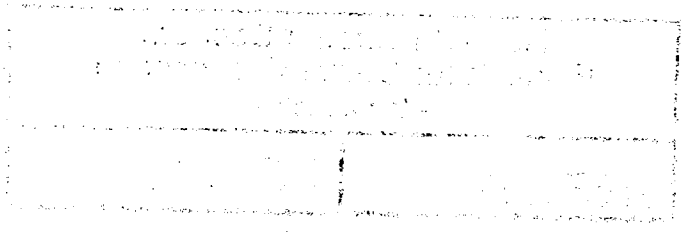
Stefan Immerfall · Göran Therborn
Editors

Handbook of European Societies

Social Transformations in the 21st Century



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Editors

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Chapter 16
Sexuality and Family Formation

Elina Haavio-Mannila and Anna Rotkirch

When I met Matti I was in my late 20s. I skipped all my sexual adventures, because after I had seen him only a few times I knew he was my other half... We dated for a number of years, lived together and were married a couple of years ago; we have an almost one year-old baby and there will definitely be more to come. (A Finnish woman in her early thirties)

I married very early, when I was about twenty years old. He was my first great love. Our son was born the same year. First we lived with his parents, it was a very small apartment... I know my husband has had side-affairs and I have also had my share of infatuations. But I'm not going to divorce him, we have a lot in common - and we are raising our wonderful boy. (A Russian woman in her early thirties)[1]

16.1 Introduction

Biological and social reproduction situate themselves at the heart of social life and of power structures. When is it suitable to begin having intercourse? Who may marry whom and at what stage of the life course? And who takes care of the children – the parents, public day care, relatives, or private nannies? In any society, the regulations of child making and childbearing provide a shortcut into how resources and power are divided between the sexes and between generations, as well as between social and ethnic groups.

In traditional societies, sexuality and family formation are strictly linked, especially for women but also for men. Kissing the wrong person at the wrong time can literally destroy a young adult's life. Traditional patriarchy characterised pre-industrial Europe and still prevails in some European regions, e.g. in agrarian parts of the Balkan countries. During the 20th century, all European countries witnessed gradual secularisation, liberalisation, and pluralisation of acceptable sexual and marital behaviours. Northern and Western Europe spearheaded this trend of de-patriarchalisation that would affect much of global development.

As a consequence of the Western sexual revolution we now tend to think of sexuality and family life as separate spheres, at least in some academic research. But it is analytically

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[1]These quotes are from solicited autobiographies about sexuality and love written by ordinary people and analysed in Haavio-Mannila et al. (2002).

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more helpful to think about a sex–marriage complex and "locating marriage within a larger space of pre-marital and extra-marital sex, including homosexuality" (Therborn 2004, 132). In people's life stories sexual and marital choices may also often be closely linked, as the two introductory quotes clearly illustrate.

In this chapter, we first focus on the main "horizontal" tie of families, the pair bond, in its more or less stable forms. We then look at families "vertically", comparing fertility and family household structure, including generational interaction. Finally, we discuss European values concerning sexuality and family life.

We compare behaviour and values between European countries. Because many formerly socialist countries are not in the European Union, statistics and scholars still often ignore them. We will here include all European countries whenever data are available. For each topic we pay special attention to gender relations and differences. The gender differences in sexual behaviour and attitudes in several areas have been diminishing, but nowhere do the sexes behave and think identically (Kontula & Haavio-Mannila 1995; Schmitt 2005).

Many aspects of family and sexuality are not dealt with here, such as sexual fantasies and techniques, symbolic and media images of sex and gender, and specific social policy measures. Cross-national comparisons also overlook the huge and interesting intra-country variations that exist with regard to class, ethnicity, and cultural and regional specificities.

16.2 European Dividing Lines

European family patterns have historically divided into a Western and an Eastern part, following the so-called Trieste–St. Petersburg line. Extended and patriarchal households prevailed in Eastern Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. They typically had early marriage, high marriage rates, early childbearing, and high numbers of both children and infant mortality. Western Europe was characterised by later age of marriage with a corresponding higher degree of autonomy for the couple, later entry into parenthood, higher numbers of unmarried adults and unwed mothers, and lower infant mortality (Hajnal 1965; Therborn 2004, 144). The first radical fall in fertility also took place in continental Western Europe (Goode 1963; Therborn 2004).

The Western European patterns of family and sexuality are historically unique. Their support for individual autonomy and women's rights has had a huge global impact, for instance, in how human, sexual, and reproductive rights are defined. In the latter part of the 20th century, it looked as if liberal and secular values in the sphere of family morality would eventually triumph everywhere. This trend appears less uniform today after the increase of religious fundamentalism, especially in some Muslim countries and the United States but also in formerly socialist European countries such as Poland and Russia.

Classifications of European family and social policy discern three to five main regional types or regimes (e.g. Titmuss 1974; Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993; Giele 1997; Mahon 2002; Duncan & Edwards 2003; Geist 2005; Anttonen & Sipilä 2005; Drobnic & Treas 2006). The criteria are often female employment and the extent to which social policy measures transfer informal care work to communal employees. In social and gender policy, Gösta Esping-Andersen's (1990) classification into *conservative, social democratic*, and *liberal* welfare state regimes is still widely used. The First European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS 2007, 9) expands that classification into five types: *Nordic Regimes*, *Liberal Regimes*, *Continental Regimes*, *Mediterranean Regimes*, and *New European Union member states*.

Finnish family sociologist Riitta Jallinoja (1989) showed how family and work have been combined in Europe in three ways: *the housewife pattern* (in 1980 The Netherlands,

Italy and in 1960 also Norway, Sweden, France, Great Britain and The Federal Republic of Germany), *the moderate sex role pattern* (in 1980 France, The Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, Norway, Great Britain), and *the pattern of employed women* (in 1980 Soviet Union, Poland, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Finland). She later found that among the politico-economically peripheral countries, the four Nordic countries form the most modernised territory as to gender equality and the family, whereas the Southern Europe periphery forms the least modernised territory (Jallinoja 1995).

Göran Therborn has in his outstanding work "*Between Sex and Power*" (2004) and in an outline of current variants of the European family (2007) divided Europe into four main areas with different family patterns: *the Nordic family, the Central Western European family, the Southern European family*, and *the Eastern European family*. A similar divide has been applied for European fertility patterns (Sánchez-Barricarte & Fernández-Carro 2007). Therborn (2004) stresses the unique traits of the Nordic and Western European family, while Eastern Europe is presented as part of the Eurasian family system. Therborn detects signs of a gradual convergence as other European countries grow closer to Western European practices, although clear differences remain. Some countries also appear to "switch sides", notably, Greece is today more aligned with Western patterns while Portugal and Italy are in some respects approaching the Eastern European family pattern.

Except for the Trieste–St. Petersburg line, stemming from agricultural and social traditions, intra-European family variations mainly appear to stem from two major influences: the dominant form of religion and the legacy of state socialism. Most Protestant churches are today liberal. They allow gender equality within the church, including female priests, and rarely condemn specific sexual or contraceptive practices. For instance, when a Finnish transsexual priest in 2007 was about to lose her job in connection with a sex change from male to female, the church was widely criticised for intolerance and discrimination. Religion does not strongly influence lay sexual morality in today's Protestant countries; it is rather the other way around.

The population of most European Catholic countries is also secularised. However, the Vatican's continued opposition to abortion, contraceptive use, and divorces has influenced especially Ireland and Poland. The inhabitants of Catholic countries also often display greater formality and stability in family formations (Therborn 2007).

The Eastern Orthodox church is the majority religion in Greece and Cyprus and in most of the countries that belonged to the Soviet Union or its sphere of influence. During state socialism, the church's social influence diminished and it could rarely intervene directly in sexual and marital behaviours. Today, fundamentalist Orthodox family values are being revived in several countries where the local Orthodox Church is aspiring to a more visible role as nation builder. In Russia, for instance, the church has successfully campaigned against sex education and acceptance of homosexuals. A minority of Russian Orthodox believers follow strict religious norms, including rejection of abortion and sometimes also contraception. Still, the overall influence of religion in Eastern European Orthodox countries is better compared to that of Catholic but secular France than Catholic and more religious Ireland.

Kosovo, Albania, and Turkey are European countries with a Muslim majority. Many European countries also have growing Muslim populations. European Muslims are today characterised by higher marriage rates and somewhat higher fertility. The differences between Muslim and non-Muslim Europeans are largely explained by marriage rates and level of religiosity. The differences between these groups also appear to be diminishing (Westoff & Frejka 2007).

In addition to religious impact, European families are shaped by the legacy of social democracy and state socialism, which promoted gender equality and women's full-time

employment (Björnberg & Eydal 1995). From the 1930s onward social democratic governments created the so-called Nordic welfare state model in Scandinavia and Finland, combining generous state family policies with female wage work. At the same time, state socialism transformed the Eastern European family pattern towards a dual breadwinner, nuclear family. In sexual matters state socialism was, after the exceptional sexual freedom of the Soviet 1920s, restrictive and puritan. Sexual education and use of modern contraceptives were limited, while abortions became a common means of birth regulation. Therefore Eastern European countries often resemble the Nordic countries in issues such as female labour markets, but the Southern European ones in, e.g. contraceptive use (Haavio-Mannila & Rotkirch 1997; Rotkirch 2000).

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the social uniformity imposed by state socialism melted. Former Soviet republics such as Armenia have witnessed a revival of patriarchal norms, such as virgin marriages and bride theft (Temkina 2008), while Estonia has approached Central Western European patterns in fertility postponement and contraceptive use, as we shall see below.

We will in our analyses divide Europe into six regional blocks:

1. The Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden)
2. Western Central Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxemburg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom)
3. The Western Mediterranean area (Gibraltar, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey [2])
4. The Eastern Mediterranean area (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenia)
5. Eastern Central Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia)
6. The former Soviet Union countries in Europe (Russia, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, and the Ukraine)

The data are collected from official statistics of United Nations, European Community, World Bank, the World Health Organization, and World Values Surveys. We also use survey data from research projects in Finland and Russia (Gronow et al. 1996; Kesseli et al. 2005), a large survey from 12 Western European countries collected in the beginning of this century (Börsch-Supan et al. 2005). Similar data are also available from our own recent survey of baby boomers and their children in Finland (Gentrans 2007).

