

# **Observatory on Families and Family Policies (OFAP)**

Low Fertility, Families and Public Policies  
|International Seminar

14th July 2011, ICS-UL, Lisbon

## **Fertility and mother's activity in Europe: a positive correlation.**

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- **Researching about work and family and using, among other qualitative and quantitative data, European Social Survey (2002-2008) we have been analysing trends and comparing countries in Europe**

**(Torres, Analia, R. Mendes, T. Lapa “Families in Europe”, *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* , Vol. 7, Num. 1, pp. 49-84, 2008);**

- **Participating in WORKCARE, Social Quality and Changing Relationships between Work, Care and Welfare in Europe, (FP6 - 2006-2009) and in an on going project WORKCARE SYNERGIES (FP7) we developed some other lines of research.**
- **One of our findings (from 2002 to 2008) was a positive correlation between mother’s employment and fertility rate across Europe (against common sense and stereotypes**

**In a very explorative and empirical exercise we discuss this and other findings in the presentation. Trying to understand and explain them we explore several topics:**

**1) Fathers and mothers paid work in Europe.**

**2) 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?**

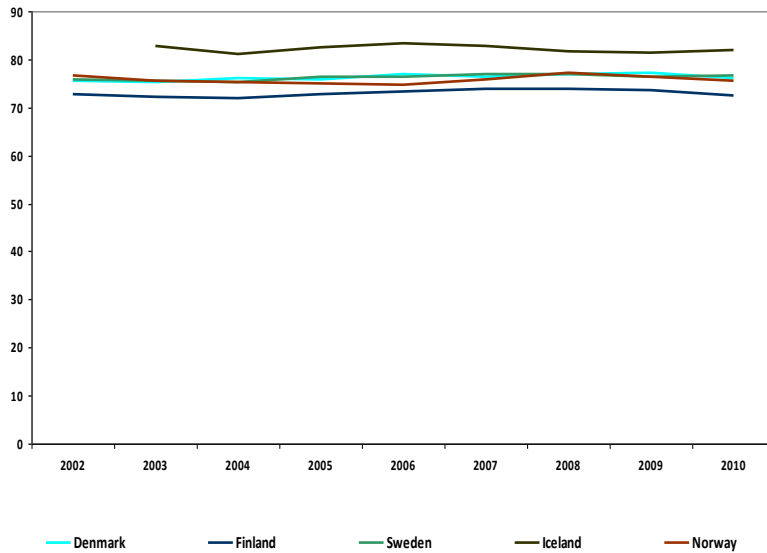
**3) The relevance of part-time and full-time jobs in European mothers employment strategies and solutions. Is this really a very spread solution?**

**4) Female unemployment and fertility in Europe. Is there a relationship?**

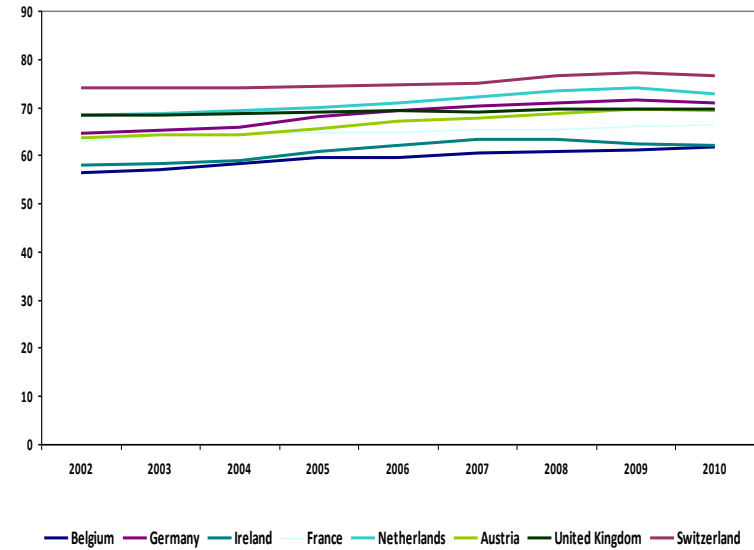
**Using European Social Survey (2002-2008) and Eurostat data.**

