

Mind the Gender Gap: Gender Role Attitudes and Their Impact on Union Formation in Europe

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Why are people not getting married anymore?

WED, JUL 19 2023 • 7:41 AM EDT

Idil Karsit



Why are men and women getting turned off marriage?

Tomasz Frymorgen

3 March 2018



INDEPENDENT

Why have we fallen out of love with marriage?

Helen Coffey

Wednesday 31 January 2024

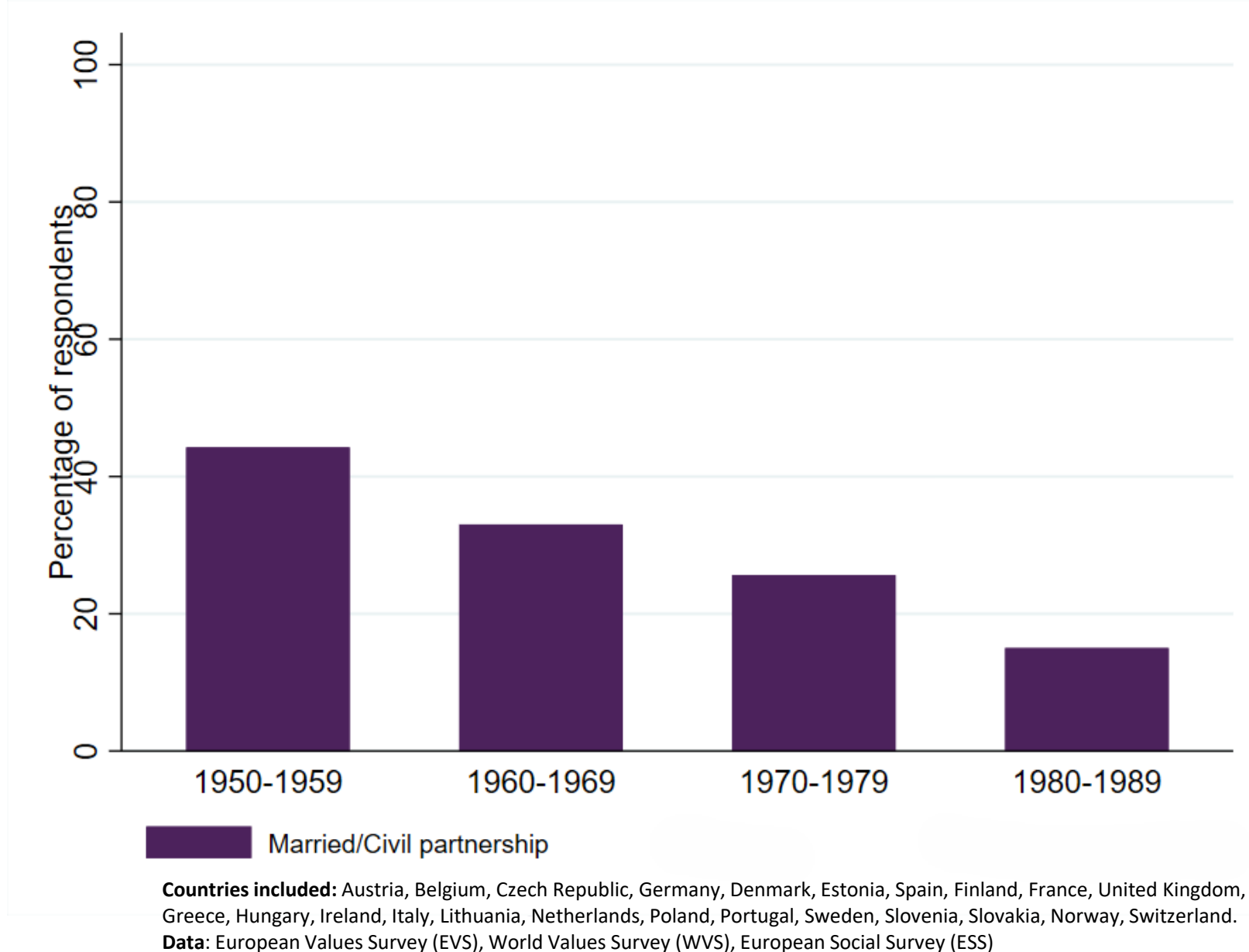
THE CONVERSATION

Why are fewer people getting married?

