

The Slowly Emerging Second Half of the Gender Revolution: Will it Strengthen the Family?

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ABSTRACT (217 wds)

This paper argues that the trends normally linked with the second demographic transition (SDT) may be reversed as the gender revolution moves into its second half, which is including men more centrally in the family and its tasks. We develop a theoretical argument about the emerging consequences of this stage of the gender revolution and review research results that bear on it. The theoretical argument compares the determinants and consequences of recent family trends in industrialized societies provided by two narratives 1) the SDT and 2) the gender revolution in the public and private spheres. Our argument examines differences in theoretical foundations (ideational vs. structural) and positive vs. negative implications for the future, centering on how each views the importance of gender and intergenerational relationships in people's lives.

In our review of the empirical literature, we focus primarily on the growing evidence for turn-arounds in the relationships between measures of women's human capital (education and labor force participation) and the demographic outcomes of union formation, fertility, and union dissolution. Although the family trends underlying these two narratives are ongoing and a convincing view of the phenomenon as a whole has not yet emerged definitively, the wide range of recent research results we review documenting changing, even reversing relationships suggests that the gender approach is the more fruitful one.

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INTRODUCTION

As is well known, there have been major changes in family processes in industrialized countries, frequently referred to as the “second demographic transition” (SDT) (Lesthaeghe 2010; van de Kaa 1987). There has been a retreat from marriage, with increasing numbers of adults disrupting their couple relationships and delaying or avoiding them, either entering cohabiting relationships or living outside a partnership altogether. Further, child-bearing and child-raising have become increasingly separated from marriage, with great increases in the numbers of children born non-maritally, either in cohabitation or to single mothers. These changes have occurred in conjunction with the growth in female labor force participation. During its early growth, female labor force participation has been linked with trends toward delayed and never-marriage (Espenshade 1985), low and often lowest-low fertility (Bernhardt 1993; Brewster and Rindfuss 2000) and increased union dissolution (Ruggles 1997). However, evidence is accumulating that many of these long-observed linkages are weakening and some are even reversing. As we will argue, these weakening and reversing linkages are rooted in changing gender relationships, as female employment has become not only ubiquitous, but expected.

Most dramatic is the fertility turnaround. The countries of southern Europe that once had the highest fertility and the lowest levels of female labor force participation (e.g., Italy, Spain, and Greece) now have the lowest levels of fertility, despite still having low levels of female labor force participation (Engelhardt, Kögel, and Prskawetz 2004; Rindfuss and Brewster 1996), even

11 November 2014

if some upturns have been reported recently (Goldstein, Sobotka, and Jasilioniene 2009; Sobotka, Zema, Lesthaeghe, Frejka, and Neels 2011). The highest fertility in Europe is now found among the countries with the highest levels of female labor force participation. Although the early studies were primarily at the macro-level, with their potential for aggregation fallacies, increasingly these changes are being observed at the individual level (Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Brandén 2013; Torr and Short 2004). There are also many other turnarounds underway in relationships between gender roles and family formation, growth, and union dissolution.

Evidence of these softening or even reversing gender-related relationships is quite recent. Most theorists who have sought to explain the longer-standing family trends (e.g., Hakim 2001; Lesthaeghe 2010; Thornton 2001) have continued to support their ideational theories, sometimes incorporating gender as a minor part of the story (e.g., Lesthaeghe 2011). However, an important theoretical approach has developed over the past decade or so that argues that gender is indeed very important for the reversals in fertility. This approach links these reversals with the growth in state policies that provide support for families, encouraging both parental employment and childbearing by reducing work-family conflict for those with active parenting roles (e.g., McDonald 2000; Hoem 1993). Our approach, while not dismissing the importance of extra-family supports that reduce parents' work-family conflict, identifies reversals for other family behaviors in addition to fertility, which are less affected by these state policies. We understand these reversals instead to be fundamentally linked with the on-going gender revolution, and in particular, with the increases in men's involvement in the home. We argue that the growth in female labor force participation should be seen as just the first half of a profound gender revolution. That early part of the gender revolution, in which more and more women joined men in the public sphere of work and employment, might indeed have stressed family relationships,

11 November 2014

but as the second half of the gender revolution slowly emerges, i.e., men's joining women in the private sphere of the family, we argue that the gender revolution is actually strengthening families.

This paper will use examples from recent studies of union formation, fertility and union dissolution, together with studies of gender roles in the family, in order to make a larger argument about the positive effects of the second half of the gender revolution on the family. We posit that the negative aspects of family change linked with the SDT really reflect the early stresses on the family imposed by the first half of the gender revolution, and that the particularly problematic elements (very low fertility and union formation and high levels of union dissolution) can be reduced by the 'completion' of the second half of the gender revolution. We will focus on three central outcome measures—union formation, fertility and union dissolution—and their changing linkages with male and female education and female labor force participation. We will also examine the processes that mediate these relationships, including studies that examine the determinants and consequences of both gender role attitudes (of different kinds) and actual sharing of housework and childcare. We include results of analyses of the actual sharing of parental leave and work adjustments to parenthood, all of which support our view that “the second half of the gender revolution” may strengthen families.

THE SDT AND THE GENDER REVOLUTION

The Second Demographic Transition

Although the SDT is normally a statement of trends, Lesthaeghe (2010) has made a major theoretical statement, arguing that the SDT has resulted because people's family relationships have become dramatically subsidiary to individualistic concerns, once they achieve material well-being, leaving them free to pursue their “higher order needs” (Lesthaeghe 2010, citing Maslow

11 November 2014

1954), which are assumed to be highly individualistic and expressive (see also Giddens 1991). Couple relationships are seen as weakly committed and transitory, and parenthood is frequently minimized or avoided altogether, leading to well below-replacement fertility. Similar themes have been developed by Inglehart (1997) in the realm of political expression. These ideational trends are seen as based on secularization (Kertzer, White, Bernardi, and Gabrielli 2009; Lesthaeghe 2010), together with growing aspirations for high levels of consumption and leisure. Increasingly, these trends have been found to be spreading beyond the early industrializing countries to include Asia (Lesthaeghe 2010) and Latin America (Esteve, Lesthaeghe and Lopez-Gay 2012).

Researchers have found the SDT to be a useful shorthand to refer to this complex of family trends, but there is little consensus on what their determinants and consequences might be, or on how general they are (Bernhardt 2004; Cliquet 1992; Coleman 2004; van de Kaa 2004). We agree with Lesthaeghe that these trends, while rooted in the original demographic transition, are also quite different; we also expect, like Lesthaeghe, that they are likely to extend well beyond the European continent. They are, in fact, the result of the gender revolution.

The Two-Part Gender Revolution

How might the family trends that began in just the past few decades originate in the original demographic transition? In fact, their roots go at least that far back, because the gender revolution is producing shifts that in many ways continue the changes initiated by the industrial revolution (Stanfors and Goldscheider 2014). The first demographic transition focused nearly entirely on intergenerational family relationships, as couples reduced their fertility in reaction, in part, to declining mortality, and in part to the changing economic relationships between the generations. Children became relatively much more expensive, with the extension of education, while they also became much less necessary to their parents, either as useful labor while children

11 November 2014

or as future partners and inheritors, with the dwindling of the role of family farms and businesses in the economy (Davis 1945; Demeny 1968; Thompson 1929).

The gender revolution, in contrast, focuses less on the family's intergenerational relationships than on the family's other axis, its gender relationships. The seeds of the gender revolution were planted by the industrial revolution, but its results have only been emerging conspicuously over the past 50 or so years in most industrialized countries. It is a revolution with two parts, reflecting the ways the industrial revolution first reshaped society and then reshaped the relationships between men and women.

