




## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# “A good mother can't—But a good father should?” Cross- and within-country differences in attitudes toward parents' full-time work in 26 European countries

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## Abstract

Regardless of the rise of egalitarian parenting, maternal and paternal roles are subject to different expectations, shaped by cultural and institutional factors. We examine levels of (dis)approval of parents' full-time work in 26 European countries and ask: Do attitudes toward mothers' and fathers' full-time work vary across countries? What are the sociodemographic, cultural, and family policy-related institutional factors that explain these attitudes? To what extent can the gender arrangement framework help to understand differences in attitudes toward full-time working parents? Data from the 2018 European Social Survey was analyzed using cross-tabulation and multilevel analysis. Results reveal that the ideal of motherhood continues to be culturally more contested than that of fatherhood. Individual-level sociodemographic factors are more relevant to attitudes toward mothers' than to fathers' full-time work, while country-level factors connected to gender, work culture, and family policy are similar in their effects on attitudes toward mothers' and fathers' full-time work.

## KEYWORDS

cross-national research, earner roles, fathers, full-time work, gender arrangement, mothers

## INTRODUCTION

Parents' individual negotiations of care and employment practices—that is, work-life arrangements—are influenced by cultural attitudes, views about parenting, and institutional structures (Bornatici & Zinn, 2025; Düval, 2023; Pfau-Effinger, 2023). The dominant role expectations of parents in European countries, as elsewhere, are gendered, which means that “motherhood” and “fatherhood” are not commensurate (Eydal & Rostgaard, 2023).

Cultural norms for motherhood and fatherhood involve different moral assumptions and ideals, which are reflected in work and care practices (Begall et al., 2023; Bornatici & Zinn, 2025); even when men participate more in childcare, the time spent on care and household duties is unequal, and men and women typically carry out different chores (Aassve et al., 2014; Düval, 2023; Kaufman & Bair, 2021).

Narrowing the gender employment gap has been high on the political agenda in Europe (Nordenmark, 2015)

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for decades, and a focus of research in that time (e.g., Bornatici & Zinn, 2025; Düval, 2023; Ferragina, 2020; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015; Valentova, 2016). Drawing on Pfau-Effinger's gender arrangement framework (1998; 2005; 2023), we contribute to the existing literature by analyzing the differences between European countries in attitudes toward full-time working (FW) mothers and FW fathers and investigate the factors that explain these differences, testing the operationalization of the framework using a comparative, cross-country setting.

The notion of gender arrangement (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, 2005, 2023) is based on the understanding that the interrelations between culture and institutions explain the differences in the employment patterns of women and men. Social actors are mediators in the intersection of culture and institutions, playing a central role in shaping and transforming gender arrangements through their engagement with cultural norms and institutional structures. A key dimension for equalizing gender roles is the cultural acceptance of maternal employment (Grunow et al., 2018), which involves people's attitudes toward employment patterns. As stated by Allport (1935; cited in Nordenmark, 2015), attitude may be defined as an individual's evaluation of people, objects, activities, or ideas. Attitudes toward maternal and paternal employment patterns are embedded in gender ideology: a set of socially shared beliefs, values, and expectations about biological sex and human behavior that shapes how individuals interpret and engage with the world and what they consider desirable (Bornatici & Zinn, 2025; Davis & Greenstein, 2009).

In this study, we build on previous research by studying both cross-country and within-country differences in attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers in 26 European countries. Earlier comparative research on the topic has typically focused on a limited number of countries (e.g., Edlund & Öun, 2016; Grunow et al., 2018); however, effective comparative analysis requires data from a large number of countries, as previous research reveals the existence of several varieties of egalitarianism rather than a single egalitarian model in Europe (Knight & Brinton, 2017).

This study contributes to extant knowledge in three ways. First, we investigate the differences between attitudes in European countries toward FW mothers and FW fathers using the gender arrangement framework. Our data has the advantage of having identical variables that measure attitudes toward mothers' and fathers' FW roles separately, which enables us to reveal possible attitudinal gender gaps in perceptions of earner roles in different European countries. Second, we analyze what are the sociodemographic, cultural, and family policy-related institutional factors that explain attitudes toward FW

mothers and FW fathers. Third, we further test the operationalization of the gender arrangement framework for empirical research by investigating whether culture and institutions (i.e., the gender arrangement framework) can help explain differences in attitudes toward FW parents. The data used comes from Round 9 (2018) of the European Social Survey (ESS), and our analysis sample includes 34,878 individuals in the age range of 18–70 years.

The findings which produced these contributions resulted from three specific research questions:

1. Do attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers vary from country to country across Europe?
2. If so, what sociodemographic, cultural, and family policy-related institutional factors explain these attitudes?
3. To what extent can Pfau-Effinger's gender arrangement framework help in understanding differences in attitudes toward FW parents?

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### Gender arrangement framework

Consisting of both individual and contextual factors, gender ideology evolves over time (Grunow et al., 2018), shaping perceptions of gender roles and responsibilities. Moreover, it affects what kind of gender roles are perceived to align with prevailing norms and practices (Begall et al., 2023; Bornatici & Zinn, 2025; Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Düval, 2023), including those governing the division of work and care (Kaufman et al., 2024). We draw on the gender arrangement framework (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, 2005, 2023) to analyze and explain both cross- and within-country differences in attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers, finding it particularly suitable for explaining cross-national variations in gender relations and social practices such as employment patterns for the following reasons:

First, its emphasis on the role of culture shows that gender differences in parents' employment patterns cannot be attributed to differences in societal institutions. Culture needs to be understood as a system of collective ideas related to the notion of a good society and morally good behavior (Pfau-Effinger, 2023). In essence, two cultural dimensions are vital for the framework: how children should be cared for and the ideal relationship of each parent toward employment and childcare (Pfau-Effinger, 2005, 2023).

Second, the gender arrangement frame also acknowledges the role of institutional settings, such as differences

in family policy institutions, care arrangements, and policies for children (Pfau-Effinger, 2023), which shape practices, choices, and preferences (Nordenmark, 2015; Rubery et al., 1999; see also Hong et al., 2023). Family policy affects care arrangements, organized both outside and within the family, by governing benefits, rules, and family leaves. However, as Pfau-Effinger (2023) points out, informal family- or market-based resources may support certain behaviors that are not in compliance with the institutional setting; cultural norms and values concerning gender roles and gender structure—in other words, institutional arrangements—are actively interpreted, negotiated, and sometimes resisted by social actors. Yet there is a dynamic reciprocal relationship between them: institutions are maintained and (re)produced through prevailing gender arrangements.

Thus, notions of gender arrangement provide a theoretical approach to understanding cross-country variations and the effects of both institutions and culture. Regardless of the widely shared view of the importance of culture, it is not always factored into empirical studies, particularly those using quantitative methodologies. This might be due to the lack of suitable data and problems related to the operationalization of culture. In this study, we chose to use the gender arrangement approach to contextualize views on motherhood, fatherhood, and employment practices as elements of cultural ideals, rather than reducing employment patterns to individual characteristics or institutional arrangements. In practical terms, we explore its applicability using empirical data from a large number of European countries. Our research is, to the best of our knowledge, the first empirical attempt to model the gender arrangement framework across a large number of countries to study attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers and is, therefore, exploratory. As we later demonstrate, empirical data do not easily accommodate the framework, but such developments play an important role in improving data collection.