16.3 Sexuality and Couple Formation

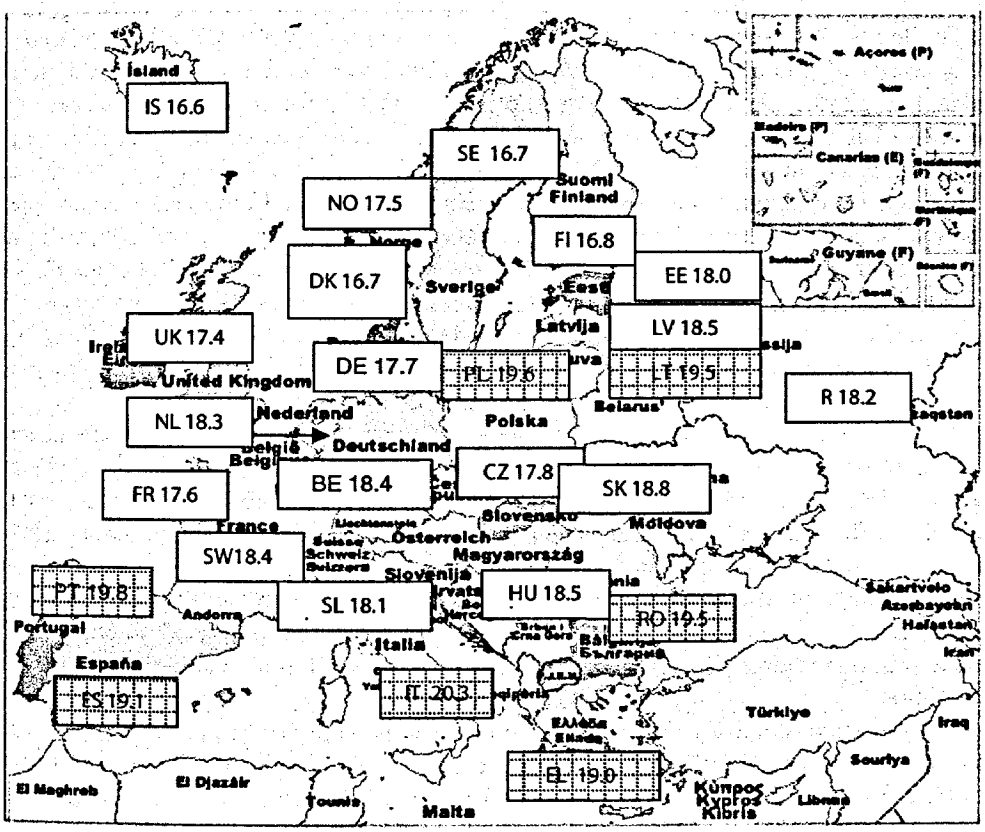
We first analyse sexual initiation, use of modern contraception, rates of marriage and divorce, and numbers of sexual partners. In most indicators Europe has witnessed a century-long linear change, often further accelerated by the so-called sexual revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, which brought a change in attitudes and values discarding previous social and religious norms. Pre- and extra-marital sex, the number of sexual partners, and the type of techniques used have all increased. The gender gap is diminishing as women and men also behave in more similar ways. Tolerance towards sexual minorities, especially homosexuality, has grown (Kontula & Haavio-Mannila 1995).

[2] In spite of its geographical location Turkey is placed in this group mainly because it lacks the state socialist legacy of the Eastern Mediterranean group.

16.3.1 First Sexual Intercourse

The first experience of intercourse is a central rite of initiation into adulthood. One measure of the event's importance is that almost without exception, people recall their first intercourse in detail. People of different generations also remember their first intercourse in very similar ways (Haavio-Mannila & Kontula 2003, 28).

Here we present survey findings on women's age at sexual initiation in the age cohort born around 1970.[3] With urbanisation, an earlier advent of sexual maturation and a loosening of social norms, the age of first intercourse has decreased in the last decades (Bozon & Kontula 1998). Map 16.1 shows that the lowest ages for women, under 18 years, are mainly found in the Protestant cultures of the Nordic countries and Western Central Europe, with the addition of the Czech Republic. In the Nordic countries, the age at first



Map 16.1 Median age at first sexual intercourse among women. Cohort born around 1970 (20–24 years of age in the 1990s)
Source: Bozon (2003) and own calculations on people born during 1968–1972 in Sweden, Finland, Estonia, and St. Petersburg, data; see Haavio-Mannila & Kontula (2003). Labels with grids: 19 years and over.

[3]This cohort was 20–24 years old in the late 1990s when the Fertility and Family Survey (FFS) and sexual behaviour surveys were conducted in 22 European countries (Bozon 2003). Ages at first intercourse in Sweden, Finland, Estonia, and St. Petersburg (here representing Russia) of people born in 1967–1972 are calculated on the basis of original data from surveys conducted in these countries in 1996–2000 (see Haavio-Mannila & Kontula 2003). We have found no statistics on the age of first intercourse from international institutions.

intercourse is lowest in Europe, on average 16.9 years. Of the Western Central European countries, people in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France have also started intercourse fairly early, making the average of this region 18.0. High ages, over 19 for women, are found in the Western Mediterranean area and in Poland, Romania, and Lithuania, three Catholic countries. The gender gap in the Mediterranean countries is over 1 year: women are in Portugal 2.4, Romania 2.2, Italy 1.9, and Greece 1.6 years older than men when first having intercourse. Elsewhere in Europe the gender gap is less than 1 year.

16.3.2 Use of Modern Contraception

In Europe, use of contraception at first intercourse has been steadily increasing (Bajos & Guillaume 2003) and the same trend applies to contraceptive use in later intercourse. Availability of and attitudes to contraception influence reproductive health and are also related to gender equality. The contraceptive prevalence for modern methods refers to the use of the following methods: female and male sterilisation, the contraceptive pill, the intrauterine device (IUD), injectables, implants, female and male condom, cervical cap, diaphragm, spermicidal foams, jelly, cream, sponges and emergency contraception and excludes the lactational amenorrhoea method (LAM), abortions, periodic abstinence, and withdrawal. Modern contraceptive devices such as hormonal pills and condoms were hard to obtain in the countries of the Soviet block. In the late 1990s, the line between frequent and rare use of modern methods followed the Trieste–St. Petersburg line (Map 16.2). Contraceptive prevalence refers to the percentage of women of reproductive age (usually aged 15–49 years), married or in union, currently using contraception.

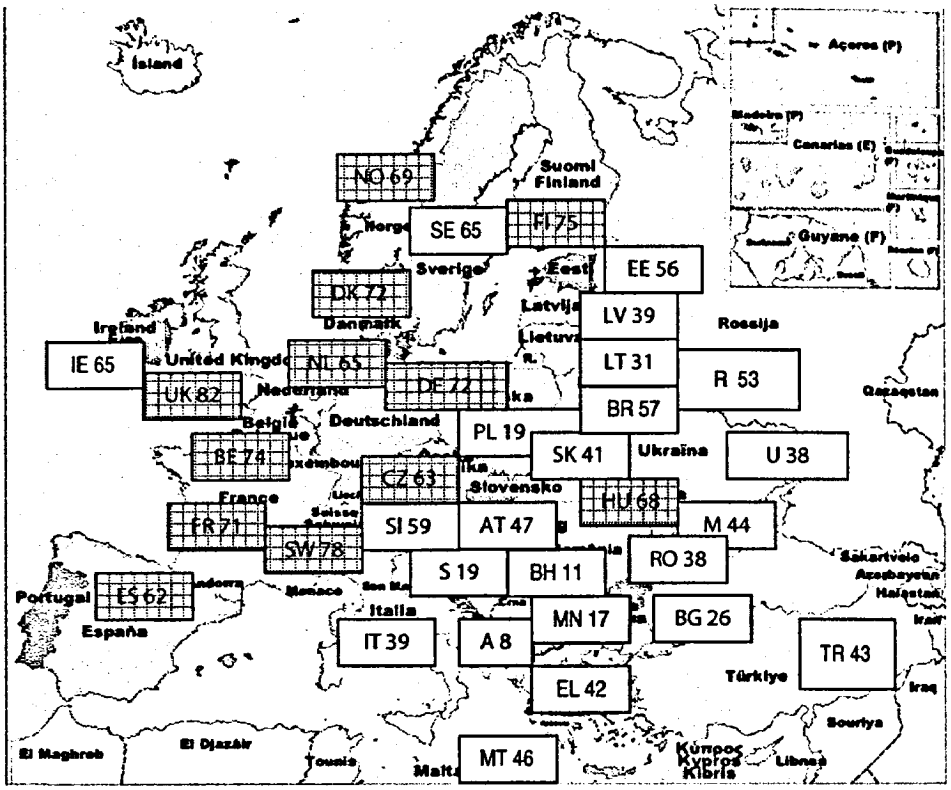
In the Nordic countries and in the Western Central European countries about three-fourths of people currently use modern contraceptive methods. The use is quite common in some Eastern Central European countries, such as Czech Republic and Hungary, but rare in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. The Eastern Mediterranean area shows great variation: in Albania only 8% of women reported use of modern contraception, in Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Montenegro less than 20% but in Slovenia 59%. In the former Soviet Union countries, on the average, 41% of the study subjects report modern contraceptive use at first intercourse. However, the use of contraceptives has also risen in this part since the 1990s.

In most state socialist countries, induced abortions were used as an alternative to contraception devices. Abortions remain more common in Eastern than Western Europe. In 2003, the highest rates of abortions per 1000 live births were found in Russia (1156), Romania (1058), Belarus (905), and Estonia (815). The lowest rates were in Croatia (139), the Netherlands (144), Sweden (146), Germany (181), and Finland (190) (WHO Regional Office for Europe 2007).

Our comparison between Finland, Estonia and St. Petersburg, Russia, shows that women having induced abortions have a different social and sexual background. In the high abortion rate countries Russia and Estonia, older women who have many children, have been married many times, and have not used contraception are overrepresented. They appear to continue the Soviet tradition and use abortion as the method of contraception. In Finland, where abortion rates are low, women having abortions tend to be less educated and to engage in risk behaviour (early intercourse, many sexual partners, high rates of sexually transmitted infections, and alcohol use).

