

# 13 How to Measure Fathering Practices in a European Comparison?

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## Introduction

Changing fatherhood practices, perceptions and ideals have attracted increasing interest from social science scholars in recent decades. This attention is motivated by important social changes that have occurred in many European countries, such as the increasing number of women and mothers entering the labour market and the growing number of working single parents and dual-income families. Fathering practices are not homogenous in Europe: several country-level factors can influence them, including social norms and attitudes as well as parental policies such as shared parental leave and/or father quota provisions that can make it possible and even desirable for fathers to stay at home with their children. Taking into consideration the changes over time is also important, because in some European countries fathers' involvement in childcare started earlier and was more intensive than in other places.

Many social scientific studies on fatherhood apply qualitative methods such as discourse analysis and interviewing (Wall and Arnold 2007; Grbich 1987; Doucet 2004; Merla 2008; Miller 2011; Chesley 2011; Solomon 2014). Qualitative studies on involved fatherhood practices and stay-at-home fathers can provide valuable insights into various ways the concept of involved fathering has been constructed and put into practice in different societies. However, most of these qualitative studies lack the comparative element (with a few exceptions such as Doucet and Merla 2007; Suwada and Plantin 2014) and reflect static pictures based on one-off data-gathering events that cannot realistically reproduce the temporal aspects of the examined situations. Shirani and Henwood (2011) introduced qualitative longitudinal methodology into involved fatherhood research while following men across the first eight years of fatherhood: they returned to their interviewees to measure and explore changes that occurred over the examined time period.

There are also a few studies that examined fatherhood practices on the basis of survey data. For example, Geisler and Kreyenfeld (2011), using German micro-census data from 1999 and 2005, focused on factors that influence whether fathers take parental leave or not, and they found that fathers are more likely to take parental leave if they have a more highly educated or older partner. Puur and his co-authors (2008) used Population Policy Acceptance Study (PPAS) data to show the

impact of men's views regarding the male role in their child-bearing preferences in eight European countries.<sup>1</sup> According to their findings, men, including fathers, characterized by more gender-egalitarian views have higher fertility aspirations than more traditionally oriented men.

Hobson and Fahlén (2009) used European Social Survey (ESS) data to highlight the inequalities among European fathers in their ability to achieve work–family balance, and they found that in comparison to Western and Northern European countries, fathers in the examined Central-Eastern European countries had the least capabilities of achieving a work-family balance due to several factors, including low employment protection, lack of father-friendly policies, relatively strong male-breadwinner norms and widespread economic precariousness.

With complete agreement regarding David Morgan's (2002) view about the importance of comparative analysis serving as a valuable corrective against the ethnocentrism that can often get in the way of a critical understanding of fatherhood and fathering, in this article, our central question is how to measure fathering practices in a European comparison. To this end, we will give an overview of fathering-related variable items in freely available international surveys: we will focus on how they have been developing over time, and in two surveys, we will also test the different scale effects.

## **Measurement tools in European surveys**

The possibilities of empirically measuring fathering practices in internationally comparable ways are central issues in the present study. Variables that can potentially be used for measuring various aspects of fathering practices can be found in a few large-scale quantitative cross-national surveys such as the European Value Studies (EVS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), the Eurobarometer (EB) and the ESS. Furthermore, we can also consider the panel surveys of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGS) because data from its first wave in 2004 is available from 19 (mostly European) countries.<sup>2</sup>

The first attempt to measure fathering practices related attitudes in Europe was provided by the first round of the European Values Study in 1981, when the following question was asked: "During the time that you were growing up, were you very close to each other [you and your father], quite close, not very close, or not at all close?" Unfortunately, the former state-socialist Central-Eastern European countries were not involved in the first EVS round: they only joined the second EVS round in 1990. Since then, the following variable became a standard EVS item: "When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women."<sup>3</sup>

The first database to include former state-socialist Central-Eastern European countries was the ISSP: in 1988 in nine countries (Hungary, Australia, Austria, United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, the United States and West Germany), the following two items were asked: "Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income" and "A husband's job is to earn money; a wife's job is to look after the home and family." The second variable was modified

in the following rounds (1994, 2002, 2004 and 2012) this way: “A man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family.”<sup>4</sup>