The early industrial revolution essentially created two spheres of human activity, the public and the private. The formerly dominant agricultural subsistence family economy closely combined production and reproduction, but this combination broke down with urbanization and the growth of industry and commerce. The public sphere swelled with the increase of non-family activities, including paid work in factories and offices, as well as investment activities such as politics and education. From the beginning, at least among the countries earliest to industrialize, the public sphere was dominated by men; the private sphere became exclusively the realm of the home and family. Further, the family became increasingly privatized and left to women. Men withdrew to more productive activities outside the home and then children withdrew into a life dominated from a fairly early age by educational institutions (Walters 1984).

Hence, the first part of the gender revolution in industrialized countries began when women emerged out of the home into the public sphere.ⁱ Women undertook new roles that provided more support for their families than they could produce in their domestic roles, much as technological change brought men out of the agricultural household economy a century earlier for the same reason.

11 November 2014

The gender revolution is an extension of the demographic transition, as well. The demographic transition causes a massive restructuring of adult lives, particularly women's, resulting from the declines in fertility and mortality. These demographic changes re-shaped the female life course because, with smaller families and longer lives, caring for the young could no longer be a life-long, full-time career for them, as it had always been until well into the 20th century (Watkins, Menken, and Bongaarts 1987). In the primarily agricultural economies of the 19th century, lives were relatively short. Although about half of the gain in life expectancy since then was due to the near-eradication of infant and early child mortality, half was not (Jacobson 1964, Fig. 1). When 19th century women married at about age 24 and bore four to six children over the next twelve to twenty years (not all of whom, of course, survived), they would have had children living at home until they were close to 60 years of age, by which time they were normally widowed and not in good health, themselves. Their adult years in large part *were* their childbearing and child raising years.

By the peak of the baby boom 100 years later, however, when young adults married and had children at very young ages, women's structuring a life around home and family no longer fit the years the decline in mortality had given to them (Davis and van den Oever 1982). If women married at age 20, as they did in the United States in the early 1950s, and quickly had two to three children, when their last child started school they were still in their early 30s; when their last child left home, they were still in their mid- to late-40s, yet they could expect to live many more healthy years. This new demographic reality, then, facilitated women's move into the public sphere. Although the major analyses of the early growth of female labor force participation conclude that economic changes that created increasing demand for women's paid labor drove the growth in female labor force participation (see Oppenheimer 1970 and Goldin 1992 for the US; Durand, 1975 for a comparative analysis), the ways demographic changes had reshaped women's

11 November 2014

lives made them more able to accept this new demand. Hence, women's move into the public sphere was multiply determined. It had, as well, multiple repercussions on family life.

The first half of the gender revolution, the dramatic rise in labor force participation among women (including the mothers of small children), was seen to be, and to at least some extent *was*, a weakening of the family. Women had added substantial economic support responsibilities, with little relief from their family responsibilities. They had a "second shift," as it were (Hochschild and Machung 1989), putting pressure on them to compromise by delaying taking on the major family roles of marriage and parenthood and reducing their completed fertility. There is ample evidence that throughout the early years of the growth in female labor force participation, employed women married later and had fewer children than women who were not employed; women who had career plans expected to have fewer children than those who did not (see reviews in Andersson and Scott 2007, Bernhardt 1972, and Waite and Stolzenberg 1976). Employed women also reduced their time in housework (Aguiar and Hurst 2009) although not their time in childcare (Bianchi 2000).

There is also evidence, although weaker, that marriages in which the woman was employed were less stable than those in which she was not (see the review in Sayer and Bianchi 2000). Certainly, states in the U.S. with higher levels of female labor force participation have had higher levels of divorce over the past 100 years or so (Ruggles 1997), although the causal arrow in this case, as in most of the other studies of this relationship, is not clear (Johnson and Skinner 1986). Nevertheless, the massive rise in divorce paralleled the initial growth in female labor force participation.ⁱⁱ

Further, these new life course territories meant that husbands and wives spent fewer and fewer of their joint years as the parents of dependent children, increasing the need for re-negotiations with each transition. These become necessary when two-job couples become parents

11 November 2014

and mothers cut back on work and fathers become major supporters, when some women “return to work” and others confront the loss of their ‘job’ at the empty nest, and again as retirement ends men’s tasks but not women’s (Goldscheider 2000; Hofferth and Goldscheider forthcoming).

Whatever the reasons, however, the rise in divorce, together with the concomitant increase in approval for non-marital sexual relationships (Thornton and Young-de Marco 2001), have led both men and women to resist commitment, and hence, to the massive increases in cohabitation and nonmarital childbearing that are the key characteristics of the SDT (Sobotka 2008).

Hence, it may be that most of these SDT trends are the result of a structural shift in the relationships between men and women, which created a situation of considerable confusion about what men and women expect from each other, leading to what couples experience as endless negotiation. This would also reduce couples’ willingness to commit, and particularly to undertake perhaps the biggest commitment, which is having joint children. If so, when both the public sphere of employment and the private sphere of the home have gone through the gender revolution, in which not only is employment expected of adult women but housework and childcare are also expected of adult men, a new balance is likely to emerge, based on a more equal relationship between men and women, together with increased commitment to each other and men’s increased commitment to their children. This process is well underway in several countries, providing the basis for considerably more optimism about the strength of family relationships in industrialized countries.

The SDT and the Gender Revolution, Compared

These two narratives, the SDT and the gender revolution, attempt to account for the same set of facts. They differ strongly, however, in their approaches to explanation, their understandings of the meaning of family relationships in adults’ lives, and their views of the

11 November 2014

future. In this section, we draw out these contrasts. It is not unusual for such disagreements to exist in the midst of rapid change; rather, it is surprising that there have been so few. The view from the middle of any major demographic change is never clear. One does not know where it is going, how long it will last, or whether it will reverse, much less what had been causing it. Will it lead to disaster, a new equilibrium, or something else?

This was certainly the case with the (first) demographic transition, the major cause of which was assumed for a long time to be physiological. Some argued that social and economic changes, such as urban living or female education, were sapping humanity's "vital forces" and thus reducing fertility (see references in Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg 1973, 340). Although there is still not total agreement about the relative impacts on fertility decline of economic development and the diffusion of availability and willingness to use family planning technologies in some countries (Brown and Guinnane 2001; Coale and Watkins 1986; Friedlander, Okun and Segal 1999; Goldstein and Klüsener 2014), the physiological explanation for the fertility decline, at least, was finally ruled out, although not until the 1930s (Pearl 1939).

The post-World War II baby boom was equally puzzling. Moderate term projections for the US population made prior to the baby boom, e.g., in 1940, were dramatically lower than those made 20 years later, at its height (Duncan and Hauser 1959), which in turn were laughably higher than those of the 1980s, when it seemed a distant memory. In response, Easterlin (1978) developed a theory predicting that such oscillations would continue into the demographic future. As he expected the next peak in fertility to occur in 1984, however, this prediction was clearly not realized, although some have tried to account for the delay (Macunavich 1998; Van Bavel and Reher 2013).

It may take many more years before we have clarity on what the causes and consequences of the phenomena linked with the SDT really are. Nevertheless, it is time to assess alternative

explanations and likely trajectories, if only because, as we will argue, the implications of the SDT narrative are problematic. Unlike Easterlin, we do not predict oscillations, and unlike Lesthaeghe, we do not predict continued entropy, i.e., family heterogeneity and decline. As we discuss below, in fact, we predict a strengthening of the family. To get there will require many reversals in well-established relationships in the factors linked with family demographic phenomena, such as union formation, childbearing, and union dissolution. Is this reasonable, or even possible? In fact, the literature on reversals and “turn arounds” is growing rapidly, challenging theorists of family change, even if it is not yet clear what the implications of these reversals are.