# Female Activity Rate (2002-2008)

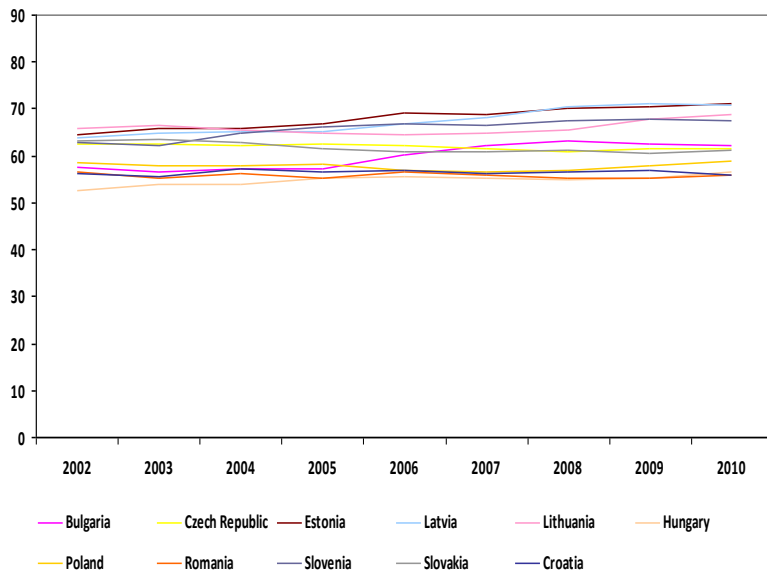
## Nordic Countries



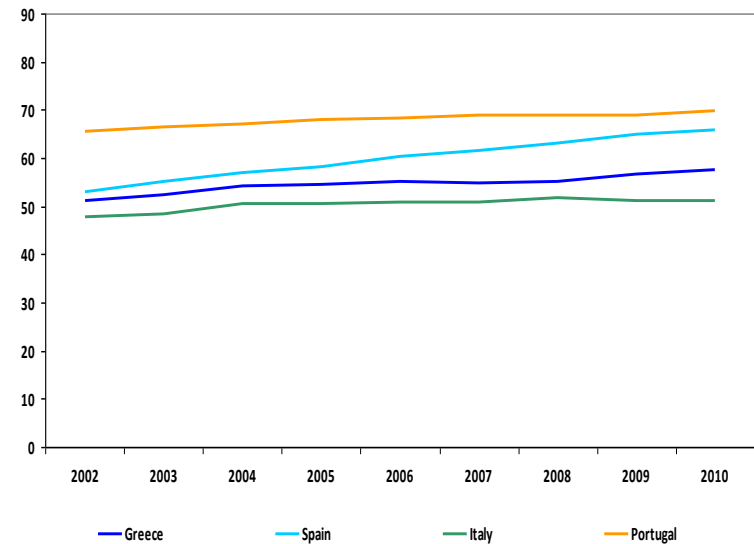
## Northern and Central Europe



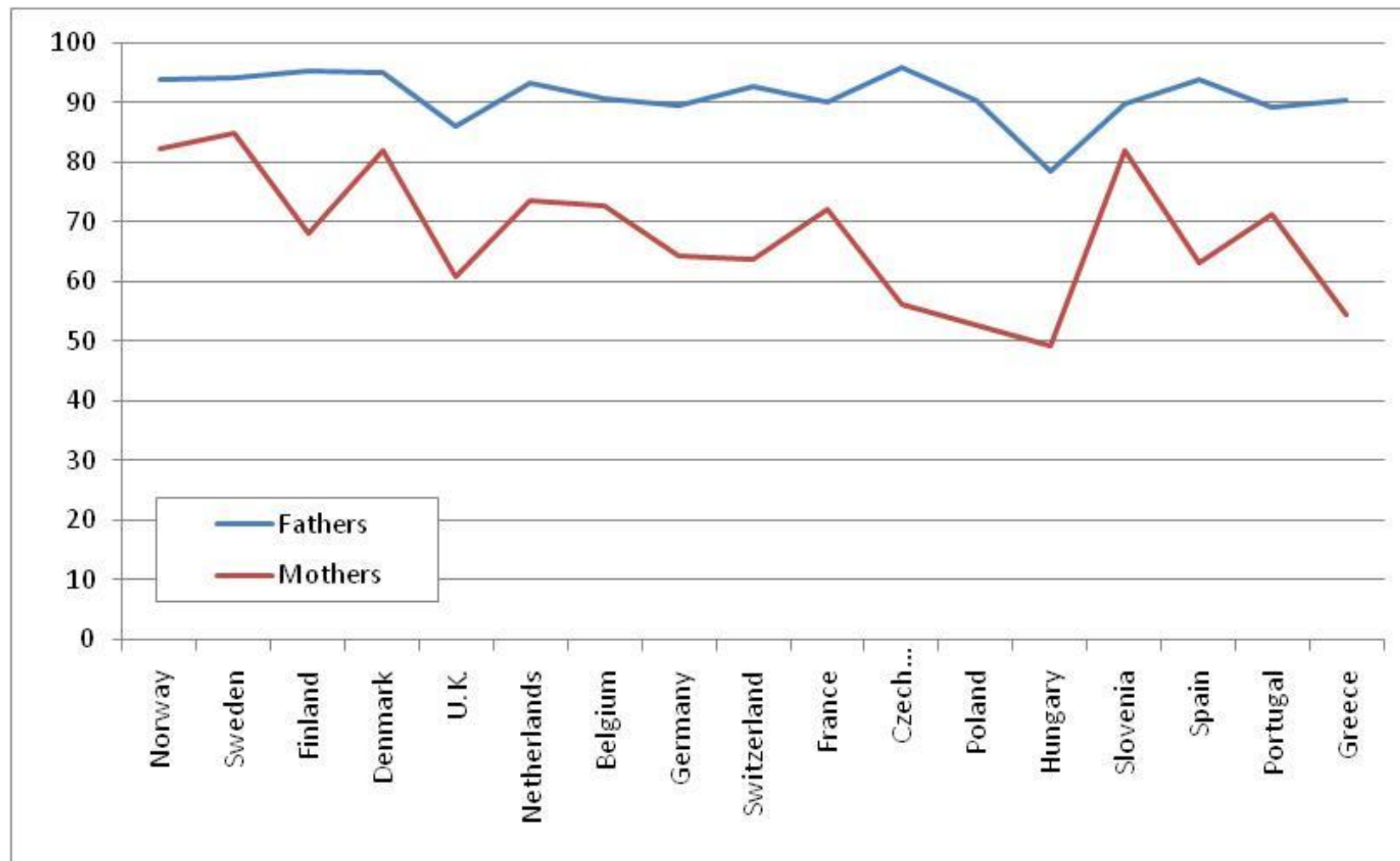
## Eastern Europe



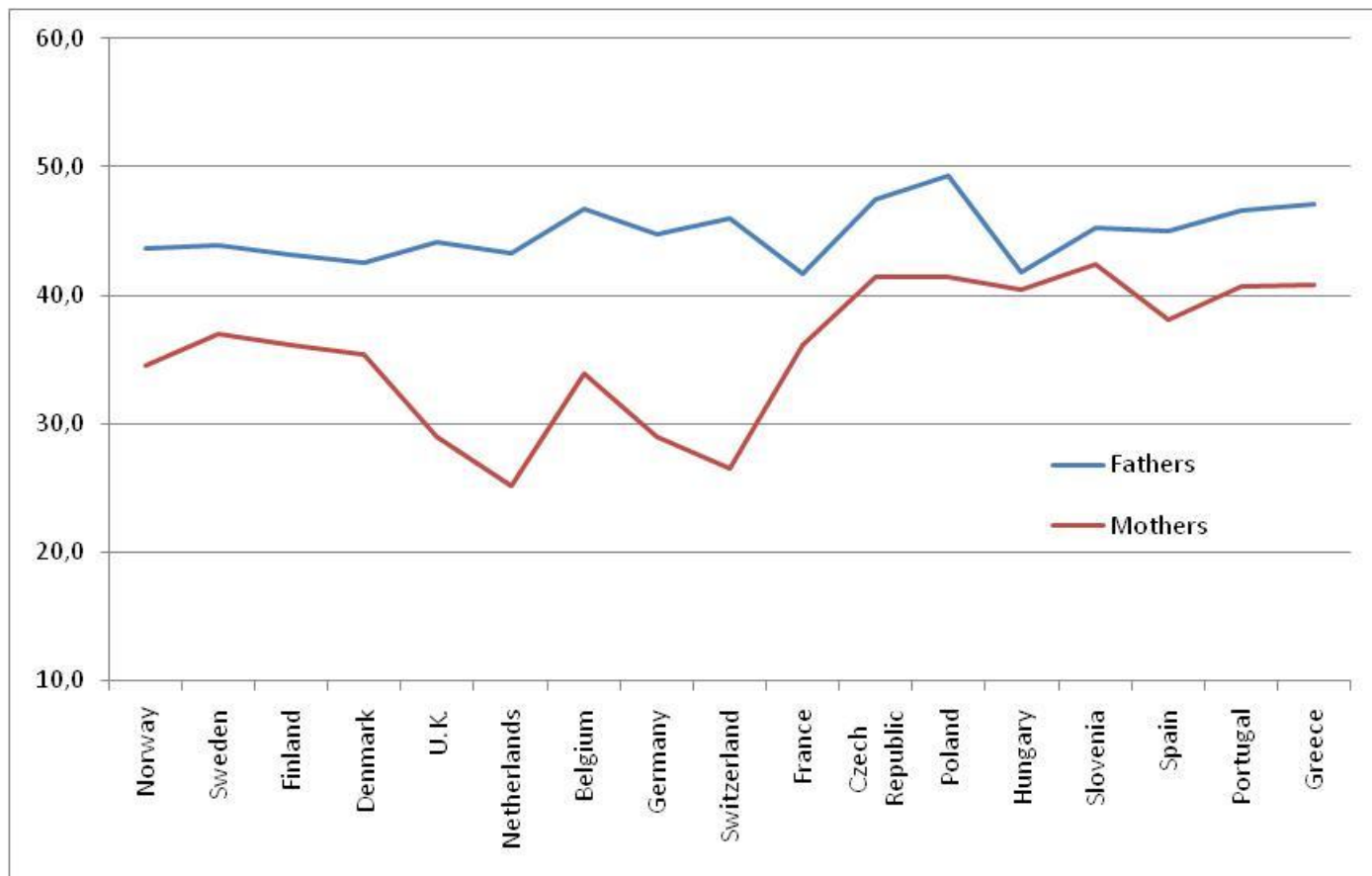
