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Cross-National Evidence on Trends in Support for Working Mothers*

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Abstract

The rise in married women's labor force participation and the liberalization of gender attitudes are two developments shaping families around the globe. In light of the primacy in childrearing which cultures assign to mothers, this paper focuses on changes over time in approval of paid work by mothers with very young children. Cross-national data from the 1988 and 2002 modules of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) permit us to analyze the mechanisms accounting for changes in attitudes toward maternal employment in

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seven industrialized countries—Austria, Germany (West), Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the U.S. We address four questions: 1) Did approval of maternal employment show similar change in all seven countries? 2) What respondent characteristics were associated with support for working mothers? 3) Did the association for any of these characteristics change over time? 4) To what extent did the demographic changes in population composition (e.g., the growth in a highly educated population segment more favorable to maternal employment) account for changes in attitudes? The analysis confirms widespread increases in approval of maternal employment for both men and women. Most relationships between individual characteristics and attitudes remained unchanged over the course of the study. On the whole, compositional changes in the populations contributed modestly to the liberalization of attitudes.

Key Words: maternal employment, attitudes, cross-national research

Few family changes have been as profound as the rise in the labor force participation of married women (Oppenheimer, 1970; van der Lippe & van Dijk, 2002). The increase in women's employment not only challenges the household economic strategy predicated on a male breadwinner and female homemaker, but it also upends gender norms about appropriate behavior for men and women. To greater or lesser extent, societal cultures maintain deeply held beliefs regarding the special relationship between mothers and their children—attitudes which run counter to maternal employment (Charles & Cech, 2010; Hays, 1996). There are striking country-to-country differences in public opinion on whether mothers of young children should work and, if so, how much (Treas & Widmer, 2000), but studies of some individual countries document a liberalization of attitudes toward gender (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Crompton, Brockmann, & Lyonette, 2005; Scott, Alwin, & Braun, 1996; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). Cross-national studies that compare the direction and magnitude of this attitude change in different countries are rare. Efforts to understand the dynamics of changing attitudes toward maternal employment have been largely limited to processes of cohort succession; studies find that within-cohort change and the replacement of more conservative cohorts by more liberal ones both play a role, but the relative importance of these two forces seems to vary by country and time period considered (Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004; Cunningham, 2008; Lee, Alwin, & Tufis, 2005).

Whether attitudes lag or lead behavioral changes, there can be little doubt that public opinion offers an important context for understanding the circumstances of working mothers. The growth in public acceptance of maternal employment minimizes a normative barrier to female labor force participation, provides assurances about the implications of working mothers for the well-being of children, and offers ideological justification for policies supporting working women and their families. Thus, it is important to know more about trends in public opinion and the factors driving approval of working mothers across countries. This

paper draws on unique cross-national data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) to analyze the mechanisms accounting for 1988-2002 changes in attitudes toward employment by mothers of preschool children in seven industrialized countries. We address four questions: 1) Did approval of maternal employment show similar change over time in all seven countries? 2) What respondent characteristics were associated with support for working mothers? 3) Did the association for any of these characteristics change over time? 4) To what extent were attitude changes driven by demographic changes in population composition (e.g., the growth in a highly educated population segment more favorable to maternal employment)?

I. Background

In the second half of the 20th century, the increase in labor force participation of married women was observed for many countries and for many contexts (Spain & Bianchi, 1996; van der Lippe & van Dijk, 2002). Despite the dearth of government policies promoting women's employment in liberal welfare states, labor demand factors in the U.S.—namely, the rapid growth of female-dominated occupations—drew married mothers into what were often full-time jobs (Oppenheimer, 1970). In socialist countries such as Hungary, a state policy of universal employment and various work-family accommodations (e.g., public child care, maternity leaves) led to exceptionally high rates of full-time maternal employment (van der Lippe & van Dijk, 2002). Compulsory employment was often layered on top of relatively conservative views of gender roles. After 1989, the transition from socialism had contradictory effects—causing unemployment, increasing financial need, but making full-time homemaking possible in some families benefitting from new capitalist economies. In conservative welfare regimes such as West Germany, employment, welfare, and tax policies have long bolstered the breadwinner-

homemaker family; mothers typically worked part-time, if at all. Although regions and welfare regimes invite broad generalizations about women's employment patterns, there are notable deviations within these heuristic country groupings. Among liberal countries, for example, American women favor full-time work while the British pursue part-time employment.

We analyze seven countries—Austria, Germany (West), Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the U.S. These countries do not include all welfare state types of interest. There are no representatives of the Nordic social democracies, which have promoted high female labor force participation. Nor can we consider the Southern European countries where women's employment has been stymied, in part, by a lack of part-time jobs. Following Esping-Andersen (1990), the seven countries studied cover liberal (Great Britain, Ireland, the U.S.), conservative (Austria, West Germany, the Netherlands), and post-socialist welfare regimes (Hungary). Thus, they offer the broadest test to date of the proposition that public opinion in varying contexts has become more favorably disposed to maternal employment.

