

Disagreements about the money before and during the economic recession in officially registered and consensual unions in European countries

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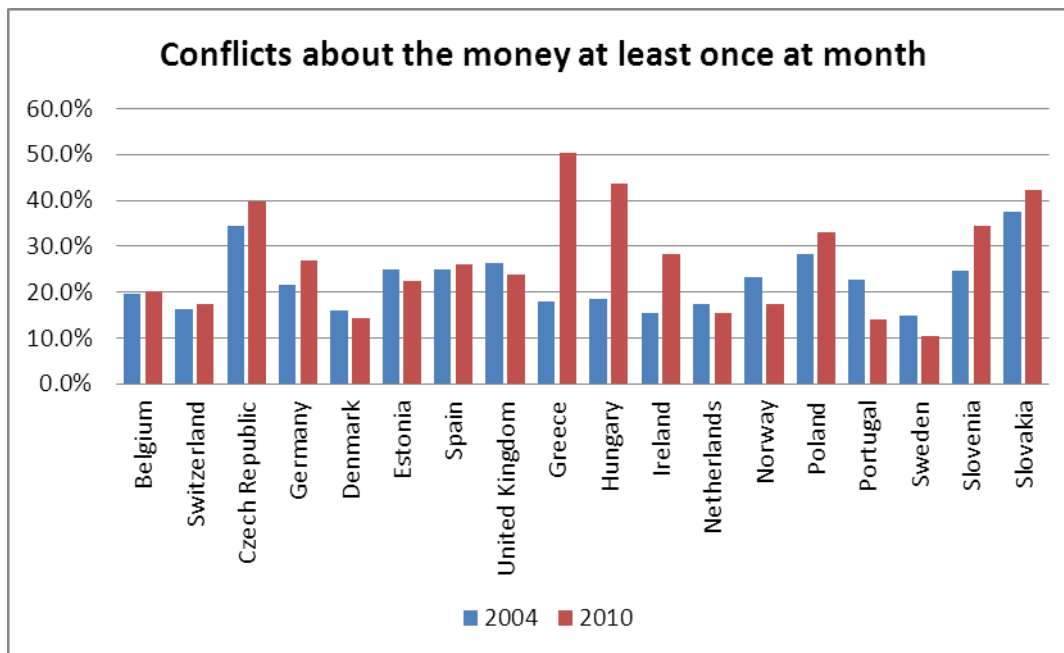
The current poster analyses changes in family quality in terms of frequency of disagreements about money before and during the economic recession in 15 European countries and in two different family types: in officially registered marriages and in consensual unions.

The existing research suggests different ways how the economic recession might have an effect on partnership quality and longevity of partnerships. First it might be expected that economic problems might raise the risk of family problems and divorces, on the other hand difficulties could also bond the partners more tightly together and strengthen the family bonds. The current study examines the two explanations and more precisely looks at possible antecedents of divorce, namely the frequency of conflicts about money between the partners. The data for analyses come from the 2004 and 2010 waves of the European Social Survey.

Results

The main indicator of the quality of the relationship in the analyses is worded as follows “How often do you disagree with your husband/wife/partner about money?” The range for the answers is from 1 (never) to 7 (every day).

The results show that in most of the countries the frequency of disagreements with the partner about the money increased during 2004-2010 (graph 1). The most extreme example is Greece.



Graph 1. Frequency of disagreements about money between the partners in 18 European countries

Differences in the frequency of disagreements by the type of the family can also be brought out: cohabiting couples tend to have more disagreements than married couples. Older respondents, religious persons and persons without children have lower conflict risks. Being in the paid work last 7 days decreases the risk for conflicts for men but not for women whereas feelings of coping with the household income decrease the risk for conflicts for both. More traditional personal gender attitudes decrease the risk for conflicts for men but not for women.