudes for respondent *i* in country c and survey year *t*, *Female* is a dummy variable taking value 1 for female respondents, *Cohort* is a set of indicators for six birth cohorts,[4] $X_{i,c,t}$ includes age and age squared, δ_τ are cohort dummies, and δ_c and γ_t are country and survey year fixed effects (respectively). $\epsilon_{i,c,t}$ is the error term. We pool together three waves of the survey to separate cohort from age effects.[5]

The coefficients of interest are the β's, the interaction terms between the female indicator and the dummies for the different birth-year cohorts. The omitted category is the oldest cohort of respondents. The cohort dummies alone illustrate how the opinion of

[4] Born before 1950, born in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and after 1990.

[5] We impose some functional form assumptions to be able to separate age, cohort, and year effects. We control for survey year fixed effects, while we include a second-order polynomial in age, and in equation 1(1) we control for cohort fixed effects grouped in ten-year bins, while in equation (2) birth-year enters linearly.

men changes over generations, relative to the oldest cohort of men. The interactions of the cohort indicators with the female dummy capture to which extent women's views differ from men's, across the difference cohorts. Positive coefficients indicate that women's views are more progressive than men's. Coefficients (β's) that increase over the cohorts would suggest that the distance in the opinions between women and men becomes larger over time, indicating a growing divergence in attitudes.

We also estimate a second specification where birth cohort is introduced linearly, allowing us to test directly the hypothesis that the gender gap in attitudes is larger for younger cohorts. We thus estimate the following equation (equation 2):

$$Attitudes_{i,c,t} = \beta_1 Female_i + \beta_2 YBirth_{ict} + \beta_3 Female_i \times YBirth_{ict} + \phi X_{i,c,t} + \delta_c + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{i,c,t},$$

where $Attitudes_{i,c,t}$ again measures gender attitudes for respondent i, in country c and survey year t, $Female_i$ is the indicator for female respondents, and $YBirth_{ict}$ now refers to the birth year of respondent i, in country c and survey year t (normalized to 1 for the earliest year of birth). $Female_i \times YBirth_{ict}$is the interaction of the gender indicator and the linear variable of birth-year, while $X_{i,c,t}$ again controls for age and age squared, and δ_c and γ_t are the country and survey year fixed effects. The coefficient of interest is now β_3. A positive coefficient would indicate that women's views are becoming more progressive relative to men's in the younger cohorts.

2.3. Regression results

The results from estimating equation 1 are presented in Figure 4. We use data from three waves of the EVS (1999, 2008 and 2017). We present the coefficients (and confidence intervals) for the interaction of the female dummy with the different birth cohorts. The red diamonds correspond to the main specification, where the dependent variable is the degree of agreement with the importance of sharing household chores for a successful marriage. All five interactions are positive, and their magnitude is increasing for younger

cohorts. The gender gap is more than 12 points higher in the youngest relative to the oldest cohort.[6]

The blue circles and squares show the coefficients for additional specifications where the dependent variable measures agreement with statements regarding women's participation in paid work ("a child suffers if the mother works" and "what women really want is to stay home and take care of the house and children"). The pattern is quite different for these variables, with no significant change in the gender gap in attitudes for the cohorts born in the 1950's and 1960's, a decrease in the gap (convergence) for those born in the 1970's, and some divergence after that.

We present some robustness checks for this analysis in Appendix Figure 2. Panel A shows the results of a specification where the attitudes variables are converted into binary dummies. Panel B splits respondents into finer birth cohorts (ten instead of six), and Panel C uses the binary dependent variables and the ten cohorts. These results confirm the main pattern: an increasing gender divergence in attitudes towards the importance of sharing housework, while the gender gap is relatively flat in attitudes regarding women's participation in paid work.

Table 1 presents the results from estimating equation (2), where cohorts are introduced linearly. The results (column 3) confirm that younger cohorts of women are increasingly in agreement that sharing housework is important, relative to men. We don't find evidence of convergence in the two other measures of attitudes (columns 1 and 2).

[6] In this specification, the dependent variable takes values 1 to 3 for the three discrete values indicating the degree of agreement. Appendix Figure 2 shows alternative specifications where the dependent variable is treated as binary, with value 1 for respondents who agree with the statement.

3. A toy model of the household with gender norms

We propose a simple model to highlight our proposed mechanism, via which men's reluctance to contribute to home production can lead to both low fertility and low female employment. We consider a household composed of a male-female couple. Individual utility is assumed to be increasing in (private) consumption and children:

(1) $U(C,N) = log(C) + log(N)$.

Each individual can split their time between market work (h) and childcare (t), where $h+t=1$. Children require parental time ($N=t_1+t_2$). The spouses choose the optimal allocation of their time in order to maximize a weighted average of their individual utilities, where the weights (α and $1-\alpha$) reflect each partner's (exogenous) bargaining power ($0 \leq \alpha \leq 1$). Individual consumption is determined by earnings ($w_i h_i$), and wages (w) are treated as exogenous.

In this very simplified setting, both partners want (derive utility from) children, but they prefer that the other spouse does the childcare. The reason is that time in market work leads to higher individual consumption (the private good), while childcare time contributes to the public good (children). The household can decide to specialize, such that one spouse works more in the market and the other one works more in the home, but in this setting the gains from specialization accrue to the partner who specializes in market work.

We make strong simplifying assumptions in order to illustrate the main mechanism as simply as possible. We assume that consumption is private and do not allow partners to transfer consumption to one another. Allowing for such transfers would make our predictions less stark, but we want to capture the well-established empirical finding that the person who receives the income has more control over how it is spent (Attanasio and

Lechene 2002). In addition, in our model there are no efficiency gains from specialization (as in the traditional Becker framework). Our setting instead highlights the asymmetric costs and benefits of specialization for each spouse, which we believe is an important feature that is often missing from household specialization models.

To illustrate the implications of our simple model, we start by exploring the case of unequal bargaining power. What happens if men have higher bargaining power? Consider the extreme case where $\alpha=1$. In this situation, the time allocation of the spouses will reflect the husband's preferences perfectly. Given our setup, this means high fertility ($N=1$) and full specialization: men work in the market full time ($h_1=1$, $t_1=0$), and women do childcare full-time ($h_2=0$ and $t_2=1$). Men (just like women!) would like to have as many children as possible and work full-time, while their partner stays home and raises the family. This situation can be seen as describing specialization patterns in many countries around, say, the 1960's, when female labor force participation was very low in most countries and fertility was high.

Let's now consider the implications of an increase in women's bargaining power. The bargaining power parameter in our toy model is exogenous, as are wages, but an increase in women's bargaining power could be seen as driven by improved labor market opportunities for women, for example due to technological change and/or the rise of the services sector over time, or by improvements in women's legal rights. We consider the case where women's bargaining power is as high as men's ($\alpha=0.5$). How would this affect fertility and women's employment with respect to the initial case?

The answer depends crucially on men's willingness to increase their contribution to childcare (our variable of interest). In a world with no social norm preventing men from doing childcare, the new optimal time allocation would be such that both partners share childcare equally ($t_1=t_2=0.5$) and they both work part-time in the market

($h_1=h_2=0.5$). In this new situation, fertility remains high ($N=1$), while female employment increases (and male employment falls). Women's utility is now higher (since their preferences get a higher weight), while men's is lower. Thus, in our model, bargaining power affects women's employment, but not fertility.

Finally, we consider a situation where women's bargaining power can still be high ($\alpha=0.5$), but the prevailing social norm allows men to keep their childcare time equal to 0. We thus maximize the weighted sum of utilities, with the additional restriction that $t_1=0$. We can show that the optimal allocation in this case is one of lower fertility ($N=0.66$) and lower female participation ($h_2=0.33$), compared with the previous case.[7]

This toy model is meant to illustrate a simple mechanism that may link men's attitudes (resistance to do unpaid household work) to low fertility and low female employment. Through the lens of our model, both men and women would prefer to work more in the market and have their partner work more in the home, since this increases their private consumption while allowing them to have more children. In this symmetric model, two elements can lead to specialization: differential bargaining power, and/or social norms. In our setting, specialization benefits the spouse who specializes in the market. Traditional specialization can thus emerge from a combination of men having higher bargaining power than women, and/or a social norm that allows men to not contribute to childcare.[8] In either case, the resulting traditional specialization benefits men (and hurts women).

[7] The case where men have high bargaining power AND there is a social norm that men don't do childcare leads to the same optimal allocation as the case with high bargaining power and no social norm.

[8] Social norms are usually modeled as a societal expectation associated with belonging to a group (social category), such that the individual derives a disutility if they deviate from the group norm (Akerlof and Kranton 2000). If both men and women derive a disutility from deviating from traditional specialization (an element that we don't incorporate

Our toy model makes the point that, as long as there is a link between individual earnings and individual consumption (for example, there are frictions when transferring income or consumption across partners), then specialization benefits more the person who specializes in the market. This implies that both spouses would prefer the other one to spend more time on childcare. If men can somehow just refuse to share home production, then both fertility and women's labor supply are kept low: since women have to shoulder all of the childcare, they prefer to have fewer children and increase their private consumption (by working some in the market).[9]

We derive one main testable prediction from our theoretical framework. We expect a negative relationship between the strength of the social norm (men's reluctance to share childcare and housework) and both fertility and women's employment. We test this implication with data for multiple European countries in the next section.

4. Attitudes, fertility, and female employment

In this section we document how the increasing gender gap in attitudes towards home production relates to fertility and female employment. Our main data source for this part of the analysis are fertility rates (TFR) and female labor force participation rates (FLFP) provided by the World Bank for a large set of European countries, combined with our measures of attitudes from the EVS.

We first show simple correlations between the gender gap in attitudes across countries and years and national-level fertility and female employment rates. We calculate the gender gap in the importance of sharing housework in each country using

explicitly in our model), this would of course induce more specialization. What our model stresses instead is that traditional specialization is (more) beneficial for men, which may help explain why they have a higher resistance to deviating from it.

[9] Our main prediction can also be derived from the (more elaborate) model by Doepke and Kindermann (2019). In their model, an (exogenously) higher cost of children for women (higher childcare demands) leads mechanically to lower female labor supply, and results in lower fertility.

the 1999, 2008 and 2017 waves of the EVS. We then plot these gaps against fertility and female employment rates in the same years. These scatterplots exploit only the country-year dimension (without separating cohort from age effects).

The correlation with fertility rates is shown in Figure 5. We display a separate linear fit for each of the three EVS waves. All three lines have a negative slope, showing that fertility rates tend to be lower in countries with a larger gender gap in attitudes regarding the sharing of home production. Figure 6 shows that a larger gender gap in attitudes is also associated with lower female participation rates, with a more negative slope in the more recent wave (2017).

