

Do European values have a sex?

Anália Torres and Rui Brites

In
Guerreiro, Maria das Dores, Anália Torres and Luís Capucha (2009). *Welfare and
Everyday Life, Portugal in the European Context*, Vol.III, CIES, ISCTE-IUL, Oeiras,
Celta Editora (pp. 37-72).

Introduction

The main goal of this chapter is to analyse the differences and similarities between men and women for a specific set of values and attitudes. We conducted a similar exercise in a prior publication (Torres and Brites, 2006) using all the answers — from media exposure to years of schooling — of more than 42 thousand European respondents of the *European Social Survey*.¹ On this text we focus in greater detail only answers to questions concerning more directly to values. We have chosen in particular values and attitudes related to important domains of personal life; to social and political trust; to citizenship and politics, religion and human values.

We stressed before that, contrary to what could be expected, attitudes, opinions and values of men and women are much more similar between them than different (Torres and Brites, 2006). 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 essentialise the biological differences between women and men (Amâncio, 1994; Kimmel, 2000). 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, 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

1: The data regards the first Round of European Social Survey carried out in 2002/2003, which included 22 countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Israel, all of which are analysed in this text with the exception of Israel.

studied by psychologists. Clear-cut block differences are few, and confined to restricted topics" (Connell, 1987: 170²).³

Authors such as Prince-Gibson and Schwartz (1998) also analysed the differences between men and women in terms of values and attitudes. Based on a grid of values proposed by Schwartz (1992) and also used in the European Social Survey and a study used in Israel, these authors concluded that there was no significant difference between the sexes with regard to values — both in terms of *structure* and *priorities* (Prince-Gibson and Schwartz, 1998). In other words, men and women give the same meaning, similar importance and grading to the same types of value. Prince-Gibson and Schwartz discussed theoretical proposals and the results of other empirical research on values and gender and have shown how the conclusions reached by their research tend to invalidate the theories that indicate "stable gender difference" focusing more on constructive or interactive perspectives according to which gender attitudes, values or behaviours depend more on specific contexts.

So what the results of the ESS again show is that variables such as education, class, generation, or even those regarding economic and cultural conditions in each country tend to explain the differences among Europeans better and more than they explain the differences between the sexes.⁴ In other words, in terms of values and attitudes, the difference is greater between a young woman with a university degree and a lesser educated older woman than it is with a man of the same age with a similar education.

As a rule, it is in this same direction that we point when analysing attitudes and values on gender equality and cultural changes in the world, as Inglehart and Norris do in their book *Rising Tide*, when they compare the changes in different types of contemporary societies: "Nevertheless, the gap that has emerged *between* traditional agrarian societies and post industrial societies is far greater than the gap between women and men *within* each type of society" (Inglehart and Norris, 2003: 160).

2 In his book *Gender*, published in 2002, R. Connell reaffirms his rejection of the "dichotomy of the character" of men and women on the basis of gender differences and discusses more recent research results (Connell, 2002).

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: 15).

4 A fundamental distinction must be made here between sex, an observable variable, and gender, a concept. The latter refers to the differentiation of the social categories "masculine" and "feminine", a social differentiation that starts with the biological differences between men and women and is constituted as an ideology or cultural construction that defines the "appropriate" behaviour and attitudes of men and women in a given specific social context (Torres, 2001).

This convergence does not eliminate some differences in values, attitudes and behaviours between the wider group of men and that of women. In fact, there were differences in terms of position between European men and women which were observed regularly throughout the 21 countries studied — thus showing true sociological regularities. On the other hand, and with regard to certain topics, it was also observed that the differences among countries were higher than those observed between men and women within each country, just as Inglehart and Norris noted regarding the differences among societies.

The results obtained allow us to paint an interesting picture of Europe. By and large, the intention was to deal with the data for the 21 countries but, for operative reasons in the analysis, the countries were also given a certain grouping. Although always somewhat arbitrary, it captures differences considered generally consistent, as is the case for the difference between the north and south of Europe. But it was also thought that it made sense to distinguish the Scandinavian countries within the "north", and then group the others into the north and centre,⁵ followed by the countries of the enlargement⁶ and, finally, southern Europe.

The socio-demographic data also enabled us to identify other differences and similarities between European men and women. Thus, data on schooling and religious belief are also briefly analysed, and we have sought to verify not only possible differences between the sexes but also generational differences. In this sense, it is once more confirmed that younger women in most European countries have overtaken men in terms of the level of education reached. This, together with the growing tendency for women to participate in the labour market, may help explain the greater convergence between men and women in a wide range of issues.

Indeed, it is important to emphasise the great transformation represented by women's attainment of their present educational levels. In diachronic terms, European women entered the 20th century with very low schooling levels and left it in a more advantageous position than men. This expansion reveals that women have shown, with what they have achieved over time, that biological differences are not directly reflected in different intellectual or performance capacities.⁷ In fact, we can also conclude, as some authors underscore: "that the most

5 This set of countries is extremely heterogeneous.

6 We refer to those countries in the most recent EU enlargement that participated in the first ESS round: Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia. This is how they will be referred to below.

7 Even the most recent discoveries in the neurosciences, which show, for example, certain differences between the male and the female brain, are normally extremely cautious when it comes to translating these differences into behaviour, almost always going back to the relationship between the biological and the social (Connell, 2002; Cahill, 2005; Dortier, 2005).

important change in recent decades has been the revolution in gender roles that has changed the lives of most people in advanced industrial societies" (Inglehart, Norris and Welzel, 2003: 104). As the same authors point out, this great change in practices and values has not always been considered of importance or adequately analysed.

These changes and the considerable advances in the equal rights area in western societies, or the great convergence in positions that we have mentioned, mean that the real inequalities between men and women, which are clear from a series of other indicators, are all the more absurd, even if sociologically explicable. Women earn less than men, have fewer opportunities of employment and paid work, do not occupy managerial positions even where they are in the majority and are clearly under-represented in decision-making political posts in governments and in parliaments. When they work outside the home, which is the case for most European women, they combine this work with the responsibility for carrying out a range of tasks like looking after the children and doing the household chores (Torres, 2004; Torres *et al.*, 2004). All the surveys on the use of time demonstrate the work overload that women have to cope with, which leaves them with little time for other activities. Among other factors, the exclusion of women from the spheres of political decision-making and power can also be attributed to these objective limitations which, ultimately, have the function of reproducing male domination (Bourdieu, 1999). And if women are far less represented in the political sphere, the day-to-day problems that affect their lives and restrict them become also less visible in that public forum (Viegas and Faria, 2001).

All this makes it clear that women's progress in education and labour market participation can help to explain experience that is partly similar — which in turn may explain the fact that the ESS responses did not differ greatly in the variable of sex — though at the same time this progress makes the exclusion of women from politics all the more shocking.

Though it is not the purpose of this text to analyze such inequalities, contradictions and paradoxes, it seemed to us of importance to develop a transverse analysis in order to identify similarities and differences, since it was known from the outset that the former, as shown above, far outweigh the latter. This recognition may help to reveal the errors to which essentialist positions may lead.

In fact, it is easier, though illusory, to attribute the inequalities of sex and gender to the different "nature" or biological predispositions of men and women. It will be more useful and productive to identify gender inequalities in the form that the positions of power in the social structures are distributed and the way that they are reflected both in women and men's lives and on a symbolic level. This approach helps to explain why, in values and attitudes, there are notable convergences between the two sexes and, if there are differences, what their occurrence and distribution may involve.

Family, friends and leisure: the most important in life

Family, friends and leisure were considered the most important aspects in life, and in this order, by people in the 21 countries (figure 2.1, table 2.1). Work is in fourth place right after values associated with feelings of affection. As for religion, voluntary activities and politics, these seem to have average figures below the middle of the scale.

The analysis per country undoubtedly indicates that family comes first in every country. As for friends, free time and work, these are clearly different in this hierarchy in Scandinavian countries, whereas in some northern European countries the order is different, in particular in eastern and southern European countries. The averages for religion, voluntary work and politics come below the middle of the scale; however, religion is above the average in Ireland, Poland, Italy, and Portugal; and voluntary work is second in Luxembourg, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Politics, which is only slightly above the middle of the scale in Germany, is the least important aspect (figure 2.1).

These results transmit three fundamental ideas: first, they confirm findings from other studies and research in this area (Almeida *et al.*, 2000), i.e., once more, and contrary to common sense views, family is still an essential reference for Europeans. It is an acquired value for all, and it is noted that the figures are very close even in Scandinavian countries to those for Spain and are even higher than Italy in terms of importance given to family. Secondly, they show that you can clearly speak of common values within a European context. Indeed, differences among countries in the dimensions in life that everyone values are not very relevant and this is particularly true for family, friends, free time and work; likewise, the hierarchy in the choice of values is almost the same (figure 2.1). More relevant differences only relate to the importance given to religion and voluntary work. Finally, it should also be noted that the value given to family is independent of religion; in other words, contrary to more traditional views, this analysis also confirms what other studies have shown — that in Europe there is a modern idea of a family that is compatible with equality among men and women and with the individualisation logics (Torres, Mendes and Lapa, 2006; Torres, Cardoso and Coelho, 2007).

Thus, and despite the enormous changes seen in this domain, family is still the main area of personal investment. What do seem to have changed are the family models, the representations and the ways in which investments are made in the family. Phenomena such as a decrease in fecundity, higher rate of divorce and cohabiting cannot be interpreted as symptoms of decline, but rather as signs of new investments and ways which obviously co-exist with other new types of problem (Torres, 1996). Now, families tend to define themselves as a setting where the aim is for the individual to be recognised and maintain individual freedom and space in order to obtain emotional fulfilment.

Table 2.1 What is important in people's lives, by gender according to sex

How important is each one of this aspects:	Men			Women			Sig.	Eta2
	Average	Standard deviation	Order	Average	Standard deviation	Order		
Family	9.2	1.5	1	9.5	1.2	1	0.000	0.010
Friends	8.2	1.8	2	8.3	1.8	2	0.000	0.003
Leisure time	7.7	2.0	3	7.6	2.0	3	0.000	0.001
Work	7.5	2.7	4	7.3	2.8	4	0.000	0.001
Religion	4.2	3.3	7	5.3	3.3	5	0.000	0.026
Politics	4.5	2.6	5	4.0	2.6	7	0.000	0.010
Voluntary work	4.5	2.9	5	4.6	3.0	6	0.037	0.000

Scale: 0=not important; 10=extremely important.

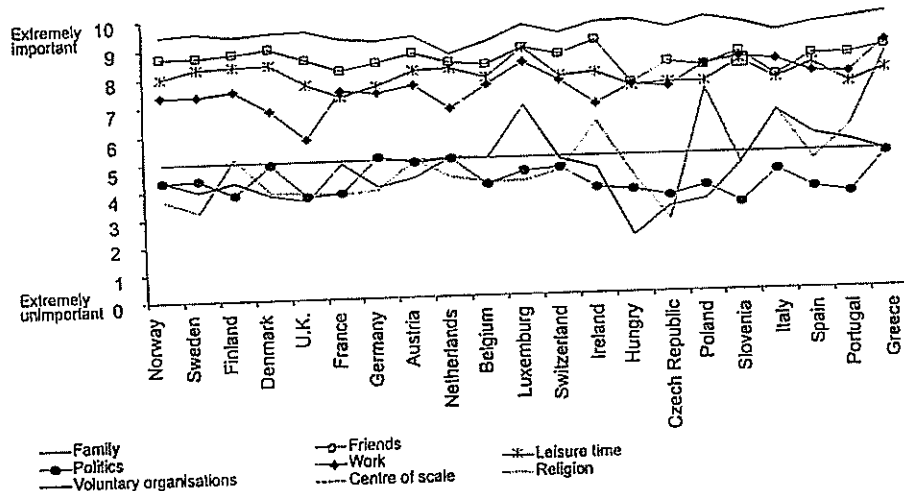


Figure 2.1 Importance of each of the aspects in life (average)

Notes: Family: $F(20,36954)=65.308, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.034$; Friends: $F(20,36887)=63.119, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.033$; Free time: $F(20,36737)=37.006, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.020$; Politics: $F(20,36782)=91.258, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.047$; Work: $F(20,36373)=142.787, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.073$; Religion: $F(20,36849)=352.853, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.161$; Volunteer Organisations: $F(20,36557)=256.824, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.123$.

