



Vrije Universiteit Brussel



Interface Demography

Field of education, gendered family norms and the postponement of first births in Europe

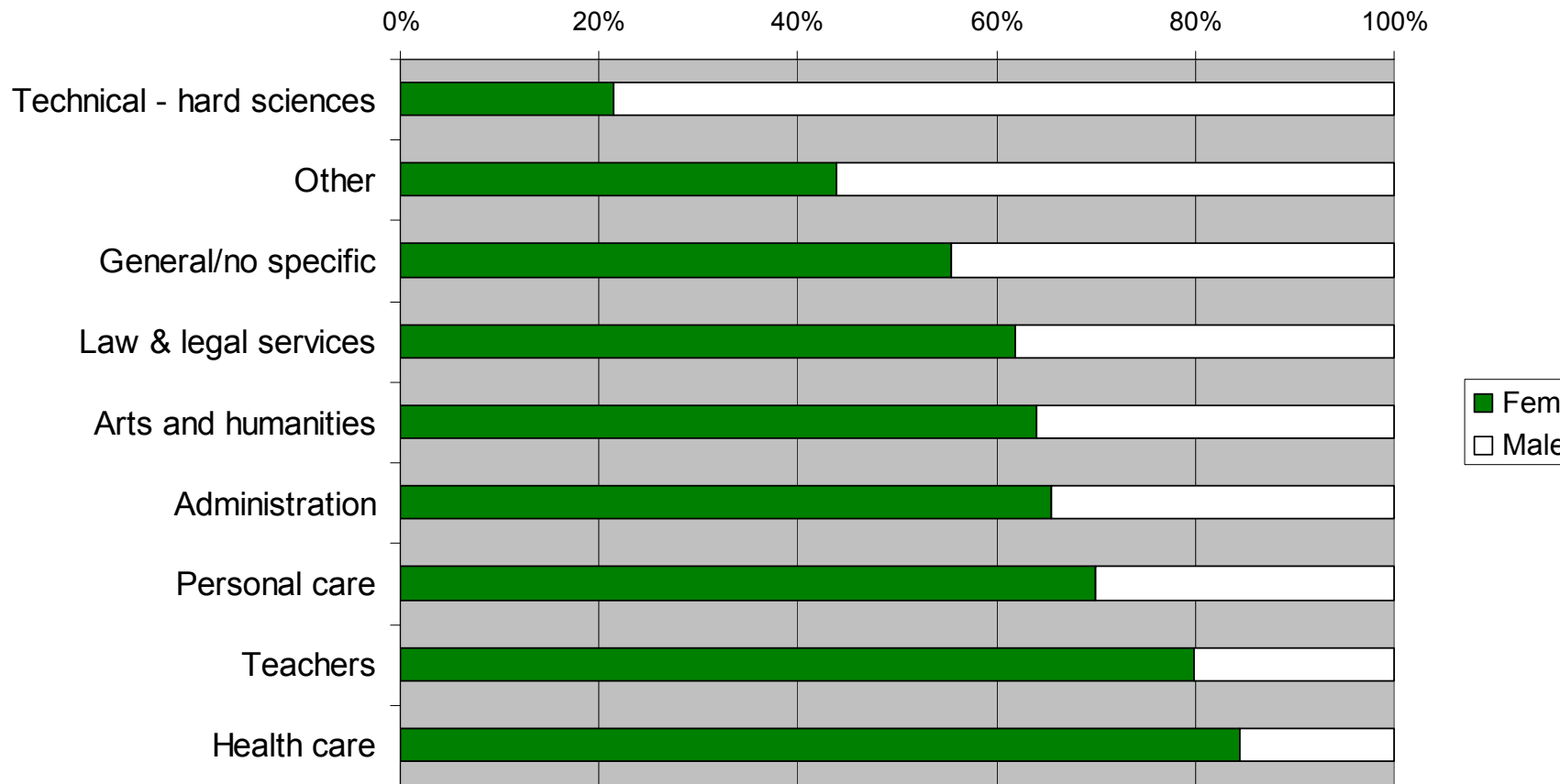
Jan Van Bavel, *Interface Demography*
Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Women's education and postponement

