5th ISSP User Conference – Family and Changing Gender Roles

Online, 30 November 2026, 12:30-16:30 (CET)

Organised by the ISSP Secretariat and the Editors of the International Journal of Sociology (IJS) on the ISSP "Family and Changing Gender Roles" module.

Program:

12:30 – 12:40: Short welcome and introduction to the ISSP
Stephanie Steinmetz (University of Lausanne)

12:40 – 13:40: Session 1: Practices and outcomes: How are gender roles reflected in work, domestic responsibilities, and family decisions?
Chair: tbd

1) Does Greater Gender Equality Reduce Work–Family Conflict? A Cross-National Analysis of Gender Differences
Sigrún Ólafsdóttir, Ásdís Arnalds & Kári Kristinsson (University of Iceland, Iceland)

2) Educational Attainment and the Gendered Division of Domestic Labour: How Employment Status Conditions the Education–Housework Relationship across ISSP Family Modules
Qinlei Wang (King's College London, UK)

3) Marital Selectivity, Gender Values and Work-family conflict in comparative perspective
Maira Covre Sussai & Felícia Picanço (*Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)*

4) More Expectations, Fewer Children? Ideal Family Size in the Nordic Countries, 2012 and 2022
Ásdís Arnalds (University of Iceland, Iceland)

Break 15 min

13:55 – 14:55: Session 2: Attitudes: What do people think about gender roles?
Chair: tbd

5) Gender Role Attitudes in Suriname in Cross-National and Historical Perspective
Tamira E Sno, Nancy Gooding (both ADEK University of Suriname, Suriname) & Harry BG Ganzeboom (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands)

6) Cross-national variations in gender ideology over time – mapping attitudes towards women's employment and consequences thereof on family relations 1988-2022
Jonas Edlund & Ida Öun (Umeå University, Sweden)

7) Whose Job Is It? Father-Specific Leave and Gender-Role Attitudes
Karen Staniscia (Stockholm University, Sweden)

8) Gender and Gender Role Attitudes: Do Men and Women Ever Agree?
Harry BG Ganzeboom (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Break 15 min

15:10 – 16:10: Session 3: Values and ideology: How are gender and family norms changing, and how are they connected to broader political and ideological divisions?

Chair: tbd

9) The New Gender Contract? Family, Work and Changing Conceptions of Masculinity
Akanksha Yadav & Pratibha Agrawal (Amity University Jharkhand, India)

10) Gender, Parenthood and Family Diversity: A Cross-National Perspective
Elitsa Dimitrova (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria)

11) Changing Attitudes Towards Non-Traditional Families: Longitudinal Trends and Political Ideology Using ISSP Data, 1994-2022
Ioannis Andreadis, Alexandros Kioupkiolis & Nikoletta Sivenou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece)

12) Exploring the Link between Gender Traditionalism and Populism: Evidence from Lithuanian ISSP Data
Eglė Butkevičienė, Vaidas Morkevičius & Vytautas Valentinavičius (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania)

16:10 – 16:30: Closure of the conference

Abstracts

Does Greater Gender Equality Reduce Work–Family Conflict? A Cross-National Analysis of Gender Differences

Sigrún Ólafsdóttir, Ásdís Arnalds & Kári Kristinsson

(University of Iceland, Iceland)

ABSTRACT

Work–family conflict is a persistent source of inequality in contemporary societies, reflecting competing demands between paid employment and family responsibilities. Greater gender equality is often assumed to reduce these tensions by promoting more equal opportunities in employment and a more equitable distribution of family responsibilities. However, progress toward gender equality in the public sphere does not necessarily imply corresponding changes in the private sphere. Drawing on theories of gender stratification and the unfinished gender revolution, this study examines whether gender differences in work–family conflict are smaller in more gender-equal societies. We distinguish between two dimensions of work–family conflict: work-to-family conflict (WFC), where demands from paid employment interfere with family life, and family-to-work conflict (FWC), where family responsibilities interfere with paid work. We hypothesize that women experience higher levels of both forms of conflict than men, reflecting persistent gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work. We further expect that gender differences in conflict will be smaller in more gender-equal societies, where institutional arrangements and gender norms may facilitate a more equitable reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities. However, the unfinished gender revolution perspective suggests an alternative possibility: greater equality in public life may coexist with persistent inequalities in family responsibilities, potentially producing larger gender differences in work–family conflict. We use data from the 2022 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) Family and Changing Gender Roles module, covering employed respondents in 28 countries across Europe, Asia, the Americas, and other world regions.

