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WORKING PAPERS

04/2023

**THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY, LEISURE,
WORK, AND FRIENDS**

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we investigate the importance of various aspects of life—that is, the value of family, leisure, work, and friends distinguished by age and parenthood. Our data is from the European Values Study and World Values Survey, capturing 46 countries in Europe, East Asia, Latin America and Australia. We focus on persons in young and middle adulthood and examine the perceived importance of the four life domains in 2005–2009 and 2017–2019 and the changes over the roughly 10-year period. Our results show that family is most often regarded as important, followed by work, friends, and leisure. This hierarchy remained the same during the last decade. The descriptive results show an increase in the importance of family, friends, and leisure, with significant regional differences. Regionally, Southern Europe and East Asia have the most significant changes in values over the 10-year period. Differentiations by age and parity reveal that the associations of age and parity are weaker in 2017–2019 than in 2005–2009.

KEYWORDS

Importance of life domains, family, leisure, work, friends, European Values Study (EVS), World Values Study (WVS)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The life of an adult man or woman is characterised by a plurality of choices and events pertaining to different domains, such as education, partnership, work, and family formation. Factors including vis-à-vis low fertility rates, observed gaps between desired and realised fertility (Beaujouan & Berghammer, 2019; Harknett & Hartnett, 2014), the interplay between different life domains, and the importance attributed to these domains in young and middle adulthood may help to understand reproductive decision making. Rotkirch (2020) discusses how a perceived resource scarcity in life is related to continued falling fertility, where scarcity can be economic, social, or psychological. Considering children within a space of resource scarcity allows us to better conceptualise fertility through a comparative and relative life-course approach. This resource scarcity is distributed in terms of time, where individuals may dedicate more time and importance to their leisure, work, or friendship—potentially instead of family. The selected life domains identify a set of closely interrelated fields that inform an individual's family formation history and adult life.

2 BACKGROUND

The concept of second demographic transition (SDT, van de Kaa, 1987) has not only been widely used and popularised in the field of demography, but also in sociology to understand changes in demographic behaviour. The SDT represents a shift from traditional patterns of high fertility and early marriage to a new set of behaviours characterised by decline of fertility to below replacement levels, postponement of marriage and birth, increase in cohabitation and divorce, and changes in value orientations. Further, the SDT has been linked to changes in the age structure and the accumulation of wealth and capital (Mason & Lee, 2006). Despite variations, the basic features of the SDT have been observed in many countries, including European and Asian ones (Gietel-Basten & Sobotka, 2017; Lesthaeghe, 2011).

The SDT guides our approach of linking life domains, changes in values, as well as reproductive decisions. Housing, steady work, or marriage and children are no longer considered as important as they used to be, but there is a greater emphasis on individualism and self-expression, which is especially valued among younger generations with better education (Lesthaeghe, 2011). More so than in previous decades, individuals may consider children and family as part of an individual choice in conflict with other domains. An observed change in the value of life course domains that potentially conflicts with family formation might give evidence for a change in priorities at the individual level. Depending on the purpose and field of study, there is a great diversity and breadth in the definition of life domains (Koshy et al., 2023; Matei & Abrudan, 2018). In the scope of this research, we focus on four main aspects of life domains; namely, family, leisure, work, and friends.

The importance of life domains varies across individuals' life cycle stage. Likewise, there are generational differences when it comes to assessing the importance of work and other aspects of the life domain. Notably, older cohorts are less likely to consider work as important as younger ones. Research on elderly people in the US has shown that health and family life are most important, followed by friendships and spare time, whereas work is least important (Hsieh, 2005; Koshy et al., 2023). With increasing age, the role of friendships decreases. However, this is different by gender in that the importance of friends decreases more strongly for men than for women in old age (Kalmijn, 2012). Moreover, education and marital status are relevant: Higher educational attainment significantly affects the propensity to view friends and leisure as important, whereas no substantial differences were found between graduates and non-graduates regarding the tendency to view family and work as important (Koshy et al., 2023).

Depending on the regional and national context, family, friends, leisure, and work are evaluated differently. In the Asian setting, family is more likely to play a role than in the Western one (Li & Cheng, 2015). However individualism is on the rise in East Asian countries, where people are becoming less likely to marry and have children. In other words, even in societies that are considered extremely traditional, such as Asian countries, the family has lost importance to individuals. This has been linked to low fertility and changes in the parenthood transition (Raymo et al., 2015). When people are facing challenging circumstances (such as a financial crisis, unemployment, or serious sickness), family bonds become more crucial, whereas

friends frequently offer a lot of assistance when people are going through emotional or mental crises (Lee et al., 2005). Further, cultural factors contribute to shaping priorities in life domains between work and leisure time. In European countries, society values harmony, while in Asian or American countries, the hierarchy and the individual are important (Schwartz, 2014). Brzozowska (2021) found that the increase in the importance of leisure in Europe is highest in post-socialist countries, linking findings to the SDT where the shift from materialist to postmaterialist values is found in areas where the economy grew quickest.

