

It's still a story without an ending: fertility, public policies and working mothers in Europe.

Anália Torres

www.analiatorres.net

**President ESA, European
Sociological Association
Full Professor ISCSP-Technical
University of Lisbon**

Bernardo Coelho

Researcher
CIES/ISCTE

with **Diana Carvalho**

Junior Researcher
CIES/ISCTE

Finding (from 2002 to 2008):

A positive correlation between mother's employment and fertility rate across Europe (against common sense and stereotypes).

**Researching about work and family.
Analysing trends and comparing countries in Europe**

**Using qualitative and quantitative data,
European Social Survey (2002-2008)**

WORKCARE, Social Quality and Changing Relationships between Work, Care and Welfare in Europe, (FP6 - 2006-2009)

WORKCARE SYNERGIES (FP7) (on going)

In a very explorative and empirical exercise we discuss this and other finding. Trying to understand and explain them we explore several topics:

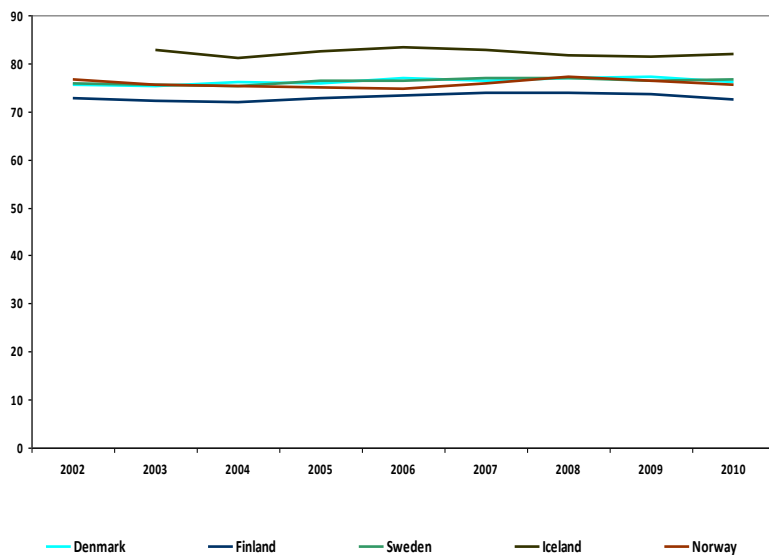
1) The relation between fertility rate trends (in the last 20 years), female and mother's activity and social policies.

- Can policies be effective? Different policies with the same outputs? And What about female unemployment and fertility in Europe? Do historical and political dynamics have a role? And what about ideologies and cultural factors?**

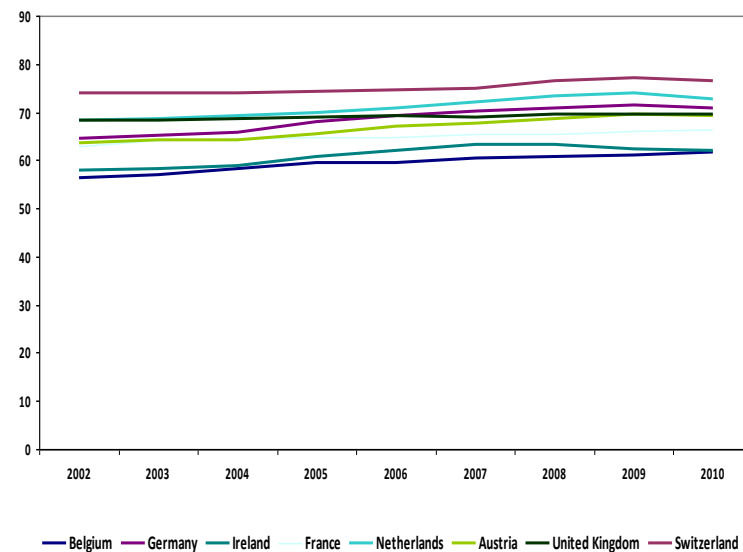
2) The relevance of part-time and full-time jobs in European mothers employment strategies and solutions. Is this really a very spread solution?

Female Activity Rate (2002-2008)