## Southern Europe



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

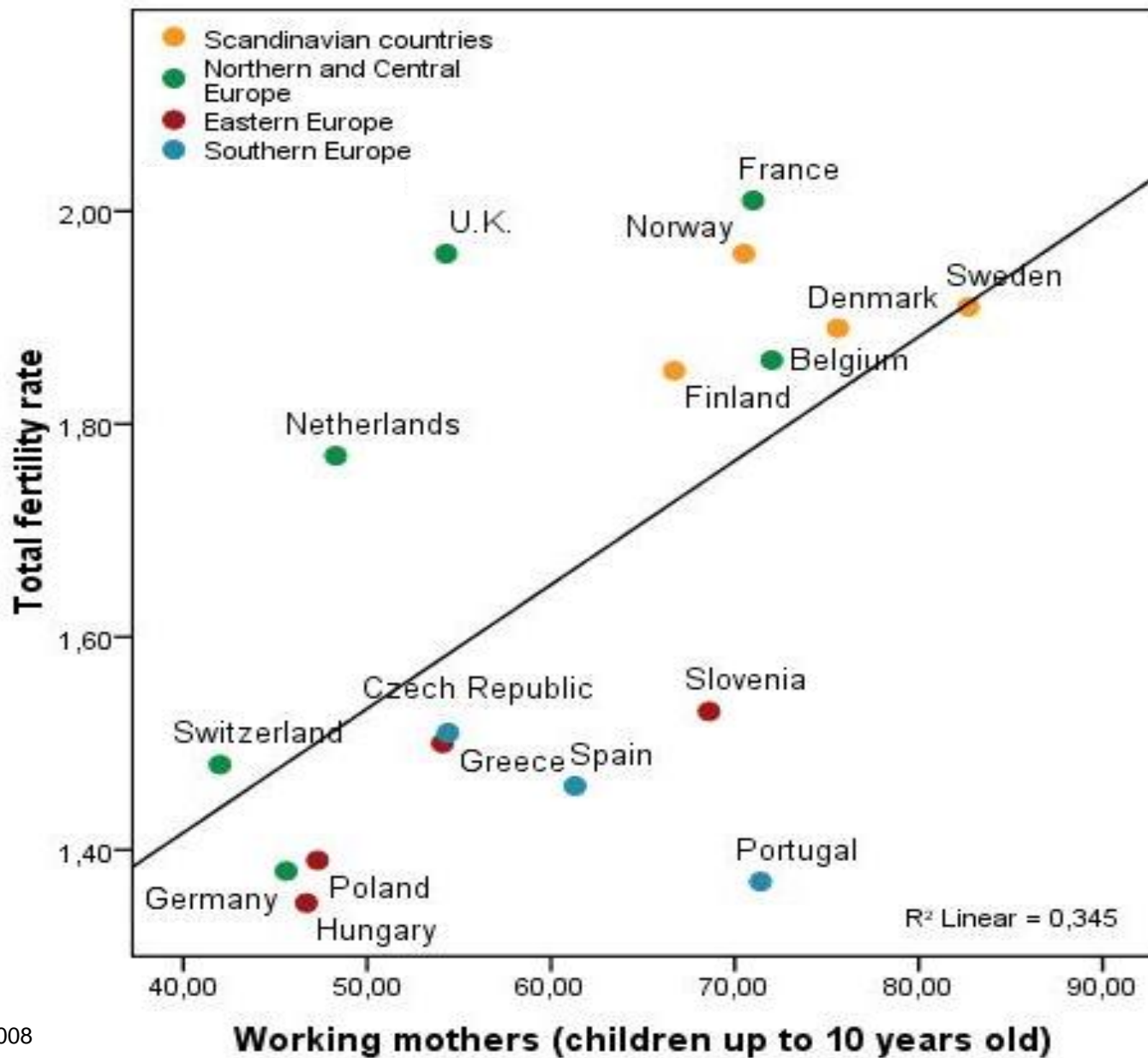


## Average hours of work of mothers and fathers with children under 10, 2008



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