These figures exploit variation across countries in the gender gap in attitudes. We thus rely on attitudes evolving differently for men and women across different European countries. We provide descriptive evidence of (some of) the cross-country variation in Appendix Figure 3. Panels A and B show the stark divergence in attitudes over cohorts in Finland and Italy, while Panels C and D show that the divergence is not present in the cases of France and Germany.

We next proceed with a more formal regression analysis that controls for country fixed effects as well as cohort effects.

4.1. Empirical strategy

To investigate the association between the gender gap in attitudes towards home production, fertility, and female employment, we estimate the following regression (equation 3):

$$Y_{c,t} = \alpha + \beta_1 Gap_{c,t,\tau} + \beta_2 AttitudeW_{c,t,\tau} + \varphi X_{c,t,\tau} + \gamma_{c*t} + \delta_\tau + \epsilon_{c,t,\tau},$$

where $Y_{c,t}$ is the fertility rate (or female labor force participation rate) for country c and cohort τ. $Gap_{c,t,\tau}$ is the gender gap in attitudes on housework sharing for country c, survey year t and cohort τ. $AttitudeW_{c,t,\tau}$ measures the average attitudes of women on

housework sharing by country, year and cohort. $X_{c,t,\tau}$ controls for the gender gap as well as the average attitudes of women on women's paid work. γ_{c*t} is the interaction of country fixed effects and survey year fixed effects, and δ_τ are cohort fixed effects. Finally, $\epsilon_{c,t,\tau}$ is the error term. The coefficient of interest is β_1: a negative coefficient would indicate a negative association between the gap in attitudes and fertility (or female employment).

We control for the average attitudes of women with respect to the sharing of housework, and we also control for both the level and the gender gap in attitudes regarding women's employment: the level of disagreement with the statements "A child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works" and "A job is fine, but what women really want is a home and children". We are thus controlling for aggregate attitudes towards gender norms (or the degree of "gender progressiveness") and focusing on the partial correlation between fertility (or female employment) and the gap between men's and women's views on housework sharing.

We construct our main regressor, the *"Gap"* variable, by taking the difference between women and men at the country-cohort-wave level, such that a positive value corresponds to women having a more progressive (egalitarian) view compared to men, while a negative value corresponds to men having a more progressive view than women.

For the dependent variable, the yearly data on total fertility rates and female labor force participation rates (for women of ages 15-64) are provided by the World Bank. The data used for the analysis corresponds to the period in which respondents of each cohort were aged 26 to 35 (the period in which they were more likely to give birth). Hence, for example, we assign the TFR in a given country in year 1985 to respondents from that country born in years 1950-59; we use the TFR in year 1995 for respondents born in years 1960-69, and so on.

4.2. Results

The results from estimating equation 3 are presented in Tables 2 and 3, for fertility and female participation rates, respectively. All specifications control for cohort and country-survey fixed effects. The different columns vary in whether and how we control for attitudes (and gender gaps) on women's paid work.

We find a significant, negative association between the gender gap in attitudes towards sharing of household work and fertility rates (Table 2). This association is robust to controlling for attitudes regarding women's labor force participation. The results are also robust to using the binary version of the attitudes variables, as well as to using a finer grouping of cohorts, as shown in Appendix Table 1.

In terms of magnitude, our estimates (using our estimates with the binary measure of attitudes, from Panel B of Appendix Table 1) suggest that moving from the cohort-country with the lowest gender gap in attitudes to the one with the highest is accompanied by a total fertility rate that is almost 1% higher.

Our main results for female employment are presented in Table 3 (robustness checks in appendix table 2). After controlling for cohort and country-year fixed effects, we find a strong association between the gender gap in attitudes towards sharing housework and female participation rates. Our estimates again suggest that moving from the cohort-country with the lowest gender gap in attitudes to the one with the highest is accompanied by a female participation rate that is 1% higher.

Our empirical analysis suggests that there is a negative relationship between the gender gap in views related to the sharing of housework responsibilities, and both fertility and female labor force participation rates. Our results indicate that countries and cohorts with higher gender gaps in attitudes towards sharing housework display lower fertility as well as lower female employment. This is in line with our initial hypothesis, and with

previous papers that hint at the importance of cooperative fathers for boosting fertility rates. Our results suggest that as long as (men in) developed countries stick to old conservative attitudes towards family roles, women will continue to have to choose between having children or pursuing a career.

5. Conclusions

We have shown an increasing divergence in attitudes between men and women in Europe, such that younger cohorts of women are more and more in favor of men sharing childcare and housework more equally, while men's views have not evolved in parallel. We hypothesize that this divergence may contribute to low fertility rates as well as gender gaps in labor market outcomes, as men's resistance to increase their contribution to household work forces women to choose between work and family life. We test this hypothesis using data on fertility and female participation rates for more than 40 European countries, and we show that, after controlling for country and cohort fixed effects, a higher gender gap in attitudes towards men's participation in domestic work is associated with both lower fertility rates and lower female employment rates.

We believe that our findings reflect a stark reality: as long as developed countries cling to outdated patriarchal views on family roles, women will remain trapped in a system that forces them to choose between a career and a family, a choice that men don't have to face. The real issue is not women's ability to balance both, but rather men's persistent refusal to take on their fair share of household responsibilities. Until men step up and stop expecting women to shoulder the burden of home and child-rearing alone, both fertility rates and female employment will remain low, holding our societies back from their full potential.

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Table 1. Gender divergence in attitudes

	PANEL A: dependent variables as continuous		
	(1) Disagree: Child suffers if mom works	(2) Disagree: Women want H&C	(3) Agree: Sharing housework is important
Fem	0.134***	0.077***	-0.090***
	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.013)
Birth Year	-0.0094	-0.0050	0.0203***
	(0.0055)	(0.0054)	(0.0045)
Fem*Birth Year	-0.0004*	0.00008	0.0022***
	(0.0002)	(0.0002)	(0.0001)
	PANEL B: dependent variables as dummies		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Fem	0.081***	0.057***	-0.041***
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Birth Year	-0.003	-0.001	0.016***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Fem*Birth Year	-0.0003**	-0.00008	0.001***
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
N	144,145	144,145	144,145
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: $*$ p < 0.05, $**$ p < 0.01, $***$ p < 0.001. The table presents OLS regressions results. Panel A shows results where the dependent variable takes values from 1 to 4 for variables in columns (1) and (2) and values from 1 to 3 for "Sharing housework is important" in column (3). In Panel B, "Child suffers if mom works dummy" equal to 1 if answer is either "strongly agree" or "agree" for column (1). "Women want home and children dummy" equal to 1 if the answer is either "strongly agree" or "agree" for column (2). For column (3), "Chores dummy" equals to 1 only if the original value is equal to 3, hence if the respondent's answer is "very important". The main explanatory variable is the interaction between a dummy for female respondents and a continuous variable for Year of Birth (from 1898 to 2002). The regressions include controls for respondents' age. Data are taken from three waves of the European Value Study: 1999, 2008 and 2017. The sample includes a section of 48 European countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Northern Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table 2. The gender gap in attitudes and fertility

Dep. Variable = Total Fertility Rate *Mean Dep. Variable = 1.67*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Gender gap "Sharing Chores"	-0.350* (0.167)	-0.376* (0.167)	-0.346* (0.168)	-0.377* (0.168)
Women's attitudes "Sharing Chores"	1.089*** (0.216)	1.117*** (0.215)	1.091*** (0.217)	1.117*** (0.216)
Gender gap "Child suffers if mom works"		0.143 (0.126)		0.142 (0.136)
Women's attitudes "Child suffers if mom works"		0.198 (0.147)		0.213 (0.175)
Gender gap "Women want h&c"			0.00590 (0.126)	-0.00436 (0.136)
Women's attitudes "Women want h&c"			0.0829 (0.159)	-0.0261 (0.188)
Country*Survey Year FE s	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	422	422	422	422
r2	0.691	0.697	0.692	0.697

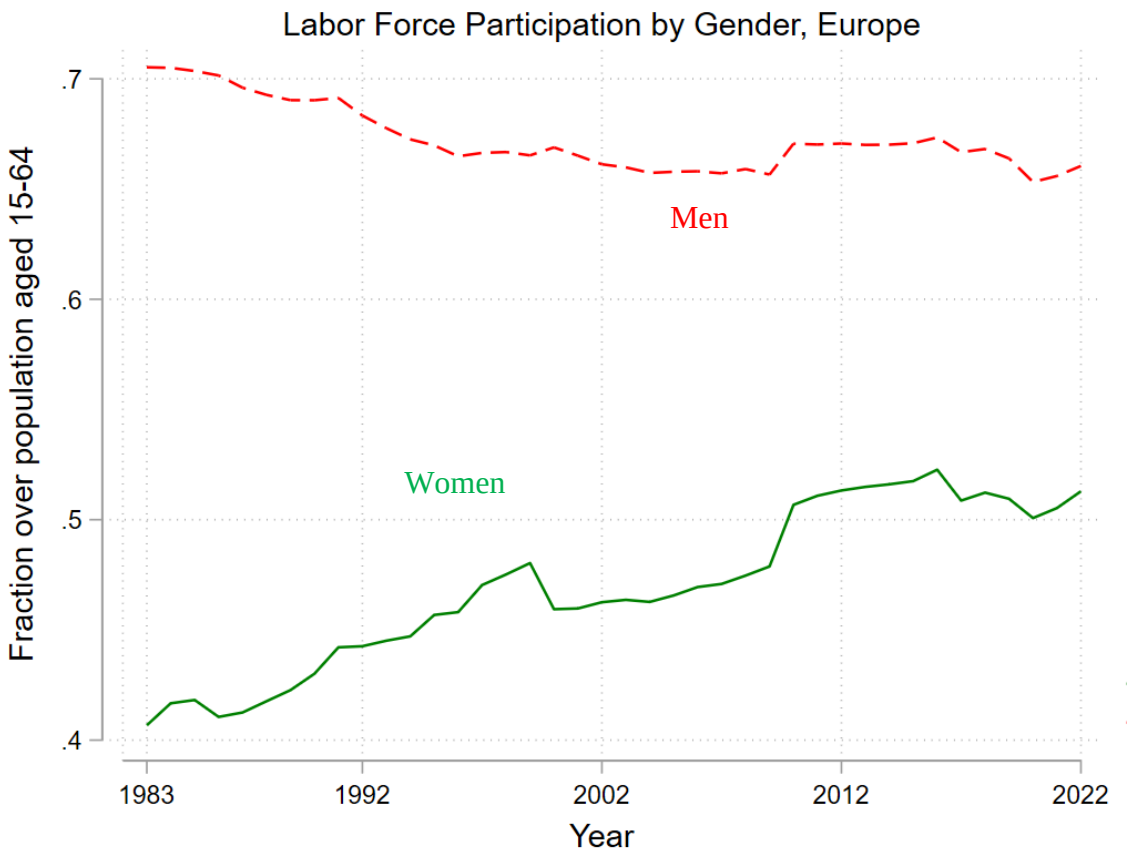
Notes: $*$ p < 0.05, $**$ p < 0.01, $***$ p < 0.001. The table presents OLS regressions results. The main explanatory variable is the difference in attitudes between women and men about the importance of sharing housework in a marriage. The dependent variable is total fertility rate. Controls include (1) women's average opinion about the importance of sharing housework, (2) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether a child suffers if his/her mother works and women's average opinion about whether a child suffers in the presence of a working mothers, (3) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether what women really want is a home and children and women's average opinion about whether what women really want is a home and children. Column (4) presents regression results where all controls are included. Attitudes about family are taken from three waves of the European Value Study: 1999, 2008, 2017. Respondents are aggregated by country and birth-year cohorts. Birth year cohorts are: 1950-59; 1960-69, 1970-79; 1980-89. Each cohort corresponds to the country's total fertility rate of the year in which respondents were 30-35 years old. Total fertility rate (World Bank) from years 1985; 1995; 2005; 2015. All specifications include country*survey year fixed effects and cohort fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table 3. The gender gap in attitudes and female employment