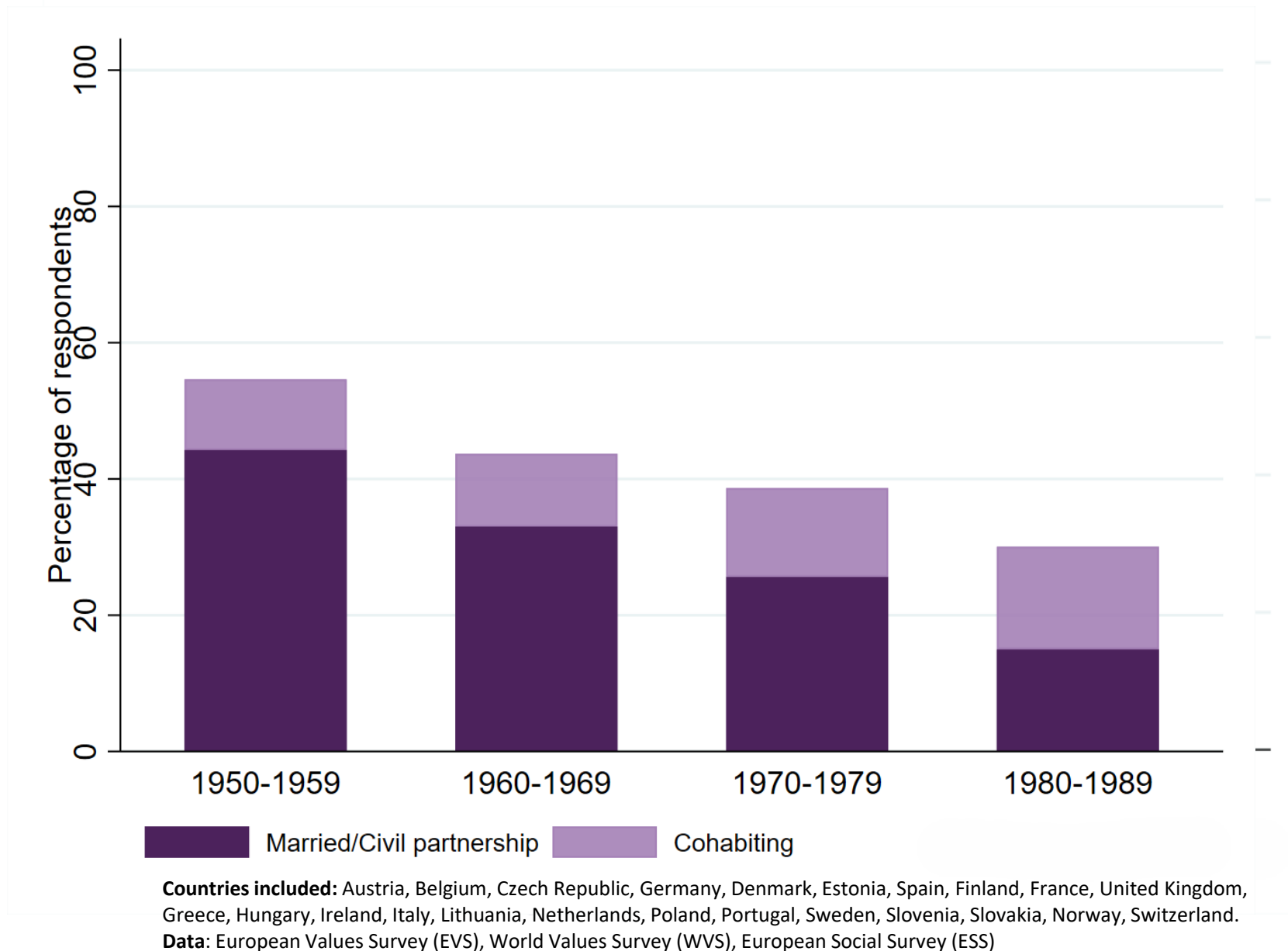
Jay L. Zagorsky

Published: June 2, 2016

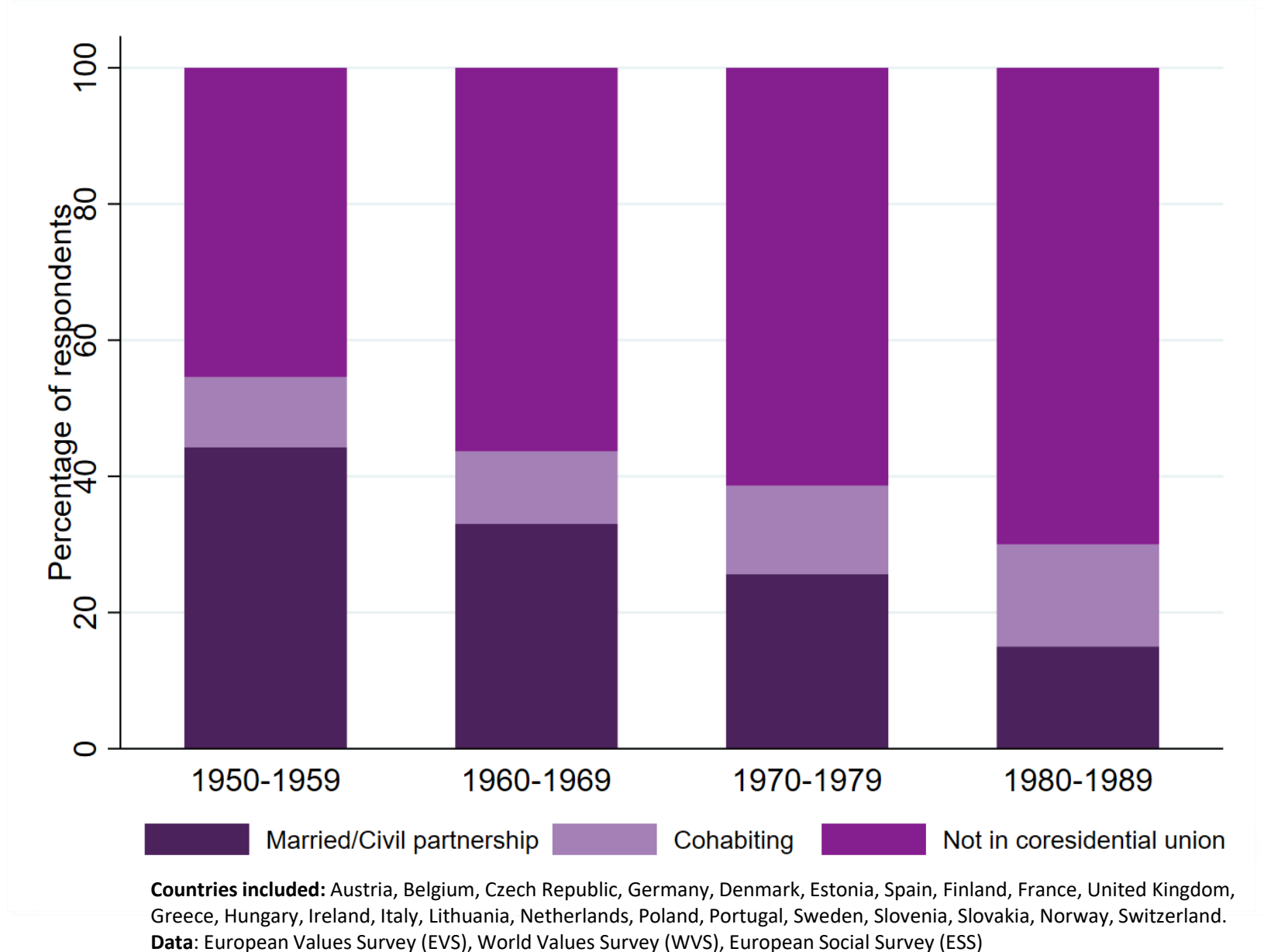
Partnership Status (%) Among Young Individuals (Aged 18–29) by Cohort in 23* European Countries



