

CFR CONFERENCE
Family Diversity & Gender

ISA - ISCSP

Lisbon | 9 – 13 September 2008

Private matters in public and political agenda in Europe

Anália Torres

CIES/ISCTE

Lisboa



Shared, common values and diversity in Europe.

1) Trends in family and gender relations.

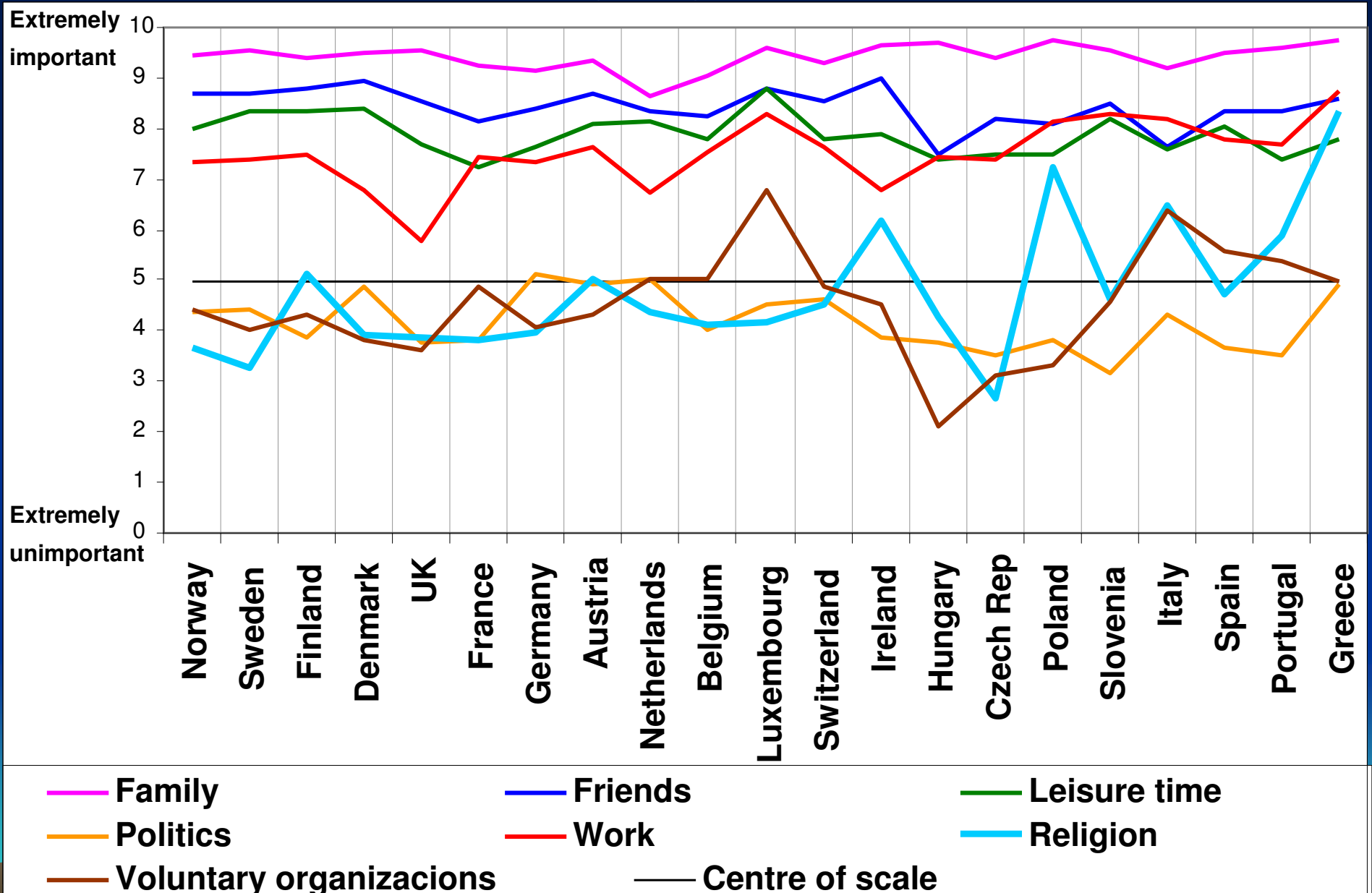
- Valuing feelings and emotions
- Secularization
- Individualization and women's search for autonomy and gender equality

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

2) The private in the public and the political agenda. But also the public present in the private.