Dep. Variable = Female Labor Force Participation *Mean Dep. Variable = 0.622*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Gender gap "Sharing Chores"	-0.125***	-0.126***	-0.125***	-0.125***
	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Women's attitudes "Sharing Chores"	0.227***	0.229***	0.230***	0.229***
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Gender gap "Child suffers if mom works"		-0.003		-0.005
		(0.023)		(0.025)
Women's attitudes "Child suffers if mom works"		0.014		0.003
		(0.026)		(0.030)
Gender gap "Women want h&c"			0.013	0.015
			(0.021)	(0.023)
Women's attitudes "Women want h&c"			0.022	0.020
			(0.028)	(0.033)
Country*Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	412	412	412	412
r2	0.877	0.878	0.879	0.879

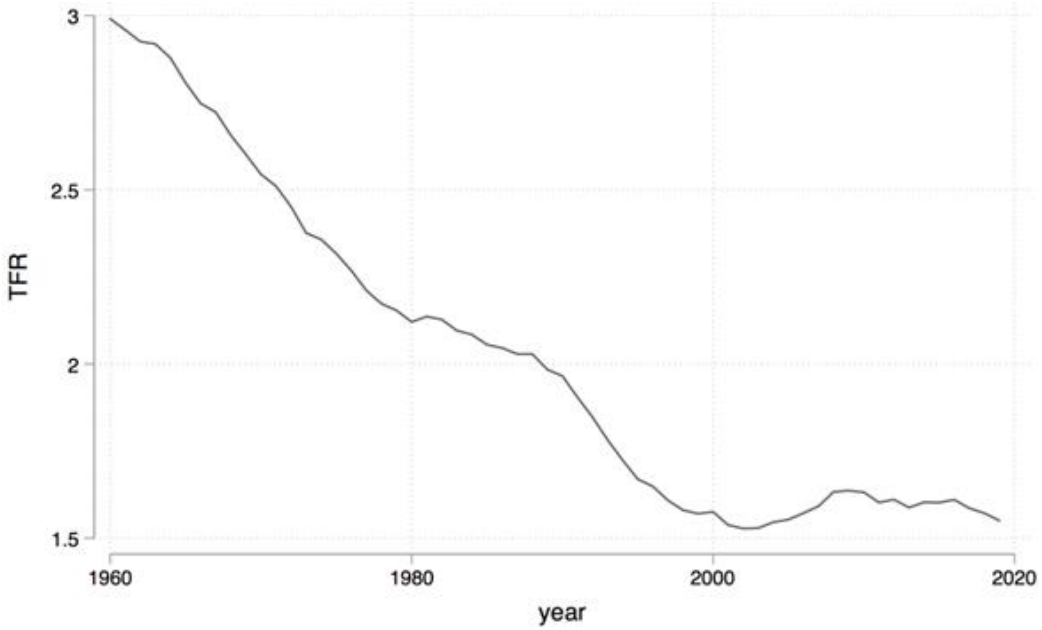
Notes: $*$ p < 0.05, $**$ p < 0.01, $***$ p < 0.001. The table presents OLS regressions results. The main explanatory variable is the difference in attitudes between women and men about the importance of sharing housework in a marriage. The dependent variable is total fertility rate. Controls include (1) women's average opinion about the importance of sharing housework, (2) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether a child suffers if his/her mother works and women's average opinion about whether a child suffers in the presence of a working mothers, (3) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether what women really want is a home and children and women's average opinion about whether what women really want is a home and children. Column (4) presents regression results where all controls are included. Attitudes about family are taken from three waves of the European Value Study: 1999, 2008, 2017.Respondents are aggregated by country and birth-year cohorts. Birth year cohorts are: 1950-59; 1960-69, 1970-79; 1980-89. Each cohort corresponds to the country's female labor force participation of the year in which respondents were 30-35 years old, with an exception for the cohort born in 1950-59, at 35-40 years old. Female Labor Force Participation rate (World Bank) from years 1990; 1995; 2005; 2015. All specifications include country*survey year fixed effects and cohort fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Figure 1. Labor force participation of men and women in Europe, 1983-2022



Source: International Labour Organization. Notes: The figure plots the mean of labor force participation rate (age 15-64) by gender over the period 1983-2022, for 42 European countries: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine.

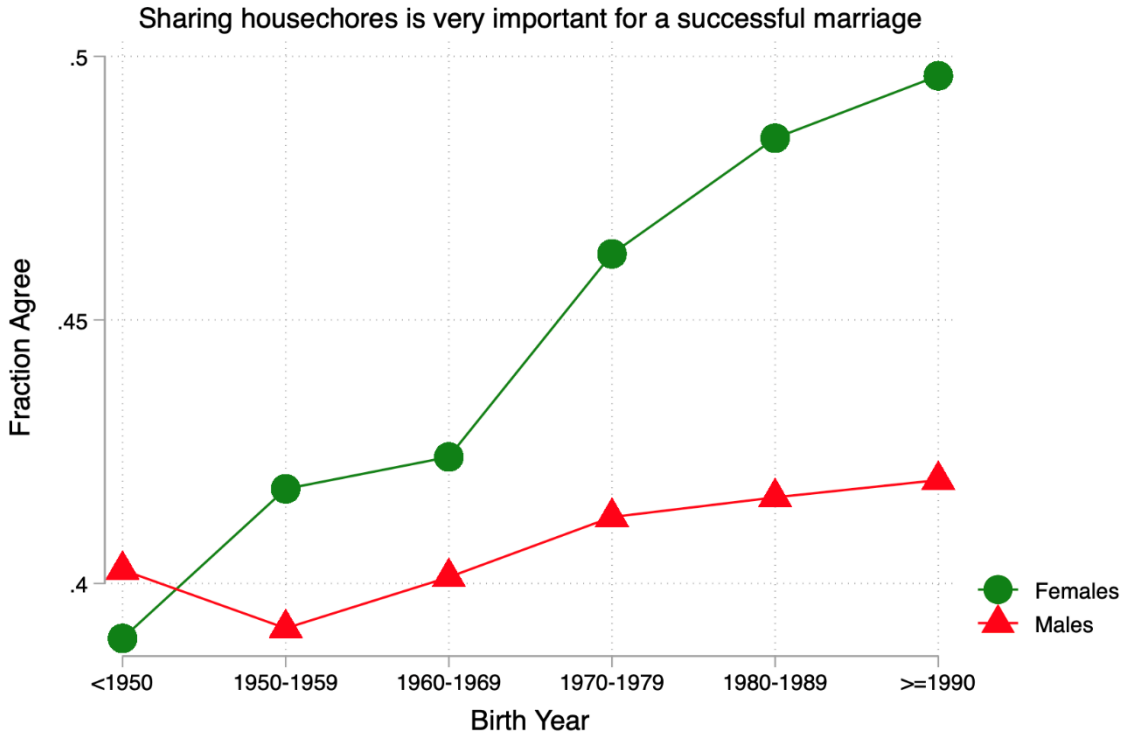
Figure 2. Total fertility rate in Europe, 1960-2019



Source: World Bank. Notes: The figure plots the mean of Total Fertility Rate (TFR) over the period 1960-2019, for 44 European countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine.

