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A Mysterious European Threesome: Work-care Regimes, Policies and Gender

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Abstract

Arguing that European family lives are affected by many societal factors, this article discusses the interplay between three sets of phenomena: the management of work and care responsibilities, work-care policies and regimes, and gender order within the family context.

Based on discussions about orientations to work and care, we compare European countries and analyze regularities and singularities among them. Identifying and assessing the interplay between structural, institutional and cultural determinants of orientations we try to explain country diversity mobilizing data from the European Social Survey (rounds 2002, 2004 and 2006) and data from Eurobarometer 2003.

The paper is organized around three analytical axes. First, we analyze how work and family orientations are perceived by the Europeans. Secondly, we assess different European political policies regarding work and care arrangements, the outcome being a proposal for a work-care political typology. And finally we discuss the connections between those policies and the production or reproduction of gender order within the family.

We conclude that in countries with more egalitarian gender values and policies targeted at work-care arrangements, individuals experience less work-family conflict. Conversely, in countries with more traditional gender values and restricted or disadvantaged policies we found more family-work conflict. But institutional constraints don't act alone: orientations to work and care differ according to age, education, family forms and employment status.

Keywords: work, family, gender, work-care arrangements, work-care policies

Based on orientations to work and care and on previous research results, this paper wishes to contribute to enlighten regularities and singularities among European countries. Several other research results showed already that orientations to work and care differ across Europe. Thus, besides mapping them it is important to identify and assess the interplay between structural, institutional and cultural determinants of orientations and trying to find the more relevant for explaining country diversity.

We argue that European family living conditions are affected by many societal factors: political regulations, economic resources and cultural norms, among others. In a sociological perspective this paper analyzes the interplay between three main dimensions: the management of work and care responsibilities, political regulations (work-care related policies) and gender order and regimes.

In a first step, it seems fundamental to understand the way family and work, one of the most discussed dichotomies in sociological discourse in recent years, are perceived by the Europeans. As these two dimensions produce a complex set of potentially conflicting interactions, the second step will be to look at different European policies specifically targeted at issues related to work life balance. The analysis of the different dimensions involved led us to propose a **work-care policies typology**. Thirdly, the focus concentrates on the latent connections between policies and the production and reproduction of gender order within the family. Based on the typology traced, the institutional context of the orientations to work and care will be then analyzed, namely, by looking at the interplay between work-care policies and gender roles.

Data from the European Social Survey (ESS) (2002, 2004, 2006), complementary results from the Eurobarometer (EB) (2003) and an analysis of different policies in several European countries were the main empirical sources. The combination of these different data has as outcome a better portrait and understanding of the regularities and singularities among European countries. Other research background on childcare, marital life and the division of paid and unpaid labour between men and women was also mobilised¹.

Framing work and family relations

Therborn, in a perspective of the XX century, argues that crediting urbanization and industrialization alone with the role of providing the principal motor for the family changes observed in the last hundred years does not seem sufficient to understand these changes. The example of the pioneering role played by Scandinavian countries in certain transformations is used by the author showing us that when laws regarding gender equality in marriage, the freedom to choose a partner, the greater value given to individual rights and a secular vision of conjugality, the country could not be considered very industrialized. So Therborn tends to give pre-eminence to political, cultural and ideological factors, such as strong secularization, to explain the differences in the European family system that can be observed between countries (Therborn, 2004). The greater or lesser influence of secularization on topics associated with the family, the existence or absence of policies on gender equality or sexuality is also a factor to be taken into account when explaining these differences.

For Hakim (2000, 2003) orientations, attitudes and preferences are very relevant because they tend to explain the choices made by individuals in work-care arrangements. But testing Hakim's preferences theory Crompton and their collaborators (Crompton & Lyonette, 2005a, 2005b; Crompton, Brockmann, & Lyonette, 2005) showed that life style's preferences, choices or attitudes towards mothers' employment, were not the main factors determining work and care arrangements. Moreover they distinguish between specific arrangements and orientations, the former being influenced also by institutional and structural factors that can be different from the factors influencing attitudes or orientations. They conclude that individuals and couples choices are the result of a complex inter-relation of attitudes and practical constraints and are made according to several contextual factors like labor market conditions, individual's qualifications and education attained or the presence of children at home.

These recent results update other critiques regarding the preference's theory like the ones made by a group of British sociologists (Ginn et al.,

1996) who stated, among other issues, the commitment and orientation to work of British women at the same time they shed light over issues like childcare costs and availability and relating them to part-time jobs and its “choice” and “satisfaction” with it. More recent results update and reinforce these critiques (Torres, Hass, Steiber, & Brites, 2007; Torres, Mendes, & Lapa, 2007) not only for Britain but for all Europe.

In fact, different sources - such as results from ESS 2002 and 2004 or EB 2003 - showed very clearly the attachment or commitment of women and mothers to work as well as the perception of difficulties raised by part-time jobs. It is also important to stress that contrary to Hakim’s assumptions the results of EB 2003 show that mothers of pre-school and school children don’t reveal less commitment to their jobs than women nor men and fathers.

Knudsen & Waerness (2001), comparing Great Britain, Sweden and Norway regarding attitudes to mother’s employment reveal that differences between countries must be attributed to welfare state regimes, to socio-demographic characteristics but also to historical and national contexts. That is what becomes very clear when comparing Norway and Sweden as other authors had already concluded (Leira, 1992).

The differences within Scandinavian countries, in spite of sharing the same social democratic welfare state regime, have to be accessed and explained by other specific historical national contexts. And the case is the same when we compare countries within southern Europe, as shown by the example of the Portuguese case (Torres, 2008). Transformations in Eastern countries are another example of the need for drawing our attention to social and historical processes when comparing countries at a certain moment in time concerning work care issues.

But for explaining differences between countries it is also necessary to assess other factors. Conjuncture changes such as political orientations of governments do not fail to affect existing policies in both the area of family policies or of unemployment. An example of such problem change is the alternation in the same country between social democratic/socialist governments and conservative governments, which makes it possible to introduce modifications in the direction and variations of those policies. This was the situation in the United

Kingdom, which, while maintaining a liberal model, has seen certain policy change in 1997 in the areas mentioned above. Between the years 1995 and 2001 and 2005 and 2010 it was also the case in Portugal² and in Spain.