Besides being affected by welfare regimes, maternal employment transpires against a backdrop of cultural assumptions about women's special responsibilities for their children. These maternal responsibilities reflect taken-for-granted beliefs about the unique nature of the mother-child bond and the mother's primacy in childrearing (Charles & Cech, 2010; Hays, 1996). To greater or lesser extent, pragmatic issues of time binds and work-family conflicts have been addressed by institutional arrangements (e.g., maximum work hour legislation, public childcare). These policies have had some successes. Small children constitute less of an impediment to employment for mothers in countries where there is greater public provision of childcare (Pettit & Hook, 2005). Where they have had the option, however, women have typically adjusted their hours of paid work responsibilities to their childcare demands. They choose to work part-time or not at all when children are young, perhaps returning to the labor force or working longer

hours when children reach school age. Thus, attitudes toward full-time and part-time maternal employment are of great interest.

A. Attitudes about Maternal Employment

Public opinion regarding the desirability of married women working reflects cultural beliefs about appropriate gender roles, as well as practical assessments of family economic need, the financial returns to female labor force participation, and the ease with which women can balance work and family. As has been documented across countries, gender role attitudes have become less traditional and more egalitarian (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Crompton et al., 2005; Scott et al., 1996; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). Although maternal employment was traditionally seen as detrimental to children, this concern has abated over time. According to a study of seven Western countries, there was a general decline between 1988 and 2002 in respondents who agreed that a “pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works” (Braun & Scott, 2009).

Whether changing attitudes lead or lag the increased labor force participation of mothers is a matter of debate, but panel studies find a reciprocal relationship between gender attitudes and young women’s full-time employment (Corrigall, 2007; Cunningham, Beutel, Barber, & Thornton, 2005). Examples of ideological developments favoring women’s labor force participation include individualism (Lesthaeghe & Sirkyn, 1988) and liberal feminism (Budig, 2004). These ideologies clearly predate the recent rise in maternal employment. Trend studies for the U.S., however, find that public opinion became more favorable to working women only after the rise in married women’s labor force participation (Oppenheimer, 1970; Rindfuss, Brewster, & Kavee, 1996). As for the dynamics of attitude trends, depending on the country and time period studied, both within-cohort change and the replacement of more conservative cohorts by more liberal ones contribute to changes in beliefs (Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004; Cummingham,

2008; Lee et al., 2005). To our knowledge, direct comparisons of approval of maternal employment have been limited to two or three countries (Crompton et al., 2005; Scott et al., 1996).

B. Predictors of Attitudes toward Maternal Employment

Attitudes toward women's labor force participation over the life course differ by country. Treas and Widmer (2000) analyzed 1994 ISSP data on whether women should work full-time, part-time or not at all at four points in their lives—before children, when the youngest child is a preschooler, when the youngest is school age, and after the children have left home. For 23, mostly industrialized countries, they identified three general patterns of attitudes. In the “work-oriented” cluster, which includes the U.S., respondents were least likely to advise staying home; they favored work, at least part-time, even for mothers with young children. The “family-accommodating” cluster of mostly liberal and conservative welfare states was the least supportive of women's employment, favoring non-employment for mothers with young children and only part-time work for those with school-age youngsters. In a “mother-centered” cluster of post-socialist and Catholic countries, respondents advocated full-time employment before and after children. Perhaps because of the limited availability of part-time jobs, they recommended mothers staying home with children, especially preschoolers.

Attitudes toward women's work reflect not only the country context, but also the characteristics of respondents. Cross-nationally, more positive views about maternal employment are held by women, the young, the better educated, and the less religious (Charles & Cech, 2010; Knudsen & Waerness, 2001). Although marriage has been found to contribute to more liberal gender attitudes, cross-national analyses do not agree that married women are more supportive of mothers working for pay (Alwin, Braun, & Scott, 1992; Charles & Cech, 2010).

Because attitudes are shaped by one's experience and location within social institutions (Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004), employment experience is relevant, especially for women's views. Indeed, U.S. panel data show women's labor force participation to be a driving force behind the increasing support for two-earner couples (Cunningham, 2008). Women who are homemakers are less likely than employed women to report favorable views toward mothers' labor force participation (Alwin et al., 1992; Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004; Charles & Cech, 2010). Indeed, there is U.S. evidence that women's full-time labor force participation became a more powerful predictor of gender attitudes over time (Glass, 1992).

Gender role attitudes are also shaped by childhood socialization. Respondents who had a working mother during childhood hold more liberal views about gender roles, including women's paid work (Charles & Cech, 2010; Ex & Janssens, 1998; Knudsen & Waerness, 2001; Rindfuss et al., 1996; Sjoberg, 2004). In one U.S. panel study, mothers' employment history proved more important for gender attitudes of daughters born in earlier, rather than later, cohorts—suggesting that family socialization is more consequential when maternal labor force participation is less common and cultural views less supportive (Moen, Erickson, & Dempster-McClain, 1997).

II. Hypotheses and Theoretical Rationale

Prior research points to individual-level factors associated with positive attitudes toward working mothers. Given cohort differences in attitudes, we anticipate that older people will be less supportive of maternal employment than younger ones. Following some prior research, marriage may discourage support. An individual who is more highly educated or has no religious affiliation is apt to be more approving of non-traditional gender activities, including paid work for mothers with young children. If a woman herself works for pay or if a respondent had a mother

who worked for pay, we anticipate more positive views about mothers holding a paid job. Net of women's employment and education, we expect higher family income will minimize a respondent's stake in approving of maternal employment.