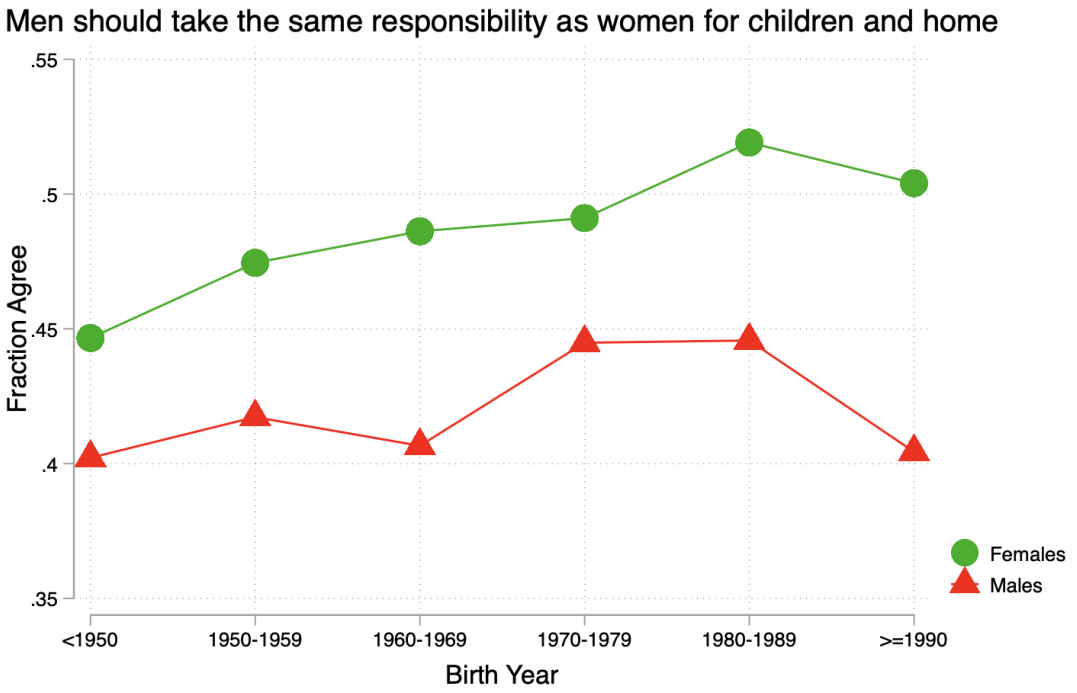
Figure 3. Gender attitudes in Europe

Panel A. Sharing household chores is important



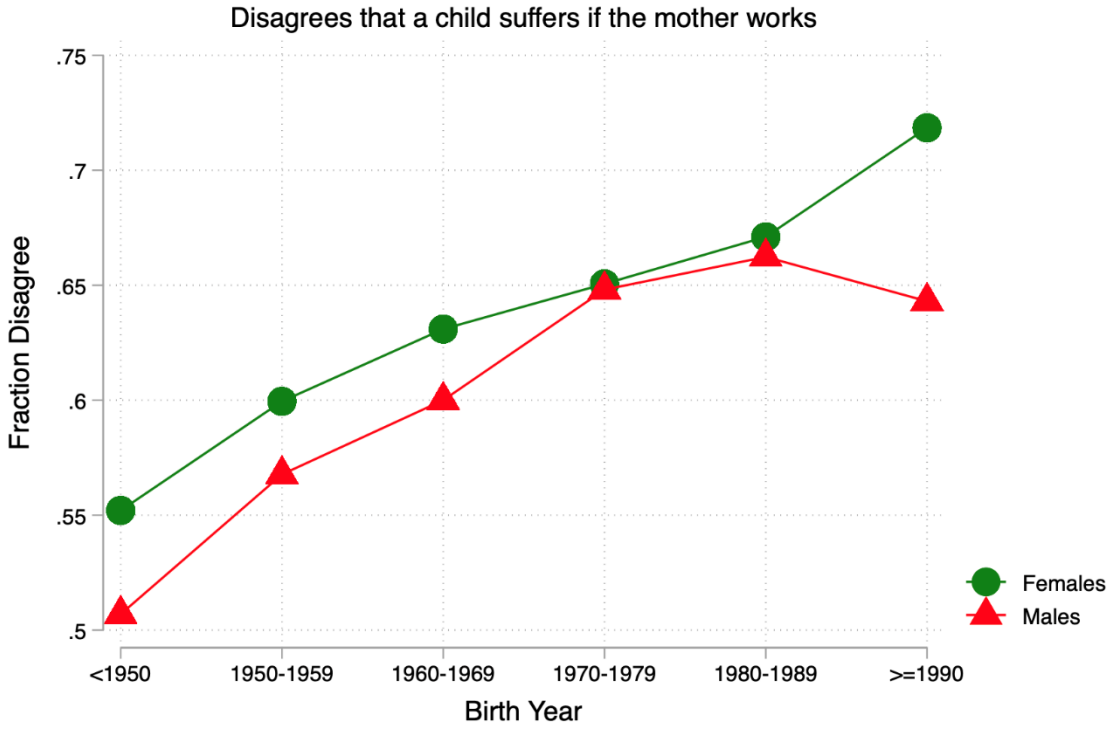
Source: European Value Study, 2017. Notes: The figure plots respondents' opinion about the importance of sharing housework for a successful marriage. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The sample includes a section of 34 European countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland. The level of importance of sharing housework is based on three levels: 0=not very important; 1=very important.

Panel B. Men should take responsibility



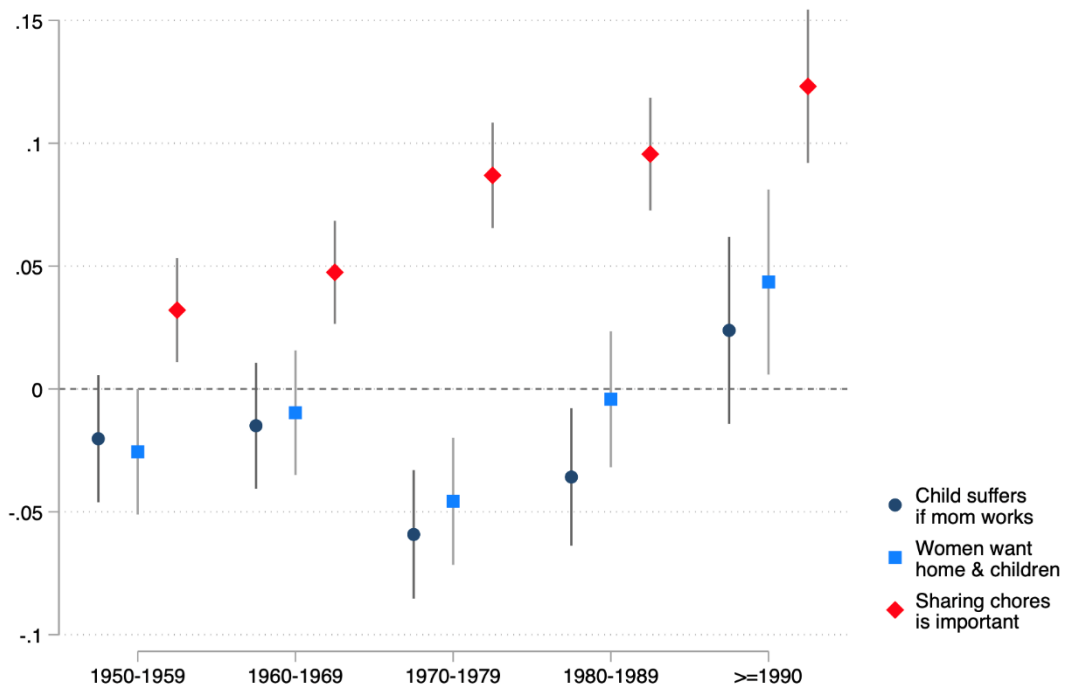
Source: European Value Study, 2008. The figure plots respondents' opinion on whether men should take the same responsibility as women for housework and childcare. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The sample includes a section of 46 European countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Northern Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine. The level of agreement is based on four levels: 0=disagree; 1=agree.

Panel C. A child suffers if the mother works



Source: European Value Study, 2017. Notes: The figure plots respondents' opinion on whether a child suffers if his/her mother works. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The sample includes a section of 34 European countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia,, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland. The level of disagreement is based on four levels: 0=agree; 1=disagree.

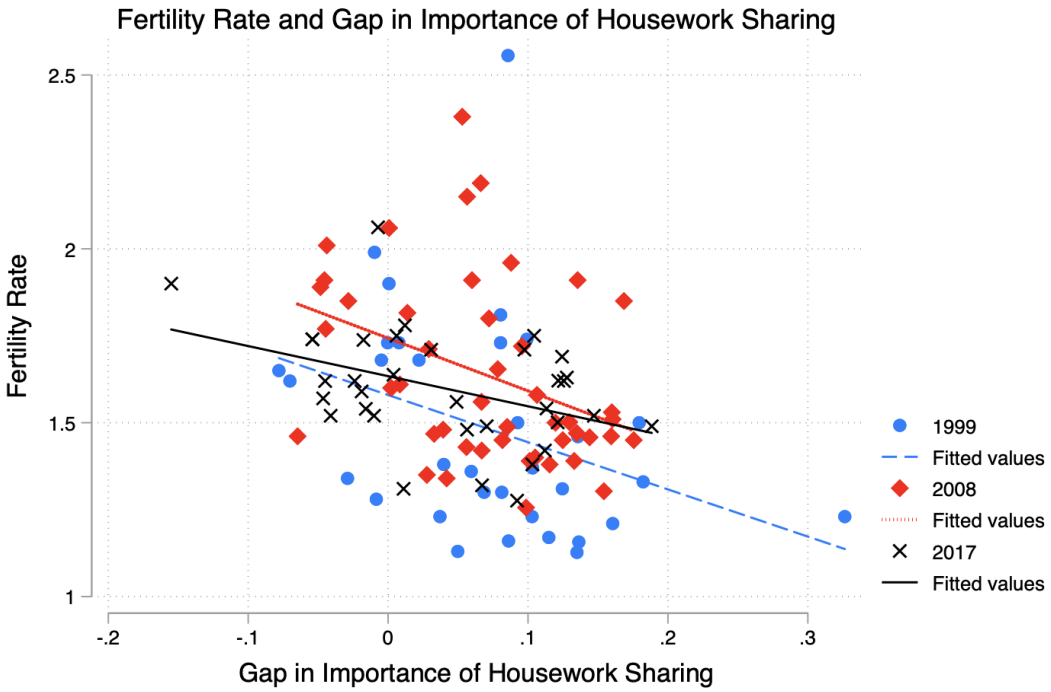
Figure 4. Gender divergence in attitudes



Data source: European Value Study (1999, 2008, 2017).

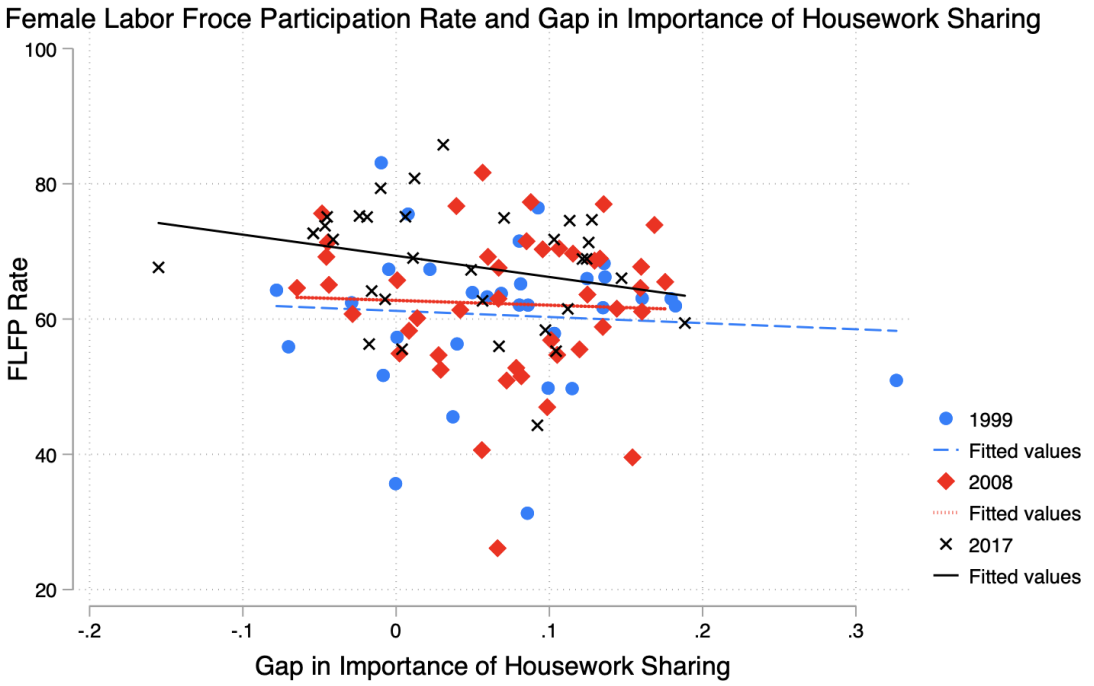
Notes: The figure plots the coefficients from three different OLS regressions. The dependent variable is respondents' opinion on gender attitudes. For the coefficients plotted as red diamonds, the dependent variable is the importance of sharing housework for a successful marriage. For the coefficients plotted as light blue squares, the dependent variable is the level of disagreement with the statement "What women really want is a home and children". For the coefficients plotted as dark blue circles, the dependent variable is the i level of disagreement with the statement "A child suffers if his/her mother works". The running variables are the interaction between an indicator for female respondents and six indicators for six different birth-year cohorts: < 1950; 1950 − 59; 1960 − 69; 1970 − 79; 1980 − 89; > 1989. The coefficients indicate that female respondents' opinion diverges from that of men over generations, only for gender attitudes related to sharing housework.