Within these seven aspects considered, the similarities are greater than the differences between men and women (table 2.1). Indeed, the order of importance of each aspect is the same up to number four; but then there is no consensus with religion — coming last for men and fifth for women and the opposite being true for politics.

When considering only family, work and religion and the differences between the sexes and among countries (figure 2.2), we find there are almost

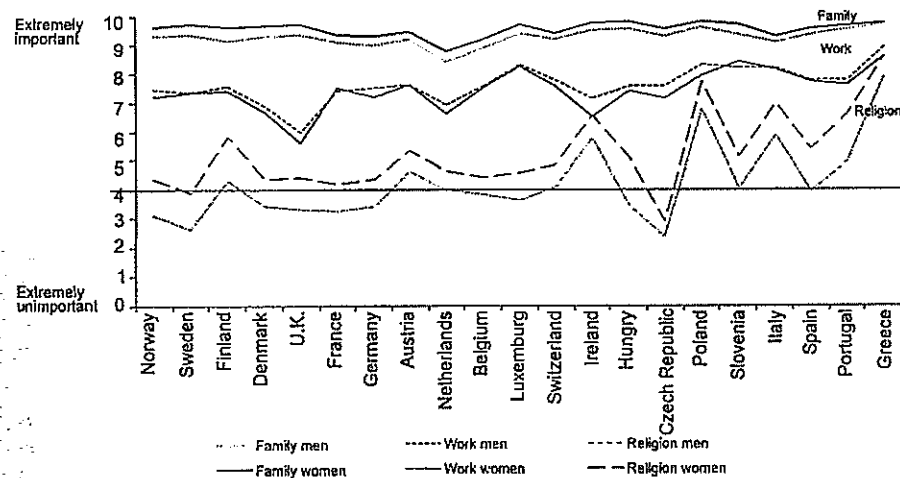


Figure 2.2 Importance of family, work and religion in people's lives according to gender (averages)

Note: Variance by sex. Family: $F(1,36954)=355.855, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.010$; Work: $F(1,36373)=36.361, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.001$; Religion: $F(1,36850)=997.714, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.026$.

no differences with regard to work. Thus, once more contradicting stereotypes which tend to consider that men by "nature" give more importance to work and women to the family, this data shows that the differences between the sexes are much smaller than the differences among countries.

The importance given to work and family reveals that women invest or want to invest on both fronts; this refutes the current idea — often justified by the fact that maternity implies that women have an interrupted work pattern (Klement and Rudolph, 2004) —, that because women are employed, they do not give as much importance to family or that men consider work to be more relevant than family. It is true that these are very general positions in terms of value. Research results from qualitative studies have also shown that, within the scope of discourse, men really value family life and believe women have the right to be personally fulfilled through their job, whereas in *practice* they tend to act as though the responsibility for the respective fields followed the old sexual asymmetries (Torres, 2004).

As for women, what this data reveals — and this is probably new information — is that work is an important part of their social identity, a value in-itself, which goes beyond the economic need of having two breadwinners in the house. In fact, data from other studies reveals the same conclusions (Torres *et al.*, 2007). Within this scope, this can be seen as a European convergence of shared symbolisms. However, the possibility of women seeing their wish to invest in both work and family congenially accomplished depends on

concrete and specific conditions; as these are different in every country, they may in some cases create dilemmas and impose constrained options.⁸

The importance of the so-called "life cycle" also confirms the hierarchy of the seven domains analysed, with few exceptions. Indeed, whatever the age group, men and women put family first and friends second, i.e. feelings and affection are central for both men and women irrespective of age. Leisure activities come third and work comes fourth among the younger and the older groups, regardless of sex. Those aged between 30 and 59 put work in third position, with men rating it as important as friends and women as important as free time.⁹ Women in all age groups give more importance to religion than men, although only older women place it above the middle of the scale. Voluntary work and politics are considered the least important in all age groups.

At the same time, education¹⁰ which, as it is known, assumes growing importance in instilling values,¹¹ presents significant negative correlations with family¹² and religion¹³ and positive ones with friends,¹⁴ free time,¹⁵ work¹⁶ and politics.¹⁷ Voluntary work is the only aspect that does not have significant correlations with education. Note that the direction of the correlations is the same for both men and women. In other words for both men and women, the higher the education, the less importance is given to family and religion, on the one hand, the more importance is given to friends, leisure, work and politics on the other.

Social trust and political trust: no differences in gender

As several authors have stressed, social trust is closely connected with "social capital" and is related with interests and social questions that, as Newton (2004: 61) notes, extend "from the payment of taxes, educational success and economic growth to contentment with life, length of life, community involvement and the exercise of the vote". For that author, "the less people trust, work with and cooperate with their fellow citizens and the more they disconnect themselves from the collective and voluntary life of their communities, the weaker and less efficient the social institutions of civil society will be. The less trust that citizens have in their political leaders and government institutions, the less efficient the government will be and the greater the probability of citizens seeing little credibility in their political system".

From this perspective, and as we are interested in understanding the relationship between social trust and political trust, we have created two summary indexes.¹⁸ The first — Summary Index of Social Trust¹⁹ — includes three

8 A "maternalist" ideology not favouring women's participation in the labor market may mean that women are faced with the personal dilemma of managing the family/work relationship and, in certain countries, it may even contribute perversely and unintentionally to low fertility (Torres, Mendes, and Lapa, 2006).

indicators²⁰ with the following statement "believes that you cannot be careful enough when dealing with people, or believes most people can be trusted" (interpersonal trust); "believes most people try to take advantage of others whenever they can, or believes most people are honest" (honesty), and "believes that most of the time people are worried about themselves, or believes that they try to help others" (altruism). The second — Summary Index of Political Trust²¹ — includes four indicators: trust in the Parliament, in the Legal System, in the Police, and in Politicians. As would be expected, both indexes are strongly correlated in the positive sense²² thus indicating that those who trust socially also trust politically.

There are no differences between men and women for the three indicators that make up the summary index of social trust (Figure 2.3) and the four that make up the summary index of political trust. As for the differences between countries, there is a decrease in social trust²³ and political trust²⁴ from Scandinavian countries — more trusting — to northern and central Europe, to southern Europe and to countries from the post-communist Europe (figure 2.3 and 2.4). Accordingly, as Newton points out (2004: 71-72) "the more democratic a country, the more trust there seems to be amongst the population. [...] a democratic and efficient government, as well as the appropriate functioning of public institutions helps to create the circumstances in which trustworthy behaviour does not require much effort and is highly valued".

9 That is, men in this age group seem to value social moments more, whereas women value rest. Could this be another sign that household chores are not equally divided, meaning that women are more overloaded in this area and therefore value free time as no work time?

10 Education is understood here as years of finished schooling.

11 As we know, school has a determinant importance in instilling values because, together with the family, is an instance for socialisation par excellence.

12 $r(36226)=0.049$; $p=0.000$.

13 $r(36135)=0.188$; $p=0.000$.

14 $r(36172)=0.124$; $p=0.000$.

15 $r(36040)=0.103$; $p=0.000$.

16 $r(35666)=0.072$; $p=0.000$.

17 $r(36090)=0.200$; $p=0.000$.

18 The creation of the synthetic indexes referred to in this presentation, which was inspired by Halman (2003), include the factorial scores that result from an analysis into main components (AMC) with a single dimension, and which were later transformed algebraically so as to facilitate their comprehension, as suggested by Vaus (2004). In this way the minimum rounded value is made to coincide with zero, and the maximum with the maximum of the original scale of indicators.

19 Explained variance: 53.2%; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.77.

20 Already used in other surveys on values and attitudes.

21 Explained variance: 65.3%; Cronbach's Alpha: 0.82.

22 $r(20)=0.775$; $p=0.000$.

23 $F(20.36514)=238.059$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.115$.

24 $F(20.35248)=167.753$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.087$.

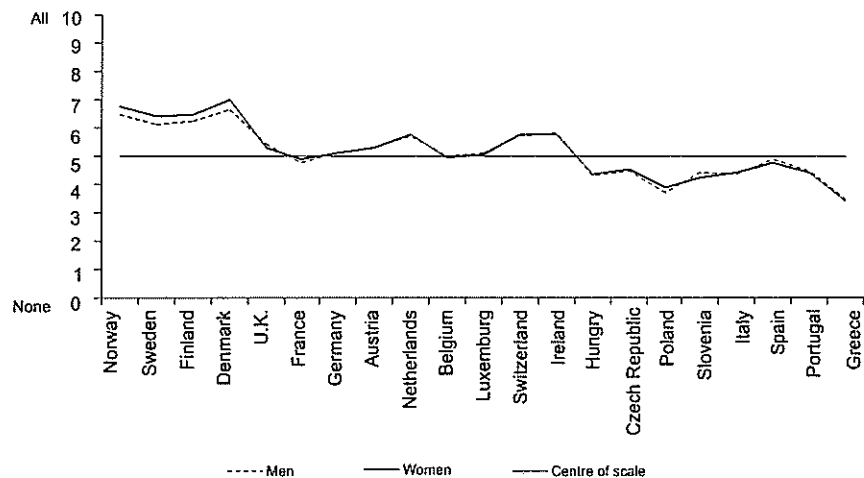


Figure 2.3 Summary Index of Social Trust (averages)

Variance by sex: $F(1.36512)=0.967$, $p=n.s.$ Variance by country: $F(20.36514)=238.059$, $p=0.000$; $\eta^2 = 0.115$.