Individual-level measures of work–family conflict are combined with the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (2022) to assess how societal gender equality is associated with gender differences in conflict. The analyses account for gender, age, education, working hours, partnership status, and children in the household. Country fixed-effects models are used to examine whether the association between gender and work–family conflict varies systematically with societal gender equality. Preliminary findings show that women report higher levels of both WFC and FWC than men, even after adjusting for individual characteristics and family circumstances. Longer working hours are particularly strongly associated with WFC, while the presence of young children is more closely associated with FWC. We also find meaningful cross-national variation in both dimensions of conflict.

Contrary to the expectation that societal gender equality reduces gender differences, the gender gap in WFC is significantly larger in more gender-equal societies. No comparable association is found for FWC. Additional analyses indicate that the association between societal gender equality and WFC differs by gender, although the gender-specific associations are not statistically significant when examined separately. These findings suggest that progress toward gender equality at the societal level does not necessarily translate into more equal experiences of work–family conflict. They highlight the importance of distinguishing between different directions of conflict and raise questions about whether changes in employment opportunities, family responsibilities, and institutional support proceed at the same pace.

Educational Attainment and the Gendered Division of Domestic Labour: How Employment Status Conditions the Education–Housework Relationship across ISSP Family Modules

Qinlei Wang

(King's College London, UK)

ABSTRACT

Educational expansion and women's employment have transformed household resources, yet unpaid work remains unevenly distributed. Bianchi et al. (2000) traced changing domestic workloads, while Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny (2011) demonstrated persistent gender segregation across routine and nonroutine tasks. Gupta (2007) challenged relative-earnings explanations by identifying women's independent earnings as a consequential resource. These findings leave unresolved whether education's association with domestic equality varies systematically across couples' employment configurations, and whether apparent historical convergence reflects shifts in household composition or differences within comparable employment arrangements.

This study examines the education–housework relationship among partnered respondents in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) Family and Changing Gender Roles modules for 2002, 2012 and 2022. Combining relative-resource theory, time-availability explanations and gender-performance accounts, it evaluates three hypotheses. Higher education is expected to correlate with more equal routine housework, particularly among dual-earner couples. Employment configurations involving a single earner are expected to display different education gradients according to which partner undertakes paid work. Finally, adjustment for gender-role attitudes is expected to attenuate some educational differences, although the degree of attenuation may vary across country-waves.

The analysis is designed around the newly released ISSP five-wave cumulation, ZA8795 (ISSP Research Group, 2026). The proposed analytical sample comprises partnered adults in country-waves with comparable education, employment and task-allocation measures, including eligible observations from Germany, Japan, Sweden and the United States. Harmonised indicators distinguish dual employment, respondent-only employment, partner-only employment and neither employed, where measurement permits. Survey-weighted descriptive comparisons will precede country-by-wave fixed-effects models incorporating education-by-employment interactions. A further interaction with survey wave will evaluate temporal heterogeneity; task-specific models, common-country restrictions and alternative education categorisations will test robustness. These repeated cross-sections identify conditional associations, not causal effects or within-person trajectories.

Preliminary documentation analysis identifies substantive measurement constraints that reshape the research design. Laundry, cleaning, cooking, shopping and care for sick family members offer candidate common task measures across the selected waves, whereas minor repairs lack equivalent 2022 coverage. Employment categories and educational credentials require harmonisation, and participating countries change between rounds; Great Britain is absent from the internationally integrated 2022 file. Consequently, pooled estimates will exclude incomparable observations and report routine-housework outcomes separately from care responsibilities. No substantive coefficients or significance tests are reported prior to accessing and estimating the underlying microdata.

The contribution is an employment-conditional test of competing explanations for educational differences in domestic work. Distinguishing unequal access to paid employment from unequal task allocation within the same employment configuration clarifies how educational expansion may coexist with persistent gendered responsibility. The proposed harmonisation also prevents changes in task coverage or national composition from being mistaken for shifts in household practice, providing a replicable foundation for comparative family-policy research. The resulting estimates will be interpreted alongside country-specific institutional contexts, while their limitations will be documented transparently for subsequent replication and extension. Additional carefully specified robustness comparisons will also clarify whether education gradients persist after adjustment for household composition, respondents' gender and relationship duration, where consistently measured, with uncertainty reported for every estimated contrast.