How important is each of these aspects in your life?

(means)



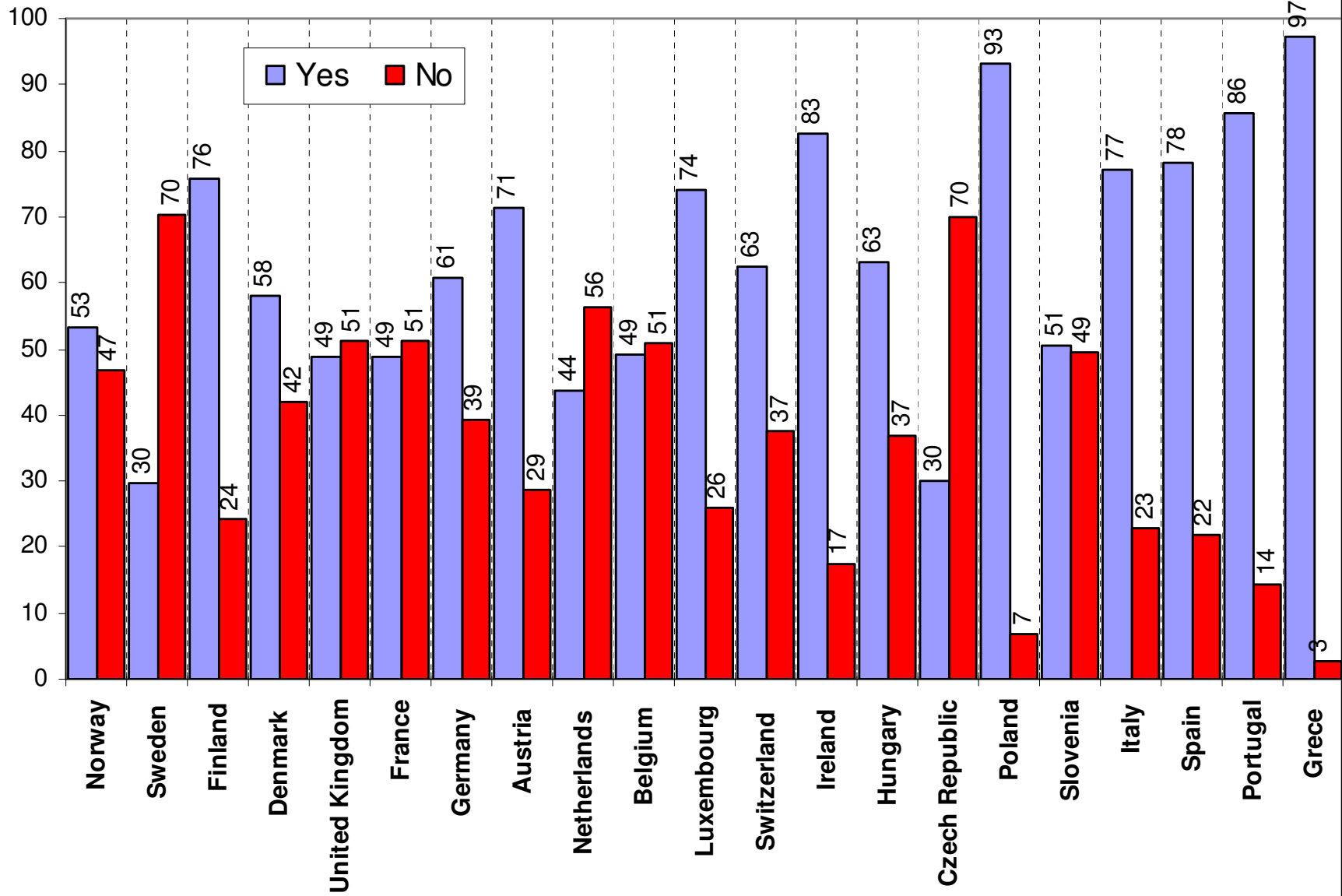
Source: ESS, round 1, 2002

- **Contradicting stereotypes, individuals value family and emotional dimensions.**
- **Common values in Europe shared by the majority of the countries.**

Data from European Social Survey, 2002, 42 thousand individuals.



Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination? (%)

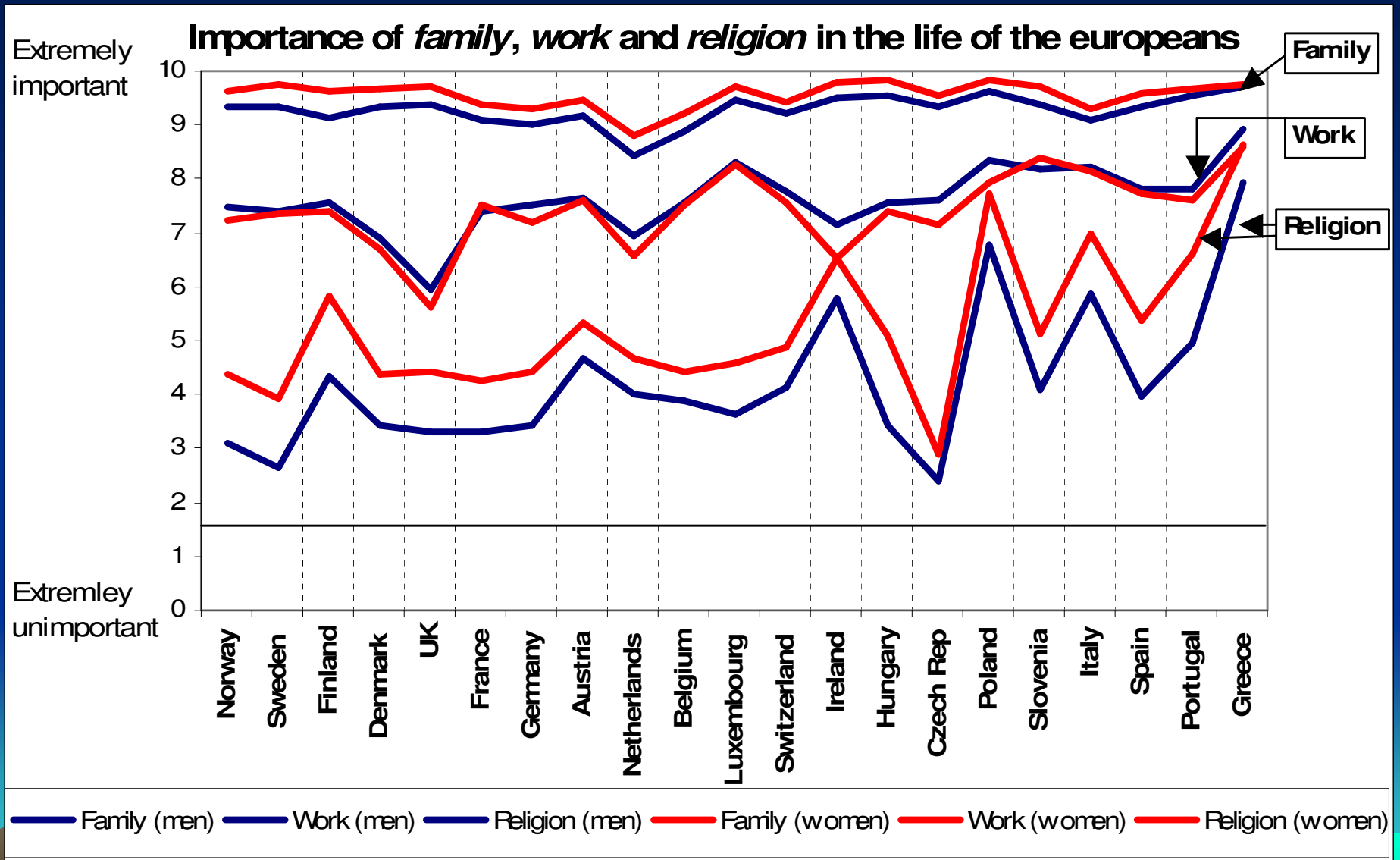


Secularization...