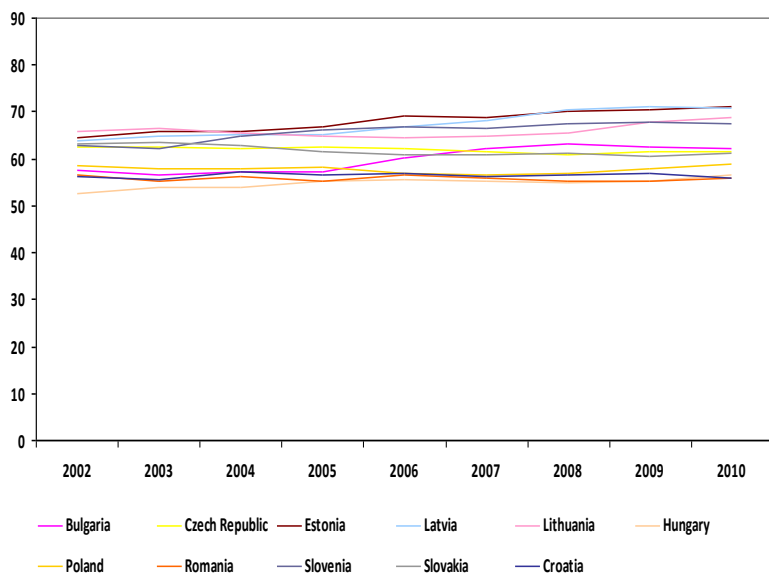
Nordic Countries



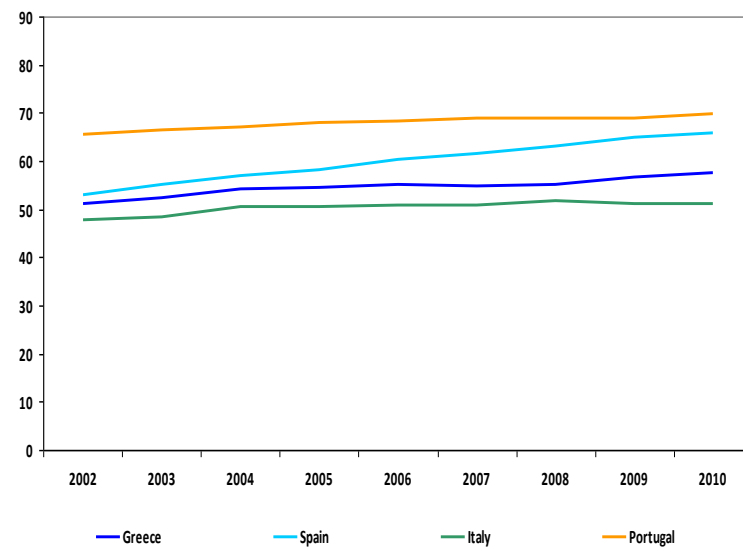
Northern and Central Europe



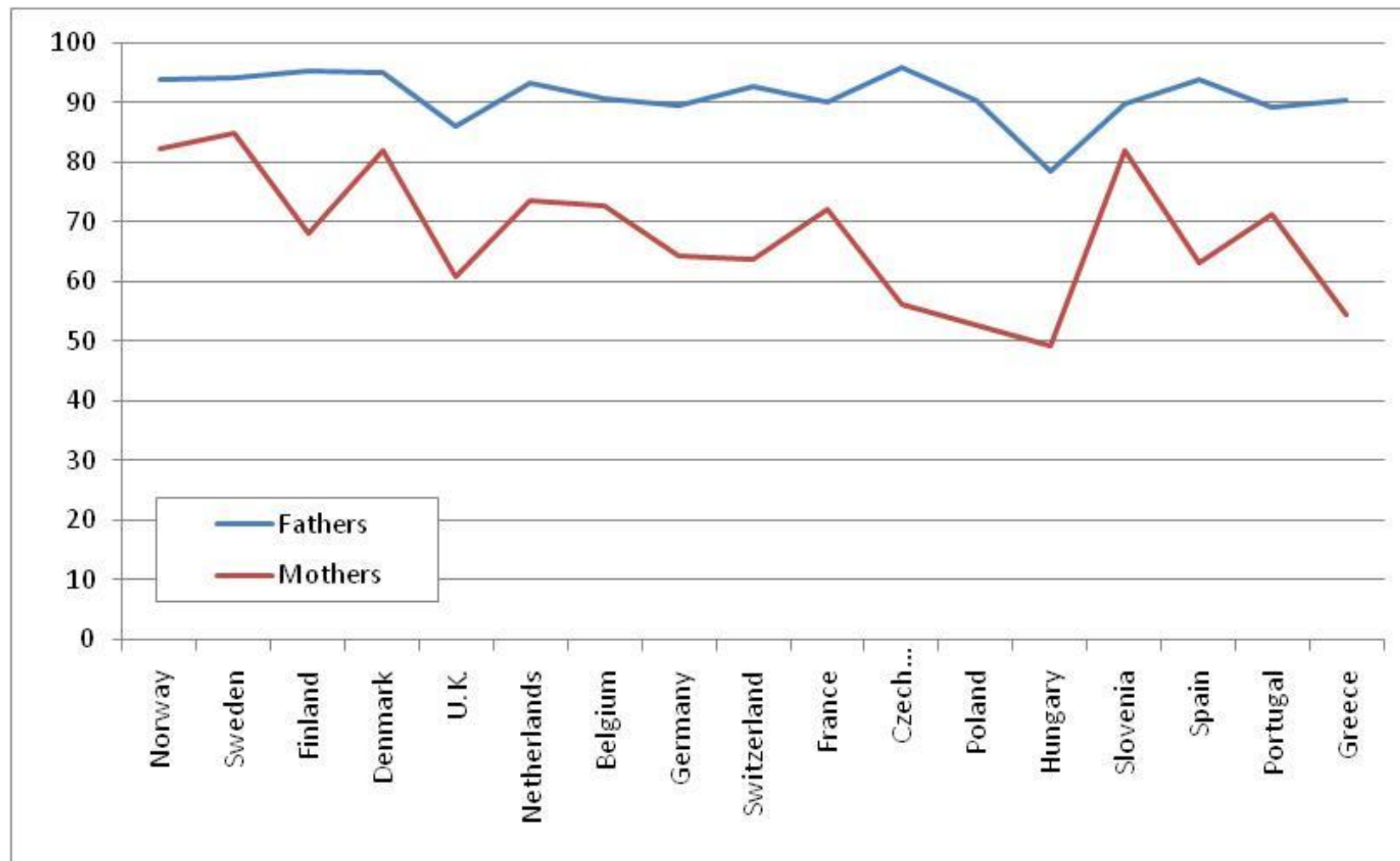
Eastern Europe



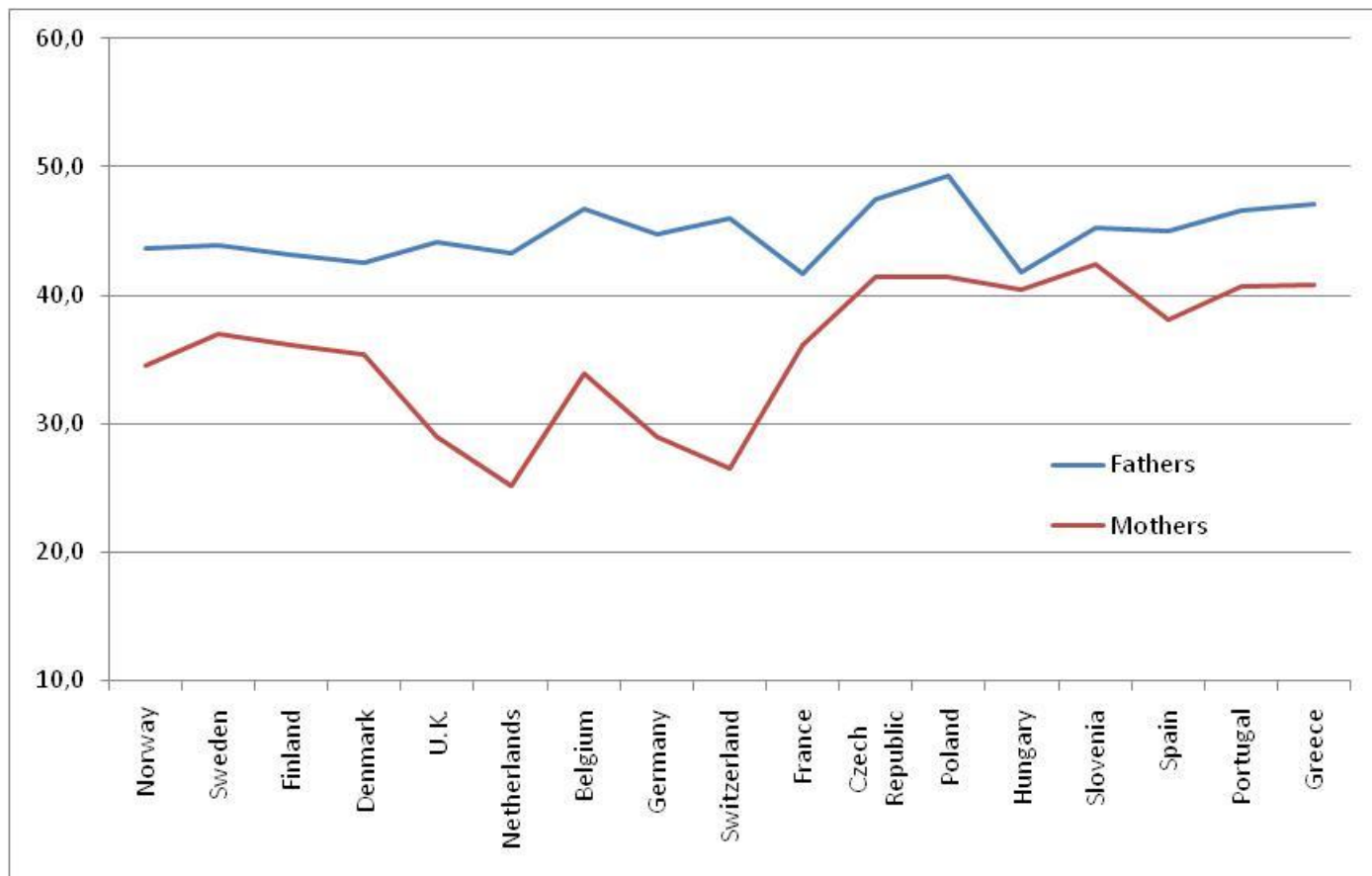
Southern Europe



Mothers and fathers of children under 10 who carried out paid work in the preceeding 7 days (%), 2008