Work and family as main dimensions to personal projects

Although research has already shown that the differences within the sexes are much more important than those between them, the truth is that the latter are frequently inflated in a manner that tends to essentialize the biological differences between women and men (Amâncio, 1994; Kimmel, 2000; Torres & Brites, 2006). In fact, in contrast to the common view and the image portrayed in airport best-sellers, which constantly tell us that women and men come from different planets, a close study of the differences between the two allow us to conclude, with some surprise, that as Connell states: “(...) the main finding, from about eighty years of research, is a massive psychological similarity between women and men in the population studied by psychologists. Clear-cut block differences are few, and confined to restricted topics” (Connell, 1987, p. 174, 2002)³.

Contradicting stereotypes, women tend to attribute the same importance to work as men do (Figures 1 and 2). Work is a value in itself, making part of a feminine social identity, even in countries where there is a lower participation of women in the labor market (Klement & Rudolph, 2004; Tobio, 2001). The discrepancies between the sexes are far narrower than the differences between countries.

Family is the main sphere of personal investment both for men and women and it isn't more important in the south than in other European regions or countries. It is a taken-for-granted value for each of the countries of the ESS. What changes within Europe are the family models, the meanings and forms of investment in the family. The South and the East with more traditional views mainly related to family gender roles.

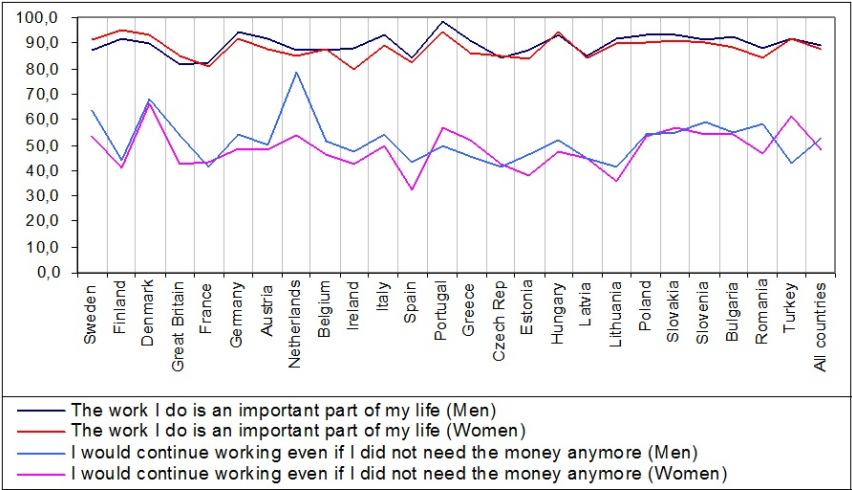
Nevertheless, the importance of feelings and emotional life - family, friends, leisure - is globally stressed everywhere. Women are more

modern than men, especially accounting for family gender roles, in all Europe.

But there are contradictions between these kinds of answers with other data. When we ask questions formulating them in a gender biased perspective we have answers that tend to reproduce stereotypes. If we ask simply addressing the individual – man or woman – they tend to respond as they feel for themselves: for “me” work is very important but for other women probably not so much.

The general trend is the rejection of very classical and traditional gender stereotypes (men’s job is more important than women’s or couple staying together for the sake of the children). But gender discrimination still stands (women should be prepared to sacrifice their paid work for the sake of the family).

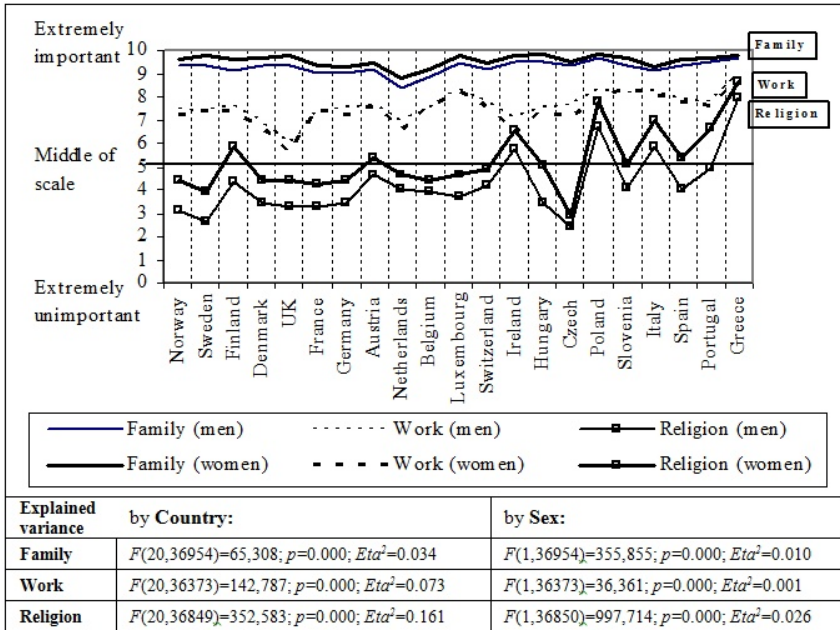
Figure 1.
Work attachment for working men and women (%)



Source: Eurobarometer (2003) and Eurobarometer with candidate countries (2003)

Figure 2.

The importance of family, work and religion for women and men in Europe averages)



Source: European Social Survey, round 1 (2002)

Looking closer to satisfaction with various spheres of life, there aren't significant differences between men's and women's satisfaction about the hours spent on paid work; in the case of those men and women with pre-school or school children women are more satisfied than men (Figure 3).

Analyzing the EB 2003 data we can see that men are always more satisfied with the division of household tasks than women. This restates the idea emergent from the ESS 2004 data: women admit more than men disagreements about housework tasks – women are the most discontent about that dimension of their lives. The gender gap still stands when we analyze the satisfaction with free time: men still are more satisfied than women. Being a parent seems to have a negative

impact on the satisfaction with own free time; both fathers and mothers register a decrease of satisfaction.