### Earlier studies: Attitudes toward employment

Gender-role attitudes can include diverse factors, such as acceptance of gendered spheres and support for a gender-specialized division of paid work and family responsibilities (Reichelt et al., 2021). The gender arrangement approach aside, most theoretical explanations of attitudes in cross-national research on gender, work, and family/life draw on either the *culturalist* or *structuralist* framework, as noted by Ollier-Malaterre and Foucreault (2017) in their discussion of 92 peer-reviewed studies. Research that builds on cultural

dimensions most commonly relies on the individualism versus collectivism dimension, whereas structurally informed studies typically focus on gender regimes, industrial relations systems, and welfare state regime typologies (Ollier-Malaterre & Foucreault, 2017).

Much of the previous comparative attitude research on employment participation has focused on women and mothers (e.g., Cotter et al., 2011; Neimanns, 2021). Overall, there is significant cross-national variation in attitudes toward women's employment, especially mothers' employment (e.g., Gambaro et al., 2023; Lietzmann & Frodermann, 2023; Scarborough et al., 2019), even though attitudes have become more supportive of it in most Western countries in general (e.g., Neimanns, 2021; Yu & Lee, 2013). The results have shown that attitudes are more receptive in countries with more gender-equal social/family policies, institutional contexts, and higher labor market participation (Knight & Brinton, 2017). For example, a comparative study of 14 European countries (Panova & Buber-Ennser, 2016) found that the most egalitarian attitudes were found in Norway, Estonia, Eastern Germany, and Belgium, whereas Hungary, Georgia, Russia, Bulgaria, Poland, and Lithuania were the most traditional. Gender differences in views within countries were smallest in Central and Eastern Europe and largest in Western Germany and Austria, with men being more traditional than women in their attitudes.

Some comparative studies have examined attitudes toward equal work and parental roles specifically through working time arrangements. Edlund and Öun's (2016) study focused on five European countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Poland), finding that traditional gender roles were most strongly supported in Poland and Western Germany, while equal work and parental roles were most strongly supported in Sweden. Finland, Denmark, and Eastern Germany were similar in terms of their support for the one-and-a-half earner model. In Sweden, respondents who supported equal roles were in favor of reducing the working hours of both parents, whereas in Denmark and Finland, full-time work for both parents was supported. Edlund and Öun (2016) suggest that heterogeneity within Nordic countries is due to differences in family policies and the extent to which fathers are involved in caring for children, as reflected in those policies.

In terms of within-country differences, studies indicate that women, young people, and those with higher education have more positive attitudes toward women's employment than men, older people, and those with lower education (e.g., Panova & Buber-Ennser, 2016; Edlund & Öun, 2016). Interestingly, Zhou's (2017) study of women's attitudes toward the traditional division of labor, based on British data, found no significant impact

of either motherhood or employment on women's views on the traditional division of labor. Zhou suggested that women who are mothers and full-time employees tend to adopt less traditional gender attitudes; however, if they leave the workforce after becoming mothers, they become more traditional in their views. Thus, how individuals view gender roles can be influenced by factors such as being a parent, being employed, or both. Cultural beliefs and ideas may affect women and their attitudes differently depending on various sociodemographic characteristics, such as their educational background (Pfau-Effinger, 2023).

Overall, as Walter (2018) pointed out, measures of attitudes toward working mothers and fathers often focus on traditional gender roles. For example, attitudes toward working mothers are analyzed with the ideas that “a child suffers if his/her mother works” and “children often suffer because their mothers concentrate too much on their work” (e.g., Begall et al., 2023; Panova & Buber-Ennser, 2016; Kaufman & Bair, 2021), while analysis of attitudes toward fathers' involvement in care begins with notions such as “in general, fathers are as well suited to look after their children as mothers” (Begall et al., 2023).

In recent research, the unidimensional view of gender ideology has been criticized for simplifying attitudes into a binary between traditional (male breadwinner/female carer) and egalitarian (equal labor market participation) (Begall et al., 2023; Düval, 2023; Grunow et al., 2018; Knight & Brinton, 2017). In response to this, scholars have proposed a multidimensional approach, recognizing that beliefs about gender roles are complex and often ambivalent. For example, individuals may support women's employment but not equal childcare responsibilities, and policies may promote mothers' employment without supporting fathers' caregiving (Grunow et al., 2018; Scarborough et al., 2019). This complexity calls for cross-national, multilevel research that includes diverse dimensions such as fatherhood roles and attitudes toward men's caregiving (Begall et al., 2023; Düval, 2023; Grunow et al., 2018).

The multidimensional view of gender ideology resonates with Pfau-Effinger's (e.g. 2023) gender arrangement framework by acknowledging that cultural models of gender roles are not monolithic but vary within and across countries. Institutional policies may support certain gender roles while neglecting others (e.g., promoting mothers' employment but not fathers' caregiving). Individual practices reflect a mix of traditional and egalitarian beliefs, often shaped by both cultural norms and policy contexts.

Our interest lies in contributing to the earlier research tradition by studying and explaining cross- and within-country differences in attitudes toward *both* mothers' and fathers' FW earner roles across 26 European countries.

## METHOD

### Data

We used data from the ESS, Round 9 (2018). The ESS is a biennial, cross-sectional, multi-country survey conducted since 2002 to measure and explain trends in attitudes, beliefs, and values across European countries. Each wave of the ESS consists of a core questionnaire with standard questions asked in every wave and additional rotating modules prepared for each specific wave (European Social Survey, 2023). In ESS 2018, two modules were developed covering personal and social well-being and life course organization in Europe. One of the rotating modules—The Timing of Life: The Organization of the Life Course in Europe—comprised questions relevant to the purposes of this study.

The ESS 2018 data covers 29 countries, but because of data limitations, three countries were excluded from the analysis (i.e., they had too many missing cases in some variables used and/or no comparable country-level data were found on them). Thus, 26 countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) were examined. The final dataset consisted of 34,878 observations. The number of cases per country and response rates are presented in Table A1.

### Variables

The dependent variable, attitude toward FW mothers and FW fathers, was measured through the question: “How much do you approve or disapprove if a woman/man has a full-time job while she/he has children under three years of age?” on a five-point categorical scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The dependent variable was treated as a five-category variable in descriptive analyses and as a continuous variable in explanatory analyses.

Two things should be kept in mind regarding the dependent variable. First, in ESS 2018 data the same respondents did not answer the question regarding FW mothers and FW fathers. Instead, in this data set a split ballot design was used, meaning that half of the randomly chosen respondents were asked about mothers ( $n = 17,653$ ) and half about fathers ( $n = 17,225$ ). The pros of a split ballot design are that it reduces bias and increases the validity of results; the con, in our case, is that it prevents us from examining the attitudes of the

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics of independent variables.

	Categorical variables, % (n)
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	53.22 (18,562)
Male	46.78 (16,316)
<b>Age</b>	
18–30 years	18.56 (6472)
31–45 years	27.28 (9515)
46–59 years	30.38 (10,597)
60–70 years	23.78 (8294)
<b>Education</b>	
High	34.16 (11,913)
Intermediate	47.27 (16,488)
Low	18.57 (6477)
<b>Labor market status</b>	
Employed	62.54 (21,813)
Unemployed	5.32 (1855)
In education	6.43 (2241)
Housework	6.67 (2325)
Retired	14.99 (5227)
Otherwise outside labor market	4.06 (1417)
<b>Family type</b>	
Partner + children	24.22 (8448)
Partner, no children	37.77 (13,175)
Children, no partner	3.52 (1229)
No partner, no children	34.48 (12,026)
<b>Attendance to religious services</b>	
No	37.69 (13,144)
Rarely (less than once a month)	42.51 (14,827)
At least once a month	19.80 (6907)
	Continuous variables, mean (st. deviation)
<b>Gender culture</b>	
Gender inequality	0.09 (0.05)
<b>Women's work culture</b>	
History of mothers' paid work	64.78 (16.73)
Prevalence of women's part-time work	22.57 (13.93)
<b>Men's work culture</b>	
Prevalence of men's long working time	44.51 (10.87)
Prevalence of men's part-time work	7.65 (4.07)

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

	Continuous variables, mean (st. deviation)
<b>Family policy institutions</b>	
Support for father's carer role	5.65 (7.30)
Support for mother's earner role	34.2 (15.82)

Source: Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

same people on both FW mothers and FW fathers (and possible interconnections), which would better illustrate the multidimensionality of the gender arrangement. Second, people may interpret the question differently; some people may refer to their own experience, others may use someone else's experience as the basis for their answer or perhaps consider whether, at the general level, mothers/fathers should work full-time when they have small children.