- 36% say that they don't have any religion.
- In six countries the majority do not have a religion: Sweden, UK, France, Belgium, Holland, Check Republic.

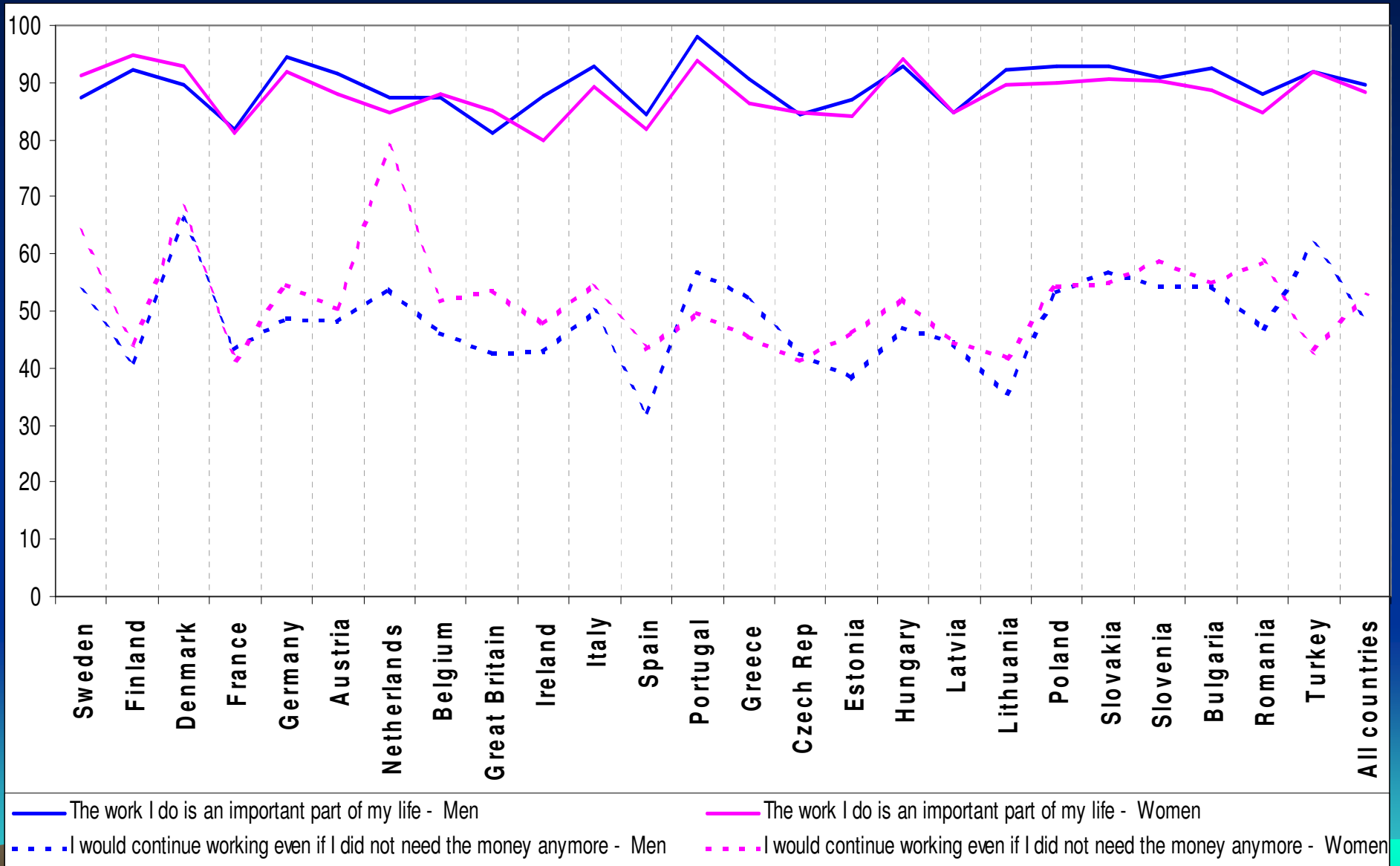


Importance of family, work and religion by sex



Work attachment for men and women (%)

