Analysis of Subjective Wellbeing and Social Values in the Context of Macro-Level Behavioural Patterns

Ewa Jarosz

Centre for Time Use Research, University of Oxford/
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

5th Laboratory for Comparative Social Research, Moscow, 8-10 April 2015

Introduction

Happiness – adherence to traditional values or achieving wellbeing

Happiness levels remain constant despite increase in wealth (Easterlin, 1995)

Individual happiness related to income only to a limited extent (Kahneman et al., 2006)

Social aspects of life (being in a relationship, spending time with others) strongly related to happiness (Hellwell, 2006)
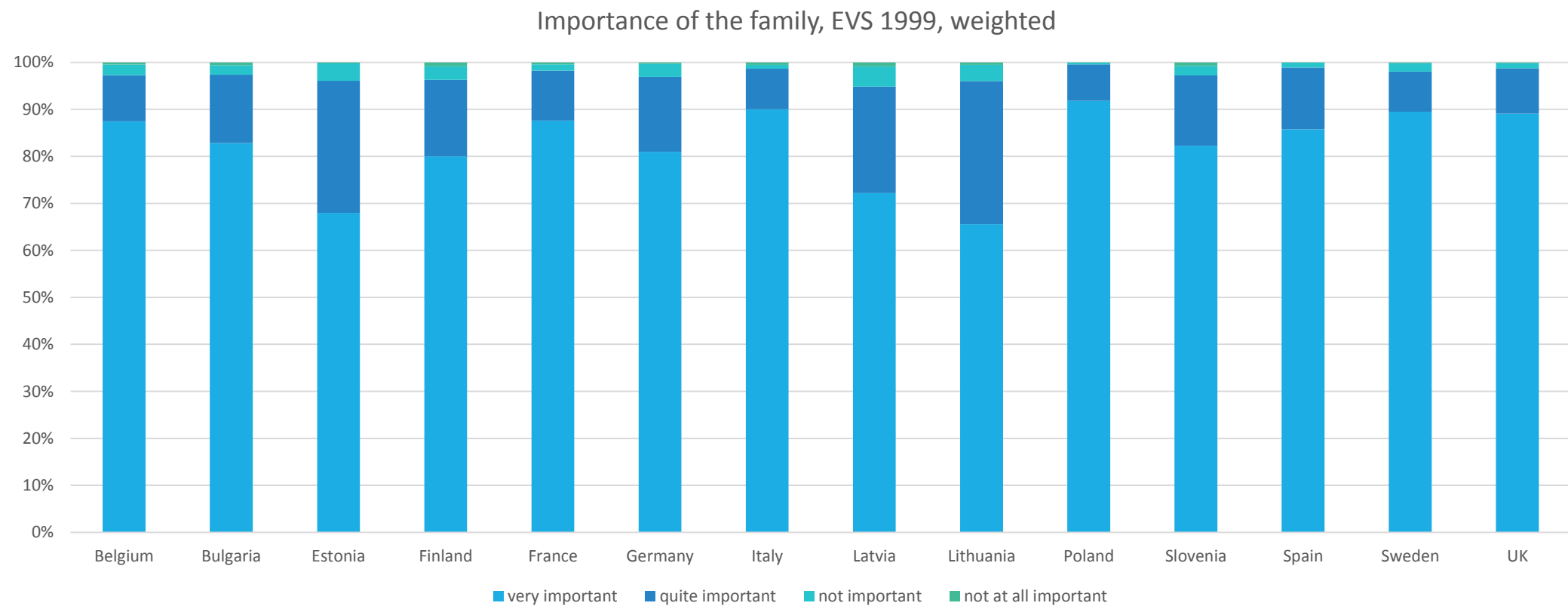
People who engage in social activities often are happier than those who do it infrequently (Lloyd and Auld, 2002)