Even though the Eurobarometer survey is the oldest one among the others, as it started in 1970, questions about fathering practices related attitudes were asked for the first time in 1993. These were the following: “And in your opinion, is it better for a child if the father is very involved in bringing the child up from an early age, or is it better if the child’s education is above all the responsibility of the mother and not of the father?” and “Here is a list of household tasks which may be completed by the father or the mother, or by both. Please tell for each of them, whether you think they should be carried out mainly by the father, mainly by the mother or by both?”<sup>5</sup>

The biannual ESS was launched in 2002 but had items relevant to our present study for the first time only in its second round, in 2004. They included the following variables: “Men should take as much responsibility as women for the home and children” and “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.” For a while, it seemed that the second variable could become part of the core module of the survey, but in the latest available round (ESS round 6), there were no relevant items included related to our topic.<sup>6</sup> Table 13.4 in the Appendix provides an overview of all relevant variables of the EVS, ISSP, EB and ESS surveys.

The GGS panel survey is the newest one among the others: it only started in 2004 and differs from the other previously mentioned cross-sectional international surveys as its focus is more specific to family and gender issues. Therefore, it contains relatively many items regarding fathering practices, such as “Children often suffer because their fathers concentrate too much on their work” or “If parents divorce it is better for the child to stay with the mother than with the father.” Table 13.5 in the appendix provides an overview of all relevant GGS variables.<sup>7</sup>

Based on availability, for comparison we have chosen one of the most frequently used items: “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women.” Even though this variable does not measure fathering practices directly, by using this item as an indicator, we can draw a more general picture about the different gender orders – referring to a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women, as well as definitions of femininity and masculinity (Connell, 1987) – characterizing the examined societies. Previous studies showed that gender roles are related to fathering practices in many ways: for instance, the arrival of the first child pushes couples towards practising traditional gender roles (Grunow et al. 2012; Henchoz and Wernli 2013; Neilson and Stanfors 2014). Even those couples who reported (almost) equal division of labour before having a baby changed their practice after the arrival of their first child. Furthermore, this effect is long term in one’s life course because couples tended to maintain this unequal arrangement until children reached secondary school (Kühhirt 2011). These results suggest that the functioning of traditional gender norms can be a main force behind long-term dynamics in couples’ household work divisions. However, these norms can be influenced by social policies: for example, by introducing special father quotas within parental leave provisions

in the Nordic countries, where state feminism not only provides opportunities for women to combine work and childcare but also “ensures the rights of fathers in relation to their children” (Brandth and Kvande 2001, p. 251).

## **Data and methods**

In this study, we will examine data from the EVS and the ESS. The EVS, a large-scale longitudinal survey research programme, has been conducted every nine years since 1981, following multi-stage probabilistic sampling plans. The EVS provides insights into the ideas, beliefs, preferences, attitudes, values and opinions of citizens all over Europe by applying standardized questionnaires. The ESS is also a large-scale, cross-national longitudinal survey initiated by the European Science Foundation in order to study changing social attitudes and values in Europe. The first round of ESS data collection was completed in 2002. Since ESS is a repeat cross-sectional survey, in each round of data collection, following each other every two years, a core module and two rotating modules (focusing on specific academic and policy concerns, being repeated not in every ESS round but only at certain intervals) are used.