Figure 5. Fertility and gender divergence in attitudes



Data source for values on housework sharing: European Value Study (1999, 2008, 2017). Data source for total fertility rates: World Bank (1999, 2008, 2017). Notes: The figure plots the country's average difference between women and men on the importance of sharing housework and the country's fertility rate. The graph shows the relation between values and TFR for three different periods: 1999 (33 countries), 2008 (46 countries) and 2017 (34 countries). Each wave of the European Value Study, corresponds to the country's fertility rate of that year. The figure shows that the higher the gap in values between women and men, the lower the fertility rate.

Figure 6. FLFP and gender divergence in attitudes



Data source for values on housework sharing: European Value Study (1999, 2008, 2017). Data source for total fertility rates: World Bank (1999, 2008, 2017). Notes: The figure plots the country's average difference between women and men on the importance of sharing housework and the country's fertility rate. The graph shows the relation between values and female labor force participation for three different periods: 1999 (33 countries), 2008 (46 countries) and 2017 (34 countries). Each wave of the European Value Study, corresponds to the country's FLFP rate of that year. The figure shows that the higher is the gap in values between women and men, the lower is women's labor force participation.

Appendix Table 1. Robustness fertility results (3 panels)

Panel A. Eight birth cohorts

Dep. Variable = Total Fertility Rate	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Mean Dep. Variable = 1.66				
Gender gap "Sharing Chores"	-0.173*	-0.171*	-0.169*	-0.166*
	(0.0782)	(0.0779)	(0.0782)	(0.0780)
Women's attitudes "Sharing Chores"	0.529***	0.529***	0.523***	0.523***
	(0.107)	(0.107)	(0.107)	(0.107)
Gender gap "Child suffers if mom works"		0.0659		0.110
		(0.0617)		(0.0681)
Women's attitudes "Child suffers if mom works"		0.126		0.0548
		(0.0779)		(0.0896)
Gender gap "Women want h&c"			-0.0629	-0.0937
			(0.0605)	(0.0669)
Women's attitudes "Women want h&c"			0.168*	0.151
			(0.0826)	(0.0949)
Country*Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	815	815	815	815
r2	0.680	0.684	0.682	0.685

Notes: $*$ p < 0.05, $**$ p < 0.01, $***$ p < 0.001. The table presents OLS regressions results. The main explanatory variable is the difference in attitudes between women and men about the importance of sharing housework in a marriage. The dependent variable is total fertility rate. Controls include (1) women's average opinion about the importance of sharing housework, (2) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether a child suffers if his/her mother works and women's average opinion about whether a child suffers in the presence of a working mothers, (3) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether what women really want is a home and children and women's average opinion about whether what women really want is a home and children. Column (4) presents regression results where all controls are included. Attitudes about family are taken from three waves of the European Value Study: 1999, 2008, 2017. Respon- dents are aggregated by country and birth-year cohorts. Birth year cohorts are: 1950-54; 1955-59; 1960-64: 1965-69: 1970-74; 1975-79; 1980-84, 1985-89. Each cohort corresponds to the country's total fertility rate of the year in which respondents were 30-35 years old. Total fertility rate (World Bank) from years 1985; 1995; 2005; 2015. All specifications include country*survey year fixed effects and cohort fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Panel B. Four birth cohorts, values as dummy variables

Dep. Variable = Total Fertility Rate	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Mean Dep. Variable = 1.67				
Gender gap "Sharing Chores"	-0.0292	-0.0322	-0.0295	-0.0323
	(0.0384)	(0.0381)	(0.0385)	(0.0382)
Women's attitudes "Sharing Chores"	0.883***	0.909***	0.891***	0.910***
	(0.192)	(0.191)	(0.192)	(0.191)
Gender gap "Child suffers if mom works"		0.0578		0.0587
		(0.0412)		(0.0415)
Women's attitudes "Child suffers if mom works"		0.239		0.246
		(0.132)		(0.152)
Gender gap "Women want h&c"			-0.0173	-0.0129
			(0.0443)	(0.0446)
Women's attitudes "Women want h&c"			0.113	-0.0114
			(0.129)	(0.147)
Country*Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	422	422	422	422
r2	0.687	0.694	0.688	0.694

Notes: $*$ p < 0.05, $**$ p < 0.01, $***$ p < 0.001. The table presents OLS regressions results. The main explanatory variable is the difference in attitudes between women and men about the importance of sharing housework in a marriage. The dependent variable is total fertility rate. "Chores dummy" equal to 1 only if the answer is "very important". "Child suffers if mom works dummy" equal to 1 if answer is either "strongly agree" or "agree". "Women want home and children dummy" equal to 1 if the answer is either "strongly agree" or "agree". Controls include (1) women's average opinion about the importance of sharing housework, (2) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether a child suffers if his/her mother works and women's average opinion about whether a child suffers in the presence of a working mothers, (3) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether what women really want is a home and children and women's average opinion about whether what women really want is a home and children. Column (4) presents regression results where all controls are included. Attitudes about family are taken from three waves of the European Value Study: 1999, 2008, 2017. Respondents are aggregated by country and birth-year cohorts. Birth year cohorts are: 1950-59; 1960-69, 1970-79; 1980-89. Each cohort corresponds to the country's total fertility rate of the year in which respondents were 30-35 years old. Total fertility rate (World Bank) from years 1985; 1995; 2005; 2015. All specifications include country*survey year fixed effects and cohort fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Panel C. Eight birth cohorts, values as dummy variables

Dep. Variable = Total Fertility Rate	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Mean Dep. Variable = 1.66				
Gender gap "Sharing Chores"	-0.0170	-0.0190	-0.0173	-0.0188
	(0.0213)	(0.0212)	(0.0213)	(0.0213)
Women's attitudes "Sharing Chores"	0.422***	0.430***	0.420***	0.429***
	(0.0962)	(0.0959)	(0.0962)	(0.0960)
Gender gap "Child suffers if mom works"		0.0248		0.0258
		(0.0237)		(0.0239)
Women's attitudes "Child suffers if mom works"		0.163*		0.138
		(0.0670)		(0.0738)
Gender gap "Women want h&c"			-0.00826	-0.00565
			(0.0241)	(0.0242)
Women's attitudes "Women want h&c"			0.122	0.0611
			(0.0683)	(0.0750)
Country*Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	815	815	815	815
r2	0.678	0.682	0.680	0.682

Notes: $*$ p < 0.05, $**$ p < 0.01, $***$ p < 0.001. The table presents OLS regressions. The main explanatory variable is the difference in attitudes between women and men about the importance of sharing housework in a marriage. The dependent variable is total fertility rate. "Chores dummy" equal to 1 only if the answer is "very important". "Child suffers if mom works dummy" equal to 1 if answer is either "strongly agree" or "agree". "Women want home and children dummy" equal to 1 if the answer is either "strongly agree" or "agree". Controls include (1) women's average opinion about the importance of sharing housework, (2) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether a child suffers if his/her mother works and women's average opinion about whether a child suffers in the presence of a working mothers, (3) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether what women really want is a home and children and women's average opinion about whether what women really want is a home and children. Column (4) presents regression results where all controls are included. Attitudes about family are taken from three waves of the European Value Study: 1999, 2008, 2017. Respondents are aggregated by country and birth-year cohorts. Birth year cohorts are: 1950-54; 1955-59; 1960-64: 1965-69: 1970-74; 1975-79; 1980-84, 1985-89. To each cohort corresponds to the country's total fertility rate of the year in which respondents were 30-35 years old. Total fertility rate (World Bank) from years 1985; 1995; 2005; 2015. All specifications include country*survey year fixed effects and cohort fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Appendix Table 2. Robustness employment results (3 panels)

Panel A. Seven birth cohorts

Dep. Variable = Female Labor Force Participation *Mean Dep. Variable = 0.629*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Gender gap "Sharing Chores"	-0.052***	-0.052***	-0.052***	-0.052***
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Women's attitudes "Sharing Chores"	0.105***	0.105***	0.105***	0.104***
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Gender gap "Child suffers if mom works"		-0.016		-0.019
		(0.012)		(0.0133)
Women's attitudes "Child suffers if mom works"		0.004		0.001
		(0.015)		(0.017)
Gender gap "Women want h&c"			0.003	0.010
			(0.012)	(0.013)
Women's attitudes "Women want h&c"			0.009	0.006
			(0.017)	(0.019)
Country*Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	692	692	692	692
r2	0.878	0.878	0.878	0.879

Notes: $*$ p < 0.05, $**$ p < 0.01, $***$ p < 0.001. The table presents OLS regressions results. The main explanatory variable is the difference in attitudes between women and men about the importance of sharing housework in a marriage. The dependent variable is female labor force participation rate. Controls include (1) women's average opinion about the importance of sharing housework, (2) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether a child suffers if his/her mother works and women's average opinion about whether a child suffers in the presence of a working mothers, (3) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether what women really want is a home and children and women's average opinion about whether what women really want is a home and children. Column (4) presents regression results where all controls are included. Attitudes about family are taken from three waves of the European Value Study: 1999, 2008, 2017.Respondents are aggregated by country and birth-year cohorts. Birth year cohorts are: 1955-59; 1960-64: 1965- 69: 1970-74; 1975-79; 1980-84, 1985-89. Each cohort corresponds to the country's female labor force participation of the year in which respondents were 30-35 years old, with an exception for the cohort born in 1950-59, at 35-40 years old. Female Labor Force Participation rate (World Bank) from years 1990; 1995; 2005; 2015. All specifications include country*survey year fixed effects and cohort fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Panel B. Four birth cohorts, values as dummy variables