Theoretical Differences: Ideation vs. Structure

In Lesthaeghe’s (2010) review (in which he cites his earlier statements with various co-authors going back to 1986), he theorizes that the SDT is responding to the development of new values, and is hence not rooted in structural conditions, beyond the growth in relative affluence. These new values are instead independent drivers of individual behavior. Lesthaeghe’s narrative thus joins Thornton’s “developmental idealism” (Thornton 2001) and Hakim’s “preference theory” (2001) by privileging ideation over structural conditions as explanations for important human behaviors, despite the ongoing changes underway in the relationships between men and women that powerfully structure each others’ choices as they contemplate union formation (see discussions in Breen and Cooke 2005 and Edin and Kefalas 2011).

Although preferences often strongly shape human behavior, it is inappropriate to privilege attitudes and ideas as major shapers of the family trends linked with the SDT, given how rapidly attitudes on family issues have been changing (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). The gender revolution is thoroughly structural, reshaping as it does the fundamental relationships between men and women. The gender construct of the “separate spheres” is neither biblical nor eternal; it

11 November 2014

emerged with industrialization and was the dominant force structuring adult gender relationships for approximately 100 years (Stanfors and Goldscheider 2014). The gender revolution is in the process of undermining that structure, first by inserting married mothers into the public sphere of the economy as co-breadwinners, and eventually by enfolding men into the private sphere of the family, as co-nurturers. With the completion of the gender revolution, the world is likely to experience at least somewhat higher fertility and greater family stability.

The Role of Family in Adult Lives

In addition to this theoretical difference between these two narratives, a second difference lies in their assessments of the role of family in adults' lives. It is clear that family roles and relationships are much less all-encompassing in the post-industrial world than they once were. Nevertheless, they continue to be extremely important in people's lives. Although they are less likely to consider them necessary, young Americans in high proportions continue to expect to have long-term conjugal relationships and nearly as many consider parenthood to be important in their future lives (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). In contrast, although never explicitly, Lesthaeghe implies that adults' having rewarding relationships with partners and children should not be considered among individuals' "higher order needs." Instead, he suggests, such relationships are part of the "solidarity and social group adherence and cohesion" (2010: 213) that is being superceded by individualism.

The importance of partnership and parenthood would seem to be a critical issue in any approach to the family changes that the SDT narrative addresses. Others writing on this issue often take an even stronger position, and express amazement that modern individuals would ever have children at all, and hence might feel averse to conjugal relationships that might involve them in their care. Coleman discusses parenthood only in terms of "duty", as well as "cost and

11 November 2014

inconvenience”; and “20 years of partial house arrest” (2004, p. 18). Although it seems likely that he is being ironic at this point, he is far from alone among scholars discussing family changes in assuming that any benefits to parenthood, as well as costs, would accrue only to women (Fuchs 1988; McDonald 2010; Romaniuk 2010). Most, like Lesthaeghe, avoid the subject altogether. Likely these scholars are accurately describing the current ideal male life course, which is both focused primarily on work and idealizes the freedom to have multiple, short-term relationships (McCarthy, Edwards, and Gillies 2000). But likely few women feel this way, or many men, either.

Even scholars who express enthusiasm about public policies that support families as a way to encourage fertility rarely mention the ways husbands and fathers might share in the care of their homes and children (e.g., Hoem 1993; McDonald 2000; Romaniuk 2010). There has been a substantial increase, however, of studies about the importance of fatherhood in men’s lives (e.g., Eggebeen 2001), as well as a great increase in father involvement in their children’s care.ⁱⁱⁱ

Future Trajectories

The third, and perhaps most critical, difference between the SDT and gender revolution narratives involves likely future trajectories. From its first articulation, the architects of the SDT narrative have taken a very negative view of the future consequences for families and populations; they appear to consider the behaviors linked with the SDT, particularly lowest-low fertility, to be permanent. Lesthaeghe describes these consequences in his review of his own and related studies (2010), including those of some of his critics. On the basis of this review, he rejects the optimistic view that the future families and populations of the world would achieve a “new balance” (i.e., zero population growth) based on low mortality and a matching level of replacement fertility, although later (2011; Sobotka et al. 2011) he and his co-authors

11 November 2014

acknowledge that the Nordic countries appear to have experienced a recovery of fertility. But overall, he expects low fertility as well as uncommitted relationships for the foreseeable future because “greater economic development produced a shift in concerns about material needs (subsistence, shelter, physical and economic security) to a focus on non-material needs (freedom of expression, participation and emancipation, self-realization and autonomy, recognition)” (Lesthaeghe 2010, p. 213).

In contrast, our understanding of the gender revolution sees many of the iconic SDT trends to be transitional. They are the consequences of the enormous destabilization in the relationships between men and women caused by the first half of the gender revolution. This is particularly the case for the very low levels of fertility and very high levels of union dissolution. Very low fertility challenges the survival of rich cultures, and eventually, the future of the human race. High levels of union dissolution disrupt the lives of all involved: the couples who have invested in each other and the children whose growth and security are undermined. Stabilizing fertility and unions is important; we see the continued progress of the gender revolution contributing to these valuable outcomes.

Some of the other trends that are frequently included as SDT phenomena, such as the growth of cohabitation and nonmarital childbearing, and the delay in union formation and parenthood, are of a very different order. Replacing legal/religious ceremonies with socially recognized “couple status”, which is what happens when cohabiting unions endure as a site for raising children, as is the case in many countries, is not a problem, and it is not clear why there has been such denial of this issue. Marriages, too, can be unstable; those in the United States are as nearly as unstable as cohabiting unions in many parts of Europe (Heuveline, Timberlake, and Furstenberg 2003; Kennedy and Thomson 2010). Childbearing and child raising within cohabiting unions are also not problems, if children are born into relatively stable, legally

11 November 2014

supported unions, which is also increasingly the case in northern and western Europe (Perelli-Harris et al. 2012). The massive delays of parenthood that so concern Lesthaeghe and many other demographers do not seem so problematic, either. In the new, longer life course brought to young adults by the demographic transition, there is plenty of time for most people to have two children. Young people do not have to become parents while they are still in the throes of "emerging adulthood" (Arnett 2007). Young men and women need time to establish mature relationships, develop solid job or career trajectories, and establish their own independent identities. However, there is time. Young adults can wait into their early or even mid-thirties to begin families.^{iv}

The Second Half of the Gender Revolution: Why the Delay?

Why do we separate the parts of the gender revolution into public and private sphere change, with the first taking so long to lead to the second? This is an important question to address, as the delay has led to much confusion, even defeatism, forcing scholars to use terms such as "unfinished" and "stalled" when the second half doesn't co-occur with the first half (see, in particular, England 2010). Others assume that the home is women's responsibility, whatever other activities they may take on, as we have alluded to, above. Many factors are involved, but most fundamentally, if the public sphere has historically been a "male" place, the family has been even more a "female" place. In the iconography of the separate spheres, even though employment was "unwomanly," child care and housework were for a long time far more "unmanly," at least in western societies. Even a supposed unbiased social scientist, Margaret Mead (1965), delineated what she considered had become "the three sexes" in modern societies: domestic women, professional women (like herself) and men (who she was clear should have no family responsibilities). See also Hakim (2001) who takes a similar position.