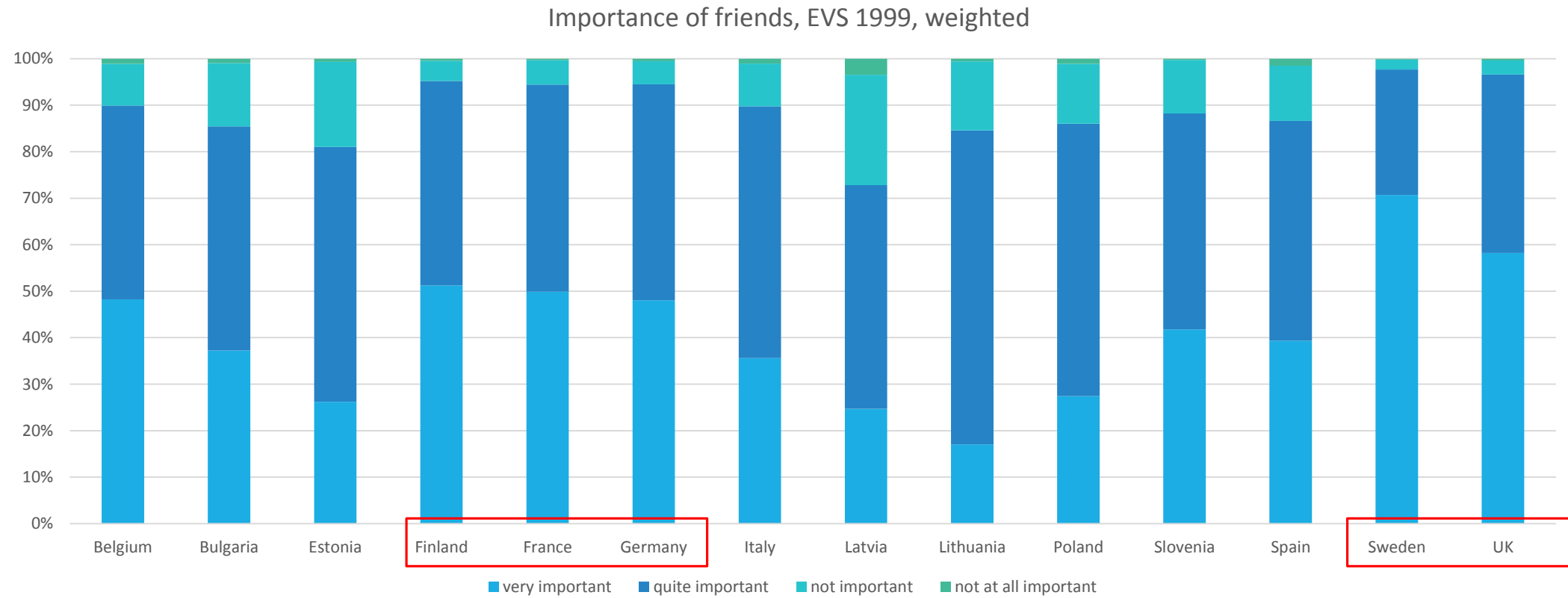"If money does not make you happy, consider time" (Aaker et al., 2011)

Satisfaction with life in general
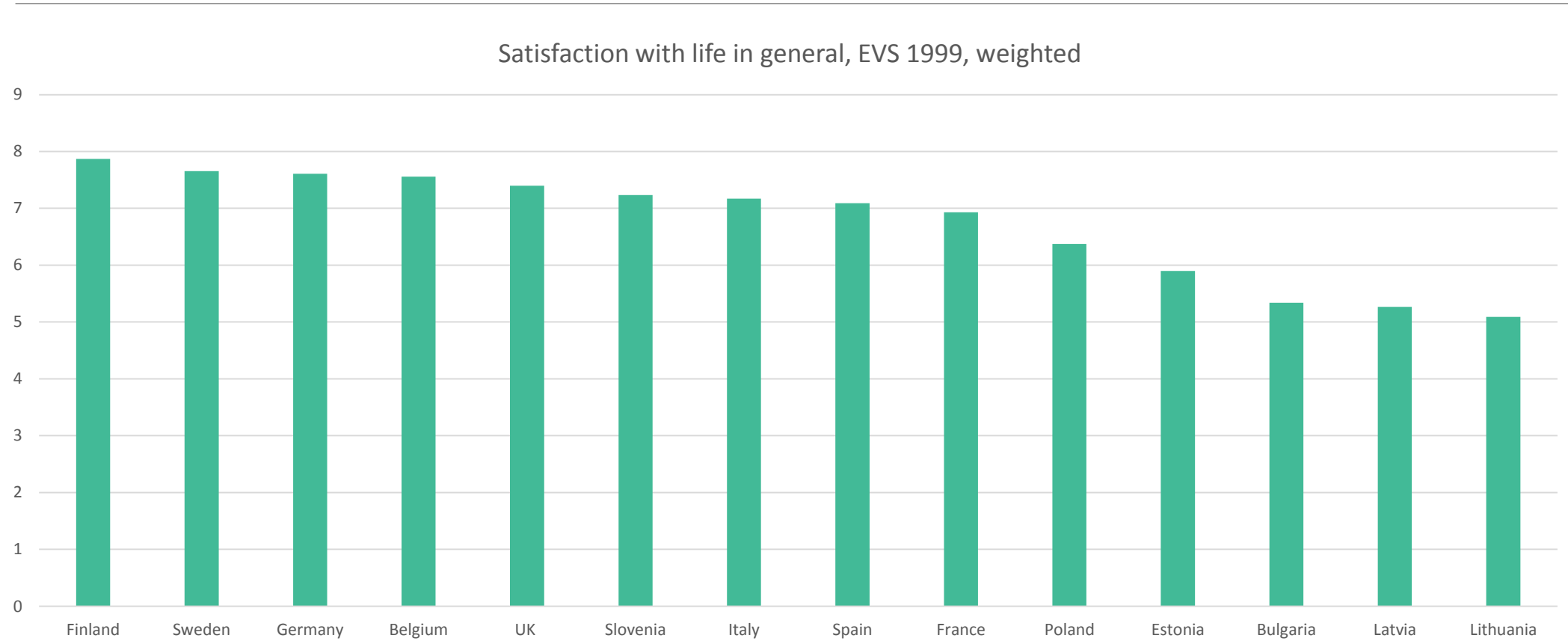
Satisfaction with life in general, EVS 1999, weighted

