



9th European Sociological Association Conference

**ESA2009**

European Society **or** European Societies?

02 - 05 September 2009  
Lisboa - Portugal  
ISCTE

# Family and gender in Europe

## Trends of convergence and divergence comparing countries

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centro  
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## European trends in family and gender relations

Valuing feelings  
and emotions

Secularization

Individualization

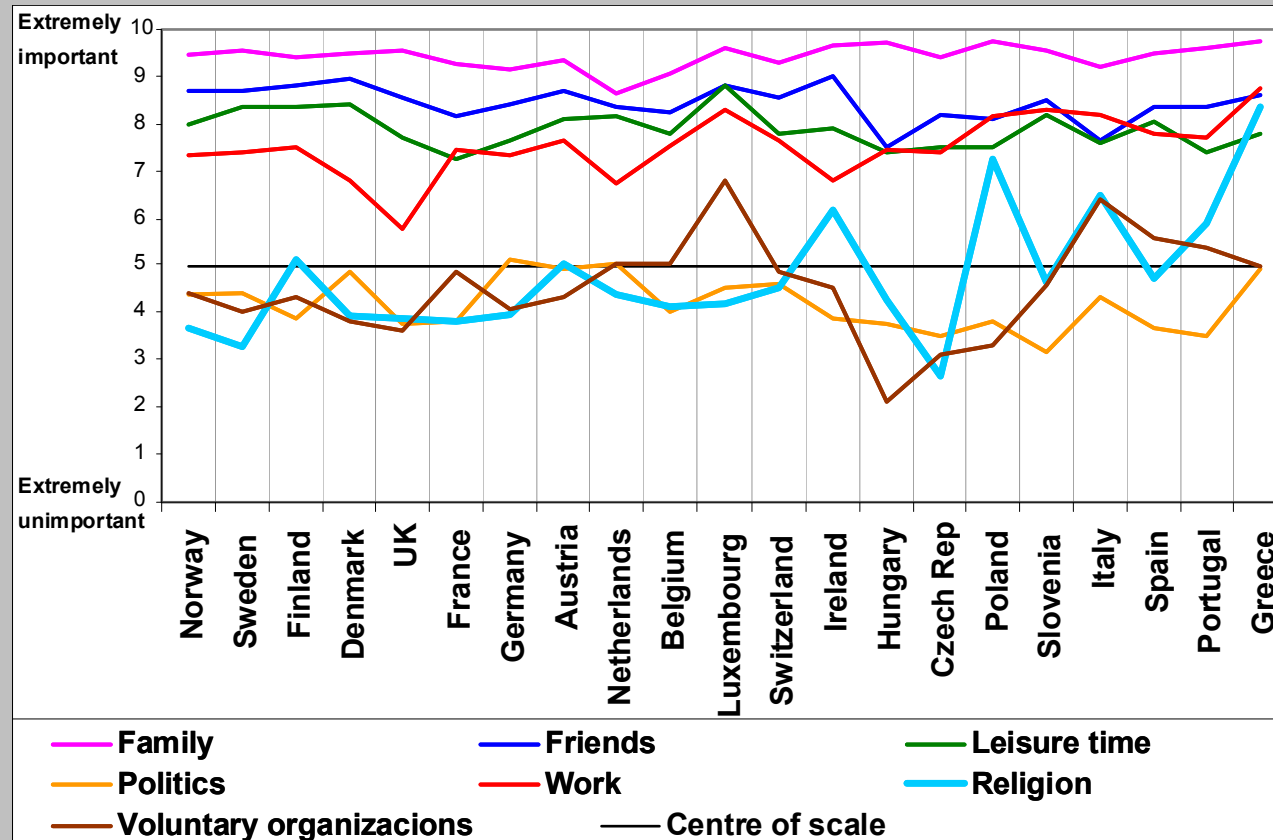
Women's search  
for autonomy and  
gender equality

Diversity in Europe,  
same pathways  
from different  
starting points and  
dynamics, specific  
configurations.

To understand those  
differences between  
countries we need to  
account for:

1. Structural,  
institutional,  
cultural contexts;
2. Dynamics of change  
in specific countries.

# Valuing feelings and emotions



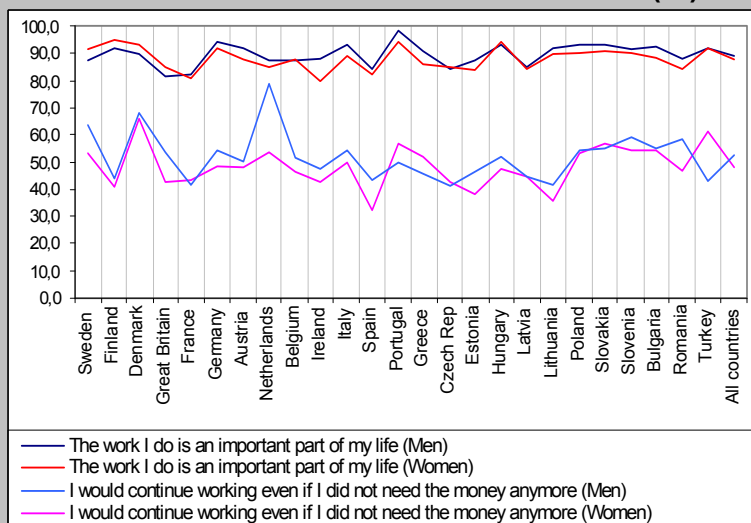
ESS (round 1) 2002

Contradicting stereotypes:

1. individuals value family and emotional dimensions.
2. Common values in Europe shared by the majority of the countries.

