

Zagel, Hannah; Van Winkle, Zachary

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Women's family and employment life courses across twentieth century Europe: the role of policies and norms

Hannah Zagel, Humboldt-University of Berlin (corresponding author)

Zachary Van Winkle, University of Oxford

Abstract

This paper examines longitudinal patterns of work-family reconciliation across Europe and whether the influence of defamilizing policies on those patterns is contingent on the normative context. Data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement and sequence analysis is used to reconstruct and analyze women's family and employment life courses from age fifteen to fifty, born 1924-1966 from fourteen countries. Historic family policy data and gender attitudes collected in the International Social Survey Programme are included in multinomial regressions. Results suggest that defamilization and gender egalitarianism increase the labor market attachment of women with traditional family life courses independently.

1. Introduction

Variation in women's employment across time and countries has received ample attention in academic and political discussions surrounding family change (van der Lippe and van Dijk 2002; OECD 2007). In the period following World War II, women's labor market participation increased in industrializing countries (Oppenheimer 1994), although trends differed across contexts (Pfau-Effinger 2005). Explanations for the diverging developments focus on macro-level factors, e.g. policy and norms, and on individual-level factors, e.g. family demographics and education. Labor demand has historically been an important macro-level determinant of women's employment, but the relevance of demographic characteristics, such as marital status and number of children, has grown over more recent decades (Humphries and Sarasúa 2012). From the 1970s, for example, the employment gap between mothers and childless women decreased in a number of high-income countries.

A broad body of literature demonstrates that institutional differences partially explain the cross-national variation in women's employment and income (e.g. Pettit and Hook 2005; Korpi, Ferrarini, and Englund 2013). Country differences in women's employment are associated with the provision of work-family policies supporting mothers' return to work after childbirth, and

their labor market attachment more generally (Gornick and Meyers 2003). Family policies underwent enormous shifts throughout the past century, with the period from 1960 seeing change both in scope and diversity (Daly and Ferragina 2018). While most comparative accounts of women's employment are cross-sectional, an emerging literature takes a life-course perspective on work-family relationships (Aisenbrey and Fasang 2017). This research demonstrates that point-in-time perspectives are limited, in part because family life and employment are processes embedded in macro-structural contexts (Mayer 2004). While life-course research on family and employment is increasingly comparative, research disentangling the relationships between policies and norms usually uses cross-sectional multi-country designs.

Women's employment behavior is also shaped by the cultural context (Pfau-Effinger 1996; Kremer 2007). Gender egalitarianism, defined as a low level of individual support for a division of paid work and family responsibilities based on the notion of separate spheres (Davis and Greenstein 2009, 87), is particularly relevant. It is often argued that gender-egalitarian norms were crucial in the historical development of country-specific patterns of women's employment (Pfau-Effinger 2005). Empirical evidence supports the positive association between gender-egalitarian norms and mothers' employment, and suggests that work-family policies affect mothers' earnings more strongly in culturally supportive settings (e.g. Budig, Misra, and Boeckmann 2012).

In this article, we study individuals' work-family lives holistically as embedded in macro-contexts and by evaluating how policies and norms play out interdependently. Further, we go beyond existing research in analyzing women's labor market outcomes as long-term employment trajectories. We address three research questions: First, what patterns of work-family reconciliation exist in a wide range of European countries and birth cohorts? Specifically, we ask how patterns of family life are characterized by the timing and ordering of fertility and union events associated with employment life-courses with varying levels of labor market attachment. Second, to what extent do defamilizing policies and gender-egalitarian norms moderate the association between family and employment life-courses? For example, is early marriage and parenthood more likely to be associated with higher labor market attachment in societies with policies that reduce family responsibilities or in gender-egalitarian societies? Third, are the moderating effects of family policy and gender norms contingent on one another? In other words, do policies that reduce family responsibilities only enable women

to reconcile work and family life in gender-egalitarian contexts or do policy and norms work independently?

Rich, retrospective data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement (SHARE) are used to reconstruct the family and employment life-histories of women from age fifteen to fifty born between 1924-1966 in fourteen European countries. We then apply sequence and cluster analysis to identify separate patterns of family and employment life-courses. Our family life sequences combine annual residential, union, and fertility information to give a holistic representation of individuals' family formation process. Women's employment sequences are characterized by varying degrees of labor market attachment, including the intensity of women participating in the labor market – full-time employment, part-time employment, or unemployment, as well as the statuses of women not participating and not attached to the labor market – in education, in the household, or in retirement. Multinomial logistic regression with country and cohort fixed-effects enable us to estimate the associations between family life-course patterns and employment life-course patterns. To analyze the role of family policy and norms, we use family policy data collected by Van Winkle (2019; see also Garrouste 2010; DICE Database 2015) and information on gender norms in the 1988, 1994, 2002, and 2012 International Social Survey Programme database.

2. Family life-courses and women's employment

Women's employment across the life-course is affected by a range of individual level and macro-level factors. Employment behavior develops in a complex interplay between work orientations, cultural and institutional possibilities and the individual perceptions of these possibilities (Crompton and Harris 1998). A key individual determinant of women's employment is their level of family responsibilities, primarily relating to care relationships. This is strongly variable across the life-course, and crucially determined by the presence of young children. Childbirth is highly consequential for women's labor market attachment: new mothers exit the labor market for care work, and if they return, they often do so with reduced employment hours and pay (Waldfogel 1998). But mothers' labor market participation varies, partially due to differences in the occurrence and timing of family events across the life-course.

Although childbirth is nearly universally detrimental to women's employment, timing in the life-course matters. Early motherhood constrains opportunities for education and career advancement, and is associated with more negative labor market outcomes than late

motherhood (Olausson et al. 2001), although selection of women with low employment prospects into early parenthood plays a role (Keller 2011). This is in line with the idea of parenthood as an alternative strategy towards a fulfilled life compared to employment-oriented life-courses (Edin and Kefalas 2005). Consequently, family life-courses with early family formation are likely associated with lower levels of employment across the life-course.

Late motherhood, by contrast, is associated with higher career achievements, however theoretical explanations vary. Research with a modernization lens assumes that individualist values cause women to postpone motherhood in order to realize education and career goals (Lesthaeghe 1998). Economic explanations either stress the opportunity costs of having children (Lehrer and Nerlove 1986), or the need to achieve economic security before entering parenthood (Mills and Blossfeld 2003; Pöyliö and Van Winkle 2019). Cultural and economic explanations converge in the expectation that family life-courses characterized by later family formation are associated with higher employment levels across the life-course. However, the hegemony of the traditional family model still makes parenthood result in scaling back work hours or exiting the labor market.

The sequencing of family life phases also has implications for women's employment. The dominant, normative family life-course sequence of the last century was to exit the parental home for marriage early in life, then having children and subsequent coresidential 'nuclear' family life (Mayer 2004). The model implies a gendered division of labor where wives fulfil the domestic and husbands the market work. Specialization in household tasks made work-family reconciliation somewhat obsolete in this model. The arrangement involved large shares of women adopting the housewife role throughout the life-course. In much of the twentieth century, this model hence provided an economically secure context to many women. However, the dominance of the traditional model has withered since the 1980s, and alternative family life-courses have become more prevalent (Cohen 2015). This has been discussed within the realm of a shift towards the post-fordist sexual contract with an emerging new gender order (McDowell 1991), coinciding with a shift from a male breadwinner to an adult worker model (Daly 2011; Lewis 2001). People increasingly delayed marriage and parenthood; union dissolution and consequently single parenthood became more widespread. Overall, family life-courses differentiated over time across Europe (Van Winkle 2018a), which is consequential for women's labor market position.

Divorce and single motherhood increase the economic necessity for women to become economically active. Union dissolution substantially reduces women's economic resources (Andreß et al. 2006). In the absence of a second earner, the main source of household income is women's own employment (Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado 2018b). But single mothers face particular challenges of work-family reconciliation. Consequently, single motherhood is associated with lower resources across many countries, although to different degrees (ibid.). Single mothers' employment trajectories vary strongly, as a consequence of both, differences in prior market power and differences in the ability for work-family reconciliation (Zagel 2014; Struffolino and Bernardi 2017).

Two contradicting expectations may be derived. First, stronger barriers to employment could mean that union dissolution trajectories are associated with low employment levels across the life-course. However, single mothers likely accept lower wages rather than dropping out of the labor-force, as indicated by their high in-work poverty risks (Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado 2018a). Second, union dissolution trajectories may hence be associated with high employment levels across the life-course for women due to economic necessity.

Lifelong childlessness is another pattern diverging from the traditional family life-course. Levels of childlessness increased across countries and cohorts over the last half century (Sobotka 2018). Patterns and causes of childlessness vary across regional and historical contexts (Kreyenfeld and Konietzka 2018), but the implications for women's labor market outcomes are universal. Childless women are more likely to maintain high levels of labor market attachment than those who become mothers. Childless women do not face the same work-family reconciliation issues, although care for sick or older family members may be an issue.

In sum, we expect that *traditional family life-course patterns are associated with employment life-course patterns characterized by low labor market attachment, while union dissolution and childless patterns are associated with employment life-course patterns characterized by high labor market attachment (H1)*.

