

Relative resources and responses to inequity in the division of labour: A comparison of ten European countries

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS NEW?

Test of the relative resources theory (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Lundberg & Pollak, 1996), combined with insights from Hirschman (1970) to explain different responses to inequitable situations in couple relationships.

OBJECTIVES

- 1 Examine three responses to inequity:
 - o 'loyalty' (dissatisfaction)
 - o 'voice' (conflict)
 - o 'exit' thoughts
- 2 Consider both the relative and absolute level of resources of the spouses.
- 3 Link the correlations between relative resources and 'satisfaction', 'voice', and 'exit' to gender equality in a country.

HYPOTHESES

- 1. The more resources women have compared to their spouse, the less loyal they are towards their spouse and the more likely they will want to change an inequitable situation (either by voice or exit) - while controlling for couple's absolute resources.
- 2. Relative resources may more often translate into certain inequity responses in gender egalitarian contexts than in traditional ones:
- When more traditional norms, women can use their marital power less (less conflict and dissatisfaction)
- Exit thoughts will occur as often in traditional societies as in egalitarian ones because in traditional contexts women can only 'vote with their feet'

DATA AND METHOD

DATA

Generations and Gender Survey (GGS)
N=14,036 (7586 women; 6450 men)

Bulgaria, Russia, Georgia, France, Hungary, Romania, Austria, Belgium, Lithuania, and Czech Republic