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34% to 56% of singles report being **involuntarily single** (Apostolou et al., 2019, 2023)

Assortative mating

- Age (Neyt et al., 2020)
- Race/Ethnicity (Ranzini et al., 2022; Chopik & Johnson, 2022)
- Education (Ranzini et al., 2022; Egebark et al., 2021)
- Values & Attitudes (Lewis, 2016; Huber & Malhotra, 2017)

Gender role attitudes

1. First half of the gender revolution:

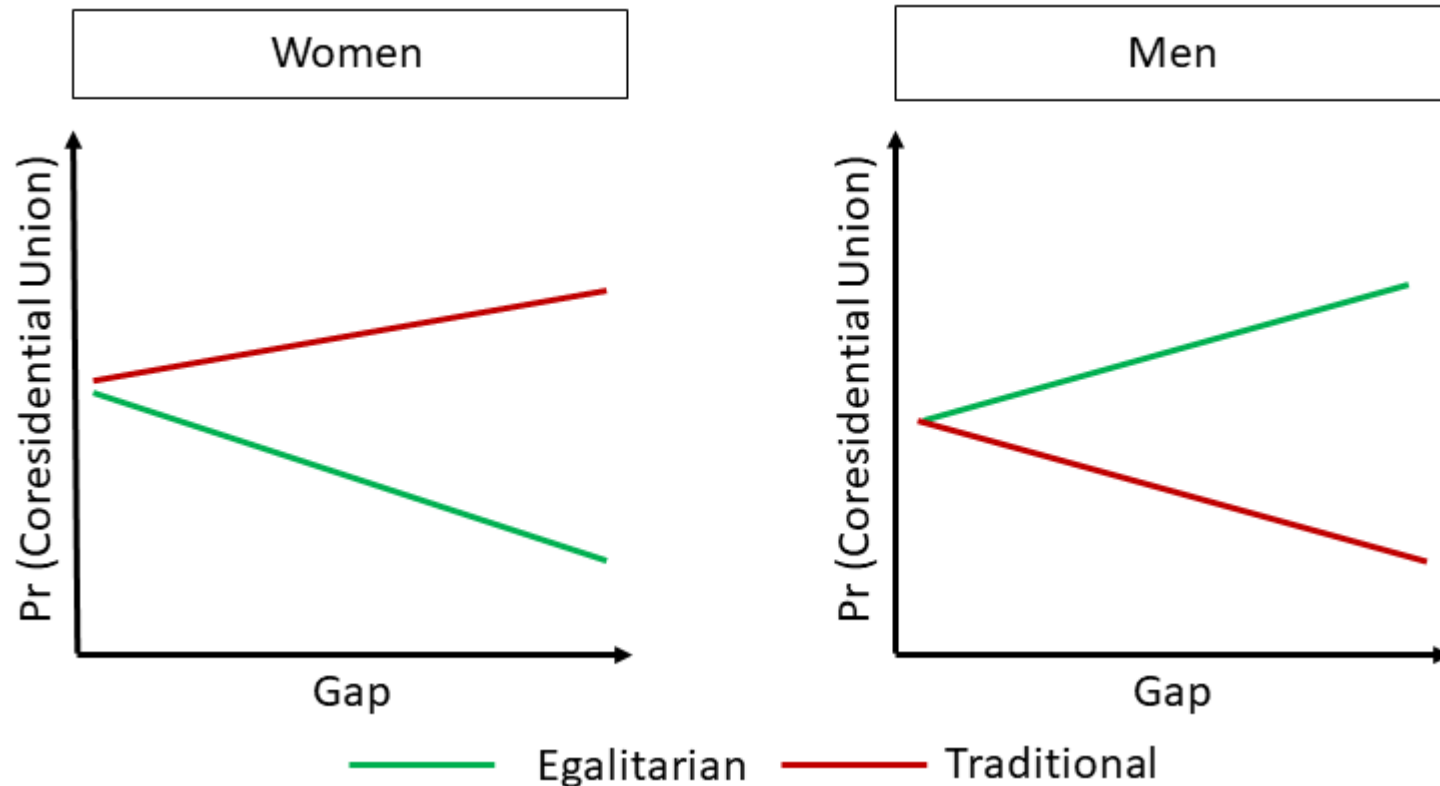
- Women entered the labor market.
- Result: Double burden → union delay/avoidance

2. Second half of the gender revolution:

- Men were expected to adopt more egalitarian attitudes
- Unclear if this shift has occurred

RQ1. Does the gap in gender role attitudes between young men and women persist across cohorts in European countries?