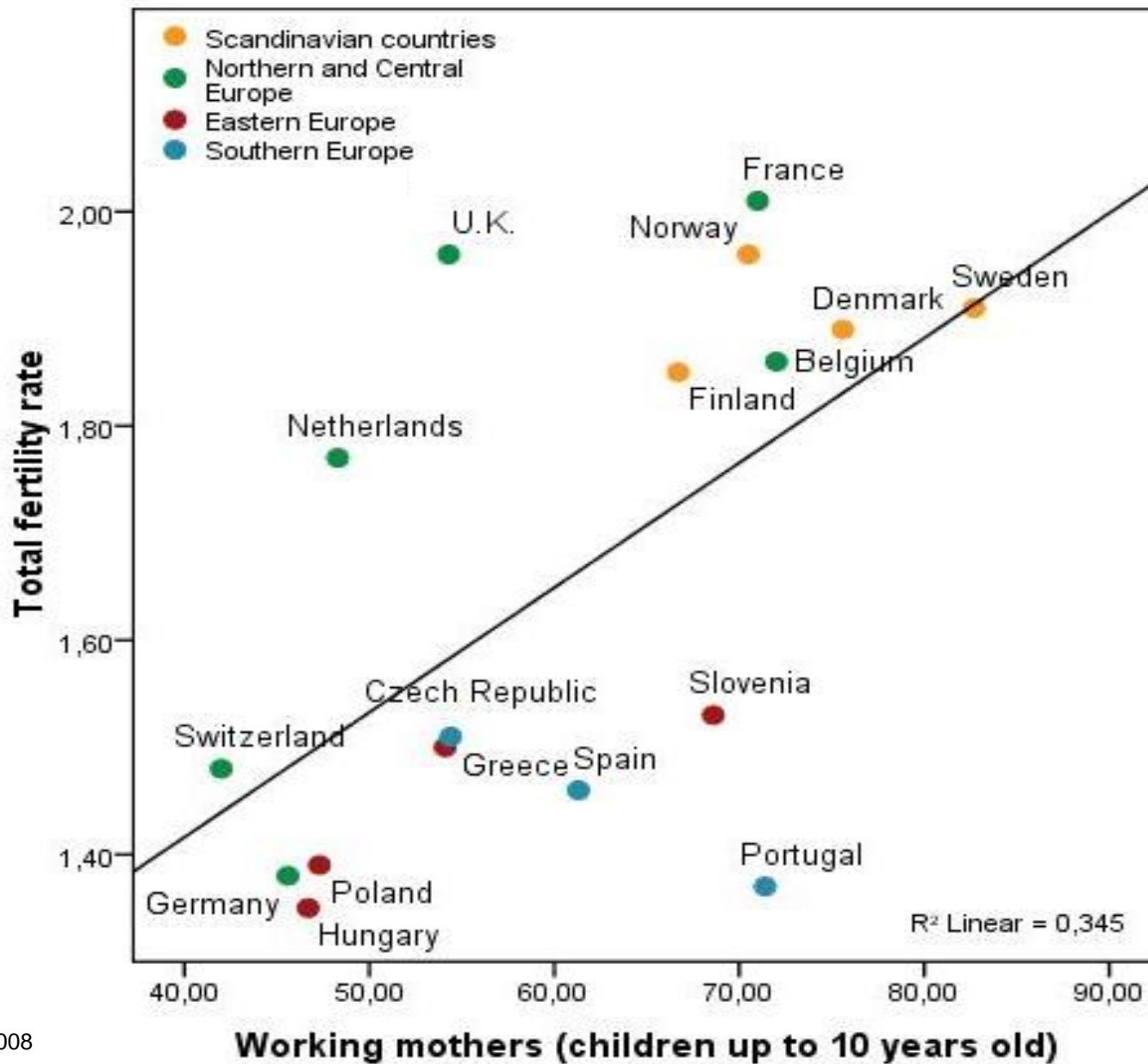


Average hours of work of mothers and fathers with children under 10, 2008



**Mother's employment and
fertility rate: a positive
correlation since the 80s**

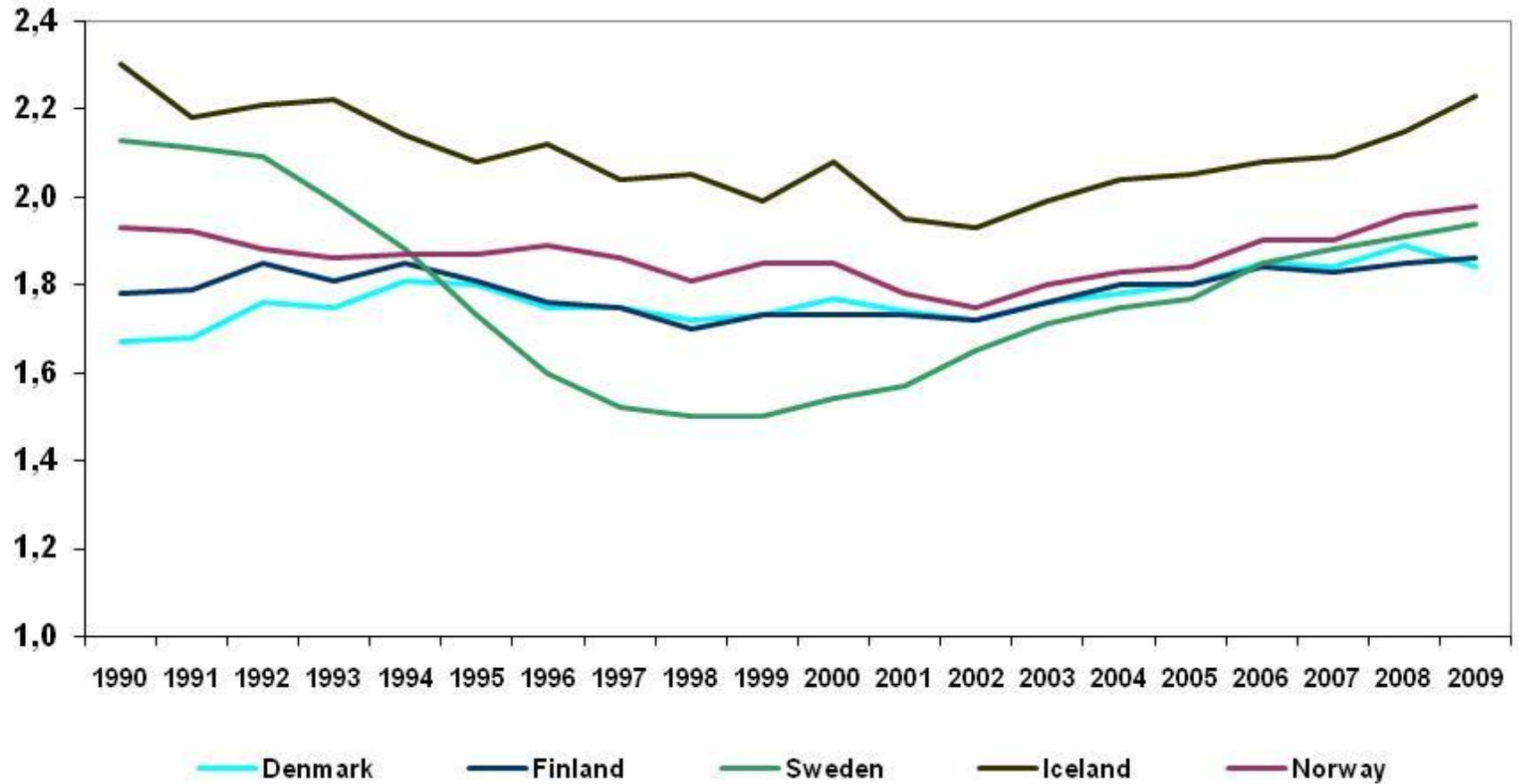
Total fertility rate and working mothers (2008)