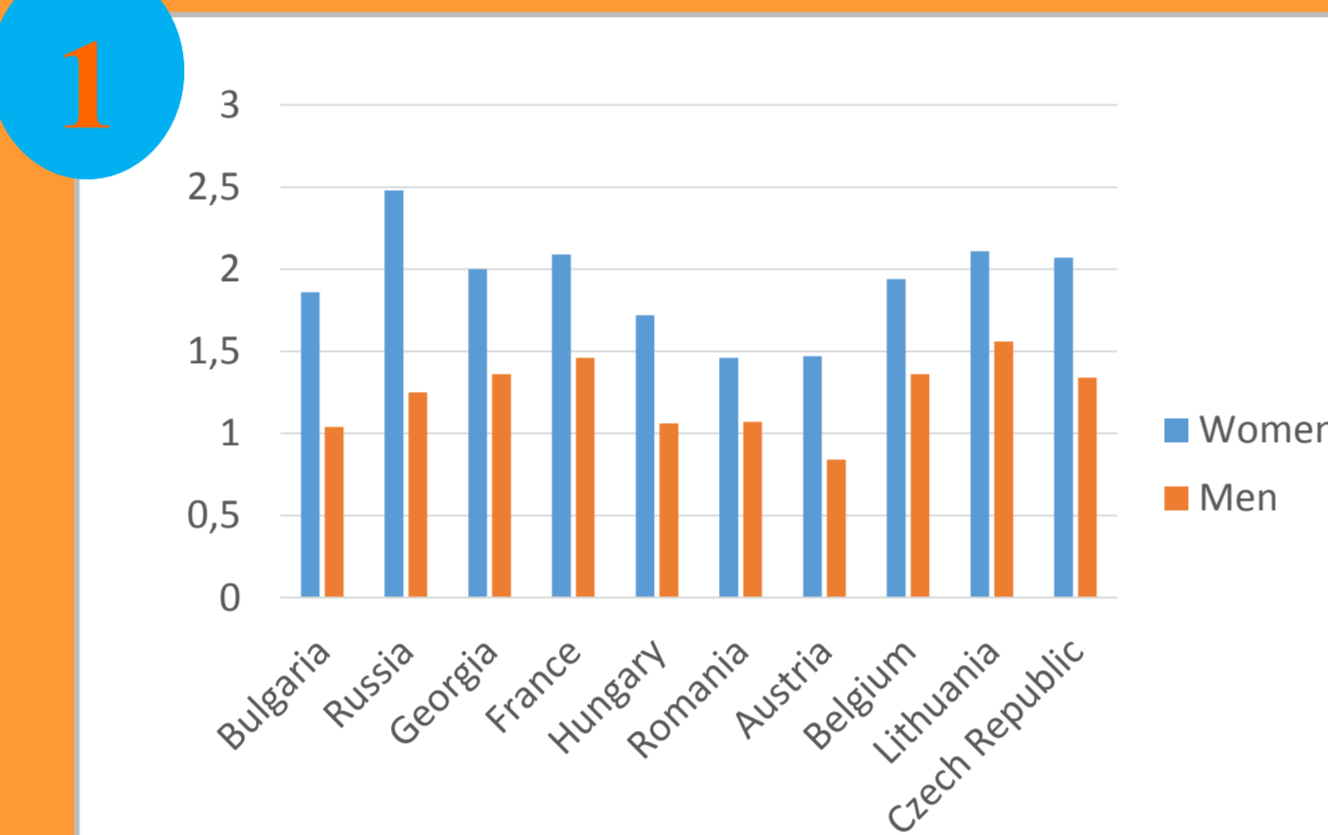
MEASURES

- 1 'How satisfied are you with the division of household tasks between you and your partner/spouse?' (0-10)
- 2 'Within the last 12 months, how often did you and your partner/spouse have disagreement about household chores?' (0-1)
- 3 'Over the past 12 months, have you thought about breaking up your relationship?' (0-1)

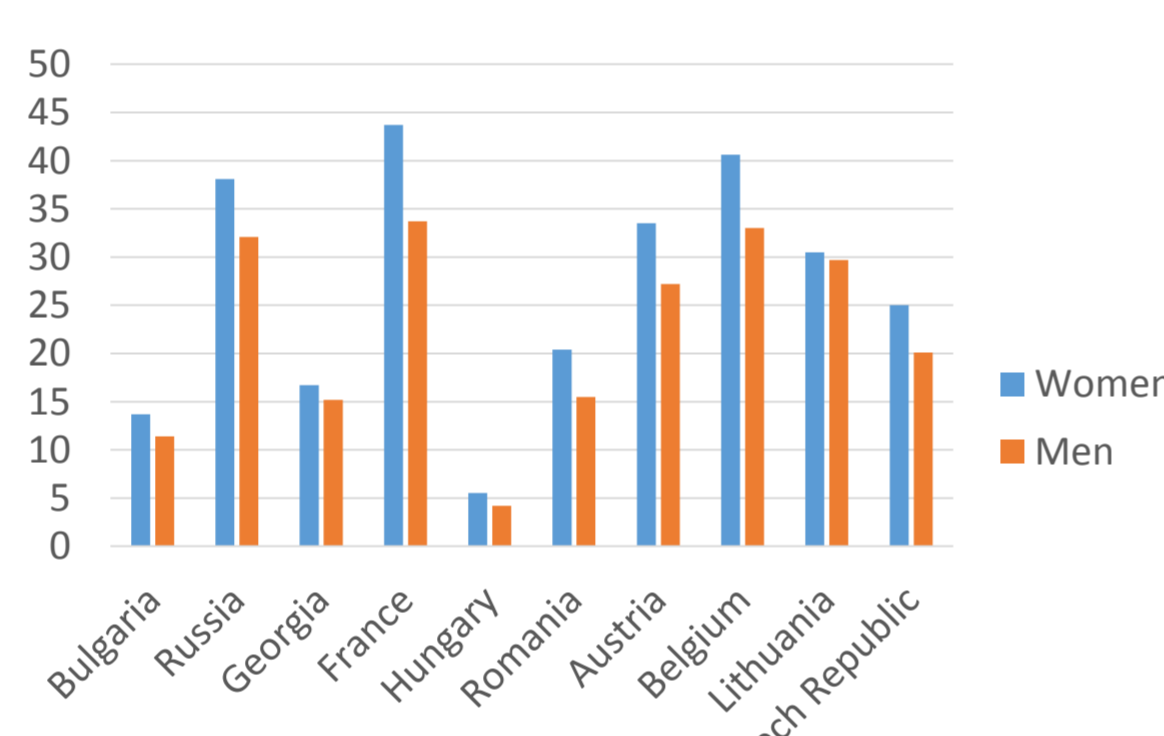
ANALYTICAL APPROACH

- OLS regression for dissatisfaction
- Logistic regressions for conflict and exit thoughts
- Multi-level models allow us to estimate cross-level interaction effects of GEM with relative resources
- Models with and without the inclusion of each of the two other outcomes as independent variables
- Multiple imputation sensitivity check (results are similar)