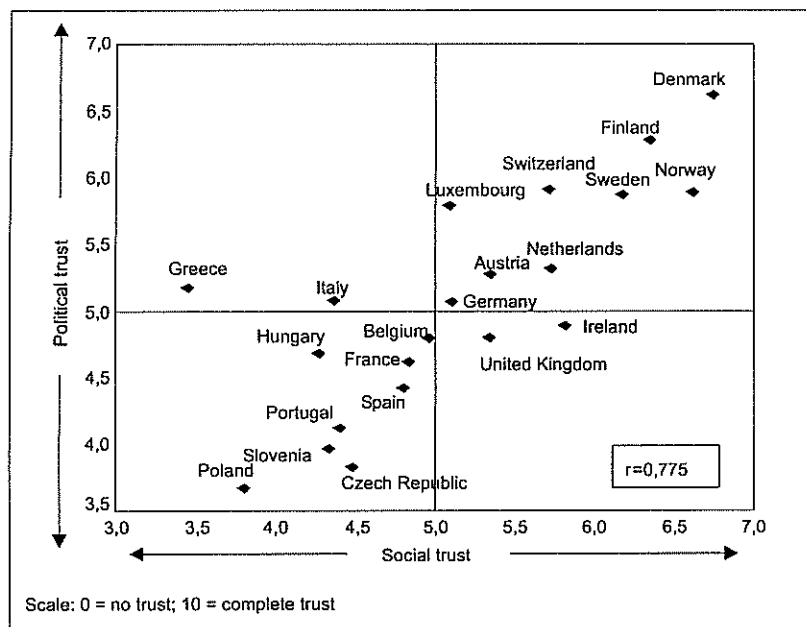


Figure 2.4 Summary Indexes of Social Trust and Political Trust by country (averages)

The type of democracy in some central European countries, such as France and Spain, as well as southern European and the extended EU countries needs to create internal mechanisms capable of reinforcing social trust and political trust and, in turn, improving the quality of the respective democracies. As Kriesi (2004: 191) says: "Trust is a kind of shortcut which lets us escape from processing a lot of information [...] It is an element of emotional equivalence to the cognitive schemes, which constructively simplifies the world. Despite knowing little of how trust works in making political decisions, we assume that those who trust the authorities will more easily support them than those who do not".

With regard to Portugal which, together with Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Poland,²⁵ registers the lowest figures for both types of trust, the low levels of interpersonal trust have already been noted and it is not easy to find variables that explain this situation (Halman, 2003; Cabral, 2005). For example, religious feeling (which is high in Portugal like in other southern countries and some EU enlargement countries, e.g. Poland — countries which also have low levels of social trust) is not positively related to the levels of trust and equity as Halman correctly indicated (2003: 257-292). Even Fukuyama defends the opposite, and the ESS results seem to prove him right. According to Fukuyama, if there is any relationship between religion and trust, it should be negative and not positive, as he says: "apparently religion has contradictory effects on trust; fundamentalists and people that go to church tend to be more distrustful than the general average" (Fukuyama quoted by Fernandes, 2003: 182).

Citizenship values: no differences between the sexes

It is particularly important to understand what the predominant citizenship values are when discussing individualisation in democratic societies. Trying to capture these type of values, the ESS considered the following set of indicators: "having one's own opinion", "complying with every law and regulation", "voting in every election" and "helping those who are worse off". The figures registered for these indicators are the highest in all countries — above the middle of the scale. This is followed by "working in volunteer organisations" which oscillates around the middle of the scale and where Luxembourg, Italy and Portugal have the highest results and Hungary and the Czech Republic the lowest. "Being politically active" comes last for every country and it is only in Poland, Portugal and Greece that figures are slightly above the centre of the scale.

²⁵ Note that, unlike Portugal which has had a democratic regime for the last 30 years, Slovenia, Poland and the Czech Republic are recent democracies.

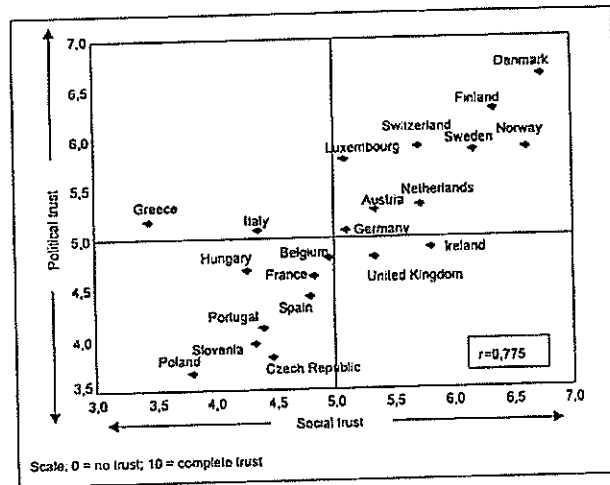


Figure 2.5 What is important to be a good citizen (averages)
Scale: 0= not important; 10= extremely important.

Yet again, the profiles for men and women are quite identical with women showing slightly higher figures for “compliance to laws and regulations”, “voting in elections” and “working in volunteer organisations”; the difference for “helping those who are worse off” is more marked which is indicative of the female tendency for values that could be called “self-transcendent” according to Schwartz (Torres and Brites, 2006).

It is interesting to note that the lowest score in every country goes to a value like “being politically active” which is below the middle of the scale in the vast majority; in other words, it is believed to be of little importance to good citizenship. This may imply political apathy and therefore a certain distancing from politics which is more worrying the less circumstantial it is; on the other hand, it may indicate the feeling of distrust towards politicians.²⁶ However, the value given to the need to “vote in every election”, which comes third on the scale of importance, makes us believe that this is more of a circumstantial distrust for politicians than political apathy. Notwithstanding, there is the question of the high abstention levels in consolidated democracies in the European Union which, though worrying in internal elections, becomes exponentially greater in community elections like those for the European Parliament. Is it apathy or mistrust in the institution’s ability to intervene? Whatever the reason, it

26 “Trust in politicians” and being “politically active” are positively correlated ($r(35871)=0.224$; $p=0.000$).

is important to question whether the high abstention levels mean that the electors are unable to identify with the candidates, or whether they do not believe in the political effectiveness of voting.

Political self-positioning: women are more left-wing

Most people prefer the centre and avoid placing themselves to the right or to the left. We are of course referring to large groups (countries, men/women, etc.) and we know how the “central limit theorem”, derived from statistics, has a homogenising effect that conceals individual differences or those of small groups. It is well known that we are speaking of something non-existent when we speak of averages. Thus, the data must be interpreted broadly and it must be emphasised that only small variations for the average in the left/right dichotomy are being referred to. However, these small variations might be considered by some to be relevant and indicative of clear regularities. Looking at the differences between the sexes, for example, women always position themselves slightly to the left of men in almost every country, except Luxemburg, Poland and southern Europe, where they are slightly to the right.²⁷

This verification is convergent with the results from the surveys on political self-positioning, and even on voting, conducted since the 1980s in the United States and in most European Union countries. In fact, women do systematically position themselves more to the left than men, even with voting (cf. Inglehart and Norris, 2003). This trend has been described as changing from a *traditional gender gap* to a *modern gender gap*. Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s it was an accepted fact that women always placed themselves to the right of men, since the 1980s they have tended to position themselves to the left of men, and systematically so in more developed countries.

The explanation given for this trend — which was set in the USA in the 1980s when women started giving their vote to the Democrat party — has been that left-wing parties tend to give more committed support to the Welfare State and to public services providing child and family support, to be more ecologically oriented and more concerned with education and reproductive rights; these are positions to which women are particularly sensitive as various opinion studies have shown (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). In matters regarding gender equality, greater participation and affirmation of women in public and political life, of which the quota issue is an example, the

27 However, these results must be interpreted carefully; it is known that given that political self-positioning is structured intersubjectively, we must not forget when making international comparisons that the left/right classification does not mean the same in every country. That is, being right- or left-wing is not the same in a stable democracy as in more recent democracies.

Table 2.2 Religion declared predominant

Religion	Political self-positioning			
	Catholic/Orthodox (>75%) ^a	Catholic (45-65%) ^b	Protestant majority ^c	Mainly without a religion ^d
Men	4.8	4.9	5.6	5.0
Women	5.0	4.7	5.4	4.8

Scale: 0 = left; 10 = right.

Notes: ^a Ireland, Poland, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece; ^b Austria, Luxemburg and Hungary; ^c Norway, Finland and Denmark; ^d Sweden, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic and Slovenia.

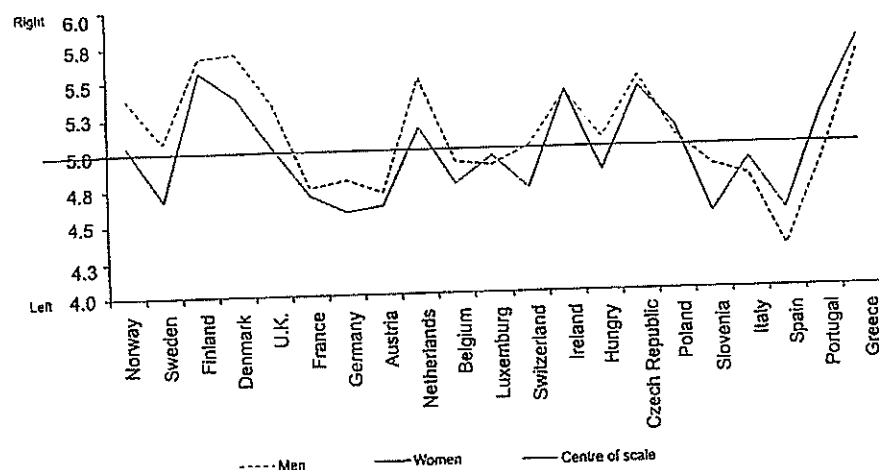


Figure 2.6 Political self-positioning (left/right) (averages)

Variance by sex: $F(1,32315)=16.321, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.001$. Variance by country: $F(20,32314)=32.406, p=0.000, \eta^2=0.020$

fight to affirm their rights and to combat discrimination are also subjects that have a tendency to lean towards the left.

Indeed, at first it was thought that the explanation for the fact that women were making political choices similar to those made by men, leaving their former more right-wing positions, was that they had more years of schooling and participated more in the labour market. However, many studies have shown that there is a persistent difference between the sexes and that women are always on the left of men even when those variables are controlled

(cf. Inglehart and Norris, 2003). As for their position on the role played by the state and by the market in the economy, we will see later that these differences remain and it seems that this is a consistent choice which is even more marked in younger generations.

And how can the systematic differences in southern countries be explained where women remain more to the right unlike other European women?²⁸ When trying to explain this difference, it was noted that there was no relationship between their political self-positioning and variables such as age, education and the rate of female activity. There were, however, small variations related to a strong predominance of the Catholic religion, as table 2.2 shows and as Lipset had already referred (Lipset in Inglehart and Norris, 2003). It is precisely in countries where declared Catholic/orthodox religion is very predominant (75%), e.g. the four southern European countries and Poland, that women position themselves politically to the right of men.

Alternatively, the set of factors that make women position themselves to the left in other European countries may be less marked in southern countries.²⁹ Indeed, this political self-positioning more to the right could be explained by the fact that the Welfare States are weak in southern countries and take fewer measures that protect interests to which women are more sensitive, or that the roles played by each family member continue to be more traditional. Moreover, with the exception of Portugal, the female activity rates are lower in these countries and greater importance is given to religion. Equally, feminist movements undoubtedly have less power in these countries as they usually have a left-wing connotation.

Turning now to how the left/right-wing positions change by generation in the different major groups of European countries. Figure 2.6 shows that there is a change in positions from the right to the left, from the oldest to the youngest, in all major groups of countries except in the recent EU enlargement countries where the change is in the opposite direction, moving from the left to the right.

Women in Scandinavian countries are systematically found to the left of men regardless of their age; those born at the time of the 2nd World War (1941-1950) are the exception where self-positioning coincides with their male counterparts. Women in northern and central Europe are systematically to the left of men regardless of age, with the similar exception for those born

28 However, note that differences are minimal and, with the exception of Spain, are not statistically significant.

29 It must also be said that in southern countries — men and women together — assume varied positions. Spain is the most left-wing country (although more to the right than men, Spanish women are more to the left than all the other southern European women. Greece is the most right-wing country of all the southern European countries, followed by Portugal and Italy.