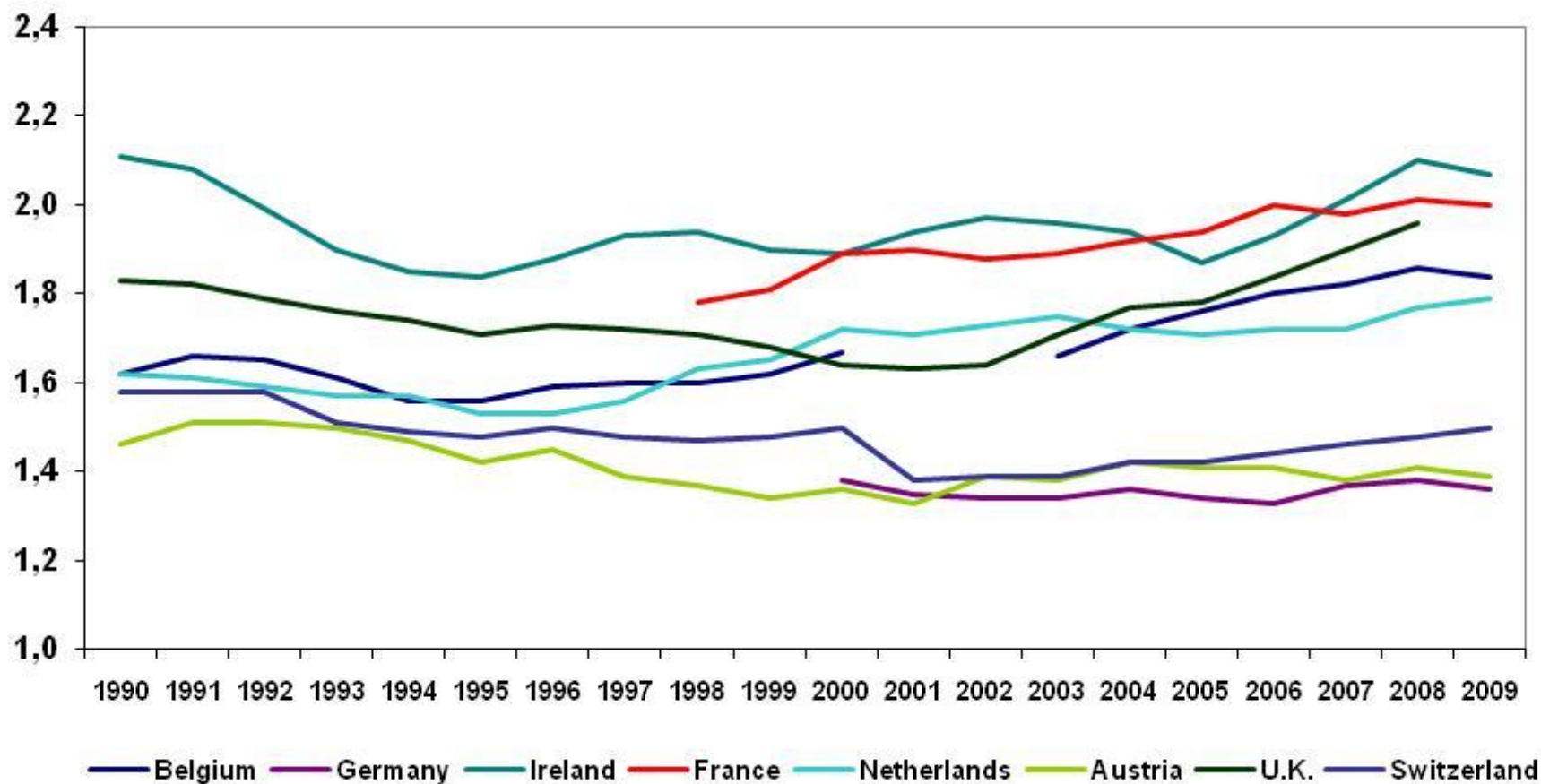
**How can we explain this correlation?
Do Policies have an impact? And
Welfare state regimes?**