3. Work-family policies and norms

Opportunity structures for women's labor market attachment across the life-course are crucially shaped by the welfare state. Welfare states provide different sets of policies that relieve

individuals from family responsibilities (Orloff 1993), and feature different degrees of cultural support to women's employment (Pfau-Effinger 1996; Kremer 2007). Comparative research commonly acknowledges that both policy and culture, defined as a set of common norms, values and attitudes shared by the majority of a population in a given territory (van Oorschot, Opielka, and Pfau-Effinger 2008), matter for women's employment. But only more recent multi-country studies have analyzed moderating relationships; for example, looking at whether policy effects vary in different normative environments in comparative perspective (Boeckmann, Misra, and Budig 2015), or using a quasi-experimental case study design for disentangling how feedback norms mediate policy effects on women's labor market participation (Gangl and Ziefle 2015).

3.1 Work-family policies

Welfare states provide a wide range of policies that have consequences for women's employment, but work-family policies are the most relevant. Family policies aim to support mothers' employment or have other goals, such as securing the welfare of children, and affect mothers' employment indirectly (Kaufmann 2002). Forming a subcategory, work-family policies are statutory rights, transfers and services aimed at reducing family responsibilities and enable parents' participation in the labor market (Gornick and Meyers 2003). Classical work-family policy instruments are early childhood education and care (ECEC) and parental leave policies for mothers and fathers. While the case of ECEC is relatively uncontested, there is debate about the effectiveness of parental leave for women's employment (e.g. Pettit and Hook 2005; Budig, Misra, and Boeckmann 2012), which will further be discussed below.

Work-family policies have also been defined as 'defamilizing' policies. These are in contrast with 'familizing' policies, which support the family in its caring function (Leitner 2003) and increase intergenerational dependencies (Saraceno and Keck 2010).¹ The concept of defamilization captures differences in how welfare states lower dependencies between family members (McLaughlin and Glendinning 1994; Lister 1994). Defamilizing policies hence shift responsibilities from the family to the state (Lohmann and Zagel 2016), such as through public provision of care services for children and older people. Outsourcing care work makes time available for employment of women, who are overwhelmingly doing that work in the family (Sayer 2005). Hence, to the extent that family responsibilities hinder women's employment, defamilizing policies reduce these barriers.

A large body of comparative welfare state literature has focused on differences in work-family policies and their outcomes. This literature suggests that countries can be characterized by the dominant work-care arrangements, also referred to as the male breadwinner and adult worker models respectively (Lewis 1992; 2001; Daly 2011). A number of studies also looks at the associations between policy configurations and work-family outcomes using quantitative analysis on multiple countries (e.g. Mandel and Semyonov 2006; Pettit and Hook 2005). Such studies show that publicly provided or subsidized ECEC has positive effects on mothers' employment (Steiber and Haas 2012). Parental leave policies have less clear outcomes, and there is a broad discussion in the literature about class-specific and non-linear effects (Pettit and Hook 2005; e.g. Mandel and Semyonov 2006). Short generously paid leaves are generally found to increase mothers' likelihood to return to employment after childbirth (Boeckmann, Misra, and Budig 2015). However, the relationship between parental leave and mothers' employment is curve-linear so that some leave (up to two years) is better than none, but long leave is worse than some (Thévenon and Solaz 2013; Nieuwenhuis, Need, and Van der Kolk 2017). Defamilizing policies, e.g. short well-paid parental leave for mothers and fathers and ECEC services, likely increase mothers' labor market attachment.

The benefits of defamilizing policies are particularly strong for single mothers (Maldonado and Nieuwenhuis 2015). Defamilizing policies are crucial for single mothers' labor market participation, because domestic and market work cannot be shared with a partner. The relationships between work-family policy and single mothers' employment across the life-course are complex, because single motherhood is not a static state (Zagel and Hübgen 2018). Couple formation and dissolution are dynamic processes that affect mothers' care load and time availability. Therefore, single motherhood is best captured as part of an entire family life-course. We expect women with family life-courses that include episodes of single motherhood to achieve higher labor market attachment in contexts with higher levels of defamilization.

Family policies always come in packages, and so it can be misleading to look at the effect of a single policy alone for understanding the relationship between welfare states and women's employment. Investigating single policies is often preferred in the comparative literature (Korpi, Ferrarini, and Englund 2013; Budig, Misra, and Boeckmann 2012; Pettit and Hook 2005), because it does not require assuming that the policies have the same effects (Brady, Blome, and Kmec 2018). For example, not all family policies are supportive of a gender-egalitarian division of paid and unpaid work. However, the use of composite indexes in this

research area has a long tradition (Mandel and Semyonov 2006; Gornick and Meyers 2003; Korpi 2000). It thus seems advantageous to consider defamilizing policies jointly, because this gives an encompassing view of how the welfare state supports women's employment. This approach is particularly useful from a life-course perspective, because different policies can become relevant for work-family reconciliation over the course of people's lives. For example, parental leave policies are most relevant directly after child birth, while ECEC services address children of particular age groups.

In sum, we expect that *the association between traditional family life-course patterns and employment life-course patterns characterized by low labor market attachment is weaker in contexts with higher levels of defamilization (H2a)*. Further, we expect that *the association between alternative family life-course patterns with children and employment life-course patterns characterized by high labor market attachment is stronger in contexts with higher defamilization (H2b)*.

3.2 Gender egalitarianism

Welfare states also differ along cultural dimensions, e.g. people's norms about mothers' employment. Women's employment is likely to be shaped by the cultural context as much as by policies (Pfau-Effinger 1996; Kremer 2007). The spread of gender-egalitarian norms affects the link between family life-course patterns and women's labor market attachment. Gender egalitarianism generally involves the emergence of alternative family life-courses. This relationship has been noted by modernization theorists (Beck-Gernsheim 2002), and proponents of the second demographic transition (e.g. Lesthaeghe 1998). High labor market attachment is more common for women with any kind of family life-course in gender-egalitarian contexts. But in unsupportive contexts with low levels of gender egalitarianism women who follow the normative model of a traditional family life-course likely have low labor market attachment. For women with alternative family life-courses including children, labor market behavior is difficult to predict in these contexts. One possibility is that lacking social support restricts employment. The other, less likely scenario is that they pursue economic careers against all odds.

Although research on the role of culture in welfare states overwhelmingly takes a qualitative and often historical perspective, some studies have used quantitative-comparative designs. Findings provide more support for institutionalist explanations, showing that country-level

gender-egalitarian norms did not have an effect on mothers' employment independently of that of family policies (Uunk, Kalmijn, and Muffels 2005; Steiber and Haas 2009). But it remains difficult to tease these apart. Other research supports the assumption of independent effects of policies and norms by showing that gender norms affect women's labor market participation above and beyond other country-specific characteristics (Fortin 2005; Boeckmann, Misra, and Budig 2015; Pfau-Effinger 1998).

In sum, we expect that *the association between traditional family life-course patterns and employment life-course patterns characterized by low labor market attachment is weaker in contexts with higher levels of gender egalitarianism (H3a)*. We also expect that *the association between alternative family life-course patterns with children and employment life-course patterns characterized by high labor market attachment is stronger in contexts with higher levels of gender egalitarianism (H3b)*.

3.3 Policies & Norms

Family policies and norms not only act independently, but together form distinct contexts for women's family and employment life-courses. Some research suggests that in welfare states, culture and policies are inseparably interrelated (Pfau-Effinger 2005). Countries where gender-egalitarian norms dominate should thus also have more generous work-family policies. Separating out these dimensions is hence an analytical exercise, which is useful to see how gender-egalitarian norms mediate observed relationships between policies and women's employment. The empirical separation of the two dimensions is challenging.

Empirical research increasingly acknowledges that family policy effects have to be understood in the wider welfare state context. Institutional configurations (Estévez-Abe 2009) and cultural norms (Budig, Misra, and Boeckmann 2012) are assumed to interfere with how work-family policies affect women's labor market participation. For example, traditional gender norms can inhibit families to use ECEC services for outsourcing care responsibilities, because the normative model advocates maternal home caring as best for the child. Non-take-up of ECEC precludes any effect of that policy on mothers' employment. In gender-egalitarian contexts, by contrast, generous work-family policies are likely to be particularly effective.

Not adjusting for norms may lead research to overestimate work-family policy effects on women's employment, but it certainly ignores context-dependency. Analyses usually

acknowledge norms alongside policies by including a measure of women's position in society, but rarely consider moderation effects. One exception is the study by Budig, Misra and Boeckmann (2012), who include a three-way interaction effect between policies, norms and motherhood on earnings. Results suggest that the relationship between work-family policy and mothers' earnings is indeed stronger in culturally supportive settings; the positive association between ECEC and mothers' earnings is pronounced in such contexts. Besides looking at earnings rather than employment, these findings are limited for our third research question mostly for reasons of data quality. Budig and colleagues use cross-sectional data on twenty-two countries from the early 2000s. The study makes an important contribution to the research field, but does not inform about work-family reconciliation across the life-course. It is furthermore limited to one point in time, drawing all its macro-level information from cross-country variation. Generalizability to other times and places is limited.

We expect that *the association between traditional family life-course patterns and employment life-course patterns characterized by low labor market attachment is weaker in contexts with higher levels of defamilization and higher levels of gender egalitarianism (H4a)*. Further, we expect that *the association between family life-course patterns including union dissolution and employment life-course patterns characterized by high labor market attachment is stronger in contexts with higher levels of defamilization and higher levels of gender egalitarianism (H4b)*.

