

Gender ideologies: Formation, consequences, and evolution

Thursday 4 September, 11.30am

Happiness at Home? The Interplay of Gender Role Ideology and Labor Division in Shaping Well-being **Grace Chang, Matthew Henglong Luo - University of Oxford**

Recent decades have seen growing social science interest in mental well-being and subjective life evaluation, offering insights into how to enhance life quality and health. This study asks: Does gender equality influence individual subjective well-being? Specifically, we examine within heterosexual couples: (a) how the division of paid and unpaid labor affects happiness and life satisfaction; (b) how gender role ideologies shape happiness and life satisfaction; and (c) how the interaction between labor division and ideologies influences these outcomes.

We use the UK Generations and Gender Survey (2022-23), a stratified national probability sample, to study heterosexual couples. Using ordinary least squares models, we find that individuals who do more or less hours of paid work than their partner, compared to couples who work similar hours, are associated with lower life satisfaction and happiness. Individuals in relationships where women do more unpaid labor than men, have lower life satisfaction, but this is not statistically significant for happiness. More traditional individual gender ideology is associated with lower happiness and life satisfaction, but there are no statistically significant interaction associations between ideology, labor, and well-being.

With a comprehensive analysis of how the actual division of labor, the ideologies thereof, and their interaction affect both the affective (happiness) and cognitive components (life satisfaction), our findings further the understanding of the mental health implications of household gender dynamics and offer insights into promoting well-being through more equitable divisions of labor.

Email: grace.chang@sociology.ox.ac.uk

Mind the Gender Gap: Gender Role Attitudes and Their Impact on Union Formation in Europe **Alina-Maria Pavelea, Anna Matysiak - University of Warsaw**

In most developed countries marriage rates are dropping, while the rise in cohabitation is not compensating for this decline. As a result, singlehood is on the rise, particularly among young people. Although some individuals choose to remain single, a substantial proportion do so involuntarily, unable to find a compatible partner. Compatibility often hinges on shared traits and values, as individuals tend to seek partners similar to themselves—a phenomenon known as assortative mating. Due to these assortative mating tendencies, imbalances between men and women with similar traits can influence union formation, reducing the pool of potential partners. One such imbalance is the gap in gender role attitudes between men and women, which could help explain the trends in rising singlehood. However, studies that examine this gap in gender role attitudes and its impact on singlehood are missing.

This study aims to fill this gap by drawing on data from the EVS, WVS, and ESS (1981–2022) to examine changes in gender role attitudes among young adults (18–29) across countries and cohorts. Our findings reveal a persistent gender gap, with women consistently holding more egalitarian views, particularly regarding men's roles in domestic and caregiving responsibilities. This attitudinal mismatch reduces the pool of mutually compatible partners, particularly disadvantaging egalitarian women and traditional men. Our analysis suggests that countries with wider gender attitude gaps have lower union rates among egalitarian women and traditional men, highlighting a growing mismatch in partner preferences.

Email: a.pavelea@uw.edu.pl

Gender Role Attitudes and Marriage Outcomes in China **Ruhua Ma - University of York**

China has witnessed the lowest marriage rate of 4.3 in 2014, alongside with marriage delay. Changing gender roles may play a part in this – with women increasingly more likely to access higher education and gain financial independence. This emancipation has also paved the way for a shift in gender role attitudes during

marriage – with more highly educated women expecting their future spouse to more equally share care and housework. Men’s attitudes have not, however, shifted away from the male breadwinner – female carer norm to the same extent. This might mean women are less likely to marry if they perceive their spouse will fall short of their own more egalitarian expectations.

While qualitative studies have explored how gender role expectations shape women’s marriage decisions, we know little about how gender role attitudes predict the likelihood of marrying from a quantitative perspective, and whether it have different impacts on marriage formation for both genders. I address these gaps by using data from the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS), to examine how far premarital gender role attitudes in 2014 predict marriage outcomes in 2020, employing discrete-time event history analysis.

Results indicate that more egalitarian gender role attitudes significantly decrease odds of marriage for women even after controlling demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Men who are more egalitarian also have lower chances of marriage entry. However, this effect disappears when financial indicators are included. This paper provides insights into the declining marriage trends from the gender perspective in a non-Western society currently experiencing modernisation.

Email: ruhua.ma@york.ac.uk