Attitudes: Importance of the family

Importance of the family, EVS 1999, weighted

Attitudes: Importance of friends

Importance of friends, EVS 1999, weighted

Legend: very important | quite important | not important | not at all important

Spending time with friends

Frequency of spending time with friends, EVS 1999, weighted
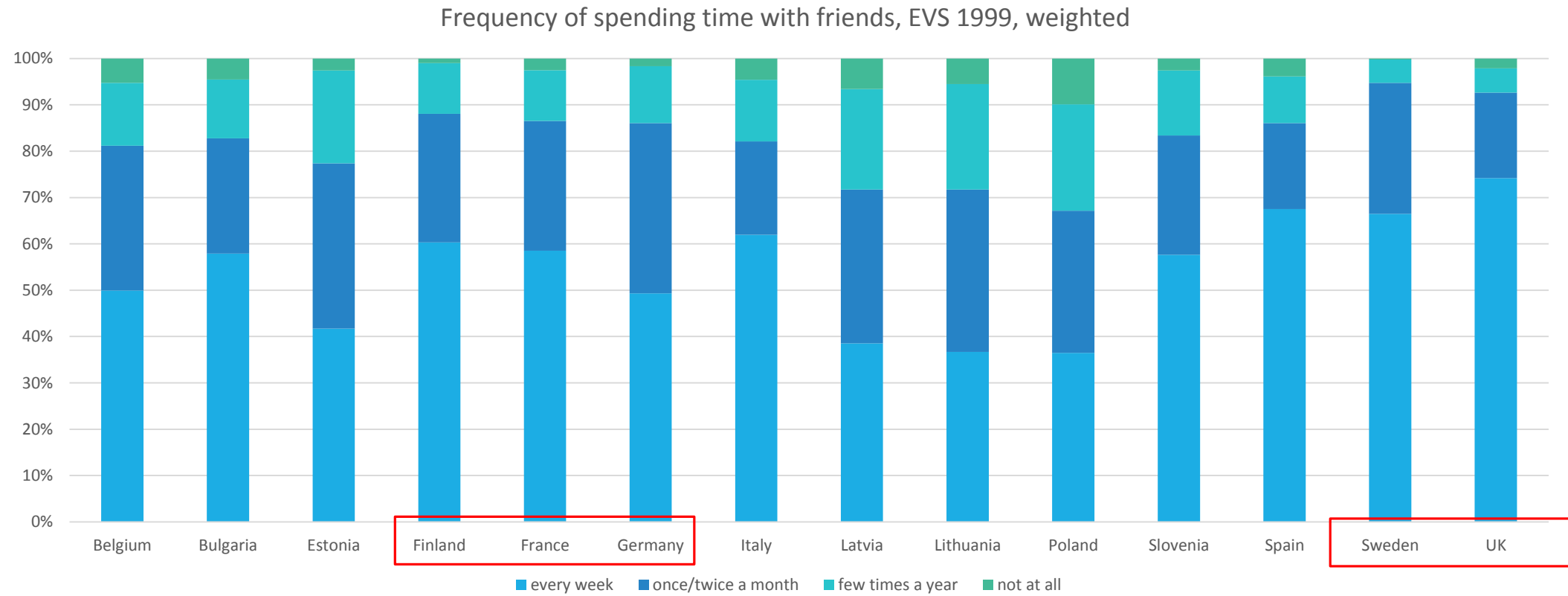
Satisfaction with life - social values and social interaction

importance of family (ref. very important)	
quite important	-0.62***
not important	-1.18***
not at all important	-1.37***
importance of friends (ref. very important)	
quite important	-0.28***
not important	-0.67***
not at all important	-1.10***
time with friends (ref. every week)	
once/twice a month	-0.30***
few times a year	-0.81***
not at all	-1.31***
Intercept	7.31***

What context is it embedded in?

Spending little time with others in an individualistic society would be less of a penalty than doing that in a collectivistic society.