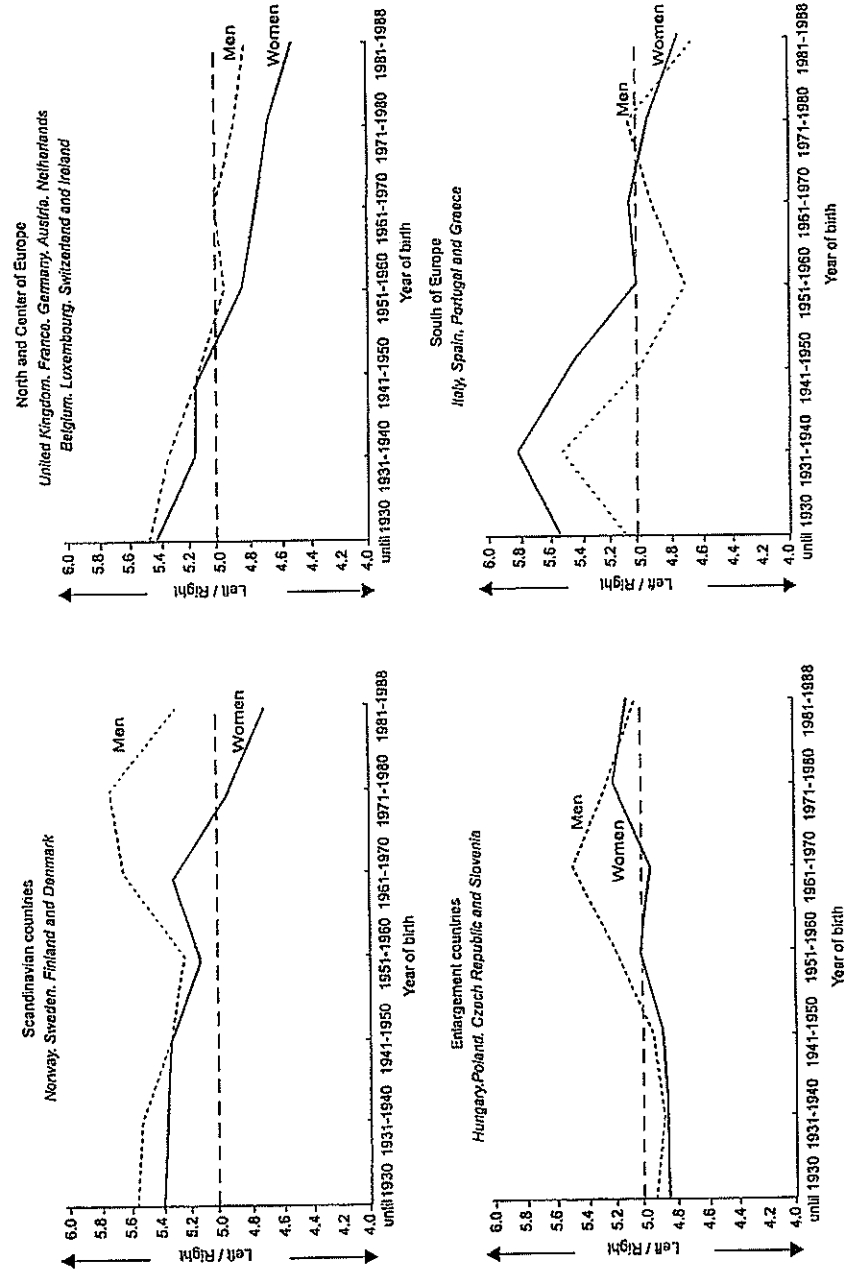


Figure 2.7 European's political self-positioning by gender and age (averages)

in the 1940s to that of Scandinavian countries and whose self-positioning is the same as that of men. There is also a systematic movement to the left; the only exception is women born in the 1940s who remain constant. In the EU enlargement countries, women are to the left of men regardless of their age, although overall and unlike all the other countries, their movement is from the left to the right. As mentioned above, the situation is completely different in southern Europe as women systematically position themselves to the right of men regardless of age, with a slight exception for those born in the 1970s.

Women more distanced from politics

The distancing from politics is known to condition the full exercise of citizenship. It is therefore also important to understand whether there are differences between men and women at this level. In fact, the differences prove to be more distinct in this area. Men in every country express more "interest in politics" and believe they could "participate in a group dedicated to political matters". On the other hand, women say that they find "politics complicated" more than men and that they "find it difficult to take a position on political matters".

According to the "summary index of political distancing", which summarises the information on four instrumental indicators — "interest in politics", "politics seems complicated", "availability to participate politically" and "difficulty in taking political positions"³⁰ — it can be concluded that there is a very similar pattern around the centre of the scale in the 21 countries, with France and the southern European countries showing greater distancing (figure 2.8).

Schweisguth (2004: 257) had already drawn attention to the fact that in France it is accepted that politics is going through a crisis and that there is such a lack of interest in politics that one could speak of a trend towards depoliticisation. The most frequently given cause for this depoliticisation was "the behaviour of the political actors themselves", in particular the numerous political scandals that put their credibility in question. Nevertheless, the recent participation in the European Constitution referendum seems to show that high levels of distancing/distrust are not compatible with the amount of protests against the political mainstream.

30 The index includes the following questions: *what is your interest in politics?*, with a response scale that varies between 1 (very interested) and 4 (not interested); *how often does politics seem so complicated that you don't really understand what is going on?*, with a response scale that varies between 1 (never) and 5 (frequently); *do you think you could participate in a group dedicated to political matters?*, with a response scale varying between 1 (I'm sure I couldn't) and 5 (I'm sure I could), and *How difficult is it to take a position on political matters?*, with a response scale varying between 1 (very difficult) and 5 (very easy). The indicators have been standardized to enable a correct interpretation of the index and thus, the scales for the last two have been inverted. Explained variance=53.5%; Cronbach's Alpha=0.70.

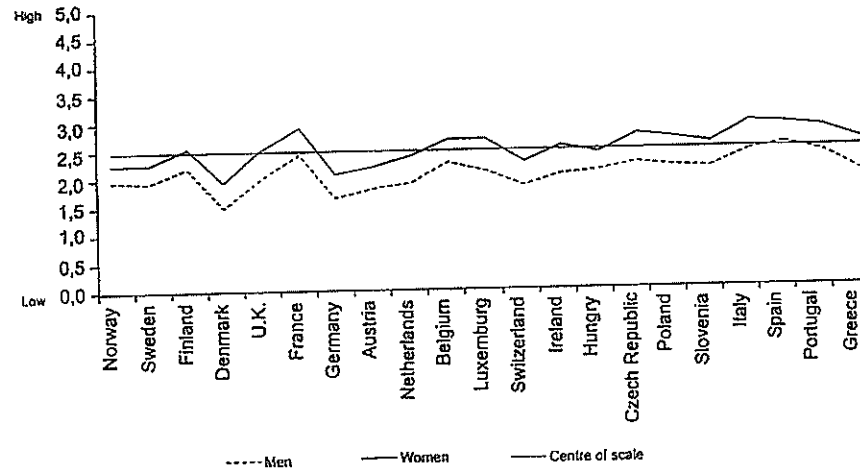


Figure 2.8 Summary index of political distancing (averages)
 Variance by sex: $F(1.35910)=2044.37$, $p=0.000$, $\eta^2=0.05$. Variance by country: $F(20.35910)=193.45$, $p=0.000$, $\eta^2=0.10$.

Within this context, it should also be remembered that, as Fernandes (2004: 36) points out: "there is no democracy without participation [...] A political regime may be free and democratic by law and by its institutions, and not be so by its customs and social life. Just as it can be free and democratic due to its customs and social life, and not be so by law and its institutions of power. A truly democratic society is one which is so because of the law and its institutions, but in particular thanks to people acting democratically in their daily lives".

Going back to the difference between the sexes — the most relevant factor for our analysis — we can conclude that women are more distanced from politics than men in every country and very consistently.

This difference towards the universe of how "politics" works can be explained by the conjunction of different structural or cultural factors. On one hand, most of the objective conditions in the daily life of these women, notably the strict justification of the time taken up by their professional activity and family responsibilities, makes it difficult for them to have time for any kind of political participation; this is very clear in the Portuguese case (Torres *et al.*, 2004). It also seems appropriate to remember that one of the most subtle forms of male domination is that which is felt through women's self-responsibilisation for family-related tasks even though both men and women spend the same time at work and these tasks should therefore be shared equally.

However, the fact that women show less interest in politics and are less available to participate in this field may also be explained by specific obstacles such as the way in which institutions and the actual political space work (Viegas and Faria, 2001) because they run at a pace that is incompatible with the pace of family responsibilities — from which men seem to be exempt. Moreover, based on the results from surveys in various countries, it has also been persistently concluded that women's "political activism" is always less than men's though the differences are not so great in more developed countries. This also demonstrates that older, more religious, less educated women who are not in the labour market are even more distanced from politics (Inglehart and Norris, 2003). However, as can be seen in figure 2.8, the ESS data conclude that a difference is found in every country and it is almost constant. Maybe this is why (as mentioned above) daily life and institutional and cultural constraints should be taken into account as factors that condition women's interest and participation in politics.

The majority in favour of regulating the economic sphere

Apropos the different positions between the sexes, the following results tend in the same direction as our studies pertaining to right/left-wing positioning. Indeed, women also most defend the state's intervention in the economy and the need to rebalance the differences in income; they also believe (more than men) that workers need to be defended by strong unions, as table 2.3 shows. Thus, women are more to the left than men in this area as well.

Very similar results were obtained by the World Values Survey and European Values Survey 1999/2000 (Inglehart and Norris, 2003) in the answers to two items that are directly related to the state's role in the economy,³¹ demonstrating yet again that women generally and in most countries in the world are more supportive of the state's intervention in the economy than men.

From a more global point of view and again analysing the results of the ESS for the 21 countries, it is found that most are in favour of this intervention; they disagree that "the less the Government intervenes in the economy, the better it is for the country" and, with the exception of Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Slovenia, the figures are below the centre of the scale. In other words, regardless of the political colour of their respective governments, most Europeans favour the state's intervention in the economy, the reduction of social inequalities, and also believe it is important to have strong unions.

31 "Private ownership of business and industry should be increased" (10) Government ownership of business and industry should be increased" (1) and the government should take more responsibility to ensure that everybody is provided for (1) People should take more responsibilities to provide for themselves (10).