## Total fertility rate and working mothers (2008)

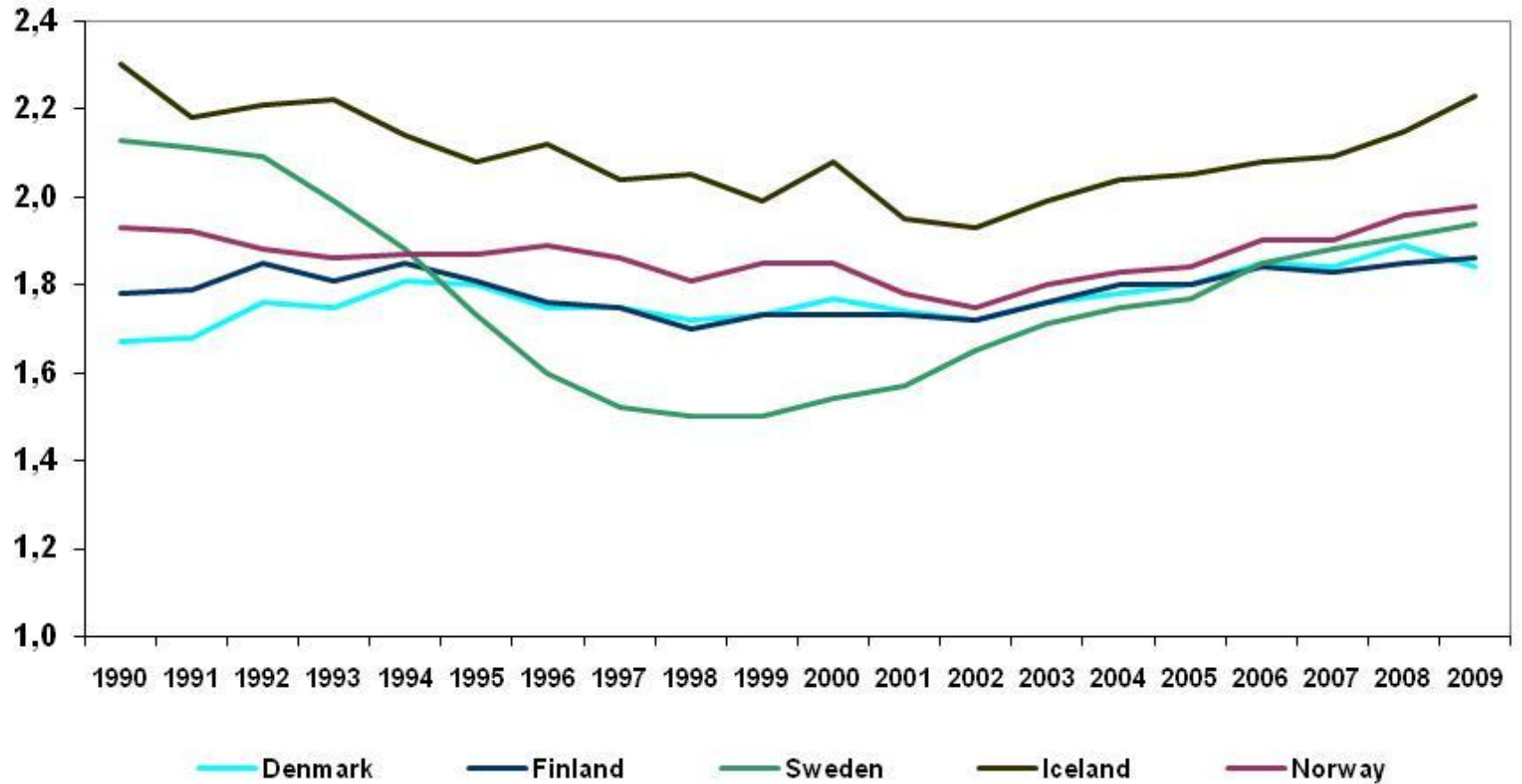




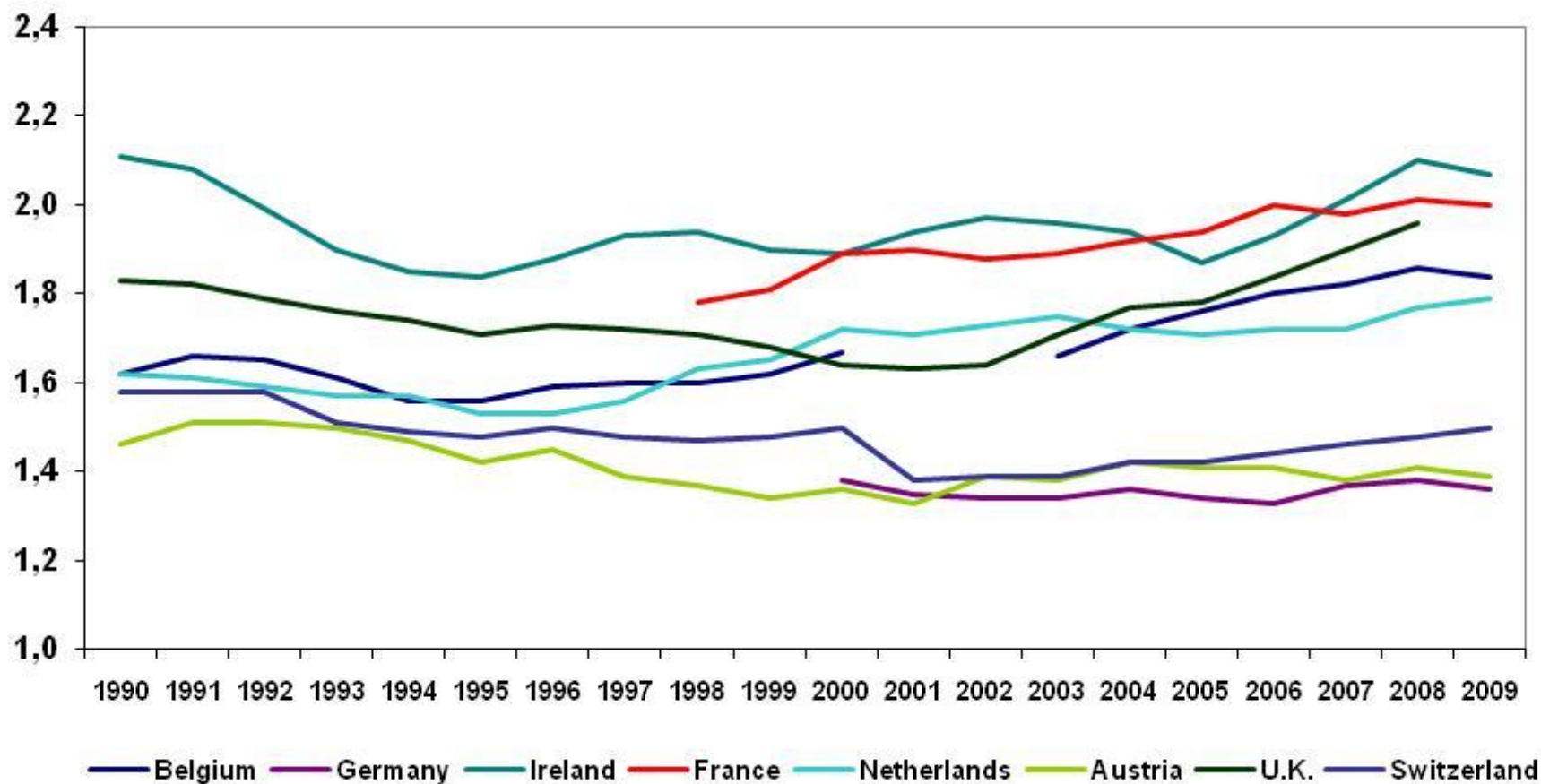
**How can we explain this correlation?  
Do Policies have an impact? And  
Welfare state regimes?**