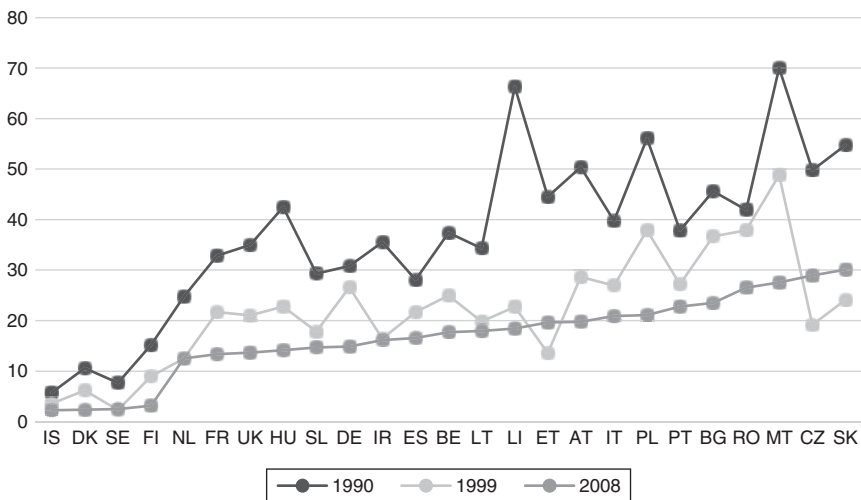
Using data gathered in 2008 (when both EVS and ESS had a data collection round at the same time) we wanted to test the relationship of gender role attitudes with other socio-demographic and attitudinal variables that can be found in both surveys. In 2008, the following 28 European countries took part in both the EVS and the ESS data collection rounds: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Norway, the Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom – thus we have focused only on these countries. This way, we could see whether there are differences between the effects of socio-demographic and other attitudinal determinants regarding gender-role attitudes in the same time period within the same set of countries.

Our dependent variable (“When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women”) was included in both surveys – the answer categories, however, were different. It seems to be a general feature that the ESS uses five-point scales (values ranging between 1 and 5) or eleven-point scales (values ranging between 0 and 10) for attitudinal questions, while the EVS applies less consistent methods by using four-, five- or ten-point scales. In social scientific and psychological survey research, the issue of rating scales has generated considerable debate over the optimal number of scale points to be used (Garland 1991; Preston and Colman 2000). The five- and eleven-point scales have neutral points, while four- or ten-point scales do not have neutral points; thus, the latter ones can force respondents to make a choice even if their attitudes are neutral. In the ESS questionnaires, uneven scales (with neutral points) seem to be preferred, while in the EVS questionnaires, there seems to be a preference for the “forced choice” questions. These patterns could be observed in our dependent variables, too: it was measured on a five-point scale in the ESS, where the value of 1 indicated strong agreement while

5 indicated strong disagreement. At the same time, this item was measured on a three-point scale in the EVS, but only the “agree” and the “disagree” categories were offered by the interviewers and the “neither disagree nor agree” category could come up only as a spontaneous choice of the respondent. Figure 13.1 provides an overview of the long-term changes of the dependent variable as measured by the EVS. We have included in Diagram 1 only those countries that participated in all three waves of EVS data gathering in 1990, 1999 and 2008.

We found that in some countries such as Lithuania, Austria, Poland, Malta and Slovakia, the majority of the population agreed with the statement in 1990. Nine years later, there was no country with majority agreement. By 2008, there was only one country left where more than 30 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement that “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women,” while in the four Nordic countries (Iceland, Denmark, Sweden and Finland) the proportion of those who agreed sank below five per cent. All in all, we can say that regarding traditional gender role attitudes, a significant change happened in Europe, although the Central and Eastern European countries (Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland), as well as the Southern European ones (like Malta and Portugal) are still lagging behind the Nordic ones.

To check whether we can detect any short-term changes in our dependent variable, we also show how the agreement level changed between 2004 and 2010.<sup>8</sup> We have included in Diagram 2 only those countries that participated in all three waves of ESS data gathering (in 2004, 2008 and 2010) where our dependent variable appeared.



*Figure 13.1* Agreement (per cent) with the statement “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women” in 25 European countries (1990–2008).

Source: EVS 1990, 1999 and 2008 datasets.