**Looking back at fertility trends in
Europe in the last 20 years.**

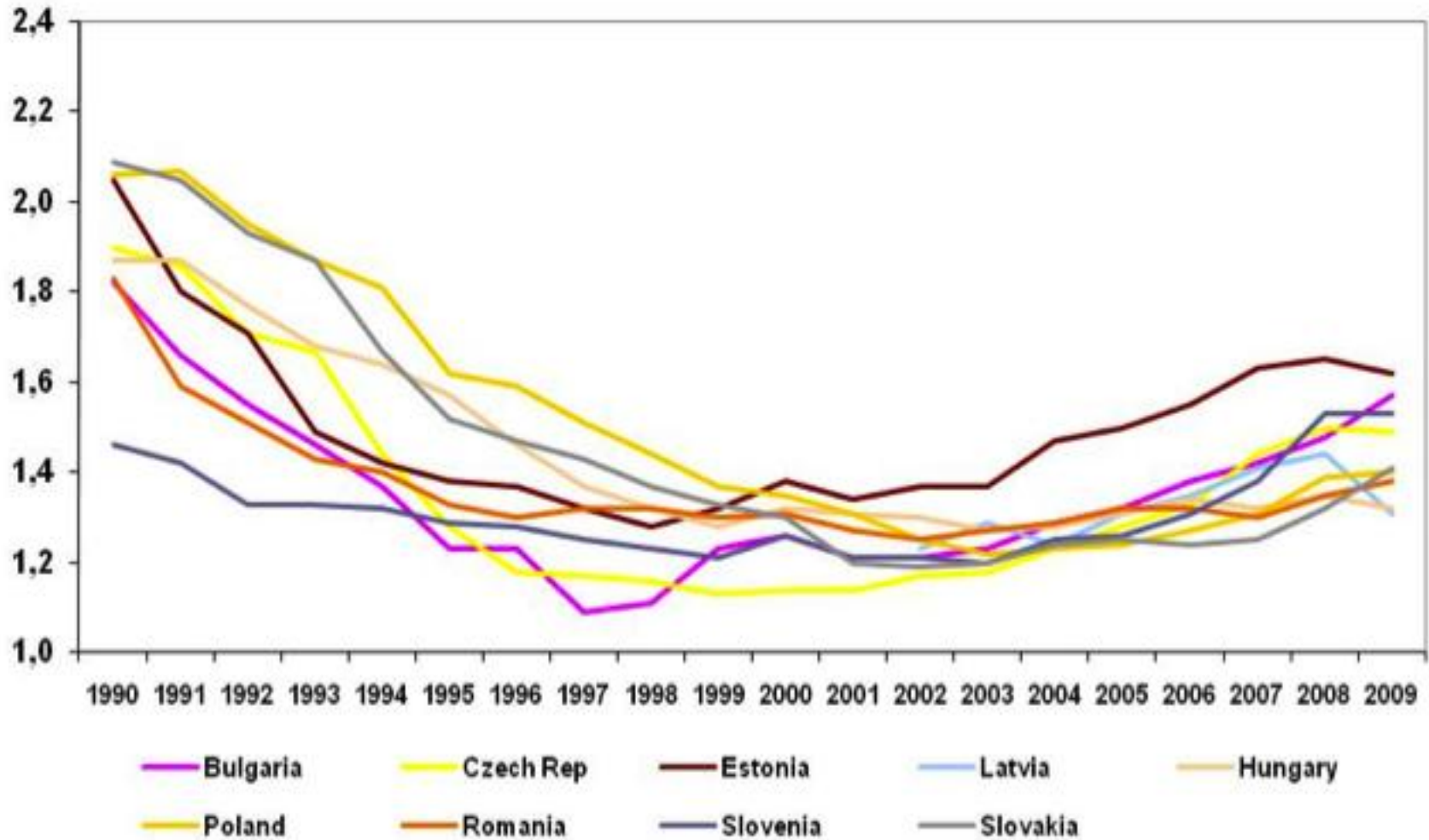
Nordic countries fertility rate



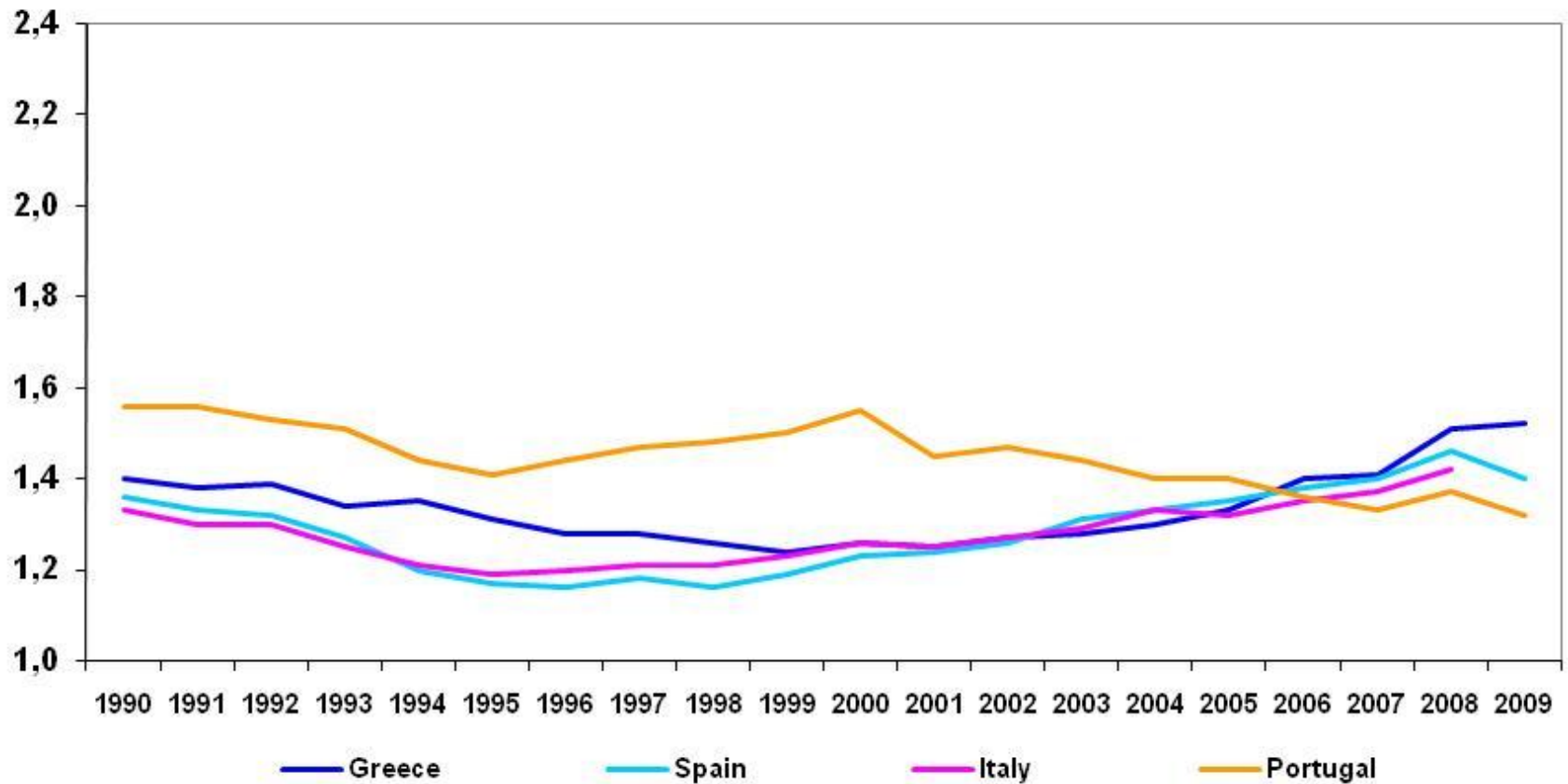
Northern and Central Europe fertility rate