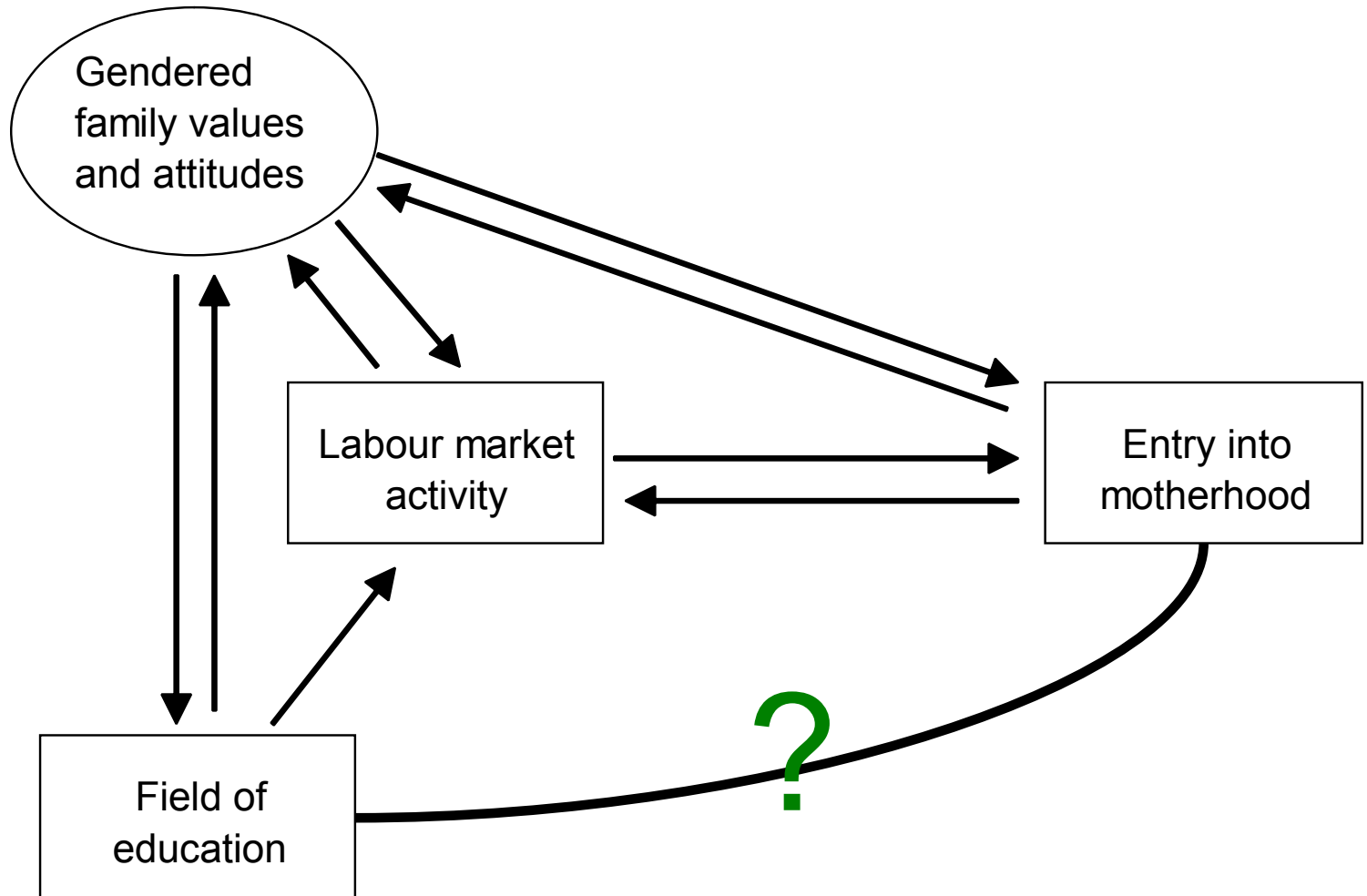
- ♀ Increased level of educational attainment
 - has facilitated participation in the labour force
 - main driving force behind postponement of parenthood
- Yet
 - women continue to be marginalized in the more lucrative and powerful professional positions
 - women continue to be concentrated in particular segments of labour market (health care, teaching, public administration etc.)

Women's education and postponement

- Gender segmentation of labour market is anticipated by concentration in particular fields of education



Why would field of education affect postponement of motherhood?



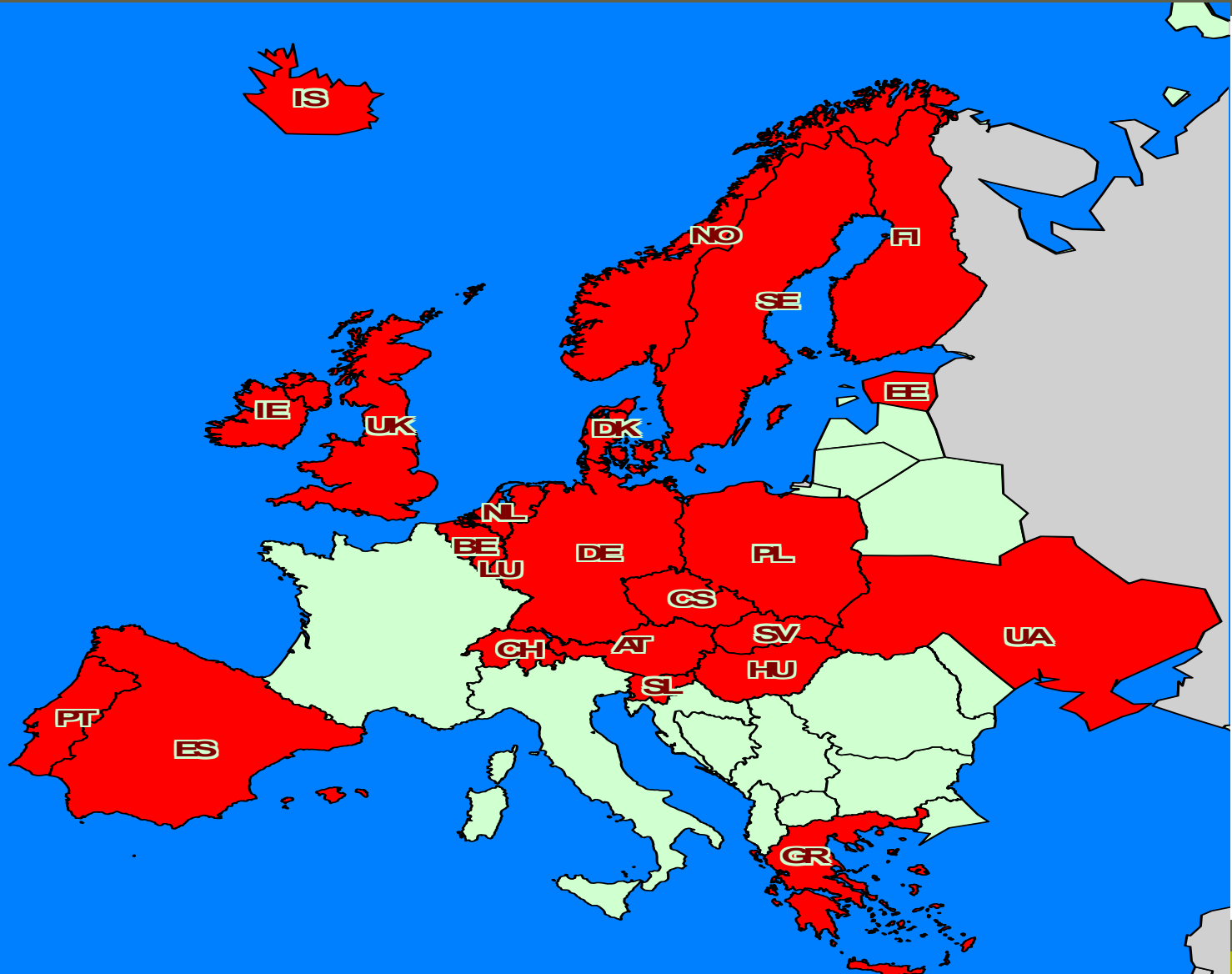
Research question

- Is there a relationship between field of education and postponement of parenthood across Europe?
 - a handful of national cases studies suggest that there is
- Can this relationship be explained by its correlation with
 - activity in the labour market?
 - attitudes towards traditional gendered family roles?