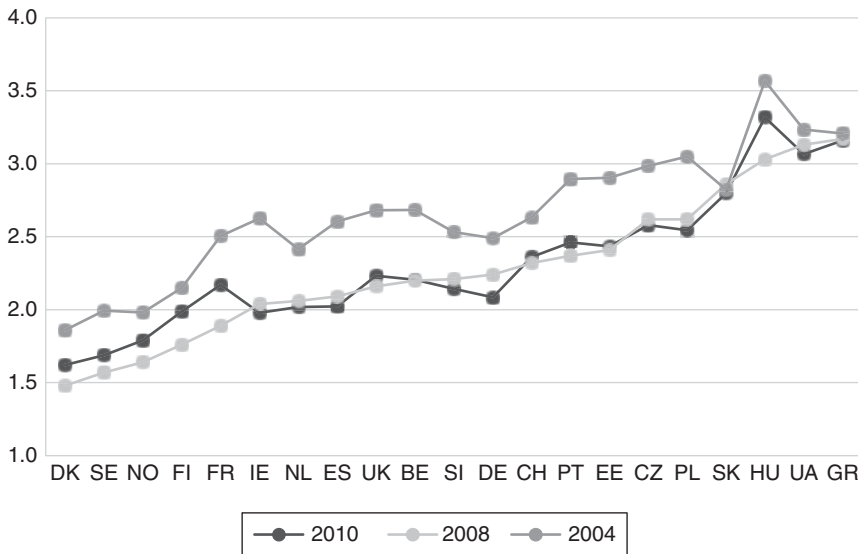


Figure 13.2 Agreement with the statement “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women”: mean values in 21 European countries (2004–2010).

Source: ESS 2004, 2008 and 2010 datasets.

Note: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree.

We can see a clear trend between 2004 and 2008: respondents expressed less traditional views by 2008 in all examined countries, except one, Slovakia. However, we cannot observe such a clear trend between 2008 and 2010: while in the Nordic countries there was a further drop in the mean values, in some other countries, for example Hungary and Portugal, the mean values even slightly increased. When trying to make sense of these very short-term changes, we should also keep in mind the potential effects the recent economic crisis that started around 2007–2008 has caused (Szalma and Takács 2013).

In this study, we have tried to overcome these difficulties by examining the same time frame (2008), the same 28 countries and the same kinds of independent variables within the EVS and the ESS datasets. However, regarding the independent variables – with the exception of gender, age, educational background, belonging to a religious denomination and frequency of attendance at religious services – there are certain differences in the variable categories used by the ESS and the EVS. For example, the settlement type is measured by a five-category variable in the ESS, while the EVS differentiates according to the number of people living in a settlement. Having children is also measured in different ways in the two surveys: in the ESS, the question is about whether the respondents have children living with them in the same household, while in the EVS it is about the

actual number of children the respondents have. Table 13.1 provides an overview of all independent variables with all the potential answer categories – from both the ESS and the EVS – that were used in our analyses.

### **Analytical strategy**

Since both dependent variables were measured on an ordered scale, ordered logistic regression was used to study the determinants of social attitudes towards same-sex adoption. To ease interpretation, we reversed the original ESS scale so that higher values indicate stronger agreement, and we recoded EVS dependent variables in the same order. We adjusted the standard error estimates for clustering; that is, we took into account that individuals within the countries cannot be treated as independent observations. This was achieved with the cluster-adjusted robust standard error estimator, which is a standard feature of the statistical software Stata. Estimation of robust standard errors is a good alternative of multi-level modelling, since random effects estimators are computationally demanding.

### **Hypotheses**

#### *I. Hypotheses regarding the effects of individual level socio-demographic and attitudinal variables on traditional gender role attitudes*

H1.1: Women, younger people, those with higher levels of education and those living in more urbanized environments are less likely to agree with this statement than men, older people, those with lower levels of education and those living in smaller settlements.

H1.2: Concerning religiosity, we assume that those who belong to a religious denomination can manifest more traditional gender views than those who do not belong to any denomination. We also assume that a higher frequency of attending religious services can strengthen traditional gender role attitudes.

H1.3: We expect that marital status and having children can influence attitudes towards gender roles: married people and those having children (or having children in their household) are more likely to agree with the statement than their non-married and/or childless counterparts.

H1.4: We assume that people in full-time employment agree less with traditional gender role attitudes than housewives, unemployed or retired people.

H1.5: Additionally, we assume that having right-wing political attitudes can contribute more to expressing support for traditional gender role attitudes than not having right-wing attitudes.