4. Data and methods

Sample

We use the third and seventh wave of SHARE, the SHARELIFE waves, to identify family and employment life-courses and estimate the associations between them. The first SHARELIFE wave consists of retrospectively collected life-history data of respondents born before 1957 and their partners from a number of European countries (Börsch-Supan et al. 2013; Schröder 2011). A second round of SHARELIFE was fielded in 2017 and collected retrospective data for all respondents born before 1967 and their partners as well for respondents and their partners in twelve of the original countries that were sampled after the original SHARELIFE. We limit our sample to women born between 1924 and 1966 in fourteen European countries.² Individuals born before 1924 are excluded due to insufficient sample sizes. All individuals born after 1966 are partners of SHARELIFE respondents and are excluded from the analysis, because they will have always married or partnered. We would therefore underestimate the proportion of post-1956 cohorts who never married, or divorced and never re-partnered.

Sequence Analysis

Our analytical strategy follows three steps: 1) sequence and cluster analysis, 2) the construction of policy and norm indicators, and 3) multinomial logistic regression modeling. In this first step, we use sequence and cluster analysis to empirically identify work and family life-course patterns. Sequence analysis has become a widespread statistical technique in life-course sociology (Aisenbrey and Fasang 2010). A crucial advantage of sequence analysis is that patterns are identified empirically based on regularities in the prevalence, timing, duration and ordering of life-course states and events, rather than a priori assumptions. For example, Van Winkle (2018) demonstrated a general shift away from early family formation trajectories in Europe, but also reveals that family life-courses involving independent living and cohabitation have long existed in the Nordic countries. Therefore, sequence analysis is useful as exploratory method to discover patterns and validate assumptions on the patterns most prevalent in a population.

Sequences analysis has great potential as an additional tool in the methodological toolbox for research on the link between family policy and women's employment. Previous research demonstrating the importance of institutional (Pettit and Hook 2005; e.g. Gornick and Meyers 2003) and normative contexts (Boeckmann, Misra, and Budig 2015) for variation in female employment by comparing mothers and non-mothers often lacks a life-course perspective. However, the timing and occurrence of family events, such as marriage and parenthood, and employment events, such as exiting the labor market or re-entering into part-time employment, is embedded in the life-course and socio-historic context (Elder 1994). Sequence analysis enables scholars to study how policy and norms influence family and employment life-course patterns in a holistic manner.

Three steps are necessary when using sequence analysis to empirically establish patterns: 1) define the sequence states, 2) calculate sequence dissimilarities, and 3) subject the dissimilarities to cluster analysis. Our family and employment life-course trajectories are operationalized as sequences composed of thirty-five consecutive annual states from age fifteen to fifty. Therefore, our sequences capture not only early life-course events, e.g. leaving the parental home, but also later life events, e.g. divorce and remarriage.

Our family sequence states include living in the parental home, living outside the parental home

and not cohabiting, cohabiting, married, or divorced; each with or without a child. For employment sequence states, women can either be in education, retired, unemployed, inactive, employed part-time, or employed full-time. We filled in missing employment states between the years 1939 and 1955 with a WW II gap state and included general gap states for persons with missing state information for a maximum of six years. This allows us to generate family sequences for 26,474 women and employment sequences for 29,363 women.

We then calculate distances between every pair of family sequences and every pair of employment sequences. We opted for Longest Common Subsequence sequence distance, which stresses the prevalence and ordering of sequence states (see Studer and Ritschard 2016 for a review). Finally, we apply the family and employment sequence distance matrixes to a partitioning around medoids clustering algorithm. Cluster analysis is a tool to simplify complex data and empirically identify groups with sequences that are maximally similar to one another within their group and maximally dissimilar to sequences from other groups (Studer 2013). We extract a five cluster solution for our family sequences and a three cluster solution for our employment sequences after a consideration of both the average width silhouette values and substance (see the supplementary material for a further discussion of sequence distance and clustering).

4.1 Indexes for policies and norms

In our second analytical step, we use principle components analysis (PCA) and data from numerous sources to generate a policy index for defamilization and a norms index for gender egalitarianism. We will use these indices with the family and employment clusters identified in step one to analyze how policies and norms moderate the relationship between family and employment clusters. Each index is created in three steps: 1) policy and norms indicators that vary across country-years are collected, 2) one summary defamilization index and one summary gender egalitarianism index are created using PCA analyses on the policy and norms indicators, and 3) the indices that vary across country-years are transformed to indices that vary across country-cohorts. We now first describe the construction of our defamilization index followed by a description of our gender egalitarianism index. The online supplementary material includes an application of this procedure to create a familization index used in supplementary analyses not discussed in the article.

The first of three steps to generate our defamilization index is to construct a country-year dataset with annual information on work-family policies for each country from 1924-2006. Our dataset includes:

1. the availability of public early childcare starting at age 1 (yes/no)³,
2. the availability of public preschool childcare starting at age 3 (yes/no)⁵,
3. the availability of old age social pensions (yes/no)⁴,
4. the standardized duration of paid paternity leave (0-1)⁵,
5. the number of weeks of job-protected parental leave (0-100)⁴,
6. and the number of weeks of paid parental leave (0-100)⁴.

Second, we use PCA to empirically produce a weighted additive index summarizing the six variables listed above. Weighted additive indexes generated through PCA have at least three advantages over simply adding the absolute values of the variables above into one index: a) Additive indexes assume that every indicator is equally important given the indicators have an equal empirical range. b) If indicators do not have an equal empirical range, those indicators with larger values would be more dominant. PCA addresses both issues by generating empirical weights that assure no indicator is too dominant, while giving indicators that are highly correlated with the others a larger weight; c) More conceptually, PCA takes a latent variable approach: one latent policy dimension (defamilization) is generated from a number of manifest indicators. In our third step, we average the country-year index across the years that individuals were age fifteen to forty. For example, the value for a French woman born in 1924 will be the average of the French index from 1939-1974, i.e. the years the woman was between age fifteen and forty. Therefore, the final policy index is constant for persons from the same country and born in the same year.

The first of three steps to construct our gender egalitarianism index was to find a dataset that includes individuals' gender role attitudes from a wide range of countries and cohorts. We use five items from the family and gender role module of the 1988, 1994, 2002, and 2012 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) that address women's role in the household and the labor market. Respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree on a five-point scale to the following statements:

1. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.
2. A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
3. All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.

4. A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children.
5. Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.

The four surveys' responses to the five statements above stem from 49,588 respondents from our study countries born between 1894 and 1995. In the second step, we perform a PCA on the five items above to generate a weighted additive index, as was done above with the policy indicators. In a third step, we estimate country-cohort levels of gender egalitarianism by regressing the gender-egalitarian index of ISSP respondents on a quadratic birth year term. This is done in country-specific OLS linear regressions with data weighted to correct for unequal sampling probabilities within countries. We additionally include an indicator for the survey (1988, 1994, 2002, or 2012 ISSP), which reduces the possibility that our gender egalitarianism estimates are influenced by age or period effects. The estimated country-cohort gender egalitarianism index values are then merged to SHARELIFE respondents. Both indices have a mean of zero that represents the average defamilization and gender egalitarianism across our country-years and a standard deviation of one.

4.2 Models

We estimate the associations between our family and employment life-courses as well as their interactions with our defamilization and gender egalitarianism indexes using multinomial logistic regressions. We include a three-way interaction between our family clusters, defamilization index, and gender egalitarianism index. This allows us to gauge 1) the association between family and employment clusters (main effects), 2) whether those associations are moderated either by defamilization or gender egalitarianism (two-way interaction effects), and 3) whether the moderation effects are dependent on the values of defamilization and gender egalitarianism (three-way interaction effects).

We include country and cohort fixed-effects to ensure that our results are not driven by country or cohort differences that are confounded with our associations of interest. We additionally adjust for educational attainment as well as country-cohort indicators for the number of years in that respondents lived in a regime other than a liberal market democracy, and GDP (Bolt, Timmer, and van Zanden 2014; Manning 2017). These individual and country-cohort level characteristics are not only associated with individuals' family and employment life-courses, but also with the generosity of social systems beyond defamilization (Van Winkle and Fasang 2017; Van Winkle 2018a). We retain 25,934 women after listwise deletion.

5. Findings

5.1 Family life-courses and employment trajectories

The family and employment life-courses of our clusters are displayed in Figures 1 and 2, as relative frequency sequence plots, which display 100 representative sequences from each cluster on the left and a box plot of the dissimilarities from each sequence on the right (Fasang and Liao 2014).

Figure 1: Relative Frequency Plots of Family Life-Course Clusters

Figure 2: Relative Frequency Plots of Employment Life-Course Clusters

As shown in Figure 1, we identify five family life-course clusters: 1) delayed family formation, 2) early family formation, 3) childless marriage, 4) singlehood, and 5) divorce with children. Women in the early family formation cluster tend to enter marriage and then parenthood in their early twenties directly after leaving the parental home. Women in the delayed family clusters also enter parenthood shortly following marriage, but during their mid to late twenties. Early and delayed family formation are the largest clusters, comprising forty-eight and thirty-one percent of the sample, respectively. Three family life-course patterns diverge from these traditional marriage and parenthood patterns. While seven percent of respondents marry, but remain childless, roughly seven-and-a-half percent of women remain single and childless. Family trajectories involving divorce after entering marriage and parenthood are with six percent the smallest cluster.

