

Gender equality in Europe and the effect of work-family balance policies on gender-role attitudes ^[1]

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Abstract

This study starts from the assumption that the context of opportunities for work-family balance affects individual attitudes toward gender roles, a main indicator of support for gender equality. Compared with extant research, the present study adopts a more articulated definition of “opportunity structure” that includes national income level and social norms on gender attitudes, measures of gender-mainstreaming policies implemented at the company level (flextime), and different work-family balance policies in support of the dual-earner/dual-caregiver family model (e.g., parental-leave schemes and childcare provisions). The effects of these factors are estimated by performing a cross-sectional multilevel analysis for the year 2014. Gender-role attitudes and micro-level controls are taken from the Eurobarometer for all 28 European Union (EU) members, while macro-indicators stem from Eurostat, European Quality of Work Survey, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Our results show that both institutional and workplace arrangements supporting the dual-earner/dual-caregiver family model are associated with more egalitarian gender-role attitudes. This is particularly true concerning availability of formal childcare for 0- to 3-year-olds among institutional factors, as well as work-schedule flexibility among workplace factors, probably as they enable a combination of care and paid work for both men and women.

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