Country	16.1. Mean age at first marriage for women 2006 [1]	16.2. Mean age of women at the birth of the first child 2005 [2]	16.3.Total fertility rate of women 2007 [3]	16.4. Divorces per 1000 population 1998–2003 [4]
Nordic countries				
• Denmark	30,7	28,4	1,83	2.9
• Finland	29,3	27,9	1,84	2.6
• Iceland	30,3	26,1	2,08	1.8
• Norway	29,3	27,2	1,90	2.3
• Sweden	31,3	28,7	1,85	2.4
Average	*30,2*	*27,7*	*19,0*	*2.4*
Western Central Europe				
• Austria	28,9	27,2	1,40	2.3
• Belgium	27,3	–	1,66	3.0
• France	29,5	28,6	2,00	2.1
• Germany	28,9	29,1	1,32	2.5
• Ireland	28,2	27,6	1,90	0.7
• Luxemburg	29,2	29,0	1,65	2.3
• Netherlands	29,2	28,9	1,70	2.0
• Switzerland	31,3	28,9	1,43	2.3
• United Kingdom	28,3	30,0	1,84	2.7
Average	*29,0*	*28,7*	*16,6*	*2.2*
Western Mediterranean				
• Cyprus	26,7	27,5	1,47	1.9
• Greece	28,3	28,5	1,39	1.0
• Italy	28,6	28,7	1,32	0.7
• Malta	26,5	29,2	1,41	2.6
• Portugal	26,9	27,4	1,35	2.1
• Spain	29,2	29,3	1,38	1.0
• Turkey	–	–	–	0.5
Average	*27,7*	*28,4*	*1,39*	*1.4*
Eastern Mediterranean				
• Albania	–	23,9	–	0.8
• Bulgaria	25,7	24,7	1,37	1.5
• Croatia	25,4	27,2	1,38	1.0
• Macedonia	23,5	25,4	1,46	0.7
• Serbia and Montenegro	24,6	–	–	1.0
• Slovenia	28,3	27,7	1,31	1.1
Average	*25,5*	*25,8*	*13,8*	*1.0*
Eastern Central Europe				
1. Czech Republic	26,7	26,6	1,33	3.2
2. Hungary	25,9	26,7	1,34	2.5
3. Poland	25,4	25,8	1,27	1.3
4. Romania	25,2	24,8	1,31	1.5
5. Slovakia	26,2	25,7	1,24	2.0
Average	*25,9*	*25,9*	*1,30*	*2.1*
Former Soviet Union				
• Belarus	22,9	–	–	4.1
• Estonia	26,5	25,2	1,55	3.0
• Latvia	25,9	25,0	1,35	2.1
• Lithuania	25,0	24,9	1,31	3.1
• Moldova	22	21,9	–	3.0
• Russia	–	22,7	–	5.3
• Ukraine	22,8	22,4	–	3.7
Average	*24,2*	*23,7*	*1,40*	*3.5*

Figs. 16.1–16.4 Family and fertility
[1]Eurostat 6.3.2008, National sources; TransMONEE database; New Cronos database.
[2]Eurostat 6.3.2008, UNECE 2005. The figure for Italy is from the year 2000.
[3]Eurostat 26.8.2008; Belgium in 2005: UN Common Database.
[4]UNECE 2005.



Map 16.2 Contraceptive prevalence: Use of modern methods, percent
Source: United Nations Statistical Division – Demographic and Social Statistics. Social Indicators. Latest available figures from 1990s and 2000s. Labels with grids: over 60%.

Especially younger people in the former socialist countries have rapidly adopted a new contraceptive culture. Also migrants appear to adapt to safer contraceptives once they find themselves in a country with better reproductive health services (Malin & Gissler 2007).

16.3.3 Marriage and Divorce Rates

Humans everywhere form durable pair bonds. If individuals can decide for themselves, these bonds are typically based on sexual attraction and romantic love and sooner or later involve child raising. The stability of pair bonds varies widely, as does the extent to which other kin or social actors participate in child rearing, and whether homosexual unions are partly or totally recognised as equal with heterosexual unions.

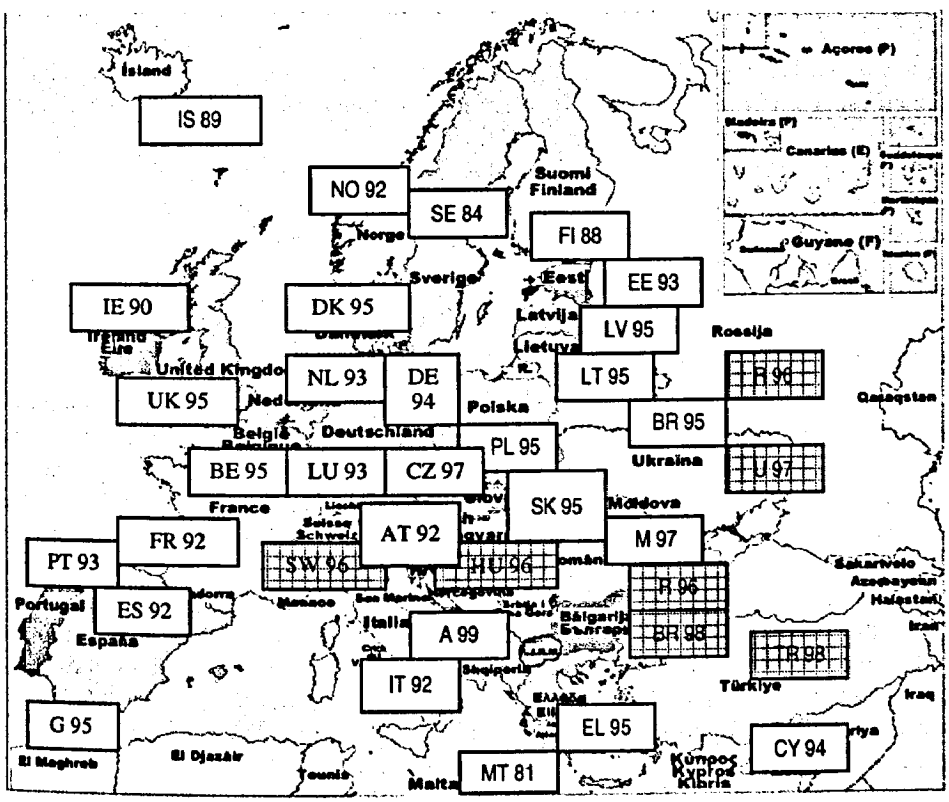
Unions can be sanctioned by legal marriage or remain informal, as in cohabitation or LAT or living apart together relations. Formal marriage is less and less favoured everywhere in Europe. This trend started in Northern Europe, but has since spread throughout Western and most of Southern Europe (European Union 2002). The social alternative to formal and informal couples is single motherhood, with typically great involvement from the woman's own kin (Therborn 2003, 201).

The Trieste–St. Petersburg line has historically distinguished countries with regard to marriage age and marriage rate (Therborn 2007). Marriage age is highest in the West

and lowest in the East. In all countries men marry at a later age than do women. In the Nordic countries and Western Central Europe, mean age at first marriage is on the average 31–32 years for men and 28–30 for women (Fig. 16.2). The highest ages are found in Switzerland, 35 years for men and 31 for women. In these areas cohabitation without marriage is common which partly accounts for the late marriage age.

In both Mediterranean areas men marry for the first time when they are 28–29 years old and women at the age of 25–26 years. In the Mediterranean area, the highest age at first marriage is in Spain where men marry at 31 and women at 29 years – approximately the same as in Nordic and Western Central Europe, although there formal marriage is more often preceded by cohabitation. In Eastern Central Europe and the former Soviet republics, the respective ages are very low, 26–27 years for men and 24–25 years for women. Gender differences are largest (3.4) in the Eastern Mediterranean area, whereas in the other regions they are about 2.5 years.

Early age of marriage is associated with higher marriage rate. When we look at the proportion of ever-married women among 45- to 49-year-old women, we notice a distinct St. Petersburg–Trieste line (Map 16.3). Southeast of the line, there are plenty of countries where the proportion of ever-married women in this age group is at least 96%, on the Northwestern side scarcely any countries have such a high marriage rate (except Switzerland). The highest rate of ever-married women is in Albania, 99% (!), and the



Map 16.3 Proportion of ever-married women aged 45–49, percent
Source: United Nations Population Division – World Marriage Patterns 2000, 2006. Labels with grids: over 95%.

lowest in Sweden, 84%. In Sweden this is related to the high prevalence of cohabiting couples.

People very frequently enter legal marriage in Southeastern Europe, even after the ideological pressure to marry under state socialism has disappeared. The highest marriage rates (more than 7 marriages per 1000 people a year) are from Cyprus, Albania, Macedonia, and Turkey, i.e. in the Eastern Mediterranean area (European Union 2002; table not shown here). In several former Soviet countries – Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine – marriage rates are between 6 and 7. They have fallen as the marital age has somewhat risen and as both cosmopolitan youth and impoverished people often prefer cohabitation. Marriage rates are lowest in Western Central Europe and the Western Mediterranean area.

Cohabitation, which is becoming increasingly popular, can take two distinct forms. Often it serves as a prelude to legal marriage or as a form chosen for subsequent unions after a divorce. In these cases, the birth of a child often makes the couple decide to formalise the relation by marrying. For instance, a Finnish couple's child is more often than not born outside wedlock today, while less than one-third of parents with two children are not married. In Russia, by contrast, legal marriage remains highly favoured, especially for the first union, and it is much more common to cohabitate in a second or third union than in the first (Vishnevskij 2006).

Second, cohabitation may be a life-long alternative to legal marriage. In the Western European countries studied in SHARE, cohabiting at advanced age (50+ years) is most common in Sweden, Denmark, and Spain and least so in Italy and Greece. Divorce rates have grown in most parts of Europe. They remain low in the Mediterranean areas and in some Catholic countries (Ireland and Poland) (Fig. 16.4). The divorce rate is lowest in Bosnia and Herzegovina and highest in Russia. In Russia, the socially unstable 1990s affected especially marriages over 10 years old (Vishnevskij 2006). In other former Soviet republics (the Baltic countries, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova) divorce is also very common, 3 or 4 per 1000. There the "universal early marriage" model was thus combined with high divorce rate. Again, if the dissolution of young cohabiting couples was counted in these statistics, the discrepancies between East and West would diminish.

16.3.4 Number of Sexual Partners

Part of the legacy of the sexual revolution is increased numbers of sexual partners during a person's lifetime. The number of lifetime sexual partners reported in Europe varies from 12 in Denmark to 5 in Poland according to Durex Global sex survey in 2005. The number of partners is highest in the Nordic countries (mean 12) and lower (7–9) in the other areas in Europe.

More scientifically collected, but older, data are available from surveys conducted in 1989–1992 in seven Western European countries (Leridon et al. 1998). Among men aged 18–49 years, the highest mean numbers of partners are from the Netherlands (20) and Finland (15). Then come France, Norway, Great Britain, and Switzerland (12), and the lowest number was found in Spain (10). Women reported half as many partners: 10 in the Netherlands, Finland, and Norway, 5 among Spanish and Swiss women and the lowest numbers, 4, for women in France and Great Britain.