11 November 2014

Further, men have had very little preparation for domestic roles, unlike the 100 years' increase in women's education that preceded the rise in female labor force participation and the fact that throughout the century of the separate spheres (Stanfors and Goldscheider 2014), many if not most women were employed prior to marriage. The next step, of returning to work when the children were in school, or even remaining in the labor force after marriage and beginning childbearing, was not as big a change for women as the move into the domestic sphere was for most men. Norm violation has also been more costly for men than for women, as they have to contend with the substantial opprobrium of their bosses and peers if they want to take time off from work when their families need them (Haas 1992), risking their promotions and even their jobs. The first cohorts of employed women were often accused of neglecting their families and ruining their children's development (many personal communications), but there were not the same financial risks; in fact, of course, they got paid. In contrast, men have not had much in the way of a paycheck to sweeten the pains of being an early adopter in terms of housework and childcare; the fact that getting paid parental leave has a strong positive effect on men's willingness to innovate at that childcare stage (Appelbaum and Milkman 2013) reinforces the importance of this gender difference in incentives.

It is also important to realize that the real pressure for change in the private sphere is very recent. Despite the rapid growth in female labor force participation in the 1960s and 1970s, men's family care roles did not really need to change much during that period. Women were responding to new opportunities, adding new roles even as their commitment to home care remained; most working women were proud that they were able to do both, not perceiving their high share of housework as unfair (Baxter 1997). After all, in the "ideal" nuclear family of male breadwinners and female care givers under low fertility and mortality conditions, many housewives were underemployed, at least by the time children reached school age.^y Women's labor force

11 November 2014

participation remained ‘counter-cyclical’ during those decades, and was strongly influenced by family considerations, lower among those with more children and higher among those with partners earning lower wages (Leibowitz and Klerman 1995). Hence, female employment was primarily an important insurance policy for families (Oppenheimer 1997; Warren and Tyagi 2004).

An additional powerful, if transitional, factor undoubtedly played a role. Breen and Cooke (2005) developed a game theoretic model demonstrating that during the decades when employed women were a minority and most men preferred a domestic partner, men searching for partners could find many candidates who did not expect domestic sharing. Employed women who wanted a family had to compromise or remain unpartnered. Of course, once women’s employment became normal, and even desirable, as men came to see the benefits of an additional income, these dynamics weakened.

As attitudes developed during the 1980s and 1990s that redefined women’s roles to include earning as a central part rather than an ‘add-on’ (Goldscheider and Kaufman 2006; Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001), women’s labor force participation became increasingly responsive to their own characteristics and less to those of their immediate families (Leibowitz and Klerman 1995). This has led to pro-cyclical patterns of female labor force participation, as women dampened their responsiveness to their family situations and increasingly responded to greater opportunity by greater work effort.

As a result, pressure began to increase on men to contribute more to the well-being of their families by adding family care to their core adult roles. This pressure has been exacerbated by structural changes in the world economy, as globalization has increased uncertainty in the labor market and increased the need for couples to have two incomes in case one failed

11 November 2014

(Duvander 1999; Oppenheimer 1997). There is, of course, major resistance to making progress on this second half of the gender revolution, as there was to the first half. Structural constraints on the job in many countries pose great challenges to men's increasing their familial engagement (Gerson 2010; Hochschild 1997). There may also be some lingering gate-keeping by their partners, particularly with regard to child care (Hofferth and Pleck 2008) and perhaps housecleaning in Germany (Cooke 2006).

Nevertheless, the second half of the gender revolution appears to be safely on its way. In the United States, fathers' proportion of total parental time spent on child care has surpassed 40 percent among dual earner couples (Bond, Galinsky and Swanberg, 1998). Another study of the United States found that while fathers in employed couples were responsible for 40 percent of child care during the week, they took on fully 47 percent on weekends (Yeung, et al., 2001). By the end of the 20th century in the US, fathers spent 5 more hours per week with their children than they had 20 years earlier (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006). Likely more headway has been made in terms of men's involvement with children than in terms of their taking responsibility for routine household chores (Bonke and Esping-Andersen 2008), making it important to study these behaviors separately.^{vi}

Further, younger men's attitudes have become much more accepting of gender equality in the family (Gerson 2010; Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001), particularly when it comes to caring for children (Hofferth et al. 2012). There are increasing signs that men's housework-related roles have also begun to intensify (e.g. Aassve, Fuochi, and Mencarini 2014). Sullivan et al. (2014) found significant evidence of recent increases across 13 representative European countries in the contribution of younger, more highly educated fathers not just to child care but also to core domestic work.

Further, there is evidence that this expansion is slowly having positive effects on the family, reversing SDT trends by increasing union formation and fertility and by reducing union instability. That the ongoing gender revolution might change the trajectory of SDT trends is a strong claim, and it is difficult, of course, to be definitive, as the issues are essentially empirical and often highly complex. The second half of the gender revolution is just barely underway, relatively speaking. However, it is time to try to understand what factors are strengthening men's domestic involvement and also why we argue that increasing such involvement strengthens conjugal unions and increases fertility. We now turn to evaluating this evidence, with a focus on the ways key analytic relationships have been changing and often reversing.

STUDYING DEMOGRAPHIC OUTCOMES, GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES, AND DOMESTIC GENDER EQUALITY

Our theoretical position is that people maximize their well-being, given structural constraints and opportunities, and hence it is based on rational choice theory, with all its qualifications (Bourdieu 1980; Kahneman 2003). People's attitudes generally reflect these opportunities and constraints, and tend to change as conditions change (e.g., Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001), although often cohort succession is needed to more closely realign structures and attitudes (Pampel 2011). However, in a period of rapidly changing structures, as has been the experience of the industrialized countries in the midst of the gender revolution, attitudes take on great salience (Rindfuss, Brewster, and Kavee 1996). Attitudes formed under the old structures often persist, to help people continue to make sense of their social worlds. This is likely to be particularly the case if they are not well prepared by education or experience (e.g., having had a working mother) to function comfortably and successfully in the new gender structure. And of course, the new structure may not have fully taken clear shape, as remnants of

11 November 2014

the old structure persist, e.g., too many workplaces that assume anyone with a job and a family (and especially a man) has a full-time adult in the home (Gerson 2010). As people increasingly adapt their behavior to the new gender structure, however, many patterns that made sense under the old “male breadwinner” structure erode and new patterns take their place. As women increasingly become equal breadwinners, incentives shift, and even reverse, affecting a wide range of demographic outcomes.

In each section below, we will distinguish between studies showing changing relationships at the individual level, and those that appear, so far, only at the macro-level. The analysis of the reversal in the relationship between female labor force participation and fertility, of course, was first studied at the macro level, and the result was challenged as potentially the result of omitted variables, or evidence of an aggregation fallacy. Hence, we will give more weight to analyses at the micro level, of which there are increasing numbers.

Turnarounds and reversals: Union formation

The second half of the twentieth century has already recorded important reversals in the dynamics of union formation, nearly all at the micro levels. Based on data from the 1950s, Bernard (1976) famously characterized the marriage market in terms of education as producing highly educated unmarried women (the “cream of the crop”) and poorly educated unmarried men (“the bottom of the barrel”). In a detailed historical analysis of Bernard’s image, however, Torr’s micro-level study (2011), expanding on a similar but more limited analysis by Goldstein and Kenney (2001), confirmed that the relationships underlying Bernard’s characterization had changed drastically by the 1980s in the United States, so that women with low levels of education have become less likely to marry than highly educated women, although they do not avoid family formation altogether (cohabiting and/or becoming parents without partners). Similar patterns have been noted for Sweden and Canada (Goldscheider, Turcotte, and Kopp 2001).

11 November 2014

Another aspect of the importance of education for union formation is the decreasing prevalence of hypergamy among heterogamous unions (Esteve, Garcia-Roman and Permanyer 2012). These authors argue that women's increasing levels of education will lead to an erosion of traditional patterns in assortative mating and represents a significant step toward achieving symmetry in union formation. This, in turn, may have important consequences for the distribution of gender roles in co-residential unions.