Similarly – attitudes reflect social norms, and are related to behavioural patterns.

Project background

What macro-level variables are often used to account for the contextual variables?

GDP pc, Gini index

Social inequality/ earnings disparity (Muffels, Skygor and Dingemans, 2012) matter for general happiness. But less explicit when only wealthy countries analysed (Gundelach and Kreiner, 2004).

Focus: Attitudes towards social values (family and friends, social leisure), social relationships (Hellwell, 2006; Soons and Kalmijn, 2009), general social support/ willingness to help others (Dunn et al., 2008).
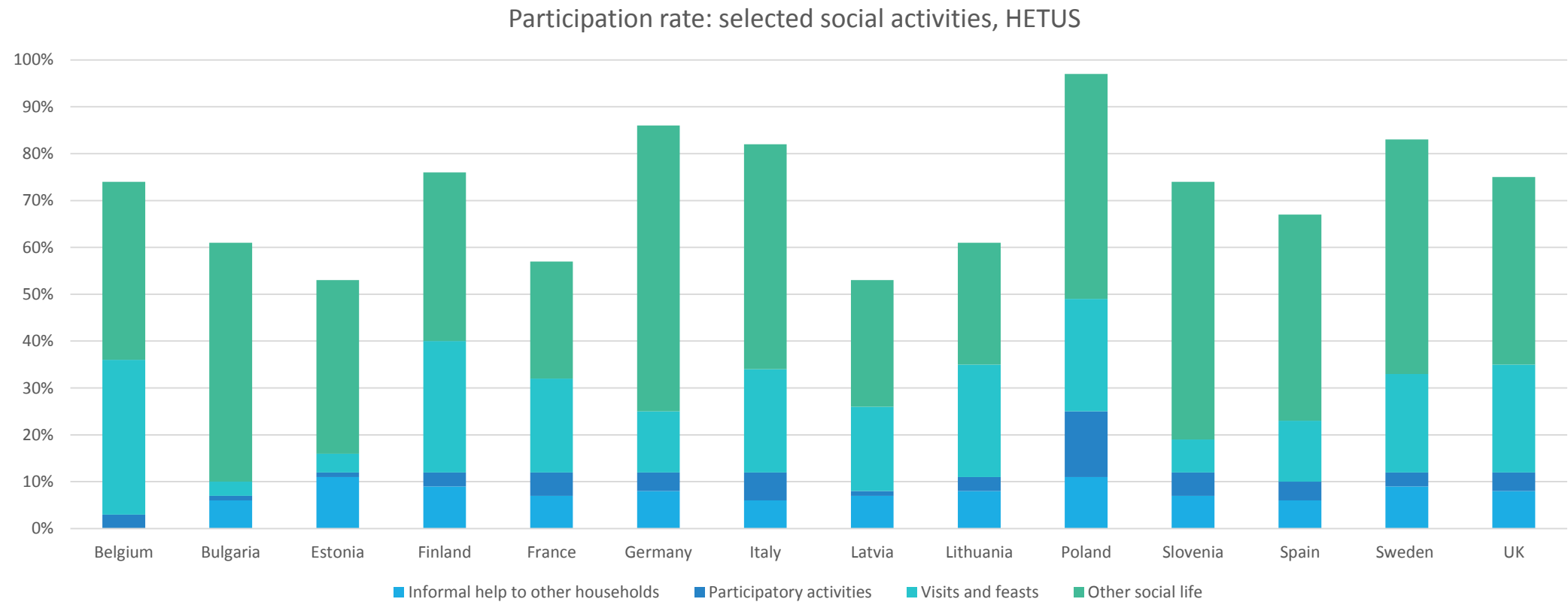
Macro-level VARs in the context of which social relations are analysed should reflect the same area of life: patterns of social interaction (norms and customs).
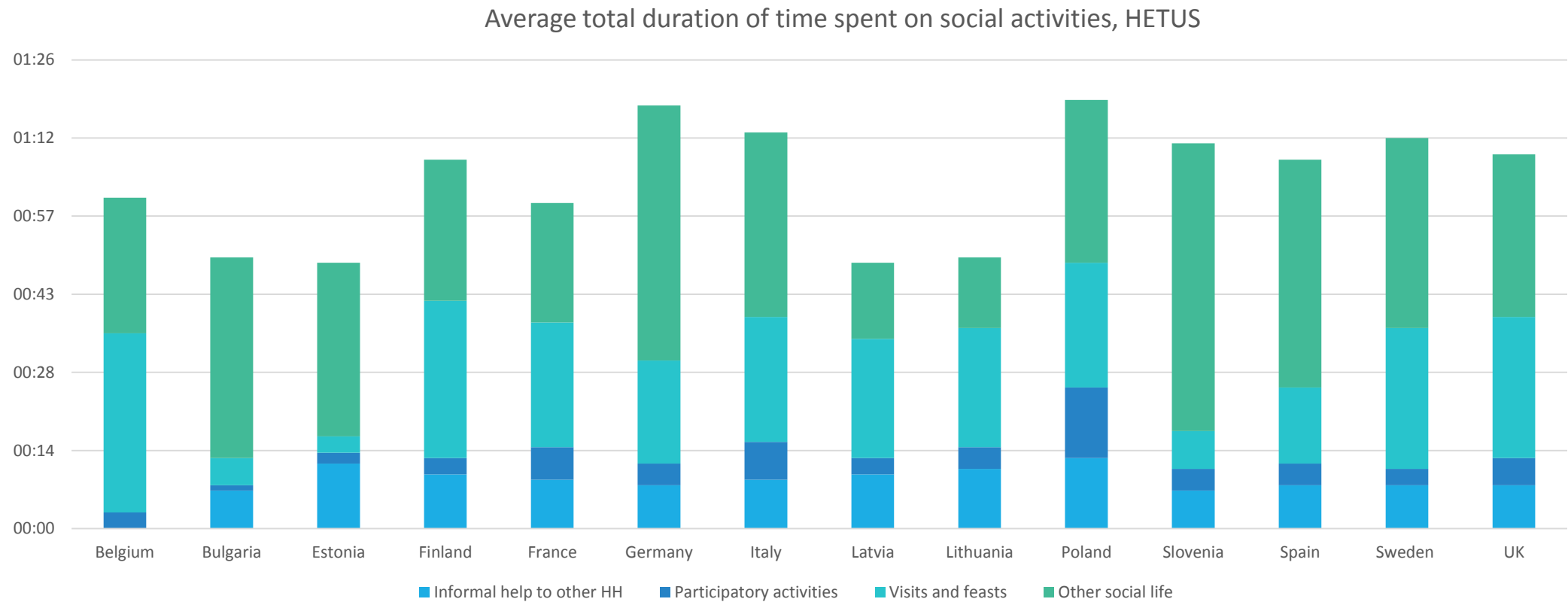
Time use diary