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

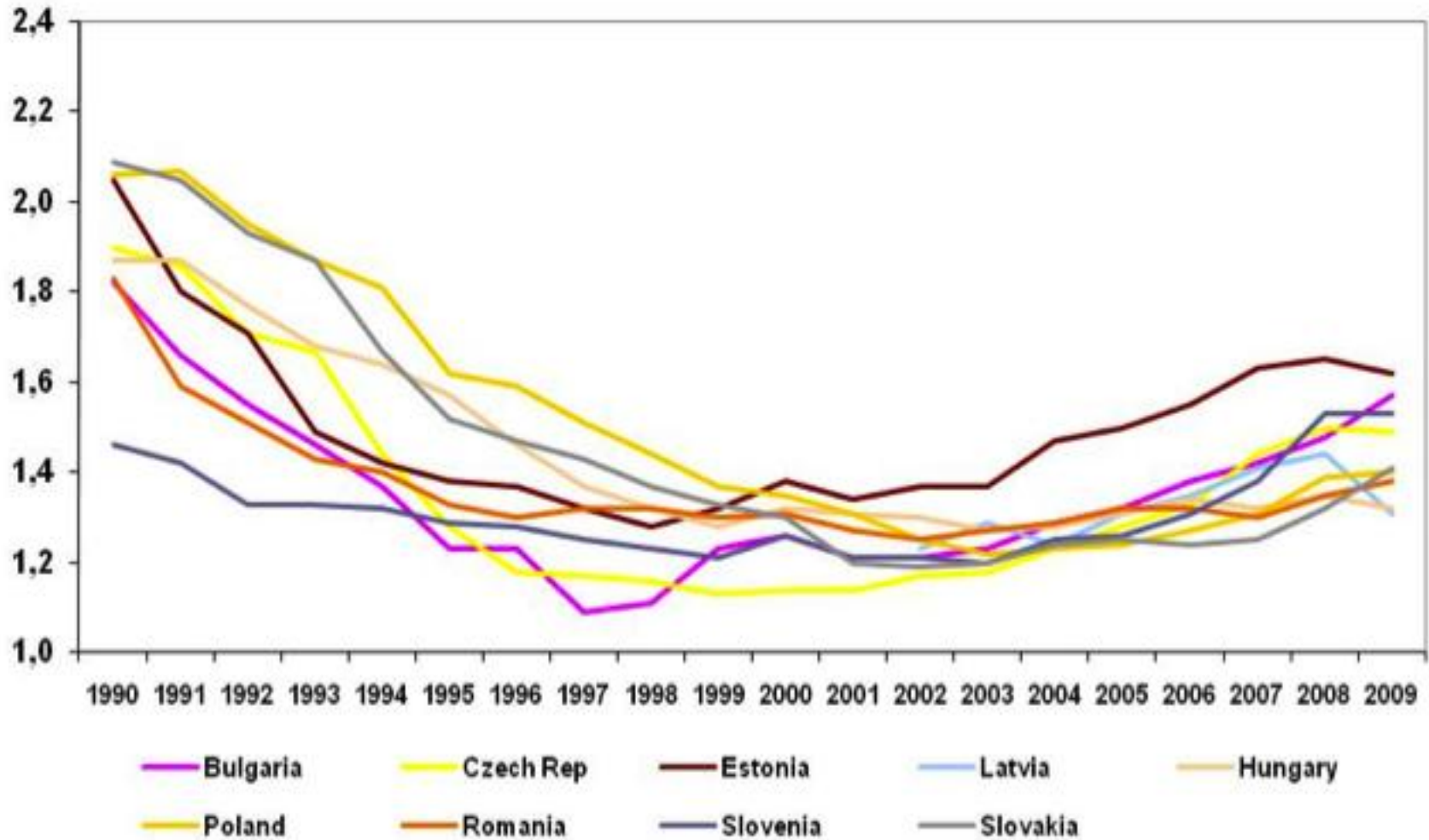
## Nordic countries fertility rate



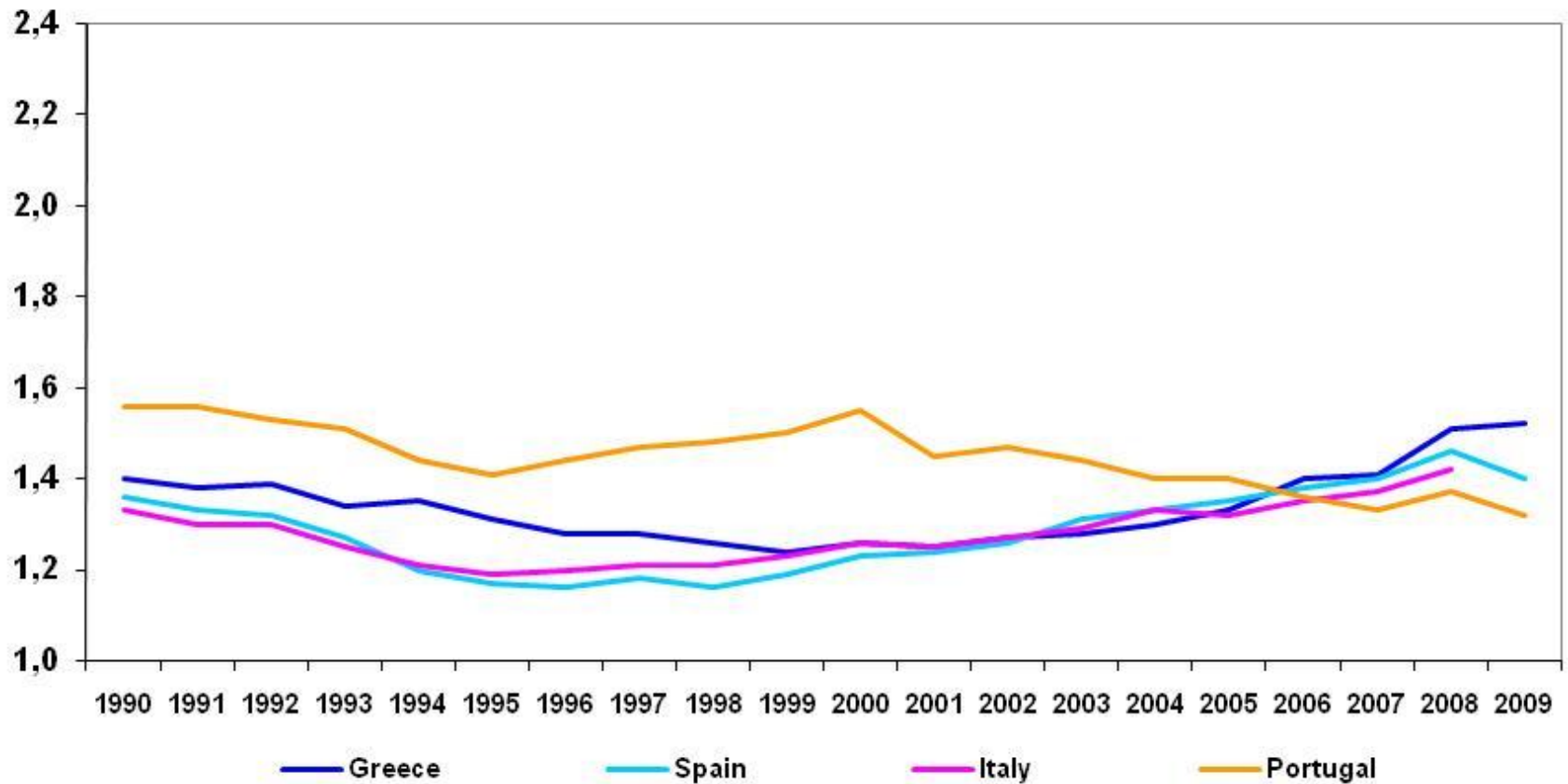
## Northern and Central Europe fertility rate