What is going on? The dominant interpretation of women's increased access to own actual and potential earnings has been that such resources create an "independence effect," reducing women's need to enter or stay in a[n undesirable] marriage. But the original statement of the "independence effect" (Ross, Sawhill, and MacIntosh 1975) also noted that women's wages create an "income effect," increasing an employed woman's attractiveness as a partner, as well as stabilizing the unions formed. Could it be that the income effect is increasingly dominating the independence effect? Sweeney's micro-level analysis (2002) of recent US experience suggests that this is very much the case. She compared the marriage forming behavior of women born in the early 1950s with those born in the early 1960s, uncovering quite rapid change: women's earnings became a more important, positive factor in their union formation.

This finding suggests that men's choices are indeed changing, that they prefer a spouse who can bring resources to the union. This is not only the case in the US but also in Australia and New Zealand, where more educated women are also more likely to marry than less educated women (Heard 2011). In Sweden, women with a high career orientation were more likely to enter a union than were other women (Thomson and Bernhardt 2010), which is interpreted as indicating that such women are more attractive as partners. There is direct evidence of this preference for the United States. As long ago as 1987/88, young unmarried men rated a potential

11 November 2014

partner with little earnings potential lower than one of a different race or religion, or even one with a pre-existing child (Goldscheider and Kaufman 2006).

Resources, of course, are always valuable. The growth of the dual-earner family signifies that more income, from whatever source, is preferred over less income. This suggests that the rise in women's earnings (the first half of the gender revolution) is not much of a problem for modern couples, if it ever was; two people providing financial support is clearly better than one.

But what of the second half of the gender revolution? Do employed women finally have enough leverage to encourage men to take on more of the effort women have traditionally supplied in caring for the home and the children, escaping the trap identified by Breen and Cooke (2005) that men could always find a more domestic partner? If so, this could increase partnership formation (contrary to the predictions of the SDT), and strengthen families. And in fact, such evidence is accumulating, with much at the micro level.

An early study using US data found that men with more egalitarian attitudes had a greater likelihood of entering a cohabiting union (although not a marital one) than men with less egalitarian attitudes (Kaufman 2000; Thornton, Axinn and Xie 2006). These results have been powerfully reinforced by an analysis of 13 industrialized countries (Sevilla-Sanz 2010), which found that men with more egalitarian attitudes were both more likely to cohabit and more likely to enter a union, overall, than men with less egalitarian attitudes. A recent study of whether cohabiting unions with children transitioned to marriages reinforced this result. Men who were involved in the care of their children (providing care when the mother was absent, taking children to daycare and medical appointments) were more likely to transition their cohabiting relationships to marriage than those less involved (Kotila 2014).

Turnarounds and Reversals: Fertility

11 November 2014

Evidence that union-forming behavior has increasingly adapted to the first half of the gender revolution makes sense; both partners gain resources. It is even plausible that union formation is beginning to adapt to the second half. Fertility, however, involves a much more complicated set of processes. As with union formation, there is the question of the timing of the transition to parenthood, but there is also parity progression and eventual total fertility. In an industrialized world characterized by wide-spread “lowest-low” fertility, these issues are important.

Further, childcare time has turned out to be much less possible to reduce than housework time (Bianchi 2000). There has been a great increase in parenting standards (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2007, Gauthier 2013) (compared with the declining pressure to get clothes “whiter than white”), so that women’s increased employment hours and the time needed for raising children compete ever more strongly. Nevertheless, there is increasing evidence that fertility is beginning to adapt at least to the first half of the gender revolution, and some suggesting adaptation to the second half, as well. Perhaps men’s greater interest and involvement in fatherhood is also having an impact on fertility.

In some ways, the changing patterns in the relationships between women’s resources and fertility echo those for union formation. The turn around that first startled demographers was that between female labor force participation and fertility. The standard relationship was expected to be negative in industrialized societies, because children, by taking (women’s) time, would force women to choose between employment and childraising (Cochran 1979; Stycos and Weller 1969). But this expected relationship is changing. Using data at the national (macro) level, Rindfuss and Brewster (1996) showed that whereas a simple regression between these two processes was negative in the 1970s, as expected, the slope had turned positive by the 1990s. This analysis (and its conclusions) was soon repeated in much greater detail, again at the macro level,

11 November 2014

confirming this changing relationship (Ahn and Mira 2002) (although they show that some portion of the enormous decline in fertility among the countries with low female labor force participation was due to high young adult unemployment). This has generated much research questioning whether the relationship had also reversed at the individual level and whether the puzzle could be explained by including omitted variables, like family policy (e.g., Hilgeman and Butts 2009; Matysiak and Vignoli 2008) as well as childcare availability. Rindfuss, Guilkey, Morgan, and Kravdal (2007), using Norwegian register data and a statistically defensible fixed-effects model, found a strong positive effect of daycare availability on the transition to motherhood. A recent study at the macro-level concludes that economic development (GDP per capita) is linked with a 're-increase' in fertility among OECD countries between 1960 and 2007, given high female labor force participation and state policies that support the combination of work and family life (Luci-Greulich and Thévenon 2014). Another recent macro study, based on time-use data for a number of countries, suggests that there might be a threshold ratio of gender equity in the distribution of domestic work that low fertility countries need to cross before they are able to enter the phase of fertility recovery (Garcia-Manglano, Nollenberger and Sevilla 2014).

In fact, the relationship between increased female resources and fertility also appears to have changed at the individual level. The major focus has been on female education. In Norway, for example, the negative relationship between female education and higher order births disappeared between the cohorts born in the early 1940s and those born in the early 1960s, and the negative relationship with completed fertility had substantially attenuated. At the same time, a positive relationship between female education and second and third order births emerged (Kravdal and Rindfuss 2008); the same has been found for Sweden (Hoem and Hoem 1989). Again for Norway, using a natural experiment based on which cohorts were exposed to different

11 November 2014

required levels of education, Monstad, Propper, and Salvanes (2008) found that among the birth cohorts of 1947 to 1958, there was no causal effect of female education either on childlessness or on total fertility. The Norwegian studies were limited to marital fertility, however (although the Swedish study was not); there is other evidence from a micro study of eight European countries that the relationship between female education and fertility in cohabiting unions is still negative (Pirelli-Harris et al. 2010). Even in Europe, paternal commitment remains stronger in marital than cohabiting unions; cohabiting women appear to be more likely to expect to support themselves and their children than married women (Goldscheider and Abroms 2002). A more recent paper suggests that the positive relationship between women's education and second births is confined to northern and western Europe (except for the German-speaking countries, where the relationship is negative); it remains negative in southern and eastern Europe (Klesment, Puur, Rahnu, and Sakkeus 2014).

Resolving the first half of the gender revolution issues vis-à-vis fertility clearly requires more research; nevertheless, there is increasing evidence that second half issues, i.e., men's involvement in home making and childcare, has the potential for increasing fertility. This has been found in countries with "lowest-low" fertility such as Italy (Pinnelli and Fiori 2006; Cooke 2008) and in countries with low but not lowest-low fertility. These findings include both countries that provide little support for families, like the US (Torr and Short 2004) and those that provide major support for families by the state and employers (which are normally mandated by the state), such as Sweden (Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Brandén 2013) and Norway (Dommermuth, Hohmann-Marriott and Lappegård 2013). In the Swedish study, egalitarian gender role attitudes only support fertility when household tasks are also shared. In fact, those *least* likely to make a transition to a second birth in Sweden were women who had reported egalitarian gender role attitudes prior to making the transition to parenthood but later described

their household's division of housework in traditional terms. Further, the relationship only appears for second births, suggesting that studies that use total fertility, or the transition to parenthood, might miss finding anything. Nevertheless, having a second birth is a key transition, as it is the one that leads to replacement fertility.