Diary/ person id	Starting time	Ending time	Main activity	Parallel activity	Who with:				Where/mode of tranport
					Alone	Spouse	Small child	Other pers.	
A	04:00	07:20	Sleep						At home
a	07:20	07:50	Shower						At home
a	7:50	08:30	Had breakfast	Read newspaper			Ch		At home
a	08:30	08:40	Walked to bus		A				By foot
a	08:40	09:00	Bus to job					OP	By bus
a	09:00	11:20	Paid work					OP	At work
a	11:20	11:50	Lunch break: meal	Talked with colleag.				OP	At work
a	11:50	12:00	Lunch break: walk	Talked with colleag.				OP	By foot
a	12:00	12:30	Lunch break: walk		A				By foot
a	12:30	16:30	Paid work					OP	At work
a	16:30	16:50	Bus to home	Read newspaper	A				By bus

source: h2.scb.se

TUS Behaviours: Social support & social life

Participation rate: selected social activities, HETUS

Legend: ■ Informal help to other households ■ Participatory activities ■ Visits and feasts ■ Other social life

TUS Behaviours: Social support & social life

Average total duration of time spent on social activities, HETUS

Legend: Informal help to other HH · Participatory activities · Visits and feasts · Other social life

TUS: Time spent with other people /data quality issue?