## Eastern Europe fertility rate



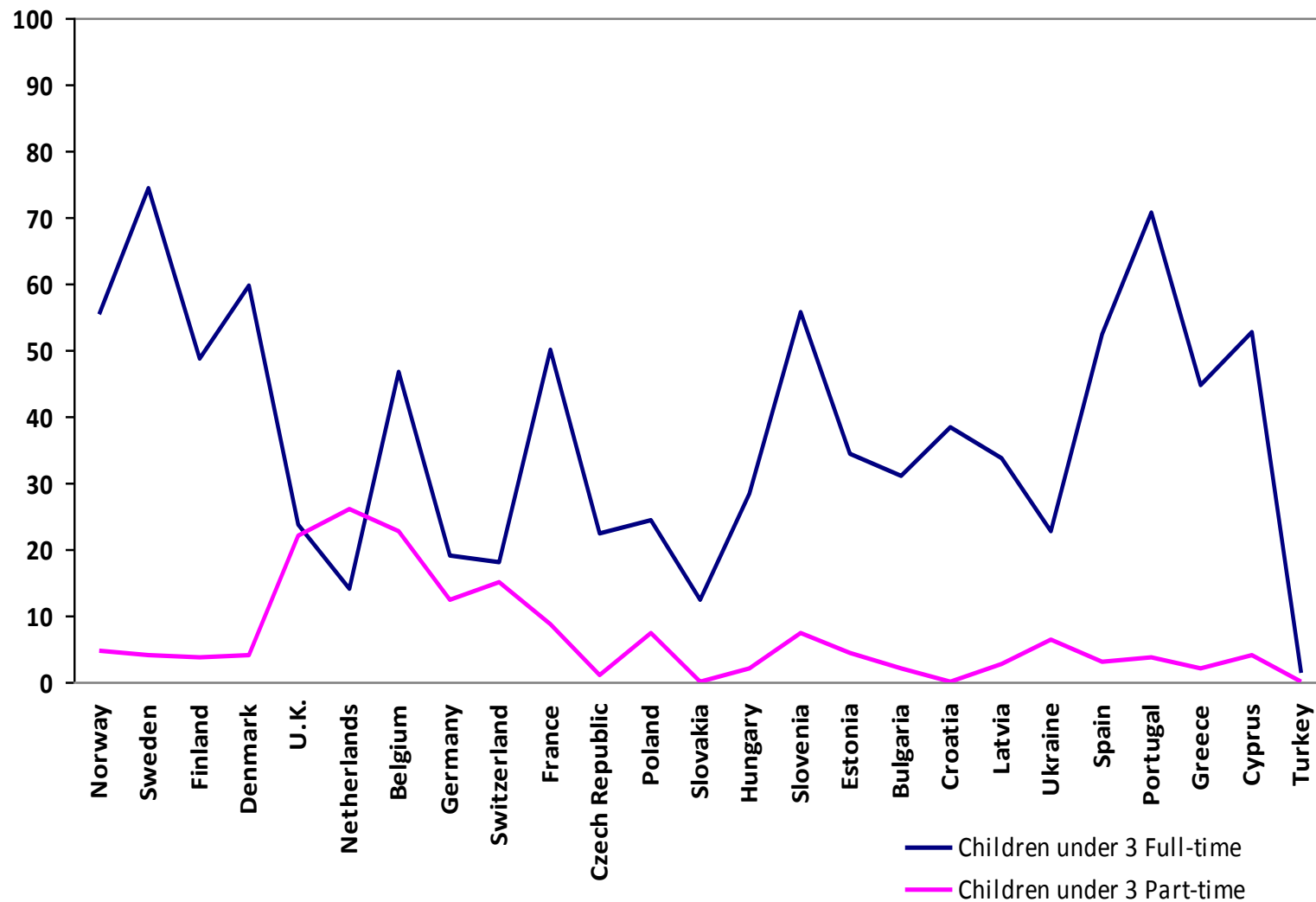
## Southern Europe fertility rate



- **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 ).**

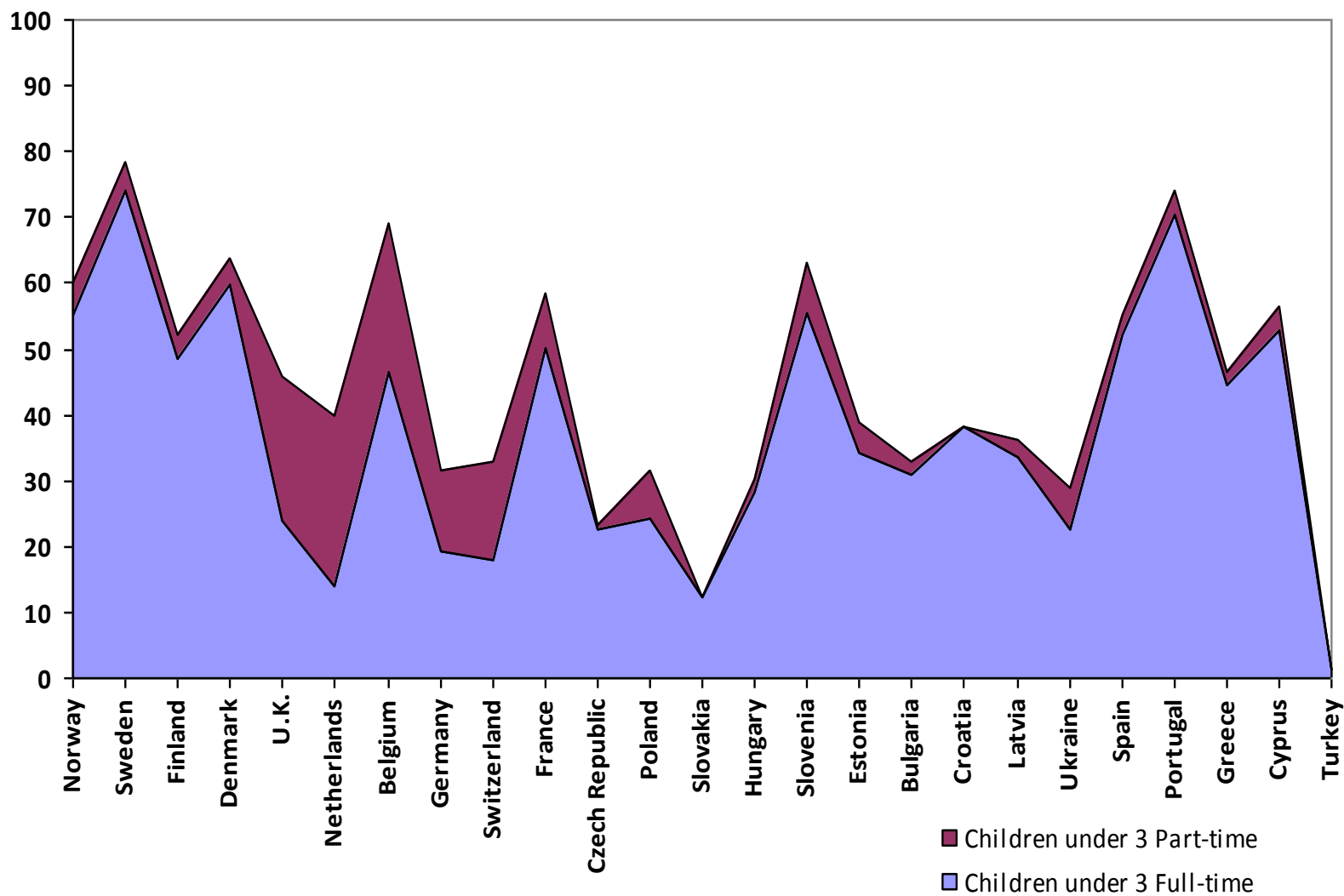
**Working mothers in Europe: part  
time or full time.**