This link between gender equality and fertility has been increasingly studied in individual countries and comparatively (for recent reviews, cf. Balbo, Mills, and Billari 2013; Goldscheider, Bernhardt and Brandén 2013; Neyer, Lappegård, and Vignoli 2013; Thévenon and Gauthier 2011). One thing is clear, however: the positive relationship between gender equality and fertility only emerges if the measure of gender equality focuses on the private sphere of the home, not on other dimensions. (See Goldscheider, Oláh, and Puur, 2010.) Because of the delay between the first and second halves of the gender revolution, many who have become comfortable with increases in female labor force participation might not favor, or even have thought of, increases in men's roles in the home.^{vii} One interpretation of the reversing female labor force participation-fertility relationship comes close to our own. Feyrer, Sacerdote, and Stern (2008) argue that as female employment increases from a rarity to a commonplace phenomenon, women can exert more pressure on their partners to reduce the fertility-dampening burden of housework, allowing both partners to realize their fertility desires.

Turnarounds and Reversals: Union Dissolution^{viii}

Research on the relationship between changing gender roles and union dissolution also shows increasing sensitivity to the first and second halves of the gender revolution. There is substantial research on the relationship between female labor force participation and divorce, as well as studies linking union dissolution with female earnings and education. Demographers, economists and sociologists have largely ignored the possibility that there may be positive links between gender equality and union stability, in part because they are so convinced that the

11 November 2014

relationship is the reverse.^{ix} This is Cherlin's (1996) "persuasive correlation" between the increases in female labor force participation and divorce, supported by Ruggles' (1997) macro study of American states between 1880 and 1990. And in many countries and at many times, they were likely right. During the first half of the gender revolution, it was married women's entry into the labor force that appeared to be destabilizing gender relationships, because women's new independence allowed them to leave difficult marriages. Even in 1970s US, however, the "persuasive correlation" might have resulted from reverse causation (Sayer and Bianchi 2000; Johnson and Skinner 1986).

As the relationship between female labor force participation (gender equity in the public sphere) and fertility appears to have reversed, however, it is likely that this should also be the case for the relationship between women's labor force participation and union dissolution, at least if it comes with gender equity in the private sphere or its close correlate, relationship satisfaction (Bianchi et al. 2000). It is increasingly clear that the first half of the gender revolution, at least, is having an impact on union dissolution: the relationship between female education is apparently reversing. This suggests, as with the research on union formation, that the "income effect" of female human capital is increasingly becoming positively related to union stability. An early study noted a potential weakening of the positive relationship between female educational attainment and divorce by comparing micro relationships within three western European countries (Blossfeld, DeRose, Hoem, and Rohwer 1995), in which the gradient was strongest in Italy, intermediate in Germany and weakest in Sweden. The authors conclude that: ". . . [i]nitially, increasing women's educational attainment has a disrupting effect on 'traditional' family relationships. . . [but as]. . . family systems change . . . and become less traditional . . . the educational expansion for women becomes less connected to divorce." A follow-up study of micro-level change over time in Sweden (Hoem 1997) takes the story further by actually

11 November 2014

uncovering an emerging negative effect of female education on divorce. A parallel study of trends in the relationship between women's education and divorce in the US found "a growing association between socioeconomic disadvantage and family instability" (Martin 2006).

This pattern is evidently becoming more general. A recent micro-level study of seventeen industrialized countries confirms that in fact, the educational gradient is becoming increasingly negative in nine of the countries studied, including both Sweden and the US (Härkönen and Dronkers 2006); there was no trend in the educational gradient for the other countries. A meta-analysis that included more recent studies of union dissolution (up to 2010) for 12 countries in Europe over a 30-year period found a weakening of the positive relationship in some countries and even a reversal in the relationship in others (Matysiak, Styr, and Vignoli 2014). The authors are able to link these results to a reduction in the financial and social costs of divorce and an increase in women's labor force participation (but not to the strictness of divorce laws). Consistent with our theoretical approach, the authors conclude that "as the gains from specialization decrease and the gains from the pooling of resources increase, less educated women become . . . more exposed to the risk of marital disruption" (p. 209). It has also been argued that partnerships may become more unstable when the female partner is economically dominant. However, Esping-Andersen and Holm (2014) have shown for Denmark that such an effect had evaporated by the 2000s, and conclude that "the acceptance of gender egalitarianism has become broadly entrenched".

The likelihood that family processes are adjusting to the first half of the gender revolution is also evident in studies of the relationship between female labor force participation and union dissolution (Cooke, et al. 2013). Based on an analysis of 11 western, industrialized countries, Cooke and her large team (15) of co-authors found that the (de)stabilizing effects of female employment depended on the amount of state support to families. In Finland, Norway, and

11 November 2014

Sweden, wives' employment predicts a significantly lower risk of divorce relative to couples with non-employed wives; there was no relationship in Australia, Flanders, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Only in the United States, with its nearly total lack of support for families, did a wife's employment significantly increase the risk of divorce.

There is also increasing evidence that men's contributions to the private sphere of the family stabilize unions. Kaufman (2000) found that men with more egalitarian attitudes were less likely to dissolve their union. A few economists and demographers are starting to take notice, as well. Sigle-Rushton (2010) re-examines the studies by economists, starting with Becker, Landis and Michael (1977), and finds that, at least in the United Kingdom, fathers' home production stabilizes marriage. Similarly, Oláh and Gähler (2014) find that couples in Sweden in which the male partner participates more in domestic chores (given egalitarian gender role attitudes), are less likely to separate than couples in which the male partner does less. Cooke (2006) finds that while this pattern also appears in the United States, male participation appears to increase union dissolution in Germany, suggesting that the balance between the increased strains on men and relief for women might tip in the other direction in situations in which few men participate in their homes.

Why might more egalitarian men be less likely to experience union dissolution? One stream of research links sharing attitudes and behavior with greater couple satisfaction with their relationship. Barstad (2014) examined men's participation in housework in Norway because he was concerned that women's gains in relationship quality might be offset by men's losses. He finds this not to be the case. Even in Japan, husbands' share of household work is positively linked with wives' marital happiness (Tamaki, et al. 2014). Further, it seems that these connections endure; Kaufman (2006) found that older married men (ranging in age from age 51

11 November 2014

to 92) with egalitarian attitudes report significantly higher levels of marital happiness than do those with more traditional attitudes.

These studies, however, focused on housework. Childcare may present a simpler set of concerns. Schober (2012), for example, finds that fathers' child care share and total time was linked positively with both mothers' relationship satisfaction and fathers' own perceived relationship quality. It is also possible that men who are more involved in their homes and families are more reluctant to leave their children than men who are less involved. Given the vast asymmetry in child custody in western, industrialized societies, men with stronger relationships with their children should be less willing to leave them than other men, whatever their relationships with the children's mothers. This is likely to be particularly the case in cohabiting unions, which were found to be more stable when fathers were more engaged with their children (Kotila 2014). This factor might explain the fact that Nordic men who take parental leave are less likely to end their union (Lappegård, et al. 2014). So increasingly, studies seem to be showing that unions might become more durable, not less, in the second half of the gender revolution.

Turnarounds and Reinforcers: Gender Role Attitudes and Gendered Behavior

In addition to these changing processes, in which changes linked both with the first half of the gender revolution (i.e., female education and labor force participation) and the second half (male involvement in the home) appear to be strengthening unions and increasing fertility, there are a series of reinforcing processes involving gender role attitudes and behavior. Together with cohort and generational succession, these patterns may be accelerating the progress of the second half of the gender revolution.