As independent variables at the individual level, we considered various sociodemographic factors that are known to be related to attitudes toward gender roles (e.g., Edlund & Öun, 2016; Miller et al., 2021; Yu & Lee, 2013). These include gender (binary variable separating women and men), age cohort (18–30, 31–45, 46–59, and 60–70), education (low, intermediate, high), labor market status (employed, unemployed, in education, doing housework, retired, otherwise outside labor market), family type (neither partner nor children, partner but no children, children and partner, children but no partner), and religious observance (not attending religious services, attending rarely [less than once a month], attending regularly [at least once a month]). Table 1 presents the individual-level independent variables. Table A2 presents the original categorization of individual-level independent variables and the transformations made to them.

Based on the gender arrangement framework (e.g., Pfau-Effinger, 2023), we included indicators at the country level that measure culture and institutions: namely, general gender culture, women's work culture, men's work culture, and family policy institutions. General gender culture was measured using a variable indicating the level of gender inequality in a country. We chose the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) gender inequality index (GII) from 2018 to represent the country's gender inequality, which considers three different dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market (see more United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). A low GII value indicates low inequality between women and men, while a high value indicates greater inequality between

women and men. Women's work culture was measured with two variables: (1) the history of mothers' full-time work, indicating the share (%) of ESS 2018 respondents aged 18–70 in each country whose mothers were employed full-time when they were 14 years old; and (2) the prevalence of women's part-time work, indicating the share (%) of employed women in part-time work in 2018, according to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2022b). Men's work culture was also measured with two variables: (1) the prevalence of long working hours for men, indicating the share (%) of ESS 2018 male respondents aged 18–70 in each country working more than 40 h a week, and (2) the prevalence of men's part-time work, indicating the share (%) of employed men engaged in part-time work in 2018, according to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2022b). Family policy institutions were measured with two variables: (1) the country's support for the father's carer role, indicating the length in weeks of paid, father-specific leave in 2018 according to OECD (2022b). For Bulgaria and Croatia, the information is taken from the 14th International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2018 (Blum et al., 2018), and it takes into account the well-paid period of father-only leave; and (2) the country's support for mother's earner role, indicating the share (%) of children aged 0–2 enrolled in formal childcare and pre-school in 2018 according to OECD (2022a). Country-level independent variables are also included in Table 1. Table A3 presents the distribution of country-level variables by country.

Despite our novel attempt to operationalize gender arrangement for the purposes of cross-national quantitative examination, our country-level variables have some limitations. First, they do not perfectly capture the holistic nature of gender arrangements and their interrelation with culture and institutions, as we have separate measures for culture and family policy institutions. We attempted to tackle this limitation by using interaction effect models in addition to main effects models in data analysis. Second, our variables measure culture only through outcomes, as reliable and comparable measures across 26 countries are available only in terms of these. However, it can be argued (see, e.g., Pfau-Effinger, 2023) that outcomes on gender inequality and women's and men's labor market patterns do reflect the cultural underpinnings of gender roles generally and gendered earner roles more specifically.

In addition, it should be noted that the history of mothers' full-time work was measured with a retrospective question about the respondent's mother's full-time employment when the respondent was 14 years old, whereas other country-level variables referred to the

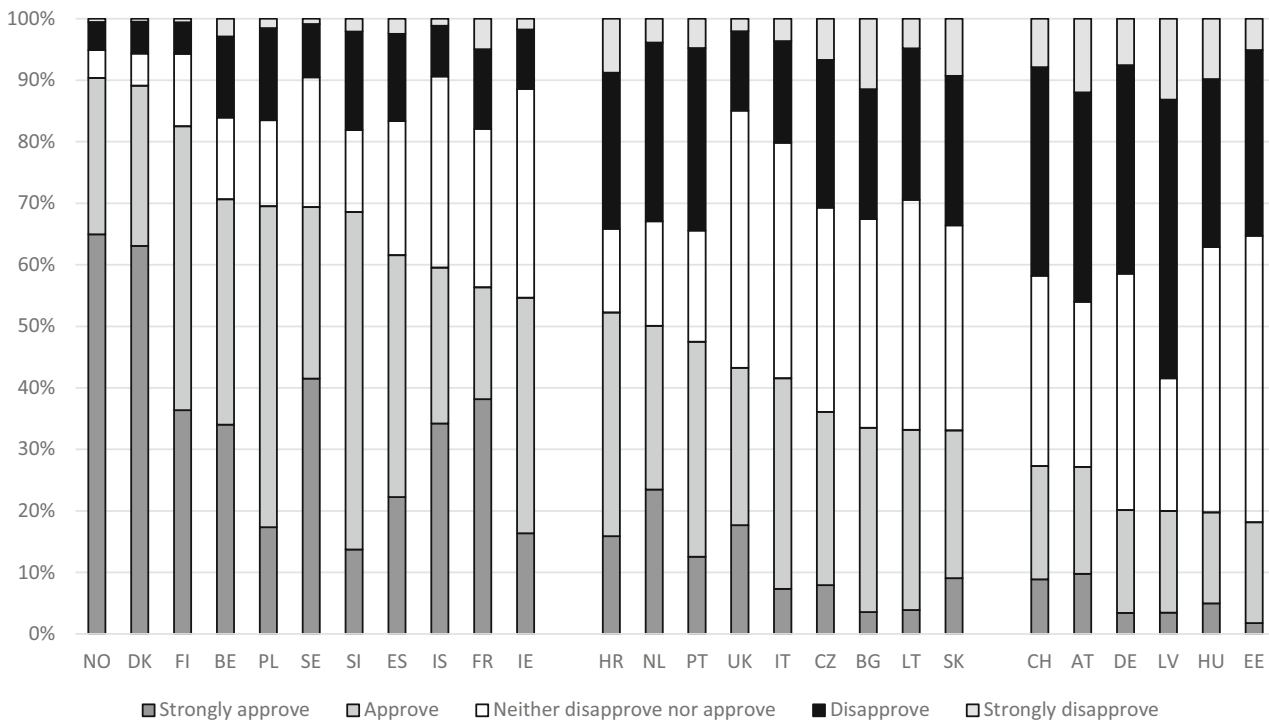
current situation. The retrospective measure was chosen because it captures the cross-national variation of mothers' earner roles over time and, as Pfau-Effinger (e.g., 2023) has stated, the position of mothers as earners mirrors the cultural role of mothers' paid work in a society. A variable to measure fathers' tradition of full-time work is not used as there has not been any change in fathers' roles in this respect.