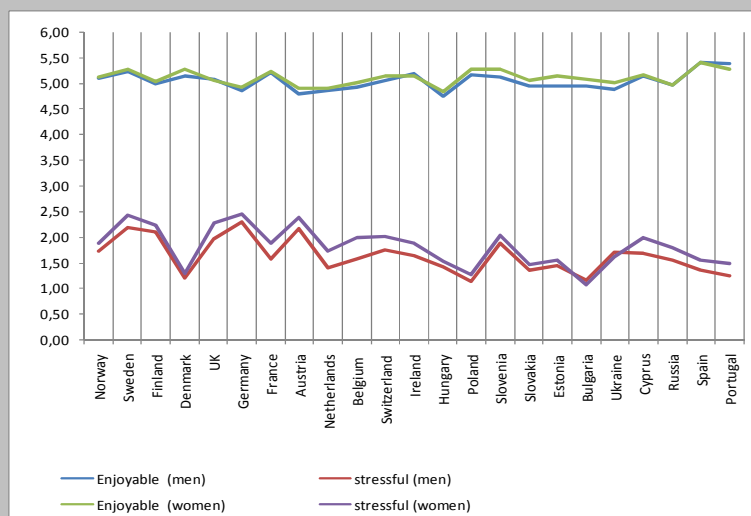
**Women's search for autonomy and gender equality**

## Work attachment for men and women (%)



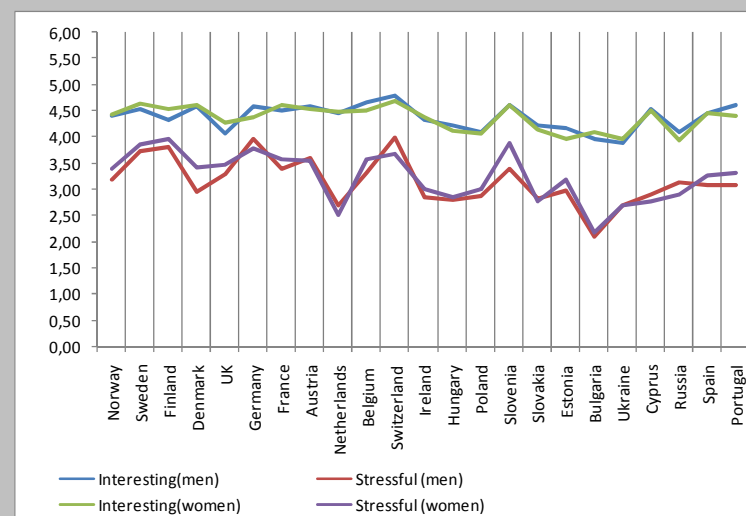
EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

## How much of the time spent with your immediate family is enjoyable and stressful



ESS (round 3) 2006

## How much of the time do you find your job interesting and stressful



ESS (round 3) 2006

Contradicting stereotypes, women tend to attribute the same importance to work as men do. Work is a value in itself, making part of a feminine social identity.

The discrepancies between the sexes are far narrower than the differences between countries.

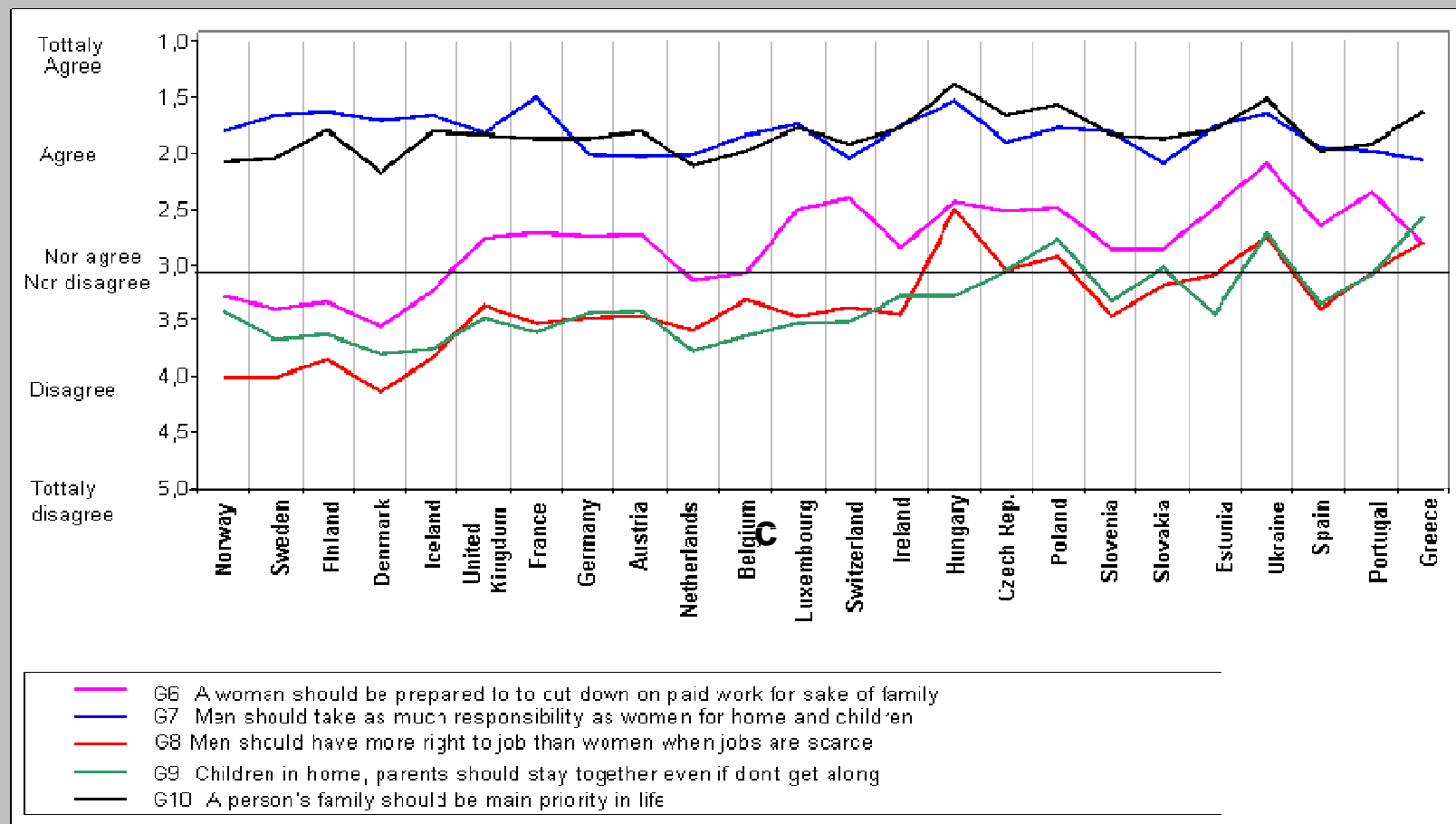
Equal patterns of satisfaction and stress in work between men and women.