In understanding attitude change, we want to know whether the respondent characteristics predicting attitudes have become more or less closely associated with approval of maternal employment. Consider the role of women's labor force participation in support of maternal employment. Some prior studies point to the growing importance of a woman's employment for her attitudes (Glass, 1992). The long-run increase in maternal employment means that a growing share of the population grew up with a working mother. As noted, this childhood experience is positively associated with favorable views of maternal employment. As working mothers have become common, their influence on childhood socialization may have declined, if only because the mother who works for pay is apt to be less highly selected over time for non-traditional gender attitudes (Moen et al., 1997).

In general, we expect that changes in population composition will have furthered support for maternal employment over time. The increase in educational attainment, the rise in women's labor force participation, the growth in the population having had a working mother, the increase in the unmarried population, and the increase in secularization all point to more favorable attitudes toward working mothers. By contrast, the aging of the population may have worked against greater approval of employment for mothers with young children. On balance, we anticipate that population shifts will contribute to more positive views of maternal employment although the magnitude of these effects remains to be seen.

III. Methods

A. Data and Measures

This paper relies on the data from the 1988 and 2002 waves

of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) Family and Changing Gender Roles modules. Seven countries—Austria, Germany (West), Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the U.S.—have comparable variables for both waves. We consider men and women separately, because we anticipate sex differences in predictors of attitudes to maternal employment. For example, women's employment, but not men's, is expected to be associated with approval of mothers working. In accounting for attitude change, we would look for the growth in female labor force participation, not the modest decline in employment for men, to have compositional effects on public opinion. There are 4,608 women, ages 18 or older, in 1988 and 3,594 in 2002. There were 3,732 men in 1988 and 2,821 in 2002. For women and men, respectively, West Germany had the smallest sample in 2002 (315 and 306) and the largest (1,033 and 807) in 1988. To prevent countries with larger sample sizes from dominating the results, pooled data are weighted so that each country-year contributes the same number of cases.

Support for maternal employment is based on an attitude item asking whether women should work outside the home full-time, part-time or not at all when there is a child under school age. Independent variables include age in years, as well as marital status (married=1, else=0). Work status is divided into two categories, employed or not. Educational attainment is harmonized into above the secondary educational level (=1) and secondary or lower (=0). Reported differently in different countries, family income data were harmonized into six categories following the distribution for the country having the fewest (6) categories. Categories are not readily interpretable due to currency differences, but their relationship with public support for mothers' full-time and part-time work is largely linear (based on ANOVA Bonferroni tests); thus, we treat family income as linear with a range from 1-6. Sensitivity tests with analytic models yield similar results using the original categories as well as the relative difference between respondent's income and country-specific maximum income. Whether mother worked before the respondent

was 14 years old (yes=1, no=0) measures early gender role socialization. The respondent's religious affiliation is classified into four types: Roman Catholic, Protestant, other religions, and no religious affiliation.

B. Analytical Design

Multinomial models examine the effects of individual and household characteristics, time (survey year), and country on attitudes toward maternal employment, simultaneously estimating the respondent likelihoods of favoring mothers' full-time versus no employment and part-time versus no employment. To examine the effect of key variables on temporal changes in attitudes, interaction terms with survey year are added to the baseline model. Since the responses to the maternal employment item include three categories—full-time, part-time, and not at all—, multinomial analyses are appropriate to test the association of demographic characteristics with public support. However, the Fairlie decomposition of attitude change, the second step of the analysis, only allows for a binary dependent variable. Therefore, we conduct a binary decomposition analysis for favoring working (full-time or part-time) versus no employment.

The non-linear Fairlie decomposition investigates the extent to which the 1988-2002 differences in support for maternal employment can be attributed to the compositional changes in population characteristics (e.g., age, education, work status). We are interested in the relative contribution of compositional as compared to non-compositional or net changes, that is, changes in attitudes in the absence of 1988-2002 changes in respondent characteristics. Given the categorical dependent variable, the nonlinear Fairlie (2005) decomposition technique is more appropriate than the familiar Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition method, which is based on linear assumptions (see Appendix).

To decompose the total explained component to show the relative contribution made by each predictor, the distribution for

one year is replaced with the distribution for the other year, holding constant all other variables. In our non-linear case, the 1988-2002 difference in attitudes toward working mothers reflects both the explained and unexplained components. The total explained effect is obtained by multiplying the probability of supporting maternal employment in 1988 by the 2002 distribution for each respondent characteristic. In other words, the explained effects are based on the population's compositional differences in characteristics over time (for example, the 1988-2002 differences in the distributions of education, age, work status, etc.). Decomposition estimates can be negative or positive. Using pooled data for coefficients and substituting 1988 distributions, the positive estimates are the distributional changes that have upward effects on the public support for maternal employment over time whereas the negative compositional effects are those that exert downward effects between 1988 and 2002 on the support for working mothers.