## Data analysis

To address Research Question 1 (i.e., whether there is cross-national variation in attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers) cross-tabulation was used. Multilevel analysis explored the individual- and country-level factors related to attitudes toward parents' full-time earner roles (Research Question 2) as well as testing the extent to which the gender arrangement framework can help to cast light on differences in attitudes toward FW parents (Research Question 3). Multilevel analysis is regarded as both theoretically and statistically appropriate for simultaneously testing different levels of analysis in one model (Hox, 2002) and, therefore, for explaining cross- and within-country variation in attitudes toward FW parents. Because we treated our dependent variable as a continuous variable, we employed a linear multilevel regression analysis wherein we started with empty models to determine how much variance in attitudes exists at the country level. The intraclass correlation (ICC) for FW mothers was 0.21 and for FW fathers it was 0.10, indicating that for attitudes toward FW mothers, 21% of the variance was at the country level, whereas for attitudes toward FW fathers, only 10% of the variance was at the country level.<sup>1</sup> Next, we proceeded to the random intercept models, first including only individual-level independent variables, followed then by country-level independent variables. As we had only 26 macro-level units (countries), we could not include all country-level independent variables in the same model; we had to test alternative models that included only one or two country-level independent variables in each.

In addition to the main models described above, we tested additional models to provide a better illustration of the interrelation between culture and institutions in gender arrangements. This was done by employing two models with interaction terms: one with interaction between gender culture (GII) and support for father's

<sup>1</sup>Empty model for mothers' full-time earner role shows AIC: 51208, individual-level variance: 1.056583 and country-level variance: 0.2778463. Empty model for fathers' full-time earner role shows AIC: 45821, individual-level variance: 0.8315546 and country-level variance: 0.0882687.



**FIGURE 1** Attitudes toward full-time working mothers when having children under 3 years in 26 European countries, 2018 (weighted %). *Source:* Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

carer role (the length of paid, father-specific leave), and another with interaction between gender culture (GII) and support for mother's earner role (the share of children aged 0–2 enrolled in formal childcare and pre-school).

As a robustness check, we assessed the impact of the categorization of our dependent variable on the results by running our main multilevel models with a two-category dependent variable separating those who approve of FW mothers/FW fathers from other respondents. This reduces the variance, which leads to some interesting differences in results, especially with regard to fathers: with a two-category dependent variable, fewer independent variables are related to attitudes toward FW fathers. Hence, it seems that the linear variable can better tackle the factors explaining attitudes toward FW fathers than the cruder two-category measure. The results of robustness checks are presented in Tables A4 and A5.

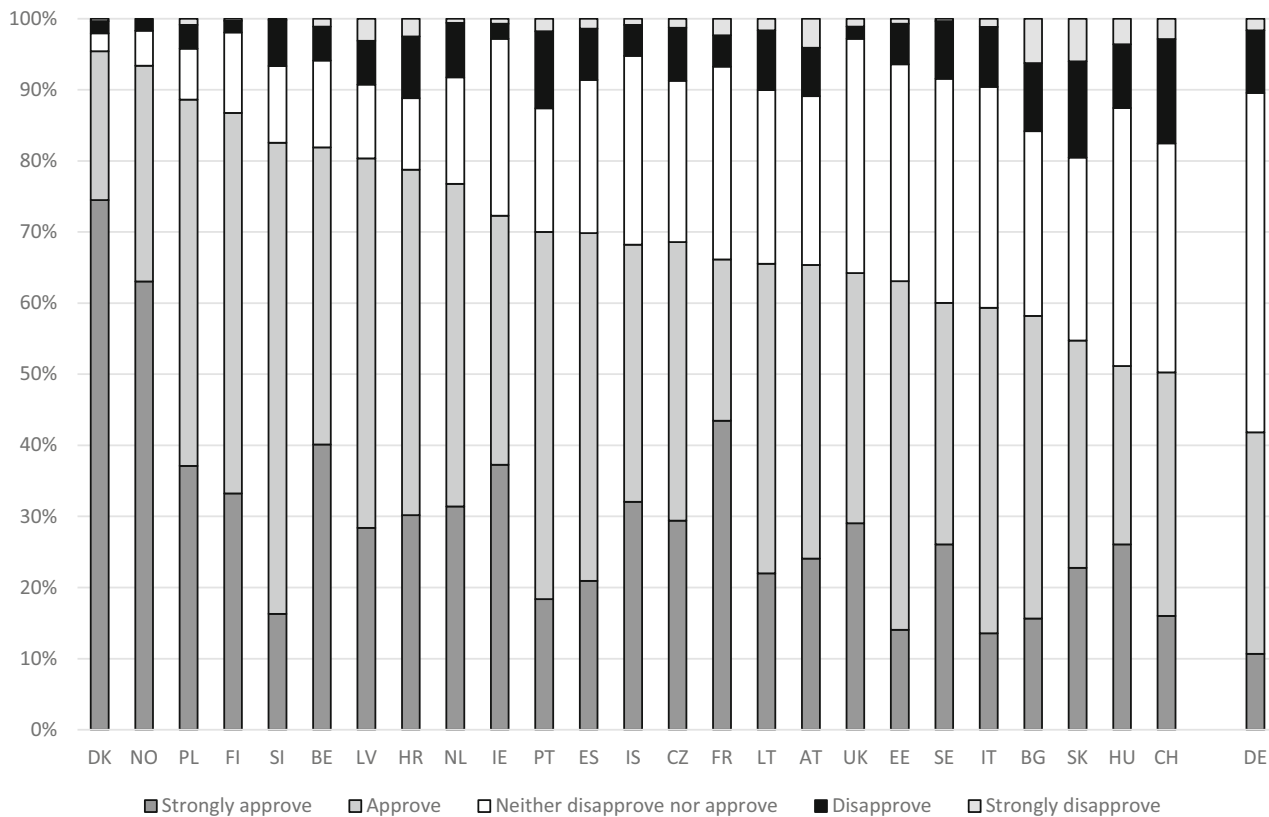
## RESULTS

### Cross-national variation in attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers

We start our analysis by examining cross-nationally attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers when they have children under the age of three. In Figure 1, we

present results concerning FW mothers, and as the figure reveals, there are notable differences between European countries. On the one hand, in countries such as Norway and Denmark, acceptance of the full-time earner role for mothers is nearly universal; on the other, in countries such as Latvia and Austria, a significant share perceives the full-time earner role to be unacceptable for mothers.

Figure 1 shows that countries can be classified into three distinct groups based on their attitudes toward FW mothers. To be included in one of the groups, a country must meet one of the following criteria: (1) clearly more than half of the respondents approve or strongly approve of FW mothers, (2) variation between approving and disapproving attitudes shows a mixed overall picture, or (3) less than one-third of the respondents approve or strongly approve of FW mothers. In the first group, the FW mother role is widely approved, and less than 20% disapprove of it. Nordic countries, and Belgium, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, France, and Ireland, belong to this group. In the second group, the attitudes toward FW mothers were evenly distributed among two or three alternatives. In Croatia, the Netherlands, and Portugal, the attitudes were polarized, that is, people either approved or disapproved of mothers taking up full-time work, whereas in the United Kingdom, Italy, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Slovakia, there were people who expressed neither approval nor disapproval: that is, attitudes were either approving,



**FIGURE 2** Attitudes toward full-time working fathers when having children under 3 years in 26 European countries, 2018 (weighted %). *Source:* Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

disapproving, or neutral. In the third group, a small percentage of people (strongly) approve of FW mothers, and a significant proportion (strongly) disapprove. This third group includes Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Moreover, it is noticeable that in some countries in this group, the share of people with a neutral attitude was quite large.