At the simplest level, the master processes underlying the first half of the gender revolution appear to be reinforcing egalitarian gender roles, not just in the public sphere, but also in the domestic sphere. Both male and female educational levels have been consistently found to

11 November 2014

be linked with egalitarian attitudes (Chatard and Selimbegovic 2007; Gähler and Oláh 2010; Goldscheider, Goldscheider, and Rico-González 2014; Harris and Firestone 1998; Morgan and Walker 1983; Thornton and Freedman 1979). The influence of education appears to be independent of how the attitudes towards gender roles are measured, because it increases egalitarian attitudes both in terms of women's roles in the public sphere and men's roles in the private sphere. Men's greater education also appears to be strongly linked with men's increased childcare (Esping-Anderson 2009; Gracia 2014). As educational levels increase, a wide range of gender inequalities are reduced, according to a study of patterns in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States (Evertsson, et al. 2009), including gender inequality in labor force participation, work hours, occupational segregation, and housework.

Increased education also influences egalitarian gender roles through the ways it is linked across the generations. Greater maternal education appears to increase egalitarian attitudes among children, once they become adults (Gähler and Oláh 2010; Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001), although primarily among daughters, not sons; sons evidently need to actually see their parents sharing gender roles directly (Lahne and Wenne 2012). Hence, increasing educational levels (and parental sharing behavior) are reinforcing egalitarian gender role attitudes.

The rise in female labor force participation appears to have similar relationships, both intra- and inter-generationally. Although most studies have suggested a tenuous link between fathers' care of children and maternal employment and earnings, a more detailed study of time use early in 21st century US shows that the link is stronger when measures of caregiving capture fathers' increased responsibility (Raley, Bianchi, and Wang 2012). Men also respond to their spouse's increased employment hours by increasing their domestic work time, although such adaptation lags, only showing larger increases in domestic work over time (Gershuny, Bittman, and Brich 2005).

Growing up with a mother who was employed, which one might think would have its greatest impact on attitudes towards women taking a role in the public sphere, in fact has its effect primarily on attitudes towards sharing in the private sphere, at least in Sweden (Gähler and Oláh 2010). Evidently, even if increased female labor force participation has had a relatively weak effect on their spouse's attitudes, generational succession is reinforcing its connection with the attitudes not just of their daughters but also of their sons.

Two recent studies have also examined the ways the structural constraints on men's work hours affect their participation in the private sphere. Dotti Sani (2014) reduced the reverse causal possibility (i.e., men who want to spend less time in their homes are more free to work longer hours) by showing that in a sample of 23 relatively representative countries, men's average work hours are linked with their performing relatively less housework. McGill (2014) also addressed this selectivity in an analysis of the United States. Using fixed effects models, she showed that while men's employment hours had little effect on childcare time, those with more egalitarian gender role attitudes were better able to preserve time with children. As they appeared to take time from their child-free leisure, this response is likely to be limited without greater workplace flexibility.

Once gender role attitudes are subdivided into items that distinguish between women's role in the public sphere from men's role in the private sphere, relationships that have normally been found appear to attenuate or even reverse. Here we review two key findings. One focuses on the "traditionalizing" results of parenthood; the other on the similar connections with religiosity.

Many studies have found that having a child is related to greater traditionalism in terms both of women's and men's gender role attitudes and behavior. However, in Sweden, a context in which state policies (and fathers) provide substantial support for the time and financial costs of childcare, this is no longer the case either for attitudes or behavior. Young Swedes, unlike young

11 November 2014

people from the United States and Great Britain (Morgan and Waite 1987; Berrington et al. 2008), on average do not change their gender role attitudes upon becoming parents (Kaufman and Bernhardt 2010). And young Swedes do not alter their time use in a traditional direction upon parenthood, unlike new parents in Germany, Italy, and Canada (Neilson and Stanfors 2014). It appears that becoming a parent, by itself, is not necessarily a traditionalizing experience; it takes a context in which parents are forced to make severe trade offs between their careers and family needs for this to happen.

Like those who have had a child, the more religious have also normally been found to have less egalitarian gender role attitudes. (For a review, see Davis and Greenstein, 2009.) However, among Swedes who are members of the (former) Swedish State Church (Lutheran), a high level of religiosity is not related to unsupportive attitudes towards men's roles in the home (Goldscheider, Goldscheider, and Rico-González 2014). Evidently, when more religious people focus on the first half of the gender revolution (particularly female employment), the family-supportive quality of religion is linked with disapproval of gender equality. But when they focus on the second half of the gender revolution (i.e., men increasing their participation in their families), the family-supportive quality of religions is linked with greater approval of gender equality. This reinforces the importance of using gender role attitude scales that distinguish clearly between activities related to women's participation in the public sphere from items related to men's private sphere involvement, which has been the problem with the competing studies of fertility (Goldscheider, Oláh and Puur 2010).

The Swedish context appears to promote processes that reinforce both the first and second halves of the gender revolution. Several studies portray Sweden as not only exhibiting high levels of female labor force participation and male involvement in home-based tasks, but as one where these processes are interrelated. For example, Evertsson (2014) shows that men spend more time

11 November 2014

in housework when they live in a family with a more gender equal division of child care. The gender pattern of taking parental leave is highly skewed towards women in Sweden (though of course, more gender equal than in the many countries where only maternity leave is available, whether supported by employers or governments). However, Duvander (2014) finds that the sharing of parental leave is responsive to men's gender role attitudes. She distinguishes the extent to which men's use of parental leave reflected their egalitarian approach to family life versus how much it simply reflected a more general familistic orientation, a frequent concern among studies of men's use of parental leave; some men might just enjoy being with children more than other men. Hence, her models include not just gender role attitudes but also items that reflect more general familistic orientations. She found that a more familistic orientation is not related to men's length of parental leave (although it was for women's). For men, it was in fact gender role attitudes that had a significant relationship. Perhaps most fathers, once freed of a concern that involvement with children is not "manly," can be involved parents. What is stunning about Sweden, of course, is that men take so much more parental leave (Duvander 2014) and make so many more work adjustments to parenthood (Kaufman and Bernhardt 2014), than they used to (Näsén 2012), and than in other industrialized countries (Misra, et al. 2011). Women's 'ownership' of paid parental leave may even be creating reverse problems, in which at least some men want more access to parental leave time. A recent study in Sweden found that men report fairly high levels of retrospective dissatisfaction, with 21 percent of all men wishing that they could have stayed home for a longer period (Brandén, Duvander, and Ohlsson-Wijk 2014).

Going beyond Sweden, there is evidence that contextual variables play an important role. A recent comparative study of 24 European countries on gender equality in the division of housework over the life course showed that a more progressive national gender culture as well as policy context seem to be significantly related to more gender equality in the private sphere (Kil

11 November 2014

and Neels 2014). Thus, the spread of more egalitarian values on the national level and more progressive and family-supportive policies will reinforce the implementation of actual sharing of home tasks, which in turn will have a positive effect on fertility and family stability.

Finally, there appear to be strong processes underway that reinforce those of generational succession evident in the results of studies of the relationship of maternal education and labor force participation, as well as of growing up with parents who shared domestic tasks. Pampel (2011) has documented cohort changes between 1977 and 2006 in the spread of attitudes towards gender egalitarianism, as well as how their determinants have shifted. In an analysis of the United States using the General Social Survey, he finds that the adoption of more egalitarian views increased steadily and persistently across cohorts over the 20th century, and that the changing relationships of the predictors he examined (particularly with education and women's work commitment) suggested extensive diffusion. A recent example of this diffusion process appears in a recent study of Japan (Choe et al. 2014), which found that knowing someone who has engaged in premarital cohabitation is linked with holding nontraditional family attitudes.