The huge gender gap in reported numbers of sex partners has constantly bothered researchers. Clearly men have a tendency to overreport and/or women to underreport their sexual partners. Haavio-Mannila & Roos (2007) analysed the reported number of partners by gender in the Finnish sex survey data from 1999. They found that people with fewer

than 20 partners, both men and women, reported about 5 partners. There was no significant over- or underreporting. Those who report having at least 20 partners (15% of all study subjects) accounted for all the difference: men reported having on average 40 partners whereas women reported only 30 partners. The question of who is "cheating" researchers remains, but only for sexually very active people.

In sum, we can discern three major, distinct paths of sexual and couple formation in Europe. In the North, people have early sex, many partners, and late and often informal coupling. The many years of living as single, young adults raise the number of sexual partners for Northern Europeans. As the Finnish woman in the introductory quote remembered, it is when deciding to "settle down" that most people stop having sexual adventures. In Southern Europe, active sex life starts later and the number of total sexual partners is lower. Coupling also starts later. In the East, sexual life starts relatively late, the number of sexual partners is not as high as in the North, but coupling is formal and very early (cf. also Therborn 2004, 145). These patterns of love and desire are intertwined with childbearing and the division of work in everyday life, to which we now turn.

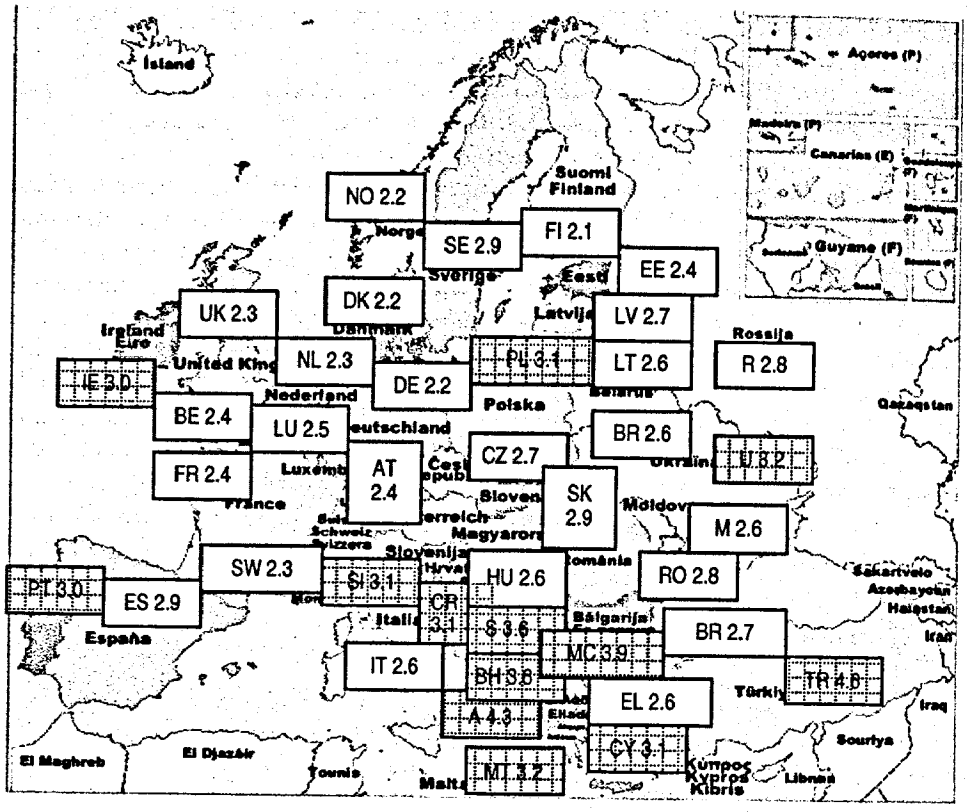
16.4 Household Composition and Fertility

Twentieth century Europe witnessed a decrease in the size of family households. The number of children was no longer directly related to its social class, and the growing middle classes often had least children, namely one or two (Tumin 1974, 108–109). Urbanisation, the decrease in infant mortality, and women's growing independence continue to make families smaller around the world (Sanderson & Dubrov 2000). With the parallel increase in individualism and longevity, Europeans spend a bigger time of our lives living alone.

16.4.1 Household Size

Household size reflects both the practices of neo-locality (whether the young couple will live independently or not) and the number of children. The number of people living together varies greatly in today's Europe. It is largest in Southern Europe: in Turkey (on the average 4.6 people), Albania, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and additionally in the West Coast periphery, Ireland, and Portugal (Map 16.4). Household size is smallest in Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Germany.

The European household is a nuclear family consisting of parents and their children. As an example we present the members in the households of baby boomers, who are now 50–62 years old (Table 16.1, unfortunately no data from Eastern Europe). In this phase of life people have not yet widowed and as many as three-fourths of the study subjects live with a spouse. More than one-third has children at home. Only 2% house their parents, and 1% their parents-in-law or grandchildren. Siblings living at this stage of life with their sisters or brothers are rare, only 0.6%, and other relatives and other people are even less frequent. One in five of the study subjects lives alone. Having other kin than children living in the household (extended family) is more common with Italy leading (8%) followed by Spain (4%), Germany (3%), and Austria (2%). These are mostly parents or parents-in-law.



Map 16.4 Average household size. Latest available year 1995–2004
Source: UNECE Statistical Yearbook of the Economic Commission for Europe. Eurostat NewCronos. Labels with grids: three people and over.

16.4.2 Fertility

Childbearing has been postponed to a later stage of life in today's Europe (Billari et al. 2006; Chapter 14). This is related to modern contraceptive methods and to the social pressure to avoid childbearing before securing one's educational and social position. Contrary to what one would perhaps expect, increase in economic wealth lowers fertility, especially if that increase happens rapidly (Mace 1998; Hill & Reeve 2004). This appears to happen both on a country level and within countries in relation to social class and has made the length of time between first intercourse and first child longer and longer.

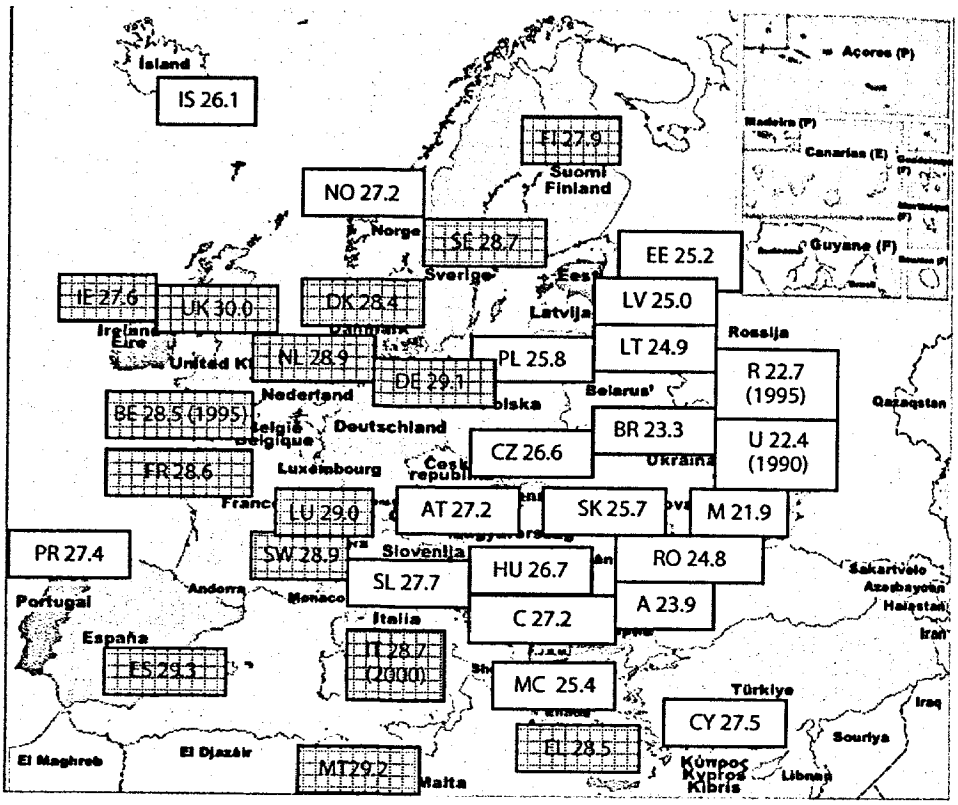
The connection between women's education and higher age for parenthood is often seen as a quasi-natural law. However, Eastern Europe and especially Russia display an interesting pattern, where very low fertility levels coexist with early age of coupling and first child. Even today, it is not uncommon for educated women to behave like the Russian woman in the introductory quote: to marry ones first great love and then have a child in the heat of the moment. The first child is described as a "fruit of love", whereas family planning and economic considerations enter the picture only with regard to possible additional children (Rotkirch & Kesseli 2008).

The Trieste–St. Petersburg line holds its historic position as the strongest marker of distinction for the mean age of women at the birth of their first child (Map 16.5). The age span reaches from 22 years in the Ukraine to 29 years in Spain. In the Nordic countries, Western

Table 16.1 Categories of people living in the household, percent and means. People born in 1945–1950[1]

	Spouse	Children	Parents	Siblings	Grandchildren	Other relatives	Others	Household size people	N
Sweden	75.2	15.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	451
Denmark	72.5	10.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.5	1.9	382
Finland	73.4	10.8	1.3	No inf.	No inf.	No inf.	No inf.	2.1	1103
Ireland	69.5	35.5	3.4	1.0	0.5	0.0	0.5	2.3	203
The Netherlands	80.3	15.6	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2	2.0	467
Germany	80.8	18.6	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.3	2.1	334
Austria	64.6	22.3	1.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6	2.0	175
Switzerland	69.9	19.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	2.0	216
Belgium	74.1	24.0	1.1	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.0	2.1	467
France	69.4	22.3	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.1	431
Italy	81.1	47.9	3.9	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.0	2.7	407
Spain	81.1	43.0	8.6	2.9	0.4	2.9	0.4	2.8	244
Greece	73.5	53.4	1.1	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	2.6	442
Czechia	66.4	23.4	3.1	0.7	0.0	0.9	0.0	2.1	453
Poland	77.3	50.6	5.8	0.5	0.0	1.5	0.5	3.1	397
Total	74.4	28.6	2.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	2.3	5069

[1]Source: SHARE CV and GENTRANS question 4.