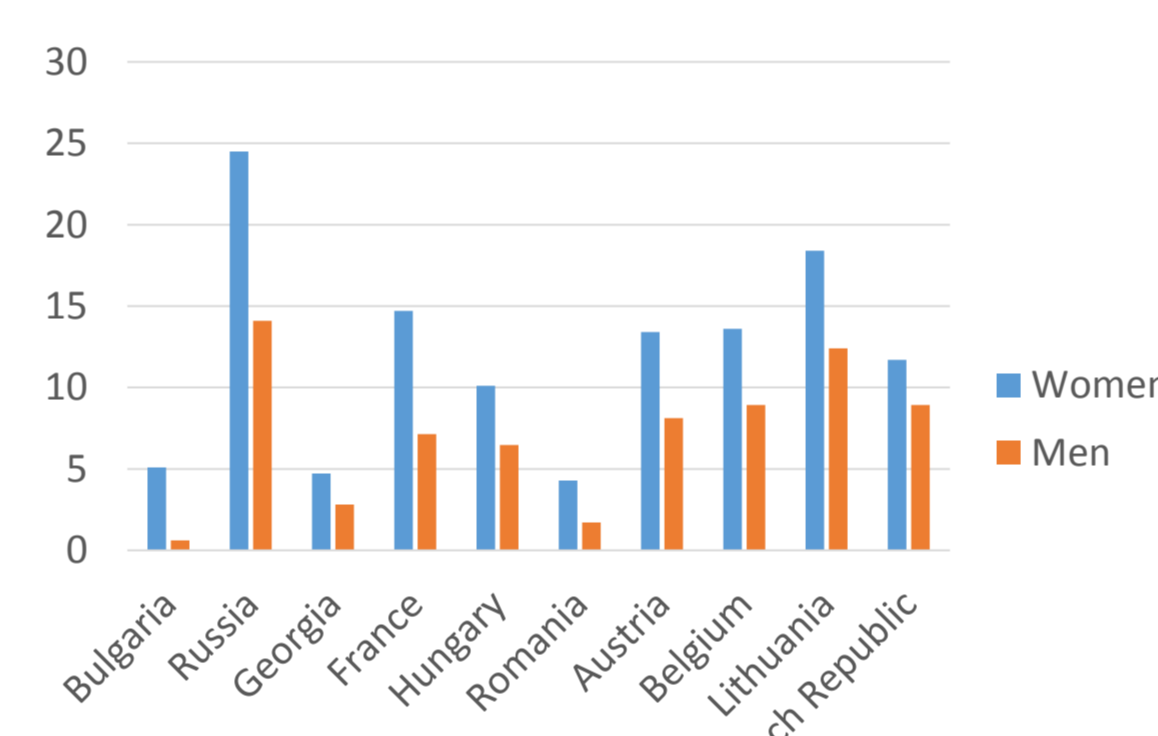
RESULTS



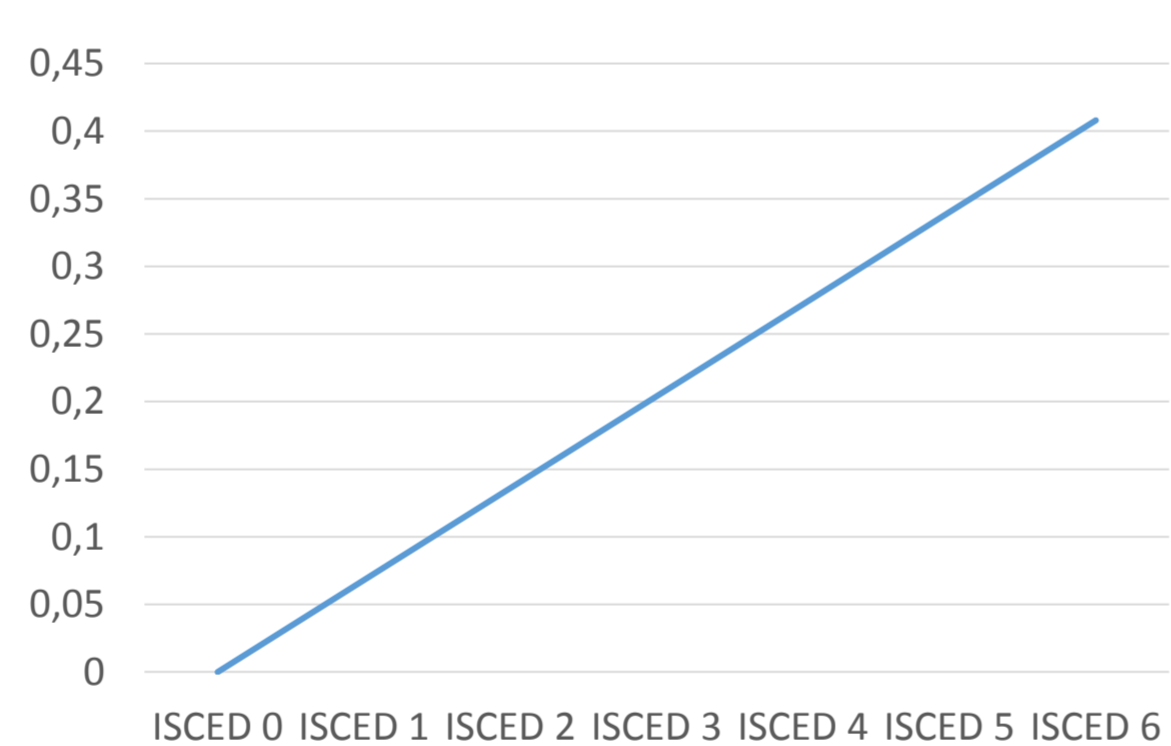
Average dissatisfaction



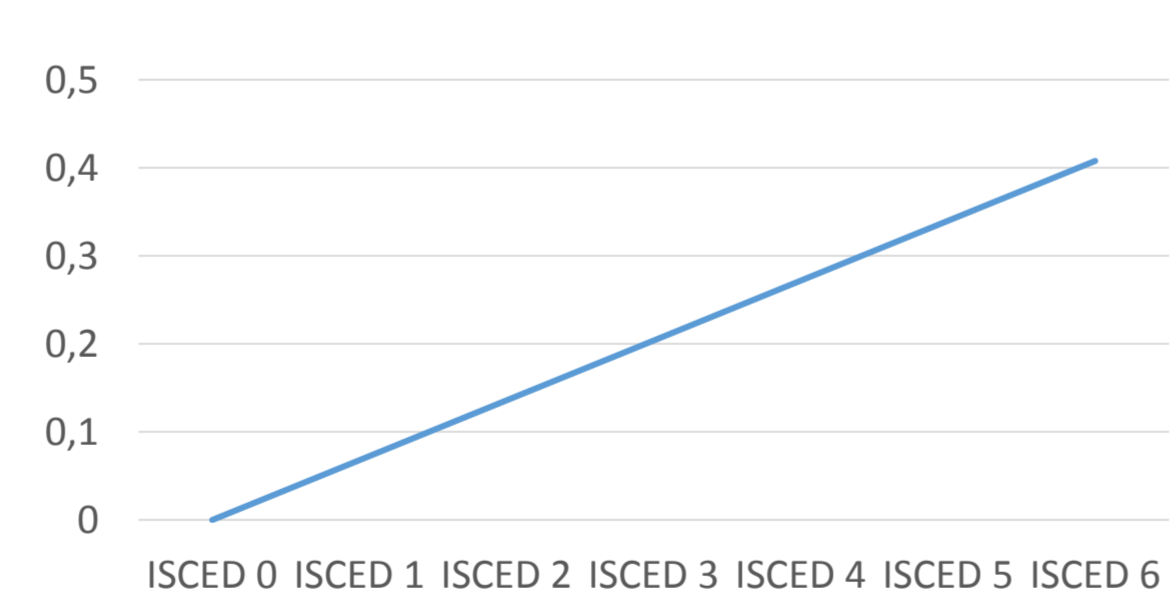
% having at least some conflict