Figure 3.

Satisfaction with several spheres of life, by life cycle and sex (%)

	Childless up to 35 years old		Pre-school/ school children		Childless 36–50 years old		Childless > 50 years old		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Hours spent on paid work	69	69	65	73	69	67	70	73	68	70
Hours spent on household tasks	61	65	66	61	68	64	68	71	65	64
Hours spent on training, studies, courses*	66	66	66	67	73	71	71	74	68	69
Division of household tasks*	87	79	86	69	89	68	89	74	87	71
Own free time	73	65	59	53	68	59	74	67	67	60
Financial situation	56	53	54	54	57	52	63	58	57	54

*As this option was not applicable for a significant number of respondents we analysed only the valid cases.

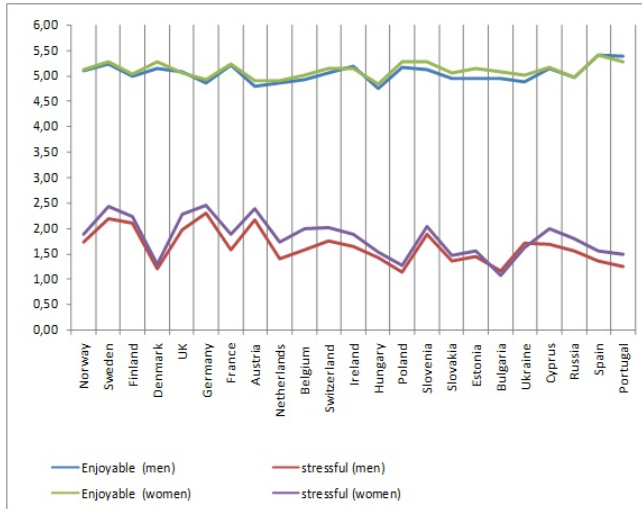
Source: Time use and work-life options over the life course (2007)

The way European perceived their family time is one-sided, the family is perceived as source of well-being and the stress felt in familial contexts is undervalued (Figure 4). Clearly the time spent with the immediate family is enjoyable both in a gender and in a cross country perspective (men and women for all European countries with values near the top of the scale). All European countries, men and women, with slightly higher values in southern Europe (Portugal and Spain), perceive almost all the time spent with the immediate family as enjoyable.

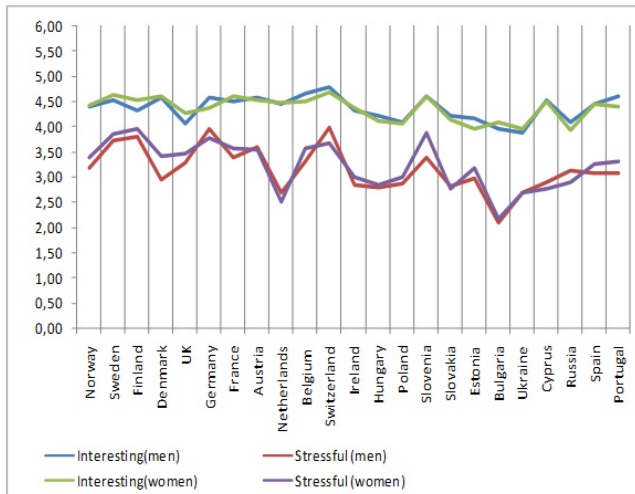
At the same time there is a rejection or undervaluation of the stressful moments felt in the time spent with the family (men and women for all European countries under the middle point of the scale). However, following [Horschild \(1997\)](#), the family sphere can also be a contradictory field, a field where stress is also at stake. If it's true that when portraying the time spent with the family the majority of both men and women considered it more enjoyable, it is also true that stress is felt in family contexts. And when that is so women are the most stressed. It is also in the northern European countries (Norway, Sweden and Finland) that both men and women admit greater deal of stressful time spent with the family.

Figure 4.

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



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



Source: European Social Survey, round 3 (2006)

Welfare-state regimes, policies and household strategies

In a more updated version, Esping-Andersen (2002a), having as a background concern the sustainability and reform of the welfare state, proposes a “child wellbeing centred policy” (Esping-Andersen, 2002b) and a “new gender contract” (Esping-Andersen, 2002c). This proposal stresses that public policies on family are about regulating the labor market in a way that women and men can be both workers and carers enhancing child wellbeing in a gender egalitarian context. However, some tensions can emerge between child wellbeing policies and gender policies: the former implies more free time to child care and less time for the labor market; the latter, depends on a progressive equality between women and men in the labor market and on the involvement of men in care and household tasks.

The importance of the institutional context affecting women’s employment patterns is also underscored in other studies: first, differences in public arrangements supporting the employment of mothers explain cross-national differences in the impact of children on women’s labor supply (Uunk, Kalmijn, & Muffels, 2005). Second, women’s employment permanence is highest among countries in which the state provides support for working mothers. At the same time, lower support for working mothers’ employment is associated with higher problem wage penalties to employment discontinuity (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2001). Both public policies and gender role values impact in women’s labor market, although public policies have a stronger impact, namely those promoting public childcare. Commonly gender values have an ambiguous result in the interplay with the institutional context: more egalitarian values positively affect women’s labor supply; but gender roles do not change the impact of institutional constraints. Changes in gender norms may underlie institutional changes rather than the other way around (Uunk et al., 2005).

The three-regime typology of Esping Andersen enabled Gornick & Meyers (2004) to map differences between countries: social democratic countries policy packages support a dual earner/dual carer society, that is, a gender egalitarian society that values both paid work and caregiving time and prizes child wellbeing; conservative European

countries help to secure time for caring and family economic stability, but they are less encouraging gender equality in paid and unpaid work; finally, liberal countries (UK and US) public policy supports are minimal, they defend a market solution to secure care, and men and women are at the mercy of labor market rules (employers).