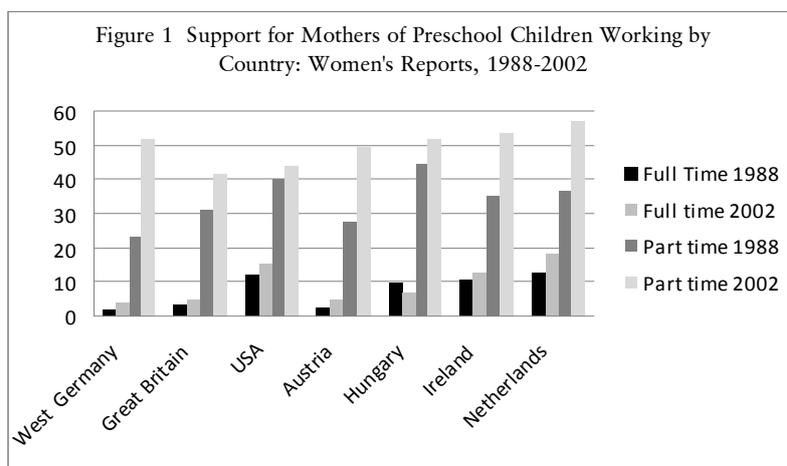
IV. Findings

Between 1988 and 2002, increases in support for both part-time and full-time employment were statistically significant ($p < .001$), but the increases in approval were much larger for the part-time response than for the more demanding and less popular option of full-time work. On average, the percent of women favoring part-time employment went from 34% in 1988 to 49% in 2002 while the comparable figures for full-time work were 7% and 9%. Overall, men were less accepting of mothers' employment than were women respondents ($p < .001$), but the percent of men favoring part-time work climbed from 29% to 43% while support for full-time work went from 5% to 8% over the period.

The gains, namely in support for part-time employment, were widespread across different types of welfare regimes. Although women in all countries except the U.S. registered significant

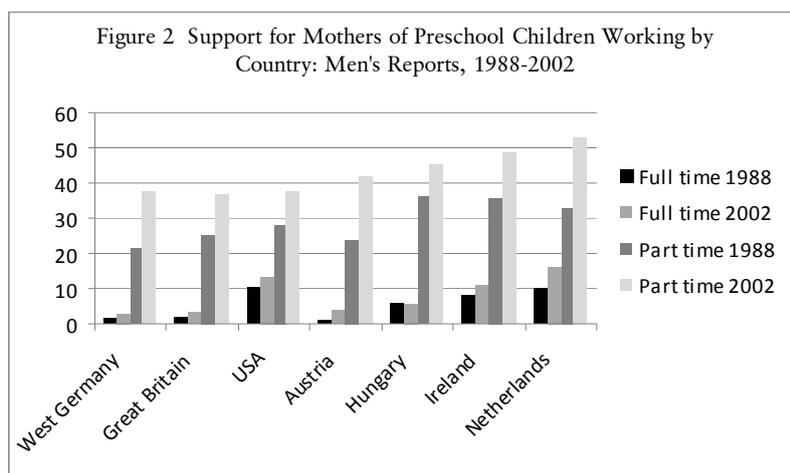
($p < .05$) increases in support for part-time employment, only Austrian women significantly increased their approval of full-time employment for mothers of preschool children (Figure 1). Male respondents in all countries showed significantly greater support for part-time employment, but only the Austrians and Dutch reported significantly more support for mothers' full-time work in 2002 than in 1988 (Figure 2).

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the respondents, which also changed over the time period. The trends for male and female respondents were similar, except for respondent's employment, which increased markedly for women and decreased somewhat for men. Comparing the respondent characteristics in the two years, the 2002 respondents were, on average, two years older and more highly educated than the 1988 respondents. Higher proportions of



Note: The differences in supporting full time between 1988 and 2002 are significant for Austria ($p < .05$); the differences in supporting part time between 1988 and 2002 are significant for the following countries: West Germany ($p < .001$), Great Britain ($p < .001$), Austria ($p < .001$), Hungary ($p < .05$), Ireland ($p < .001$), and the Netherlands ($p < .001$).

Source: Compiled by authors from data in the ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles Modules.



Note: The differences in supporting full time between 1988 and 2002 are significant for Austria ($p < .05$) and the Netherlands ($p < .01$); the differences in supporting part time between 1988 and 2002 are significant for the following countries: West Germany ($p < .001$), Great Britain ($p < .001$), USA ($p < .01$), Austria ($p < .001$), Hungary ($p < .01$), Ireland ($p < .001$), and the Netherlands ($p < .001$).