Both for men and women work time is always perceived as more interesting than stressful.

- Work as main sphere of investment both for men and women.

Both for men and women time spent with family is more enjoyable than stressful

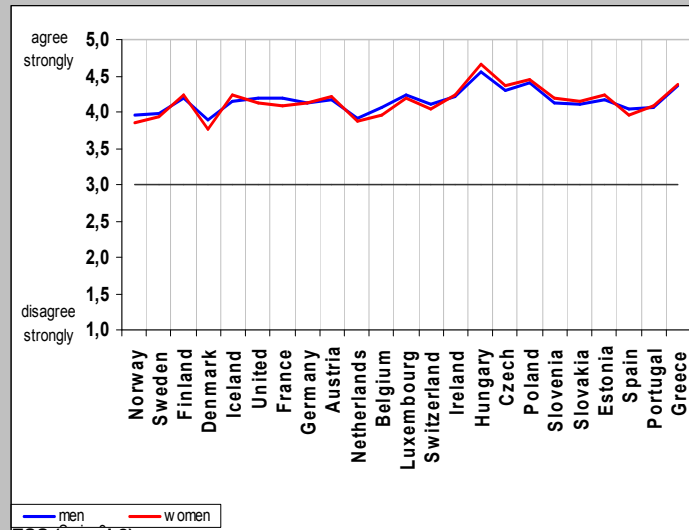
## New meanings of the family in Europe



ESS (Round 2), 2004

Great consensus in the ideological plan: Europeans tend to adopt an equalitarian perspective and reject a traditional vision of men's and women's roles in the family.

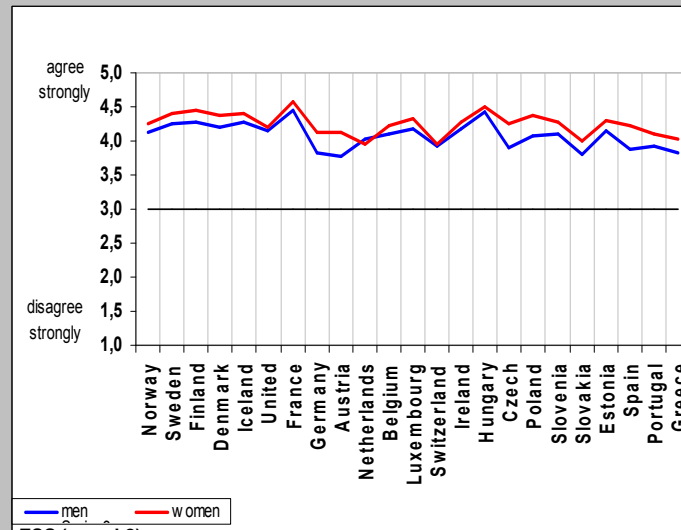
## A person's family ought to be his or her main priority in life



ESS (round 2)

2004

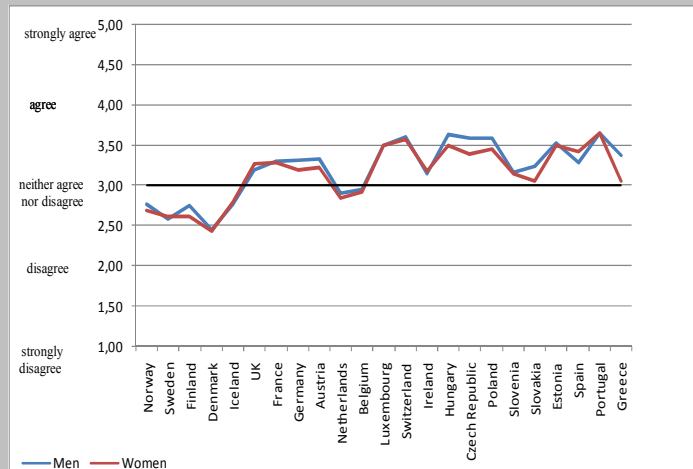
## Men should take as much responsibility as women for the home and children



ESS (round 2)

2004

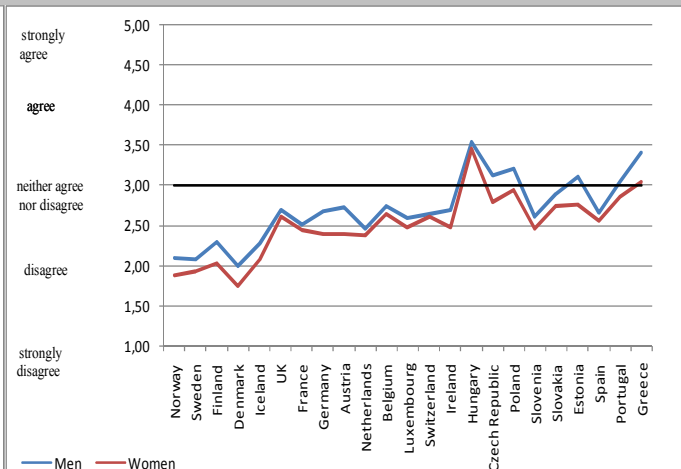
## A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family