Table 13.1 Description of the independent variables

Variable	ESS		EVS		
	Scale range	N	%	Scale range	N %
Gender	Male	24,660	45.4	Male	17,308 43.6
	Female	29,646	54.6	Female	22,393 56.4
Age	Continuous variable				
Settlement type	Big city	13,604	25	Under 2,000	8,059 21
	Suburbs	5,311	9.8	2,000–5,000	3,709 9.8
	Town	16,086	29.6	5,000–10,000	3,694 9.6
	Village	16,224	29.9	10,000–50,000	8,769 22.8
	Farm	2,843	5.2	50,000–100,000	3,778 9.8
	–	–	–	100,000–500,000	6,389 16.6
	–	–	–	More than 5,000,000	4,071 10.6
Education level	Lower than secondary education	19,325	50.1	Lower than secondary education	11,621 29.5
	Secondary education	11,416	30	Secondary education	18,063 45.9
	Tertiary education	7,355	19.9	Tertiary education	9,713 25.7
Denomination	Not belonging to any denomination	19,171	35.9	Not belonging to any denomination	11,441 29
	Belonging to a denomination	34,188	64.1	Belonging to a denomination	27,975 71
Attendance at religious services	More than once a week	736	1.4	More than once a week	1,272 3.2
	Once a week	13,101	24.6	Once a week	9,178 23.3
	Once a month	11,773	22.1	Once a month	4,017 9.9
	Only on special holy days	10,776	20.2	Only on special holy days	8,850 22.5
	Never	16,516	31	Once a year	7,016 17.8
	–	–	–	Never	13,034 33.1
Family status	Married	27,970	54.1	Married	21,736 55.1
	Widowed	5,403	10.4	Widowed	4,545 11.5
	Divorced	4,938	9.6	Divorced	4,010 10.2
	Never married	13,124	25.4	Never married	9,133 23.2

(continued)



Table 13.1 Continued

Variable	ESS	EVS			
	Scale range	N	%	Scale range	N %
Employment status	Employed	23,099	43.3	Employed	21,769 53.8
	Retired	12,337	22.1	Retired	10,618 26.2
	“Housewife” <sup>9</sup>	8,913	16.7	“Housewife”	2,577 6.4
	Student	4,182	7.8	Student	2,066 5.1
	Unemployed	2,801	5.3	Unemployed	2,346 5.8
	Disabled	1,133	2.1	Disabled	765 1.9
	Other	894	2.7	Other	342 0.8
Political attitude	Continuous				
Number of children	Not having children	32,821	62	Not having children living in the same household	10,611 26.3
	Having children	20,302	38	Having 1 child	7,861 19.5
				Having 2 children	13,794 34.2
				Having 3 or more children	8,031 20
Employment rate differences between men and women <sup>10</sup>				Continuous variable	
GII (Gender Inequality Index) <sup>11</sup>				Continuous variable	

Source: EVS 2008 dataset and ESS 2008 dataset.

## *II. Hypotheses regarding the effects of country-level variables on traditional gender role attitudes*

H2.1: We assume that people in more gender-equal countries – as measured by the Gender Inequality Index (GII) – are less likely to agree with the statement: “When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women.”

H2.2: We also expect that people in countries with higher differences between male and female employment rates are more likely to express traditional gender role attitudes than others. In societies where both men and women are in the labour market it is less likely that traditional gender role attitudes are dominant: according to the bargaining theories (Brines, 1993), since women contribute to the household income, they might also be able to achieve a better position regarding the division of household labour.

## **Results**

On the basis of an examination of data from the 2008 EVS and ESS datasets regarding 28 European countries, we found that the levels of acceptance of gender role attitudes differ considerably across Europe. In order to check whether the 28 examined European countries have reached significantly similar order in the two measures (ESS and EVS scales), we have used Kendall’s tau test, a non-parametric measure of association based on the number of concordances and discordances in paired observations (Bolboaca and Jantschi 2006). We found that there is no concordance among countries in the two samples.<sup>12</sup>

Table 13.2 provides a detailed overview of the mean values of our dependent variables and shows that in both surveys the lowest levels of support for traditional gender role attitudes could be detected in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland. At the same time, regarding the highest levels of support for traditional gender role attitudes, there were differences between the results of the two surveys: according to the EVS data, the most traditional gender role attitudes were expressed in Cyprus, Greece, Slovakia and Romania, while according to the ESS results, the most traditional gender role attitudes were expressed in Romania, Hungary, Ukraine and Greece.