Table 2.3 Regulation of the economic sphere by sex (percentages)

		Men	Women	Total	χ^2
The less Government interferes in economy the better for the country	Agree	34,3	29,4	31,8	(2)=152,815; $p=0,000$
	Neither agree/nor disagree	26,0	31,3	28,7	
	Disagree	39,7	39,3	39,5	
The Government should take measures to reduce income differences	Agree	67,5	73,5	70,6	(2)= 290,25; $p=0,000$
	Neither agree/nor disagree	12,7	13,3	13,0	
	Disagree	19,8	13,1	16,3	
Workers need to be defended by strong trade unions	Agree	71,1	74,5	72,9	(2)=93,677; $p=0,000$
	Neither agree/nor disagree	14,8	14,7	14,8	
	Disagree	14,1	10,8	12,4	

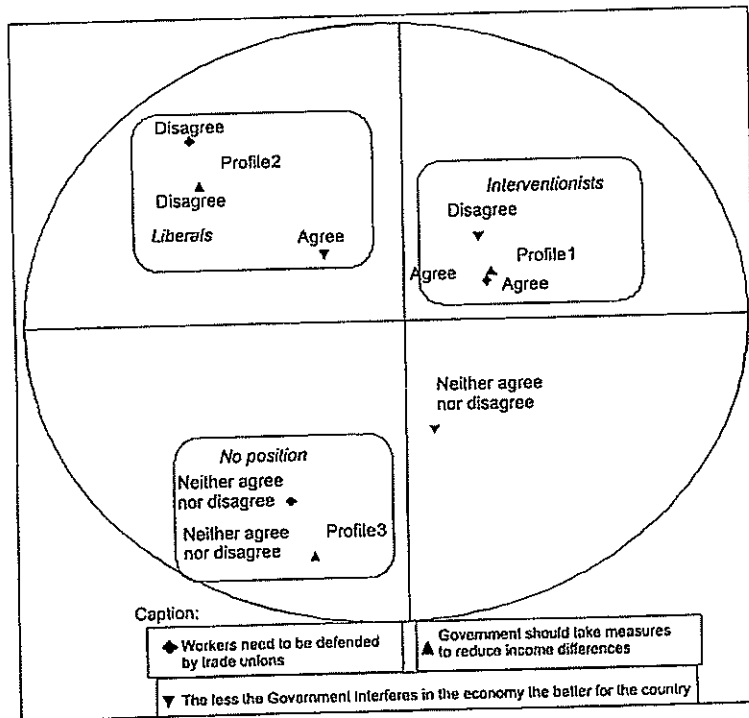


Figure 2.9 Regulation of the economic sphere

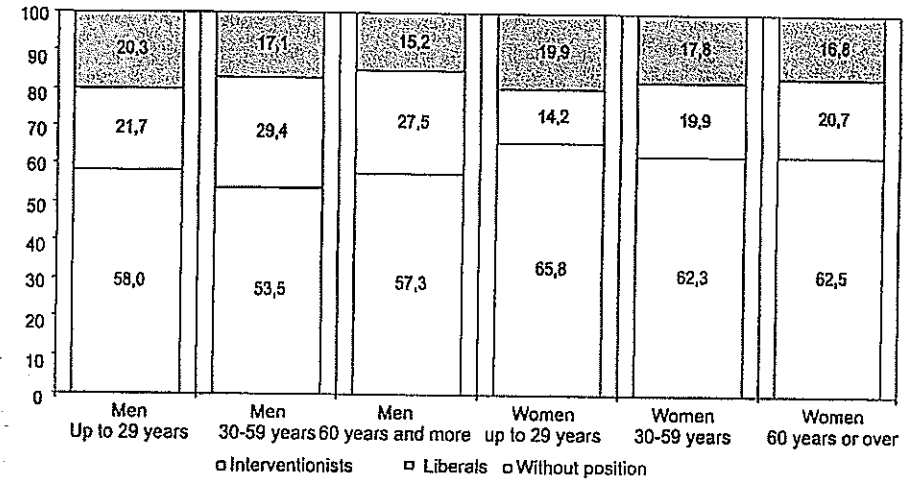


Figure 2.10 Regulation of the economic sphere by profile (percentages)

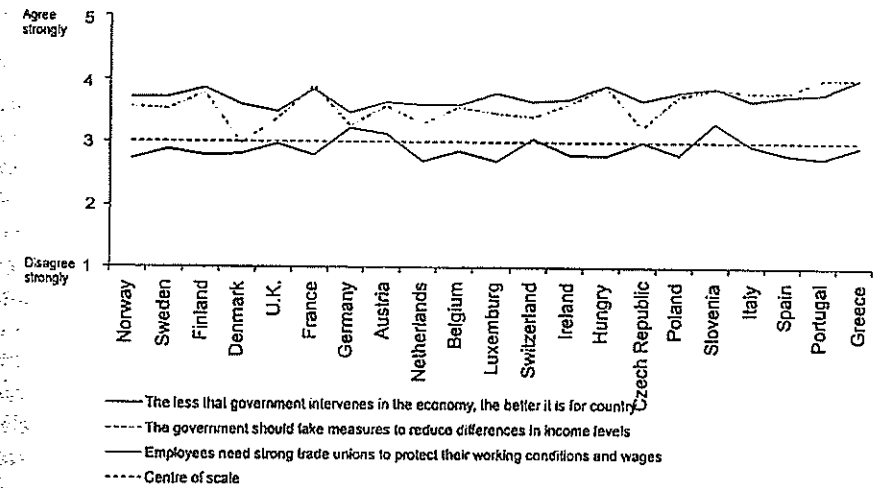


Figure 2.11 Regulation of the economic sphere by country (percentages)

It is worth examining the crossed effect of age and sex for the three con-
jugated indicators.³² As figure 2.9 shows, three distinct profiles that can be
identified: liberal, interventionist and with no position.

As can be seen in figure 2.10, the distribution of respondents into the
three profiles shows that the majority of both men and women in Europe in

the three age groups are in favour of economic intervention. It also reveals that men are greater supporters of economic liberalism than women, whereas the percentage of those with no position in the three age groups does not exceed 20.3% and is slightly higher for the younger group.

On analysing the indicators separately, some trends should be highlighted, again considering age and sex, for the group of Europeans. On one hand, the position on the state's intervention in the economy is where we find the least difference both in terms of age groups and sex. But it is the younger group and, within this group, the women, who most defend the need for strong unions and for intervention to reduce inequalities in income. Thus, young Europeans seem to have clear social concerns and defend the state's regulatory function and collective action in terms of the right to work. Could this be a "protest" reaction in response to the situations of unstable work and social deregulation? It is also curious to see that every country agrees that the Government should take steps to reduce the difference in income and also that workers need to be defended by strong unions, as is shown in figure 2.11.

Religion: the effects of secularisation

Some results in relation to religion deserve a brief note. Figure 2.12 shows the answers respondents gave in the different countries as to whether they belong to a religion or not. The majority said they had no religion in six of the 21 countries analysed, namely in Sweden, United Kingdom, France, Holland, Belgium and the Czech Republic, which is equivalent to about 36% of the population of Europeans surveyed. This illustrates what has been called "secularisation" in Europe and also that this decline in the feeling of affiliation is accompanied by a progressive decrease in religious practices. However, there is a "hard nucleus" of countries where the feeling of belonging to a religion remains very constant, as is the case of southern countries, Poland, and Ireland.

The ESS data also show that women state that they belong to a religion more than men: 67.9% versus 59.3% respectively.³² Answers to another question intended to determine religious feeling regardless of belonging to a religion or not³⁴ reveal that, on average, women in every age group say they are more religious than men.

32 Through the Multiple Correlations Analysis (MCA) with a further projection of the profiles obtained by analyzing the Clusters, whose input variables include the individual scores in the first two stages of the MCA. See Carvalho (2004) for a more comprehensive description of this analytical procedure (2004).

33 $\chi^2(1) = 296,492; p=0.000$

34 "Regardless of belonging to a particular religion, on a 0 to 10 scale would you say you are...: not at all religious/very religious.

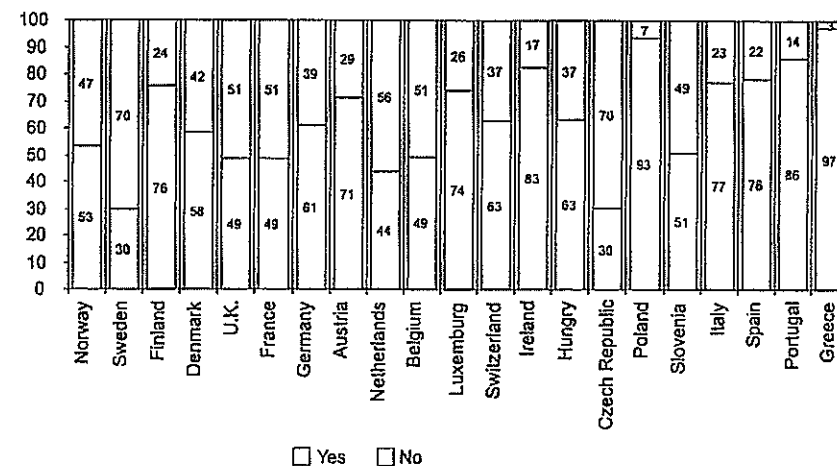


Figure 2.12 Belonging currently to a religion (percentages)

In the three age groups considered — up to 29 years of age, 30 to 59, and over 59 — the figures registered for women are 4.6, 5.0 and 5.8 in contrast with 3.8, 4.1 and 4.7 for men respectively. That is, the only approximation is between older men and younger women (a difference of one decimal). At the same time, it can be said that religious feeling increases with age for both men and women.

Human values: most in favour of self-transcendence

In his book on the subject *Social Values and Representations (Valores e Representações Sociais)* that refers to the genesis of the formation of values, Ferreira de Almeida (1990) defines them as an "expression of organised and lasting systems of preferences" that can be both found and analysed on the social as well as the individual level as systems of incorporated dispositions. In addition to a conceptual and theoretical discussion on the matter, a framework matrix of values is also suggested based on two analytical axes — the social and self-centring axis and the daily and the project axis — that give rise to four major orientations at the valorative level which are, in themselves, indicators of distinct practices and behaviours. This proposal is based on the results of research studying the relationship between classes, age and values, for example.

The typology of human values used in the ESS is more specified although founded on a similar philosophy; it is based on the "Human Values Inventory" proposed by Schwartz (1992) and contemplates 21 indicators

the three age groups are in favour of economic intervention. It also reveals that men are greater supporters of economic liberalism than women, whereas the percentage of those with no position in the three age groups does not exceed 20.3% and is slightly higher for the younger group.

On analysing the indicators separately, some trends should be highlighted, again considering age and sex, for the group of Europeans. On one hand, the position on the state's intervention in the economy is where we find the least difference both in terms of age groups and sex. But it is the younger group and, within this group, the women, who most defend the need for strong unions and for intervention to reduce inequalities in income. Thus, young Europeans seem to have clear social concerns and defend the state's regulatory function and collective action in terms of the right to work. Could this be a "protest" reaction in response to the situations of unstable work and social deregulation? It is also curious to see that every country agrees that the Government should take steps to reduce the difference in income and also that workers need to be defended by strong unions, as is shown in figure 2.11.

Religion: the effects of secularisation

Some results in relation to religion deserve a brief note. Figure 2.12 shows the answers respondents gave in the different countries as to whether they belong to a religion or not. The majority said they had no religion in six of the 21 countries analysed, namely in Sweden, United Kingdom, France, Holland, Belgium and the Czech Republic, which is equivalent to about 36% of the population of Europeans surveyed. This illustrates what has been called "secularisation" in Europe and also that this decline in the feeling of affiliation is accompanied by a progressive decrease in religious practices. However, there is a "hard nucleus" of countries where the feeling of belonging to a religion remains very constant, as is the case of southern countries, Poland, and Ireland.

The ESS data also show that women state that they belong to a religion more than men: 67.9% versus 59.3% respectively.³³ Answers to another question intended to determine religious feeling regardless of belonging to a religion or not³⁴ reveal that, on average, women in every age group say they are more religious than men.

32 Through the Multiple Correlations Analysis (MCA) with a further projection of the profiles obtained by analyzing the Clusters, whose input variables include the individual scores in the first two stages of the MCA. See Carvalho (2004) for a more comprehensive description of this analytical procedure (2004).

33 $\chi^2(1) = 296,492; p=0.000$

34 "Regardless of belonging to a particular religion, on a 0 to 10 scale would you say you are...: not at all religious/very religious.