The World Values Survey (WVS) and the European Values Study (EVS) dataset (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Koshy et al., 2023; Matei & Abrudan, 2018) are vital for analysing potential changes in values over time. Matei and Abrudan (2018) studied trends in the importance of the six broad values captured in the WVS—family, friends, leisure, work, politics and religion—over 25 years and showed that leisure time, friends, and family have become increasingly important in personal life, while work has decreased in importance over this period. Further, changes occurred more quickly in countries undergoing major sustained changes, principally economic ones. In previous studies, the concept of "national culture" was taken into account when considering the change in people's perception, especially in assessing the evaluation of each life domain across nations (Hofstede, 2001). Norms and values turned out to be strongly influenced by economic development, whereas national culture was shaped and transformed by education and mass media (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

Our study closely follows previous studies in the realm of values. We focus on individuals in young and middle adulthood—the period of family formation—and analyse the importance of the four life domains: family, leisure, work, and friends in 2005–2009 and 2017–2019 and possible changes in the importance of these domains.

The following research questions are key in our study:

RQ1. How important are family, leisure, work, and friends in young and middle adulthood?

RQ2. Do we observe a change in the importance of these four life domains between 2005–2009 and 2017–2019?

RQ3: Does the assessment of the importance of life domains differ among individuals in young and in middle adulthood?

RQ4: Do we observe differences in the importance of these four life domains between childless persons and parents?

3 DATA AND METHOD

3.1 DATA

This study is based on the WVS and the EVS, two research infrastructures allowing us to study changes in values on a wide range of aspects in a comparative setting, including family and social life (EVS, 2020, 2022; EVS/WVS, 2021; Inglehart et al., 2022). In the remainder of this paper, we use the abbreviation WVS/EVS for the combined dataset. We studied the perceived importance of different life domains and changes therein during the last decade. Hence, our life domain variables came from data collected roughly 10 years apart. Due to possible changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we excluded data collected in 2020–2021. Thus, we draw on the EVS conducted in the years 2005–2009 (wave 4) and 2017–2019 (wave 5) as well as on the WVS fielded in the period 2005–2009 (wave 5) and in years 2017–2019 (wave 7).

We restricted our analyses to countries participating in WVS/EVS in both periods of 2005–2009 and 2017–2019. As we focus on young and middle adulthood and the main period of family formation, we restricted our sample to persons aged 20 to 39 years, to individuals responding to the four life domains of interest, and to respondents with information on parity. To summarise our data, our analytical sample includes 57,174 individuals in 46 countries. The countries were grouped into nine geographical-cultural regions: Northern Europe, Western Europe, Central-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, Australia, Latin America, and East Asia. See Table A1 for the countries included in the various regions. Table 1 shows the size of our analytical sample and the years in which the interviews were conducted.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS.

	Northern Europe		Western Europe		Central-Eastern Europe		Eastern Europe		South-Eastern Europe		Southern Europe		Australia		Latin America		East Asia		Total	
	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019
Age																				
20–29	45%	47%	43%	47%	50%	45%	53%	49%	53%	51%	49%	47%	47%	39%	53%	51%	46%	44%	50%	48%
30–39	55%	53%	57%	53%	50%	55%	47%	51%	47%	49%	51%	53%	53%	61%	47%	49%	54%	56%	50%	52%
Parenthood status																				
Childless	51%	56%	50%	60%	52%	52%	43%	50%	54%	56%	62%	68%	55%	49%	38%	37%	52%	53%	50%	53%
Parent	49%	44%	50%	40%	48%	48%	57%	50%	46%	44%	38%	32%	45%	51%	62%	63%	48%	47%	50%	47%
Survey year	2005-2009	2017-2018	2005-2009	2017-2018	2005-2009	2017-2018	2006-2009	2017-2018	2005-2008	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019	2005	2018	2005-2006	2017-2018	2005-2007	2017-2019	2005-2009	2017-2019
Sample size	2,707	2,203	4,534	3,949	4,350	2,688	5,467	4,488	5,873	4,308	3,085	1,699	354	395	3,063	2,787	2,464	2,760	31,897	25,277

Source: WVS/EVS.

3.2 MEASUREMENT

The WVS/EVS surveys capture the importance of various life domains with the following question: “Please indicate how important [this life domain] is in your life.” Possible answers were measured on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (very important), 2 (rather important), 3 (not very important), to 4 (not important at all). This item is part of the core questionnaire and mainly refers to the following six life domains: family, friends, leisure time, work, politics, and religion. Given our conceptual framework of life domains competing with family, we focused on the four domains family, friends, leisure time and work.

Our study differentiated between those who answer “very important” and all other responses due to the dominance of the “very important” response (see Table A2). Thus, our outcome variable was binary with value 1 if an individual responded that a domain was very important and with the value 0 if the domain was perceived as rather important, not very important, or not important at all. We applied post-stratification weights provided by WVS/EVS. In addition, we applied weights so that each country was equally represented in regional averages.

Two explanatory indicators were key in this study, namely age (20–29 years considered as young adulthood; 30–39 years considered as middle adulthood;) and parenthood status (childless; parent). Further, we controlled for sex. Note that parenthood status was derived from the question: “How many children do you have? Please indicate how many of them live in your household and how live many elsewhere.” We recoded the answers into two categories, namely ‘childless’ and ‘parents.’ Therefore, the question relates to living children and does not specify whether the children are own biological children or step-children. Further, deceased children are not taken into consideration, as the surveys do not ask for deceased children.

Our sample contains 36,617 men and 30,952 women. The average age for both men and women was 29.8 years. When breaking down our sample by age, about one-half was in their twenties and the other was in their thirties at the time of the interview (Table 1). Childless persons comprised a slightly larger share than parents (53% versus 47%). As expected, regions with late transition to adulthood had higher proportions of childless persons (e.g., 62%–68% in Southern Europe) (Table 1).