ESS (round 2)

2004

## When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women

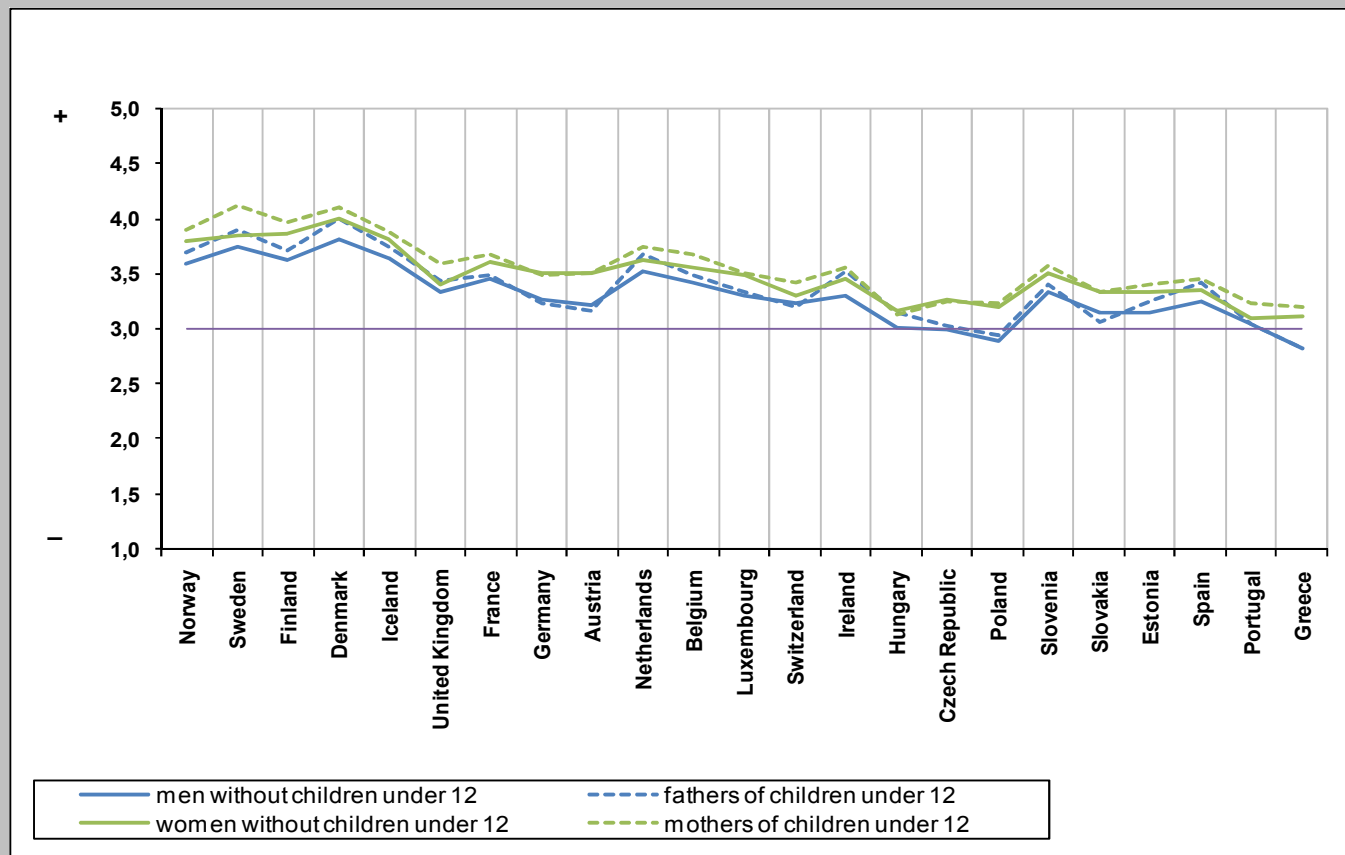


ESS (round 2)

2004



# Gender Roles by Men / Fathers, and women / mothers and Country



## ESS (round 2) 2004

Gender Roles Index: “A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family”; “Men should take as much responsibility as women for the home and children”; “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women”; “When there are children in the home, parents should stay together even if they don’t get along”.

\*Variance explained = 44,834%;  $\alpha = 0,588$

Country:  $F(22, 41590) = 245,264, p < 0,000, \eta^2=0,115$  Gender:  $F(1, 41529) = 635,814, p < 0,000, \eta^2=0,015$

Gender roles in the family are perceived slightly differently by men without children and men with children under 12.

But country differences are more important than differences between men and fathers. The same can be said about women and mothers of children under 12.