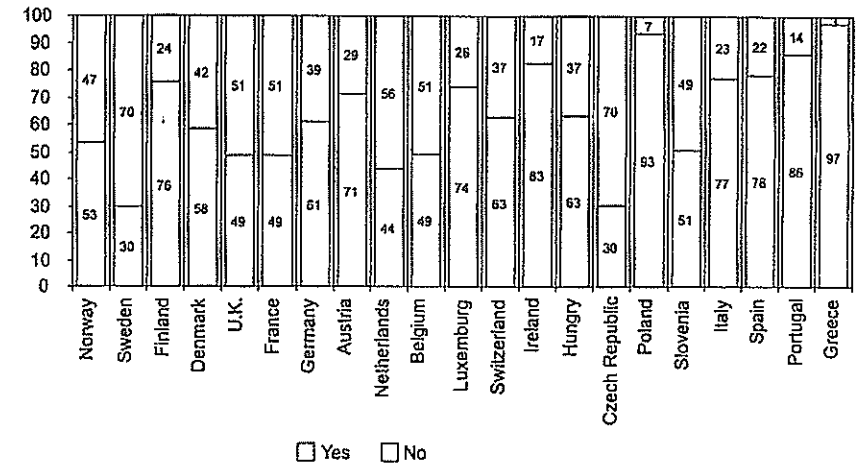


Figure 2.12 Belonging currently to a religion (percentages)

In the three age groups considered — up to 29 years of age, 30 to 59, and over 59 — the figures registered for women are 4.6, 5.0 and 5.8 in contrast with 3.8, 4.1 and 4.7 for men respectively. That is, the only approximation is between older men and younger women (a difference of one decimal). At the same time, it can be said that religious feeling increases with age for both men and women.

Human values: most in favour of self-transcendence

In his book on the subject *Social Values and Representations (Valores e Representações Sociais)* that refers to the genesis of the formation of values, Ferreira de Almeida (1990) defines them as an "expression of organised and lasting systems of preferences" that can be both found and analysed on the social as well as the individual level as systems of incorporated dispositions. In addition to a conceptual and theoretical discussion on the matter, a framework matrix of values is also suggested based on two analytical axes — the social and self-centring axis and the daily and the project axis — that give rise to four major orientations at the valorative level which are, in themselves, indicators of distinct practices and behaviours. This proposal is based on the results of research studying the relationship between classes, age and values, for example.

The typology of human values used in the ESS is more specified although founded on a similar philosophy; it is based on the "Human Values Inventory" proposed by Schwartz (1992) and contemplates 21 indicators

Table 2.4 Schwartz's human values typology

Motivational types	Goals	Type of interests
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself	Single
Achievement	Personal success obtained through demonstrated and socially recognised competence	
Power	Social status and prestige, control over people and resources	
Self direction	Independent thought, action and choice	
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty and challenge	
Conformity	Control of impulses and actions that may violate social norms or prejudice others	Collective
Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas of the traditional culture and religion	
Benevolence	Enhancing the well-being of those close to you	
Security	Security, harmony and stability of society, relationships and of self	Mixed
Universalism	Tolerance, understanding and protection of well-being of all people and nature	

including 10 types of motivational values that are differentiated from each other by the aims and interests they pursue, as we can see in table 2.4.

Indicators are measured on a six-point scale where respondents are asked to position themselves in the following categories: "exactly like me"; "very like me"; "like me"; "a little like me"; "nothing like me" and "has nothing to do with me". To minimise the social desirability effect that characterises answers to this type of question, the author suggests that the score for each of the 10 types of motivational values is obtained via the arithmetic average of the respective indicators, subtracted from the average of the 21 indicators. That is, it is assumed that the individual position in each value is measured by reference to the individual average of the 21 indicators and should therefore be interpreted as positive, neutral or negative with regard to the whole set.³⁵

By associating the ten types of motivational values (Ramos, 2006) (table 2.4), we can create four scores which reflect four macro-values which

35 The scale of indicators was inverted before the creation of the variable that reflects the 10 basic motivational types so as to simplify the interpretation of results. So the individual score will be positively higher the more the interviewee identifies him/herself with the value and vice-versa.

the author calls of a "higher order".³⁶ The positioning of the 19 countries and of men and women in relation to these motivational types is now examined (figure 2.13).

Individuals in all countries consider themselves "self-transcendent"³⁷ — women more than men — though the scores for Scandinavian countries and north and central Europe are slightly lower than in the EU enlargement countries and southern Europe. As for "self-promotion",³⁸ individuals do not identify themselves with this type of value in any country and women less so than men; the respective scores for Scandinavian countries and north and central Europe are slightly higher than those of the EU enlargement countries and southern Europe.

With regard to "conservation",³⁹ choices in most countries fall in the middle of the scale and are only positive in EU enlargement countries; Poland and the Czech Republic, and south Europe have the highest scores. Differences between men and women are almost imperceptible in most countries though stronger in EU enlargement countries and southern countries where women are more conservative than men. Values related to "receptiveness to change"⁴⁰ show that, just as in the case of "conservation", individuals keep to the centre of the scale in most countries; in fact, Ireland shows negative results, as do the EU enlargement countries and those in southern Europe. Poland is the "least receptive" and Denmark and Switzerland are the "most receptive". Men are more receptive to change than women in all countries.

On first analysis, the overall picture for values in most countries seems clear for both men and women. Europeans see themselves as defenders of values that reinforce helping others and loyalty to friends (benevolence), they believe in the importance of equal opportunities, respect for difference, and protecting nature (universalism). On the other hand, most see themselves as giving little importance to wealth and control over others (power), including success, or being greatly admired or recognised by others (accomplishment).

As figure 2.13 shows, the defence of "self-transcendence" and rejection "self-promotion" are clearly majority choices in all countries. On the other hand, "conservation" and "receptiveness to change" are much closer to the centre of the scale — as if people did not want to paint themselves as too extreme. Most countries neither clearly support nor vigorously reject values such as obedience and following the rules (acquiescence), nor modesty, humility or tradition (tradition), or even personal or political security (security).

36 "Higher-order types of values", in the original.

37 Benevolence+Universalism; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.71

38 Power+Accomplishment; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.73

39 Conformism+Security+Tradition; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.74

40 Self-determination+Stimulation+Hedonism; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.76

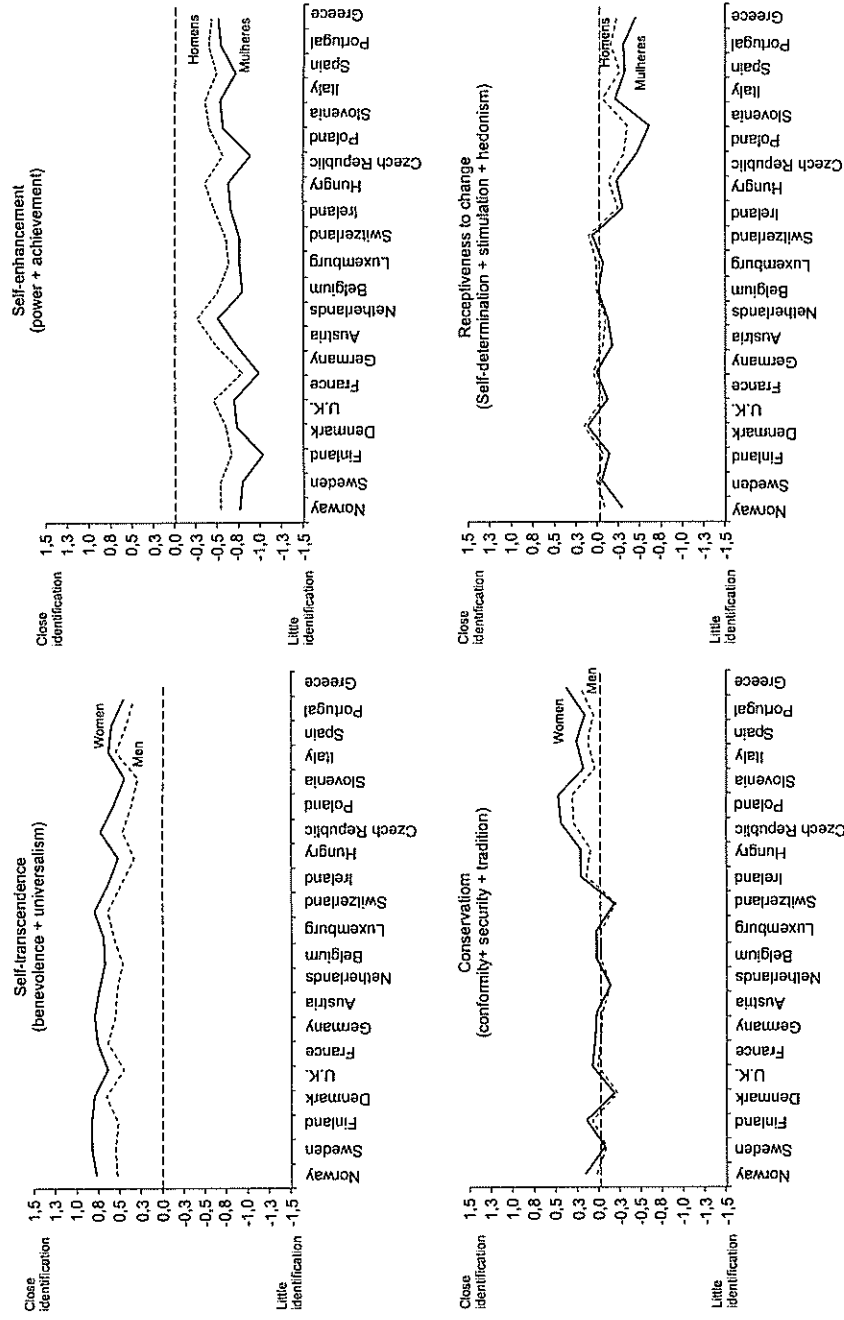


Figure 2.13 Europeans' human values by country and sex

^a Explained variance by sex: $F(1,28804)=972.789$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.033$. Explained variance by country: $F(18,28796)=51.378$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.031$.
^b Explained variance by sex: $F(1,28804)=775.28$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.026$. Explained variance by country: $F(18,28796)=66.075$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.040$.

^c Explained variance by sex: $F(1,28804)=286.365$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.010$. Explained variance by country: $F(18,28796)=98.093$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.058$.

^d Explained variance by sex: $F(1,28804)=300.094$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.010$. Explained variance by country: $F(18,28796)=103.877$; $p=0.000$; $Eta^2=0.061$.

Equally, most do not clearly reject nor defend values and attitudes that emphasise immediate pleasure (hedonism), creativity and independence (self-determination), or novelty, risk, adventure and challenge (stimulation).

With regard to "conservation" and "receptiveness to change", it is also worth adding that although the choices are very close to the centre of the scale in most countries, positions become clearer in Ireland, in the EU enlargement countries and in southern countries. The latter countries are more conservative and therefore, logically, less open to change, as figure 2.13 illustrates well. These small variations are coherent with each other and with other ESS data already analysed for the said countries, and confirm the credibility of these results.

As for the differences between men and women,⁴¹ it is interesting to note that although there were no great disparities, the relative distinctions are in line with predictable expectations. Women state that they worry about others and defend universal human rights more so than men and are also further from any affirmation on success and power. This undoubtedly is a reflection of their daily lives in which many women have to divide their time precisely between caring for others, i.e. family responsibilities, and their professional lives. These affirmations of greater benevolence, greater universalism and being more distanced from power-related concerns can therefore be said to correspond well to stereotypes. But what about the overall regular and unequivocal affirmation in all countries — by men and women — of a marked and positive adherence to "self-transcendence" values and a clear withdrawal from those regarding power and accomplishment, the so-called "self-promotion" values?