3.3 METHOD

Our first step used descriptive results to examine the importance of the four life domains in the various regions around 2008 and around 2018. Then, we analysed the response patterns through two main explanatory variables: age and parenthood status. Therefore, we distinguished between young and middle adulthood (20–29 and 30–39 years, respectively) as well as between childless persons and persons with children. Figures visualise the proportions of respondents perceiving a specific life domain as very important in the various regions.

In multivariate analyses, we studied the relationship between valuing different domains as very important on the one hand and age and parenthood on the other hand, both around 2008 and around 2018. Using binomial logit regression, we estimated average marginal effects (AME) representing the average effect of a variable on the probability to perceive a life domain as very important. AMEs allow the direct comparison of effect sizes between different models (Best & Wolf, 2012; Mize, 2019). Positive coefficients indicated that a group more often perceived a specific life domain as very important in one’s own life than the reference group, while negative coefficients indicated that a group perceived this less often. We then stratified the sample by childless individuals and parents to explore possible distinct pattern between these two groups over time. In all models, we controlled for the sex and region of the respondent.

4. RESULTS

Family was most often regarded as important, followed by work, friends, and leisure (Table 2). However, we observed different trends in different survey periods by young and middle adulthood and parenthood. Family and work were more important among those in middle age than those in early adulthood. Young people tended to value friends and free time more than middle-aged people.

The importance of the family tended to increase in the childless population from period 2005–2009 to period 2017–2019. Parents tended to view work as very important to a higher degree than those without children. Friends were more often of high importance among the childless than those with children. Hence, people without children placed a higher importance on leisure than parents.

TABLE 2. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO CONSIDERS EACH LIFE DOMAIN AS “VERY IMPORTANT” IN THEIR LIFE, BY TIME, AGE, AND PARENTHOOD STATUS

	Family		Work		Friends		Leisure	
	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019
ALL	87%	88%	59%	55%	52%	52%	43%	45%
AGE								
20–29	85%	86%	57%	53%	55%	55%	44%	47%
30–39	89%	89%	61%	56%	48%	49%	41%	44%
PARENTHOOD STATUS								
Childless	81%	83%	57%	52%	58%	57%	48%	50%
Parents	93%	93%	61%	58%	45%	45%	38%	41%

Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted Data.

Note: Ages 20-39.

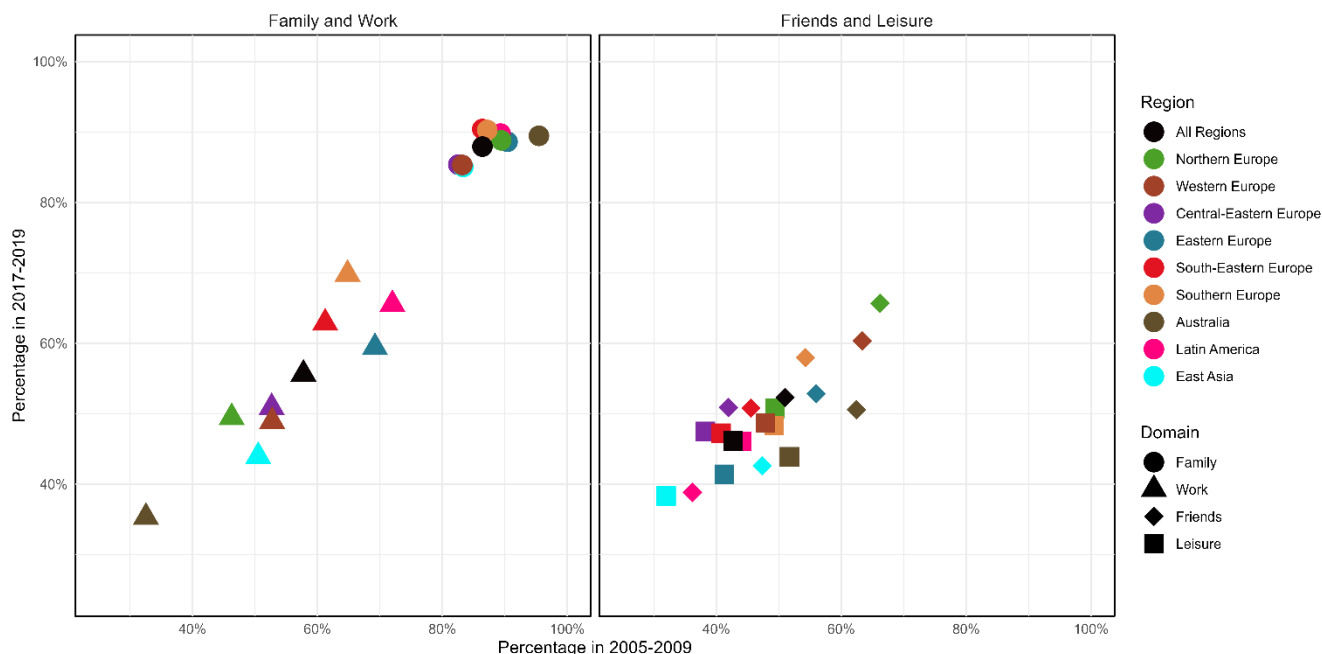
Overall, the importance of family was consistently high across regions and time. In both waves, Central-Eastern and Western Europe as well as East Asia had slightly lower shares of persons valuing family as very important than the other regions (Figure 1). Across the 46 countries included in our study, between 83% and 89% of our sample considered family to be very important in their lives (Table A2). The extremely high share of 95% observed in Australia in 2005–2009 might be due to the comparably small sample size. In all regions, the remaining respondents valued family as rather important and only 2% or less regarded family as not very important or not important at all (Table A2).