Gornick and Meyers also stress that the progress towards the goal of an earner-carer society, with greater gender equality, child well-being, and family economic security, has been best achieved in countries that have developed the most supportive packages of leave and working-time policies (Gornick & Meyers, 2003, 2004). Not only policies that affect families with children may moderate family poverty by facilitating employment and employment related income; but also, father's relative contribution to family child care rises with the strengths of family leave, child care, and working time provisions (Gornick & Meyers, 2003).

Supported by these previous research results and facing the challenge of accessing the interaction between orientations to work and care and institutional contexts we found four fundamental reasons to go beyond the three-regime typology and dive in the substantive and objective care political packages that, partially, shape a more abstract and general welfare regime: First, Esping-Andersen's welfare state regime typology only works for the Nordic and social democratic problem countries. Second, bearing in mind the definition of conservative welfare state regime we found important differences in the care political packages among the countries that theoretically fit in. For example, Germany, France and Portugal are set in the same type of regime, but between them there are profound differences about the conception of the welfare state and particularly about care political packages. Third, countries considered in the liberal type of regime have in recent years invested on work and care policies (United Kingdom) giving different shape to the traditionally liberal welfare state regime. Fourth, the Esping-Adersen typology is insufficient to deal with the eastern European countries and their specific dynamics about the role of the state on work-care arrangements.

Work-Care policies' typology

Trying to analytically operationalize the different welfare-state regimes and the diverse work-family political packages that constitute them, we briefly propose a typology of Welfare-States which, by mainly dealing with the questions of the relation between paid and unpaid work, is based on the extent and coverage of measures taken by the state. We access different Welfare-State systems by their political packages in connection with the gender issue and compatibility between paid and unpaid work.

This means a previous analytical effort in three different dimensions: first, portrait cross country differences about paid and unpaid work, namely by labor market indicators like labour market (full-time and part-time) activity rates; and by political packages focused on work and labor market. Second, gender issues must be taken into consideration, namely indicators about gender differences on labor market integration, income, time spent on paid and unpaid work. Third, accessing the extent and coverage of care political packages and measures taken by the state we identify five different objective criteria: (i) Maternity leave (length and payment); (ii) Paternity leave (length and payment); (iii) Parental leave (length and payment); (iv) Childcare leave and time off for care of dependents (length and payment); and the (v) Access to regulated Early problem Childhood Education and Care services for children between 0-5 years old.

At the moment our analytical effort was centered on this last dimension, therefore more than the final typology we propose a typology restricted to the analysis of care political packages: a work-care policies' typology (Figure 5).

By bearing this classification criterion in mind, we have identified three types of Work-Care political packages: the extended (the Scandinavian countries and France), the limited (UK and Continental Europe – Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Luxembourg), and the disadvantaged (the Mediterranean countries).

Extended

The extended type of work-care political packages has a social-democratic nature as other classifications suggest (Esping-Andersen, 2002a). This model openly tends to favor aims seeking to satisfy men's and women's equality in the job and care, and guaranteeing a wide range of facilities and equipment in order to attenuate the difference between paid and unpaid work.

Limited

It has become common in sociology to hear that it is important to look at heterogeneity among the apparent homogeneity. A typology is all about the creation of communalities and analytical groups, however is important to stress the singularities within these groups. Having in mind the five criterions, we found some singularities within the limited model of work-care political packages; those differences are the product of social and political dynamics:

First, a set of countries that where at the origin of the model when it was first drawn in the late 1990's (Torres, 2000). In the limited model, the state has to adopt a restrictive, familialist and maternalist stance. It sometimes has to pay the price for following political guidelines which place the main onus of childcare and caring for the elderly more particularly on the women. It is also the mother who has to bear the brunt of the discrepancies arising between paid and unpaid work. This being the case, measures taken in the sphere of paid work will always favor part-time work or domestic work in order to allow mothers a chance of taking care of their children. Childcare or care for the elderly as well as the models in the division of labor tend to be regarded as a private question. This means it falls to the individual and the families themselves to take up their own responsibilities and decision-making without resorting to State interference. In turn, and due also to the imbalance in men and women's expectations and their roles with regard to these issues, the differences between the sexes in these Welfare-State

systems are deepened. Moreover, it is also because of the differences between men and women which are nothing more than reflections of the individual's right to make «free» decisions in keeping with his/her choices and be exempt from the Government's interference.

Second, for some countries (Portugal and Spain) this welfare state model or the work-family political packages aren't an ideological heritage of the familalist or maternalist stance; they found themselves in this position as an effect of trajectory from a disadvantaged system to a deepened welfare state system and work-family political packages. A fast-forward move in terms of work-family political packages; following the extended model a large spectrum of solutions toward work-family articulation and gender equity have been taken in the last decade. We can say that the former limitations gave space for maneuvering on the ideological plane in order to better model available political instruments. But they are still constrained. More than ideologically restricted these countries have welfare state regimes mostly constrained by lacking financial resources that may limit efficiency: the coverage of the measures and the payment system.

Finally, there are three direct entrances to the model made by eastern European countries (Hungary, Estonia and Slovenia). Their positioning in this model is due to the specific contemporary complex historical, social and political processes by those societies, and probably by the problem maintenance of political packages heritage from the communist period.

Disadvantaged

This was the system of Welfare-State prevalent in the South of Europe (Portugal, Spain and Greece) until late 1990's and beginning of the new millennium, generally speaking, amounts to being a disadvantaged, unequal one in the kind of coverage afforded, whether in terms of social risks or from the viewpoint of social groups covered by welfare and the asymmetries between them.

In the case of the Southern European model which is disadvantaged, the situation once again reveals very specific characteristics. In first

place, certain characteristics resemble those in the restricted model not because of political choice but because of the incipient nature of the Welfare-State itself and the way it is brought to bear in gender and compatibility issues in particular. As there has never been any prior experience, these outcomes have been witnessed only very recently.

On the other hand, the lacking or disadvantaged nature of the Welfare-State and the recent appearance of questions such as these have helped to shape the political decision-making of these countries much more openly especially in terms of gender and compatibility issues. The singular situations in which each country finds itself has, consequently, also been more accentuated. The deficit, therefore, means insufficiency and limitations but it also means space for maneuvering on the ideological plane in order to better model available political instruments. In a way of speaking, it means that its very state of incompleteness is also open.