Keywords: Educational attainment; Domestic labour; Employment configuration; Gender inequality; ISSP

Marital Selectivity, Gender Values and Work-family conflict in comparative perspective

Maira Covre Sussai & Felícia Picanço

(UERJ (Maira Covre Sussai) and UFRJ (Felícia Picanço), Brazil)

ABSTRACT

The second demographic transition refers to the changes in societies regarding fertility and new family structures, particularly concerning more balanced gender roles (e.g., Lesthaeghe, 2010). However, research indicates that this process is not linear and varies in pace across different contexts. Comparative studies show that, regardless of national factors such as fertility rates, development levels, and gender inequality (Picanço, Covre-Sussai, Sento-Sé, and Araújo, 2024), women still bear the majority of domestic and caregiving responsibilities, even when they are more educated and express more egalitarian views on gender roles. This article aims to explore the link between marital selectivity based on education, the number of children, as well as its impact on gender attitudes, the division of household and caregiving tasks, and home-work conflict, taking into account variations across national contexts.

We use data from the 'Family and Changing Roles' module (2022[1]) of the International Social Survey (ISSP), from which we have developed indicators to assess gender attitudes, the division of domestic labor, and home-work conflict. To evaluate the contextual characteristics, we utilized the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Gender Inequality Index (GII, UNDP). For analyzing marital selectivity by education, we categorized marital arrangements into several groups: homogamous with high education (where both partners have higher education), homogamous with medium and low education, hypogamy I (where a higher-educated person is married to someone with medium education or lower), hypogamy II (where a medium-educated person is married to someone with low education), and hypergamy (where a lower or medium-educated person is married to someone with higher education). Preliminary results indicate that, across 30 countries, employed women living with a partner generally reported higher work–family conflict than their male counterparts. In multilevel models, compared with educational homogamy, female educational hypogamy was associated with higher conflict (β = 0.014, SE = 0.005), whereas hypergamy showed no clear association (β = −0.003, SE = 0.006). Higher educational attainment and more time spent on domestic work were also associated with greater conflict, while the gender-role equality index was negatively associated with it (β = −0.166, SE = 0.009); the female coefficient remained positive (β = 0.054, SE = 0.004). These findings indicate that gendered differences in work–family conflict persist across national contexts and that the association between marital selectivity and conflict is most apparent for hypogamous unions, although the observational results should not be interpreted as causal.

Keywords: Gender roles, gender relations, division of household tasks.

[1] As Brazil did not have the resources to conduct surveys in consecutive years, a requirement for ISSP membership, independent national household probability surveys were conducted in 2016 and 2025. Their design drew on the fifth-round questionnaire and ISSP methodological guidance.

More Expectations, Fewer Children? Ideal Family Size in the Nordic Countries, 2012 and 2022

Ásdís Arnalds

(University of Iceland, Iceland)

ABSTRACT

Despite extensive family policies and high levels of gender equality, fertility rates across the Nordic countries have declined markedly in recent years. This paradox has sparked renewed interest in the broader values and norms surrounding family life and raises the question of whether the fertility decline has been accompanied by changes in normative views regarding the ideal number of children in a family. Using data from the 2012 and 2022 ISSP modules Family and Changing Gender Roles, this study examines cross-national differences and changes over time in general fertility ideals in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Specifically, we investigate cross-national differences, changes over time, and the association between fertility ideals and attitudes towards gender roles, religiosity, and family life. The results reveal country-specific patterns. While no significant shifts are observed in Denmark, Iceland, or Sweden, fertility ideals decline in Finland and Norway. Individuals holding more egalitarian gender-role attitudes reported lower fertility ideals, whereas religious attendance was positively associated with the ideal number of children. In addition, respondents who viewed children as limiting personal freedom reported lower fertility ideals. The positive association between religiosity and fertility ideals was strongest among individuals with more traditional gender-role attitudes and became stronger over time.