Of the four life domains, work ranked second with regard to high importance for individuals. As visualised in Figure 1, variation was large, with shares ranging from 44% to 72% in the two waves and with Australia as outlier with proportions around one third. In 2005–2009, persons attributed to a larger extent high importance to work in Latin America as well as in Eastern and Southern Europe, and to a lower extent in Northern Europe and Australia, as mentioned above. Overall, the importance of work remained stable in the last decade when all regions were grouped, with some regions displaying increases (like Southern Europe) and others witnessing decreases (like Eastern Europe). As observed for leisure, large groups in young and middle adulthood valued work as rather important, resulting in a small share of 10% or less who valued work as not very important or as not important at all (Table A2).

Among the four considered life domains, leisure was least often regarded as very important, although almost all regions showed stable or increasing proportions for a high importance of leisure during the last decade. In the observed period, Northern, Western, and Southern Europe remained consistently high, with other regions catching up to levels seen in these countries. In 2005–2009, East Asia had by far the lowest proportion for high importance of leisure and remained at a comparable low level, despite an increase from 32% to 38% during the last decade. Despite differences in respondents rating leisure as very important across regions, almost all regions had similar shares that regarded leisure as rather important in

their life (Table A2). Overall, the group perceiving leisure as not very important or not important at all was comparably large in East Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe (Table A2).

FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO CONSIDERS EACH DOMAIN AS “VERY IMPORTANT” IN THEIR OWN LIFE, BY TIME AND REGION



Source: WVS/EVS.


Notes: Ages 20–39. Weighted data. See Tables A3–A6 and Figure A1 for results at the country level.

4.1 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUNG AND MIDDLE ADULTHOOD

Differences across age groups were pronounced with regard to the perceived importance of family (Table A7, Figure 2a). Respondents in their thirties nominated family more often as very important than those in their twenties. These differences were significant in most regions and at both waves. Further, in almost all regions, the share of young adults (i.e., aged 20–29) perceiving family as very important slightly increased during the last decade, although the increase was not usually statistically significant, as confidence intervals overlapped. The increase was only significant and substantial in South-Eastern Europe, which might be due to a comparably low level in 2005–2009.

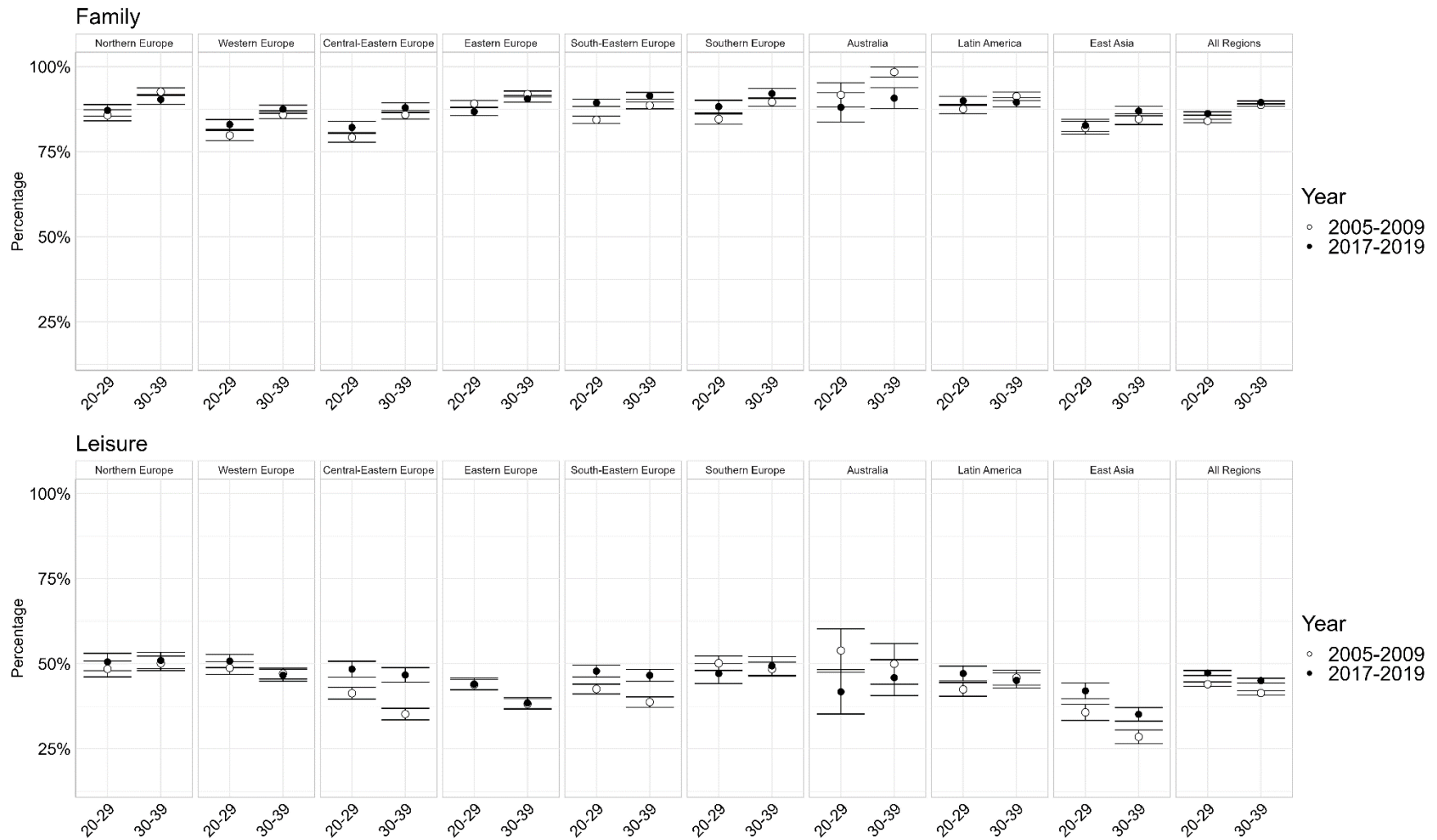
By contrast, the importance of leisure tended to be higher in young than in middle adulthood, with differences only being statistically significant in some regions such as Eastern Europe and East Asia. We observed convergence in the sense that regions with lower shares for high importance of leisure in 2005–2009 (e.g., Central-Eastern Europe or East Asia) displayed significant increases in the last decade in both large age groups.