Data

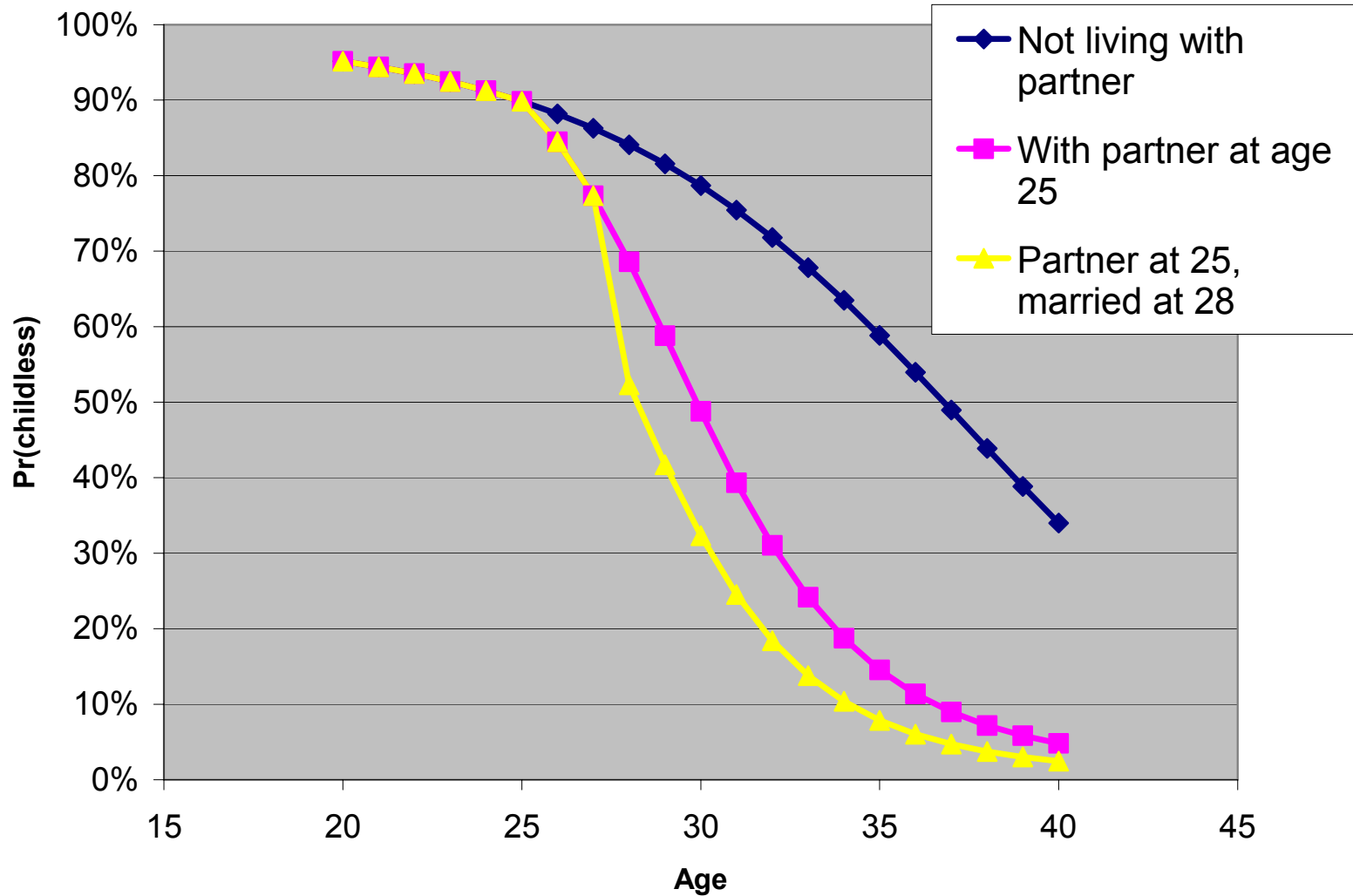
- European Social Survey, round 2 (2004/05)
 - women aged [20-40]
 - self-declared main daily activity is NOT full-time education anymore (“graduated women”)

23 countries included



Postponement from cross-sectional data?

Example: model proportions childless by age and partnership situation



Control variables

- Age
- Duration of living with a partner
- Married or not
- Level of education

- Geographic region (N-,S-,CE-,W-Europe)