Table 1: Distribution of Family and Employment Life-Course Clusters

We identify three employment clusters. The largest cluster with fifty-three percent of the sample contains women predominantly in continuous full-time employment. A majority of women in our second largest cluster with thirty-three percent of the sample enter the labor market in full-time employment, but permanently leave the labor force between ages twenty and thirty-five. In our third and smallest cluster with fourteen percent we see the same pattern, but women in this cluster re-enter the labor market in part-time employment.

5.2 Defamilization and gender egalitarianism

Our country-cohorts displayed in Figure 3 are cross-classified by their degree of defamilization and gender egalitarianism. Panel A shows the entire empirical range of the defamilization and gender egalitarianism indexes. As can be seen in Panel A, many of the country-cohorts are grouped near the mean. Therefore, Panel B displays only the country-cohorts within one standard deviation of the mean. Two main patterns emerge from Figure 3. A number of countries become more gender-egalitarian across cohorts, but do not shift towards more defamilization. For example, the 1924 Swiss birth cohort has low values of gender egalitarianism and defamilization, but Swiss cohorts become more gender-egalitarian as time progresses. A similar trend emerges for the Netherlands and Ireland.

Figure 3: Country-Cohorts by Defamilization and Gender egalitarianism

For most countries, more recent cohorts are not only more gender-egalitarian, but also experienced a greater degree of defamilization. For example, the 1924 West German birth cohort is low on both defamilization and gender egalitarianism, but the 1948 cohort reaches averages levels, and the 1954 cohort has comparatively high levels of both. A similar trend can be discerned for France, Sweden, Italy, Austria, Spain and Belgium. Younger birth cohorts in East Germany, Denmark and the Czech Republic also experience more gender-egalitarian values and greater levels of defamilization, but their starting levels are much higher than in any of the other countries.

5.3 Work-family reconciliation across time and space

The results of the multinomial logistic regression on women's employment cluster membership are displayed in Figure A1 (supplementary material). Predicted probabilities of employment cluster membership by family clusters are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Predicted Probably of Employment Cluster Membership by Family Cluster

Figure 4 shows that family clusters are strongly associated with the probability of being in stable full-time employment, exiting the labor market following childbirth, or re-entering the labor market following childbirth. Although stable full-time employment is most probable across all family clusters, women without children and divorced women are most likely to work full-time across their lives. The probability that women in the early and delayed family

formation cluster belong to the stable full-time employment cluster ranges between fifty and fifty-five percent, while the probability for divorced women approaches eighty percent. Correspondingly, women who enter marriage and parenthood but not divorce are more likely to exit the labor market than childless women and divorced women with children. In sum, our results support our first hypothesis that traditional family life-course patterns are associated more with employment life-course patterns characterized by low labor market attachment than union dissolution and childless patterns, which are associated with employment life-course patterns characterized by high labor market attachment.

Predicted probabilities of employment cluster membership by family cluster membership are displayed in Figure 5 by the degree of defamilization for women in low and high gender egalitarianism contexts. Panel A depicts the results for the probability of belonging to the re-entry into part-time cluster, panel B shows the result for labor market exit, and panel C the results for stable full-time employment. As can be seen in panel A, there are no instances where the association between family clusters and the probability of re-entering the labor market into part-time varies by levels of defamilization or gender egalitarianism. The only exception is the association between delayed family formation and re-entering the labor market into part-time: the probability of re-entering is higher in high gender-egalitarian contexts, but only in societies characterized by low levels of defamilization. In highly defamilized societies, gender egalitarianism has no influence on the association between delayed family formation and re-entering the labor market.

Figure 5: Predicted Probability of Employment Cluster Membership by Family Cluster, Defamilization, and Gender Egalitarianism

We find more evidence that defamilization and gender egalitarianism moderate the associations between family clusters and the probability of labor market exit, as displayed in panel B. The probability of women with early family formation to exit the labor market decreases considerably with the degrees of defamilization and gender egalitarianism. Moreover, the probability that women in the early family formation cluster exit the labor market decreases with increasing defamilization to a greater extent in contexts with low gender egalitarianism than in more gender-egalitarian contexts. For the other family clusters, we find that gender egalitarianism moderates their associations with the probability to exit the labor market. The probability that women in the married and childless cluster exit the labor market is considerably

higher in societies with low degrees of gender egalitarianism. Results are similar for women in the delayed family formation, singlehood, and divorce clusters, although differences by gender egalitarianism are small.

Defamilization and gender egalitarianism moderate the association between the early and delayed family formation clusters and the probability of remaining in stable full-time employment, as depicted in panel C. Specifically, the probability that women who married and entered parenthood remain employed increases considerably with the degree of defamilization and gender egalitarianism. Our results also indicate that the influence of defamilization on the association between delayed family formation and the probability of remaining in full-time employment is weaker in more gender-egalitarian contexts. Gender egalitarianism strengthens the relationship between childless marriage and stable full-time employment. Neither gender egalitarianism nor defamilization moderate the associations between the singlehood and divorce with children clusters and the probability of stable full-time employment.

In sum, with regard to defamilization, our results support our hypothesis H2a that the association between traditional family life-course patterns and employment life-course patterns characterized by low labor market attachment is weaker in contexts with higher levels of defamilization. However, we do not find evidence that the association between alternative family life-course patterns with children and employment life-course patterns characterized by high labor market attachment is stronger in contexts with higher defamilization (H2b). With regard to gender egalitarianism, we find consistent evidence supporting hypotheses H3a and H3b that the association between traditional and alternative family life-course patterns and employment life-course patterns characterized by low labor market attachment is weaker in more gender-egalitarian contexts. However, in contrast to hypotheses H4a and H4b, we find little evidence that the effect of defamilization is stronger with higher gender egalitarianism. There is some evidence that the association between traditional family life-course patterns and employment life-course patterns characterized by low labor market attachment is weaker in contexts with higher levels of defamilization and higher levels of gender egalitarianism.

6. Discussion and outlook

This article set out to examine the patterns of women's work-family reconciliation across the life-course, and the role of defamilizing policies and gender norms in a wide range of cohorts and countries. Starting point was the observation that research on women's employment in

different welfare state settings overwhelmingly takes a cross-sectional approach, using point-in-time measures for macro and micro-levels. Further, comparative research has commonly focused either on policies (Korpi, Ferrarini, and Englund 2013; Misra, Budig, and Boeckmann 2011; Pettit and Hook 2005; Gornick and Meyers 2003) or on cultural norms (Pfau-Effinger 1998; 2005; Kremer 2007; Fortin 2005) to explain differences in women's employment between countries, with quantitative studies 'adjusting' the analysis for the respective other factor.

Our study addresses these gaps, making two main contributions to the literature. First, we combine the comparative approach with a life-course design, moving beyond snapshot analyses of women's employment and welfare state configurations. Second, we consider policies and norms as two dimensions of welfare states, which can moderate links between family and employment life-courses. Our research questions were: a) what patterns of work-family reconciliation exist across European countries and birth cohorts, b) to what extent do defamilizing policies and gender-egalitarian norms moderate the association between family and employment life-courses, and c) are the moderating effects of defamilizing policies and gender norms contingent on one another?

Our results show that patterns of family life-courses characterized by the timing and ordering of fertility and union events and employment life-courses portraying different levels of labor market attachment are strongly linked. Findings support the expectation that traditional family life-course patterns are associated with employment life-course patterns characterized by low labor market attachment, while union dissolution with children and childless patterns are associated with employment life-courses characterized by high labor market attachment. Our hypotheses on the role of defamilizing policies and gender-egalitarian norms are partially supported. We find some evidence for defamilizing policies weakening the link between traditional family life-courses and low labor market attachment. Results showed that women with membership in traditional family life-course clusters are less likely to be members of the labor market exit cluster in defamilizing contexts. For example, in countries like Czech Republic and East Germany as well as in Denmark and Sweden, increasing levels of defamilization across cohorts coincided with higher levels of stable full-time employment for women who entered marriage and parenthood early. Further, we find support for our hypothesis that the association between alternative family life-course clusters with children and high labor market attachment strengthens in gender-egalitarian contexts. Women with traditional family

life-courses are less likely to have low labor market attachment if egalitarian norms prevail. Countries that had large shifts in gender egalitarianism such as the Netherlands, Belgium and France, provided the context for women with children that experienced divorce as well as those who did not experience divorce to remain active in the labor market. These country groupings resonate with breadwinner model classifications, such as the male-breadwinner – adult-worker dichotomy (Lewis 2001), and broadly line up with welfare state typologies, such as continental conservative, social democratic, and state socialist regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990).

In light of our third research question, our expectation that the associations between our family and employment clusters depend on both, levels of defamilization and gender egalitarianism, is not supported. That means, policies that reduce family responsibilities enable women to reconcile work and family life regardless of the cultural normative context, and gender-egalitarian norms can facilitate women's labor market attachment independently of the policy landscape. Our approach adds to the classical regime typology literature by making two central dimensions of socio-historic context, and life-course outcomes empirically visible.