The importance of work was higher in middle than in young adulthood (Figure 2b). The differentiation in the two large age groups shows that work was more frequently perceived as very important among persons in their thirties than in their twenties. A notable exception was Northern Europe, where in 2017–2019, work was perceived as very important to a slightly higher extent among persons in their twenties than among those in their thirties. During the last decade, changes were substantial in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, East Asia, and Latin America. Whereas Southern Europe shows an increase, the latter regions experienced significant decreases in the importance of work in both age groups. Age-specific differences



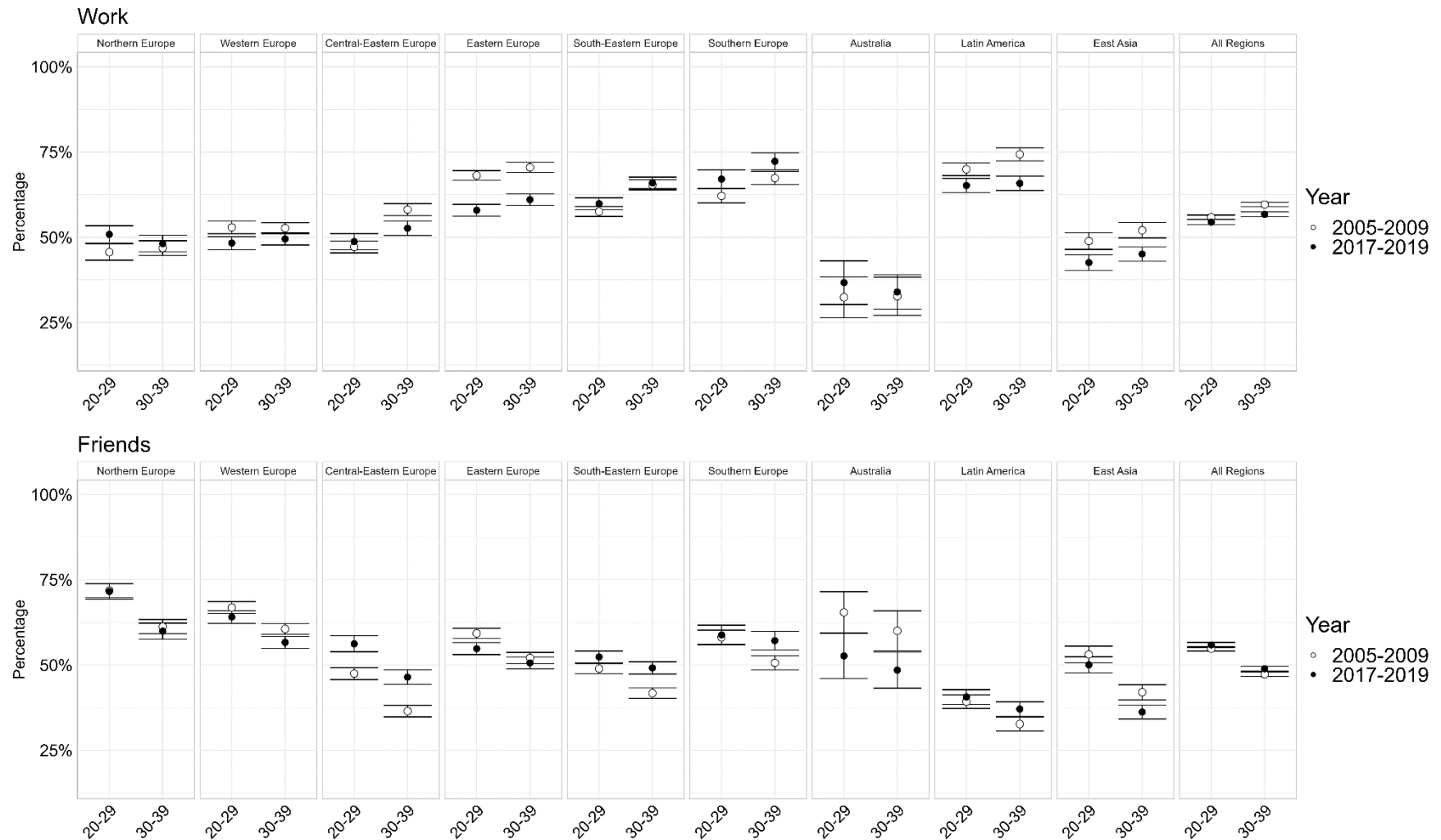
were pronounced for friends, whose importance was higher among 20–29-year-olds than among 30–39-year olds (Figure 2b). In the majority of regions, the confidence interval for the two age groups did not overlap, indicating statistically significant differences. The association with age appeared strongest in Northern Europe, with 20–29-year-olds valuing friends the most of any group. Western Europe and East Asia showed small decreases in the importance of friends from 2005–2009 to 2017–2019, whereas increases were observed in Central-Eastern European countries that had comparably low levels in 2005–2009.