Keywords: Fertility ideals, Nordic countries, Fertility decline

Gender Role Attitudes in Suriname in Cross-National and Historical Perspective

Tamira E. Sno, Nancy Gooding & Harry BG Ganzeboom

(ADEK University of Suriname, Suriname (Sno and Gooding); Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands (Ganzeboom))

ABSTRACT

Suriname, independence from the Netherlands since 1975, is a Caribbean society characterised by extreme ethnic and religious diversity. As a consequence of its colonial history, the present-day population comprises at least seven ethnic groups, none of which constitutes a majority: Indigenous, Maroons, Creoles, Hindustanis, Javanese, Chinese, and Mixed. All of these groups exhibit high levels of endogamy, including the Mixed, and are distinguished by their respective family systems. These systems differ particularly in terms of the contrast between the Asian pattern, which centres primarily on the nuclear family, and the Afro-Caribbean pattern, which places greater emphasis on the extended family. Suriname is equally diverse in religious terms, with Roman Catholicism, Moravian Protestantism, Evangelical Protestantism, and several forms of Islam, Hinduism, and indigenous religions. To some extent, these religious affiliations cut across ethnic boundaries.

In this paper, we examine attitudes towards gender roles and gender role equality (GRA) using the ISSP Gender Roles V dataset, collected in 2025–2026, which includes a sample of 1,374 respondents from Suriname. The ISSP module was supplemented in Suriname with a short battery of four GRA statements that exactly replicates a survey conducted by Ligeon in 1992 on sociocultural attitudes in Suriname. Ligeon's study, in turn, replicated the SOCON survey conducted in the Netherlands in 1990 (Eisinga et al.). Despite limitations, these data sources make it possible to compare gender role attitudes in Suriname both internationally and over time.

Our study is particularly concerned with whether attitudes towards gender roles in Suriname have converged across ethnic groups and whether they have moved closer to Western attitudes.

Cross-national variations in gender ideology over time – mapping attitudes towards women's employment and consequences thereof on family relations 1988-2022

Jonas Edlund & Ida Öun

(Umeå University, Sweden)

ABSTRACT

In this article, we use data from five rounds of the ISSP's Family and Changing Gender Roles module to systematically analyse cross-national change in gender ideology over almost 35 years (1988-2022). Based on the assumption that an individual's attitudes are molded by exposure to prevailing structures and norms in society, the study focuses on patterns of change of prevailing gender ideologies over time across 38 countries. Gender ideology is measured with six core attitudinal items included since the start of the module. First, we calculate the gender ideology mean for each country and year and note that there is a distinct overall trend towards more progressive gender ideology. Second, we examine group differences within countries and the role of contextual factors over time and across countries. By using multilevel modelling distinguishing three data levels (individuals, year-country, and country), we show that some societal level factors are positively associated with gender ideology, but the variation over time is not explained by within-country changes in these variables. Overall, younger individuals, women, and the highly educated show higher values on the gender ideology index, and differences between groups are larger in developed economies and in countries with stronger female political representation.

Keywords: gender ideology, attitudes, International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), cross-national, change over time

Whose Job Is It? Father-Specific Leave and Gender-Role Attitudes

Karen Staniscia

(Stockholm University, Sweden)

ABSTRACT

Persistent norms position mothers as primary caregivers and women still do most unpaid care work, bearing the larger labor-market penalties of parenthood. Most high-income countries give fathers some access to parental leave, yet uptake remains limited. This paper asks to what extent father-specific, non-transferable parental leave shifts gender-role attitudes. Drawing on policy-feedback and gender-norm theory, I argue that well-compensated leave reserved for fathers can change norms directly, by altering fathers' behavior and identity within families, and indirectly, through societal diffusion beyond affected households. Following Hall's (1993) typology of policy change, I also argue that the pace of reform may carry information about how deep the change is. Existing studies are mostly single-country or cross-sectional, or code reform as a binary event, so they cannot show how policy and attitudes co-evolve.

I test three hypotheses. H1: within-country increases in the generosity of father-specific leave are associated with more egalitarian attitudes. H2: this association varies across countries and cultural contexts. H3: gradual and abrupt policy expansions are associated with different attitudinal dynamics.