Portugal and Spain apparently have benefited from this space for maneuvering and openness by investing in one kind of guideline leading to the extended model – although the financial resources may limit efficiency – setting up conditions favoring equality between the sexes. Above all, it is the only one to achieve any sort of compatibility between paid and unpaid work. Greece is the only southern European country positioned in this model.

Concomitant to the fast-forward move of Portugal and Spain towards the extended model, Ireland seemed to have entered a downward mobility from the restricted model to the disadvantaged one. To better understand this further research about this specific case is needed.

Finally, there are two new entrances to the model made by eastern European countries (Czech Republic and Poland). Their positioning in this model is due to the specific contemporary complex historical, social and political processes by those societies: from communist societies to open market economy, from isolation to European integration. Probably, we can find some justification to this lack of investment on public policies target to work-family articulation to an ideological resistance to state intervention on the private sphere. In a way, these countries may be doing a trajectory from state regulation of the private to an extreme individual choice.

Work-Care regimes and gender roles

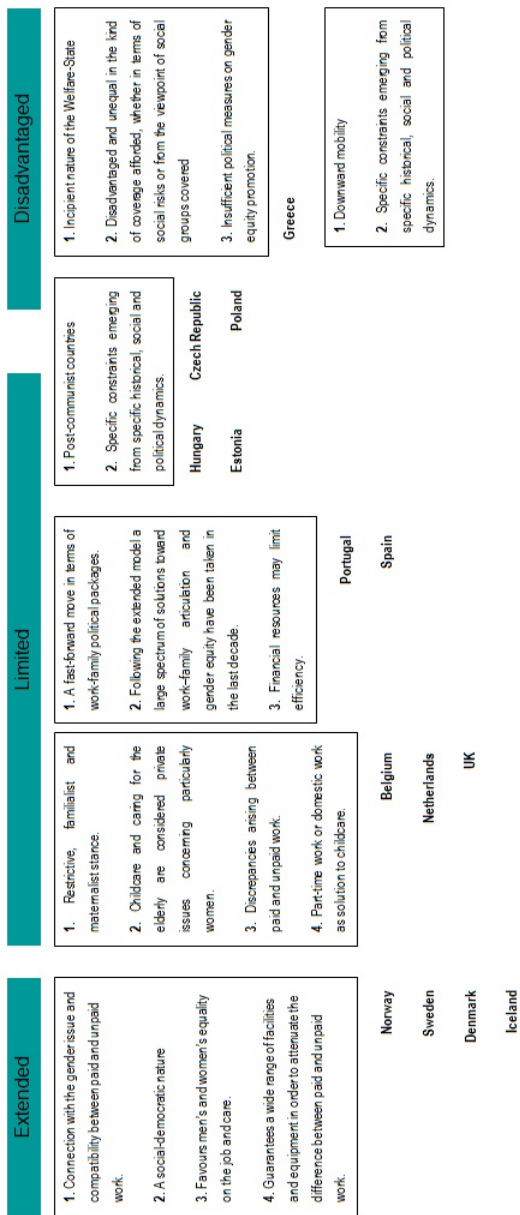
As discussed before we argue that regarding work and family structural, institutional and cultural constraints shape “preferences”. Choices seem though constrained. We have seen that work and family are dimensions of social identity for both women and men. The management of these personal investments (work + family) seems to suggest that the old breadwinner model, at least concerning attitudes, is outdated. Can direct signs of new forms of gender relations or new meanings of the family be observed? Let us look at a set of results from questions raised in ESS 2004.

We can draw some European patterns (Figure 6): First, there is a general consensus and very high agreement about the idea that *a person's family should be main priority in life* and that *men should take as much responsibility as women for home and children*. The wider agreement with the first statement isn't unexpected. We had already observed the predominance given to family in all countries (Torres et al., 2007). The second statement brings however some innovation: in the ideological plan, Europeans tend to adopt an egalitarian perspective and problem to reject a traditional vision of men's and women's roles in the family. We are observing a change in symbolic representations and images associated to masculinity and paternity, which is reflected in the growing literature. We are observing a change in symbolic representations and images associated to masculinity and paternity, which is reflected in the growing literature dedicated to the “engaged fathers”, who participate more intensely in the care of children, as an opposition to the traditional role of breadwinner (Sullivan, 2004).

Second, intermediary positions: *a woman should be prepared to cut down on paid work for sake of family's wellbeing* - 47% of the European agree. But we observe marked differences among countries, Scandinavian tend to reject but the majority is near the middle or undefined point (nor agree nor disagree), and some tend to the agreement.

This is the “less rejected” idea, regarding that the agreement overcomes the 50% of answers in various countries. European don't appreciate the idea of women's sacrifice in favor of men (in the labor market access) but they seem to tolerate a little better – particularly in the

Figure 5.
A typology of work-care policies



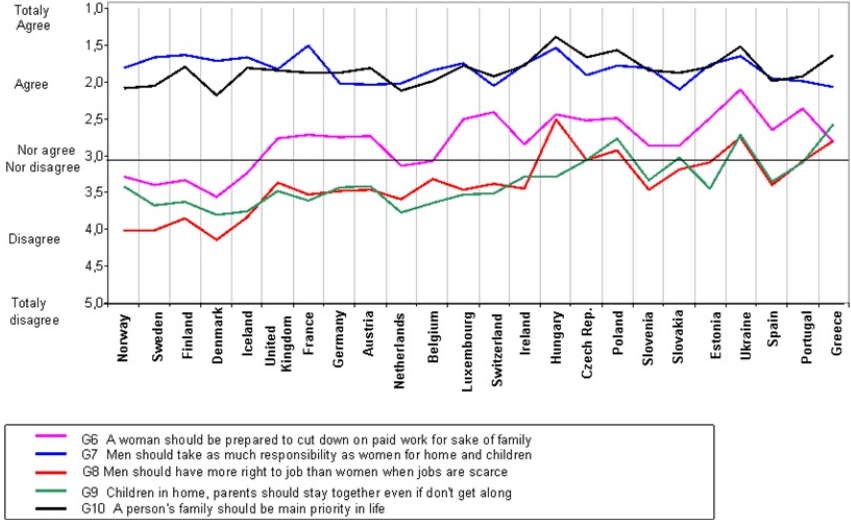
South and Eastern countries – the idea that a woman should sacrifice herself in favor of the family wellbeing. We can see that there is a major difference between countries than between sexes.