Source: Compiled by authors from data in the ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles Modules.

respondents in 2002 had no religious affiliation and reported having had a working mother. On the other hand, the married, as well as the Catholics and Protestants, made up smaller proportions in 2002. Family income and "other religions" did not change significantly over the period. Except for the aging of the population, these compositional changes could be expected to foster more supportive attitudes toward maternal employment. Later in a decomposition of the attitude changes attributable to population shifts, we will evaluate the extent to which the changing characteristics of men and women contributed to their liberalization in attitudes toward the employment of mothers with preschoolers.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics by Gender and Year and T-Test Results

Variable	1988		2002		T-Test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Women's Reports						
Supporting full-time	0.07	0.26	0.09	0.29	-3.13	***
Supporting part-time	0.34	0.47	0.49	0.50	-13.93	***
Age	45.03	17.07	47.29	16.95	-5.76	***
Married or living as married	0.65	0.48	0.61	0.49	3.12	**
Above secondary education	0.12	0.32	0.25	0.43	-14.42	***
Employed	0.43	0.49	0.50	0.50	-5.94	***
Family income	3.47	1.63	3.53	1.64	-1.42	
Mother worked before R was 14	0.37	0.48	0.48	0.50	-9.39	***
Religion						
Catholic	0.51	0.50	0.48	0.50	3.00	**
Protestant	0.31	0.46	0.26	0.44	4.29	***
Other religions	0.05	0.22	0.05	0.21	0.67	
No religion	0.13	0.34	0.22	0.41	-9.37	***
Men' Reports						
Supporting full-time	0.05	0.23	0.08	0.27	-3.81	***
Supporting part-time	0.29	0.45	0.43	0.49	-11.30	***
Age	44.19	16.86	46.56	16.25	-5.60	***
Married or living as married	0.71	0.46	0.68	0.47	2.13	*
Above secondary education	0.17	0.37	0.28	0.45	-10.74	***
Employed	0.69	0.46	0.66	0.47	2.46	*
Family income	3.80	1.60	3.84	1.59	-0.88	
Mother worked before R was 14	0.38	0.49	0.48	0.50	-7.52	***
Religion						
Catholic	0.50	0.50	0.45	0.50	3.46	***
Protestant	0.28	0.45	0.23	0.42	4.16	***
Other religions	0.05	0.22	0.05	0.22	0.00	
No religion	0.17	0.38	0.26	0.44	-8.62	***

Note: The statistics are based on weighted data. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Unweighted sample size. Women: 1988=4,608; 2002=3,594

Men: 1988=3,732; 2002=2,821

Source: Compiled by authors from data in the ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles Modules.

A. Logistic Analyses

How do the characteristics of respondents relate to their support for working mothers with young children? Have the implications of these factors for attitudes changed over time? For women, Table 2 summarizes results of multinomial analyses, which estimate the likelihoods of favoring full-time paid work versus staying at home as well as part-time work versus staying at home.

Even with controls for respondent characteristics and country in Model 1, the survey year shows that women's likelihood of approving of maternal employment increased significantly ($p < .001$) from 1988 to 2002. The year indicated greater increases for the part-time option than for the full-time alternative. With survey year and individual characteristics controlled, country-to-country differences in attitudes are clear.

All things considered, West German, British, and Austrian women are significantly ($p < .001$) less likely than Americans to support the employment of mothers with preschoolers. Dutch women are more likely to endorse both full-time and part-time employment options while Hungarians are more likely to endorse part-time, but not full-time, work. Irish women do not differ significantly from Americans at the .05 level.

Older respondents are less likely to support both full-time and part-time maternal employment, a finding consistent with cohort influences on attitudes. Although marital status is not statistically significant at the .05 level for part-time work, married women are significantly less likely to endorse mothers working full-time. Work status also predicts women's attitudes, particularly for full-time maternal employment. Compared to non-working women, female respondents who are employed are 115% more likely to agree that mothers of preschoolers should work full-time and 85% more likely to endorse working part-time. Having higher education and having had a working mother are also positively associated with approving maternal employment. Neither family income nor religious affiliation is significantly related to women's attitudes about mothers

Table 2 Support for Working Mothers with Children under School Age: Women, 1988-2002

Variable	Full-time vs. Stay at Home		Part-time vs. Stay at Home	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.220 ***	0.257 ***	0.645 **	1.037
Year (2002=1)	1.629 ***	1.194	2.020 ***	0.877
Country (USA=ref.)				
West Germany	0.214 ***	0.116 ***	0.773 *	0.430 ***
Great Britain	0.189 ***	0.151 ***	0.604 ***	0.491 ***
Austria	0.247 ***	0.173 ***	0.749 **	0.507 ***
Hungary	0.817	0.966	1.320 **	1.182
Ireland	1.141	1.119	1.197	0.905
Netherlands	1.539 **	1.097	1.422 **	0.909
Age	0.980 ***	0.973 ***	0.991 ***	0.986 ***
Married	0.796 *	0.791	0.913	0.885
Above secondary education	2.171 ***	1.760 **	1.399 ***	1.620 ***
Employed (=1)	2.152 ***	2.177 ***	1.851 ***	1.621 ***
Family income	1.056	1.104 *	1.017	1.011
Mother worked before R was 14	1.605 ***	1.626 ***	1.222 ***	1.384 ***
Religion (Catholic=ref.)				
Protestant	0.931	1.128	0.897	0.909
Other religions	0.888	0.845	0.884	0.956
No religion	1.345 *	1.932 **	1.178	1.531 **
Interaction				
Year × West Germany		2.976 *		3.014 ***
Year × Great Britain		1.477		1.488 *
Year × Austria		1.885		2.077 **
Year × Hungary		0.644		1.191
Year × Ireland		1.021		1.683 *
Year × Netherlands		1.885		2.450 ***
Year × Age		1.012		1.008 *
Year × Married		0.994		1.012
Year × Education		1.379		0.781
Year × Employed		0.953		1.249
Year × Family income		0.932		1.018
Year × Mother worked		0.965		0.790 *
Year × Protestant		0.667		0.943
Year × Other religions		0.944		0.746
Year × No religion		0.513 *		0.605 **
Log pseudo likelihood	-6916.823		-6861.925	
Pseudo R ²	0.085		0.092	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Source: Compiled by authors from data in the ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles Modules.

working for pay although having no religion increases the likelihood of favoring full-time work over no work.