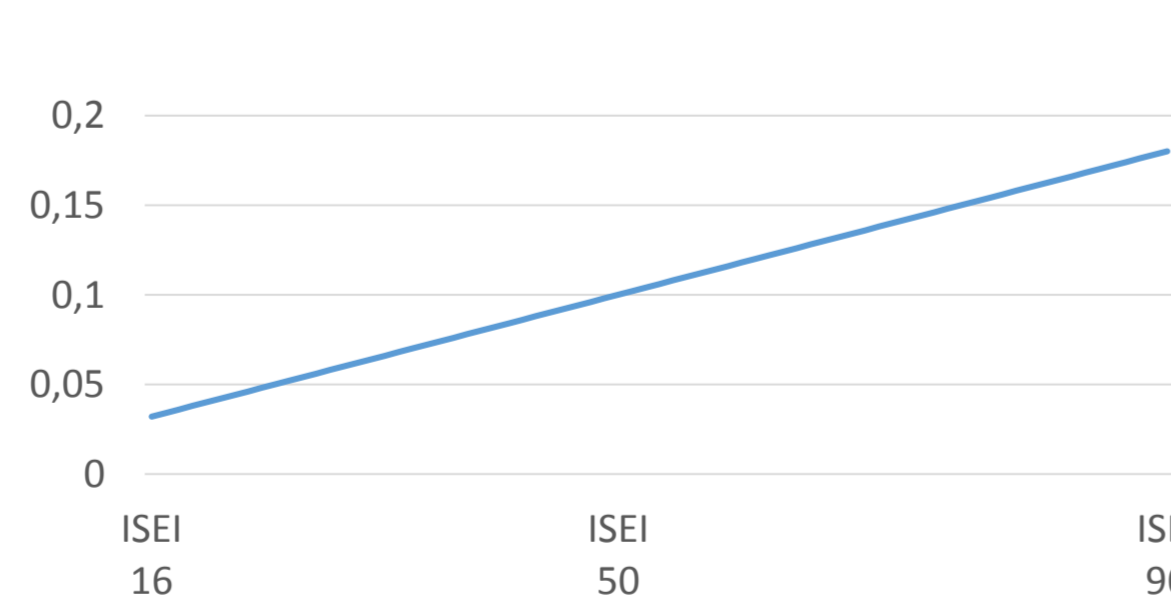
% having exit thoughts



Women's relative education and exit thoughts



Women's relative education and men's conflict



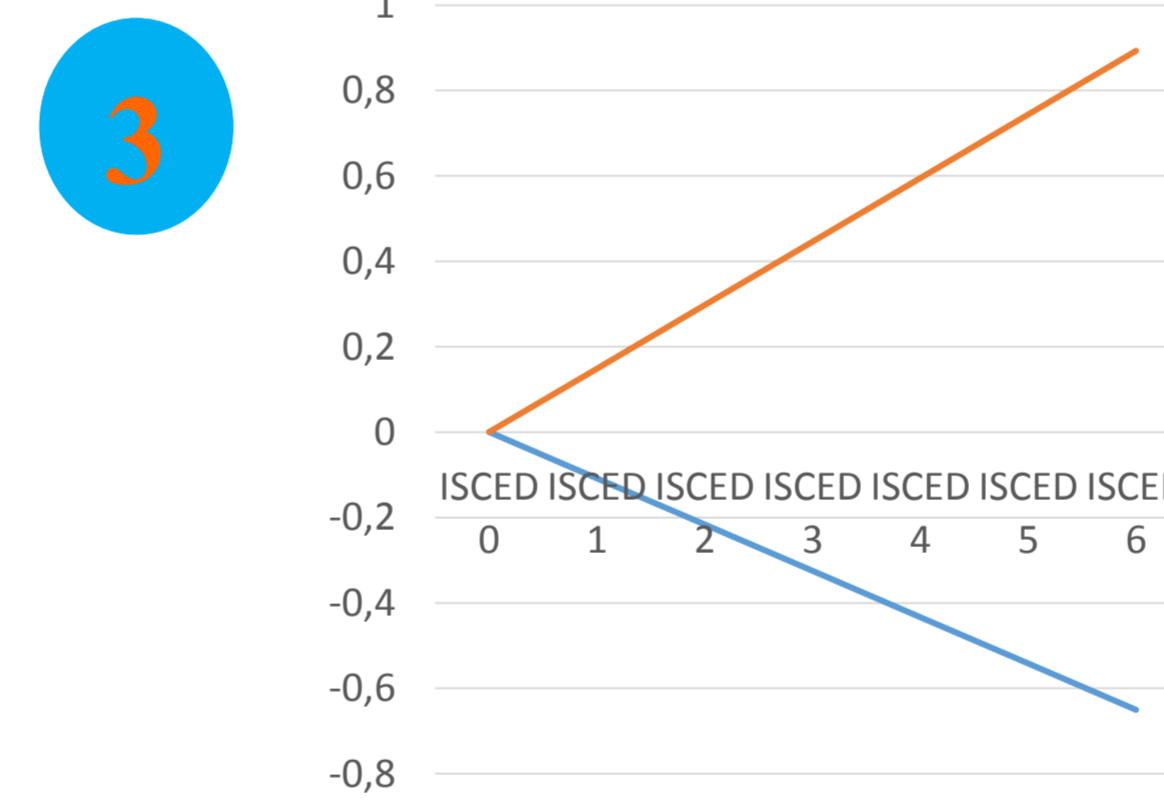
Couples' mean status and men's dissatisfaction

Controlled for working hours, gender role values, age, division of household labor, outsourcing, union (duration), age of the youngest child, education of the mother when respondent age 15