In Figure 2, we present equivalent results for fathers. The results clearly show that the story behind the attitudes toward FW fathers is more straightforward than that behind attitudes toward FW mothers. This was evident in two ways. First, differences from country to country were distinctly smaller, especially in terms of (strong) disapproval. The smallest share of non-acceptance of FW fathers is found in Denmark, where around 3% disapprove or strongly disapprove of FW fathers and even the largest share in Slovakia is less than 20%. Moreover, there were no distinct country groupings. Although there are some differences across countries, all 26 European countries belong to more or less one group, wherein FW fathers are widely approved and rarely disapproved. The only outlier of sorts is Germany, where fewer than 50% approve of fathers in the full-time earner role. Interestingly, this does not mean that the share of disapproval is high, but rather that a large share holds a neutral view.

## Individual-level factors explaining attitudes to FW mothers and FW fathers

Analysis of the roles of different individual-level factors reveals that those explaining attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers with children under 3 years of age are, to some extent, similar; however, there are also some intriguing differences. The results are summarized in Table 2. First, in terms of gender, education, and religiousness, the results are rather uniform regardless of whether the question concerns FW mothers or FW fathers: female gender, higher education level, and being less religious are related to stronger approval for FW parents than male gender, low education, and being more religious.

Second, Table 2 reveals that the roles of labor market status and family type are somewhat different for attitudes toward FW mothers/fathers. For both mothers and fathers, those who are employed show greater approval than those who are unemployed or retired; however, those engaged in housework seem to show less approval than working individuals toward FW mothers, but not toward FW fathers. The same applies to those who are otherwise outside the labor market. The way family type influences attitudes is interesting. In terms of attitudes

**TABLE 2** Individual-level factors explaining attitudes toward full-time working (FW) parents, 2018 (regression coefficients and in parenthesis standard errors).

	<b>FW mothers</b>	<b>FW fathers</b>
Gender (female ref.)		
Male	−0.08*** (0.016)	−0.06*** (0.014)
Age (18–30 years ref.)		
31–45 years	0.03 (0.027)	−0.02 (0.025)
46–59 years	−0.11*** (0.026)	0.02 (0.023)
60–70 years	−0.21*** (0.032)	0.04 (0.029)
Education (high ref.)		
Intermediate	−0.22*** (0.018)	−0.025 (0.016)
Low	−0.38*** (0.032)	−0.07* (0.021)
Labor market status (employed ref.)		
Unemployed	−0.18*** (0.035)	−0.08* (0.032)
In education	0.04 (0.036)	−0.08* (0.034)
Housework	−0.15*** (0.032)	−0.04 (0.029)
Retired	−0.07* (0.029)	−0.07* (0.027)
Otherwise outside labor market	−0.13** (0.040)	−0.07 (0.036)
Family type (partner + children ref.)		
Partner, no children	0.06** (0.023)	−0.08*** (0.021)
Children, no partner	0.001 (0.044)	−0.05 (0.039)
No partner, no children	−0.03 (0.023)	−0.08*** (0.021)
Attendance at religious services (no attendance ref.)		
Rarely (less than once a month)	−0.12*** (0.018)	−0.07*** (0.016)
At least once a month	−0.32*** (0.023)	−0.18*** (0.021)
AIC	50,355.8	45,703
Individual-level variance	1.004978	0.824365
Country-level variance	0.2568405	0.0863257

Note: In the dependent variable, a higher value indicates a more approval attitude toward FW parent.

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

**TABLE 3** Country-level factors explaining attitudes toward full-time working (FW) parents, 2018 (regression coefficients and in parenthesis standard errors).

	<b>FW mothers</b>	<b>FW fathers</b>
Model 1: gender culture		
Gender inequality	−5.17*** (1.431)	−2.16* (0.930)
AIC	50,347	45,700
Individual-level variance	1.004977	0.8243643
Country-level variance	0.1705248	0.071265
Model 2: women's work culture		
History of mothers' paid work	−0.002 (0.007)	0.003 (0.004)
Prevalence of women's part-time work	0.002 (0.009)	0.002 (0.005)
AIC	50,359	45,706
Individual-level variance	1.004978	0.8243647
Country-level variance	0.2541622	0.08511
Model 3: men's work culture		
Prevalence of men's long working time	−0.004 (0.008)	−0.006 (0.005)
Prevalence of men's part-time work	0.05* (0.022)	−0.03* (0.013)
AIC	50,354	45,702
Individual-level variance	1.004978	0.8243638
Country-level variance	0.2097767	0.0710468
Model 4: family policy institutions		
Support for father's carer role	0.001 (0.013)	−0.005 (0.008)
Support for mother's earner role	0.02** (0.006)	0.01** (0.004)
AIC	50,348	45,698
Individual-level variance	1.004978	0.8243655
Country-level variance	0.1596384	0.0624607

Note: In the dependent variable, a higher value indicates a more approval attitude toward FW parent. The models also include the same individual-level factors listed in Table 2.

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ . Source: Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

toward FW mothers, those with a partner but without children show more approval than those with both a partner and children. For fathers, the opposite is true. Notably, for both FW mothers and FW fathers, those having neither partner nor children expressed more disapproval than those with both a partner and children. Finally, Table 2 shows that age affects only attitudes toward FW mothers, but not toward FW fathers: older

people have less approval for mothers in the full-time earner role than younger people.

### Country-level factors explaining attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers

To analyze the roles of different country-level factors, we tested four main models including indicators for gender culture, women's work culture, men's work culture, and family policy institutions (see Table 3). Model 1 examines the role that general gender culture, in terms of gender inequality, plays on attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers, with the results demonstrating that it is a prominent one: more severe gender inequality is related to less approval for both FW mothers and FW fathers.

Models 2 and 3 focus separately on women's and men's work cultures. Results reveal interestingly—and surprisingly—that only men's work culture, and more specifically the prevalence of men's part-time work, is slightly related to attitudes toward FW parents. However, approval appears in diverging ways: in terms of attitudes toward FW mothers, the prevalence of men's part-time work is related to more approval, whereas for attitudes toward FW fathers, the prevalence of men's part-time work leads to less approval. Women's work culture seems not to be important, as neither the history of mothers' paid work nor the prevalence of women's part-time work is related to attitudes.

Model 4 assesses the role that family policy institutions play in shaping attitudes toward FW parents, with a focus on how family policies support fathers in the carer role and mothers in the earner role. Results show that family policies supporting earner mothers are more important than those supporting carer fathers. While more support for mothers' earner role is related to more approval for both FW mothers and FW fathers, support for carer fathers is not related to attitudes toward FW mothers/fathers.

In addition, we examined two models to illustrate the interrelation between culture and institutions in gender arrangements. Results are shown in Table 4, which presents two models with interaction terms. Model 5 includes an interaction between gender culture (GII) and support for the carer role for fathers (the length of paid father-specific leave), and Model 6 includes the interaction term between gender culture (GII) and support for the earner role for mothers (the share of children aged 0–2 enrolled in formal childcare and pre-school). Table 4 shows that in terms of attitudes toward FW mothers, the interaction term for gender inequality and support for the earner role for mothers is not statistically significant, whereas for attitudes toward FW fathers, it is. Conversely, in attitudes toward FW fathers,

**TABLE 4** Models examining the interrelation between cultural and institutional factors in explaining attitudes toward full-time working (FW) parents, 2018 (regression coefficients and in parenthesis standard errors).