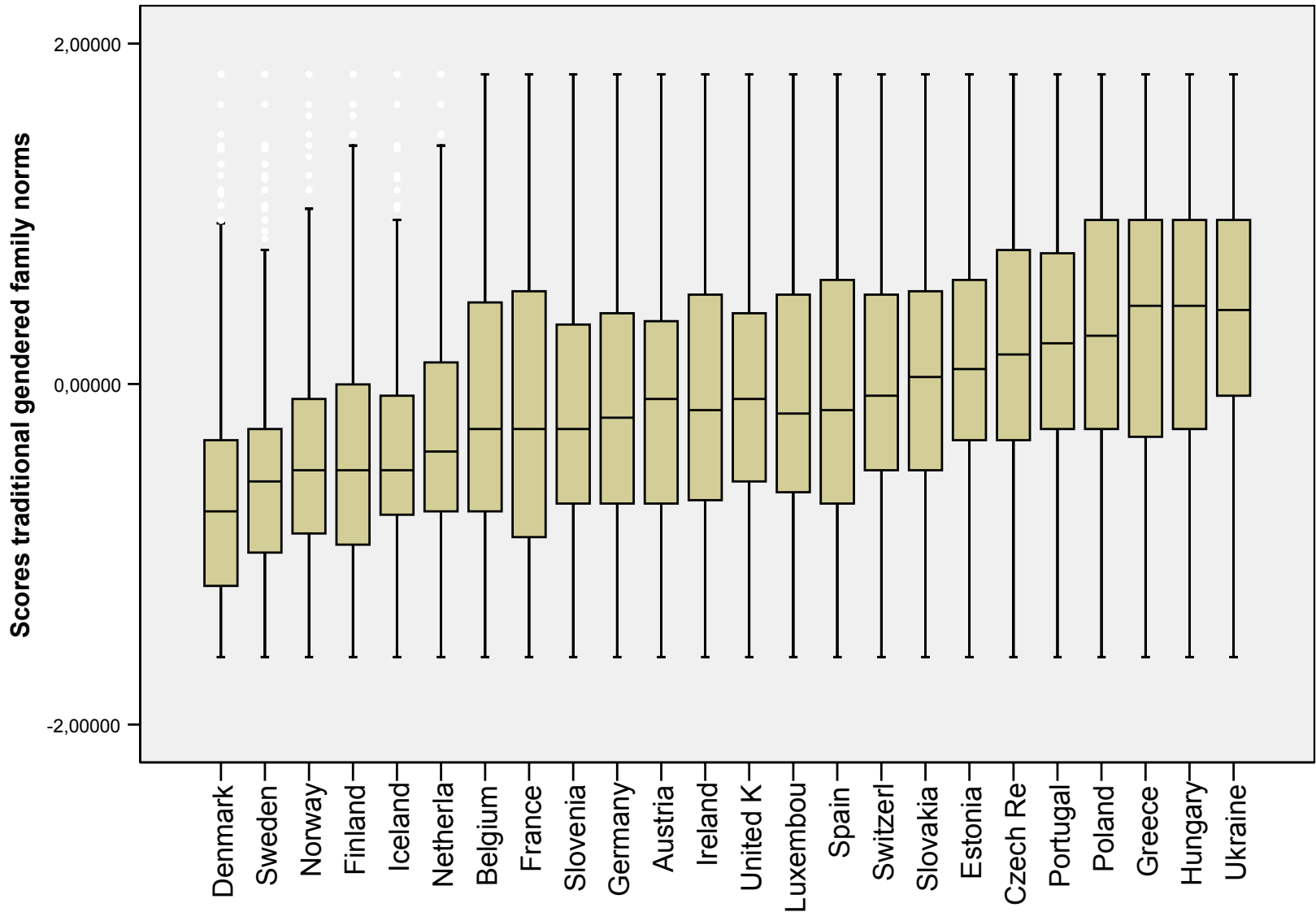
Activity status in the labour market

- paid work
- unemployed, looking for a job
- unemployed, not looking for a job
- doing housework
- other

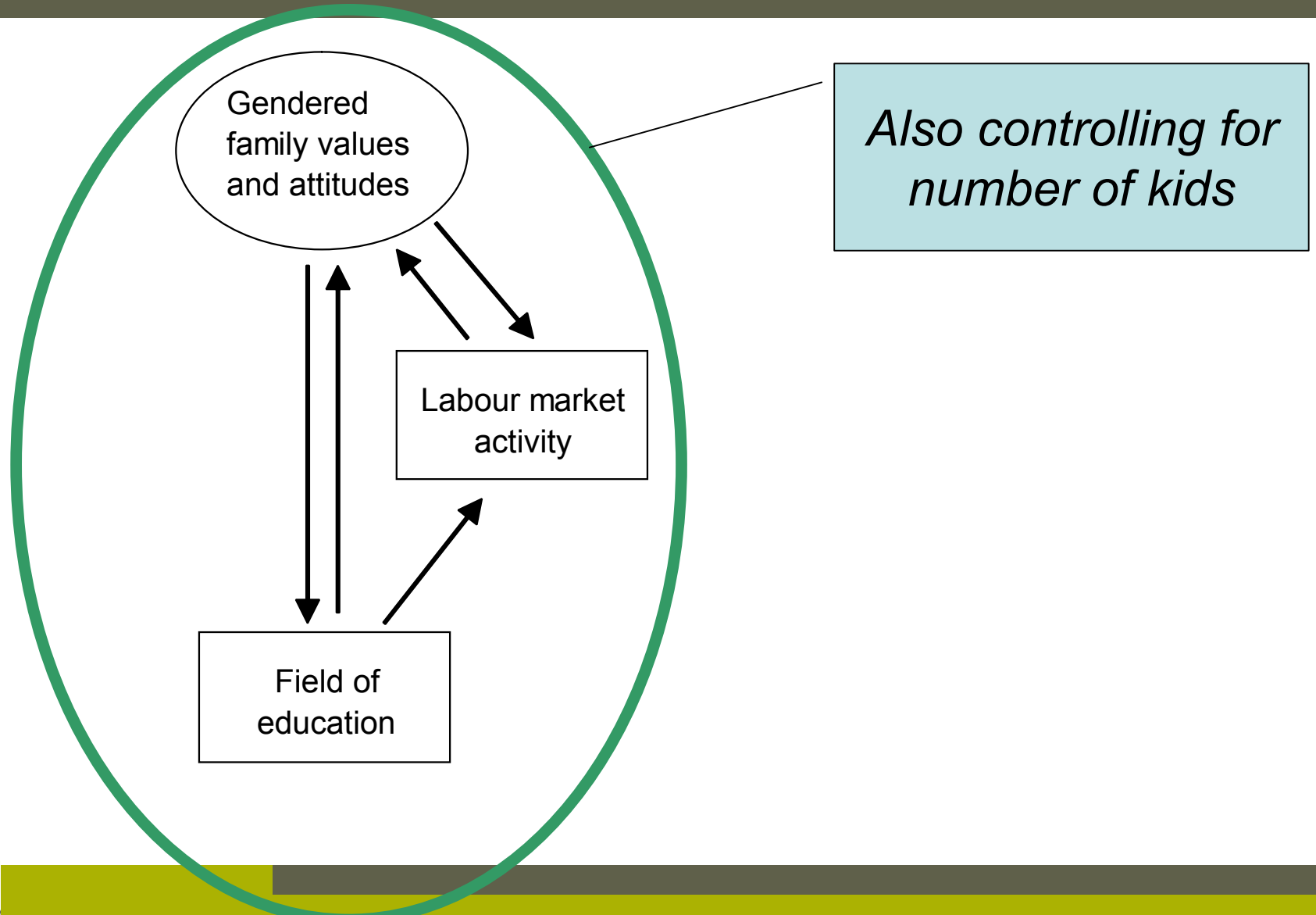
Traditional attitude about gendered family norms