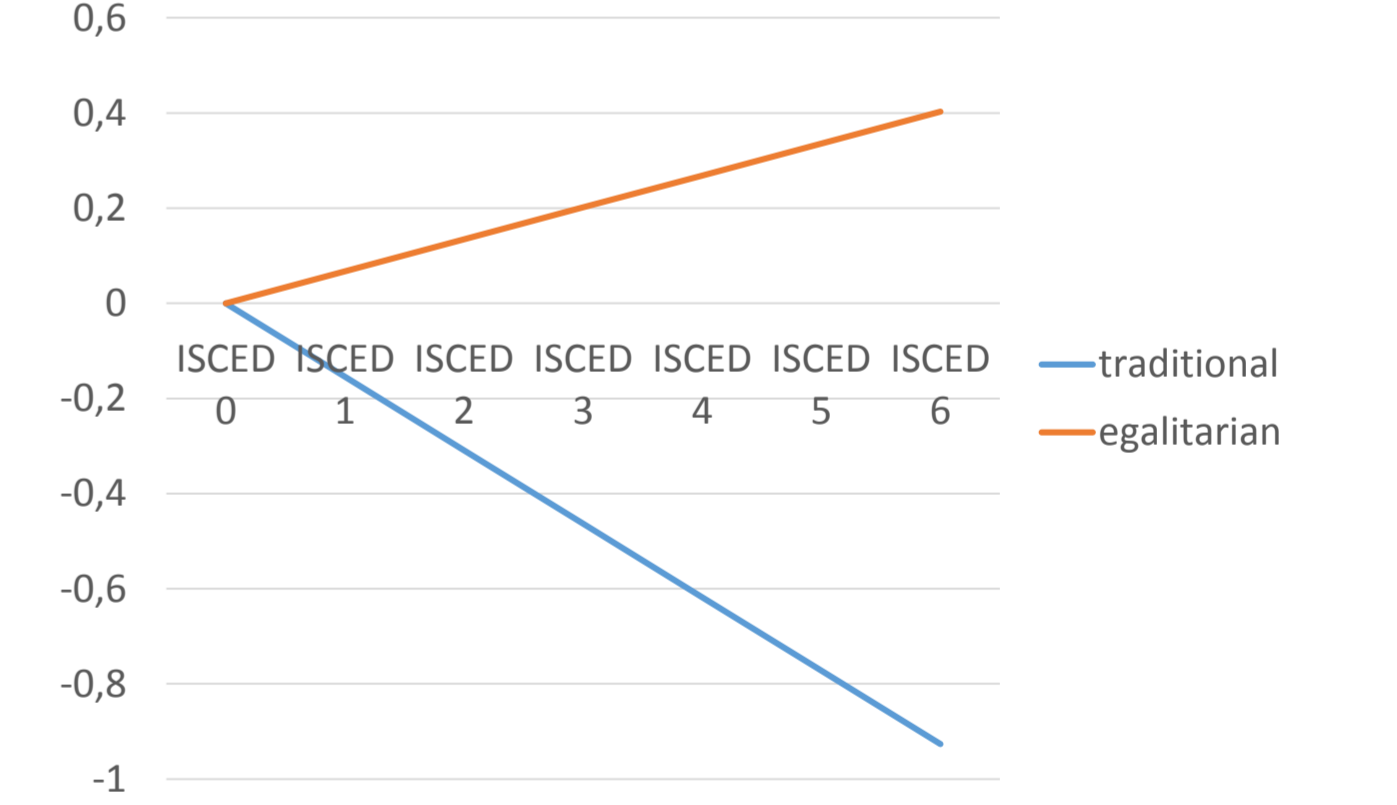
Table 1. Trivariate associations between both spouses' level of resources and each of the three outcomes.

		Dissatisfaction (mean)			Conflict (%)			Exit thoughts (%)		
		Low	Men Middle	High	Low	Men Middle	High	Low	Men Middle	High
Women's perceptions Education	Low	2,05	1,95	2,27	21	19	27	5,5	7,0	11
	Middle	2,31	2,05	2,06	24	22	24	10	8,5	13
	High	2,14	2,31	2,08	36	29	27	16	13	10
Occupational status	Low	2,27	2,09	1,97	27	23	24	9,6	10	11
	Women Middle	2,21	2,02	1,84	23	23	22	12	9,9	9,3
	High	2,45	2,16	1,94	30	24	22	13	13	11
Men's perceptions Education	Low	1,38	1,21	1,38	16	17	21	2,9	3,4	4,4
	Middle	1,42	1,25	1,27	18	19	17	5,1	5,0	5,5
	High	1,58	1,35	1,29	25	23	22	8,0	7,8	7,4
Occupational status	Low	1,42	1,32	1,32	21	21	20	4,6	6,4	5,9
	Women Middle	1,35	1,21	1,24	20	18	18	5,7	5,5	6,5
	High	1,43	1,27	1,24	23	20	18	8,8	7,5	7,0