Estimates of the ordered logistic regressions (summarized in Table 13.3) show that women, younger people and those with higher levels of education were less likely to agree with the statement based on both measurements; these findings support our first hypothesis regarding socio-demographic variables. Regarding the settlement type, we could not find any significant effect in the ESS dataset; at the same time, the settlement size, which was used by the EVS, showed significant effect: those living in settlements with a population of more than 500,000 people were more likely to disagree with the statement that men should have more rights, compared to those living in settlements with fewer than 2000 people. The different effects of settlement size and settlement type can derive from the different settlement sizes as well as the different scales of the dependent variable; however, on the basis of our data, we are not able to determine the cause of this difference.<sup>13</sup>

*Table 13.2* Mean values of the dependent variables: agreement with the statement: "When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women"

<i>EVS</i>		<i>ESS</i>	
Sweden	1.05	Denmark	1.48
Denmark	1.07	Sweden	1.57
Norway	1.09	Norway	1.64
Finland	1.18	Finland	1.76
Netherlands	1.27	France	1.89
France	1.29	Ireland	2.04
Croatia	1.29	Netherlands	2.06
Hungary	1.30	Spain	2.09
Slovenia	1.34	Great Britain	2.16
Great Britain	1.35	Belgium	2.20
Belgium	1.39	Slovenia	2.21
Ireland	1.45	Germany	2.24
Spain	1.46	Switzerland	2.32
Switzerland	1.46	Portugal	2.37
Estonia	1.47	Estonia	2.41
Latvia	1.47	Croatia	2.47
Germany	1.50	Latvia	2.51
Lithuania	1.55	Czech Republic	2.62
Poland	1.56	Poland	2.62
Portugal	1.59	Lithuania	2.69
Bulgaria	1.65	Russian Federation	2.83
Ukraine	1.68	Bulgaria	2.83
Russian Federation	1.69	Slovakia	2.86
Czech Republic	1.69	Cyprus	2.86
Romania	1.70	Romania	2.94
Greece	1.74	Hungary	3.03
Slovakia	1.76	Ukraine	3.13
Cyprus	1.95	Greece	3.17

Notes: ESS: 1 = disagree strongly; 5 = agree strongly; EVS: 1 = disagree, 2 = neither agree or disagree, 3 = agree.

Regarding religiosity, we found similar results in the two surveys: belonging to a denomination seemed not to have significant effect, but very infrequent attendance at religious services increased the disagreement level with the statement that men should have more rights. The less frequently somebody attended religious services, the higher the level of disagreement with the statement was. Probably belonging to a denomination did not have significant effects because it strongly correlates with the frequency of attending religious services. This assumption is supported by the fact that if we include only the belonging to a denomination variable into the models without the other variable (measuring the frequency of attending religious services), we can get a significant effect for denomination, too. Thus we can accept our second hypotheses according to which belonging to a denomination and higher frequency of attending religious services can increase traditional gender role attitudes.



Table 13.3 Continued

ESS				EVS	
Gender	Male	Ref	Gender	Male	Ref
Employment status	Widowed	0.21 ***	Employment status	Widowed	0.2 ***
	Divorced	-0.13 *		Divorced	-0.07
	Never married	-0.16 ***		Never married	-0.15 *
	Employed	Ref.		Employed	Ref.
	Retired	0.32 ***		Retired	0.04
Political attitude	“Housewife”	0.32 ***	Political attitude	“Housewife”	0.56 ***
	Student	0.02		Student	-0.12
	Unemployed	0.44 ***		Unemployed	0.28 ***
	Disabled	0.16		Disabled	0.16
	Other	-0.13		Other	-0.13
Number of children	Not having children	0.04 ***	Number of children	Not having children living in the same household	0.04 ***
	Having children	Ref.		Having 1 child	Ref.
		0.08 **		Having 2 children	-0.12 *
Employment rate differences between men and women			Employment rate differences between men and women	Having 3 or more children	-0.15 *
					-0.17 *
					0.05 **
GII		0.05	GII		4.18 ***
		6.36 ***			

Notes: \*\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05, \*p < 0.1.