FIGURE 2A. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO CONSIDERS FAMILY AND LEISURE AS “VERY IMPORTANT” IN THEIR OWN LIFE, BY TIME, REGION, AND AGE.



Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted data.
 Note: Ages 20–39. 95% confidence intervals. See Tables A3–A6 for results at the country level.

FIGURE 2B. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO CONSIDERS WORK AND FRIENDS AS “VERY IMPORTANT” IN THEIR OWN LIFE, BY TIME, REGION, AND AGE.



Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted data.
 Note: Ages 20–39. 95% confidence intervals.

4.2 DIFFERENCES BY PARENTHOOD

Having children was related to viewing family as very important in one's life. Overall, compared to the population without children, parents had a greater tendency to consider family and work as important, whereas friends and leisure were perceived substantially more often as important to people without children than those with children (Table A8).

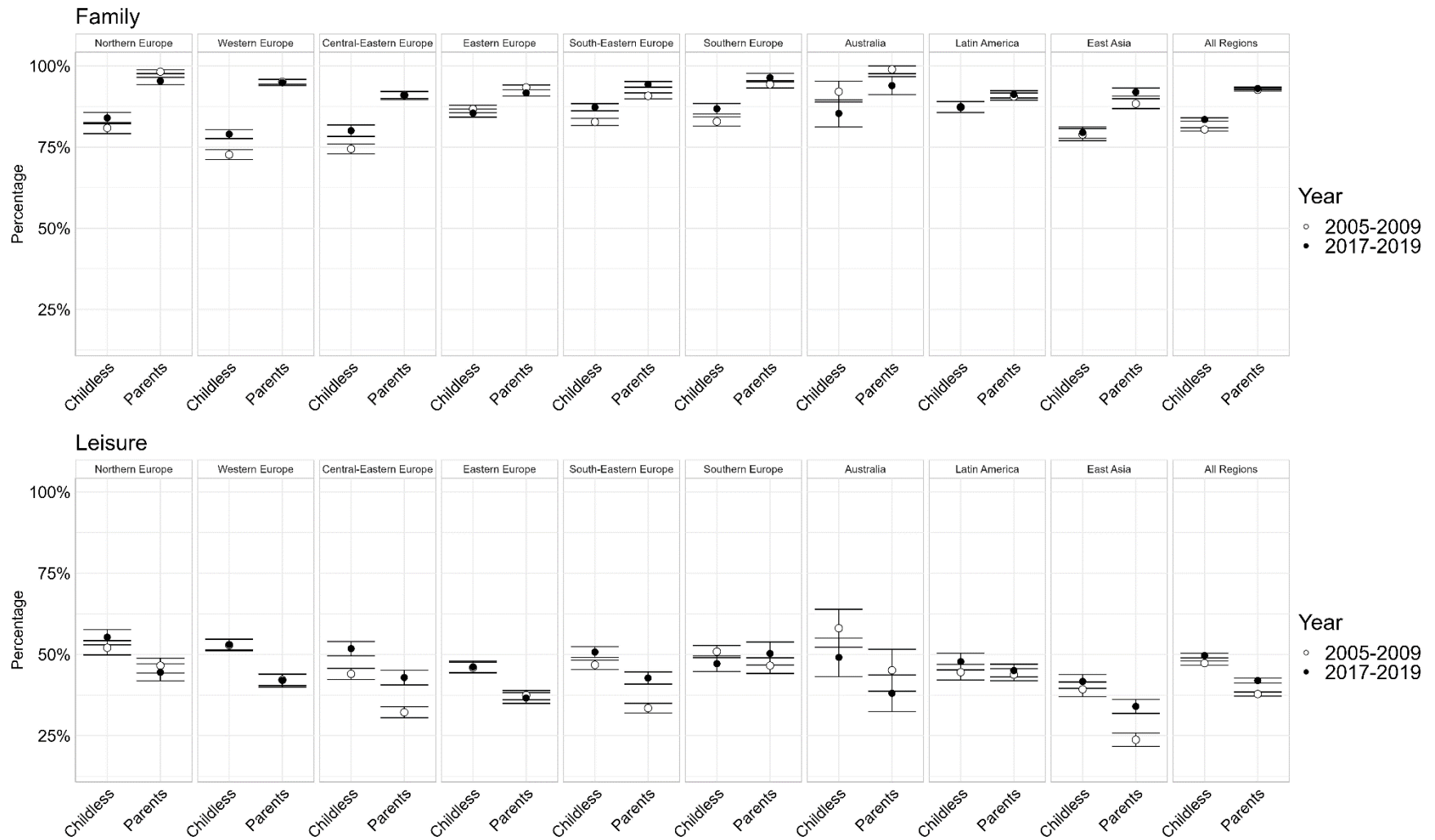
According to our bivariate analyses, differences between childless and parents with regard to family were statistically significant, as indicated by not-overlapping confidence intervals in all regions (Figure 3a). Some regions, like Northern Europe, Western Europe, and East Asia, showed large differences in parenthood status, whereas these were less pronounced in Latin American countries. During the last decade, the importance of family tended to increase in the childless population, particularly in European regions, but remained at almost the same level in Latin America and East Asia. The importance of family for those with children was rather stable during the same period, with increases observed in East Asia.