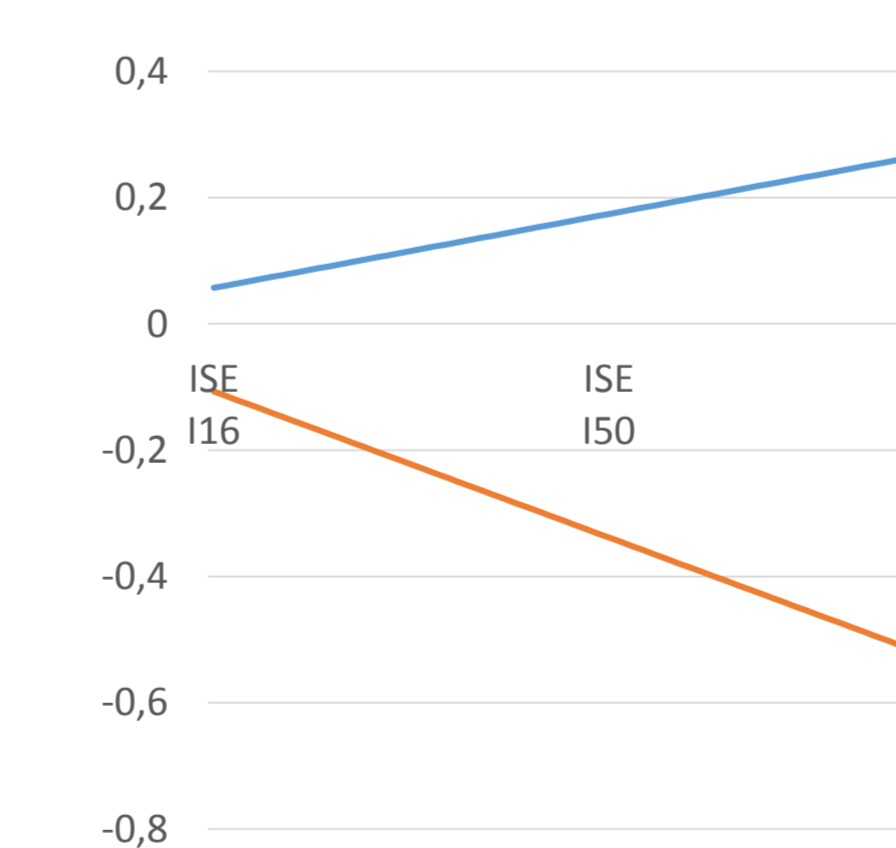
* Low educated is ISCED 1-2, middle educated is ISCED 3-4, high educated is ISCED 5-6.
* Low status is ISEI 10-30, middle status is ISEI 31-49, high status is ISEI 50-90.