Concerning family status, our results showed that those who never married were less likely to express traditional gender role attitudes than married people, while widowed people were more likely to express such attitudes than married people. These results were supported by both the EVS and the ESS databases. For divorced people, the results coincided with our third hypothesis: they were less likely to express traditional gender role attitudes than married people, but the result was significant only in the ESS database. Regarding the potential effects of having or living with children, we have found contradicting results in the ESS and the EVS: according to the ESS results, people living in a childless household tend to express less traditional views, while the EVS findings indicated that having children can decrease traditional attitudes. These differing findings might be due to the different ways these variables were measured. Thus, on the basis of our findings, we can only partly accept our third hypothesis.

Employment status had significant effects in both databases: unemployed people and those staying at home to do housework and care work were more likely to agree with traditional gender role attitudes than those having full-time jobs. Thus we can accept our fourth hypothesis, but we should also note that there were differences between the two surveys' results because retired people expressed more traditional attitudes in the ESS database but this effect was not significant in the EVS database.

Political attitudes operated in both databases as we expected in our fifth hypothesis: those characterized by stronger right-wing attitudes were also more likely to support traditional gender role attitudes than respondents having less pronounced right wing attitudes.

Regarding the country-level variables, gender inequality measured by the GII seemed to be the strongest indicator of traditional gender role attitudes because it had significant effects in both databases: people in those countries where gender inequality is higher were more likely to agree with the statement that men should have more rights. Thus, we can accept our first country-level hypothesis (H2.1).

Our second country-level variable (measuring employment rate differences between men and women) seemed to work as we expected: higher levels of employment rate differences between the two genders coincided with higher levels of traditional gender role attitudes. However, it had significant effect only in the ESS database.

## **Conclusion**

In order to assess the changes over time and across countries regarding traditional gender role attitudes, we were able to use the freely available international survey datasets such as the ESS and EVS. These surveys allowed us to map the changes over time due to their repeating items regarding fathering practices, and they also made it possible to make comparisons within Europe.<sup>14</sup>

As we could see, there are many international surveys that have items related to fathering practices and attitudes; however, they are not harmonized, and some important features are missing that would be required in order to gain an overall

view of fathering practices. For example, if the EVS and the ESS were to use the same measurement scales for the same items, it would allow researchers to follow the changes in more comparable ways. This assumption is supported by our analysis that highlighted that there is no concordance among countries in the ESS and EVS database despite the fact that we examined data from the same countries and the same year (2008).

Despite the different measurement scales of the dependent variable in the EVS and the ESS, most independent variables had the same effects in the two databases. We have found only a few divergent results, such as the effect of settlement size and type and the number of children – but these independent variables were also measured in different ways in the two surveys. Thus, it is not clear whether the differences were due to the different measurements of the dependent or the independent variables or both. However, involving exactly the same two country-level macro variables (the GII and employment rate differences between men and women) brought us a slightly different effect: based on the ESS data, there was no significant effect that might suggest that the deviation is due to the different measurement of the dependent variables.

This study has several limitations. We have used only one measurement that measures just one aspect of gender role attitudes with potential connection to attitudes towards fathering practices. Furthermore, this is only an indirect measurement of attitudes related to fathering practices. Our conclusions are therefore somewhat vague, because besides the scaling effects, other factors, such as different sample design or different sample sizes, could also contribute to the different results. Additionally, we have to point out that attitudes do not necessarily equal actual behaviour – however, we can interpret them as predictors of behaviour. Despite these limitations, this study does contribute to a better understanding of individual and country-level factors that can affect traditional gender role attitudes and also – indirectly – attitudes related to fathering practices.

The possibility of empirically measuring fathering practices in internationally comparable ways was a central issue in the present study. However, if we want to answer the question posed in the title of our article – how to measure fathering practices in a European comparison – we must emphasize the need for more fathering practices-specific variables that are to be used as core variables in numerous waves of many European surveys.

## Notes

- 1 In this study, a “male role index” was constructed from the following three variables: (1) It is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes out to work; (2) Family life often suffers because men concentrate too much on their work; (3) For a man, the job should be more important than the family (Puur et al. 2008).
- 2 Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Sweden. Source: [www.ggp-i.org/data/data-access.html](http://www.ggp-i.org/data/data-access.html).
- 3 Source: [www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/](http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/).
- 4 Source: [www.issp.org](http://www.issp.org).
- 5 Source: <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/download.asp?id=5858>.