Dep. Variable = Female Labor Force Participation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Mean Dep. Variable = 0.622				
Gender gap "Sharing Chores"	-0.013*	-0.013*	-0.013*	-0.013*
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Women's attitudes "Sharing Chores"	0.157***	0.157***	0.158***	0.157***
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Gender gap "Child suffers if mom works"		0.008		0.009
		(0.008)		(0.008)
Women's attitudes "Child suffers if mom works"		-0.001		-0.020
		(0.0245)		(0.0271)
Gender gap "Women want h&c"			0.004	0.004
			(0.007)	(0.007)
Women's attitudes "Women want h&c"			0.033	0.040
			(0.023)	(0.026)
Country*Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	412	412	412	412
r2	0.873	0.873	0.874	0.875

Notes: $*$ p < 0.05, $**$ p < 0.01, $***$ p < 0.001. The table presents OLS regressions results. The main explanatory variable is the difference in attitudes between women and men about the importance of sharing housework in a marriage. The dependent variable is female labor force participation rate. Controls include (1) women's average opinion about the importance of sharing housework, (2) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether a child suffers if his/her mother works and women's average opinion about whether a child suffers in the presence of a working mothers, (3) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether what women really want is a home and children and women's average opinion about whether what women really want is a home and children. Column (4) presents regression results where all controls are included. Attitudes about family are taken from three waves of the European Value Study: 1999, 2008, 2017.Respondents are aggregated by country and birth-year cohorts. Birth year cohorts are: 1950-59; 1960-69, 1970-79; 1980-89. Each cohort corresponds to the country's female labor force participation of the year in which respondents were 30-35 years old, with an exception for the cohort born in 1950-59, at 35-40 years old. Female Labor Force Participation rate (World Bank) from years 1990; 1995; 2005; 2015. All specifications include country*survey year fixed effects and cohort fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

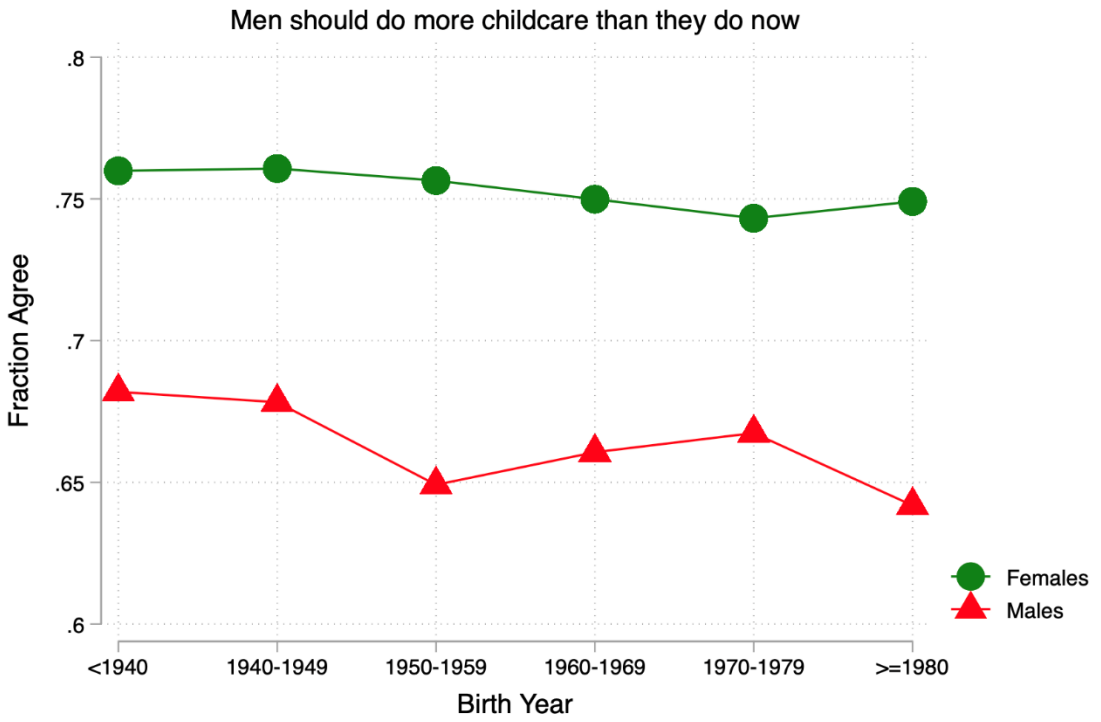
Panel C. Seven birth cohorts, values as dummy variables

Dep. Variable = Female Labor Force Participation *Mean Dep. Variable = 0.629*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Gender gap "Sharing Chores"	-0.011**	-0.010*	-0.011**	-0.010*
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Women's attitudes "Sharing Chores"	0.081***	0.080***	0.080***	0.079***
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Gender gap "Child suffers if mom works"		0.002		0.001
		(0.004)		(0.004)
Women's attitudes "Child suffers if mom works"		-0.006		-0.012
		(0.013)		(0.014)
Gender gap "Women want h&c"			0.003	0.002
			(0.004)	(0.004)
Women's attitudes "Women want h&c"			0.009	0.014
			(0.014)	(0.015)
Country*Survey Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	692	692	692	692
r2	0.877	0.877	0.877	0.877

Notes: $*$ p < 0.05, $**$ p < 0.01, $***$ p < 0.001. The table presents OLS regressions results. The main explanatory variable is the difference in attitudes between women and men about the importance of sharing housework in a marriage. The dependent variable is female labor force participation rate. Controls include (1) women's average opinion about the importance of sharing housework, (2) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether a child suffers if his/her mother works and women's average opinion about whether a child suffers in the presence of a working mothers, (3) the difference in attitudes between women and men about whether what women really want is a home and children and women's average opinion about whether what women really want is a home and children. Column (4) presents regression results where all controls are included. Attitudes about family are taken from three waves of the European Value Study: 1999, 2008, 2017.Respondents are aggregated by country and birth-year cohorts. Birth year cohorts are: 1955-59; 1960-64: 1965-69: 1970-74; 1975-79; 1980-84, 1985-89. To each cohort corresponds the country's female labor force participation of the year in which respondents were 30-35 years old, with an exception for the cohort born in 1950-59, at 35-40 years old. Female Labor Force Participation rate (World Bank) from years 1990; 1995; 2005; 2015. All specifications include country*survey year fixed effects and cohort fixed effects. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

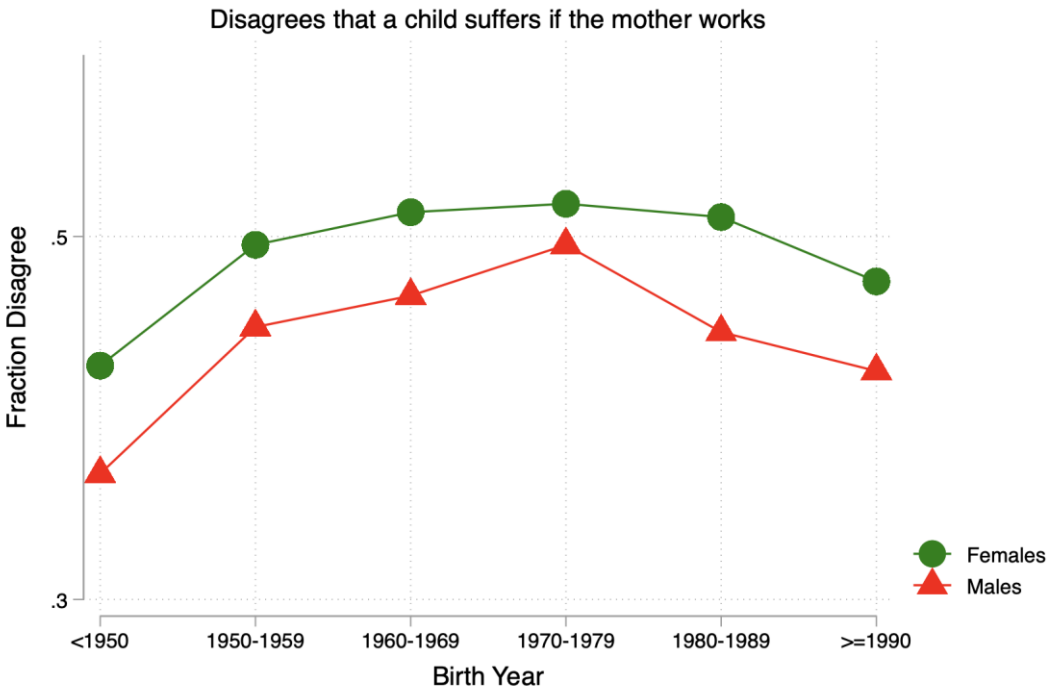
Appendix Figure 1. Additional descriptive evidence on gender divergence in attitudes

Panel A. Men's contribution to childcare



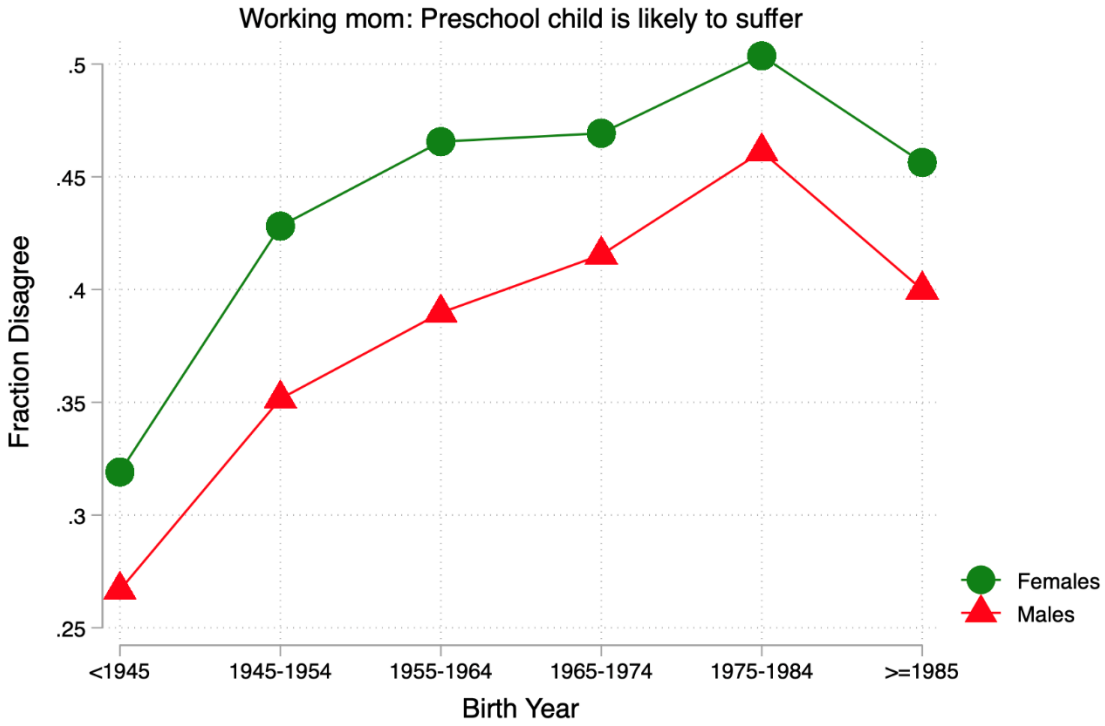
Source: International Social Survey Program, 2002. Notes: The figure plots respondents' opinion about whether men should do more childcare than they do now. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The sample includes a section of 24 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland. The attitudes on whether men should do more housework are measured as follows: 0=disagree; 1=agree.