Are Europeans closer to female rather than male stereotypes in terms of values? Cynics might explain this trend by saying it is the right, socially-desirable answer. But if that is the case, is it indifferent that "self-transcendence" values are defined as desirable in all countries? Could this very dominant affirmation of interest in others and for equal opportunities work in a compensatory manner? And why is it that social desirability is the same yet again for men and women, despite the relative differences?

The answer to these questions requires a more in-depth analysis that is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight the great convergence of personal choices between these results and those analysed above when it comes to ranking what is important in each person's life. In most countries, men and women choose first family, then friends and leisure, followed by work in a perfectly coincident hierarchy, thus revealing that they give as much importance to affection, and social and relationship values. That is, there is also a kind of "self-transcendence".

41 The structural layout of the four values (analysed via the multidimensional scaling /PROXCAL procedure available in the SPSS) is similar for men and women.

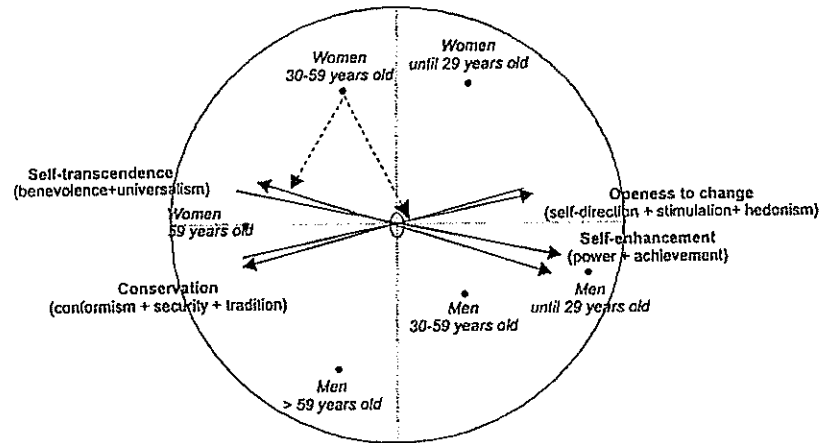


Figure 2.14 Europeans' human values by sex and age

Note: The position of the categories, in relation with values, is obtained by a drawing a perpendicular to each vector, imagining the position of the category in the respective intersection area. See, for instance, women 30-59 years old are much more close to self-transcendence and distant from conservation. The closest to the arrow the higher is the agreement with the value.

SPSS/CatPCA. Cronbach Alpha = 0.999; Explained variance=99.55%

Anyhow, once more there is the need here to exclude dichotomic views that insist on emphasising the gender differences. Figure 2.14, which introduces age groups into the analysis, shows that intra-gender differences are more relevant than those of inter-gender as has been stressed above; this clearly shows that an analysis focussing only on the differences between men and women conceals changes in the structure of values that must not be ignored.

Indeed, figure 2.14 shows that values such as "receptiveness to change" to which women seemed to be more distant and men relatively close, now seem to be associated with a specific group of younger women (up to 29 years of age); on the other hand, "being conservative", to which women generally said they were closer, is now more associated with older men (59 years).

In turn, "self-transcendence", which generally had more female support, is now also associated with men and becomes the inverse of "self-promotion". The first case is more associated with women aged between 30 and 59 years, and the second more associated with men in the same age group.

On examining the effect of other variables, it is concluded that education is significantly correlated ($p=0.000$), though the correlation is very low with "self-transcendence", ($r=0.078$) and with "self-promotion" ($r=0.048$) and low with "receptiveness to change" ($r=0.235$) and "being conservative" ($r=-0.316$);

the association of conservative to low education is therefore the only correlation with a negative direction.

As stated above, education is of great importance today in instilling values and it has very weak correlations⁴² with "self-transcendence" ($r=0.078$) and "self-enhancement" ($r=0.048$), and weak correlations with "receptiveness to change" ($r=0.235$) and "being conservative" ($r=-0.316$); hence, the association between being conservative and low education is the only correlation with a negative direction.

Education: Portugal's specificity

In the in-depth analysis of the ESS data conducted by members of the CIES team working with the ESS, education reveals itself as one of the variables that best explains the differences found in some of the dimensions addressed. Clearly, this is nothing new for either experts in the field or, we daresay, the general public. Indeed, school is the ideal foundation for social and economic development. The discussion on the duality of economic growth versus development has always been a false problem. Knowing whether it is growth that precedes development or development that precedes growth is of little importance as they are closely linked: it is impossible to speak of development without growth, and it is equally meaningless to seek growth without development. Though there are of course plenty of examples of the latter, it is well known that they are false and always hazardous examples. Essentially, there are two contrasting positions: the virtuous circle embodied by the growth/development binomial, and the vicious circle of underdevelopment without growth. Without a shadow of doubt, education is at the base of the virtuous circle both due to its capacity to provide theory and practical skills and the teaching of citizenship which it is required to promote.

The ESS results for Portugal are not good in this field. As shown in figure 2.15, the scenario is not optimistic despite the changes in the last 30 years when there was an exponential growth in the school population, especially in higher education.⁴³

Only Swiss, Hungarian, Slovenian, Polish and southern European women are below the European average (11.8 years), with Portugal holding the sad

⁴² ($p=0.000$).

⁴³ With regard to Portugal in particular, everything seems to suggest that a low level of education is largely responsible for our endemic delay and, if this is not corrected soon, our difficulties will become worse in the near future. Even in the younger age group (aged 15-29 years) Portugal is still below the European average, whereas the countries of the most recent EU enlargement that participated in this study — Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia — have already overtaken that average. If citizens are not well prepared in terms of literacy, it will be impossible to withstand a "technological shock".

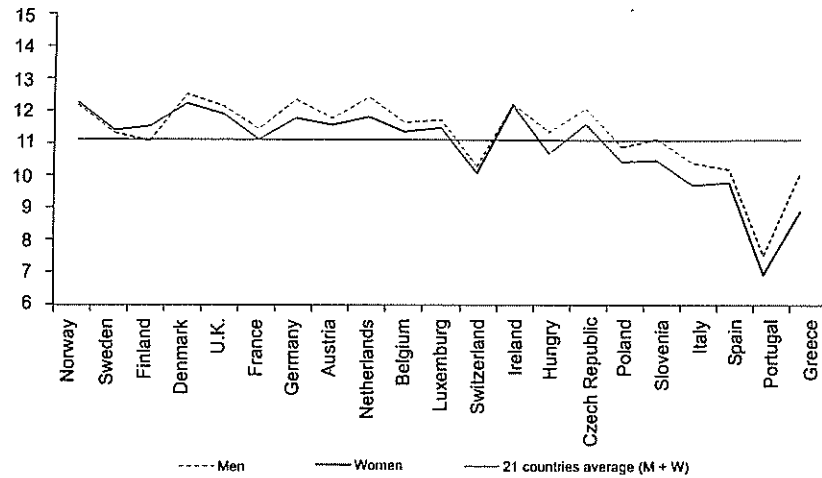


Figure 2.15 Years of completed schooling by country and sex (averages)

Variance by sex: $F(1.36252)=159.091$, $p=0.000$, $Eta^2=0.004$. Variance by country: $F(20.36247)=163.582$, $p=0.000$, $Eta^2=0.083$.

Table 2.5 Years of completed schooling in Portugal and in Europe (averages)

Age group	21 countries	Portugal	Difference
60 years or over	10.7	5.2	-5.5
30 to 59 years	12.9	8.7	-4.2
15 to 29 years	12.7	10.5	-2.2
Total	11.8	7.4	-4.4

record of 7.4 years. It should also be noted that differences between men and women in the general population are not very expressive and the average figures are below those of men except in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The Portuguese scenario does not seem so bleak when considering age groups where the differences decline. In relation to the average, Portugal goes from -5.5 years among the older generation to -2.2 years among the younger generation (table 2.5).

It should be noted, however, that it is women who most contribute towards Portugal's convergence with the European average. The differential is favourable to men in the 30-59, and over 60 age groups but it is now favourable to women in the 15-29 age group with -1.7 years as opposed to -2.7 years for men. This confirms what has long been known: the increasing feminisation of the higher levels of education.

Table 2.6 Completed years of schooling in Portugal and in Europe (averages)

Age group	21 countries	Portugal			Difference between Portugal and the 21-country average	
	(M+W)	(M+W)	Men	Women	Men	Women
60 years or over	10.7	5.2	5.9	4.6	-4.8	-6.1
30-59 years	12.9	8.7	8.8	8.6	-4.1	-4.3
15-29 years	12.7	10.5	10.0	11.0	-2.7	-1.7
Total	11.8	7.4	7.7	7.1	-4.1	4.7

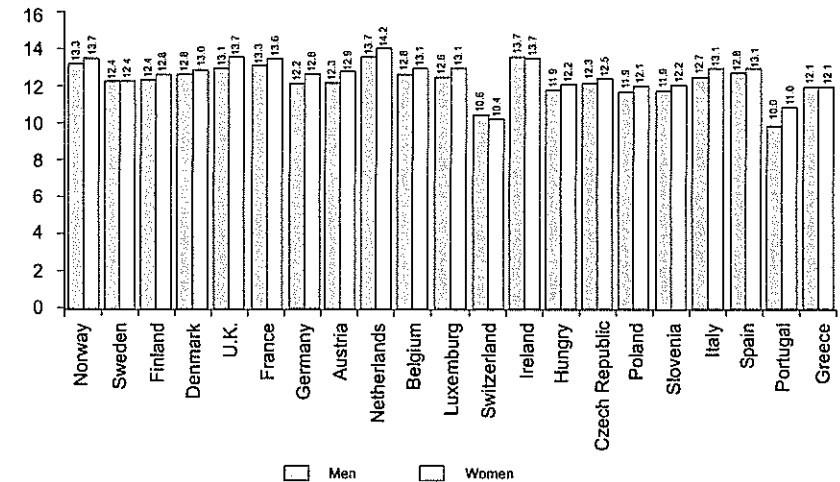


Figure 2.16 Completed years of schooling by country and sex in the 15 to 29 year age group (averages)

But has this feminisation in higher education only taken place in Portugal? The following figure shows that that is not so. Women are better educated than men in the younger age group (aged 15 to 29 years) in 15 of the 21 countries analysed.

It can therefore be concluded that the feminisation of the higher levels of education is not circumstantial but structural. Indeed, when comparing the population as a whole (figure 2.16), we go from 3 cases out of 21 where women were better educated than men (Norway, Sweden and Finland), to 15 countries in the 15 to 29 age group.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the European values and attitudes it is not difficult to conclude that there are more similarities than differences between men and women. Overall, convergences are visible in most answers, especially in relation to what is considered to be important in life, social and political trust, citizenship values and the state's role in the economy. Though there were sometimes minor differences in the position taken by each of the sexes in each field, they were never significant.

The differences only assume greater significance in three areas: in the distancing from politics, value given to religion, and some domains of human values.