Men should have more right to job than women when jobs are scarce; Children in home, parents should stay together even if don't get along. The sacrifice of the female professional work in favor of men is rejected by the majority (52,9%). Rejection is strong and the two sexes are always very close together. Apparently, the majority of the European does not support the sacrifice of women in favor of men. The unequal vision in what concerns the access to paid work (which reflects a conservative attitude) increases as long as we move from the North to the South of Europe. The idea of the indissolubility of marriage due to the existence of children is also, globally, rejected (52,2%). This is again an idea linked to conservative attitudes and, although being globally rejected, it reaches a medium agreement in the South and East countries. Or in another way, gender conservative positions seem to increase as we move from European institutional contexts covered by extended work-care and gender equality policy packages to limited or disadvantaged work-care policy contexts. Besides, this is the case where women and men assume positions that are more distant from each other, with men adopting more conservative positions than women.

Nordic express a much clearer position (of rejection), while the others have more difficulty in standing for or against the statements. We may then understand that Nordic countries present very consistent positions of disagreement towards the three last statements. In the remaining countries – South and Enlargement – the figures of agreement are around half of the sample, reflecting more ambiguous predispositions and with a more conservative trend in what concerns the work-family relation.

The idea that gender equality as an ideal is a more deep-rooted reality in the Nordic countries is confirmed. And also that institutional contexts based on an extended work-care policy regime – gender equity policies and work-care policies - enabling the double investment on family and work might have an important role on this issue (Gornick & Meyers, 2004; Leitner & Wroblewski, 2006; Lewis, 2002).

Figure 6.
New meanings of the family



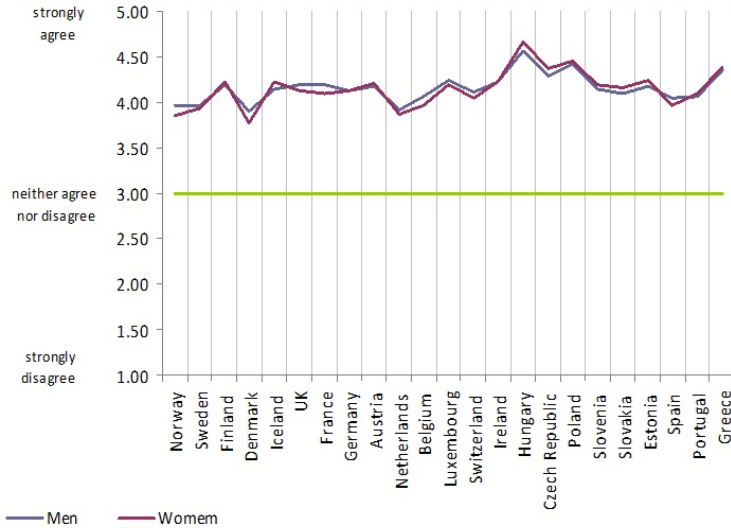
Source: European Social Survey (2004)

Looking now at the same questions but trying to differentiate the answers for both sexes we find out that there aren't significant gender differences (Figure 7). These results contradict again the naturalized view on gender differences, namely those setting apart men and women in different social worlds: paid work as a masculine universe and the family as a female sphere.

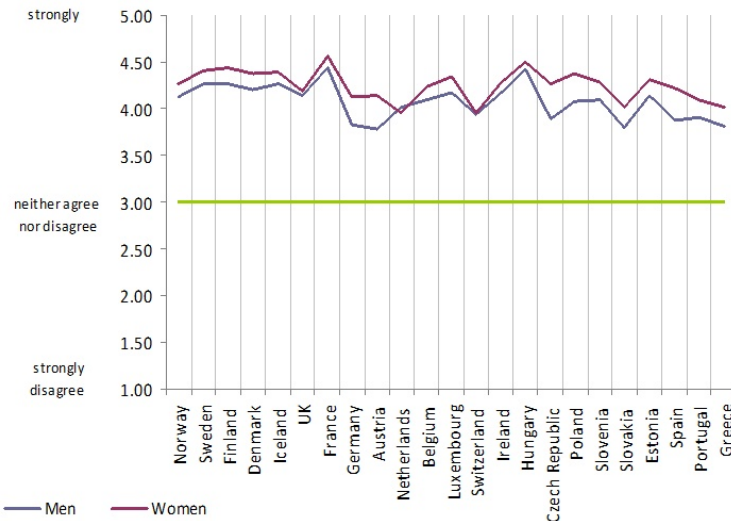
Looking at this also reveals different ideological and cultural orientations to work and care embodied by men and women in different European countries. On one hand, there aren't significant gender differences. On the other hand, we can say that women orientations to family vary more than orientations to work: when asked if a woman should be prepared to cut down her paid work for the sake of the family the answers are positioned around the middle point of the scale (neither agree or disagree); but the Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland) show a clearer position towards disagreement; on

Figure 7.