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

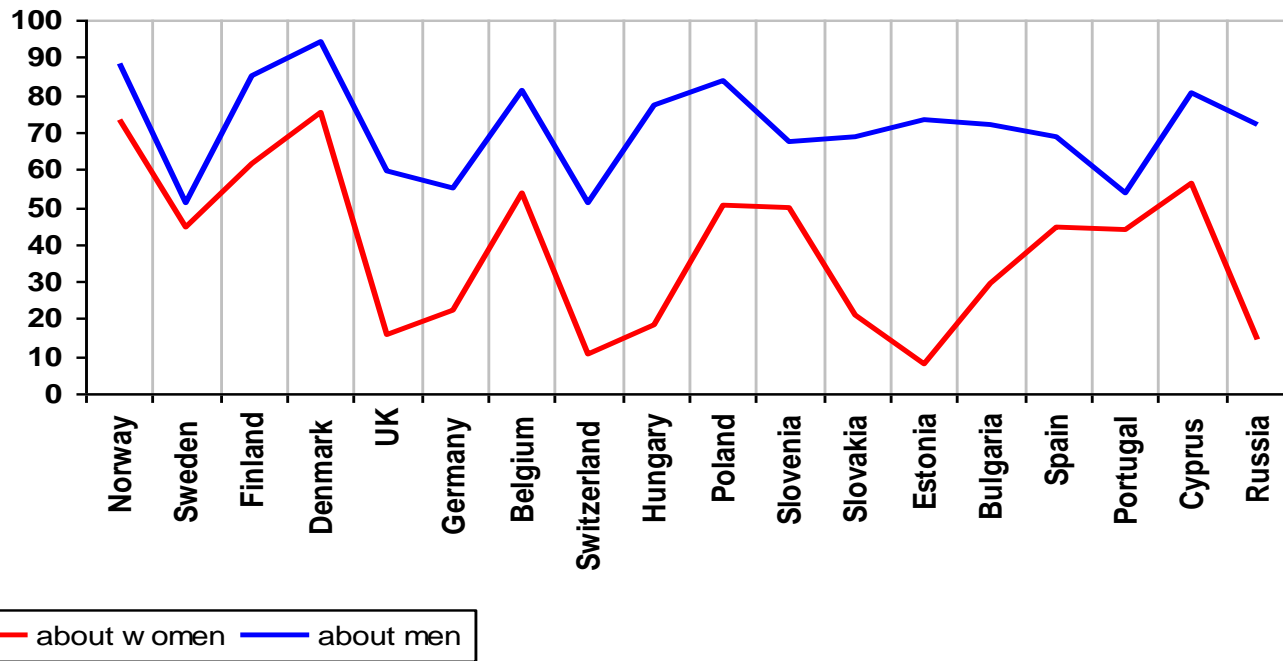




## Full time + Part-time working mothers children under 3 (%)



# 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:

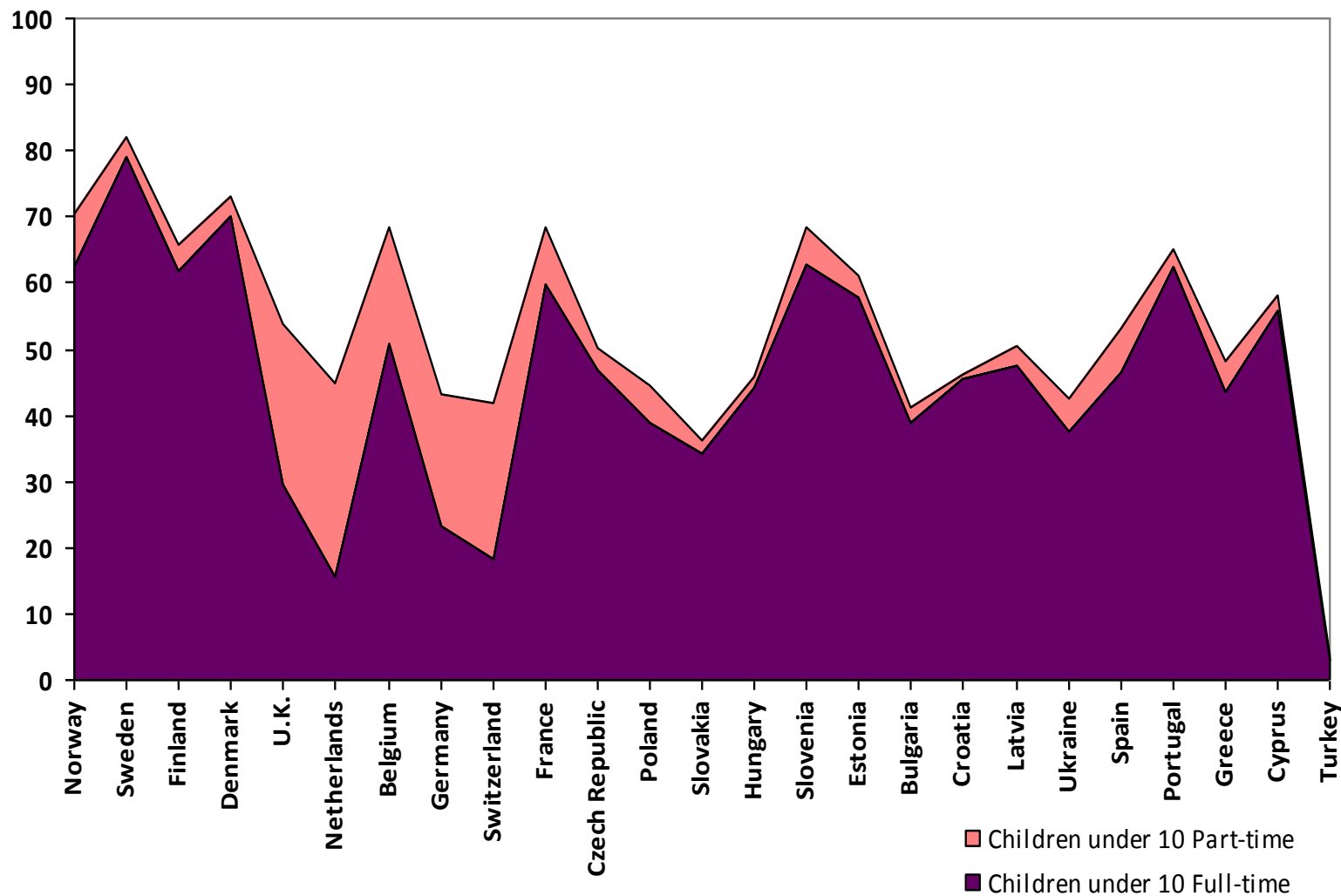
Very high approval: Nordic (except Sweden);

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

Very low approval: UK, Germany,

Switzerland, Estonia, Russia

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



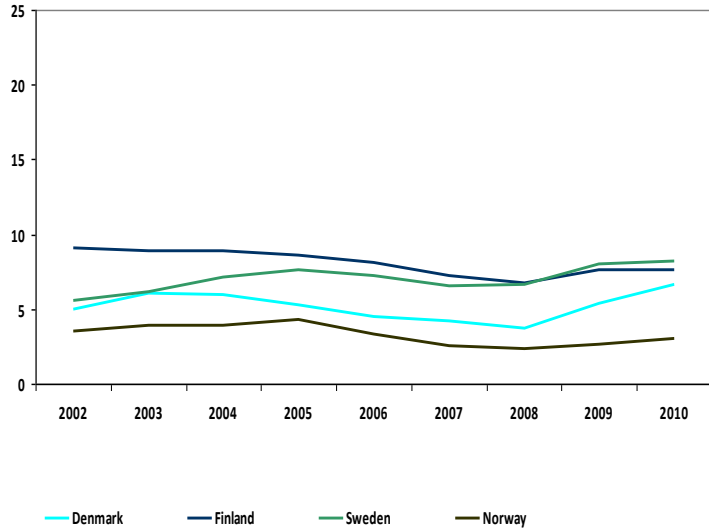
ESS, 2008

# **Female unemployment and fertility in Europe.**

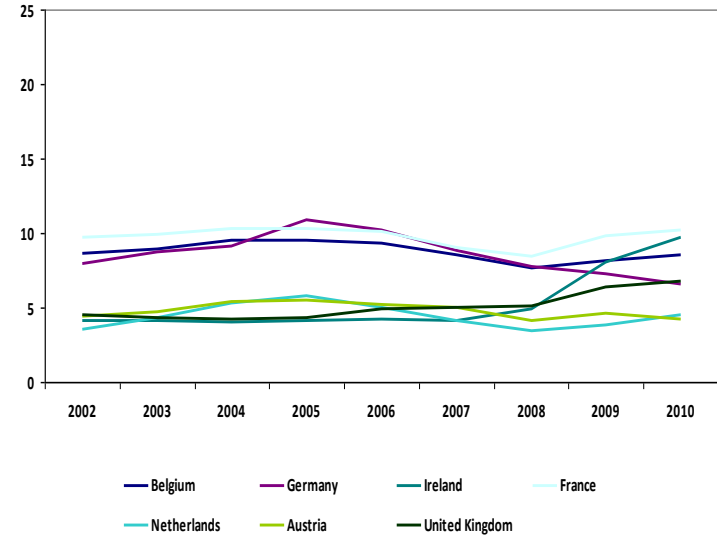
- **Overview female unemployment rate in Europe. Differences among country groups.**
- **The relation between unemployment and fertility rate. Some particular cases: different regions the same trends and differences within the same region.**
- **European map by the lens of female unemployment and fertility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