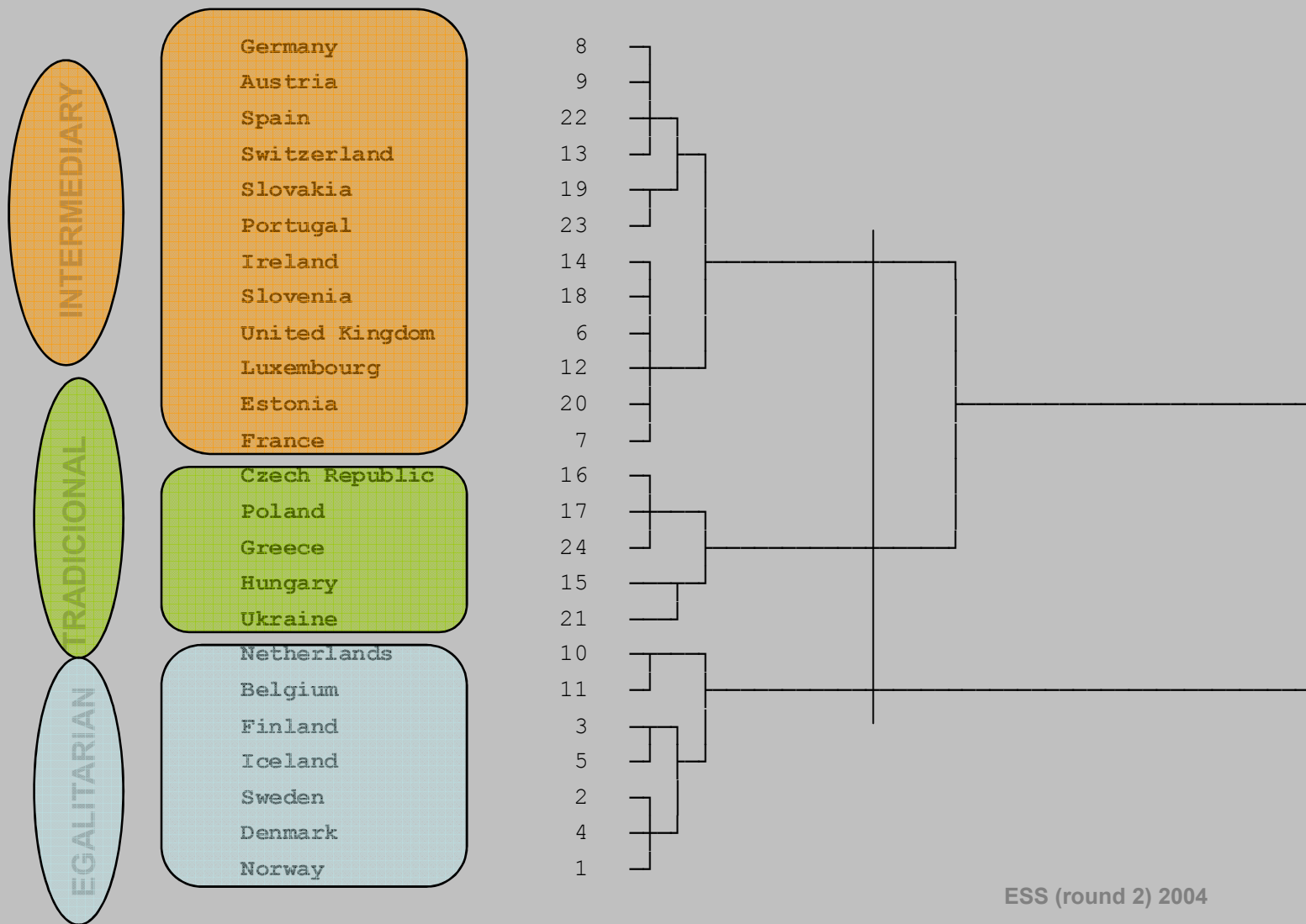
In a cross country perspective women tend to be more egalitarian than men.

Egalitarianism tends to decrease from Nordic countries, to continental Europe and to the Southern and eastern European countries.

Structural, cultural and institutional constraints can explain differences among European countries.

# Gender Roles Indicators

## Hierarchical Cluster Analysis (Ward Method) by Gender relations in the family



ESS (round 2) 2004

- The transformations of the family in Europe follows the same patterns but with calendar differences and cultural variants.
  - Each region have particular configurations and combinations between the old and the new. It still makes sense, analytically, to differentiate between the northern and the southern European countries (although there are also internal differences within the groups of countries).
- 
- Long term structural dynamics in each country. But also conjuncture effects, changes in politics and policies, the strength of feminist movements...
    - Portugal. The effect of Colonial War. But also young people leaving home soon to marry (less skilled, less educated..)
    - Eastern countries. (The cry of revenge... U.Beck)
    - Germany. Doing it all differently from the East...
    - U. Kingdom. Changes from 1997 on.
    - Spain and Finland. Both with high young people unemployment rate but with different fertility rates and policies.

## Multiple Regression, dependent variable: Gender Roles Index

	Sweden	Netherlands	UK	France	Austria	Spain	Portugal	Czech Rep.	Greece
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.094</b>	<b>.070</b>	<b>.068</b>	<b>.124</b>	<b>.103</b>	<b>.254</b>	<b>.147</b>	<b>.084</b>	<b>.208</b>
Years Education Completed	,236***	,241***	,145***	,288***	,181***	,458***	,262***	,209***	,333***
Income	-	-	,119***	-	-	-	,197***	-	-
Sex <sup>a</sup>	,123***	,119***	,074*	,066*	,193***	,135***	,101*	,187***	,284***
Working hours (week)	-	-	-	-	-	-,103*	-	-	-,061*
Household Type <sup>b</sup>	Living alone	-	-	-	-,085*	-,103*	-	-	-
	Childless	-	-	-	-,170***	-	-	-	-
	Couple	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Couple with children	-	-	-	-,122*	-	-	-	-
	Lone parent	,066*	,118***	,097*	-	,083*		,089**	-

\*  $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0,001$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0,0001$ .

<sup>a</sup> dummy variable: 0=men, 1=women

<sup>b</sup> dummy variable: reference: "Other"

Education and sex are the stronger predictors:

- The higher educated are more egalitarian and being a woman also means having more egalitarian values.