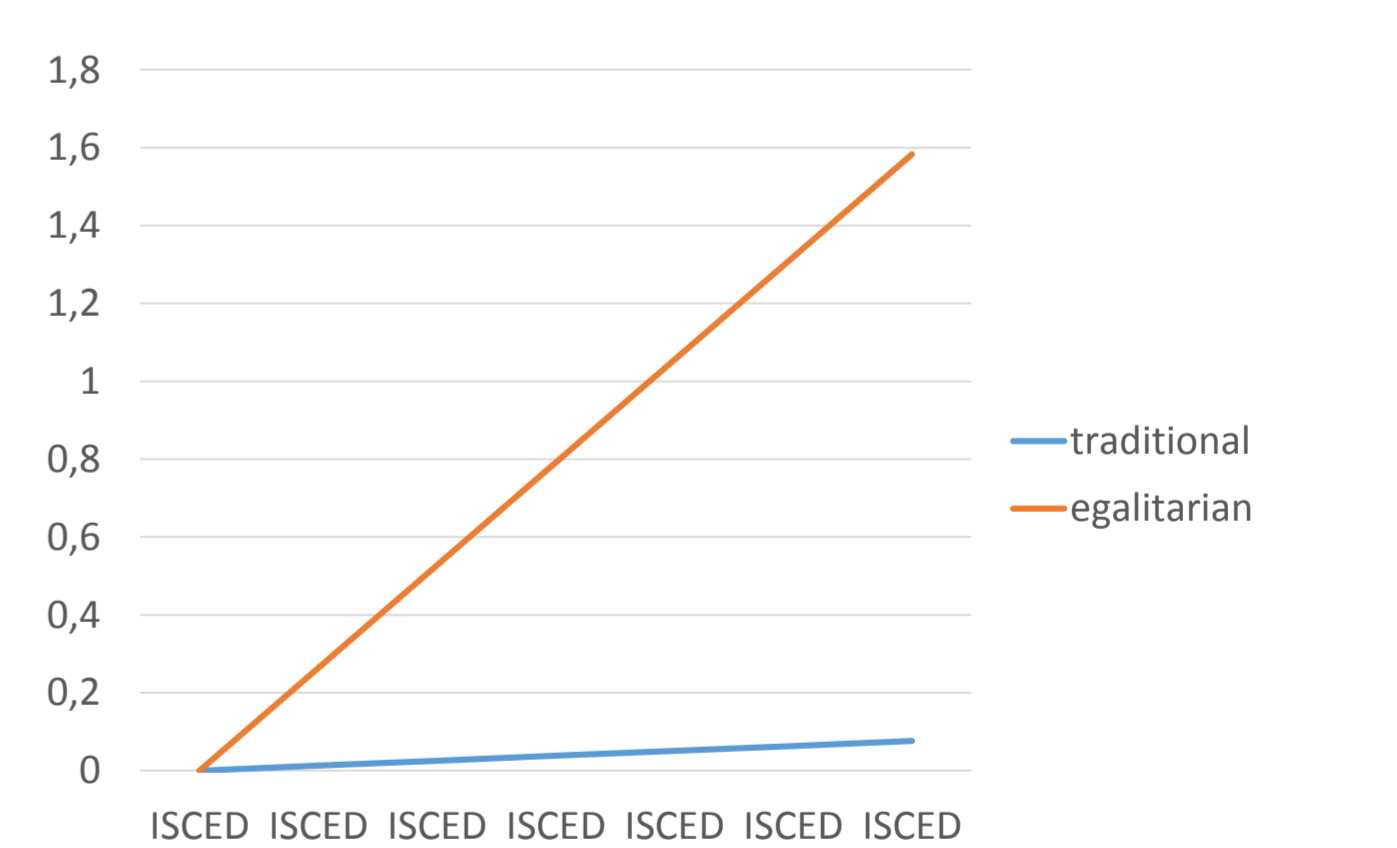
Couples' mean education and women's dissatisfaction



Couples' mean education and men's dissatisfaction



Women's relative status and women's dissatisfaction



Couples' mean education and women's conflict

Conclusions

Descriptive figures

- 1 Dissatisfaction is highest in Russia for women and in Lithuania and France for men. It is lowest in Austria and Romania.
- 2 Conflict occurs most in France, Belgium, and Russia and least in Hungary.
- 3 Exit thoughts are most present in Russia and least in Romania.

Table 1

- 1 Increasing levels of education go together with an increase in dissatisfaction, conflict, and exit thoughts.
- 2 Increasing status is associated with lower scores on dissatisfaction, conflict, and exit thoughts.
- 3 Hence, the level matters, both for education and for status (but for status in the opposite direction).
- 3 Wife's relative resources matter for dissatisfaction, conflict, and exit thoughts.

References

Blood, R. O., & Wolfe, D. M. (1960). *Husbands and Wives: the Dynamics of Married Living*. Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe.
Greenstein, T. N. (1996). Gender Ideology and Perceptions of the Fairness of the Division of Household Labor: Effects on Marital Quality. *Social Forces*, 74(3), 1029-1042.
Hirschman, A. (1970). *Exit, voice, and loyalty*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Lundberg, S., & Pollak, R. A. (1996). Bargaining and Distribution in Marriage. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 10(4), 139-158. doi: 10.1257/jep.10.4.139

DISCUSSION

Figures

- 1 The couples' mean level of resources matters and it matters more in gender egalitarian societies (both for dissatisfaction and for conflict (women's reports)).
- 2 Women's relative occupational status (for women) increases satisfaction the more gender egalitarian a society is.
- 3 The higher the couples' absolute occupational status, the more dissatisfied men are.
- 4 Wife's higher relative education goes together with more conflict reported by the man.
- 5 Women have more exit thoughts when their education is higher relative to that of their spouse

Discussion

- 1 More resources -> more power -> higher likelihood to respond to inequitable division of labor within the household.
- 2 Absolute educational resources more positively affect 'voice' rather than 'exit' thoughts in gender egalitarian countries
- 3 Importance of absolute economic independence within relationships.