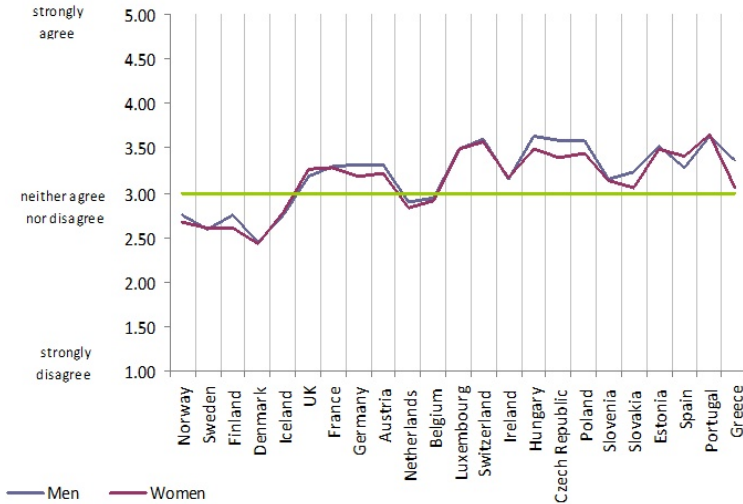
A person's family ought to be his or her main priority in life



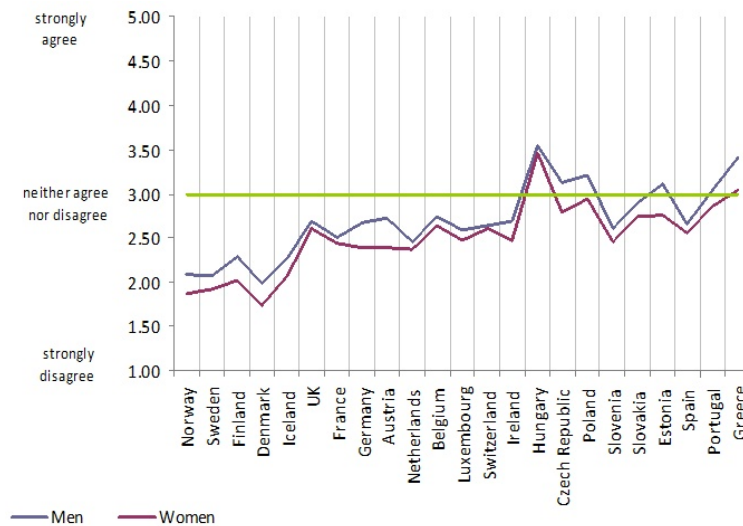
Men should take as much responsibility as women for the home and children



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



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



Source: European Social Survey (2004)

the opposite position Eastern and southern European countries tend to agree with the statement, showing a more traditional profile about gender roles.

When analyzing the answers to this question in particular, we can't forget some methodological remarks that can help us to interpret the results. We can not neglect two semantic details on the statement "a woman should be prepared to cut down her paid work for the sake of her family": first, the statement is in conditional form, tracing a hypothetical scenario; bearing this in mind the answers can show us a state of prevention, a conditional agreement with the scenario. Second, to be prepared doesn't mean to actually do it or deeply agree with the statement; it means to be aware of the possibility, it can be interpreted almost as kind of a B plan for a specific situation when the family wellbeing is at risk. Therefore, it may constitutes (i) a preventive attitude within the frame of limited work-care policy regimes not fully guaranteeing individual or family wellbeing, (ii) a rational and pragmatic attitude towards gender pay gap persistence which actively conditions everyday life funding.

Besides, and in contrast with this hesitation, women seem to have clear professional oriented individual projects when compared to men in the labor market. When asked if men should have priority to work when jobs are scarce women tend to reject this idea. So, finally, we can say that women can sacrifice their professional career for the sake of the family, but not for the sake of male labor market integration.

Going a step forward, in the European analysis we produced a cluster analysis using the gender role index (Figure 8). By this method we draw three clear distinct country clusters: egalitarian which correspond to a mix of extended and limited work-care policies (Nordic countries, Belgium and Netherlands); intermediary (France, Luxemburg, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, UK, Ireland, Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Portugal and Spain) and traditional (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Greece).

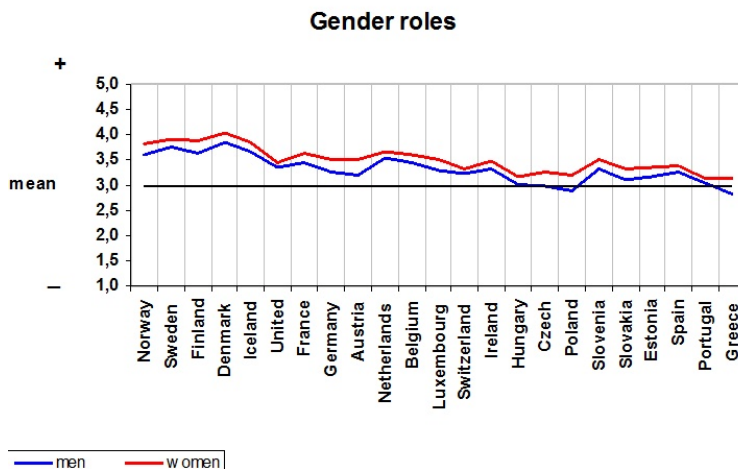
The country clustering by gender roles opens up several research interrogations that can be synthesized in one question: does this clustering has something to do with cultural, structural and institutional contexts? So, besides the descriptive analysis these clusters have an

instrumental function working as a reference to further analysis.

Selecting countries from the different clusters we intend to identify and access the interplay between structural and cultural determinants of orientations (Haas, 2005) and trying to find the more relevant for explaining country diversity about gender roles: in what measure does cultural and structural constraints impact the definition of an egalitarian position?

Figure 8.

Gender role index



Scale: 1=Traditional; 5= Egalitarian
 Source: European Social Survey (2004)

Answering this question by a multiple regressions’ analysis (Enter Method), the explanatory model takes into consideration indicators for structural and cultural constraints from the ESS 2004 (Figure 9). Assuming gender as a dimension for instantiation of deep cultural differences and values across Europe, we have activated the sex variable to assess the impact of cultural constraints in the definition of a more egalitarian stance among the countries. Accessing the interplay between structural constraints and gender roles equality we identified the following predictors: years of full-time education completed;

income, working hours per week and household type. The household typology is defined by four different case-types: (i) living alone; (ii) childless couple; (iii) couple with children; (iv) lone parent.

Figure 9.