## Sex

Women are more gender  
equalitarian

## Education

Years of completed  
education have a special  
impact on gender role  
index

Greece

Spain

France

Austria

Czech  
Republic

Sweeden

Netherlands

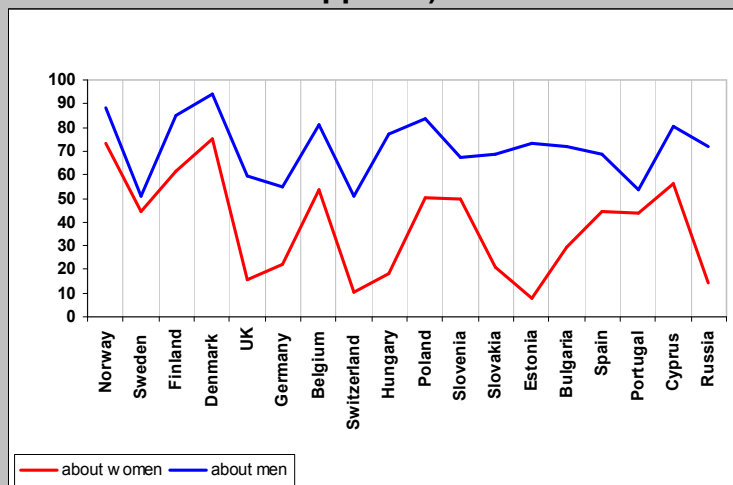
Portugal

UK

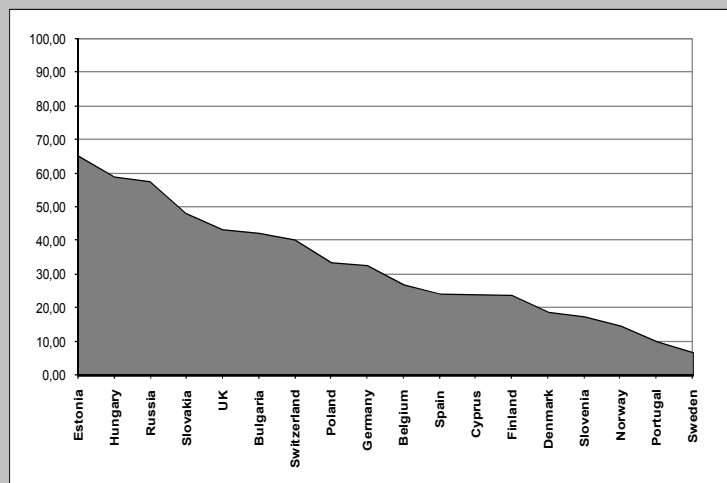
Higher the income more  
equalitarian

## Economic resources

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



**Parenthood – work gender discrimination (%)**



ESS (round 3) 2006

Clear different pattern for mothers and for fathers.

Persistent feminization of caring responsibilities.

For men there is no question:

Very strong approval across Europe.

For women:

Very high approval: Nordic (except Sweden);

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

Very low approval: UK, Germany, Switzerland, Estonia, Russia.

Strong differences among european countries:

- Nordic countries and Portugal more equalitarian.

Persistence of traditional orientations to work and care in many european countries:

- Feminization of care.

# Conclusions



**Both men and women agree that family and paid work are important.**

**Family is a sphere of personal investment both for men and women.**

**What is changing is the family models, the meanings and forms of investment in the family.**

**The importance of feelings and emotional life is globally stressed - family, friends, leisure.**

**Across Europe women assume more modern positions than men, especially accounting for family gender roles.**

**Women want to invest in both fronts, family and work. But in the majority of the countries they have to pay a price for maintaining both investments. Gender equality is continually at stake.**

**Persistent gender values (feminization of care): Some european countries with high levels of gender discrimination about the orientations between work and care when children under 3.**

**Structural constraints are important for the definition of more modern and equalitarian gender roles.**

Education

Sex

Economic resources

**The transformations of the family in Europe follow the same patterns but with calendar differences and cultural variants.**

It still makes sense, analytically, to differentiate between the northern and the southern European countries (although there are also internal differences within the groups of countries).

Each region has particular configurations and combinations.

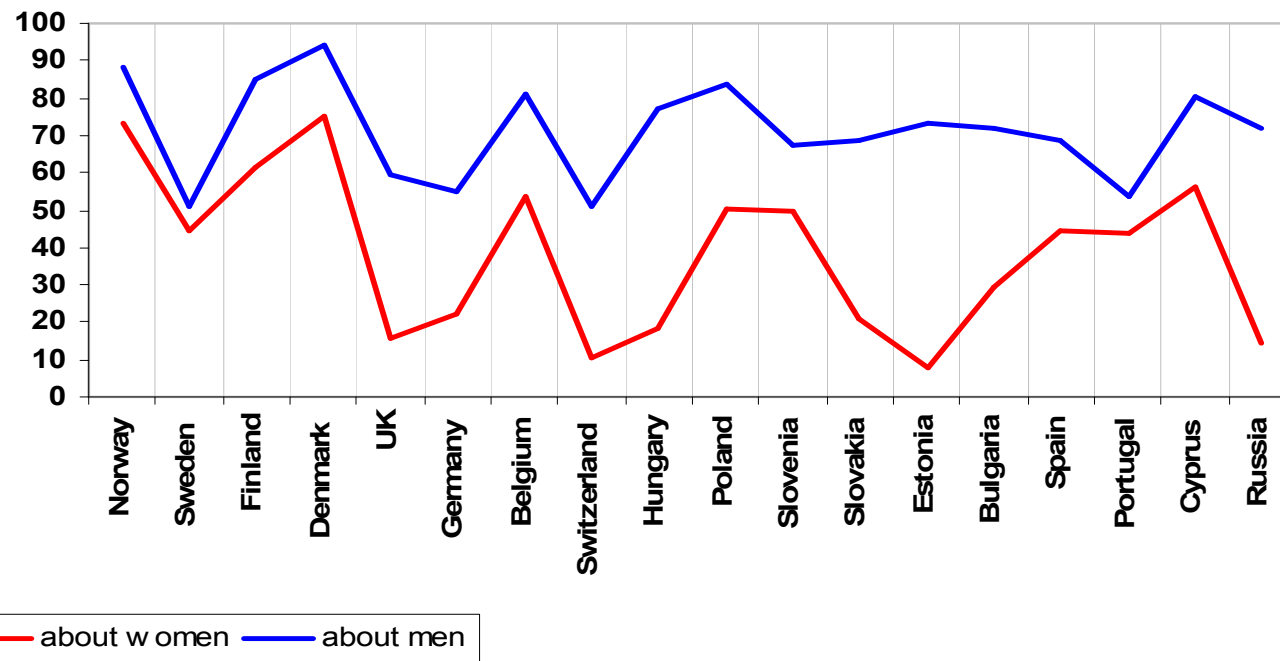
Family is not more important in the southern countries than in other European countries or regions.