Concluding Discussion

This paper has compared two approaches to the family-demographic phenomena collectively called the SDT. The chief theorists of the SDT (Lesthaeghe and colleagues) predict continued family heterogeneity and breakdown resulting from the pursuit of individualism; we focus on the two halves of the gender revolution, an approach that predicts increased family strength with the incorporation of men in home and family care. The approach based on the SDT narrative identifies changes in ideation as the principle cause of the SDT, specifically the development of individualism and other "higher order needs," and treats the central family relationships of partnership and parenthood as relatively unimportant in adult lives. The approach

11 November 2014

based on the gender revolution posits that structural changes in women's roles in the public sphere (employment), i.e., the "first half" of the gender revolution, have disrupted gender relationships and hence contributed to the negative trends in fertility and union stability identified with the SDT narrative. This approach, which assumes that committed partner and parental relationships are indeed important to most people, further implies that men's increased involvement in the home, the "second half" of the gender revolution, has the promise of increasing both fertility and the proportions entering and remaining in committed unions. The paper provides evidence from hundreds of recent studies from a wide range of different countries testing different theories in support of the gender revolution theoretical approach. Most critically, we find the gender revolution to be increasing fertility and union formation and decreasing union dissolution.

One of the most positive results of these studies is that they suggest reinforcing trends. The effects of cohort succession will be reinforced by the growth in maternal employment and particularly in female education. Moving beyond such distributional changes, the evidence for reversing relationships, as outlined in the previous section, suggests that many factors might come together to speed the completion of the two halves of the gender revolution.

As the argument makes clear, however, this is an ongoing process of social change, and demography (like other social sciences) does not have a good track record in understanding ongoing changes, whether based on our experience with trying to understand the (first) demographic transition in its early decades or the baby boom. Our relatively optimistic argument derives from our focus on gender, both as an inadequately analyzed factor in recent family trends structuring the substantial majority of family relationships and on expecting that the central family relationships of committed couple-ness and parenthood (and eventual grandparenthood)

11 November 2014

will continue to be very important in adults' lives. It is based on an assessment that modern adults will continue to seek these relationships.

Other recent trends, however, have also been linked with SDT phenomena. Blossfeld and colleagues (e.g., Mills and Blossfeld 2013), while agreeing with us that structural forces, far more than ideational ones, are behind the SDT, focus on the structural changes linked with globalization, which have had their greatest impact on the economic prospects of young adults. On this basis, they argue that globalization is responsible for the SDT, by leading young adults to delay or even forego the committed relationships of parenthood and parenthood. This argument is supported by the results of Ahn and Mira (2002). Unlike in that study, however, gender and the changes we describe, so far have found little if any place in their narrative.

Of course, there are many limitations to our analyses, particularly in the strong emphasis on Sweden. Sweden is clearly a powerful case, given how much further advanced it is on both halves of the gender revolution. The country has made extraordinarily progress on the first half of the gender revolution, with its high levels of female labor force participation and even intensive part-time work (most mothers working part time spend 30+ hours per week on the job) and it also has high and increasing levels of male participation in the tasks of their homes and families, strongly supported by state policies. Perhaps as a result, differences in the timing of events in the transition to adulthood between young men and women are smaller in Sweden than in any of a set of 10 quite representative European countries, including countries in northern, western, eastern, and southern Europe (Liefbroer and Goldscheider 2007).

Nevertheless, Sweden is not very representative on an important dimension: in a world of great and increasing class inequalities, Sweden stands out as an extraordinarily equal society, which is a context in which family-friendly public policies are most effective (Thévenon and Gauthier 2011). Noting the strong class differences in family patterns in the US, a country which

11 November 2014

has dominated research on family and gender for many decades, we searched Swedish data for class differences in the relationships between gender role attitudes and behavior, on the one hand, and fertility and union dissolution, on the other, and found nothing (research not presented).

Further, it seems likely that gender role flexibility has a long history in the countries of northwestern origins, unlike countries of central and southern Europe and east Asia, with their high levels of gender essentialism (Brinton and Lee 2012). The gender revolution requires massive shifts in gender and family roles; some societies may not be either willing or able to embrace them.

Certainly, change has not been instantaneous. The gender revolution is characterized as "incomplete" (Esping-Anderson 2009), as "unfinished" (Gerson 2010), and sometimes even as "stalled" (England 2010), which is not surprising, given how entrenched separate spheres gender roles have been. As many downplayed the significance of early increases in female earnings, so do more recent scholars downplay increases in men's domestic contributions. However, as each new cohort sees the possibilities of a new balance in family roles, with men and women whose mothers worked, who have seen their parents sharing, and have shared work places with those of the opposite sex, these stresses should wane. And of course, as Malthus himself posited: "the passion between the sexes is necessary and will remain nearly in its present state." Demographers rejected this postulate vis-à-vis fertility long ago, but it may be more persuasive in the context of couple relationship formation (Esteve, Garcia-Roman, & Permanyer 2012).

It is key to the gender change argument to acknowledge is that men's increasing involvement in the family *is* a gender revolution. It is a revolution as profound as the last half century's increase in female labor force participation. Neither should be trivialized; as women's wages were once called "pin money", so men's early forays into the home are even now routinely characterized as "just the easy/fun stuff." However together, they constitute the two halves of the

11 November 2014

modern gender revolution, a revolution that is not just strengthening countries' economies, as women join their skills and energies to men's in the marketplace, but also one that strengthens families, as men increasingly take on important roles in the home, first as active fathers, and eventually as full participants.

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11 November 2014

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NOTES

ⁱ There were certainly earlier gender revolutions, as when men first left agriculture and near continuous face-to-face interaction with their wives and children, leaving women to assume many of their tasks; or when the development of settled agriculture led to the growth in private property, increasing the importance of inheritance rights and hence men's greater concern over paternity and women's childbearing. Each of these, however, is prior to the gender revolutions that are now shaking the "separate spheres" (although they may have contributed to their creation).

ⁱⁱ The rise in divorce was at least in part the result of the great loosening of the laws that had been restricting or even preventing divorce. It is not clear what a 'natural' level of divorce might be. William Goode (1993) posited a curvilinear pattern, with high levels in pre-industrial societies, followed by lower levels that were institutionalized by civil and religious forces seeking to stabilize the family; the recent period may simply be reverting to the older pattern, when barriers to divorce have again become relatively low (Boertien and Härkönen 2014).

ⁱⁱⁱ See in particular the new journal, *Fathering*, and the two special issues of the *Journal of Family Issues* on "Studies of Men's Family Involvement and the Second Demographic Transition" (June 2014).

^{iv} Although if they want to support their children well into adulthood and still experience a rewarding retirement and grandparental stage, neither men nor women should wait much longer, even if the biological challenges for women are solved by freezing eggs in adolescence or early adulthood.

^v It seems likely that the growth in “home schooling” in the United States among culturally conservative groups is in part a response to these changes in women’s lives.

^{vi} While there is now a professional journal on “*Fathering*,” and popular parenting magazines routinely include articles aimed at fathers, nothing along the lines of “Better Homes and Gardens” has yet appeared addressed to men, much less a professional journal focused on men and housework.

^{vii} The vast majority of scholars of the increase in female labor force participation have made no connection to its potential effects on men’s roles in the home.

^{viii} Migration has been much less of a focus in SDT theorizing. The rise of female labor force participation (the first half of the gender revolution), however, has produced a substantial research literature showing for many places that couples continue to treat men’s career needs as the priority over women’s (Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree and Smith 2003; Cooke 2008; Shauman 2010), including in Sweden (Åström and Westerlund 2009). Brandén (2014), however, takes on the Swedish challenge, and examines how gender role attitudes might affect gendered migration patterns. She finds that although couples generally expect to move more to accommodate men’s rather than women’s career opportunities, gender role attitudes shape respondents’ willingness to move for their partner, with greatly muted gender differences among egalitarian respondents.

^{ix} Interestingly, family sociologists and psychologists, together with related scholars, have long known that men’s involvement with domestic tasks increased women’s happiness (e.g., Cox and Paley 2003).