Eastern Europe fertility rate



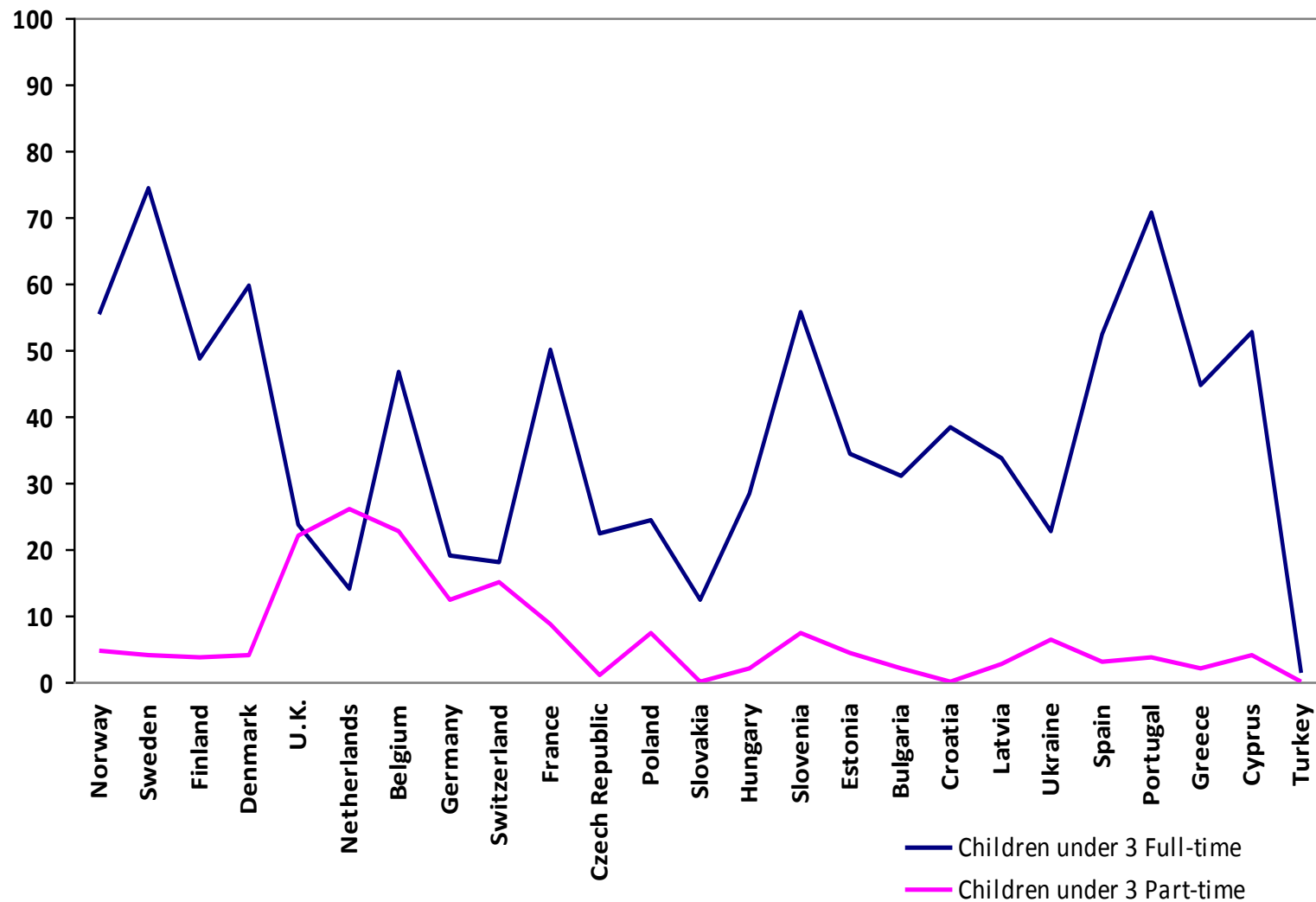
Southern Europe fertility rate



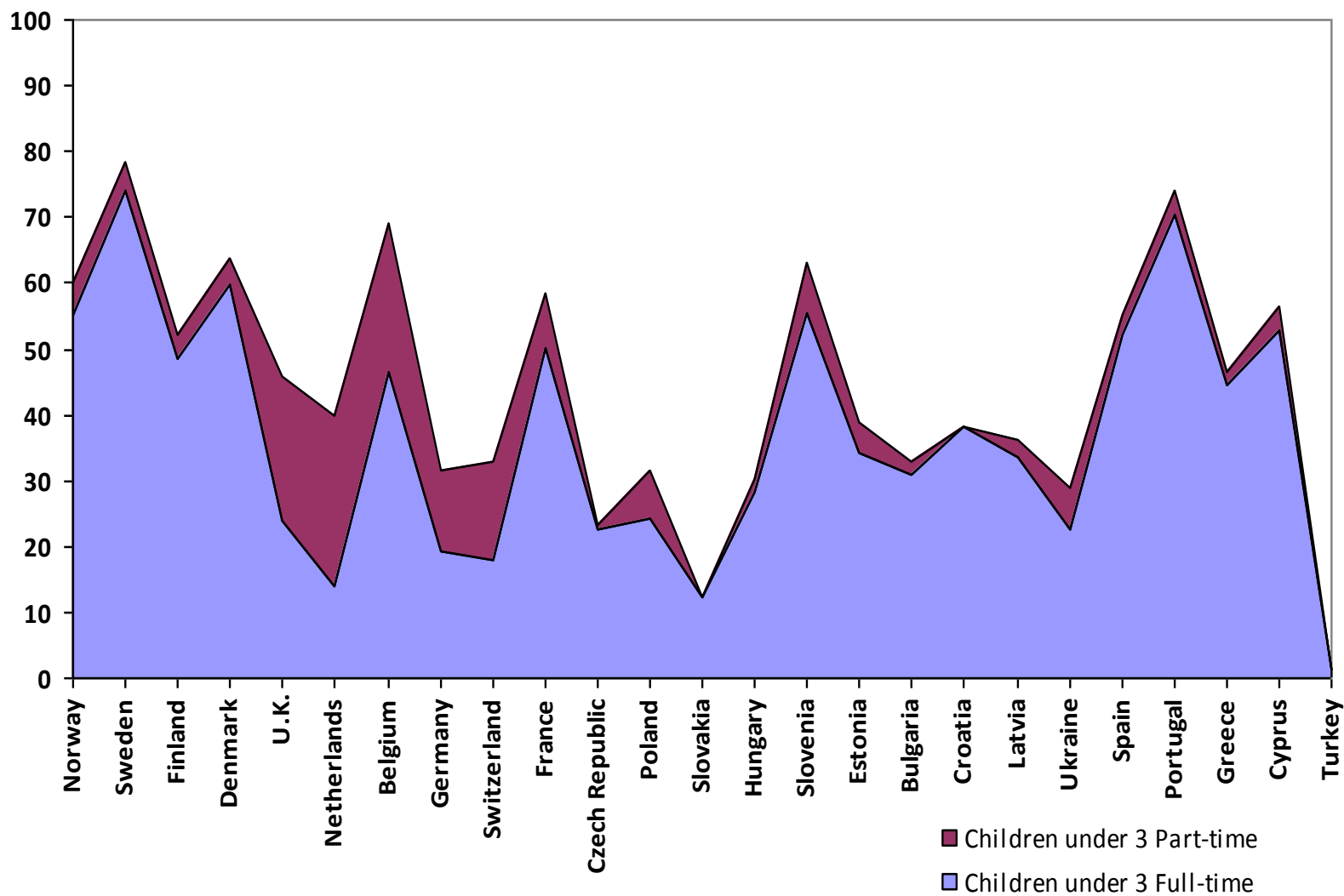
- **Fertility trends in the last 20 years in Europe. The relevance of historical dynamics of change in each country or group of countries.**
- **Long term structural dynamics in each country. But also specific effects: changes in politics and policies**
 - **Eastern countries change of regime (1989); UK, 1997; Portugal 1995; 2005; Spain (2004);**
- **Or historical and cultural dimensions: the strength of feminist movements (differences among Scandinavian countries; or some backlash and cultural specific effects and “ideologies” (Eastern countries, “motherhood ideology in Germany and The Netherlands).**

**Working mothers in Europe: part
time or full time.**

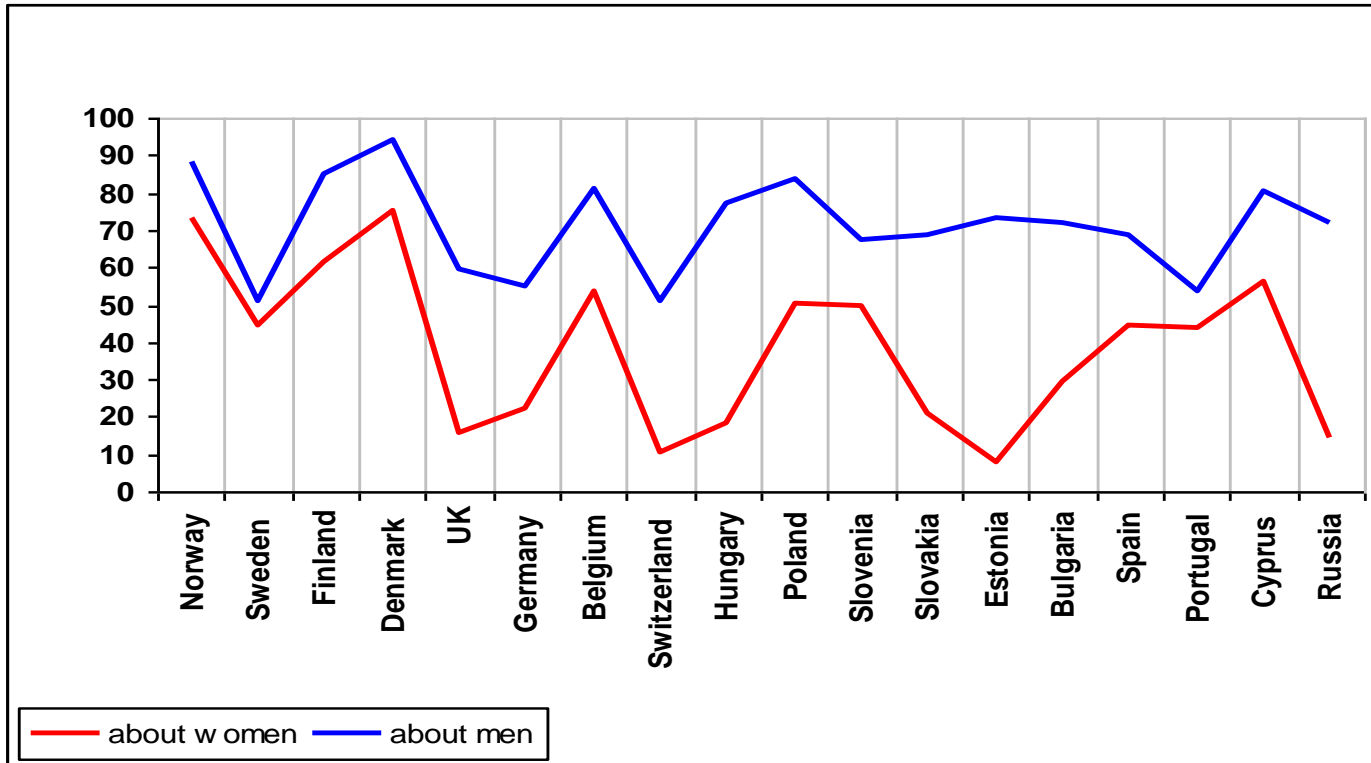
Full time/Part-time working mothers children under 3 (%)



Full time + Part-time working mothers children under 3 (%)



Have a full-time job while she/he has children aged under 3 (% approve + strongly approve)



ESS (round 3) 2006

Country: $F(18, 34291) = 178,669$; $p < 0,000$, $ETA^2 = 0,086$

Gender: $F(1, 34285) = 2,111$; $p = n.s.$

Clear different pattern for mothers and for fathers.

For women:

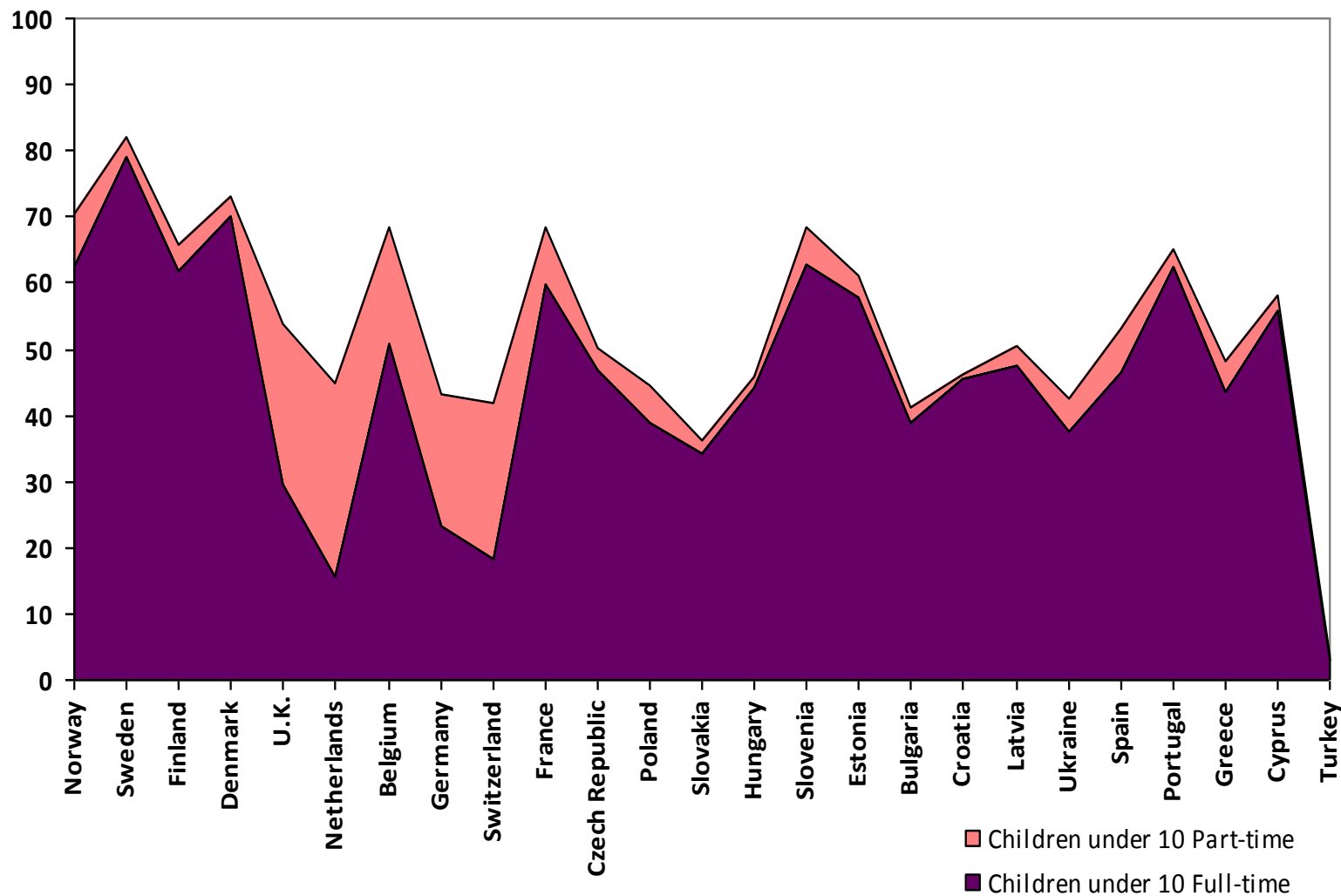
Very high approval: Nordic (except Sweden);

Moderate approval: Belgium, Poland Slovenia, Spain, Portugal;

Very low approval: UK, Germany,

Switzerland, Estonia, Russia

Full time + Part-time working mothers children under 10 (%)



Final Remarks

- The participation of women in the labour market is not a constrain to a higher fertility rate, on the contrary, it is a factor that seems to enhance it.
- Policies do have effects. Though policies, and their combination, differ in different countries they may have the same impact in raising fertility rates.
- Positive correlation between mothers work and fertility rate in Europe.
- Part-time jobs aren't a solution for mothers. In countries with an important number of mothers in part time jobs the most common situation is the withdraw from the labour market (UK, Netherlands, Switzerland).
- In countries with long term high fertility rates (Nordic) – mothers of very young children (until three) work full-time. After the leave of one year they get back to work.
- Fertility decisions and trends have to be explained by the interaction of different social dimensions. Each country with a specific combination of factors.
- But where the philosophy seems to be a good combination between the right for mothers and fathers to have a job and quality childcare facilities look the the more balanced and preferred solutions.

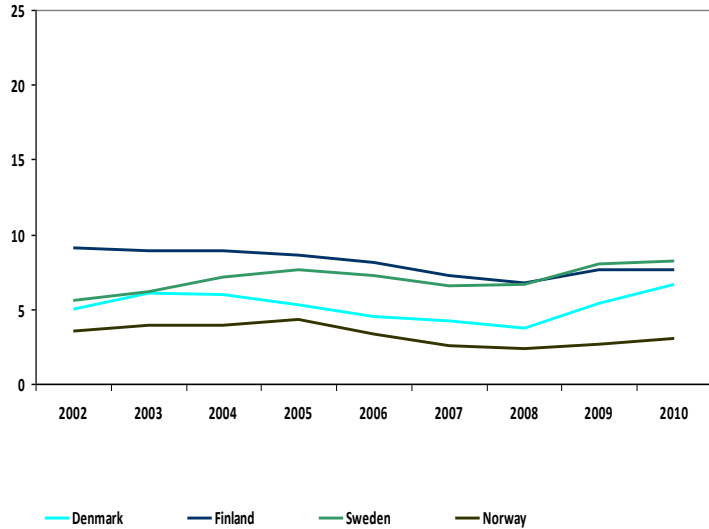
EXTRAS

Female unemployment and fertility in Europe.

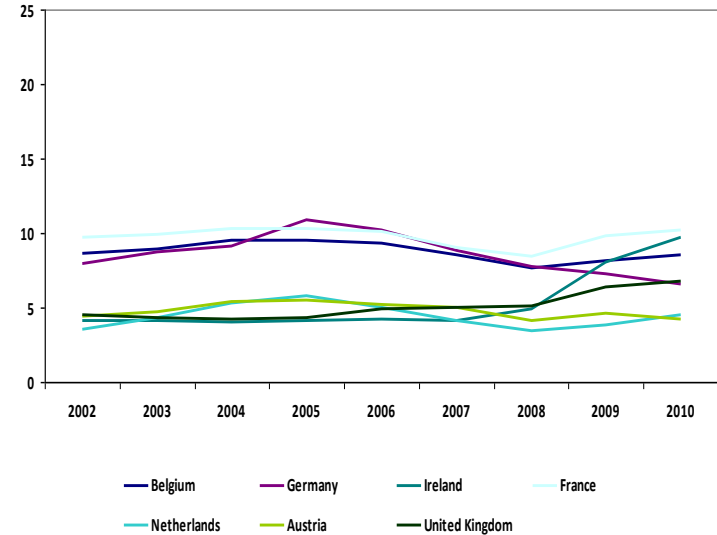
- **Overview female unemployment rate in Europe. Differences among country groups.**
- **The relation between unemployment and fertility rate. Some particular cases: different regions the same trends and differences within the same region.**
- **European map by the lens of female unemployment and fertility change rates (2002 – 2010). Coexistence of apparent contradictory trends.**