RQ2. Does the gap in gender role attitudes influence the likelihood of being in a coresidential union?



Methodology

- **Data:** European Values Survey (EVS), World Values Survey (WVS), European Social Survey (ESS); 23 countries*
- **Sample:** young men and women (18-29) covering four birth cohorts (1950s–1980s).
- **Gender role attitudes:**
 - Attitudes towards shared financial responsibility:
“Husband and wife should both contribute to household income ”
 - Attitudes towards working mothers:
“Pre-school child suffers with working mother”
 - Attitudes towards men’s involvement in housework and childcare:
“Sharing household chores is important for a successful marriage” ;
“Men should take as much responsibility as women for home and children”.
 - Attitudes towards men’s primacy in the labour market:
“When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women”

Countries included: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Norway, Switzerland.

RQ1. Analytical Strategy

We estimate the following logistic model for each country:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{sex}) + \beta_2(\text{cohort}) + \beta_3(\text{sex} \times \text{cohort}) + \gamma X + \varepsilon,$$

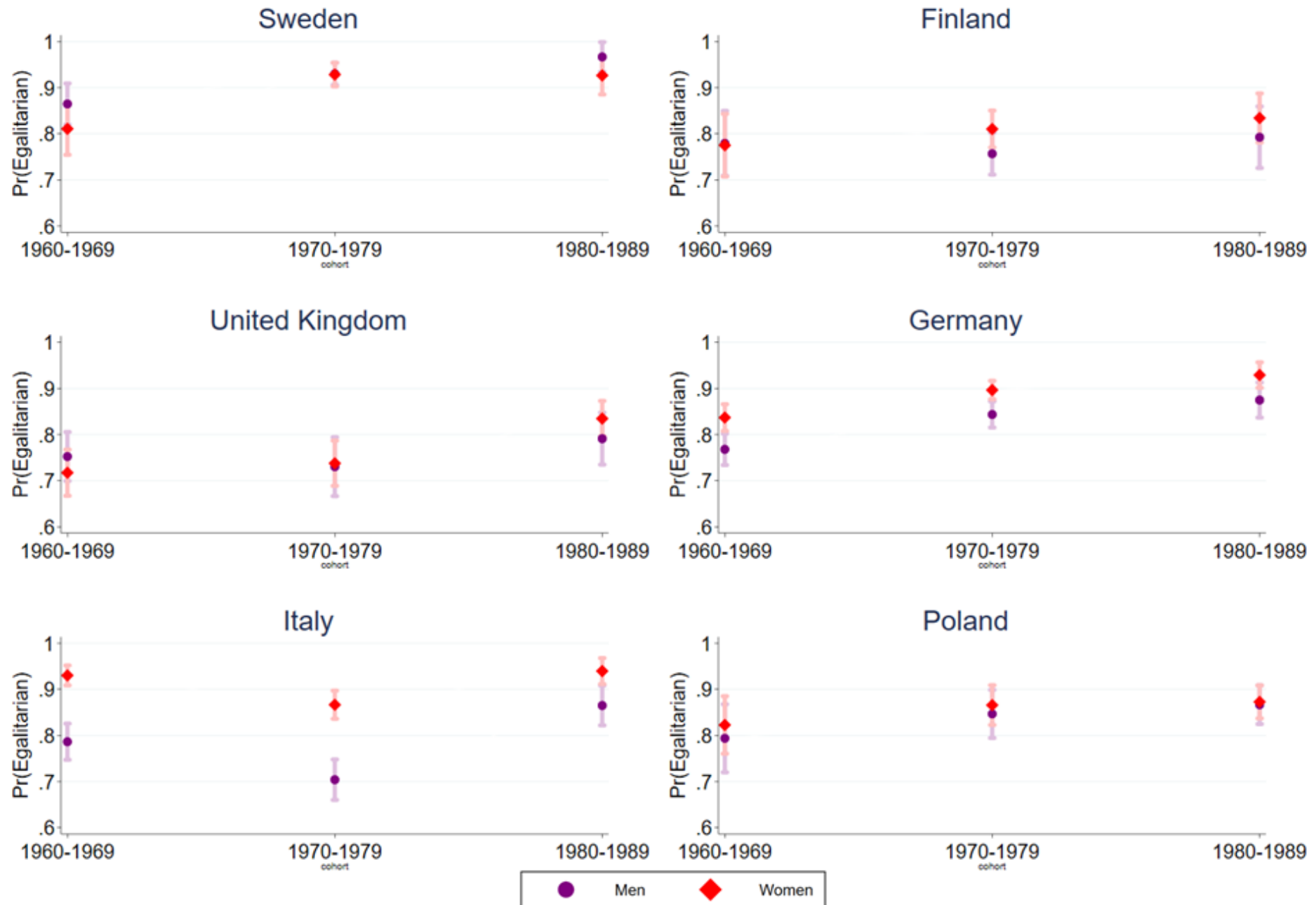
Where:

Y = each dimension of gender role attitudes

$\text{sex} \times \text{cohort}$ = interaction term to examine differences by cohort and sex

X = vector of control variables (employment status, education level, partnership status, parental status, survey fixed effect)

Attitudes towards shared financial responsibility



Note: The figure presents predicted probabilities based on estimated margins for each cohort and gender (with 83% confidence intervals)

Attitudes towards working mothers



Note: The figure presents predicted probabilities based on estimated margins for each cohort and gender (with 83% confidence intervals)

Attitudes towards men's involvement in housework and childcare



Note: The figure presents predicted probabilities based on estimated margins for each cohort and gender (with 83% confidence intervals)

Attitudes towards men's primacy in the labour market



Note: The figure presents predicted probabilities based on estimated margins for each cohort and gender (with 83% confidence intervals)

RQ2. Analytical Strategy

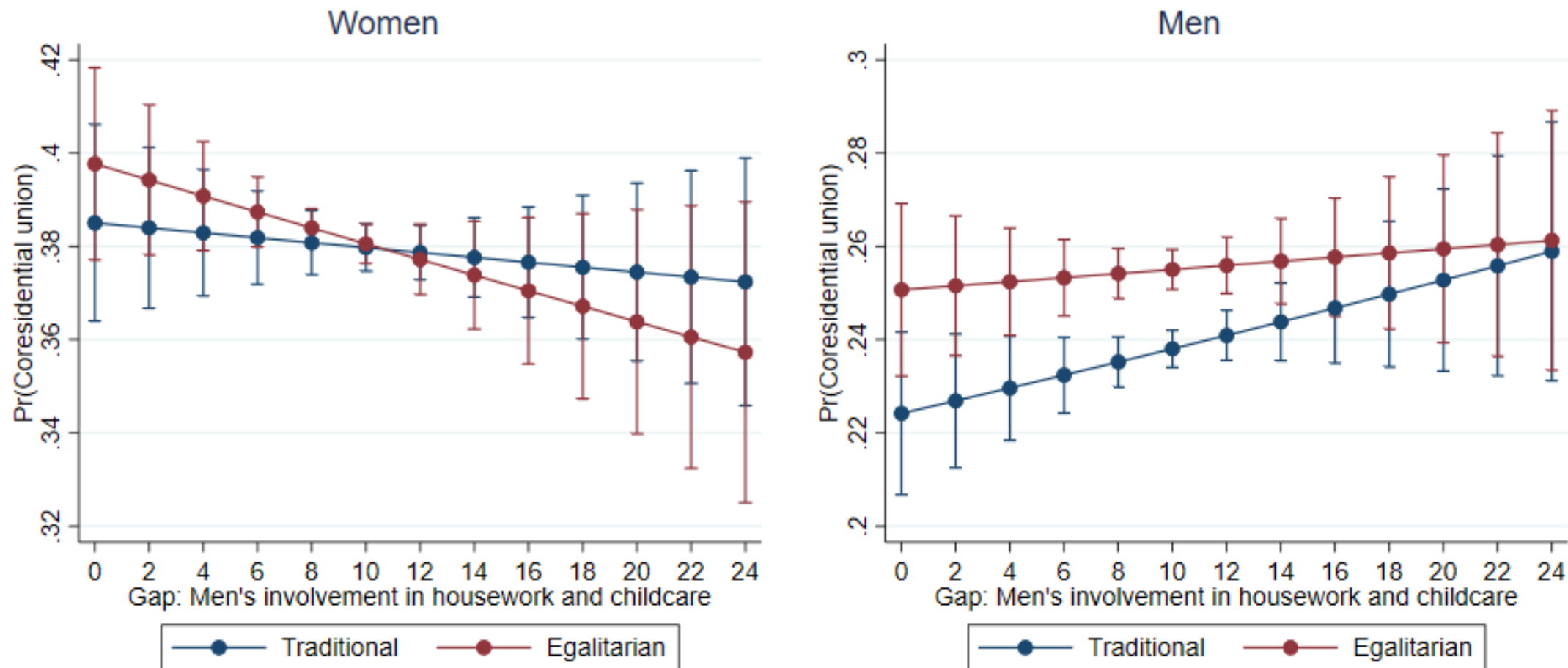
$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Attitude}) + \beta_2(\text{Gap}) + \beta_3(\text{Attitude} \times \text{Gap}) + \gamma X + \delta C + \varepsilon,$$