Over time, does the impact of these predictors on women's attitudes toward maternal employment change? To answer this question, Model 2 adds the interaction terms of survey year with country dummies, as well as with the respondent characteristics. Compared to American women, the magnitude of the 1988-2002 increase in support for full-time versus no paid work is significantly greater for West German women. As for the preference for part-time work over staying home, women in all countries except Hungary saw a greater increase in support than their American counterparts. Most respondent characteristics did not change in their importance for attitudes over the time period. The association of own mother's employment and respondent's support for part-time work did decline significantly ($p < .05$) over time. When maternal employment becomes more common, childhood socialization counts for less as a predictor of women's attitudes, particularly for the less demanding part-time option. The "no religion" variable shows a similar decline in importance over time as did respondent's age.

In Table 3 which focuses on men, the survey year shows that support for both full-time and part-time work for mothers increased over time as compared to the stay-at-home option. Compared to the U.S., Hungarian, Dutch, and Irish men are all more supportive of the part-time option. West German and British men are less approving of mother's employment, full-time or part-time, than are their American counterparts. Austrians are less supportive of mothers working full-time.

As for respondent characteristics, men, like women, are significantly more supportive of maternal employment if they are younger, are better educated, and had a working mother. Having no religion also increases the likelihood of supporting working mothers. Although being employed disposes women to favor maternal employment, men's employment status is not significantly associated with their attitudes. Marital status has no significant

Table 3 Support for Working Mothers with Children under School Age: Men, 1988-2002

Variable	Full-time vs. Stay at Home		Part-time vs. Stay at Home	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	0.180 ***	0.481	0.627 **	0.987
Year (2002=1)	1.843 ***	0.328	1.950 ***	0.848
Country (USA=ref.)				
West Germany	0.172 ***	0.153 ***	0.785 *	0.701 *
Great Britain	0.133 ***	0.122 ***	0.735 **	0.704 *
Austria	0.194 ***	0.088 ***	0.872	0.686 *
Hungary	0.677	0.710	1.441 **	1.590 **
Ireland	1.256	1.035	1.739 ***	1.680 **
Netherlands	1.182	0.980	1.686 ***	1.269
Age	0.977 ***	0.963 ***	0.982 ***	0.971 ***
Married	0.896	0.954	1.054	1.182
Above secondary education	1.928 ***	2.334 ***	1.605 ***	1.683 ***
Employed (=1)	1.177	1.115	0.912	0.848
Family income	1.060	1.009	1.040	1.050
Mother worked before R was 14	1.407 **	1.363	1.324 ***	1.263 **
Religion (Catholic=ref.)				
Protestant	1.012	0.782	0.948	1.018
Other religions	1.154	1.430	1.020	1.115
No religion	2.168 ***	1.710 *	1.253 *	1.382 *
Interaction				
Year × West Germany		1.278		1.233
Year × Great Britain		1.203		1.078
Year × Austria		3.454		1.527
Year × Hungary		0.843		0.819
Year × Ireland		1.355		1.060
Year × Netherlands		1.524		1.734 *
Year × Age		1.026 **		1.020 ***
Year × Married		0.915		0.848
Year × Education		0.717		0.892
Year × Employed		1.101		1.109
Year × Family income		1.081		0.981
Year × Mother worked		1.056		1.094
Year × Protestant		1.545		0.877
Year × Other religions		0.521		0.809
Year × No religion		1.407		0.841
Log pseudo likelihood	-5261.581	-5230.915		
Pseudo R2	0.076	0.082		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Source: Compiled by authors from data in the ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles Modules.

association with men's attitudes. Model 2 shows the year by country interactions. With the exception of Dutch men, who saw significantly greater increases in support for part-time employment than did American men, there were no significant differences in the 1988-2002 changes between men in the U.S. and elsewhere. The only other interaction which proved statistically significant was age, a finding suggesting narrowing disparities between younger and older cohorts.

B. Population Shifts and Attitude Change

Approval of maternal employment increased over time even when respondent characteristics were controlled. This result contradicts a purely mechanical explanation of attitude change rooted in shifts in population composition. To provide a more formal assessment of the relative importance of compositional change and to quantify the contribution of each factor to attitude trends, Table 4 summarizes the results of the Fairlie decomposition for women and for men. Combining the full-time and part-time work to create the dichotomous variable required by the method, we decompose 1988-2002 changes in support for mothers working versus not working based on a logistic regression of this dependent variable for the baseline model with no interactions. Results (not shown) approximate those of the multinomial analyses above.