This article provides an empirical map of the work-family reconciliation landscape in large parts of Europe throughout the last century, and casts light on the role of norms and policies in shaping these patterns. We find a polarized structure of women's work-family life-courses. On the one hand, in line with the idea of a strong female housewife norm, we find only small differences in the probability to have a low labor market attachment trajectory among women with traditional ordering of fertility and union events, regardless of the timing of these events in the life-course. Governments are moderately able to intervene in this relationship by providing defamilizing policies that reduce family responsibilities, mostly by preventing mothers to exit the labor market after childbirth. On the other side of the divide, we find women with family life-courses that deviate from the normative model in their occurrence and order of family events, staying childless as single or within marriage, or experiencing union dissolution. These vastly diverging alternative family life patterns have in common the increased probability of high labor market attachment across the life-course. The power of norms is underscored by the finding that the labor market attachment penalties of experiencing union dissolution with children are reduced in gender-egalitarian contexts. Unsurprisingly, defamilization does not play a role for lifetime childless singles and couples. However, gender egalitarianism strongly reduces the probability of childless women's labor market exit.

Our findings deem concerns about family policies being powerless in culturally unsupportive settings unwarranted. Rather, the analyses are in line both with research that highlights the role of policies for women's employment (Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993), and with research that adds the dimension of cultural norms (Pfau-Effinger 1998; 2005). Defamilization does not depend on norms to be permissive. Based on this observation we can contend that policies are important instruments for improving work-family reconciliation among women. One qualification has to be made. Defamilizing policies appear not to be equally useful for all women and employment outcomes alike. Most of all, defamilizing policies seem to prevent labor market exit, and make part-time employment after childbirth a feasible option for women with traditional family life-courses. In line with the comparative welfare state literature, cultural norms on women's employment are decisive in shaping different levels of labor market participation across time and countries. Our analyses made visible what is perhaps implicit to that literature; that gender egalitarianism is particularly relevant for labor market attachment of mothers with non-normative family life-courses.

7. Notes

¹ The remainder of this article focuses exclusively on defamilizing policies, but the supplementary material contains additional analyses on the role of familizing policies.

² Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany (East), Germany (West), Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland. Germany (East) and Germany (West) are treated as separate countries, because our German respondents spent most of their life-time within separate societies.

³ see Garrouste (2010)

⁴ See the Country Fact Files of HelpAge International: <http://www.pension-watch.net/country-fact-file/>

⁵ see the DICE Database (2015)

8. Literature

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10.Tables & Figures

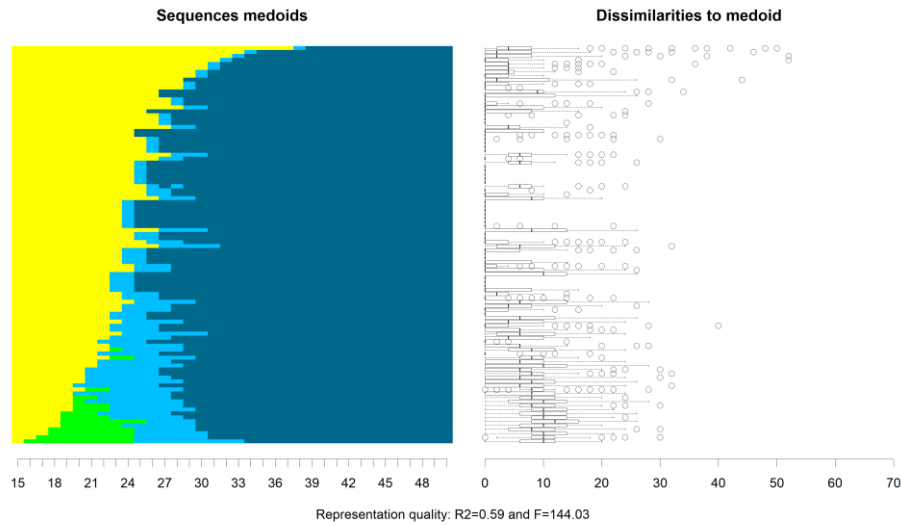
Table 1: Distribution of Family and Employment Life-course Clusters

	<i>Family Clusters</i>				
	Delayed Family Formation	Early Family Formation	Childless Marriage	Singlehood	Divorce with Children
N	9,698	15,307	2,285	2,084	1,980
%	31.23	47.89	7.17	7.47	6.25
<hr/>					
	<i>Employment Clusters</i>				
	Re-Entry into Part-time	Labor Market Exit	Stable Full-time		
N	3,855	8,596	16,105		
%	13.60	33.25	53.15		
<hr/>					
<i>N</i>	31,354				

Note: Absolute frequencies and percentages displayed. Data weighted.

Figure 1: Relative Frequency Plots of Family Life-course Clusters

Delayed Family Formation



Early Family Formation

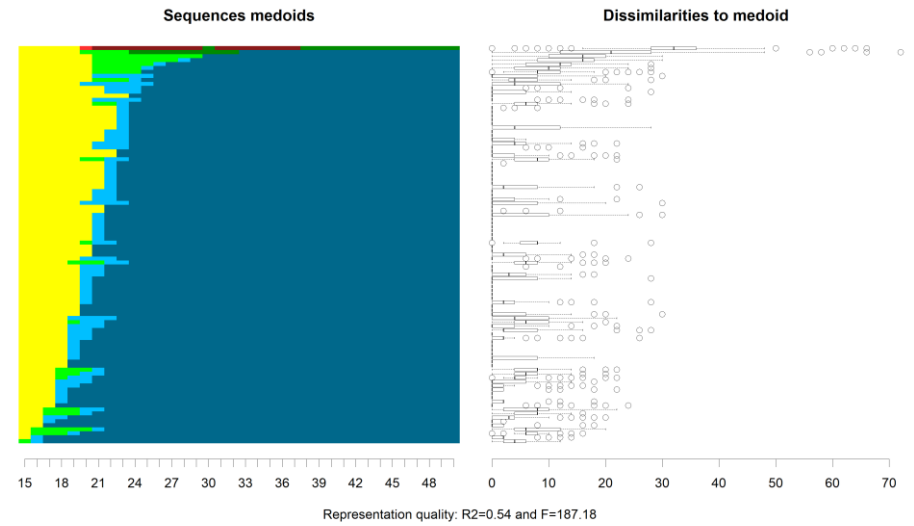
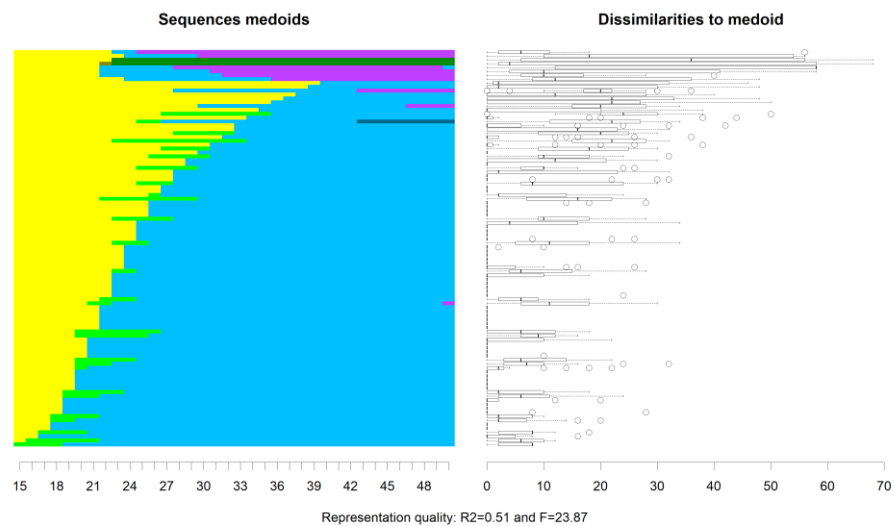