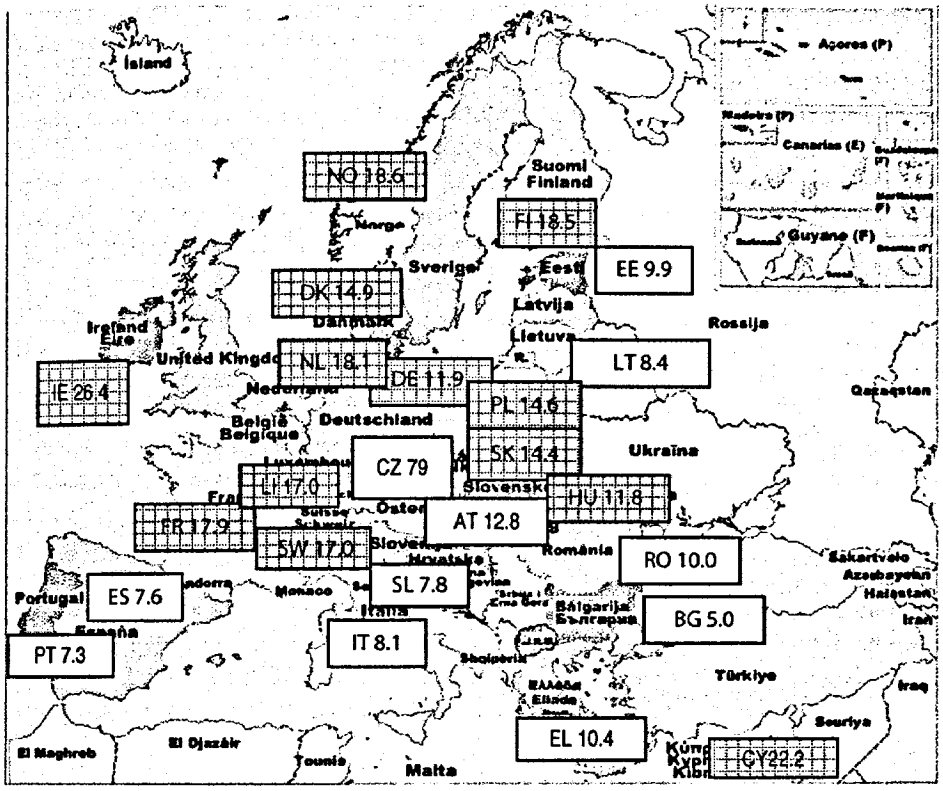
Map 16.5 Mean age of women at the birth of the first child in 2005
Source: Eurostat 2008, UNECE Statistical Yearbook of the Economic Commission for Europe. Labels with grids: over 27.5 years.

Central Europe, and Western Mediterranean area women first become mothers older (27–28 years of age) than in the Mediterranean and Eastern Central European countries (23–25 years). The exceptions are the Western peripheral countries Iceland, Norway, and Portugal (and Austria) where women become mothers fairly young.

In spite of a later start of childbearing, the total fertility rate (children per 1000 women) is higher in the North and the West than in the South and the East (except for Turkey and Estonia, which have very high, respectively, low rates) (Fig. 16.3). Among European low fertility countries, the highest fertility rates appear in countries with high gender equity and long-term family-friendly social policies: this is often used to explain high fertility rates in the Nordic countries, France, and Belgium (1.84–2.00) as compared to those in South and Eastern Europe (Ronson & Skrede 2006; Santow & Bracher 2001; Sánchez-Barricarte & Fernández-Carro 2007).

Both type of religion and degree of religiosity affect fertility rates. Fertility is highest in Turkey (2.20), where the majority is Muslim, and fairly high also in Catholic Ireland. The lowest rates are from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland (about 1.20). Rates are low also in the other post-socialist countries and the Mediterranean countries, except Portugal and Turkey.

Map 16.6 shows the proportion of households with three or more children of all households with small children. The focus is on people who are currently of reproductive age. The variation is very high, from 5 to 7% in the Eastern and Mediterranean regions to almost



Map 16.6 Percentage of families (with children <18 years in the household) having at least three children
Source: Eurostat, Census 2001, Households and families. Labels with grids: over 10%.

every fifth household in the Nordic countries. The high levels of Nordic fertility does not mean that all Nordic women have children, but that quite many women have three or four or even more children.

In sum, European fertility rates are today lowest in countries where women have entered the labour market fully but social policy supports are unstable or lacking. Although postponement of parenthood contributes to lower number of children, the European countries with highest fertility are not the ones where women and men become parents very young, but where also people with higher education can "recover" higher fertility levels in their thirties (Sánchez-Barricarte & Fernández-Carro 2007). Fertility is also influenced by the availability of kin help and the amounts of paid and unpaid work, which we present below.

16.5 Paid and Unpaid Work

Women represent almost half of the labour force in the Nordic countries and in the countries which belonged to the former Soviet Union (Fig. 16.5). In the other post-socialist countries, this proportion is closer to that of Western Central Europe and in the Mediterranean region, where it is 41–46% except for being even lower in Malta (31%) and Turkey (26%).

Children's day care crucially affects women's possibilities to participate in paid work (see Chapter 13). Most of the very young children seem, however, to be taken care of at home. Less than half of Europe's children aged 0–3 years attend institutionalised day-care

Country	16.5. Share of women in adult labour force 2006 [1]	16.6. Part-time employment of women [2]	16.7. Proportion of 0–3 years old children in daycare facilities [3]	16.8. Preschool child suffers of maternal employment [4]
Nordic countries				
• Denmark	47	22	64	18
• Finland	48	15	22	41
• Iceland	47	-	-	33
• Norway	47	-	-	-
• Sweden	47	20	48	38
Average	*47*	*13*	*45*	*32*
Western Central Europe				
• Austria	45	26	4	74
• Belgium	44	33	30	51
• France	46	23	29	56
• Germany	45	36	East 16 West 2	East 37 West 73
• Ireland	43	34	-	35
• Luxemburg	42	-	-	-
• Netherlands	45	60	6	46
• Switzerland	45	-	-	-
• United Kingdom	46	40	-	46
Average	*45*	*36*	*6*	*46*
Western Mediterranean area				
• Cyprus	46	-	-	-
• Gibraltar	-	-	-	-
• Greece	41	10	3	47
• Italy	40	24	6	81
• Malta	35	-	-	-
• Portugal	47	15	12	72
• Spain	41	16	5	46
• Turkey	26	12	-	-
Average	*39*	*15*	*6*	*61*
Eastern Mediterranean area				
• Bulgaria	46	(3)	10	61
• Croatia	45	-	-	-
• Macedonia	-	-	-	-
• Serbia	43			
• Slovenia	46	8	29	47
• *Average*	*45*	*5*	*20*	*54*
Eastern Central Europe				
• Czech Republic	45	5	1	47
• Hungary	45	-	-	-
• Poland	46	17	5	63
• Romania	46	(13)	1	47
• Slovakia	45	4	46	77
Average	*45*	*9*	*13*	*62*
Former Soviet Union area				
• Belarus	49	-	-	-
• Estonia	49	(11)	19	65
• Latvia	48	(14)	13	63
• Lithuania	49	(11)	10	75
• Moldova	47	-	-	-
• Russia	49	-	-	-
• Ukraine	48	-	-	-
Average	*48*	*12*	*14*	*68*

Figs. 16.5–16.8 (continued)

facilities (Fig. 16.7). These proportions are highest in Denmark, Sweden, Slovakia, Belgium, France, and Slovenia.

Attitudes towards maternal employment are more positive in the West than in the East but the line is not as straight as in the case of part-time work. This was studied by asking whether respondents agreed with the statement "A preschool child suffers when his or her mother is working". Answers correspond quite well to the enrolment of children in public day care (Fig. 16.8). The statement received less support in the Nordic countries and in Western Central Europe (except Austria, Western Germany, and Portugal). There is also a small group of Balkan countries – Greece, Slovenia, and Romania – where maternal employment is not so much condemned. The generally unfavourable views towards maternal employment in the East may be a reaction against the compulsory paid work of women in the socialist time and the patriarchal renaissance in this area since the 1990s.

The gender gap in unpaid domestic work is wide (Szalai et al. 1972) and is only slowly diminishing (Niemi & Pääkkönen 2002). Makiko Fuwa (2004) studied the effect of macro-level economic and political gender inequality on individual-level factors – relative income, time availability, and gender ideology – in determining the division of housework in 22 industrialised countries. She found that the equalising effects of time availability and gender ideology were stronger for women in more egalitarian countries; women in less egalitarian countries benefitted less from their individual-level assets. A later study of 33 countries showed that social policies affect not only the overall gender division of housework but also the dynamics of micro-level negotiations (Fuwa & Cohen 2007).

In the 11 European countries which are included in the Harmonized European Time Use Survey (2007), the amount of domestic work conducted by men is largest in Bulgaria, Estonia, and Sweden and lowest in Italy and Spain (Chart 16.1). Women spend about 5 h in domestic work in Italy, Bulgaria, Spain, and Estonia.

Part-time work, i.e. less than 30 h of wage work a week, is a typical solution for working mothers combining in some regions (Fig. 16.6). Among women, Europe is split on an East–West axis: in the East most women work full-time while part-time work is quite common in the West (except in Spain and Portugal, where full-time housewives are also more common than elsewhere). In the Netherlands three and in the United Kingdom two out of every five women are in part-time work. In Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, and Italy the proportion ranges from 20 to 36%. In the other Nordic and Mediterranean countries and in all Eastern European countries less than one of five women works part-time.[4]

Figs. 16.5–16.8 (continued) Facts and attitudes related to maternal employment, percentages
[1]United Nations Statistics Division – Demographic and Social Statistics. Last update 2008.
[2]Part-time employment (<30 h a week) of total employment of women aged 15–64 in 2003. OECD 2005. Quoted from EQLS (2007, Table 2, p. 15). For countries without official data on part-time work, information on subjective part time in parantheses is presented on the basis of an Eurostat survey.
[3]EQLS (2007, Table 3, p. 18).
[4]Agrees with the statement "A preschool child suffers when his or her mother is working". European Values Survey 1999/2000; European and World Values Surveys Four-wave Integrated Data File, 1981–2004.

[4]In some of the Eastern European countries there is no official data on working hours. Eurostat subjective survey data come very close to the objective official data. In Appendix Table 5 subjective data are marked in parantheses.