For each sex, we calculated the percent of the 1988-2002 change in approval which is explained by the total compositional changes, as well as the percent attributed to individual variables, by dividing the coefficient estimate by the total difference. For women, changes in demographic composition account for 13% or $(.024/.178) * 100 = 13.37$) of the attitude difference. On whole, shifts in the demographic characteristics of men had an even smaller impact, accounting for less than 9% of the growth in approval of work by mothers of preschoolers. Recognizing that the contributions of particular variables are somewhat arbitrary because they depend on the choice of reference groups (Jones, 1983;

Table 4 Decomposition of Support for Paid Work by Mothers with Preschool Children by Sex, 1988-2002

	Women		Men	
1988 Support	0.416		0.346	
2002 Support	0.594		0.509	
2002-1988 difference	0.178		0.163	
Contribution to difference	Coefficient	%	Coefficient	%
Age	-0.006 ***	-3.19	-0.010 ***	-6.39
Married	0.002 *	0.92	0.000	-0.04
Education	0.011 ***	6.09	0.014 ***	8.39
Employed	0.009 ***	5.13	0.000	0.24
Family income	0.000	0.15	0.000	0.15
Mother worked before R was 14	0.003 *	1.74	0.003 *	1.73
Religion	0.005 ***	2.55	0.007 ***	4.39
All variables included (total explained)	0.024	13.37	0.014	8.57

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Source: Compiled by authors from data in the ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles Modules.

Yun, 2005), the results of this particular specification suggest the following. Taking women’s education as an example, the increase in their educational attainments contributes 6% or $(.011/.178) * 100 = 6.09$) to the 1988-2002 difference in support for employment. The comparable figure for men is 8%. Also contributing to the increasing approval of maternal employment are the changes in religion (primarily the growth of no religion) and the increase in own mother’s employment, and, for women, increases in their employment and singlehood. Working against the attitude trend is the substantial impact of population aging.

Thus, demographic shifts explain only a small percentage of the 1988-2002 increase in approval of maternal employment. Only the population’s tilt toward older ages was a drag on growing approval of working mothers; most changes promoted the approval of employment for mothers with preschool children. For example, because better educated persons are more likely to support working mothers, the 1988-2002 increase in respondents with higher educational attainments contributed to both men and

women becoming more favorably disposed to women working rather than staying home. For women, their increased employment had a similar effect.

V. Conclusion

We began by asking whether approval of maternal employment shows similar change in all seven countries. Public support for the employment of mothers with preschool children climbed significantly over the 14 year period between 1988 and 2002. Whether we consider men or women, significant increases in support characterized virtually all countries, at least with regards to the option of working part-time. All things considered, gains in approval of part-time work versus no work lagged in the U.S. compared to most other countries. In the broadest cross-national test to date of change in attitudes toward maternal employment, we conclude that attitude liberalization was widespread across liberal, conservative, and post-socialist states although there were some differences in the pace of change. Women were significantly more supportive of maternal employment than men, but both sexes became more approving over time. Our results are largely consistent with prior research based on fewer countries. Braun and Scott (2009), for example, find lessening concern in these seven countries regarding negative effects of maternal employment on children's well-being, and others report a general liberalization of attitudes toward gender (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Crompton et al., 2005; Scott et al., 1996; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001).

Considering which respondent characteristics predict support for maternal employment, we found that most expectations were confirmed. Following Charles and Cech (2010) and Knudsen and Waerness (2001), respondent's more favorable views about maternal employment are linked to younger age, higher education, the lack of religious affiliation, own mother's employment, and, for women, being employed. We did not find a significant association for a

disputed variable, marital status, nor for our income measure.

With few exceptions, the associations between respondents' characteristics and their attitudes were remarkably unchanged during this time period. There is some evidence of narrowing age disparities. For women, reporting no religious affiliation was less consequential for their approval of maternal employment in 2002 than in 1988. Similarly, it came to matter less whether women had had a working mother, consistent with U.S. findings (Moen et al., 1997). Contrary to prior research (Glass, 1992), however, we find no evidence that women's own employment became a more powerful predictor of gender attitudes. The stable relationships between predictive characteristics and attitudes point to the possible implications of population shifts in the distribution of these characteristics for the changes over time in support for maternal employment.

As anticipated, the 1988-2002 changes in population largely contributed to the liberalization of attitudes. Only population aging worked against the growing approval of maternal employment so the overall impact of demographic shifts was to liberalize attitudes toward maternal employment. Only a small part of the change in public opinion, however, could be accounted for by the compositional changes in the populations.

We cannot discount the possibility that a better specified micro-level model might reveal a stronger role for compositional effects. The lack of any 1988 ISSP data on whether respondents have children poses one such limitation, as does the fact that spouse's work status is not available for all the countries. Given the comparatively minor role in attitude change played by the available variables, there is compelling reason to believe that the growing approval of employment, even for mothers with very young children, is largely due to genuine changes in social norms regarding employment.