Where:

- Y = respondent's partnership status (1 = in a coresidential union, 0 = not in a union)
- $\text{Attitude} \times \text{Gap}$ = interaction term respondent's gender attitude and gender gap in attitudes
- X = vector of control variables (education level, employment status, parental status)
- C = cohort and country fixed effects

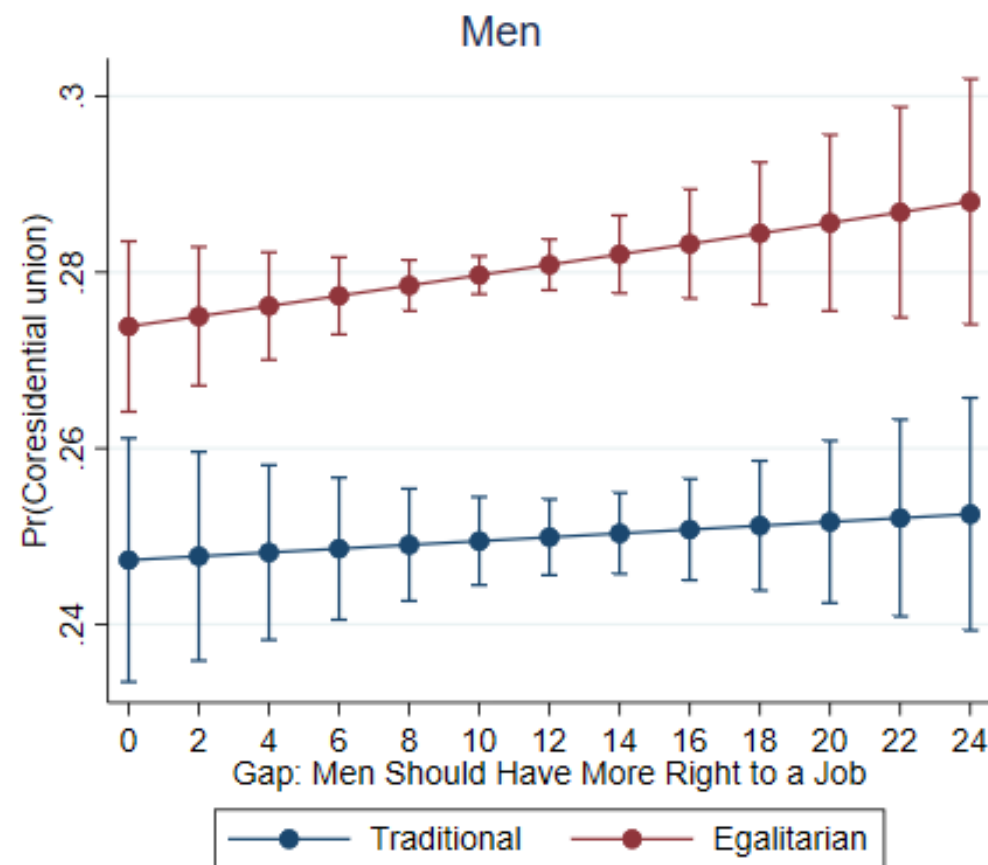
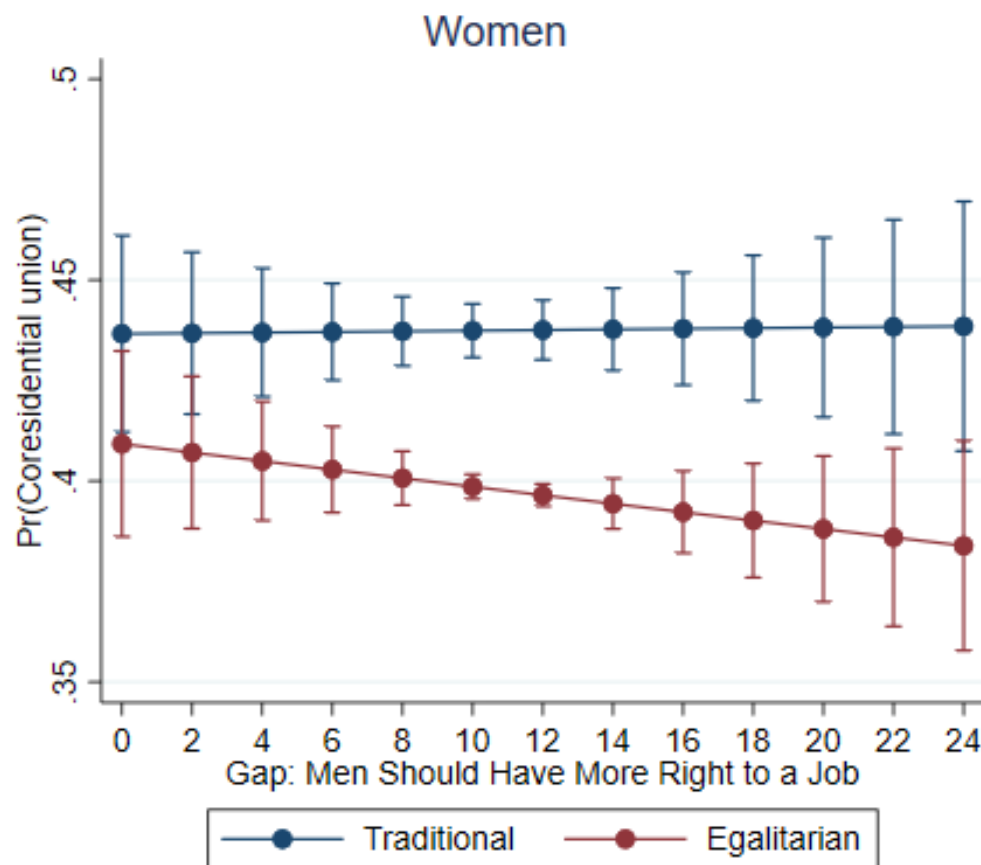
The gender attitude gap is computed following **Arpino et al. (2015)** using a logistic model separately for each country-period, controlling for education.

Estimated probabilities of coresidential union by gender gap in men's involvement in housework and childcare



Note: 83% confidence intervals

Estimated probabilities of coresidential union by gender gap in men's primacy on the labour market



Note: 83% confidence intervals

Conclusions

- No significant gender gap in attitudes toward *shared financial responsibility* and *working mothers*.
- Persistent gaps in attitudes on *men's involvement in housework & childcare* and *men's primacy in the labor market*
- These gaps are associated with being in a coresidential union, in line with expectations.

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