Figure 1, continued

Childless Marriage



Singlehood

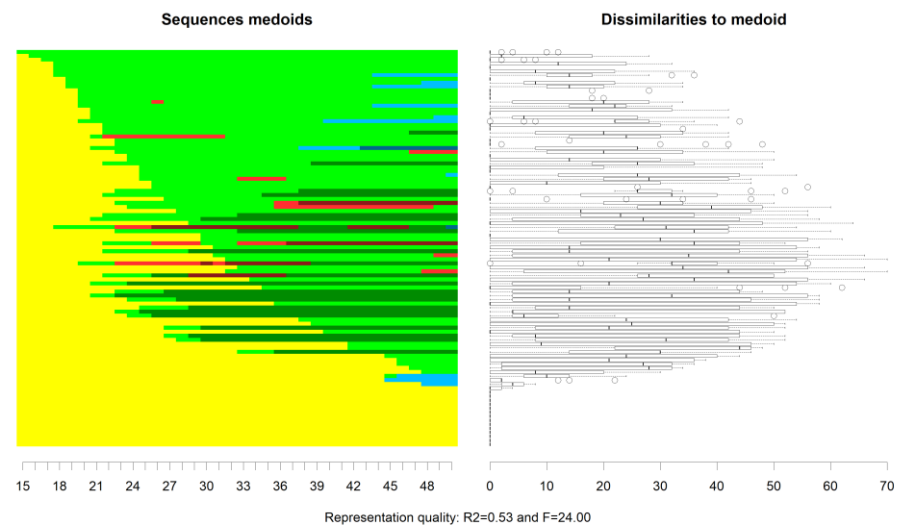
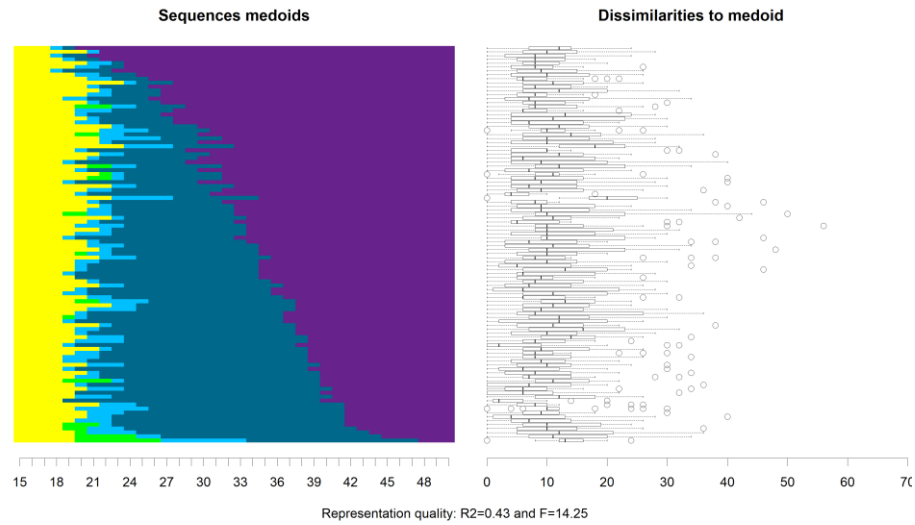


Figure 1, continued

Divorce with Children

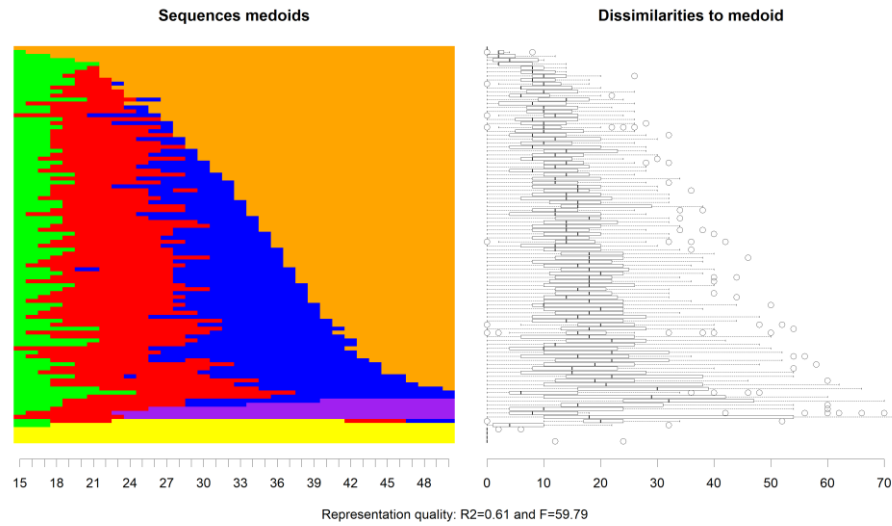


Legend

- Parental Home
- Parental Home, Children
- Single
- Single, Children
- Cohabiting
- Cohabiting, Children
- Married
- Married, Children
- Divorced
- Divorced, Children

Figure 2: Relative Frequency Plots of Employment Life-course Clusters

Re-Entry into Part-Time Employment



Labour Market Exit

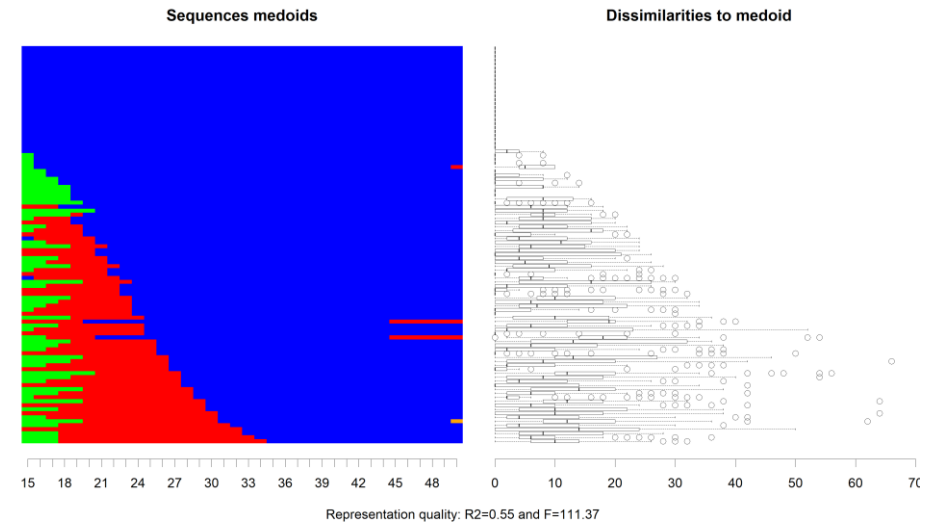
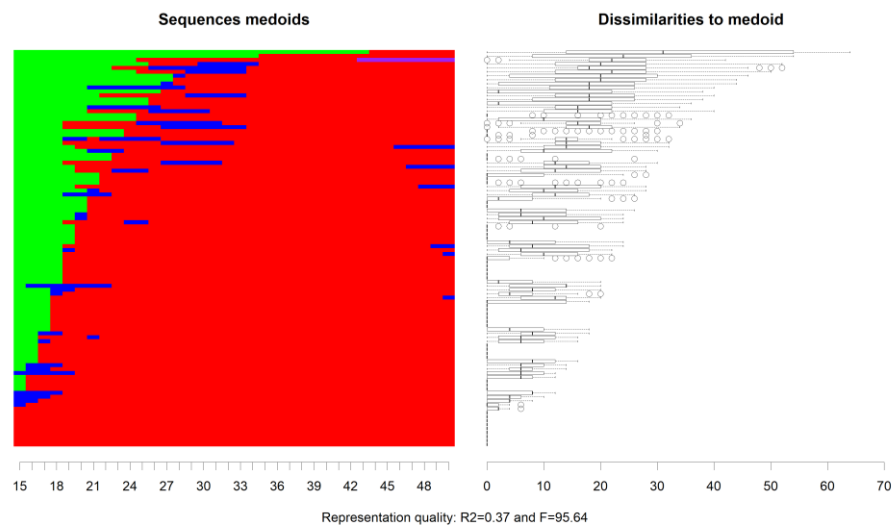


Figure 2, continued

Stable Full-Time Employment



Legend

- Education
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Not Employed
- WWII Gap State
- Missing
- Full time
- Part time

Figure 3: Country-Cohorts by Defamilization and Gender egalitarianism

Panel A



Panel B

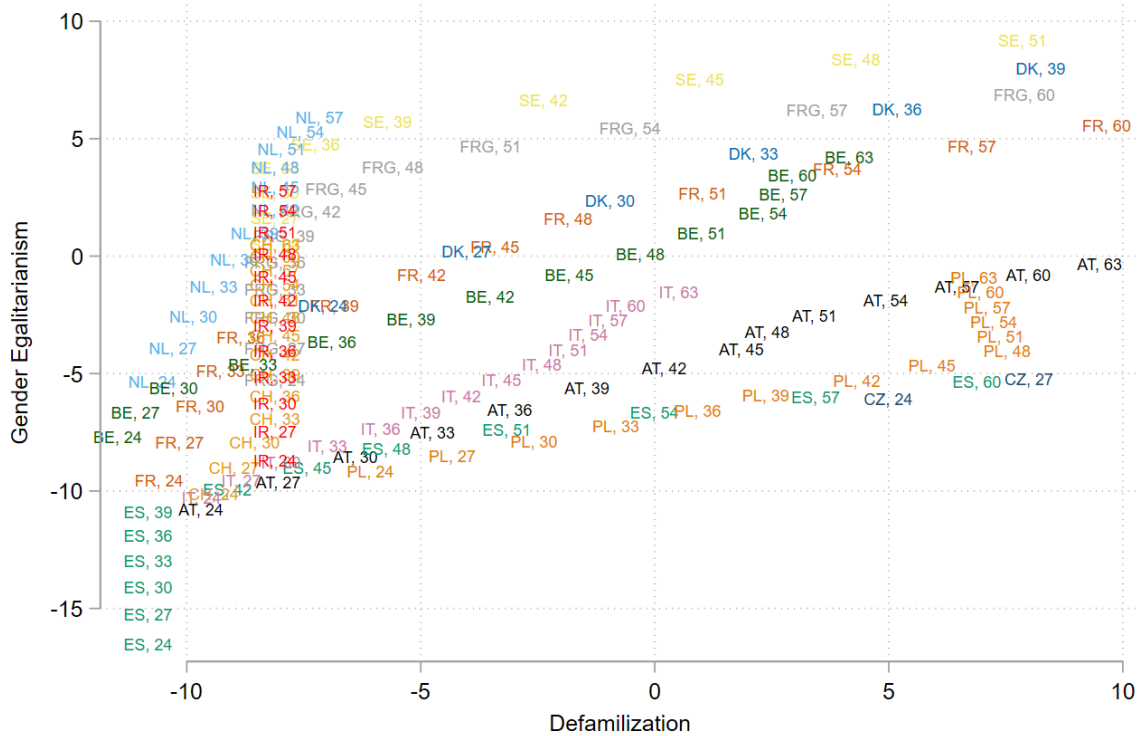


Figure 4: Predicted Probability of Employment Cluster Membership by Family Cluster