Panel B. Women's work



Source: European Value Study, 2008. Notes: The figure plots respondents' opinion on whether a child suffers if his/her mother works. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The sample includes a section of 46 European countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Northern Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine. The level of agreement is based on four levels: 0=disagree; 1=agree.

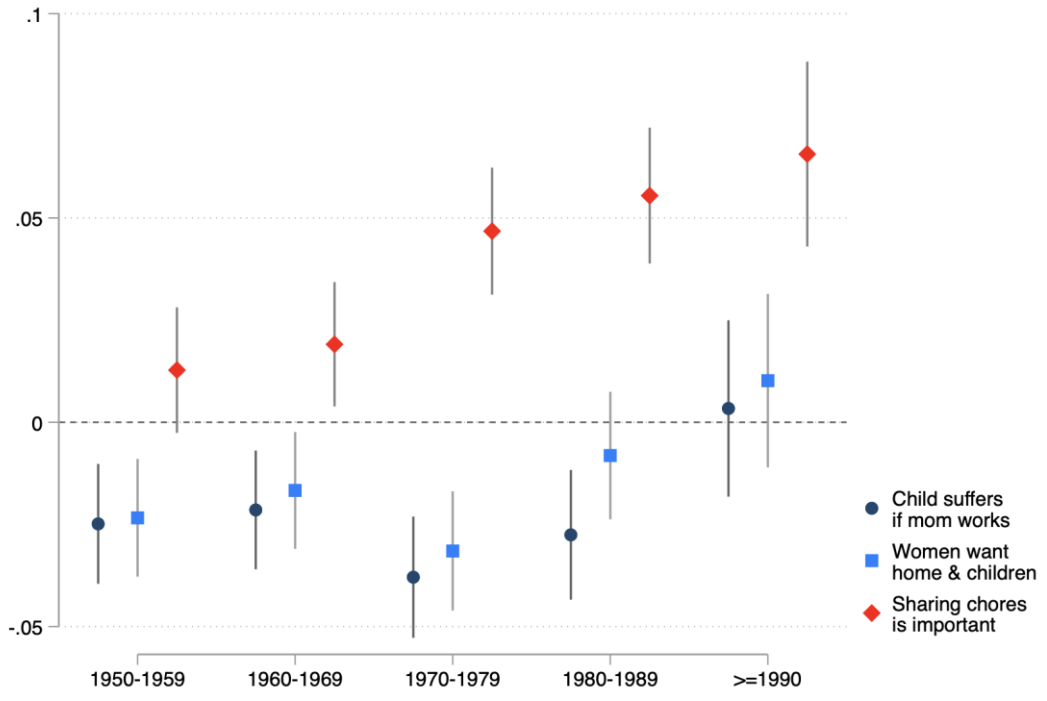
Panel C. The child suffers if the mother works



Source: International Social Survey Program, 2012. Notes: The figure plots respondents' opinion on whether a child suffers if his/her mother works. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The sample includes a section of 25 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal. The attitudes on whether a child suffers if the mother works are measured as follows: 0=agree; 1=disagree.

Appendix Figure 2. Robustness divergence results (panels)

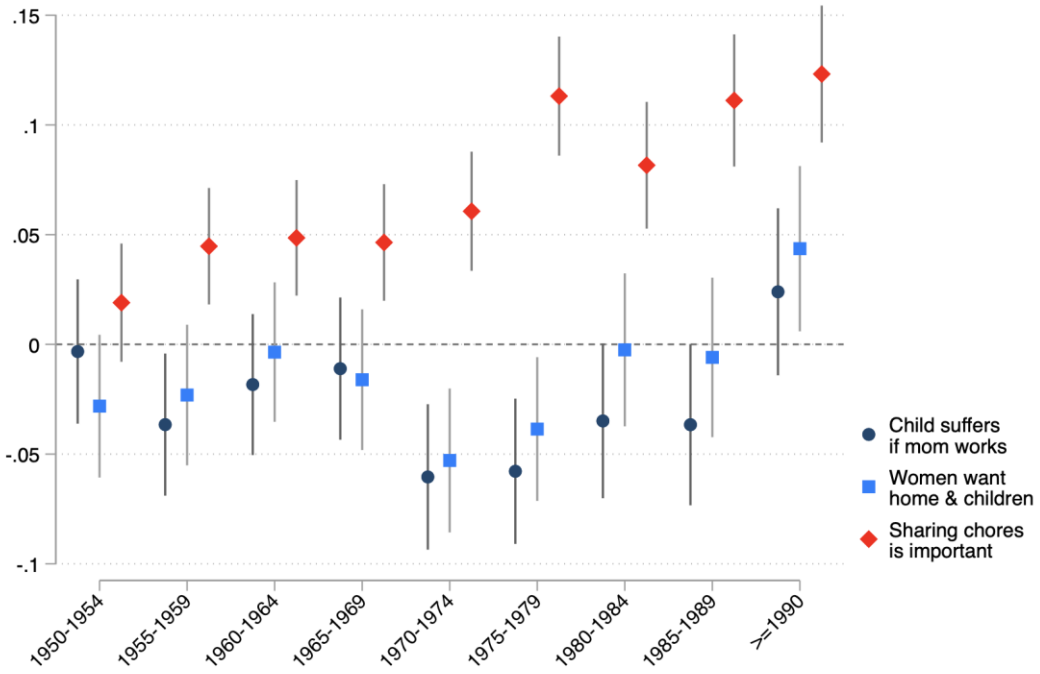
Panel A. Dependent variable as dummy variable.



Data source: European Value Study (1999, 2008, 2017).

Notes: The figure plots the coefficients from three different OLS regressions. The dependent variable is respondents' opinion on gender attitudes. For the coefficients plotted as red diamonds, the dependent variable is the importance of sharing housework for a successful marriage. For the coefficients plotted as light blue squares, the dependent variable is the level of disagreement with the statement "What women really want is a home and children". For the coefficients plotted as dark blue circles, the dependent variable is the i level of disagreement with the statement "A child suffers if his/her mother works". The running variables are the interaction between an indicator for female respondents and six indicators for six different birth-year cohorts: < 1950; 1950 − 59; 1960 − 69; 1970 − 79; 1980 − 89; > 1989. The coefficients indicate that female respondents' opinion diverges from that of men over generations, only for gender attitudes related to sharing housework.

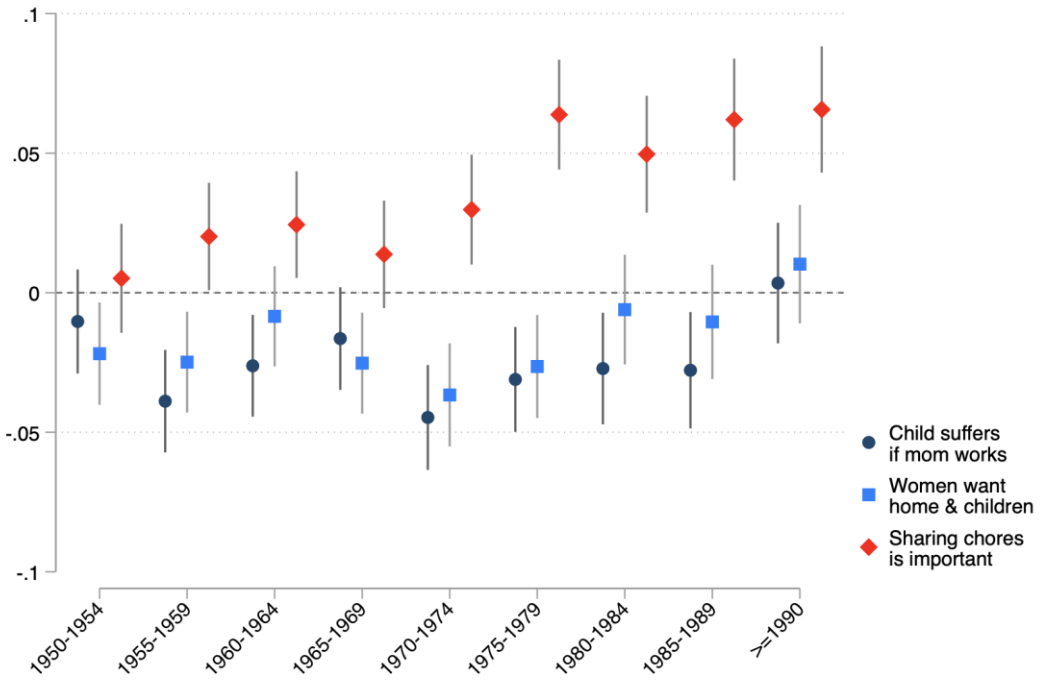
Panel B. Regression with 10 birth cohorts



Data source: European Value Study (1999, 2008, 2017).

Notes: The figure plots the coefficients from three different OLS regressions. The dependent variable is respondents' opinion on gender attitudes. For the coefficients plotted as red diamonds, the dependent variable is the importance of sharing housework for a successful marriage. For the coefficients plotted as light blue squares, the dependent variable is the level of disagreement with the statement "What women really want is a home and children". For the coefficients plotted as dark blue circles, the dependent variable is the i level of disagreement with the statement "A child suffers if his/her mother works". The running variables are the interaction between an indicator for female respondents and six indicators for six different birth-year cohorts: < 1950; 1950 − 54; 1955 − 59; 1960 − 64; 1965 − 69; 1970 − 74; 1975 − 79; 1980 − 84; 1985 − 89; > 1989. The coefficients indicate that female respondents' opinion diverges from that of men over generations, only for gender attitudes related to sharing housework.

Panel C. Dependent variable as dummy variable and regression with 10 birth cohorts.