- Factor scores based on
 1. “A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family”
 2. “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women”
 3. “When there are children in the home, parents should stay together even if they don’t get along”

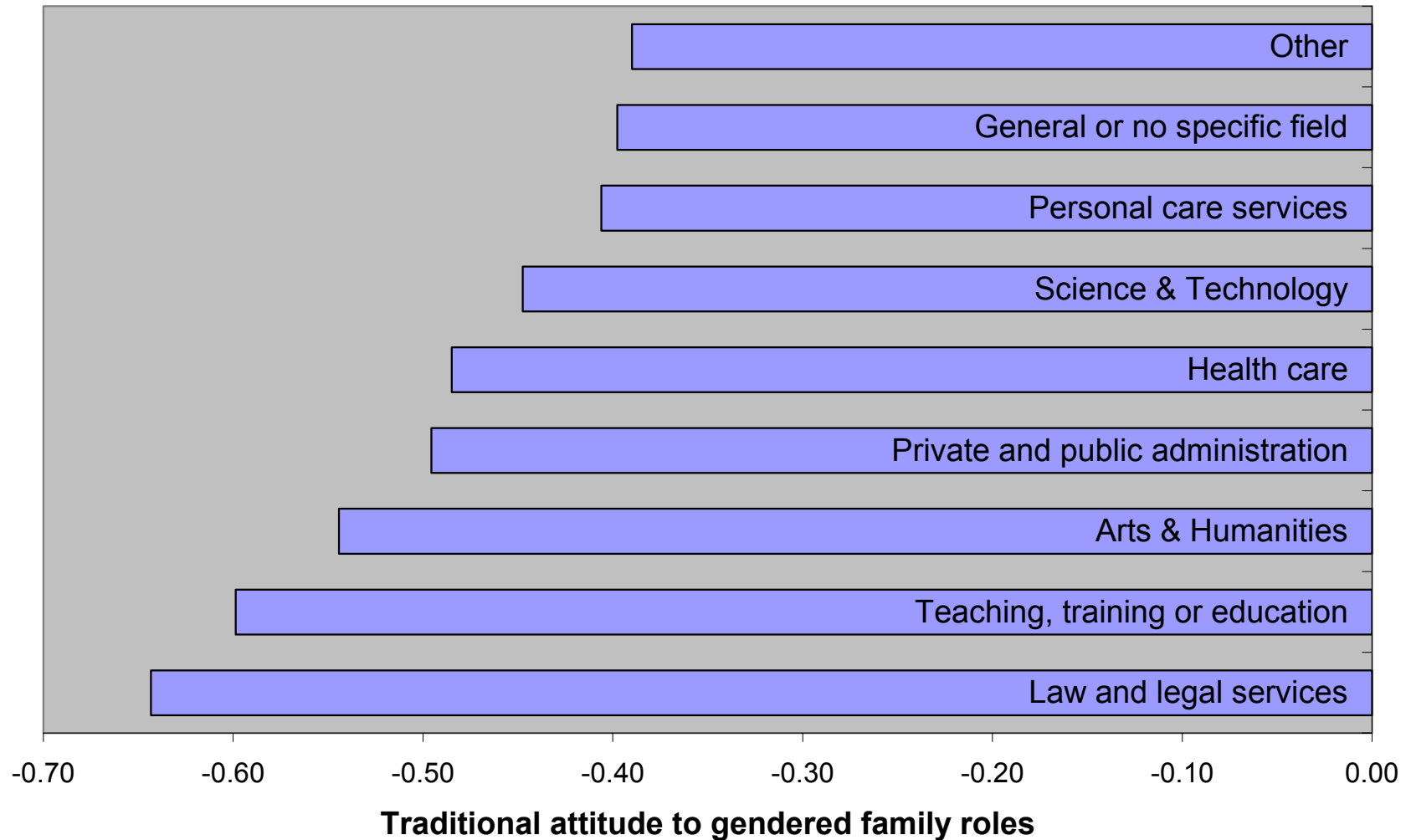
Factor scores on traditional gendered family norms, box plot by country