Country clusters show Nordic countries consistently equalitarian.

extras

## 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:

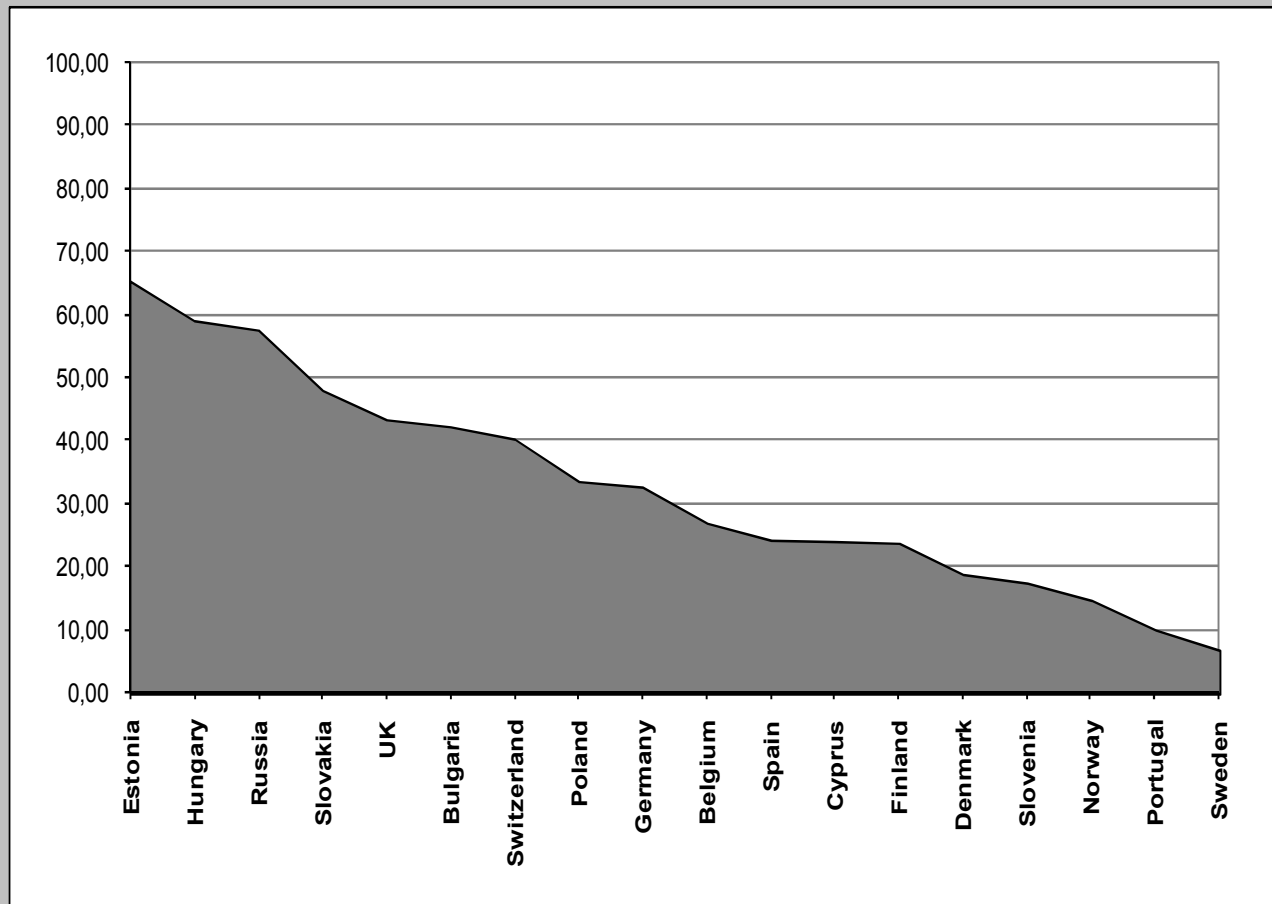
Very high approval: Nordic (except Sweden);