I combine five waves of the ISSP "Family and Changing Gender Roles" module (1988, 1994, 2002, 2012, 2022) with annual leave indicators from the SOFI Care Leave Policy Dataset. The sample covers 29 countries: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States. The outcome is a five-item scale of gender-role egalitarianism (1-5). The key predictor is the wage replacement rate during non-transferable leave reserved for fathers. I decompose it into a between-country component (a country's average generosity) and a within-country component (deviation from its own average, capturing policy change over time). I estimate three-level linear mixed-effects models, with individuals nested in country-years nested in countries. The models include a random slope for within-country change and cluster-robust standard errors. Controls are age, sex, education, income, children in the household, and GDP per capita. The analytic sample has 78,398 respondents in 80 country-years.

Preliminary results support H1. Within-country policy change is positively and significantly associated with egalitarian attitudes ($b = 0.66$, $p < .001$). A 10-percentage-point increase in wage replacement is associated with a 0.07-point rise on the five-point scale, about 9% of a standard deviation. Moving from no entitlement to the most generous scheme observed (37.3% of the average production worker's wage) corresponds to roughly one-third of a standard deviation. By contrast, a country's average generosity is not associated with attitudes. This suggests that policy change, not simply having a generous policy, is what tracks attitudinal change. Tests of cross-country heterogeneity (H2) and reform pace (H3) are in progress.

Keywords: parental leave; gender norms; father quotas; policy feedback; multilevel modeling

Gender and Gender Role Attitudes: Do Men and Women Ever Agree?

Harry BG Ganzeboom

(Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands)

ABSTRACT

Research on Gender Role Attitudes [GRA] has consistently shown that women support more egalitarian positions than men. However, remarkably little research has been done on variations in this gender 'gap': the gender difference in GRA is usually noticed, taken to be self-evident and controlled. But when is the gender difference in attitudes larger, when is it smaller? Are there any conditions in which women and men are in agreement about their preferred roles in society and in the family?

An exception is the paper by McDaniel (2008), who examined cross-national differences in GRA in wave 4 (ca. 2000) in the World Value Study and finds that the gap between women's and men's attitudes is largest in countries with highest mean level of gender egalitarianism and gender equality: men and women disagree most when they are close. McDaniel does not offer an explicit argument or explanation for her finding. Other pertinent literature (e.g. Miller et al. (2021), Tu & Liao (2005a, 2005b)) does not provide an explicit theory to explain the cross-national variation either. Recent research by Napier & Kusano (2026) seems to confirm McDaniel's generalization.
This research examines historical trends and cross-national differences in disagreement between women and men as found in the five waves of the ISSP Gender Role and Family modules (1988, 1994, 2002, 2012, 2022; 51 countries; N=202000) and uses the cohort replacement (adjusted for age / period effects) 'metabolism' as an instrument to examine historical changes. To address concerns in the recent literature about multidimensionality of GRA measures (Knight & Brinton, 2017; Begall et al., 2023), I compare a one-dimensional instrument, a two-dimensional instrument as well as all the (seven) separate indicators.

The main purpose of the presentation is to develop the research question better. Is this an interesting research question and if so, why has it not been studied more often? What would be a plausible theory to explain the historical and cross-national variations?

The analysis is an extension of research by Neill Lugtenburg, reported in his BA-thesis (Lugtenburg, 2022, available upon request).

The New Gender Contract?: Family, Work and Changing Conceptions of Masculinity

Akanksha Yadav & Pratibha Agrawal

(Amity University Jharkhand, India)

ABSTRACT

Debates on changing gender roles have increasingly moved beyond women's incorporation into paid employment to examine transformations in men's identities, family responsibilities, and practices of care. Yet the decline of the male-breadwinner model does not necessarily imply the emergence of an egalitarian gender order. This paper asks whether contemporary transformations in family and gender-role attitudes signal the emergence of a new gender contract, or whether they represent an adaptation of traditional masculinity to changing social expectations. Drawing on the International Social Survey Programme's Family and Changing Gender Roles I–V modules, the paper examines changing attitudes toward men's and women's employment, breadwinning, domestic responsibilities, childcare, and family roles across societies and over time.