	FW mothers	FW fathers
Model 5: gender culture and support for father's carer role		
Gender inequality	−2.561 (1.796)	−1.268 (1.314)
Support for father's carer role	0.009** (0.033)	0.025 (0.024)
Gender inequality × support for father's carer role	−1.140* (0.458)	−0.364 (0.335)
AIC	46,036.61	41,688.16
Individual-level variance	0.9809386	0.8050977
Country-level variance	0.135441	0.0720035
Model 6: gender culture and support for mother's earner role		
Gender inequality	1.662 (2.970)	2.763 (1.969)
Support for mother's earner role	0.026** (0.009)	0.016**
Gender inequality × support for mother's earner role	−0.165 (0.089)	−0.143*
AIC	50,343.19	45,697.33
Individual-level variance	1.004978	0.8243652
Country-level variance	0.1247053	0.0541819

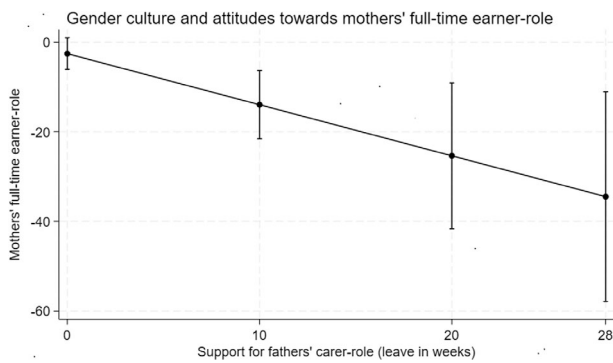
*Note:* In the dependent variable, a higher value indicates a more approval attitude toward FW parent. The models also include the same individual- and country-level factors listed in Tables 2 and 3.

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

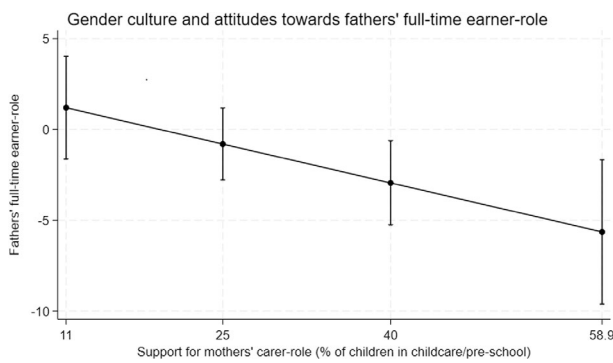
*Source:* Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

the interaction term for gender inequality and support for the carer role for fathers is not statistically significant while for attitudes toward FW mothers it is.

Based on the results in Table 4, we took a closer look at the interrelation of gender culture and support for carer fathers in terms of attitudes toward FW mothers. Figure 3 presents the relationship between gender inequality (i.e., culture) and attitudes toward FW mothers according to the length of paid, father-specific leave (i.e., institutional support for carer fathers). Figure 3 shows the average marginal effects of gender inequality with 95% confidence intervals. Results indicate that the effect of gender inequality on attitudes toward FW mothers varies slightly according to the leave reserved for the father: the longer the leave, the more gender inequality is negatively related to approval of FW mothers. However, as confidence intervals show, the length of the leave is not very important; thus, it is more of a question of having no leave (zero weeks) or having any leave than its length.



**FIGURE 3** The relationship between gender culture and attitudes toward full-time working mothers according to the support for fathers' carer role (average marginal effects of gender inequality with 95 % confidence intervals). *Source:* Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.



**FIGURE 4** The relationship between gender culture and attitudes toward full-time working fathers according to the support for mother's earner role (average marginal effects of gender inequality with 95 % confidence intervals). *Source:* Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

Also based on the results in Table 4, Figure 4 examines the relationship between gender inequality (i.e., culture) and attitudes toward FW fathers according to the share of children (0–2 years old) in formal childcare or pre-school (i.e., institutional support for mothers' earner role). Figure 4 shows the average marginal effects of gender inequality with 95% confidence intervals. Confidence intervals for different shares of children attending childcare or pre-school all overlap, so results do not support the interrelation between gender culture and support for earner role for mothers on attitudes toward FW fathers.

## DISCUSSION

In this study, we drew upon the gender arrangement framework (e.g., Pfau-Effinger, 2005, 2023) and cross-

national comparative attitude research to examine both cross- and within-country differences in attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers. We asked three research questions: (1) Do attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers vary from country to country in Europe? (2) If so, what are the sociodemographic, cultural, and family policy-related institutional factors that explain these attitudes? (3) To what extent can the gender arrangement framework help to understand differences in attitudes toward FW parents? Based on our analysis, three key conclusions that contribute both empirically and theoretically to existing knowledge can be made.

In terms of Research Question 1, our results revealed large cross-national differences in attitudes toward FW mothers but not FW fathers, demonstrating that on the basis of this unidimensional measure the ideal of motherhood continues to be culturally more contested than that of fatherhood in many European countries. Fatherhood remains more strongly associated with the full-time financial provider role, whereas the attitudinal ideal of mothers' full-time employment is more controversial. Thus, mothers' and fathers' roles as full-time earners were not viewed equally. This result is not surprising considering gender arrangements (e.g., Pfau-Effinger, 2023), as well as earlier studies which have argued that expectations of the parental role are gendered (e.g., Begall et al., 2023; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2023).

Some studies (e.g., Neimanns, 2021; Yu & Lee, 2013) have argued that the change in gender roles over the last few decades has meant widespread and common acceptance of women and mothers' engagement in paid work; hence, the traditionality of attitudes toward mothers' full-time employment in some countries could at first sight seem somewhat surprising. We suggest that the explanation for the traditionality finding is most probably due to the dependent variable employed in this study and the way it was worded. Earlier studies (e.g., Begall et al., 2023; Kaufman & Bair, 2021) measured the acceptability of mothers' paid work through, for example, its possibly negative consequences on a child's well-being, while we measured approval of full-time work for mothers with children under 3 years of age. It seems that a somewhat more traditional picture of attitudes toward mothers' earner role is produced when the mothers involved have young children.

While a strictly formulated dependent variable such as ours can be seen as a strength because it describes the phenomenon it measures in detail, it also poses a potential weakness in terms of the generalization of the results, leaving some unanswered questions: To what extent are our results applicable to parents with older children? What are the attitudes toward parents' part-time work? These questions should be addressed in future studies.

The difference in the acceptance of FW mothers and FW fathers raises the further question of “attitudinal gender gap”: namely, what is the difference in each country between acceptance of mothers’ and fathers’ full-time employment? Our results in Figures 1 and 2 indicate that this attitudinal gender gap is smallest in Nordic countries, where both FW mothers and FW fathers are widely accepted. The largest gender gaps are found in some Eastern European countries, where there is broad acceptance of the full-time earner role for fathers but not for mothers.

In terms of Research Question 2 our results reveal interesting differences as well as some similarities in the factors explaining attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers. On the individual level, our results show that sociodemographic factors better explain attitudes toward the full-time earner role for mothers than for fathers. Certainly, it seems that approval of mothers’ full-time labor market participation is especially prevalent among younger and more educated Europeans. An interesting question is whether this could be interpreted as a gradual change toward more egalitarian attitudes to mothers’ earning roles in the future. On the other hand, it is interesting to find that cultural and family policy institutions are similarly related to attitudes toward both FW mothers and FW fathers. Thus, our results clearly demonstrate the importance of studying the cultural expectations of parental work and career roles from the perspectives of both fathers and mothers, although our examination is only one attempt to advance this type of research, and further work is required.