- 6 Source: [www.europeansocialsurvey.org/](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/).
- 7 Source: [www.ggp-i.org/](http://www.ggp-i.org/).
- 8 In our view, the five-point scale measurement can help to detect short-term changes more efficiently than a coarser scale, which would not have revealed these changes.
- 9 A person characterized by doing housework, looking after children or other persons.
- 10 We have calculated the differences between male and female employment rates on the basis of OECD (2010) data.
- 11 The GII (2010) measures gender inequality in a given country by reflecting women's disadvantage in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. GII values can range from 0 – indicating that women and men fare equally in a country – to 1, indicating that women fare poorly in all measured dimensions. Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/gii/>.
- 12 The applied significance level is  $p < 0.05$ .
- 13 When we analysed the different measurements of homophobia based on the same databases (ESS and EVS), we did not find different effects of the same two types of settlement measurements (Takács and Szalma 2013).
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# Appendices

*Table 13.4A* Development of fathering practices related items in freely available international surveys

<i>EVS</i>	<i>1981</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2008</i>	
And you and your father? During the time that you were growing up, were you very close to each other, quite close, not very close or not at all close?	X				
<b>When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women.</b>		X	X	X	
If someone says a child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily, would you tend to agree or disagree?		X		X	
Both the husband and wife should contribute to household income.		X	X	X	
A man has to have children in order to be fulfilled.			X	X	
In general, fathers are as well suited to look after their children as mothers.			X	X	
Men should take as much responsibility as women for the home and children.				X	
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
<i>ISSP</i>	<i>1988</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2012</i>
Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income.	X	X	X	X	X
A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family.	X <sup>1</sup>	X	X	X	X
A single father can bring up his child as well as a married couple.	X				
It is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes out to work.		X			
Family life often suffers because men concentrate too much on their work.		X			

Note: <sup>1</sup>In 1988, this version of the variable was asked: The husband's job is to earn money; the wife's job is to look after the home and family.

<i>ISSP</i>	<i>1988</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2012</i>
Men ought to do a larger share of childcare than they do now.			X		
Who usually makes/made the decisions about how to bring up your children?			X	X	X
One parent can bring up a child as well as two parents together.				X	X
Still thinking about the same couple, if both are in a similar work situation and are eligible for paid leave, how should this paid leave period be divided between the mother and the father?				X	X
Consider a family with a child under school age. What, in your opinion, is the best way for them to organise their family and work life?				X	X
And, in your opinion, which of these options would be the least desirable?				X	X
A same-sex male couple can bring up a child as well as a male–female couple.					X

<i>EUROBAROMETER</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2010</i>
And in your opinion, is it better for a child if the father is very involved in bringing the child up from an early age, or is it better if the child's education is above all the responsibility of the mother and not of the father?	X					
Here is a list of household tasks which may be completed by the father or the mother, or by both. Please tell for each of them, whether you think they should be carried out mainly by the father, mainly by the mother or by both?	X	X	X			
It is more natural for mothers than for fathers to take care of children?			X			
According to you, how important is each of the following in the decision on whether to have or not to have a\another child?						
The working situation of the father				X	X	
The health of the father				X	X	
Childcare for children aged 0–3 can be organised in different ways, by combining several options or by relying on only one option. In your opinion, what is the best way of organising childcare for children aged 0–3?						X
Childcare for children aged 3–6 can be organised in different ways, by combining several options or by relying on only one option. In your opinion, what is the best way of organising childcare for pre-school children aged 3–6?						X

<i>ESS</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2012</i>
Men should take as much responsibility as women for the home and children.	X					
<b>When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.</b>	X			X	X	
And to be considered an adult, how important is it for a man to have become a father?			X			

*Table 13.5A* Fathering practices related items in GGS

<i>GGS</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2008</i>
How often do you see your father?	X	X
How satisfied are you with the relationship with your father?	X	X
A man has to have children in order to be fulfilled.	X	X
A child needs a home with both a father and a mother to grow up happily.	X	X
If a woman earns more than her partner, it is not good for the relationship.	X	X
Children often suffer because their fathers concentrate too much on their work.	X	X
If parents divorce, it is better for the child to stay with the mother than with the father.	X	X
<b>When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.</b>	X	X

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