Average time spent alone/ with others in mins, HETUS
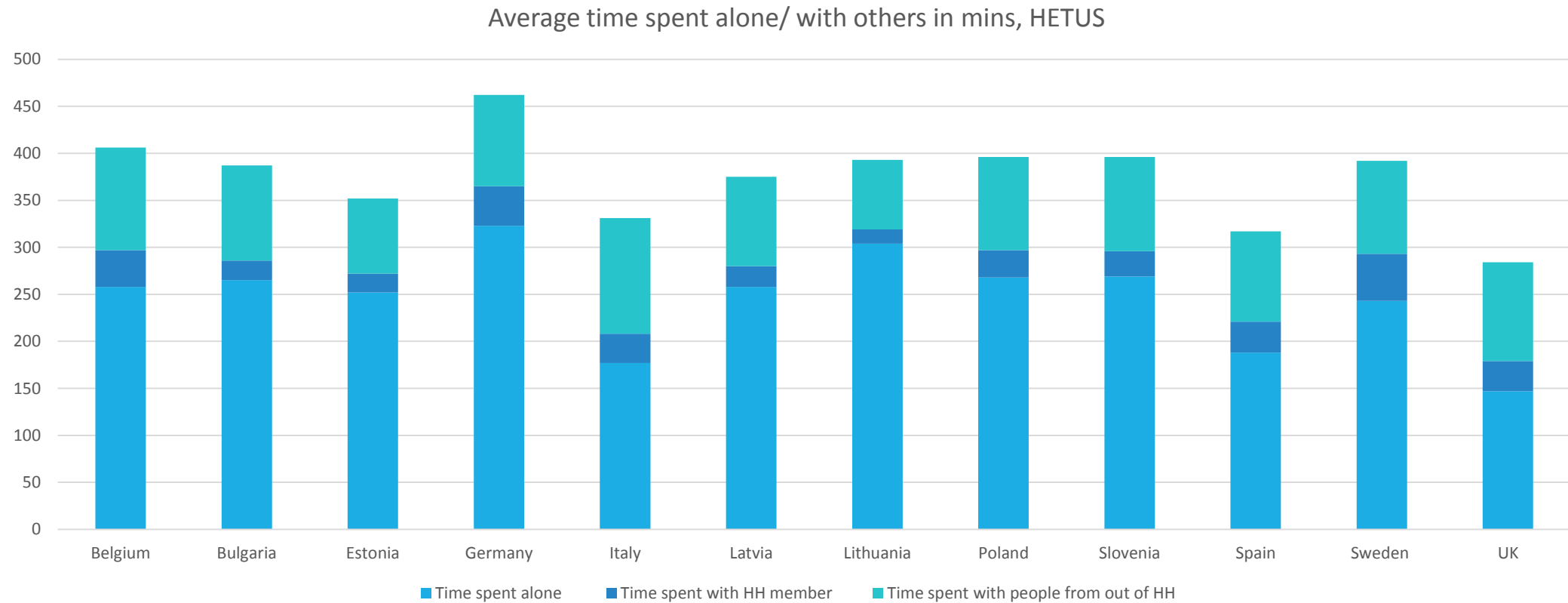
Control: Duration of paid work

Average duration of paid work (HETUS)
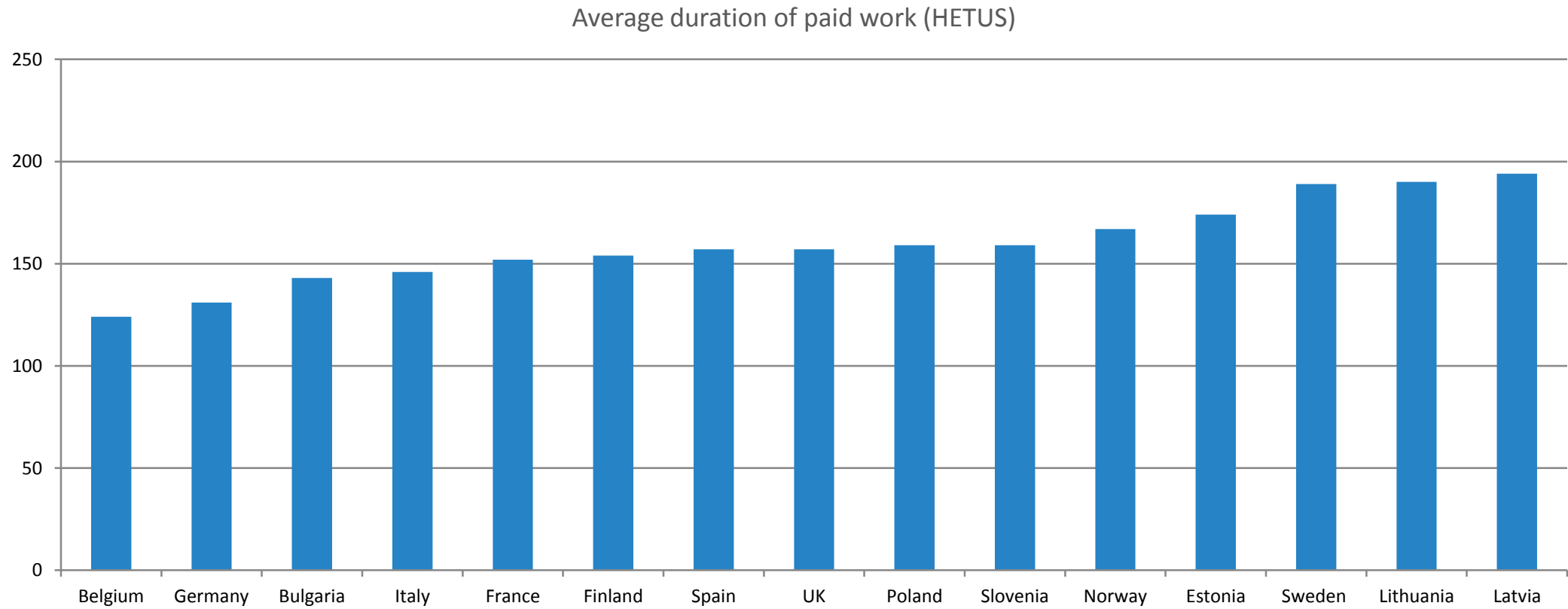
Method 1/2

Individual level variables

Importance of (1) Family; (2) Friends and acquaintances; (3) Leisure time.