Having children was further related to viewing leisure as very important in one's life (Figure 3a). Childless persons attributed a high importance to leisure at a substantially higher degree than persons with children. Additional analyses including parity revealed a trend of decreasing importance of leisure with increasing number of children. Between 2005–2009 and 2017–2019, the importance of leisure increased for those without and those with children. This increase was substantial in Central-Eastern Europe and among parents in East Asia.

As mentioned above, parents tended to regard work as very important to a higher extent than childless persons (Figure 3b). However, differences partly failed statistical significance, as visualised by overlapping confidence intervals. We found opposing trends between 2005–2009 and 2017–2019. In Southern Europe, the importance of work increased substantially for parents, whereas it decreased in Eastern Europe and East Asia for parents as well as childless. Further parity-specific analyses revealed that the largest changes in the 10-year period were found in individuals who were childless or had one child.

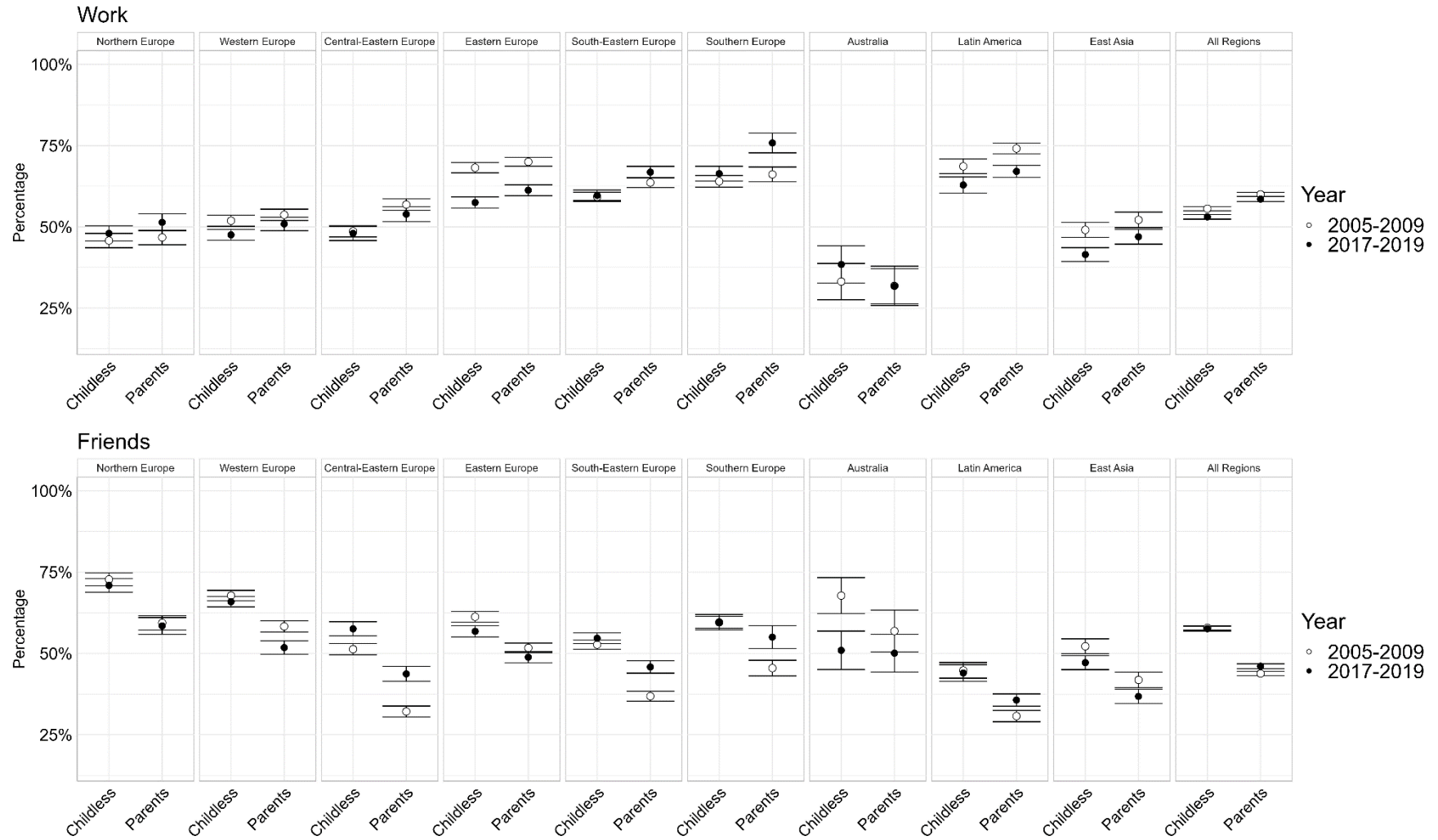
Similar to the life domain leisure, the importance of friends varied substantially between parents and childless (Figure 3b). The latter attributed high importance to friends more often than persons with children, and differences were statistically significant in almost all regions. During the last decade, some regions (like Central-Eastern Europe, Southeastern Europe and East Asia) witnessed remarkable increases in the importance of friends, especially among parents.