Multiple Regression: dependent variable: Gender Roles Index

	Sweden	Netherlands	UK	France	Austria	Spain	Portugal	Czech Rep.	Greece
Adjusted R²	.094	.070	.068	.124	.103	.254	.147	.084	.208
Years Education Completed	.236***	.241***	.145***	.288***	.181***	.450***	.262***	.209***	.333***
Income	-	-	.119***	-	-	-	.197***	-	-
Sex ^a	.123***	.119***	.074*	.066*	.193***	.135***	.101*	.187***	.284***
Working hours (week)	-	-	-	-	-	-.103*	-	-	-.061*
Household Type	Living alone	-	-	-	-.085*	-.103*	-	-	-
	Childless Couple	-	-	-	-	-.170***	-	-	-
	Couple with children	-	-	-	-	-.122*	-	-	-
	Lone parent	.066*	-	.118***	.097*	-	.083*	.089**	-

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

^a dummy variable: 0=men, 1=women

^b dummy variable: reference: "Other"

Source: European Social Survey (2004)

First, structural constraints seem to have a clear importance for the definition of more modern and egalitarian gender roles concerning the family life. The years of completed full-time education are the most powerful predictor of the model. In a cross country perspective it is possible to say that gender roles vary positively, by that we mean towards a more modern and egalitarian stance, according to the years of completed education (the higher the level of education, the more

egalitarian).

Among the selected countries we identify different levels of impact of the education variable: United Kingdom, Austria and Czech Republic face the lowest impact of the level of education on the definition of egalitarian position facing gender roles; Sweden, Netherlands and Portugal constitute a second group; the third group France and Greece; and finally, Spain is the country where the definition of an egalitarian position facing gender roles vary most according to education (the higher the level of education, the more egalitarian).

The other predictors for structural dimensions don't have an explanatory capacity across countries. However, is important to analyze the impact of income on defining a position facing gender roles. Apart from the UK and Portuguese cases, the income isn't a strong predictor. The differences of income are for Portugal and UK important factors for explaining the positioning about gender roles. The higher is the income, more egalitarian tend to be the individuals.

Analyzing the sex variable as a predictor for the impact of cultural constraints, it is possible to say that to be a woman means to be more egalitarian for all countries selected. This interplay has a particular importance in Greece, Czech Republic and in Austria.

Matching gender roles country clustering and work-care political typology allow us to say that the extended work-care packages in the Nordic countries coexists with more egalitarian values in the family. [Leitner & Wroblewski \(2006\)](#) show also that Nordic countries are a good example to understand that the consistency of welfare state regulations and a correct policy mix are important preconditions for a successful work-life balance; meaning also that a transformation of the institutional conditions may lead to changes of the prevailing norms, values and orientations to work and care. The disadvantaged type in Greece and the specific case of some post-communist countries correspond to a more conservative positioning.

Therefore, in an exploratory way we may say that public policies about work and family conciliation, childcare facilities and gender relations promote gender equity. The other way around the lack of gender and family political packages feeds the ambivalence towards the new meanings of the family.

Conclusions

Our research findings contradict stereotypes and naturalized views on gender attitudes and orientations, namely those setting apart men and women in different social worlds: masculine universe of paid work and the family as a female sphere. First, across Europe we find that affections and emotions are highly valued, the importance of family and friends coexisting with a vision of work as a source of social identity both for men and women. Second, a trend towards the instantiation of new meanings of the family for both women and men family is the main priority in their lives, and family and care for children are perceived across Europe as a responsibility for both men and women. Third, in a European panorama snapshot we can say that stronger differences are found between countries with different scenarios of work-care and gender policies than between women and men. Fourth, the clear disruption of the male breadwinner model puts Europe, with different countries and regions on diverse rhythms and with pathways of change, on the move towards a more modern and gender egalitarian perception and organization of work and care. Nevertheless, these more egalitarian perspectives tend to coexist with practises clearly unequal, working women and working mothers still being the main providers of care while working in the labor market, in some countries, for long hours. Hence, gender equality is continually at stake.

We also conclude that more egalitarian views about work and care arrangements are positively correlated with the education level attained. The more educated are also the more egalitarian in most of the countries. Additionally, women tend, in all countries, to be more modern and egalitarian than men.

Orientations to work and care differ in Europe in different welfare state regimes. But within the same welfare state regime countries there are also differences due to specific national and historical contexts. Therefore, a broad welfare-state regime typology seems insufficient to explain country differences about the orientations to work and care. To access the interplay between institutional context and the work and care orientations is more pertinent to analyze work-care arrangements and policies.

A final remark on methodology seems inevitable. We have noticed that different ways of asking questions produce different answers: on one hand, questions addressed with a gender neutral perspective will be answered according to personal projects and wishes. On the other hand, when gender roles are directly at stake the answers tend to be filtered by gender stereotypes. Men and women, across Europe, tend to answer in amore neutral way when questions refer to their personal projects, but tend to change when questions are filtered by gender roles stereotypes.

Notes

¹ Several research results constitute this background: within the European Research Network *Social policies and the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women* we carried out two surveys: a survey applied in 1997 in the area of Lisbon (Torres & Silva, 1999); another survey at National level applied in 1999 (Torres et al., 2000). Results are coming also from qualitative research about marriage, marital life and work carried out in Lisbon in mid-nineties (Torres, 2004). More recently, in the scope of the research project *Work, Family, Gender Equality and Social Policies: European transformations from a comparative perspective* we used also results coming from quantitative European survey data but also from qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews to couples in different towns (Porto, Lisbon and Leiria) in Portugal (Torres, Marques, & Maciel, 2011). And the same happens still more recently with the research results coming from a Framework Program 6 research *Changing Relationships between Work, Care and Welfare in Europe (WORKCARE)*.

² Between 1995 and 2001, and from 2005-2010, a set of public policies was implemented in Portugal in the field of child minding and pre-school education. They partially filled a gap in coverage that was particularly obvious in a country with such a high employment rate among mothers of small children. However, there is still, scarce public coverage for the group of children aged 0-3 year.

³ Even in an analysis of such characteristics as the distribution of attributes connected with masculinity and femininity, it can be seen that, despite the differences in averages, the overlapping of characteristics is much greater than the distance and difference between them. As Kimmel also shows: "In fact, in virtually all the research that has been done on the attributes associated with masculinity or femininity, the differences among women and men are far greater than the mean differences between women and men" (Kimmel, 2000, p. 15).

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