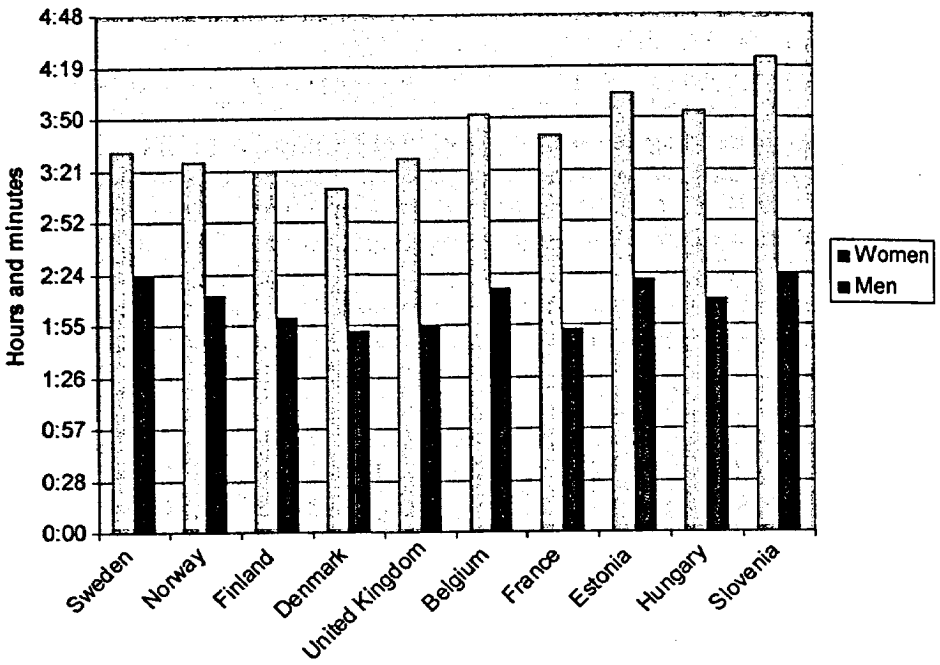


Chart 16.1 Time used in domestic work by men and women in some European countries
Source: European Time Use Survey 2004.

In Italy and Spain, two of the countries where women spend a lot of time in domestic work, the female share of the labour force is low, part-time work fairly common, and men do not spend much time in domestic work. In two others, Bulgaria and Estonia, on the contrary, the percentage of women in the labour force is high, part-time work is rare, and men conduct quite a lot of domestic tasks. These countries have a tradition of women's paid full-time work while ready-made foods and home technology have been expensive or hard to obtain.

16.6 Intergenerational Help

The predominance of the nuclear family type in Europe does not imply an absence of strong familial bonds between generations. Several studies have shown close ties including practical and financial transfers between parents, their adult children, and grandchildren (e.g. Attias-Donfut & Rozenkier 1995; Walker 1996; Millar & Warman 1996; Kohli 1999; Arber & Attias-Donfut 1999; Attias-Donfut 2000; Björnberg 2007). The results from the SHARE and the GENTRANS projects show that adults both expect and receive much economic and emotional support from parents and grandparents (Chart 16.2). Thus most so-called baby boomers, people born in 1945–1950, think that a grandparent's duty is to be there for grandchildren "in case of difficulties". The view that it is grandparents' duty to "look after grandchildren" is also widespread and almost as many agree that it is grandparents' duty to "support grandchildren economically".

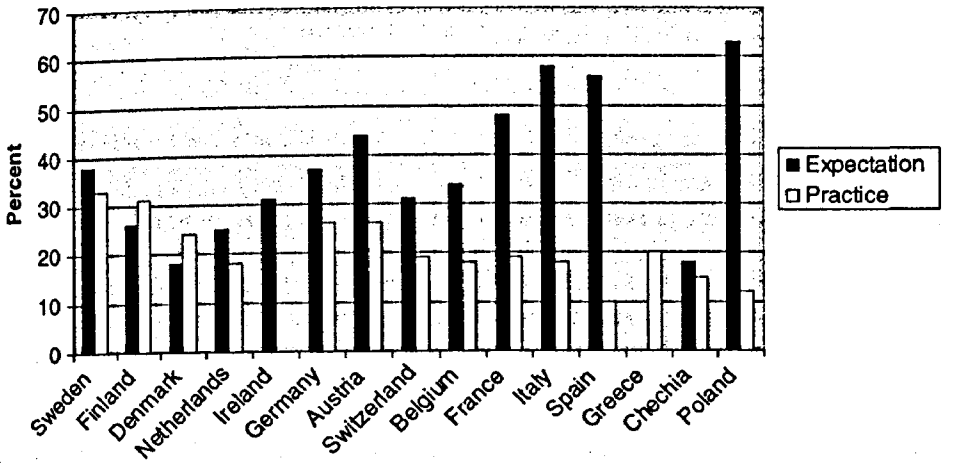


Chart 16.2 Expects financial help from grandparents and has given financial gifts to adult children. Parents born in 1945–1950 in some European countries
Expectations: Agrees with the statement that it is grandparents' duty to support grandchildren and their families economically, percent.
Practice: Has given financial gifts >250 euro to at least one of his or her four first-born children in the last 12 months, percent.
Sources: SHARE Wave 2 and GENTRANS.

Expectations towards grandparents are more demanding in the Mediterranean area and France than in the other Western Central European countries and the Nordic countries. The exception is that also in Austria and Germany grandparents are expected to look after grandchildren. This was measured with reactions to the statement "Parents duty is to do their best for their children even at the expense of their own well-being". Intergenerational solidarity in attitudes towards grandparents' role is least popular in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Finland. Expectations towards parents are most demanding in the Mediterranean countries Greece, Italy, Spain but also in Sweden. In the Mediterranean area and at the core of Western Central Europe (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Belgium) people more often think that "the family instead of the state" should bear the responsibility of giving financial support, help with household chores, and personal care to older people.

How do these attitudes translate into practice? We studied baby-boomers' (who were about 60 years old) monetary gift-giving to their children and other kin and friends and found that it is, a bit surprisingly, most common in Finland and Sweden (see Chart 16.2). Then come the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Spain.

One explanation to this result is that the amount of provided financial assistance decreases if the adult children live at home. This is today rare in the North and much more frequent in Central and Mediterranean Europe. About 60% of baby boomers, now in their sixties, have children living at home in Spain, Italy, and Greece.[5] In the North, in

[5]The high proportion of adult children living at parents' home has become a public concern and popular research topic.

Finland, Sweden, and Denmark but also in Switzerland and Austria, only 11–20% of baby boomers house their children in their homes.[6]

16.7 Sexual Attitudes

We conclude by looking at some attitudes to sexuality and family life. First, we measure attitudes to abortion, sexual freedom, homosexuality, and prostitution.[7] They indicate liberalism and gender equality, as well as how the unavoidable tension between these two is culturally solved. A highly liberal attitude to sexuality is not necessarily in favour of gender equality, and vice versa. The data are derived from the World Values Surveys conducted in 1981–2002; the average year is 1994.

Finding *abortion justifiable* is most common in the Nordic countries, where this is the view of almost three out of four persons (scores 5–10 on the scale ranging from 1 to 10, Fig. 16.9). Western Central Europe does not form a coherent region in this respect and the attitudes vary widely. The most negative attitudes are found in the Catholic Western Mediterranean countries. In Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece the percentages vary between 42 and 60 so half the population is opposed to abortions. Also in Eastern Mediterranean, Central European, and the ex-Soviet countries only every second person finds abortion justifiable. It is astonishing that the socialist legacy, with high numbers of performed abortions, should have left such a low support today. However, other studies indicate higher tolerance of abortions in, e.g. Russia and Estonia (Haavio-Mannila & Kontula 2003).

Agreeing with complete *sexual freedom* was studied by using the following question: "If someone said that individuals should have the chance to enjoy complete sexual freedom without being restricted, would you tend to agree or disagree?" Here, least support came from Nordic countries and Eastern Central Europe (Fig. 16.10). The most liberal country is Spain and the most conservative ones are Malta, Denmark, and Norway.

Homosexuality is most accepted in the Western regions (Fig. 16.11). Finding it justifiable stretches from 4% in Albania and 9% in Turkey to 87% in the Netherlands! These values correlate with the legal and social status of homosexuals and the attitude to homosexuality of the dominant religion. In many Western European countries, homosexuality was classified as a disease until the 1970s or 1980s. Only during the last decade have homosexuals begun to receive marital and parental rights comparable to those of heterosexual couples. In Eastern Europe, by contrast, the legacy of state socialism is still visible. In Soviet Union, for instance, male homosexuality was criminalised for being an asocial way of living, and lesbianism was regarded as a mental disease. Today, homosexuality is decriminalised in all European Union countries including Turkey and other countries applying for membership, but homosexuals lack full human and marital rights especially in Eastern Europe. Both the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox churches condemn homosexuality.

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[6]We calculated these percentages from the data of the SHARE project conducted in the beginning of the 2000s in 12 Western European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland. The bulk of the 31,115 study subjects consists of people aged 50–74 years (Börsch-Supan et al. 2005; www.share-project.org).

[7]The attitudes correlate significantly with each other; complete sexual freedom least so.

	16.9. Abortion justifiable	16.10. Agrees with complete sexual freedom	16.11. Homo-sexuality justifiable	16.12. Prostitution justifiable
Nordic countries				
• Denmark	78	11	73	40
• Finland	65	28	57	31
• Iceland	65	23	81	27
• Norway	67	11	63	29
• Sweden	86	17	84	39
Average	*72*	*18*	*72*	*27*
Western Central Europe				
• Austria	52	39	56	41
• Belgium	55	27	62	34
• France	74	32	66	36
• Germany	56	24	60	41
• Germany West	45	25	65	48
• Ireland	25	17	49	24
• Luxemburg	63	-	68	32
• Netherlands	66	33	87	65
• Northern Ireland	30	22	-	-
• Switzerland	60	31	71	59
• United Kingdom	57	30	61	38
Average	*53*	*26*	*70*	*42*
Western Mediterranean				
• Cyprus	-	-	-	-
• Greece	60	-	57	26
• Italy	48	42	56	19
• Malta	4	7	24	4
• Portugal	42	23	36	12
• Spain	58	56	72	56
• Turkey	22	24	9	9
Average	*39*	*30*	*42*	*21*
Eastern Mediterranean				
• Albania	42	16	4	3
• Bosnia and Herzegovina	44	30	14	10
• Bulgaria	60	20	23	23
• Croatia	46	34	26	27
• Macedonia	44	-	13	8
• Serbia and Montenegro	60	27	16	11
• Slovenia	71	27	48	32
Average	*52*	*26*	*24*	*15*
Eastern Central Europe				
• Czech Republic	67	14	60	23
• Hungary	46	16	37	22
• Poland	39	20	25	18
• Romania	42	28	13	17
• Slovakia	53	13	55	33
Average	*49*	*16*	*38*	*16*
Former Soviet Union				
• Belarus	63	27	26	25
• Estonia	54	24	30	22
• Latvia	44	29	13	32
• Lithuania	47	25	13	20
• Moldova	38	25	17	21
• Russia	62	22	18	17
• Ukraine	46	23	21	13
Average	*51*	*25*	*20*	*21*

Figs. 16.9–16.12 Attitudes towards some sexual issues,[1] percentages[2]
[1]Source: World Values Surverys 1996–2002.
[2]Values 5–10 on a scale of 1 to 10.