Importance of leisure time activities: (4) Meeting nice people; (5) Doing as I want.

Perceived level possible social support: (6) 'Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?'

(7) Social participation (participation in organizations)

(8) Frequency of spending time with friends

Control variables: (1) Employment status (dummy); (2) Age; (3) Gender; (4) Educational attainment; (5) Self-reported health (controlling for bad health); (6) Relationship status

Method 2/2

Country-level variables

(1) Average time spent on informal help to other HH; (2) Participation rate in informal help to other HH;

(3) Average time spent in participatory activities; (4) Participation rate in participatory activities;

(5) Average time spent on visits and feasts; (6) Participation rate in visits and feasts;

(7) Average time spent on other social life; (7) Participation rate in other social life.

(8) Average time spent alone (excluding sleeping); (9) Average time spent with other adult member of the HH; (10) Average time spent with other person from outside of the HH.

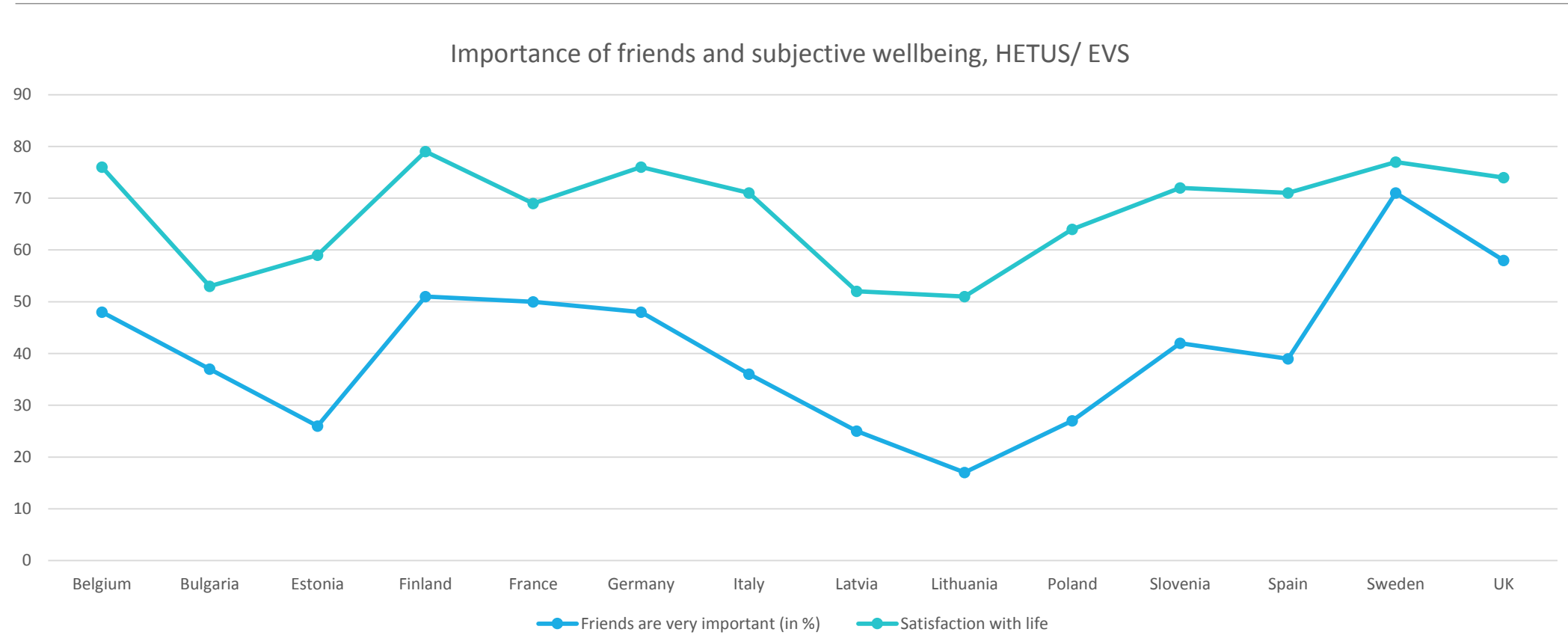Control variables: (10) Mean duration of paid work; (11) GDP per capita?