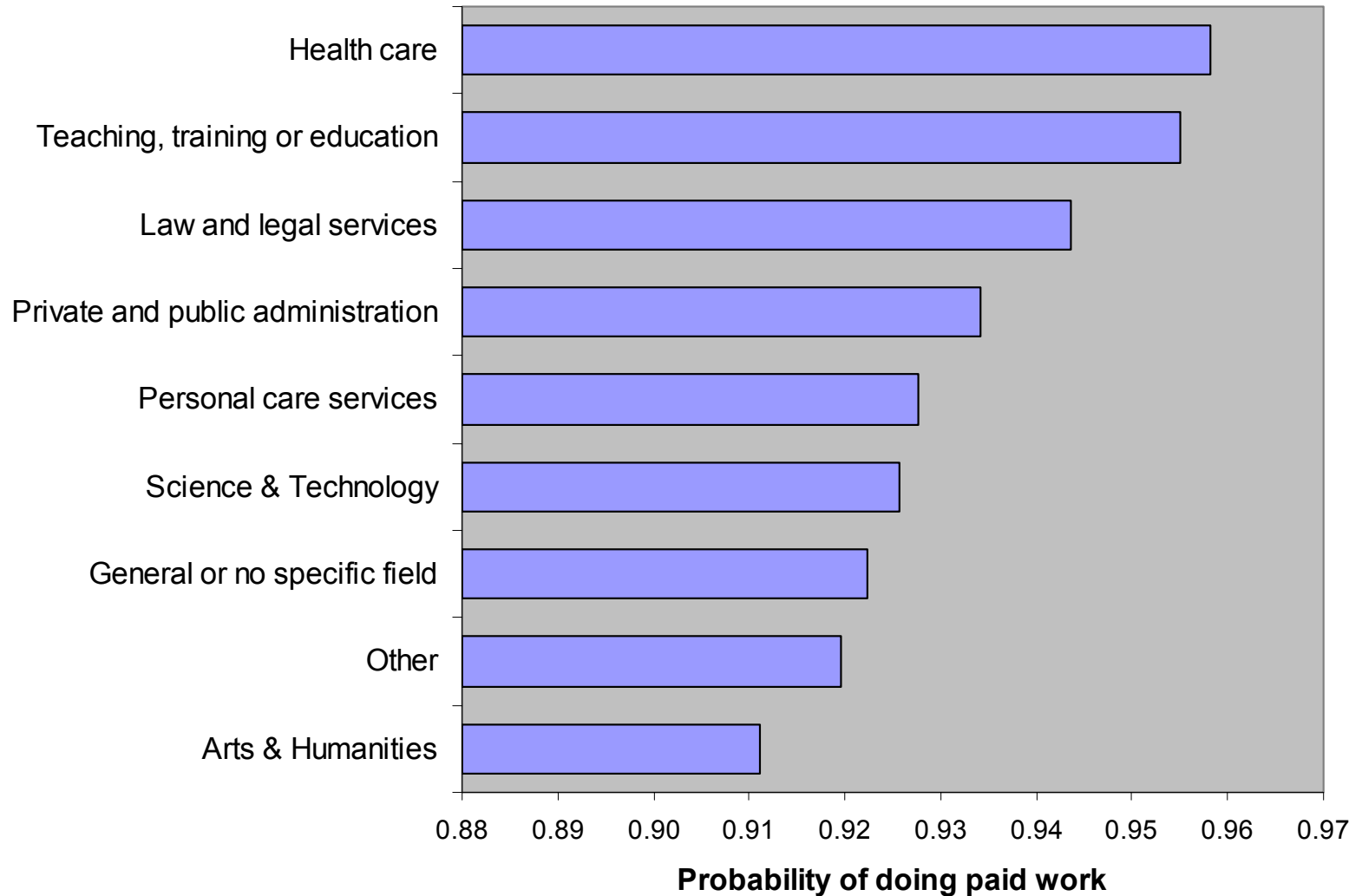
Field of education, family norms, and activity in the labour market



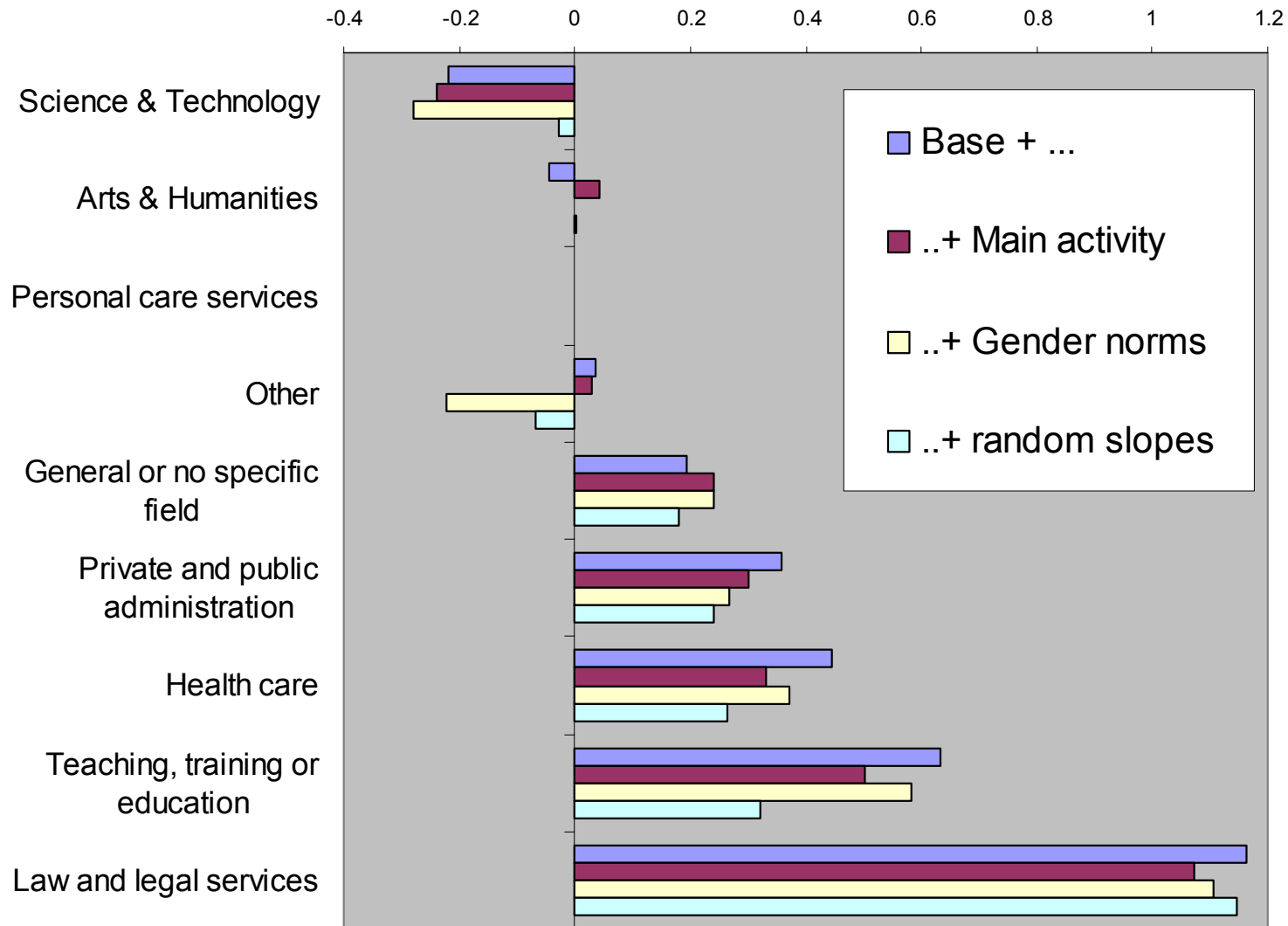
Field of education and traditional attitudes about gender roles (net differences)