Acceptance of *prostitution* varies from Malta (4%) and Turkey (9%) to majority support in the famously liberal Netherlands (65%). Western Central Europeans accept prostitution more than the others, as more than two of five people consider it justifiable (Fig. 16.12).

16.8 Family Values

Do Europeans share the same family values? Far from it. On the basis of World Value Survey data we conducted a factor analysis of seven available variables measuring attitudes towards family issues. Three dimensions emerged. *Support of nuclear family and traditional femininity* (or traditional parenthood) was related to agreeing with the statements "a woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled", "women want a home and children", "a child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily" and to disapproval of single woman as parents.[8] An *anti-institutional conception of family and marriage* was found among those thinking that family is not important in life, marriage is an out-dated institution and approving of single women as parents. Those supporting *women's economic provider role* thought that husband and wife should both contribute to family income and also approved of single women as parents.

The counter-poles in traditional family values are on the one hand, the former Soviet Union countries, and on the other hand, the Nordic countries (Figs. 16.13–16.15). The other countries fall in between these extremes. The ideal of traditional parenthood is most common in the ex-Soviet Union and Eastern Central European countries and least common in the Nordic countries and in Western Central Europe.

Family and marriage as institutions are not important in the former Soviet Union countries and in the Western Central Europe (Figs. 16.16–16.17). Shared economic provision by husband and wife and single women as parents are rejected in Eastern Central European and Eastern Mediterranean countries (Figs. 16.18–16.19). It is most often accepted in the Nordic and Western Central European countries.

To summarise, the West–East dimension is a very important but not the only dividing line in European sexual patterns. Countries with long experiences of state socialist or social democratic rule are more prone to favour women's rights. This is reflected in higher support for abortion and less support for prostitution and complete sexual freedom. A traditionally harsh rejection of homosexuality diminishes when legislation and public ideology changes. As we have seen this is not the case with all indicators – for instance, although female employment has long been a fact of life, many still oppose it.

16.9 Conclusion: Tradition, Equality, or Autonomy?

In the 1930s, the founder of comparative sociology Edward Westermarck (1936/1970) predicted two long-term trends in family and sexual life: marriage would preserve its popularity and cultural tolerance would increase. By marriage, he referred to any durable union

[8]Measured by the statement: "A woman wants to have a child as a single parent but she doesn't want to have a stable relationship with a man." In Europe, there is a growing scientific interest in single parents' economic and employment situation, also from an international perspective (Duncan & Edwards 1999; Millar & Evans 2003).

Country	Traditional parenthood			N
	16.13. Child needs a home with father and mother[1]	16.14. A woman has to have children to be fulfilled[2]	16.15. Women want a home and children[3]	
Nordic countries				
• Denmark	0.7	0.8	1.9	970
• Finland	0.6	0.1	2.5	991
• Iceland	0.7	0.3	2.6	936
• Sweden	0.6	-	2.2	951
Average	*0.6*	*0.4*	*2.3*	
Western Central Europe				
• Austria	0.9	0.3		1511
• Belgium	0.8		2.6	1873
• France	0.9	0.7	2.8	1578
• Germany	0.9	0.6	2.3	1982
• Ireland	0.7	0.2	-	968
• Luxemburg	0.8	0.4	2.6	1149
• Netherlands	0.7	0.1	2.2	994
• Northern Ireland	0.7	0.2	-	944
• United Kingdom	0.6	0.2	2.4	913
Average	*0.8*	*0.3*	*2.5*	
Western Mediterranean				
• Greece	1.0	0.7	2.8	1121
• Italy	0.9	0.6	2.8	1948
• Malta	0.9	0.4	2.8	991
• Portugal	0.7	0.7	2.5	971
• Spain	0.9	0.5	2.4	2331
• Turkey	1.0	0.7	-	4518
Average	*0.9*	*0.6*	*2.7*	
Eastern Mediterranean				
• Albania	1.0	0.9	0.6	985
• Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.9	0.9	-	1191
• Bulgaria	1.0	0.7	3.0	991
• Croatia	0.8	0.5	2.6	973
• Macedonia	1.0	0.7	2.7	1049
• Serbia and Montenegro	0.9	0.7	-	2187
• Slovenia	0.9	0.4	2.8	994
Average	*1.0*	*0.7*	*0.9*	
Eastern Central Europe				
• Czech Republic	0.9	0.5	2.8	1870
• Poland	1.0	0.7	3.0	1086
• Hungary	1.0	0.9	2.9	991
• Romania	0.9	0.8	3.1	1119
• Slovakia	0.9	0.4	2.7	1312
Average	*0.9*	*0.7*	*2.9*	
Former Soviet Union				
• Estonia	1.0	0.7	2.8	973
• Latvia	0.9	0.9	2.8	989
• Lithuania	0.8	0.7	3.1	943
• Russia	0.9	0.8	3.1	2451
• Belarus	0.9	0.8	2.9	976
• Ukraine	1.0	0.9	3.1	1170
• Moldova	0.97	0.8	-	999
Average	*0.93*	*0.8*	*3.0*	
Total	0.9	0.6	2.7	50889

Figs. 16.13–16.15 Traditional parenthood, means
[1]Source: World Values Surveys 1999–2002.
[2]Range 0–1.
[3]Range 1–4.

Country	Anti-institutional family conception		Economically independent woman		N
	16.16. Family not important in life	16.17. Marriage is an out-dated institution	16.18. Husband and wife should both contribute to income	16.19. Approves woman as a single parent	
Nordic countries					
• Denmark	1.1	1.3	2.1	2.2	970
• Finland	1.2	1.4	2.1	2.3	991
• Iceland	1.1	1.2	2.3	2.7	936
• Sweden	1.1	1.4	1.6	1.9	951
Average	*1.1*	*1.3*	*2.0*	*2.3*	
Western Central Europe					
• Austria	1.1	1.4	-	2.1	1511
• Belgium	1.1	1.6	1.9	2.1	1873
• France	1.1	1.7	1.8	2.2	1578
• Germany	1.3	1.4	2.0	2.0	1982
• Ireland	1.1	1.4	-	1.9	968
• Luxemburg	1.1	1.7	2.3	2.1	1149
• Netherlands	1.3	1.5	2.6	2.2	994
• Northern Ireland	1.1	1.5	-	1.9	944
• United Kingdom	1.1	1.5	2.2	2.00	913
Average	*1.1*	*1.5*	*2.1*	*2.1*	
Western Mediterranean					
• Greece	1.2	1.3	1.7	1.9	1121
• Italy	1.1	1.31	2.0	1.9	1948
• Malta	1.0	1.1	2.2	1.4	991
• Portugal	1.2	1.5	1.8	1.9	971
• Spain	1.1	1.4	1.8	2.6	2331
• Turkey	1.0	1.2	1.8	1.2	4518
Average	*1.1*	*1.3*	*1.9*	*1.8*	
Eastern Mediterranean					
• Albania	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.5	985
• Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.0	1.3	1.6	2.1	1191
• Bulgaria	1.2	1.3	1.6	2.2	991
• Croatia	1.2	1.2	1.7	2.5	973
• Macedonia	1.0	1.4	1.5	2.1	1049
• Serbia and Montenegro	1.1	1.3	*1.6*	2.1	2187
• Slovenia	1.2	1.5	1.6	2.4	994
Average	*1.1*	*1.3*	*1.6*	*2.1*	

Figs. 16.16–16.19 Anti-institutional family conception and economically independent woman, means (range 1–4)

Eastern Central Europe					
• Czech Republic	1.2	1.2	1.6	2.1	1870
• Poland	1.1	1.2	1.7	2.2	1086
• Hungary	1.1	1.3	1.6	2.0	991
• Romania	1.2	1.2	1.7	2.2	1119
• Slovakia	1.1	1.2	1.6	1.9	1312
Average	*1.1*	*1.2*	*1.7*	*2.1*	
Former Soviet Union					
• Estonia	1.4	1.3	1.9	2.1	973
• Latvia	1.3	1.3	1.8	2.3	989
• Lithuania	1.4	1.4	1.9	2.4	943
• Russia	1.3	1.4	1.9	2.3	2451
• Belarus	1.3	1.3	1.7	2.4	976
• Ukraine	1.2	1.3	1.8	2.0	1170
• Moldova	1.2	1.6	1.7	1.9	999
Average	*1.3*	*1.4*	*1.8*	*2.2*	
Total	1.2	1.4	1.8	2.0	50889

Figs. 16.16–16.19 (continued)

between two adults of the opposite sex, thus including both institutionalised marriage and cohabitation.

As we know today, Westermarck's predictions proved right. Alternatives to the traditional institutionalised heterosexual marriage have spread and sexual behaviour has become increasingly separated from marriage. Cohabitation, either before entering legal marriage or as a life-long form of living, is common in most European countries. Single motherhood is much less stigmatised than before. Homosexual couples and their children are increasingly recognised and approved of. At the same time, the most common family formation, the heterosexual nuclear family, is still dominant.

Within these general trends of change and stability, our division into six European regions presents distinct behavioural patterns of sexual, couple, and family formation (a list of the specific features of the six areas is presented in Chart 16.3). We have attempted to retain internal divisions especially in Eastern Europe, which are often overlooked. Nevertheless, our results point to the continuing relevance of the East–West division.

A visualisation of Europe's couples and families may thus begin with that historical line, running vertically on the map, and then add more or less horizontal lines from East to West tracing religion versus secularism, or traditional family values versus gender equality, to the picture. Below, we sum up the findings for each region and then sketch three major dividing lines that emerged from our review and relate to gender equality, traditional family values, and individual autonomy.