Generally speaking, European women remain more distanced from politics and give more value to the role played by religion in their lives than men. There are also some differences with regard to trans-situational values. Women tend to be more universalist, more benevolent and more conformist than men. That is, according to Schwartz's typology, they render a little more importance to collective or mixed values, are more "self-transcendent" and "conservative" than men. Yet, even so, the differences do not mean that men and women are frontally opposed: they are reflected, rather, in variations of emphasis. Following this result, it will be very difficult to maintain that men are the sons of Mars and women the daughters of Venus.

Furthermore, what should be stressed in these conclusions as regards values — in total contradiction of the stereotypes — is that men, just like women, evaluate attitudes of universalism and benevolence positively and those of power, self-promotion and competition negatively. In other words, ultimately, in contrast to what male socialisation in peer — groups and the family may be — which still emphasize the behavioural differences between the "real" man and woman — when the two sexes are asked to give a completely anonymous opinion, they transmit the image that they tend to stress the same attitudes and value configurations as positive.

Although we recognise the so-called "social desirability" effect in these statements, the fact that men and women want to give themselves an image which is identical, does not mean that more essentialist positions are not questioned or that they attribute direct, unequivocal and lasting biological differences in their perception and behaviours. Other studies with more localised observations (Prince-Gibson and Schwartz, 1998) have already concluded that there is a proximity between the sexes in terms of attitudes and values.

Does this lack of major differences between the sexes on values and attitudes mean that men and women have similar life experiences and that there is no point in emphasising the need for gender equality after all? On the contrary. These questions can be best be answered by going back to what was said on the points which diverged most.

A dimension with a greater distance between women and men is the degree of detachment from politics, measured according to their overall interest and their availability to take part. There are two main reasons for this difference. On the one hand, we know that most European women have jobs and combine their occupation with family responsibilities, which are implicitly and explicitly assigned to them as their main responsibility, regardless of — whether they work outside the home or not. Accordingly, they have little time for other activities, a fact that surveys on the use of time plainly demonstrate. The obvious conclusion is that objective conditions very scarcely favour female availability for politics, or even interest in it.

Moreover, the way in which the political sphere works tends to exclude women (Viegas and Faria, 2001); firstly, not many women work in this field and it is also conducted in specific ways — irregular timetables, implicit rules and norms better for those with no other responsibilities, such as a family. Thus we have a dual effect of exclusion and self-exclusion. These mechanisms are generated in the everyday of our social life and they have powerful symbolic effects; they make it difficult for women to participate and dictate the need for special measures — like quotas — so as to contradict what is being acknowledged as the serious democratic deficit of the lack of female participation in politics.

However, it is important to underline that the ESS data clearly show that although European women say they are less available and less interested in politics, this does not stop them from making specific and revealing choices when asked for an opinion. For example, it is very revealing that women in most countries are stronger supporters of left-wing politics in which issues related to gender equality and policies that may directly affect women's daily life are the focus of greater attention. So as we saw, with the exception of southern Europe, women in most European countries assume a position to the left of men. A similar effect can be seen when women, especially in the younger age groups, emphasize the importance of governments combating inequalities of income and intervening in the economy, or clearly defend the need for strong trade unions. Inglehart and Norris (2003) also noted the trend that women in most countries assumed positions usually associated with left-wing parties.

Indeed, a greater distancing from politics does not imply an inability to pass judgment or to choose. This therefore confirms that rather than looking for some aversion to anything political in the "female nature", it is the social processes underlying the phenomena of women's participation in politics that need to be analysed in order to glean a greater understanding. It is these processes that encourage exclusion, just as they feed and reproduce inequality. Moreover, an analysis of the conditions and circumstances in which most women live, as well as their strategic reproductive role, will certainly help explain why they systematically give more importance to religion than men.

However, this requires a detailed and specific analysis beyond the scope of this paper.

Going back to the more overall results of the ESS, the differences in the levels of education reached by men and women is to be noted. Like political positioning, the conclusion can also be reached here that a traditional gender gap has changed to a modern gender gap. Indeed, whereas women in the past were less educated than men, today it is clear that younger European women on average have more years of schooling than their male counterparts.

To finalise this transverse view of the ESS data on gender differences, it is worth underlining that this exercise reveals the need to discard stereotyped positions. The most flagrant conclusion is the convergence of the two sexes on a vast range of attitudes, opinions and values: it challenges attempts to essentialise gender differences. But differences were also found that serve to combat the illusion of a similarity that does not otherwise correspond to any daily experience. The differences of position that were identified in a localized form can be related back, among other factors, to social processes, circumstances in life and the inequalities and real discrepancies that still persist between men and women.

It is also true that we are dealing with very generic positions and global data here, and more detailed analyses and other methods of approach are most certainly needed to shed more light on each of these positions and situations.

However, the study was a good way of breaking down current visions which often become an ideological curtain that makes reality difficult to understand. Topics related to the difference and equality between men and women certainly tend to cause paradoxical discourses nowadays. Ulrich Beck underlines the persistent inequalities as well as the changes that have taken place over the past few years, and draws attention to these paradoxes saying that the continuous inequalities become even more evident in terms of consciousness precisely because there have been significant developments in the field of equality between men and women (Beck, 1992).⁴⁴

In fact, the changes in the last hundred years and the protagonism of women have also demonstrated the systematic destruction of conceptual barriers about the consequences of the real biological differences between men and women. This process is far from finished.

44 After marking the major gains in terms of equality between the sexes with regard to ideas, and also the strong resistance to real change, he says: "This has seemingly the paradoxical effect that the increased equality brings the continuous and intensifying inequalities even more clearly into consciousness" (Beck, 1992: 103). This subject is examined in even more detail in a book recently co-written with Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

References

- Almeida, Ana Nunes de, *et al.* (2000), "Family relations: change and diversity", in José Viegas and António Firmino da Costa (eds.) *Crossroads to Modernity. Contemporary Portuguese Society*, Oeiras (Portugal), Celta Editora.
- Almeida, João Ferreira de (1990), *Valores e Representações Sociais*, Lisbon, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
- Amâncio, Lígia (1994), *Masculino e Feminino. A Construção Social da Diferença*, Oporto, Edições Afrontamento.
- Beck, U. (1992), *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*, London, Sage Publications.
- Beck, U., and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim (2002), *Individualization*, London, Sage Publications.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1999), *A Dominação Masculina*, Oeiras (Portugal), Celta Editora.
- Cabral, Manuel Villaverde (2005), "Confiança, mobilização e realização política em Portugal", in Pedro Magalhães, Marina Costa Lobo, and André Freire, *Portugal a Votos. As Eleições Legislativas de 2002*, Lisbon, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
- Carvalho, Helena (2004), *Análise Multivariada de Dados Qualitativos. Utilização da HOMALS com SPSS*, Lisbon, Edições Sílabo.
- Connell, R. W. (1987), *Gender & Power*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2002) *Gender*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Fernandes, António Teixeira (2003), "Valores e atitudes religiosas", in J. Vala, M. V. Cabral and A. Ramos (eds.), *Valores Sociais. Mudanças e Contrastes em Portugal e na Europa*, Lisbon, ICS-Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, pp. 123-197.
- Fernandes, António Teixeira (2004), "Democracia, descentralização e democracia", in José Manuel Leite Viegas, António Costa Pinto, and Sérgio Faria (eds.), *Democracia, Novos Desafios e Novos Horizontes*, Oeiras (Portugal), Celta Editora, pp. 35-60.
- Halman, L. (2003), "Capital social na Europa contemporânea", in J. Vala, M. V. Cabral and A. Ramos (eds.), *Valores Sociais. Mudanças e Contrastes em Portugal e na Europa*, Lisbon, ICS-Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, pp. 257-289.
- Inglehart, R., and P. Norris, (2003), *Rising Tide. Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Inglehart, R., P. Norris and C. Welzel (2003), *Human Values and Social Change*, Leiden, Brill.
- Kimmel, M. (2000), *The Gendered Society*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Klement, Carmen, and Brigitte Rudolph (2004), "Employment patterns and economic independence of women in intimate relationships", *European Societies*, 6 (3), pp. 299-318.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter (2004), "A decisão dos cidadãos por voto democrático directo: a experiência suíça" in José Manuel Leite Viegas, António Costa Pinto, and Sérgio Faria (eds.), *Democracia, Novos Desafios e Novos Horizontes*, Oeiras (Portugal), Celta Editora, pp. 187-196.
- Newton, Kenneth (2004), "Confiança social", in José Manuel Leite Viegas, António Costa Pinto and Sérgio Faria (eds.), *Democracia, Novos Desafios e Novos Horizontes*, Oeiras, (Portugal), Celta Editora, pp. 61-84.

- Prince-Gibson, Eetta, and Shalom Schwartz (1998), "Value priorities and gender", *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 61 (1), pp. 49-67.
- Ramos, A. (2006), "Dinâmicas dos valores sociais e desenvolvimento socioeconómico", in Vala, J. and A. Torres (eds.), *Contextos e Atitudes Sociais na Europa*, Lisbon, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, pp. 183-215.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1992), "Universals in the content and structure of values: theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries", in M. Zanna (ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (vol. 25), Orlando, Academic Press, pp. 1-65.
- Schweisguth, Etienne (2004), "Convergência ideológica e declínio do interesse político", in José Manuel Leite Viegas, António Costa Pinto, and Sérgio Faria (eds.), *Democracia, Novos Desafios e Novos Horizontes*, Oeiras (Portugal), Celta Editora, pp. 257-276.
- Torres, A., and R. Brites (2006), "Atitudes e valores dos europeus: a perspectiva do género numa análise transversal", in J. Vala and J. A. Torres (eds.), *Contextos e Atitudes Sociais na Europa*, Lisbon, ICS, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, pp. 325-378.
- Torres, A., et al. (2007), *Time Use, Work Life Options and Preferences Over the Life Course in Europe*, Luxembourg, Office for the official publications of the European Communities, Foundation for the improvement of the living and working conditions (on print).
- Torres, A., I. Cardoso, and B. Coelho, (2007), "Novos e velhos sentidos da família. Uma perspectiva europeia" communication at an international seminar on the European Social Survey data presentation, 2004, in Lisbon on the 9th February 2007 at the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon.
- Torres, A., R. Mendes and T. Lapa (2006), "Famílias na Europa", in J. Vala and A. Torres (eds.), *Contextos e Atitudes Sociais na Europa*, Lisbon, ICS, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, pp. 97-144.
- Torres, Anália Cardoso (1996), *Divórcio em Portugal*, Oeiras (Portugal), Celta Editora.
- Torres, Anália Cardoso (2001), *Sociologia do Casamento. A Família e a Questão feminina*, Oeiras (Portugal), Celta Editora.
- Torres, Anália Cardoso (2004), *Vida Conjugal e Trabalho*, Lisbon, Celta Editora.
- Torres, Anália, et al. (2004), *Homens e Mulheres. Entre Família e Trabalho*, Lisbon, Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment.
- Vala, J., M. V. Cabral, and A. Ramos (eds.) (2003), *Valores Sociais. Mudanças e Contrastes em Portugal e na Europa*, Lisbon, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.
- Vaus, D. (2004), *Analyzing Social Science Data*, London, Sage Publications.
- Viegas, J. M. L. (2003), "Valores políticos e intervenção do Estado na vida social e económica", in Vala, J., M. V. Cabral, and A. Ramos (eds.) (2003), *Valores Sociais. Mudanças e Contrastes em Portugal e na Europa*, Lisbon, ICS-Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, pp. 363-386.
- Viegas, J. M., and S. Faria (2001), *As Mulheres na Política*, Oeiras (Portugal), Celta Editora.