The paper brings Yvonne Hirdman's concept of the gender contract into dialogue with Raewyn Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and scholarship on fatherhood, care, and the gendered division of labour. It argues that transformations in the gender order have generated an increasingly complex normative expectation of masculinity: men are expected not only to remain economically productive and responsible for family provision but also to become emotionally engaged fathers and active participants in domestic and caregiving work. Rather than conceptualising this transition as a straightforward movement from traditional to egalitarian masculinity, the paper conceptualises it as a process of "dual masculinisation," in which provider and caregiver expectations increasingly coexist.

Using comparative and longitudinal ISSP data, the study investigates whether attitudes toward men's domestic and caregiving responsibilities have changed alongside declining support for exclusive breadwinner arrangements, and whether these transformations are consistent across different national contexts. Particular attention is given to the potential disjuncture between normative change and the persistence of gendered expectations, asking whether more egalitarian attitudes necessarily indicate a substantive restructuring of the family division of labour.

The paper proposes that the contemporary gender contract should be understood not as the replacement of breadwinner masculinity but as its partial renegotiation. The emerging ideal of the "involved father" may expand the boundaries of masculinity while leaving its economic-provider dimension substantially intact. By placing masculinity at the centre of debates on family and changing gender roles, the paper contributes to a more relational understanding of gender transformation and demonstrates how the reconfiguration of family expectations is simultaneously reshaping what it means to be a man, a father, and a provider.

Keywords: gender contract; masculinity; fatherhood; breadwinner model; caregiving; family; gender roles; ISSP; gender transformation

Gender, Parenthood and Family Diversity: A Cross-National Perspective

Elitsa Dimitrova

(Institute for Population and Human Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria)

ABSTRACT

Family diversity has expanded across contemporary societies, but the social acceptance of different family forms remains uneven. This study asks: How do individual characteristics and country-level social and institutional contexts shape attitudes towards different forms of family diversity, and do these factors operate similarly for single-parent and same-sex-parent families? The theoretical motivation draws on the understanding of family change as a multidimensional and differentiated process. Rather than assuming a simple transition from traditional to liberal family norms, the study considers whether acceptance varies according to the extent to which particular family forms challenge established gendered and heteronormative understandings of parenthood. The analysis therefore distinguishes between acceptance of single motherhood, single fatherhood, and childrearing by female and male same-sex couples.

The analysis tests four main hypotheses. H1: Women will express greater acceptance of diverse family forms than men. H2: Higher educational attainment will be associated with greater acceptance, particularly of same-sex parenting. H3: Respondents who are married or cohabiting will be less accepting of non-traditional family forms than respondents who are not currently partnered. H4: Acceptance will be higher in countries characterised by more inclusive and equality-oriented social and institutional contexts, although the strength of these associations will differ across family forms.

The study uses the 2022 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) full dataset. The dependent variables are based on respondents' agreement with statements that a single mother, a single father, a same-sex female couple, or a same-sex male couple can raise a child as well as a married heterosexual couple. Binary multilevel logistic regression models were estimated, with individuals nested within countries. Individual-level predictors include gender, age, education, number of children, presence of a child below school age, marital status, employment, partner's employment, household financial situation, and place of residence. Country-level indicators include the Inclusiveness Index, Equality Index, Rainbow Index, fertility, extra-marital births, prevalence of single-parent families, GDP per capita and income inequality. The analysis covers countries represented in the ISSP 2022 data, including European and non-European societies.

The results demonstrate substantial cross-national variation and a clear hierarchy of family-diversity acceptance. Acceptance is consistently higher in countries such as Denmark and Iceland and lower in Bulgaria and several Central and Eastern European countries. At the individual level, gender is the most consistent predictor: women are significantly more accepting of all four family forms. Marital status is also highly consistent, with married/cohabiting respondents showing lower acceptance across all outcomes. Education is particularly important for attitudes towards same-sex parenting, while economic security and urban residence are also associated with greater acceptance. Country-level effects are more differentiated: the Equality Index predicts greater acceptance of single-parent families. The findings suggest that family diversity is not a single attitudinal dimension: acceptance of single-parent families and same-sex parenting reflects partly different normative frameworks, with gendered and heteronormative understandings of parenthood remaining particularly influential.