To answer Research Question 3, we explored the applicability of the gender arrangement framework to analysis of attitudes to earner roles from a cross-national perspective. Our aim was to investigate whether culture and institutions can help to explain differences in attitudes toward FW parents. On the one hand, our results clearly demonstrate that, according to the principles of gender arrangement (e.g., Pfau-Effinger, 2023), both cultural and family policy institutions are of vital importance in understanding attitudes to mothers’ and fathers’ earner roles. Intriguingly, cultural and family policy institutions did not exhibit a gendered effect on attitudes, at least not with the measures we employed. Hence, the same cultural and family policy-related factors were related to more approving attitudes toward both FW mothers and FW fathers. On the other hand, our results also revealed that many cultural and institutional factors were not related to attitudes toward FW parents. This result indicates that the explanatory power of culture and institutions—and thus the gender arrangement—on attitudes toward FW parents is limited. Moreover, our interaction models did not find consistent support for the

explanatory power of the *interrelation* between culture and institutions on such attitudes. Therefore, our results did not consistently support the gender arrangement framework and its idea that culture and institutions can explain cross-national differences in attitudes toward mothers’ and fathers’ full-time work. Nevertheless, the critical point when evaluating the applicability of the gender arrangement framework is operationalization. How can culture, institutions, and their interrelations be measured quantitatively and reliably across a wide variety of countries?

According to Pfau-Effinger (2023), a complex, multilevel approach is needed to understand the roles of culture and family policies on gendered work-childcare behavior across countries. We measured culture by gender culture and gendered work culture, and institutions by the extent to which institutions supported the cultural ideas of working mothers and carer fathers. These measures can be seen as functional but, at the same time, inadequate for fully capturing the multilevel nature of culture, institutions, and their interrelations. For example, we were unable to include the role of informal care arrangements in our measure of support for FW mothers. Furthermore, our measure of support for carer fathers indicated support for often short-term father-specific parental leave, and its role in challenging perceptions of fatherhood can be questioned. Nevertheless, Eydal et al. (2015) have argued that even short, father-specific leaves (at least when fathers use them) have the potential to alter gendered practices and norms in the longer term. The problem of measuring culture and institutions multidimensionally and reliably is not restricted to our analysis but is a relevant question to (quantitative) research more generally (see also Begall et al., 2023; Hong et al., 2023).

In addition, because of data issues, we were not able to examine the multidimensional nature of gender roles; consequently, we needed to focus on a single dimension: attitudes toward full-time work. As Grunow et al. (2018) and Begall et al. (2023) have stated, multidimensional measures of gender role attitudes can reveal potential ambivalences regarding attitudes toward mothers’ and fathers’ roles as earners and carers. Hence, an interesting avenue for future studies would be to advance the applicability of the gender arrangement approach to cross-national quantitative research by developing research designs that consider the multidimensional nature of gender arrangement and gender roles. For example, in addition to variables measuring attitudes toward both FW mothers and FW fathers, it would be of vital importance to have variables measuring attitudes toward both mothers’ and fathers’ carer roles.

Despite the limitations of our study, our results contribute to the understanding of the cross-national

differences in attitudes toward FW mothers and FW fathers and the factors explaining these attitudes, and provide fruitful ground for the further operationalization of the gender arrangement framework for empirical quantitative research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Open access publishing facilitated by Turun yliopisto, as part of the Wiley - FinELib agreement.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors report no competing interests.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

European Social Survey data are freely accessible for registered users to download from the European Social Survey Data Portal: <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data>.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

No ethics approval statement is needed as this study relies on existing data source made available for research purposes. The primary data holder of the dataset has implemented data pseudonymization processes. The data released to researchers has been anonymized to ensure no individual can be identified.

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**How to cite this article:** Salin, M., Tammelin, M., Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta, K., & Isoniemi, H. (2026). “A good mother can’t—But a good father should?” Cross- and within-country differences in attitudes toward parents’ full-time work in 26 European countries. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 35(1), e70057. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.70057>

## APPENDIX A

**TABLE A1** Number of cases and response rates.

	<i>n</i>	%
Austria	1951	50.84
Belgium	1442	57.63
Bulgaria	1303	69.36
Croatia	1445	43.24
Czech Republic	1949	67.36
Denmark	1226	48.82
Estonia	1500	62.73
Finland	1378	51.82
France	1541	48.11
Germany	1857	27.56
Hungary	1236	40.73
Iceland	694	40.5
Ireland	1697	61.95
Italy	2012	51.93
Latvia	676	38.93
Lithuania	1284	59.21
Netherlands	1341	49.61
Norway	1141	43.31
Poland	1165	60.36
Portugal	795	34.92
Slovakia	808	39.55
Slovenia	1053	64.11
Spain	1332	53.81
Sweden	1156	39.00
Switzerland	1201	51.81
United Kingdom	1695	41.04

*Source:* Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

TABLE A2 Transformations made for individual-level independent variables.

	Original variable	Variable used in analyses
Gender	Variable gndr	Male
	Male	Female
	Female	
Age	Variable agea	18–30 years
	Continuous variable indicating age in years	31–45 years
		46–59 years
		60–70 years
Education	Variable edulvlb	0–229 = low education
	000 not completed ISCED level 1	311–423 = intermediate education
	113 ISCED 1, completed primary education	
	129 Qualification from vocational ISCED 2C program of duration shorter than 2 years, no access to ISCED 3	
	221 Qualification from vocational ISCED 2C programs of 2 years or longer duration, no access to ISCED 3	
	222 Qualification from vocational ISCED 2A/2B programs, access to ISCED 3 vocational	510–800 = high education
	223 Qualification from a vocational ISCED 2 program giving access to ISCED 3 (general or all)	
	212 Qualification from general/pre-vocational ISCED 2A/2B programs, access to ISCED 3 vocational	
	213 Qualification from general ISCED 2A programs, access to ISCED 3A general or all 3	
	229 Qualification from vocational ISCED 3C programs of duration shorter than 2 years, no access to ISCED level 5	
	321 Qualification from vocational ISCED 3C programs of 2 years or longer duration, no access to ISCED level 5	
	322 Qualification from vocational ISCED 3A programs, access to 5B/lower tier 5A institutions	
	323 Qualification from vocational ISCED 3A programs, access to upper tier ISCED 5A/all ISCED level 5 institutions	
	311 Qualification from general ISCED 3 programs of 2 years or longer duration, no access to ISCED level 5 institutions	
	312 Qualification from general ISCED 3A/3B programs, access to ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A institutions	
	313 Qualification from general ISCED 3A programs, access to upper tier ISCED 5A/all ISCED level 5 institutions	
	421 Qualification from ISCED 4 programs without access to ISCED level 5	
	422 Qualification from vocational ISCED 4A/4B programs, access to ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A institutions	
	423 Qualification from vocational ISCED 4A programs, access to upper tier ISCED 5A or all ISCED level 5 institutions	
	412 Qualification from general ISCED 4A/4B programs, access to ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A institutions	
413 Qualification from general ISCED 4A programs, access to upper tier ISCED 5A/all ISCED level 5 institutions		
520 ISCED 5B programs of short duration, advanced vocational qualifications		

TABLE A2 (Continued)