# Female Unemployment Rate

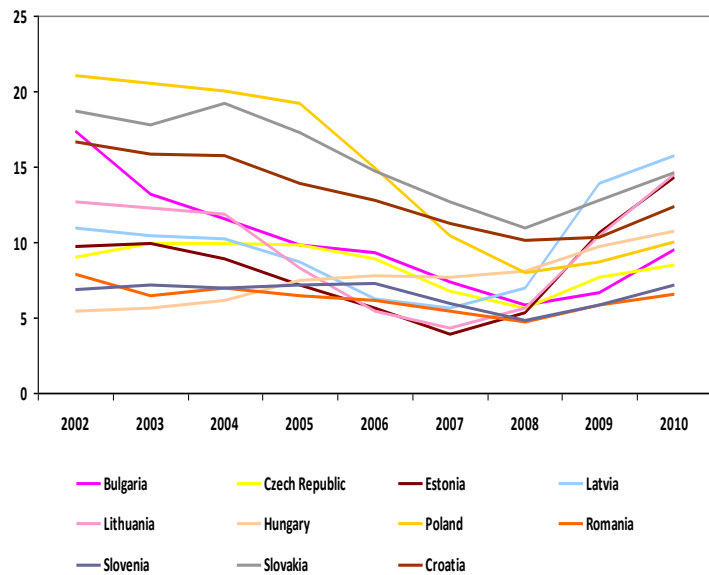
## Nordic Countries



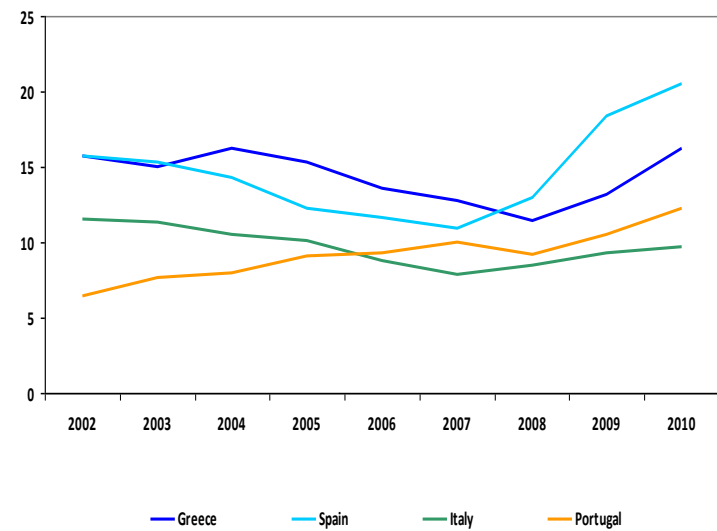
## Northern and Central Europe



## Eastern Europe



## Southern Europe

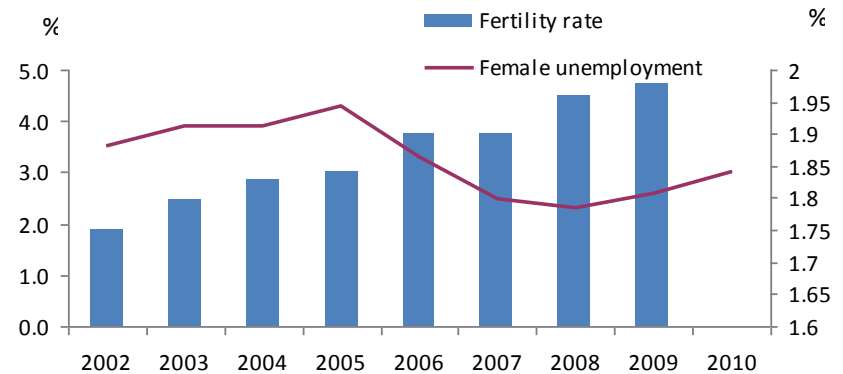


# Different regions the same trends

Negative correlation between fertility rate and female unemployment:

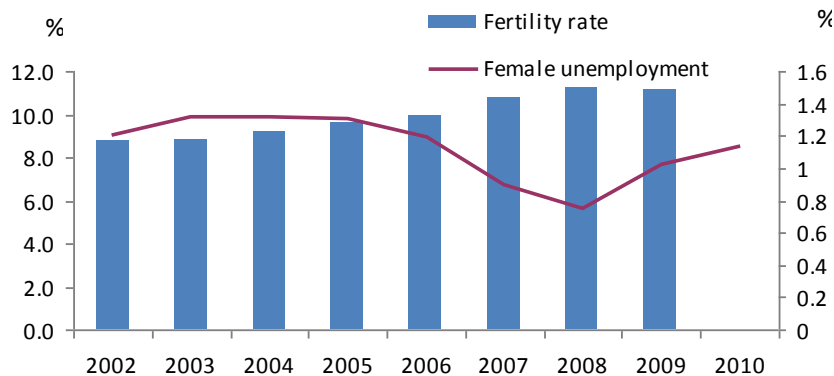
High female unemployment / low fertility rate.

## Norway



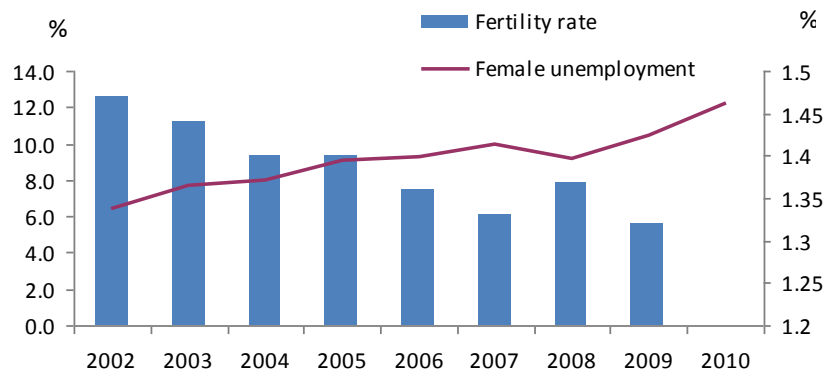
Corr: -0.75

## Czech Republic



Corr: -0.86

## Portugal

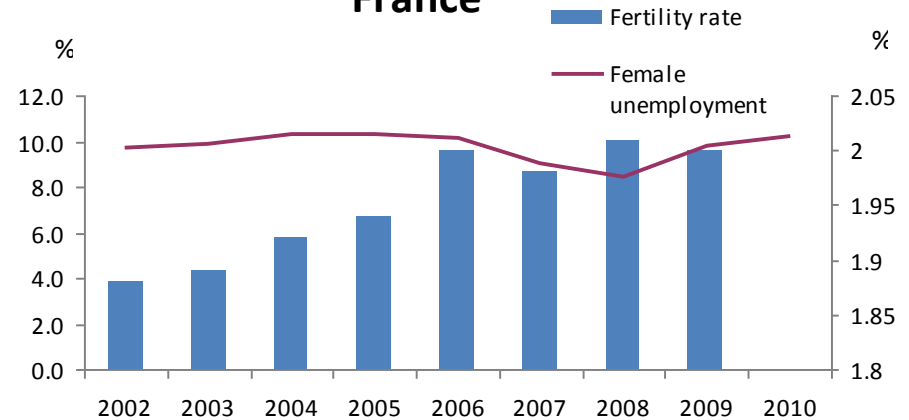


Corr: -0.97

# Differences within the same region

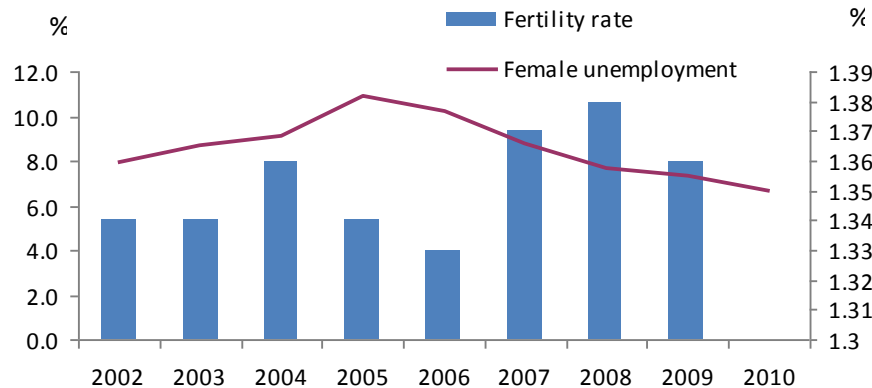
Positive (UK) and negative (France and Germany) correlations between fertility rate and female unemployment.

## France



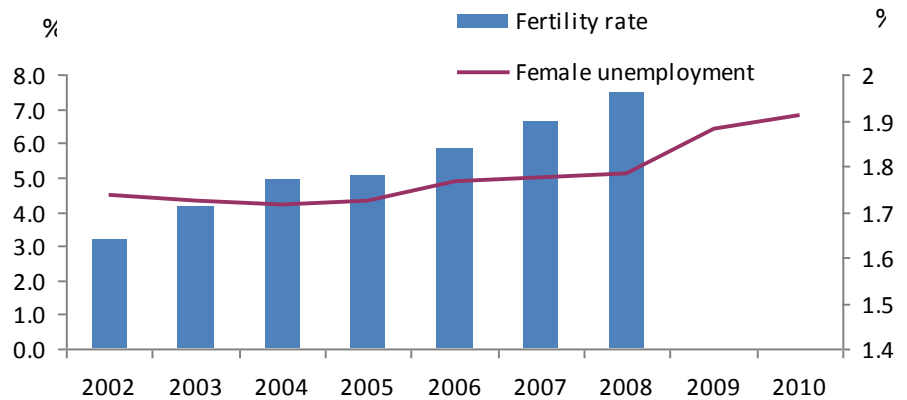
Corr: -0.45

## Germany



Corr: -0.56

## United Kingdom



Corr: 0.78

# 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.**
- **Part-time jobs do not seem to be a “solution” for mothers. Countries with an important number of mothers in part time jobs are also the ones that have many mothers out of 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.**



- **Relation between female unemployment and fertility in some countries may be the higher the first, the lower the second. But there are contradictory correlations or no correlation in other countries.**
- **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.**