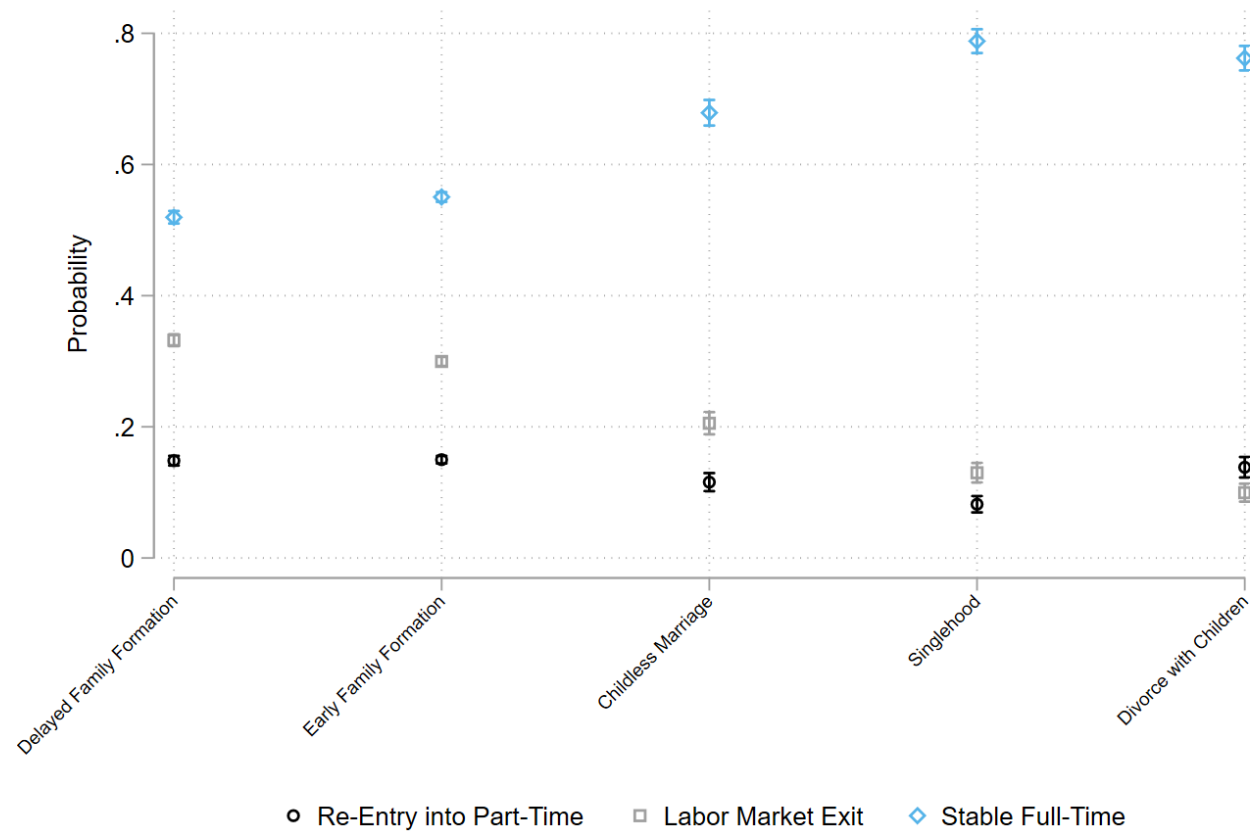
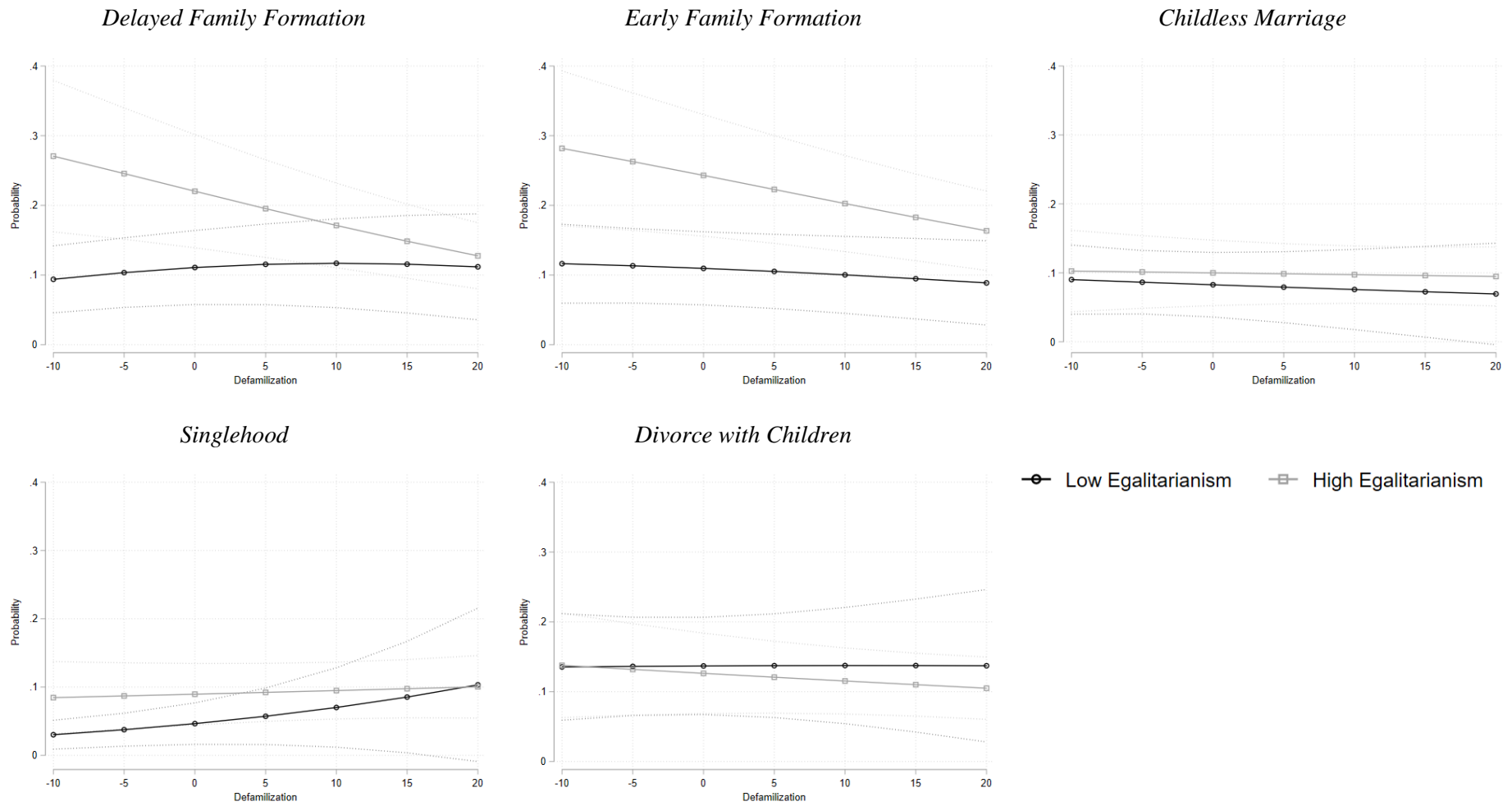


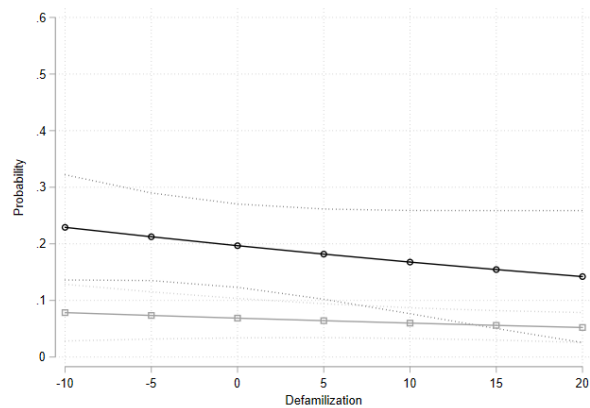
Figure 5: Predicted Probability of Employment Cluster Membership by Family Cluster, Defamilization, and Gender egalitarianism