2003

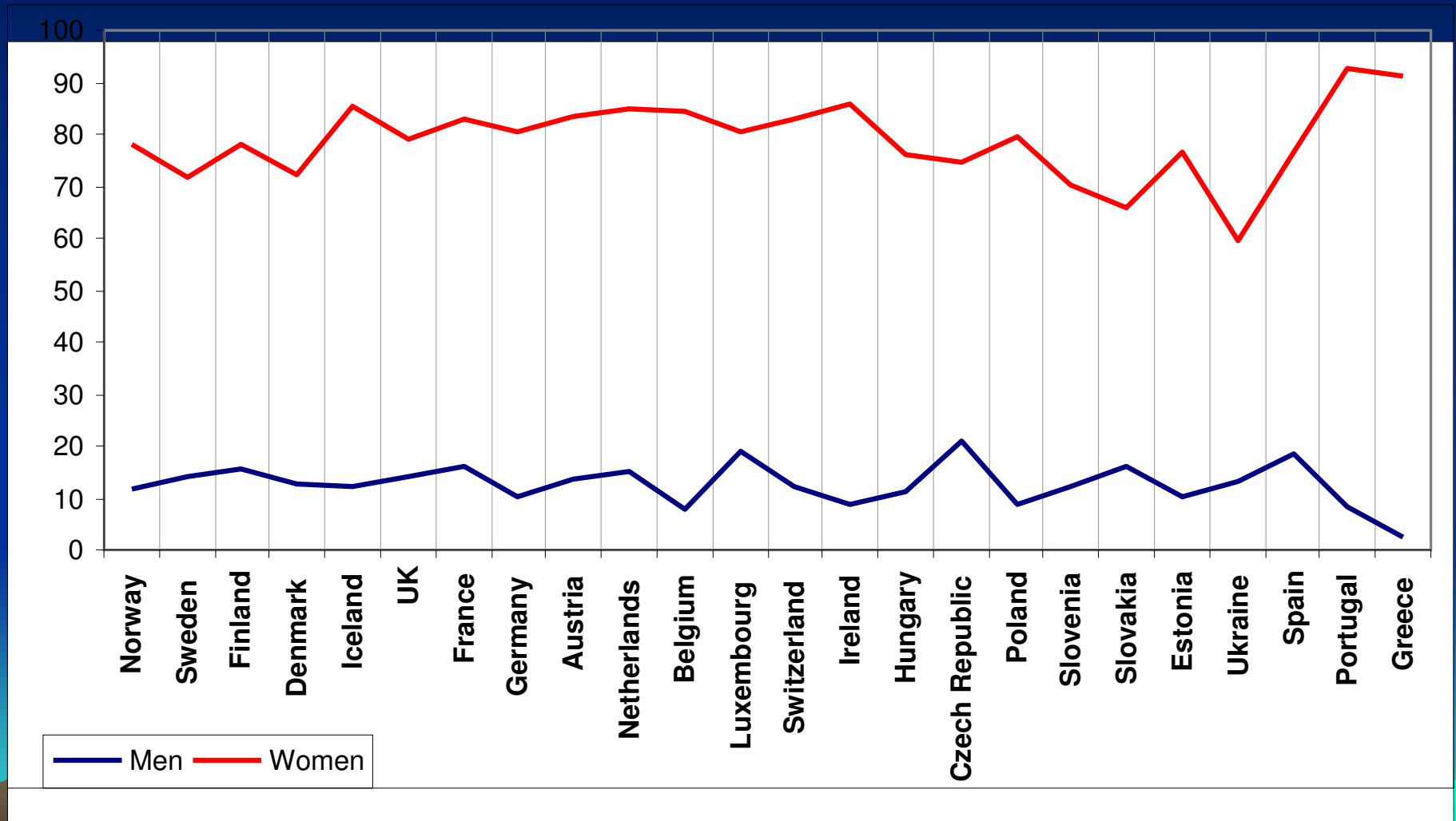


Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Division of domestic tasks

Working men and women saying that they spend more than a half of the total time spent by the household in the domestic tasks, in a week normal day

(percentages)



Source: ESS2, 2004

- **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.**



Results also from previous researches – using both quantitative and qualitative methods – show for Europe that:

- ❑ Both men and women, fathers and mothers, want to invest in both spheres - work and family. But for women, keeping both investments, may face specific obstacles. (Torres, Brites, Haas and Steiber, 2007; Torres and Brites 2006; Torres, Mendes and Lapa, 2006).
- ❑ In general, women are overburdened by paid and unpaid work even though men work more hours in paid work (Torres et al, 2006; Torres, et al. 2000 and 2004).
- ❑ Structural, institutional and cultural constraints shape individuals' choices (Crompton *et al.* contradicting Hakim's theory).

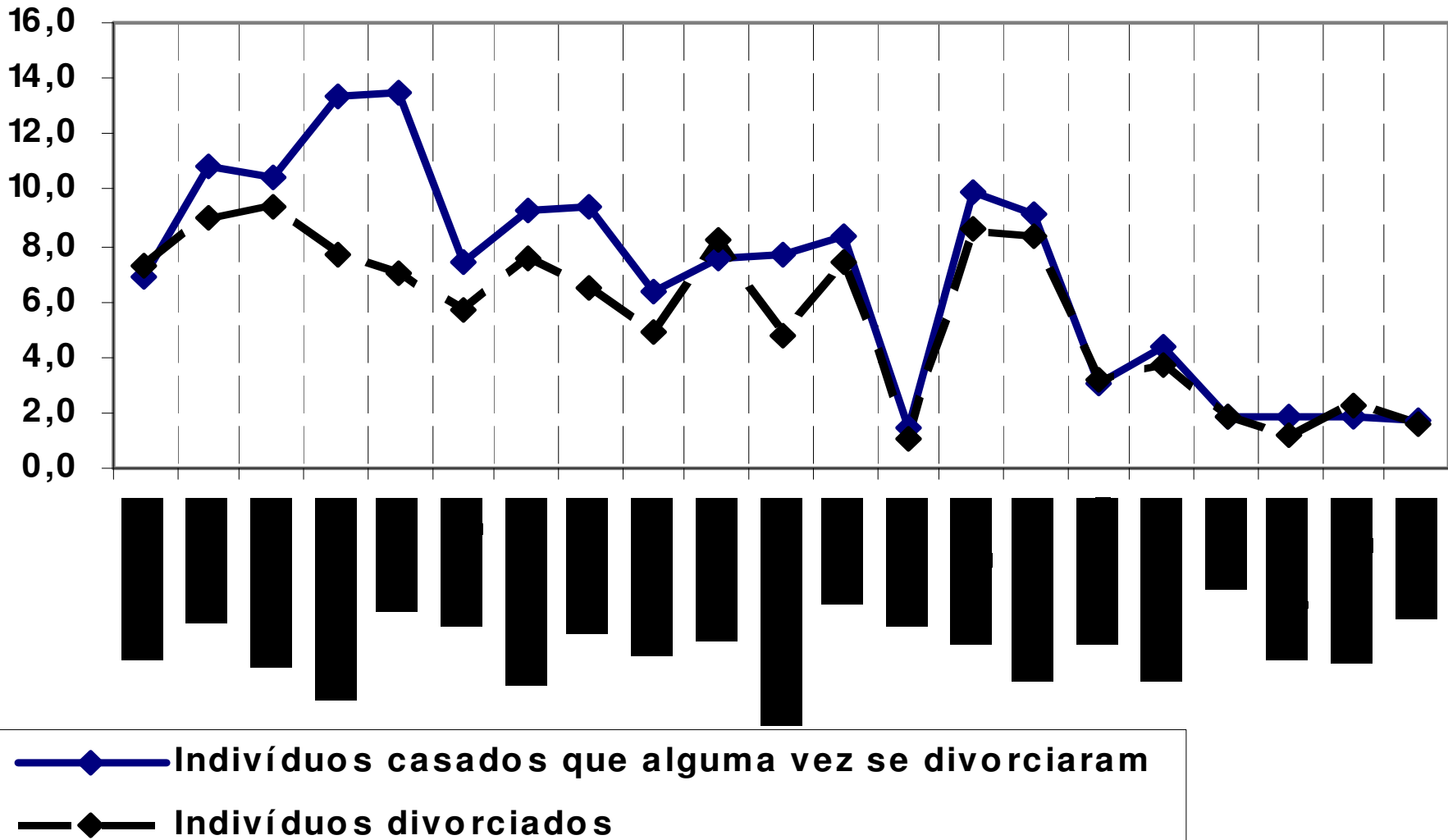
- Diversity in Europe...