	Original variable	Variable used in analyses
	510 ISCED 5A programs of short duration, intermediate certificate or academic/general tertiary qualification below the bachelor's level	
	610 ISCED 5A programs of medium duration, qualifications at the bachelor's level or equivalent from a lower tier tertiary institution	
	620 ISCED 5A programs of medium duration, qualifications at the bachelor's level or equivalent from an upper/single tier tertiary institution	
	710 ISCED 5A programs of long cumulative duration, qualifications at the master's level or equivalent from a lower tier tertiary institution	
	720 ISCED 5A programs of long cumulative duration, qualifications at the master's level or equivalent from an upper/single tier tertiary institution	
	800 ISCED 6, doctoral degree	
Labor market status	Variable mnactic	1 = employed
	1 Paid work	2 = in education
	2 Education	3–4 = unemployed
	3 Unemployed, looking for job	5, 7–9 = otherwise outside labor market
	4 Unemployed, not looking for job	6 = retired
	5 Permanently sick or disabled	
	6 Retired	8 = housework
	7 Community or military service	
	8 Housework, looking after children, others	
	9 Other	
Family type	Variables rshipa2-rshipa15 (relationship to the respondent for other persons in the same household)	1 partner + 1 children = has both partner and children
	1. Husband/wife/partner	1 partner + 0 children = has partner, not children
	2. Son/daughter/step/adopted/foster	0 partner + 1 children = has children, not partner
	3. Parent/parent-in-law	0 partner + 0 children = has neither partner nor children
	4. Brother/sister/step/adopted/foster	
	5. Other relative	
	6. Other non-relative	
	We first identified respondents that have partner (=1) and/or children (=2) living in the same household in variables rshipa2-rshipa15. For children we also used variable agea (see above) to include only children under 18 years of age. Based on this identification we created two variables: partner (0 = no partner, 1 = has partner) and children (0 = no children, 1 = has children)	
Attendance to religious services	Variable rlgatnd	1–4 at least once a month
	1 Every day	5–6 rarely (less than once a month)
	2 More than once a week	7 no
	3 Once a week	
	4 At least once a month	
	5 Only on special holy days	
	6 Less often	
	7 Never	

Source: European Social Survey 2018.

TABLE A3 Distribution of country-level independent variables.

	Gender inequality index <sup>a</sup>	History of mothers' paid work (%) <sup>b</sup>	Prevalence of women's part-time work (%) <sup>c</sup>	Prevalence of men's long working time (%) <sup>b</sup>	Prevalence of men's part-time work (%) <sup>c</sup>	Support for father's carer role (weeks) <sup>c,d</sup>	Support for mother's earner role (%) <sup>e</sup>
Austria	0.061	58.22	37.5	53.28	8.0	2.0	20.9
Belgium	0.053	50.66	28.0	44.96	6.6	19.3	56.8
Bulgaria	0.21	84.41	2.0	20.79	1.1	2.0	16.2
Croatia	0.125	48.14	6.2	41.88	3.4	0.0	20.1
Czech Republic	0.129	90.35	8.5	61.68	2.8	1.0	11.0
Denmark	0.022	77.14	24.6	34.19	14.3	2.0	56.0
Estonia	0.103	89.63	12.8	33.03	5.8	2.0	27.7
Finland	0.037	81.27	17.8	37.54	10.7	9.0	33.4
France	0.078	58.28	51.4	40.29	7.1	28.0	57.5
Germany	0.083	59.26	36.6	51.78	9.3	8.7	37.7
Hungary	0.299	75.94	5.4	33.14	2.4	1.0	16.5
Iceland	0.053	80.43	23.8	63.28	10.8	13.0	58.9
Ireland	0.084	37.66	32.6	45.28	10.2	2.0	41.3
Italy	0.057	35.21	31.9	38.52	7.8	0.8	26.1
Latvia	0.155	86.43	8.8	31.53	4.2	1.4	25.9
Lithuania	0.128	79.15	8.8	30.55	4.5	4.0	28.3
Netherlands	0.027	48.74	58.0	40.85	19.2	0.4	58.4
Norway	0.018	75.37	27.7	39.29	11.7	10.0	57.3
Poland	0.121	73.49	9.2	51.00	3.5	2.0	13.5
Portugal	0.074	60.30	9.6	53.85	4.5	22.3	39.7
Slovakia	0.194	74.63	6.9	52.33	3.4	0.0	6.6
Slovenia	0.074	64.60	11.9	54.15	5.6	4.3	42.6
Spain	0.062	42.16	21.6	42.90	6.2	4.3	38.2
Sweden	0.031	75.97	17.2	44.39	10.2	14.3	46.3
Switzerland	0.032	51.65	44.6	72.92	11.1	0.0	19.3
United Kingdom	0.112	66.31	36.9	45.61	11.7	2.0	45.1

<sup>a</sup>Source: UNDP (2023).

<sup>b</sup>Source: Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

<sup>c</sup>Source: OECD (2022b).

<sup>d</sup>Source: For Bulgaria and Croatia Blum et al. (2018).

<sup>e</sup>Source: OECD (2022a).

**TABLE A4** Individual-level factors explaining attitudes toward full-time working (FW) parents with 2-category dependent variable, 2018 (average marginal effects and in parentheses standard errors).

	<b>FW mothers</b>	<b>FW fathers</b>
Gender (female ref.)		
Male	−0.04*** (0.008)	−0.02** (0.007)
Age (18–30 years ref.)		
31–45 years	0.01 (0.014)	0.006 (0.013)
46–59 years	−0.05*** (0.013)	0.02 (0.012)
60–70 years	−0.09*** (0.017)	0.04* (0.015)
Education (high ref.)		
Intermediate	−0.08*** (0.010)	0.009 (0.008)
Low	−0.14*** (0.012)	0.002* (0.010)
Labor market status (employed ref.)		
Unemployed	−0.06** (0.019)	−0.02 (0.016)
In education	0.003 (0.020)	−0.04* (0.018)
Housework	−0.06** (0.018)	−0.02 (0.015)
Retired	−0.01 (0.016)	−0.02 (0.014)
Otherwise outside labor market	−0.05* (0.021)	−0.01 (0.018)
Family type (partner + children ref.)		
Partner, no children	0.01 (0.012)	−0.03** (0.015)
Children, no partner	−0.001 (0.023)	−0.04 (0.020)
No partner, no children	−0.001 (0.012)	−0.03** (0.011)
Attendance to religious services (no attendance ref.)		
Rarely (less than once a month)	−0.05*** (0.001)	−0.01 (0.008)
At least once a month	−0.13*** (0.012)	−0.06*** (0.011)
AIC	20,840.4	19,907.7
Country-level variance	1.03455	0.60439

Note: In the dependent variable, 1 = approval attitude toward the full-time employment, 0 = others.

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.

**TABLE A5** Country-level factors explaining attitudes toward full-time working (FW) parents with 2-category dependent variable, 2018 (average marginal effects and in parenthesis standard errors).

	<b>FW mothers</b>	<b>FW fathers</b>
Model 1: gender culture		
Gender inequality	−2.25*** (0.590)	−1.04* (0.484)
AIC	20,832.9	19,905.7
Country-level variance	0.7152396	0.5152302
Model 2: women's work culture		
History of mothers' paid work	−0.002 (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)
Prevalence of women's part-time work	−0.002 (0.004)	0.0003 (0.003)
AIC	20,844.2	19,911.35
Country-level variance	1.0257	0.5965868
Model 3: men's work culture		
Prevalence of men's long working time	−0.002 (0.009)	−0.003 (0.003)
Prevalence of men's part-time work	0.02* (0.010)	0.01 (0.007)
AIC	20,840.7	19,908.48
Country-level variance	0.8955544	0.5347423
Model 4: family policy institutions		
Support for father's carer role	0.001 (0.006)	−0.004 (0.005)
Support for mother's earner role	0.01** (0.003)	0.004 (0.002)
AIC	19,031.5	18,268.58
Country-level variance	0.7860065	0.5588738

Note: In the dependent variable, 1 = approval attitude toward the full-time employment, 0 = others. The models also include the same individual-level factors listed in Table 2.

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Authors' own calculations based on European Social Survey 2018.