Although we lack the empirical data to interpret the large residual change that remains unexplained by population shifts, this non-compositional component is certainly consistent with a broad normative rethinking of the appropriateness of gender speciali-

zation and the advantages of maternal childcare. Prior research has found that supportive public opinion can follow in the wake of higher female labor force participation rates (Oppenheimer, 1970; Rindfuss et al., 1996). Given the increase in women's labor force participation, more individuals have a personal stake in female employment, one which likely extends beyond the associations captured in our models by work statuses of own mothers and of female respondents. Psychological processes of dissonance reduction (Aronson, 1969) may soften negative attitudes when sisters and daughters work for pay. More frequent personal contact with mothers who work may increase tolerance of maternal employment among those whose values otherwise predispose them to favor mothers staying home full-time (Allport, 1954). At the same time, mounting scientific evidence offers reassurances about the effect of maternal employment on children's well-being (Hoffman & Youngblade, 1999).

As its chief contribution, this paper demonstrates that the increases in approval for maternal employment are not limited to the few countries where change has been previously studied. Women and men in six European countries and the U.S. became generally more approving of employment for mothers of young children at the end of the 20th century. This trend was seen for countries representing conservative, liberal, and post-Socialist welfare regimes. Whether we consider support for full-time or part-time employment for mothers, men's attitudes changed quite uniformly from country to country. Women's attitude change showed greater country-to-country differences. Compared to Americans, West German women showed greater gains in approval of full-time work. Except in Hungary, women in all six European countries outpaced their American counterparts in favoring part-time work over not working for pay. The question for future research is no longer whether growing approval of maternal employment is a cross-national phenomenon. Given the limited explanatory power of changing population composition, the question is what broader forces, including country-specific ones, drive these changes.

Appendix

The Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition technique has been widely applied in the studies of inter-group differences in mean levels of an outcome (e.g., earnings, self-reported health status). This technique decomposes the contributions to inter-group differences into two main effects—differences resulting from different observable characteristics across groups (endowment effect) and those from different effects of coefficients of groups (coefficient effect). In addition, Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition methods quantify the detailed effects of individual explanatory variables (e.g., education, gender, age). However, Jones (1983) and Yun (2005) pointed out that detailed decompositions tend to be arbitrary due to identification problems. The endowment effect and coefficient effect of each explanatory variable covary with the different choices of reference groups and therefore are arbitrary.

To illustrate the decomposition method used in this study, we take the earnings gap between the white and black groups as an example. For linear regression, the standard Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition of the difference between white and black groups in the average earnings, Y , can be expressed as:

$$\bar{Y}^W - \bar{Y}^B = [(\bar{X}^W - \bar{X}^B)\hat{\beta}^W] + [\bar{X}^B(\hat{\beta}^W - \hat{\beta}^B)],$$

where \bar{X}^j is a vector of average values of the independent variables and $\hat{\beta}^j$ is a vector of coefficient estimates for race j . The first part (bracket) of the equation on the right hand represents the endowment effect or the part of earnings gap due to the differences in the distributions of the explanatory variables. The second part represents the coefficient effect or the differences in the estimated coefficients leading to different earnings levels between races.

Based on coefficient estimates from linear regressions, the application of the Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition is problematic,

however, if the outcome is binary. To address this issue, Fairlie (2005: 306) developed a non-linear decomposition technique. The equation is:

$$\bar{Y}^W - \bar{Y}^B = \left[\sum_{i=1}^{N^W} \frac{F(X_i^W \hat{\beta}^W)}{N^W} - \sum_{i=1}^{N^B} \frac{F(X_i^B \hat{\beta}^W)}{N^B} \right] + \left[\sum_{i=1}^{N^B} \frac{F(X_i^B \hat{\beta}^W)}{N^B} - \sum_{i=1}^{N^B} \frac{F(X_i^B \hat{\beta}^B)}{N^B} \right],$$

where N^j is the sample size for race j . Similar to the linear Blinder-Oaxaca equation, the first term of the equation on the right hand represents the part of earnings gap traceable to group differences in the distributions of independent variables and the second term represents the contribution of the differences in estimated coefficients or group processes.

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跨國分析民眾支持育兒婦女就業之程度

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摘 要

已婚婦女就業率的提高與性別態度的平等化，是形塑當代家庭的兩項重要發展。由於文化賦予母親在養育上有首要角色，本研究跨國、跨年分析社會大眾是否支持育有幼齡子女的母親從事給薪工作。一九八八年至二〇〇二年的「國際社會調查計畫」提供跨國資料，有利於檢視各國民眾支持育兒婦女就業之態度轉變，包含奧地利、德國、英國、匈牙利、愛爾蘭、荷蘭及美國。本文探討四個問題：(1) 是否各國在支持育兒婦女就業的程度上有相似的趨勢變化？(2) 哪些受訪者特質傾向支持育兒婦女就業？(3) 這些特質與支持育兒婦女就業的關聯性是否隨時間改變？(4) 人口組成的變遷（例如高等教育人口群的增加有利於婦女就業）是否影響性別態度的變遷？本研究發現，男女在支持育兒婦女就業的程度皆有所提升，幾項個人特質與性別態度之間的關聯強度大多未隨時間而有所變化，人口組成的變遷對於性別態度的平等化有些許影響。

關鍵詞：育兒婦女就業、態度、跨國研究