Female Unemployment Rate

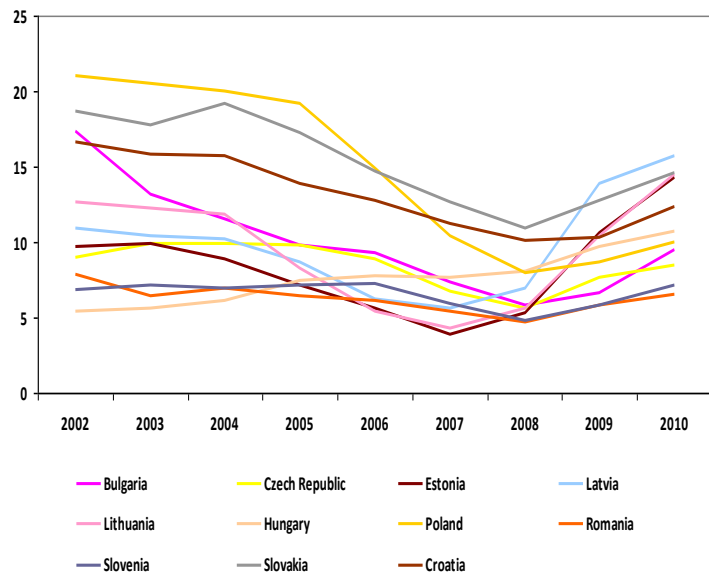
Nordic Countries



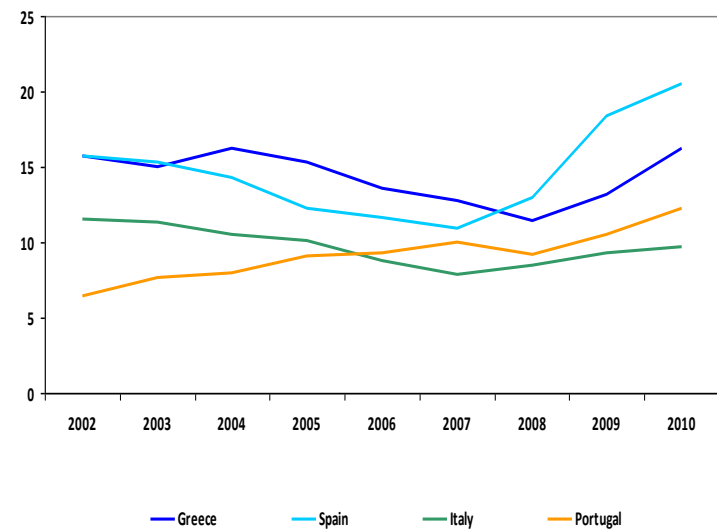
Northern and Central Europe



Eastern Europe



Southern Europe

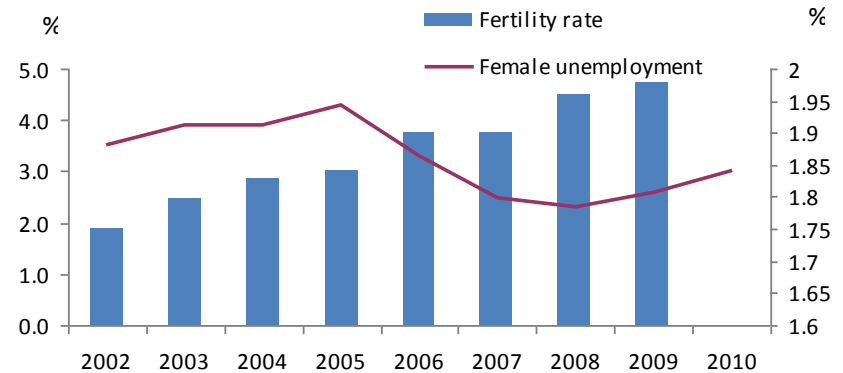


Different regions the same trends

Negative correlation between fertility rate and female unemployment:

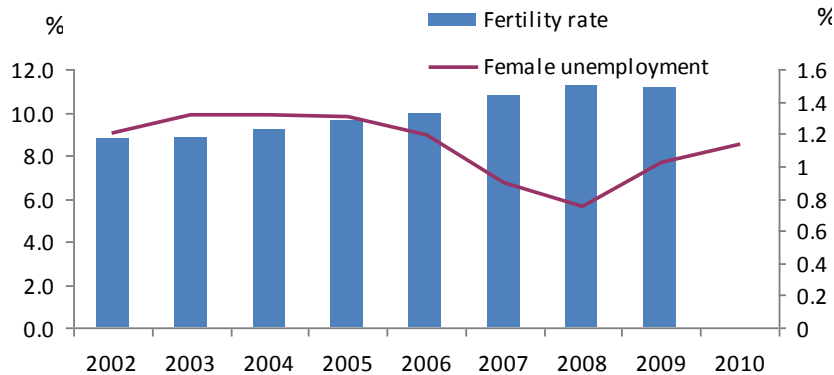
High female unemployment / low fertility rate.

Norway



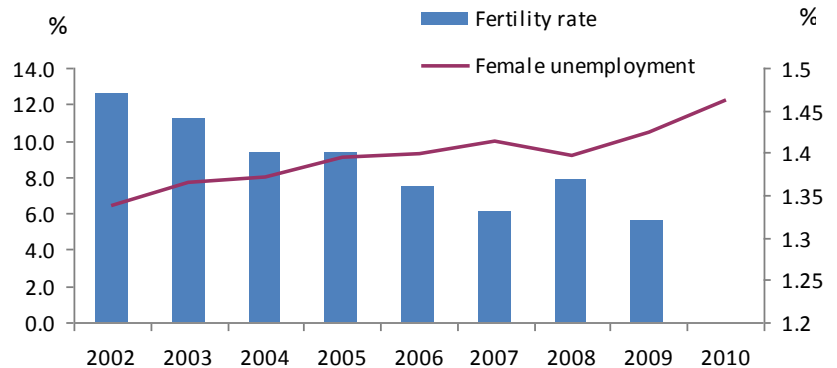
Corr: -0.75

Czech Republic



Corr: -0.86

Portugal

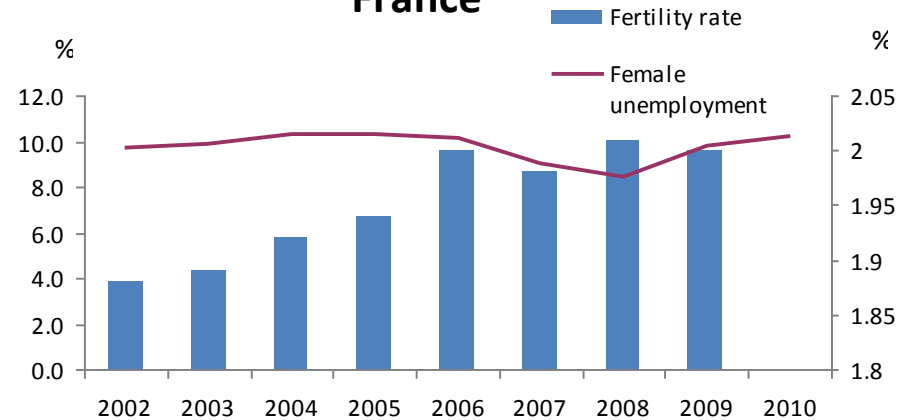


Corr: -0.97

Differences within the same region

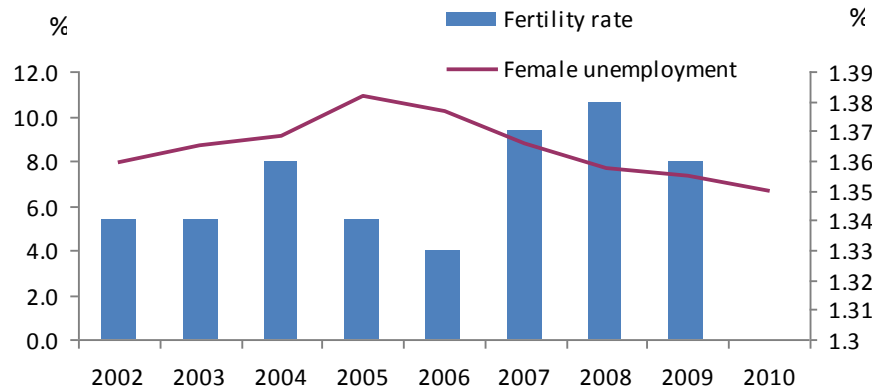
Positive (UK) and negative (France and Germany) correlations between fertility rate and female unemployment.

France



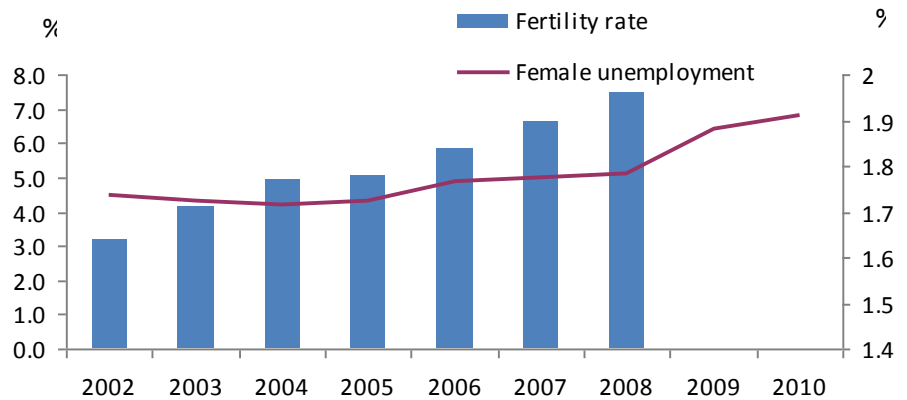
Corr: -0.45

Germany



Corr: -0.56

United Kingdom



Corr: 0.78

Fertility and female unemployment change rates: European map.