A) Re-Entry into Part-Time

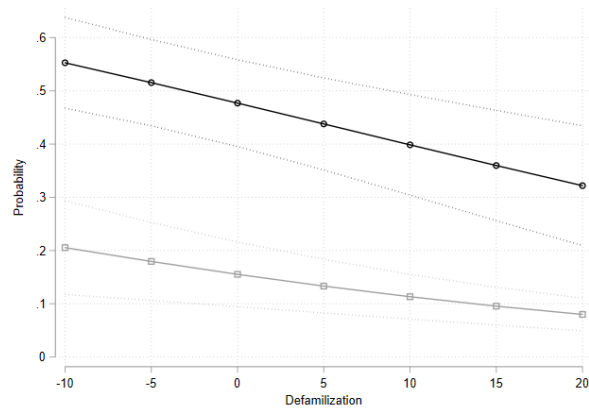


B) Labor Market Exit

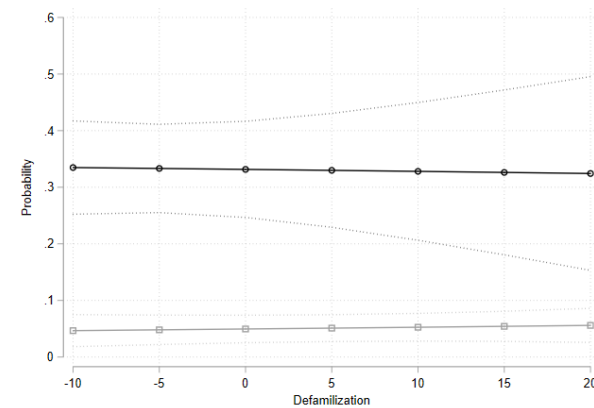
Delayed Family Formation



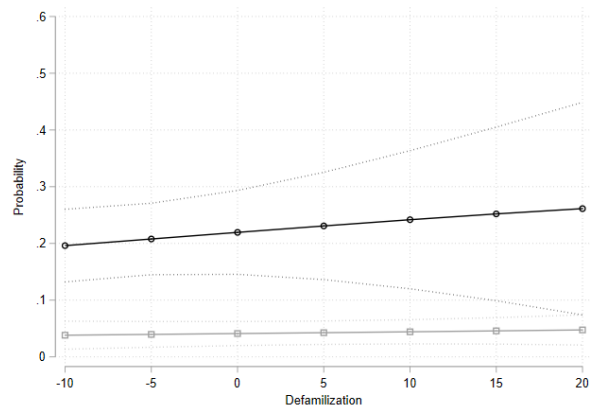
Early Family Formation



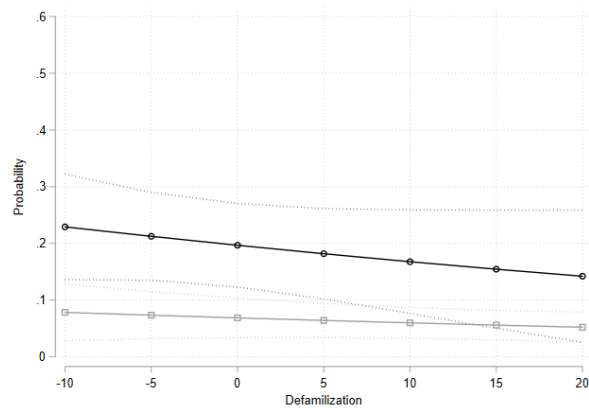
Childless Marriage



Singlehood



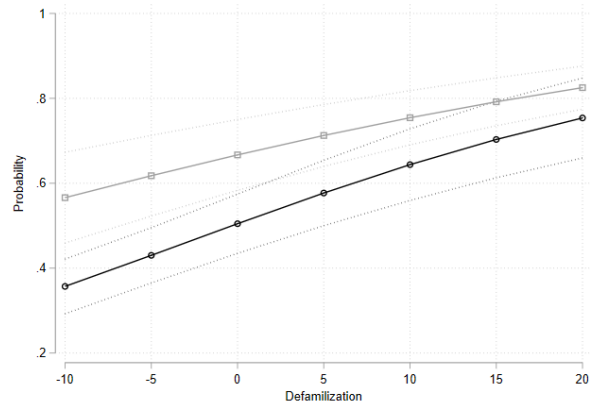
Divorce with Children



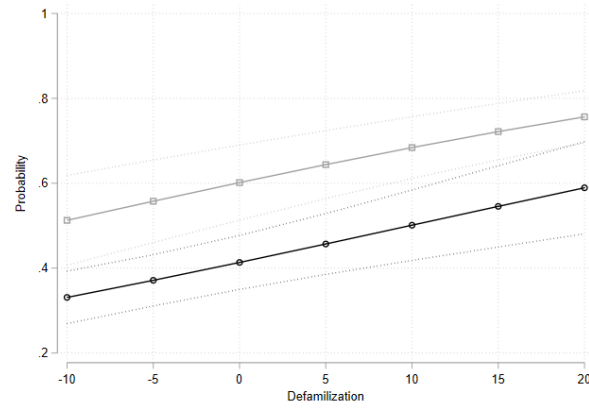
—○— Low Egalitarianism —□— High Egalitarianism

C) Stable Full-Time Employment

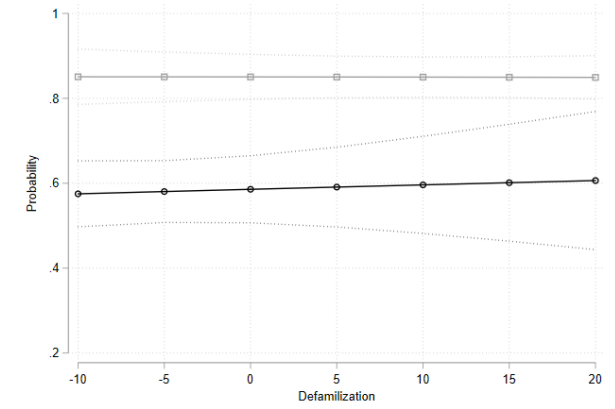
Delayed Family Formation



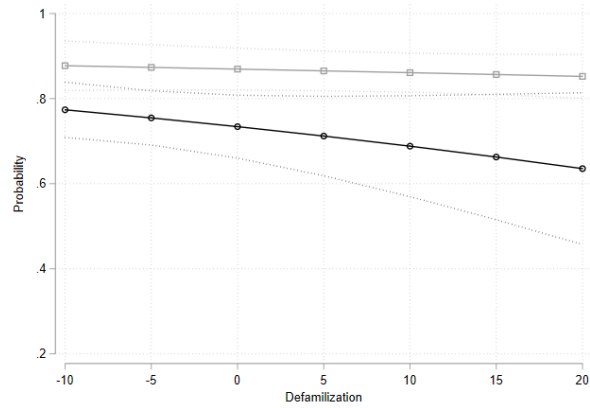
Early Family Formation



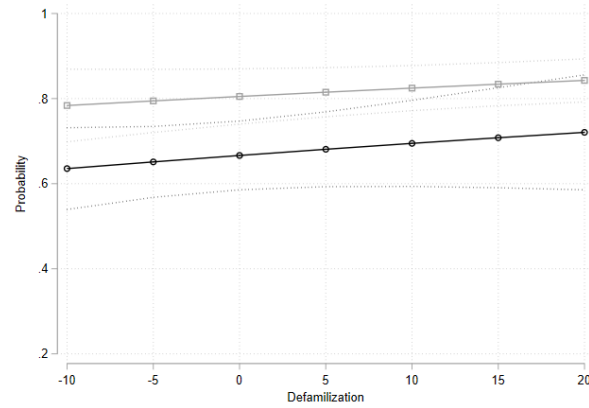
Childless Marriage



Singlehood



Divorce with Children



—○— Low Egalitarianism —□— High Egalitarianism

Supplementary material

Figure A1: Multinomial Logistic Regression Results of Family Clusters, Defamilization, and Gender egalitarianism on Employment Cluster Membership (ref. Stable Full-time Employment)

	Re-entry into Part-time	Labour Market Exit
Family Clusters		
(ref. Delayed Family Formation)		
Early Family Formation	0.150** (0.05)	0.223*** (0.05)
Childless Marriage	-0.898*** (0.10)	-0.901*** (0.09)
Singlehood	-1.421*** (0.12)	-1.287*** (0.10)
Divorce with Children	-0.552*** (0.10)	-1.061*** (0.10)
Defamilization		
	-0.036** (0.01)	-0.061*** (0.01)
Family Clusters*Defamilization		
(ref. Delayed Family Formation)		
Early Family Formation	-0.002 (0.01)	0.021** (0.01)
Childless Marriage	0.028 (0.01)	0.071*** (0.01)
Singlehood	0.065*** (0.02)	0.081*** (0.01)
Divorce with Children	0.025* (0.01)	0.046*** (0.01)
Gender Egalitarianism		
	-0.025 (0.04)	-0.067* (0.03)
Family Clusters*Gender Egalitarianism		
(ref. Delayed Family Formation)		
Early Family Formation	0.000 (0.01)	-0.005 (0.01)
Childless Marriage	-0.044* (0.02)	-0.060*** (0.02)
Singlehood	-0.000 (0.02)	-0.030 (0.02)
Divorce with Children	-0.048* (0.02)	0.004 (0.02)
Defamilization*Gender Egalitarianism		
	-0.001 (0.00)	0.001 (0.00)

Family Clusters*Defamilization		
*Gender Egalitarianism		
(ref. Delayed Family Formation)		
Early Family Formation	0.001*	-0.001*
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Childless Marriage	0.002	-0.000
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Singlehood	-0.001	-0.002
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Divorce with Children	0.001	-0.000
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Constant	-3.107***	-2.022***
	(0.74)	(0.59)

N	25,934
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Note: Unstandardized coefficients and standard errors in parentheses displayed. Statistical significance denoted as * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Country and cohort fixed-effects as well as GDP, years of authoritarianism, and educational attainment omitted. Data weighted.