Field of education and activity in the labour market (net differences)

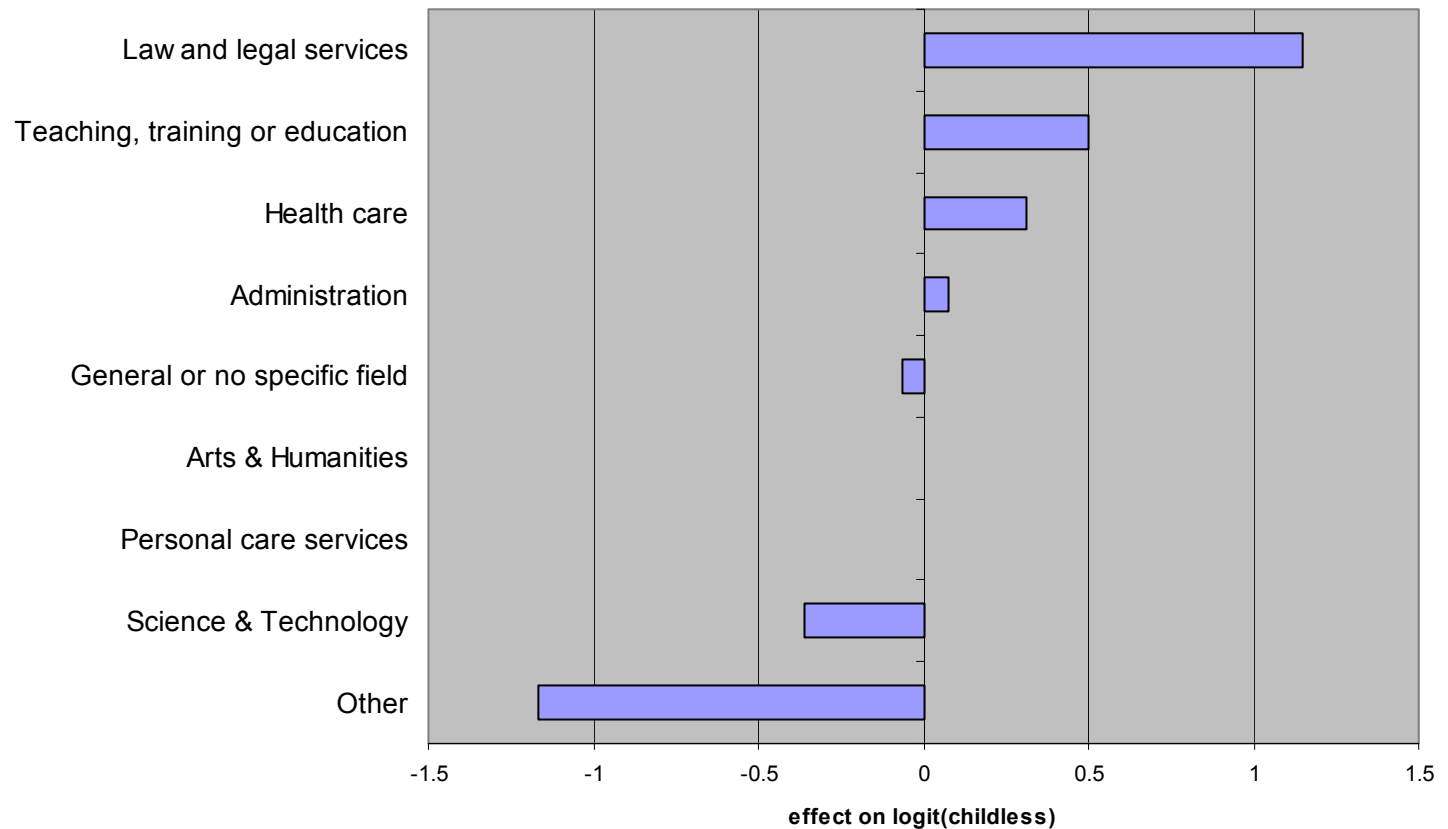


Effects of fields of education on logit(postponement)