Research questions

Association between wellbeing & social relations in the context of macro-level social behaviours
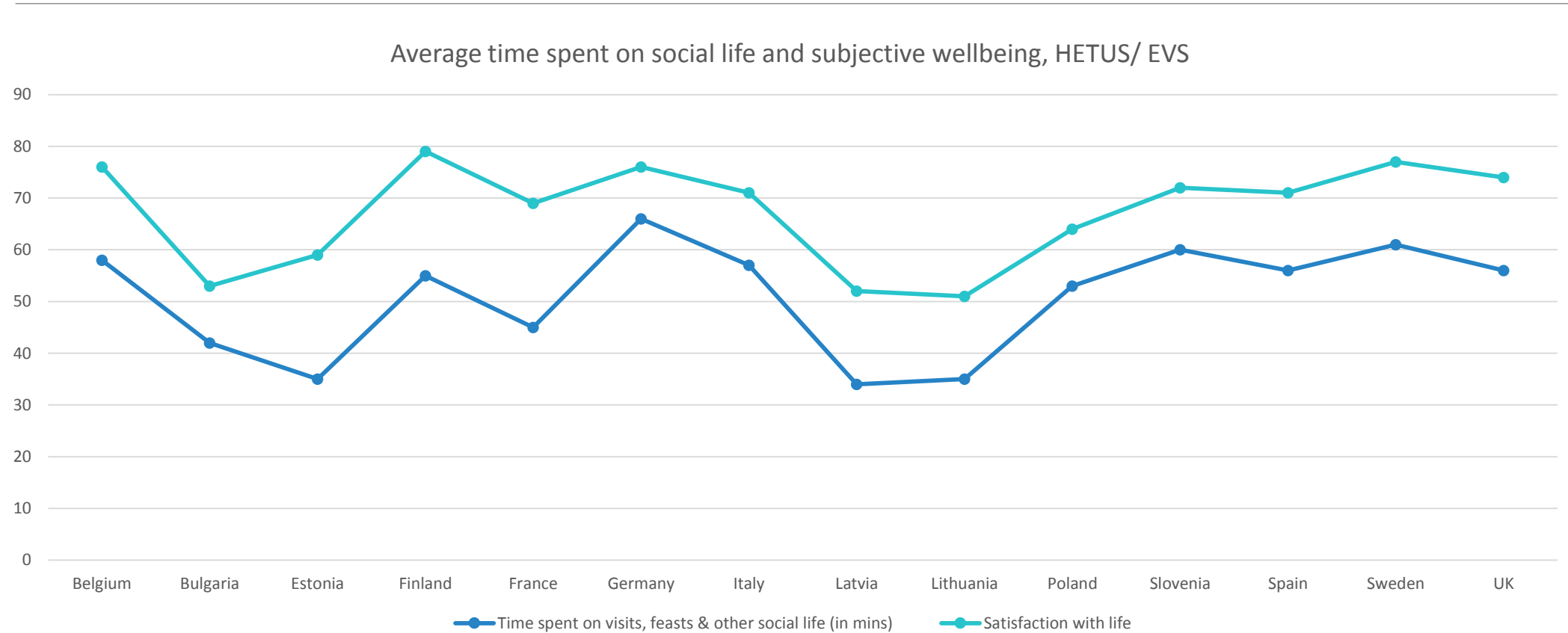
'To be social seems to pay off in terms of happiness' (Muffels, Skugor, Dingemans, 2012)

→ How it pays off in societies with a general high average level of involvement in social/ participatory activities? (participation rate + average duration)

→ How it pays off in societies with dominating particular type of social/participatory activities (socializing vs informal help)

→ How it pays off in societies where people spend relatively more time with others vs 'solitary' societies

Aggregated: attitudes & subjective wellbeing

Importance of friends and subjective wellbeing, HETUS/ EVS

Legend: Friends are very important (in %) ● Satisfaction with life

Aggregated: behaviours & subjective wellbeing

Average time spent on social life and subjective wellbeing, HETUS/ EVS

Time spent on visits, feasts & other social life (in mins) — Satisfaction with life

THANK YOU

This report was presented at the 5th LCSR International Workshop "Social and Cultural Changes in Cross-National Perspective: Subjective Well-being, Trust, Social capital and Values", which will be held within the XVI April International Academic Conference on Economic and Social Development.

April 8 - 10, 2015 – Higher School of Economics, Moscow.

www.lcsr.hse.ru/en/seminar2015

Настоящий доклад был представлен на V международном рабочем семинаре ЛССИ «Социальные и культурные изменения в сравнительной перспективе: ценности и модернизация», прошедшего в рамках XVI Апрельской международной научной конференции НИУ ВШЭ «Модернизация экономики и общества».

8-10 апреля 2015 года – НИУ ВШЭ, Москва.

www.lcsr.hse.ru/seminar2015