The *Nordic countries* are characterised by gender equality, dual breadwinners, sexual permissiveness, and relatively high fertility. Young people have early sexual initiation, often use modern contraception, start to live independently early, have late coupling and late transition to parenthood and formal marriage. Cohabitation is common and the proportion of ever-married women is the lowest in Europe. About one in five parents have three or more children. Household size is, nevertheless, small. People receive little informal practical help from kin but get relatively generous monetary assistance. The share of women in the labour force is high, part-time work uncommon, and small children are often

Characteristics	The Nordic countries (Denmark. Finland. Iceland. Norway. Sweden)	Western Central Europe (Austria. Belgium. France. Germany. Ireland. Luxemburg. Monaco. The Netherlands. Northern Ireland. Switzerland. United Kingdom)	The Western Mediterranean area (Gibraltar. Greece. Italy. Malta. Portugal. Spain. Turkey)	The Eastern Mediterranean countries (Albania. Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bulgaria. Croatia. Macedonia. Serbia and Montenegro. Slovenia)	Eastern Central European countries (Czech Republic. Hungary. Poland. Romania. and Slovakia)	The former Soviet Union countries in Europe (Belarus. Estonia. Latvia. Lithuania. Moldova. Russia. and Ukraine).
Sexuality and couple formation						
Age at first intercourse for women	low	fairly low	high	(fairly low)	high	high
Age at first marriage for women	high	high	lower	low	low	very low
Mean age of women at the birth of the first child	high	high	high	low	low	very low
Total fertility rate	high	high	fairly high	low	low	low
Use of modern contraceptives	yes	yes	some	no	no	no
Ever married women	low	fairly low	fairly low	high	high	high
Divorces	fairly low	fairly low	low	low	fairly low	high
Household composition						
Household size	small	small	large	large	small	large
Children living at home (people born 1945-50)	no	no	yes	Not studied	Not studied	Not studied
Families with 3+ children	yes	yes	no	no	yes	.no
Maternal employment						
Share of women in adult labour force	high	low	low	high	high	high
Part-time employment	low	high	low	low	low	low
Proportion of 0–3 yrs ol children in daycare	high	low	low	low	low	low
Preschool child suffers of maternal employment	low	fairly low	high	fairly high	high	high
Women use plenty of time in household work	no	no	yes	yes	Not studied	yes
Intergenerational help: gives more than expected	yes	no	no	Not studied	Not studied	Not studied
Sexual values						
Abortion	strong yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
Sexual freedom	no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
Prostitution	yes	strong yes	no	no	no	no
Homosexuality	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Family values						
Traditional parenthood	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Anti-institutional conception of marriage	no	yes	no	no	no	yes
Economically independent woman	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes

Chart 16.3 Summary of the characteristics of the six areas

enrolled in public day care. Attitudes towards employment of mothers are positive. Women do not use plenty of time for household chores, the gender gap in which is also comparatively small. Attitudes towards abortion and homosexuality are liberal but total sexual freedom is rejected. Family values favour dual breadwinners and also approve of single parenthood.

Compared to the North, *Western Central Europe* has lower overall fertility, less gender equality, and a greater emphasis on individual freedom in sexual and family matters. People start sexual intercourse and marry fairly early but get their first child at an advanced age. Use of modern contraception is widespread. Households are small, adult children do not live with parents, and there are many families with three or more children. The share of women in paid work is low and women's part-time work is common. Women spend more time in domestic work than do Nordic women but less than women in Southern and Eastern Europe. Western Central European men do housework as much as Nordic men. Sexually liberal attitudes prevail, particularly towards prostitution but also towards homosexuality and unlimited sexual freedom. However, abortion is not considered as justifiable as in the Nordic countries. Traditional family values are not very strong; people favour what we have named an anti-institutional conception of marriage and the family. Female breadwinners and single mothers are accepted.

In the *Western Mediterranean* area, we discern less gender equality and also less signs of liberal individualism. Young people stay longer in the parental home. They have later sexual initiation, coupling, and transition to parenthood. Modern contraception methods are not used very often. Fertility levels are relatively low and families with many children are rare, despite the higher presence of kin and relatives in daily life. Households are large and divorces relatively uncommon. Women are more seldom working for pay but use much time in unpaid domestic work. People often believe that a preschool child suffers if the mother is working. Attitudes towards sexual issues are conservative, with the notable exception of strong support for unlimited sexual freedom. Family values favour traditional parenthood, here measured as the view that a child needs both parents and a woman needs children.

Compared with the Western Mediterranean area, the *Eastern Mediterranean* area also favours traditional family values. In contrast to it, Eastern Mediterraneans experience earlier fertility and more gender equality in employment. Sexual initiation takes place fairly early and people marry and get children at a young age. Modern contraception is rare. The proportion of ever-married women is high and divorce is rare, but few children are born. Households are large, but there are few families with at least three children under 18 at home. Women work for pay relatively often and full-time. Much time is spent on household chores. Attitudes towards abortion and sexual freedom are liberal but homosexuality and prostitution are not considered justifiable. Family values emphasise traditional parenthood.

In *Eastern Central Europe*, sexual initiation is late, but formal marriage and transition to parenthood arrive early in the life course. Fertility levels are low and few women report modern contraception use. Average household size is small, but there are many families with at least three children under 18. As in the Eastern Mediterranean area, women's involvement in full-time wage work is high but children are not in day-care facilities outside the home. Abortion and homosexuality are considered justifiable but unlimited sexual freedom and prostitution are condemned. Traditional parenthood is valued.

Finally, in the region encompassing the *former Soviet Union*, sexual initiation occurs late but people marry and get children early. Fertility rates are low. Modern contraception is seldom used, although this is slowly changing. The proportion of ever-married women

is high and divorce common. Households are large but there are few families with at least three under-age children. Women often work for pay although people believe the children suffer from it. People approve of abortion and unlimited sexual freedom but not of homosexuality and prostitution. Family values favour traditional parenthood but also anti-institutional conception of marriage, indicating polarisation of opinions within the populations.

Depending on which indicator we study, the six European regions – a Northern, Central, and Southern region on each side of the Trieste–St. Petersburg line – align themselves somewhat differently. Generalising, we may look at these three horizontal "belts" of family formations as emphasising *gender equality in the North, individual autonomy in Central Europe*, and *traditional family values in the South.*

We grouped the family values of traditional parenthood, anti-institutional conception of family, and woman's economic independence. Their counterpoles are the former Soviet Union countries vs. Nordic countries. In between these poles are Western Central Europe and both Mediterranean areas, where people support, e.g. large individual sexual freedom. In the Nordic and also in the Western Central European countries homosexuality is accepted more than elsewhere.

In Northern Europe, the spheres of sexuality and family life are less overlapping than in the South. Young adults in Nordic countries have a longer period of sexually active single life, before marriage and parenthood, while the age at first intercourse and first marriage is higher in Southern Europe. The gender differences are also higher in the South, reflecting the stronger presence and control of kin and husbands. Women spend a lot of time in domestic work in the Mediterranean area (and in France and Estonia) while in the Western Mediterranean area the proportion of women in the labour force is low.

Children also live in the parental home longer in the Mediterranean area than in the North. Expectations towards intergenerational support differ on the South–North dimension. Finally, in some behavioural patterns, we see alignments between South and East, making the North stand alone. Thus extended families (having other kin than children in the household) are usual in the Western Mediterranean countries and in Eastern Europe. Fear of negative consequences of maternal employment is rare in the Nordic and most of the Western Central European countries, but fairly common in the Mediterranean and Eastern European countries.

How will European families evolve? While signs of convergence are clear, there is also no doubt that century-old historical divisions continue and new regional variations appear (Therborn 2007). Family and sexual attitudes also change with different logic and pace. For instance, we have seen the enormous intra-European variation that currently exists regarding homosexuality. Negative attitudes to homosexuality build on stereotypes, fears, and revulsion. Fortunately, fast progress is possible and social attitudes may change rapidly, e.g. as legislation extends marital and parental rights to sexual minorities.

With regard to gender roles, the question of the pace of change appears more complex. Despite several decades of high female participation in paid work in all of Europe, attitudes to maternal employment were nowhere unequivocal. Even in the Nordic countries, with their uniformly supportive policies for gender equality, substantial amounts of people ascribe traditional domestic roles to women and do not approve of single motherhood.

There are crucial tensions between each pair of the three concepts freedom, tradition, and gender equality. In the minds of Europeans, complete sexual freedom may be opposed to gender equality, and great marital and reproductive choice does not always lead to stable and traditional families. As stressed in the beginning of this chapter, all sex–marriage patterns have their pros and cons. Remembering the women quoted in the introduction,

Table 16.2 Expectations related to support given and received by elderly in the family. Means, range 1–5. People born in 1945–50[1)]

	Expectations towards support from grandparents and parents				Expectations related to the role of family and the state in helping the elderly			
	Grandparents' duty is to be there for grandchildren	Grandparents' duty is to support grandchildren economically	Grandparents' duty is to look after grandchildren	Parents duty is to do their best for their children	Financial support for elderly should be given by family	Help in household chores for elderly should be given by family	Personal care of elderly should be given by family	N
Greece	4.3	3.4	3.9	4.4	2.4	3.5	3.7	342
Italy	4.2	3.6	3.9	4.3	2.7	3.3	3.1	313
Spain	4.1	3.4	3.6	4.1	2.9'	3.2	3.2	221
France	4.3	3.5	3.9	3.9	2.4	2.6	2.5	263
Belgium	3.9	3.0	3.3	3.6	2.5	2.9	2.7	543
Switzerland	3.6	2.5	2.9	3.6	2.5	3.1	2.9	121
Austria	3.8	2.8	3.3	3.8	2.6	3.2	3.0	286
Germany	4.0	2.9	3.6	3.2	2.7	3.4	3.1	335
Netherlands	3.7	2.6	2.6	3.5	2.2	2.6	2.3	470
Denmark	4.0	2.4	2.9	3.7	1.8	2.0	1.7	246
Sweden	4.0	2.8	3.0	4.3	2.1	2.4	2.2	411
Finland	3.8	2.6	2.6		2.3	2.6	2.4	1115

[1)]Sources: SHARE dropoff and GENTRANS question 102.

it may be an advantage to become a mother very early and raise your child with great help from your own parents, as in the East, but it may also be desirable to live an independent, adventurous prolonged Nordic youth – or a socially and economically protected, less adventurous single life of the Southern European young.

The choice between individual autonomy, gender equality, and traditional family ties is sometimes a real choice: not even in the best of all Europes could one probably ever select only the best parts of these family variations.

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