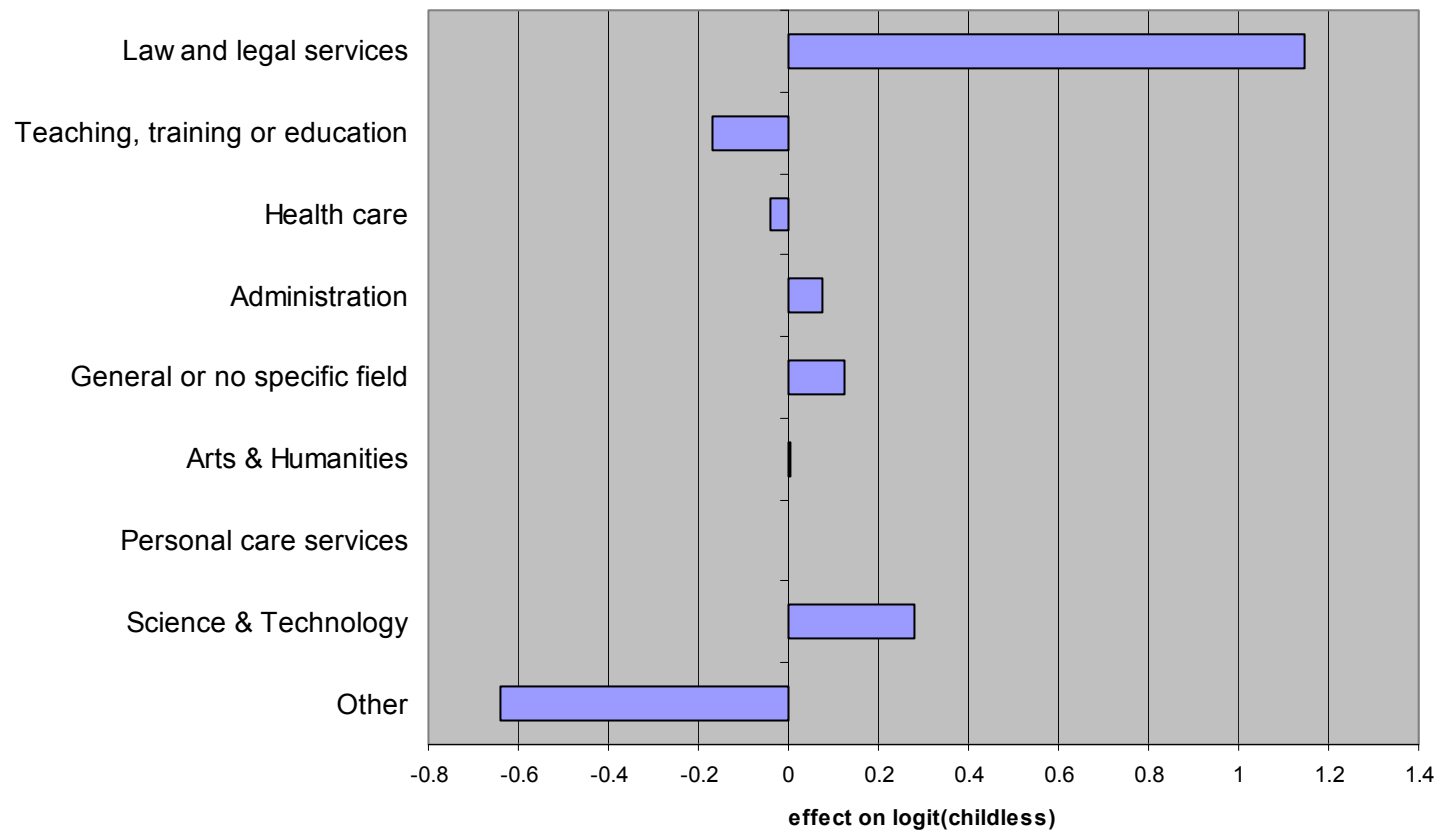
Slopes by field per country

Spain



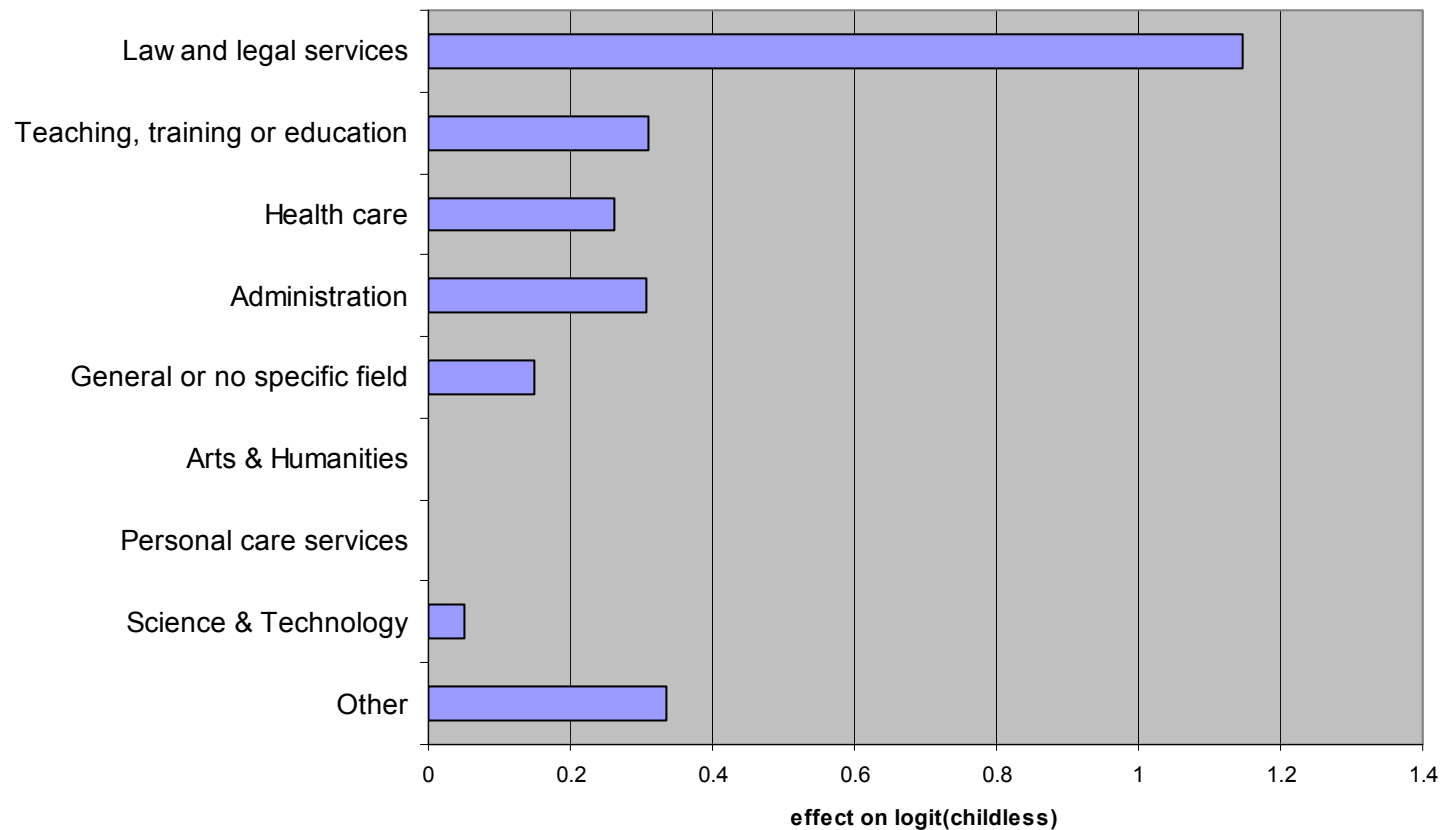
Slopes by field per country

Sweden



Slopes by field per country

Czech Republic



Conclusions

- Field of education is significantly connected with postponement of motherhood across Europe
- The latter connection cannot be explained away by
 - the simple activity status in the labour market
 - traditional attitudes towards gendered family rolesas measured here

Discussion

- To-do list:
 - Introduce more fine-tuned measures of participation in the labour force
 - explore other attitudinal variables
 - introduce country-level, institutional characteristics