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

Very low approval: UK, Germany,

Switzerland, Estonia, Russia

## Parenthood – work gender discrimination index \* (%)



ESS (round 3) 2006

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

About men – About women

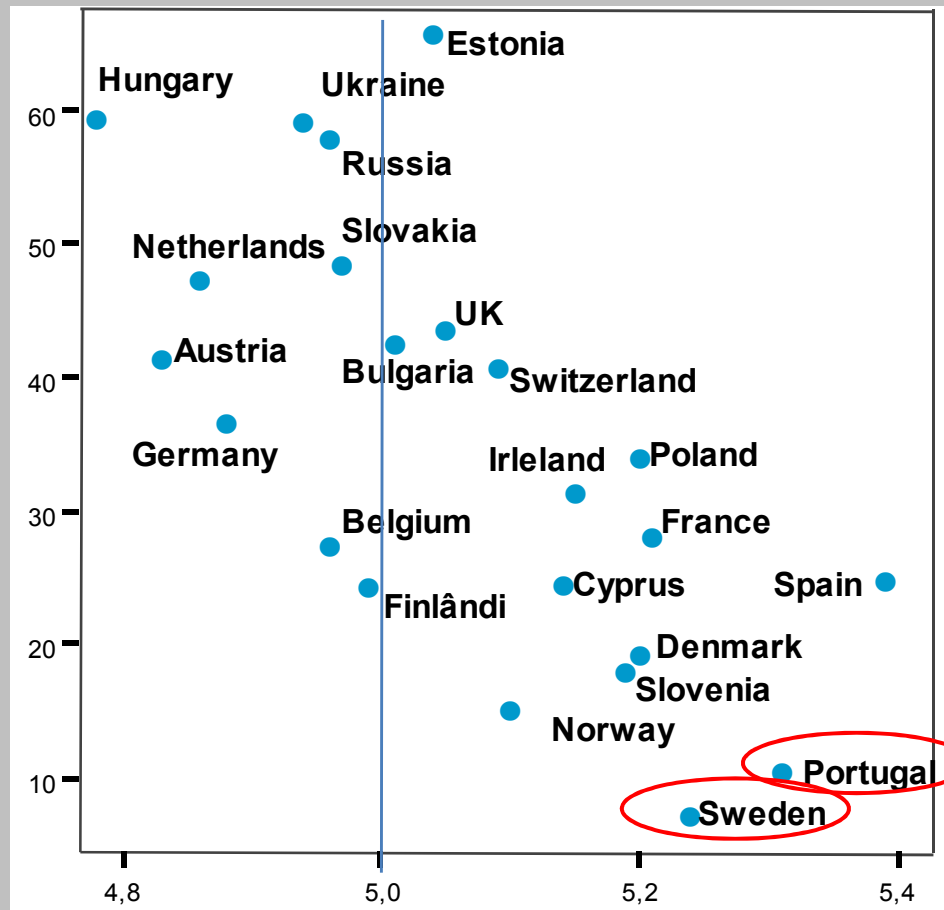
Strong differences among european countries:

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Persistence of traditional orientations to work and care in many european countries:

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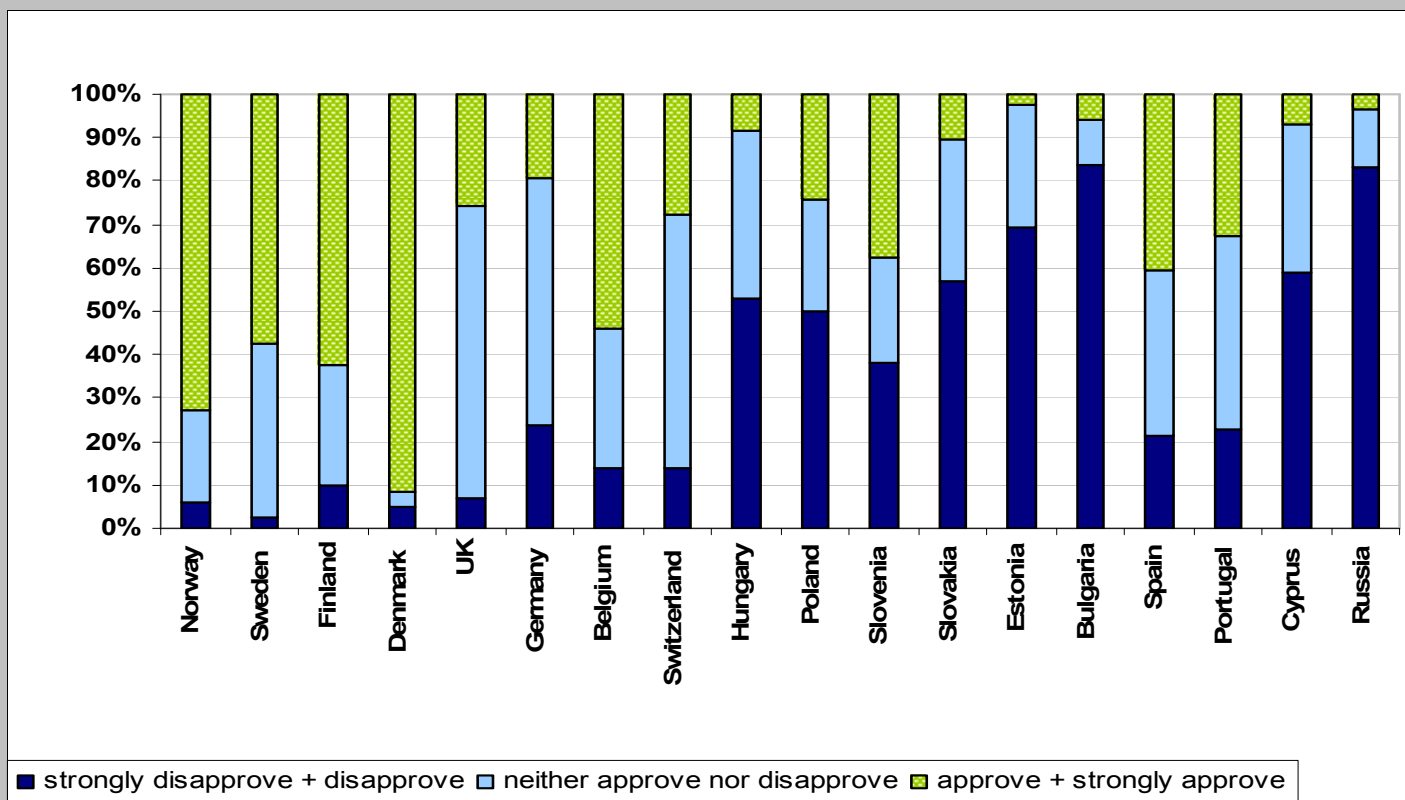
Parenthood – work  
discrimination index  
(%)



Time spent with family is enjoyable

Low level of gender discrimination in relation to parenthood and work, higher is the level of satisfaction with time spent with family.

## Choose never to have children (women about women)



ESS (round 3) 2006

Neither approve nor disapprove with very high values in:  
UK, Germany, Switzerland and Portugal