Keywords: family diversity; family attitudes; same-sex parenting; single parenthood; gender norms

Changing Attitudes Towards Non-Traditional Families: Longitudinal Trends and Political Ideology Using ISSP Data, 1994-2022

Ioannis Andreadis, Alexandros Kioupkiolis & Nikoletta Sivenou

(School of Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece)

ABSTRACT

The evolution of public attitudes towards single-parent families, same-sex families, and unmarried parents constitutes an important dimension of broader social and cultural change. Although family norms have become more inclusive over recent decades, the extent to which these transformations have transcended established political divisions remains an open question. This paper examines the longitudinal evolution of attitudes towards non-traditional families and investigates the role of political ideology in shaping patterns of acceptance between 1994 and 2022.

The paper draws on theories of value change and cultural backlash to investigate the relationship between long-term social transformation and persistent opposition to non-traditional families. Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) theory of value change suggests that socioeconomic development and changing cultural priorities contribute to the gradual liberalization of social attitudes. Nevertheless, such transformations are neither linear nor universal. Norris and Inglehart's (2019) cultural backlash thesis highlights how perceived threats to established values may generate renewed resistance to progressive social change, particularly regarding gender equality and family structures. Complementing this perspective, research on changing gender-role attitudes suggests that the transformation of family values involves both generational replacement and changes within broader social and political contexts.

Building on these theoretical approaches, this paper aims to investigate the longitudinal interplay between political ideologies and public attitudes towards non-traditional families using data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) modules on Family and Changing Gender Roles (1994, 2002, 2012, and 2022). More specifically, the paper explores how political and ideological factors shape public acceptance for three types of non-traditional families: single-parent families, same-sex families, and unmarried parents. The paper focuses primarily on two research questions: 1. How have public attitudes towards single-parent families, same-sex families, and unmarried parents evolved over time? 2. What role do political ideologies play in influencing these attitudes?

The analysis employs repeated cross-sectional ISSP data to examine changes in public attitudes towards single-parent families, same-sex parents, and unmarried parents. It compares levels of acceptance across the four survey waves and political ideology, focusing on how these attitudes have evolved over time in accordance with the political and ideological differences. The findings are expected to contribute to a broader understanding of how public opinion on non-traditional families evolves in the context of long-term social and cultural change. Examining trends across nearly three decades, the paper assesses whether the increasing acceptance of non-traditional families reflects a broad-based transformation in social attitudes or a process shaped by ideological divisions.

Keywords: ISSP, Longitudinal Analysis, Non-Traditional Families, Political Ideology, Public Opinion

Exploring the Link between Gender Traditionalism and Populism: Evidence from Lithuanian ISSP Data

Eglė Butkevičienė, Vaidas Morkevičius & Vytautas Valentinavičius

(Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania)

ABSTRACT

Studies show that traditional gender attitudes – support for a division of gender roles in work, family and other areas of life, including political, that is based on the belief in gendered separate spheres (Davis, Greenstein 2009) – are linked to voting for the radical right parties (Christley 2021). In this paper we extend these studies and analyse the link between gender ideology and populist attitudes. We focus on the gender traditionalism and explore whether people holding more traditional gender attitudes also exhibit populist views. In the analysis we control for other factors that may influence the relationship, such as, other sociopolitical attitudes, party and ideological identity, political efficacy, gender, age, education and social status.

For the study we employ data of a nationally representative survey that was conducted in May – July, 2024 in Lithuania (relatively young democracy, member of the EU and other international democratic organizations) under the RECONECT project (S-VIS-23-14). The sample size was 1257 respondents, and the survey included questions from two modules of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP): "2022 Family and Changing Gender Roles V" and "2023 National Identity & Citizenship". This merger allowed to include items for both populist attitudes (included into the module "2023 National Identity & Citizenship") and gender ideology (available in the module "2022 Family and Changing Gender Roles V") in the same questionnaire. We employ descriptive and multivariate inferential statistical methods for the empirical analysis.

Preliminary results show (see Tables 1 and 2) that there exists a positive relationship between traditional gender attitudes and populist attitudes. However, this relationship holds only for the more general index of gender traditionalism and is not statistically significant for the item specifically measuring gender traditionalism in politics. As expected, populism is also related to negative evaluations of corruption in public service, lower external political efficacy, and lower subjective social status. Extending the research, it would be interesting to examine relationship between gender traditionalism and other socio-political attitudes.

Keywords: gender traditionalism, populism, political efficacy, socio-political attitudes, Lithuania, ISSP.