	Average Europe (ESS)	Portugal	Sweden	United Kingdom
Married	57,8	64,9	46,1	55,7
Divorcee	5,1	2,2	8,9	7,1
Cohabitants	20,4	4,0	36,9	21,8

- Diversity in Europe: less formal ties in Scandinavian and in the north than in the south.
- The “state” of divorcee is transitory.

Divorcees and married people that have been divorced before.



To explain diversity in Europe

- **Long term structural and cultural dynamics in each country. But also conjuncture effects, changes in politics and policies, the strength of feminist movements, the specific paths of change.**

Examples:

- **Portugal. The effect of Colonial War (1961-1974) and than the April Revolution. Differences regarding other southern countries.**
- **Eastern countries: specific dynamics of change.**
- **U. Kingdom. Changes from 1997 on.**
- **More recent changes in Germany.**
- **Spain and Portugal, different women's activity rate, recent changes in law (gay marriage, abortion, divorce).**

- **At the same time common or largely shared values, same trends, specific dynamics.**
- **Similar questions and debates.**
- **Private issues on public and political sphere.**



For Europe and in spite of diversity...

- The personal agenda for both men and women seems quite identical:
 - having a job, being autonomous, having children or raising a family in different types of arrangements, sharing with partner those live events.



The need to articulate the three agendas: employment, care and equality

Employment Agenda

Lisbon agenda: from 40% to 60% of women in the European labor market in 2010. Sustainability of the system through women's jobs.

But Employment Agenda should be articulated with Care Agenda and Equality Agenda.

-Private decisions have macro impacts - having or not one or more children.

-At the same time those decisions can be shaped also by collective and state arrangements – childcare facilities, leave policies and so on.

So employment, care and equality need to be articulated in order to correspond to personal fulfillment but also to collective arrangements. Insisting on one without the others results in unbalanced solutions and perverse effects (inequality).



Other topics concerning the private domain like gay marriage, abortion, assisted medical reproduction, euthanasia are now in the Agora and in the Law.

But there is also public interference in other “private” matters, for instance, domestic violence or child abuse, showing the dark side of the family.



Conclusions

- **Family is the main 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.**
- **The transformations of the family in Europe follow the same patterns but with calendar differences and cultural variants. Global tendencies of individualization, different forms of coupling, lesser valorisation of formal and institutionalized marital and family relationships. Nevertheless the majority of the European are married and live in couple.**
- **Each region has particular configurations and combinations. 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).**

- **Family is not more important in the south than in other countries. It is a taken-for-granted value for each of the countries of the ESS.**
- **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.**
- **Employment, Care and Equality agenda should be articulated.**



Thank you for your attention.

analia.torres@iscte.pt