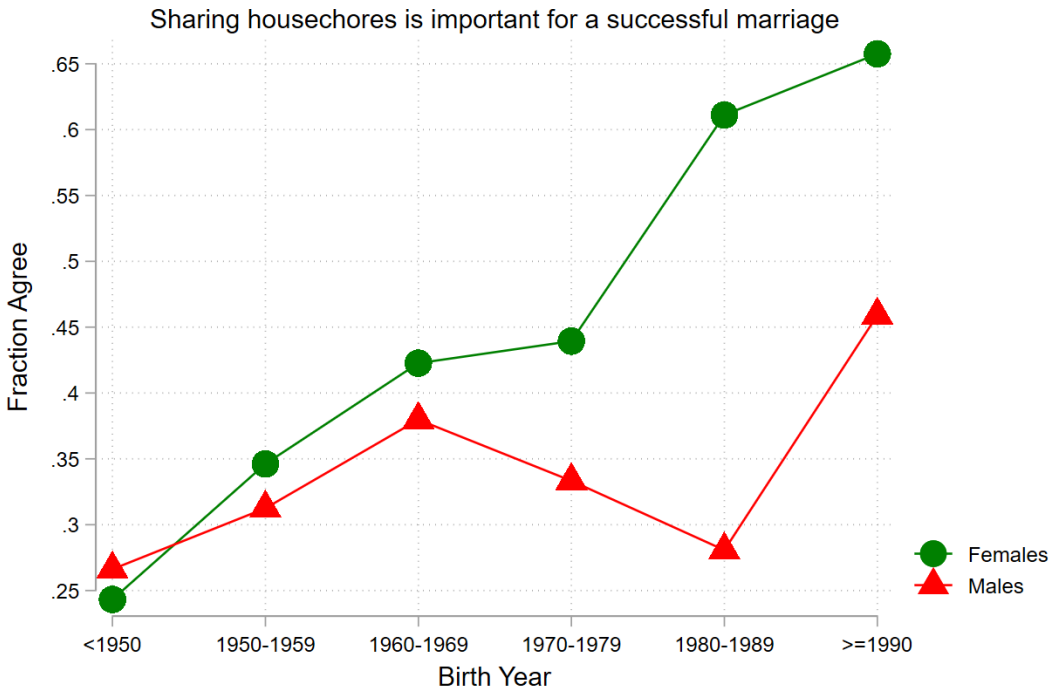


Data source: European Value Study (1999, 2008, 2017).

Notes: The figure plots the coefficients from three different OLS regressions. The dependent variable is respondents' opinion on gender attitudes. For the coefficients plotted as red diamonds, the dependent variable is the importance of sharing housework for a successful marriage. For the coefficients plotted as light blue squares, the dependent variable is the level of disagreement with the statement "What women really want is a home and children". For the coefficients plotted as dark blue circles, the dependent variable is the i level of disagreement with the statement "A child suffers if his/her mother works". The running variables are the interaction between an indicator for female respondents and six indicators for six different birth-year cohorts: < 1950; 1950 − 54; 1955 − 59; 1960 − 64; 1965 − 69; 1970 − 74; 1975 − 79; 1980 − 84; 1985 − 89; > 1989. The coefficients indicate that female respondents' opinion diverges from that of men over generations, only for gender attitudes related to sharing housework.

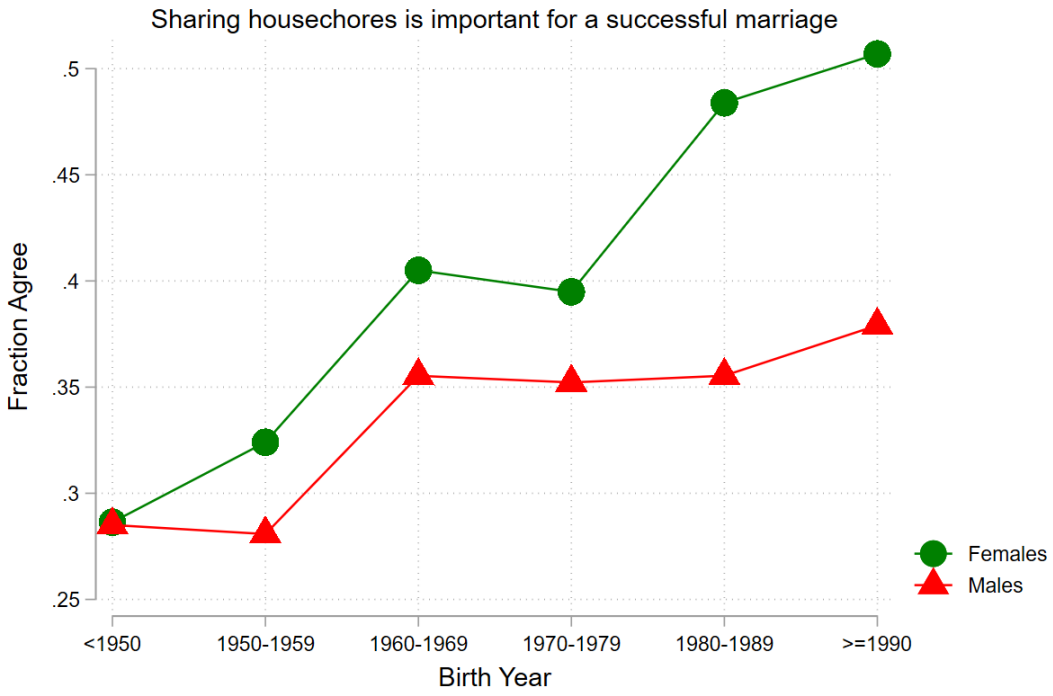
Appendix Figure 3. Sharing chores by country

Panel A. Finland



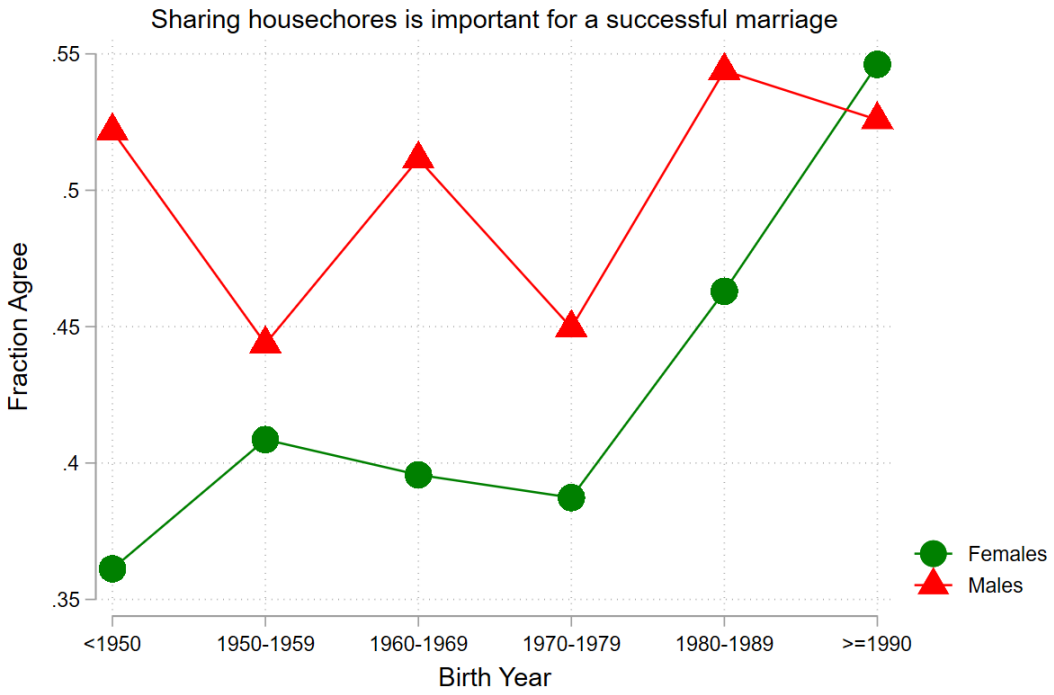
Source: European Value Study, 2017. Notes: The figure plots respondents' opinion about the importance of sharing housework for a successful marriage for the country of Finland. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The level of importance of sharing housework is based on three levels: 0=not very important; 1=very important.

Panel B. Italy



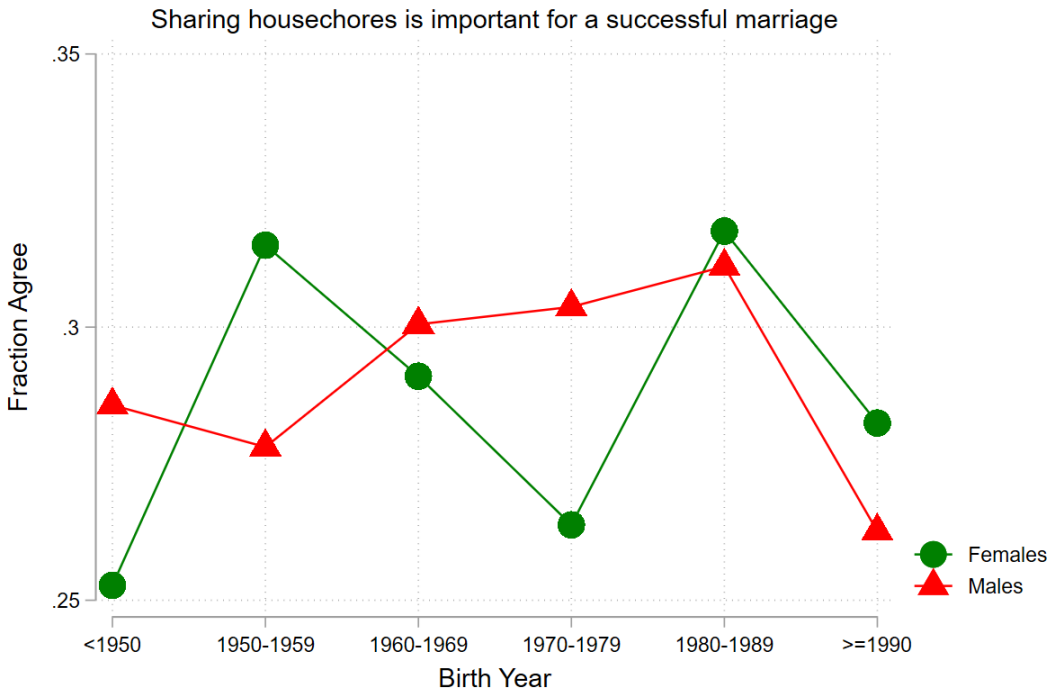
Source: European Value Study, 2017. Notes: The figure plots respondents' opinion about the importance of sharing housework for a successful marriage for the country of Italy. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The level of importance of sharing housework is based on three levels: 0=not very important; 1=very important.

Panel C. France



Source: European Value Study, 2017. Notes: The figure plots respondents' opinion about the importance of sharing housework for a successful marriage for the country of France. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The level of importance of sharing housework is based on three levels: 0=not very important; 1=very important.

Panel D. Germany



Source: European Value Study, 2017. Notes: The figure plots respondents' opinion about the importance of sharing housework for a successful marriage for the country of Germany. Respondents are divided by gender and by birth-year cohort. The level of importance of sharing housework is based on three levels: 0=not very important; 1=very important.