FIGURE 3A. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO CONSIDERS FAMILY AND LEISURE AS “VERY IMPORTANT” IN THEIR OWN LIFE, BY TIME, REGION, AND PARENTHOOD.



Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted data.
Note: Ages 20–39. 95% confidence intervals.

FIGURE 3B. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO CONSIDERS WORK AND FRIENDS AS “VERY IMPORTANT” IN THEIR OWN LIFE, BY TIME, REGION, AND PARENTHOOD.



Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted data.
 Note: Ages 20–39. 95% confidence intervals.

4.3 MULTIVARIATE RESULTS

We observed a highly significant parenthood effect in multivariate analyses for the four life domains, with parents being more likely to value family and work and less likely to value leisure and friends as very important (Table 3). Statistically significant differences were present between young and middle adulthood for viewing work and friends as very important: Those in their thirties attributed high importance to work more often and less often to friends than those in their twenties. According to the size of the estimated coefficients, parenthood status had the strongest effect on valuing family, leisure, work, and friends as very important. A comparison of the estimated coefficients for 2005–2009 and 2017–2019 indicated that differences between childless and parents somewhat decreased with regard to family (from 0.108*** to 0.087***) and friends (from -0.122*** to -0.098), widened with regard to work (from 0.020** to 0.048***), and remained rather stable for leisure (-0.099** and -0.090***). Further, the influence of sex on views about family, work, and friends was significant, with women more often nominating family as well as friends as very important, and men more often perceiving work as very important (Table A9). For differences by regions, we refer to Table A9.

TABLE 3. ESTIMATED COEFFICIENTS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE DOMAINS (AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS).

	Family	Leisure	Work	Friends
Year				
2005–2009	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
2017–2019	0.013***	0.026***	-0.042***	-0.003
Age				
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	-0.007*	0.014**	0.024***	-0.022***
Parenthood status				
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parent	0.099***	-0.094***	0.033***	-0.110***
N	57,174	57,174	57,174	57,174
Adjusted R ²	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.03

+ p < 0.1, *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Source: WVS/EVS, respondents aged 20–39.

Note: Controlled for sex and region. For the full models see Table A9

According to separate regressions for childless and parents, we found a decrease in the importance of family as age increases among the childless, and an opposite trend for those with children (Table A10). As in the non-stratified model, the association of age with domain importance weakened over the 10-year period. This was a similar finding to the weakening effect of parity when comparing 2005–2009 and 2017–2019, again supporting the argument that social groups are becoming more similar in evaluating life domain importance.

For the childless, leisure showed no significant age pattern, whereas parents became more likely to consider leisure time important with increasing age. For both the childless and parents, the association of age with the importance of work weakened to a large degree from 2005–2009 to 2017–2019, again supporting the argument of more value cohesion across groups. In relation to the importance of friends, a clear age pattern existed for the childless, where increased age was associated with the decreased importance of friends, whereas there was little evidence of a pattern for those who had children.

5 DISCUSSION

In this research, we concentrate on the ages in the twenties and thirties that are known as the “rush hour of life.” It is a certain stage of life, ranging from the mid twenties to the late thirties, when persons have completed their education, enter the labour market and—a substantial share of them—also starts their own family (Tremmel, 2010). Individuals in young and middle adulthood regard family as very important to a large extent, which is in line with previous findings underlining an almost-universal agreement on family as an important value (e.g., Koshy et al., 2023). According to the share of persons attributing very high importance to various domains, family stands out at first place, followed by work and friends and—at a clear distance—leisure. This hierarchy remained the same during the last decade, i.e., between 2005–2009 and 2017–2019 and has been characterised as stable when going further back in time (Matei & Abrudan, 2018). The hierarchy of these aspects proved to be identical among persons in their twenties and in their thirties, and among parents as well as among the childless. Only the childless deviated from this hierarchy in 2005–2009 and ranked friends second and work third—albeit at almost the same level.

Despite the persistent ranking, previous research identified variation by individual characteristics like gender, marital status, or education (Koshy et al., 2023), as well as by macro-level indicators, like GDP or economic growth (Koshy et al., 2023; Matei & Abrudan, 2018). As a major finding, our study revealed a strong parenthood effect for the importance given to the four domains in young and middle adulthood. Even though the perception of life domains varies between persons in their twenties and those in their thirties, the transition to parenthood turned out to be an even stronger determinant for valuing life domains. Although we are unable to defer the underlying process of shifting priorities or the onset of changing priorities, we may assume that possible changes in priorities are linked to the formation of fertility plans and their realisation. Further, it must be underlined that the underlying data do not allow to directly link individuals’ perceptions of high importance of family and their childbearing behaviour.

The question arises whom respondents regard as members of their family and whom they think of when asked about importance of family in their own life. Childless persons might more often think about their family of origin, i.e. their parents, siblings, and grandparents, whereas those with own children might presumably first think of their offspring and their partner. Further, the definition of family varies across cultures, and what is considered as “family” changed substantially during the course of the twentieth century (Therborn, 2004), departing from traditional views as a group of persons united by marriage and ancestors, to same-sex couples without children. Further, childless persons may take future family plans into consideration and might not only think about their parents and relatives, but also about a family they intend to have in the (near) future.

In general, individuals who are childless tend to place increasingly more value on family over the period we study, while those who are parents continue to do so. The increased value of family for those without children may be attributable to different interpretations of the term itself; whereas for those with children, “family” is likely to refer to their own children, for the childless it may refer to other referents such as parents, siblings, and extended family. Given that family relevance should decline with age if people do not have children, it is possible that the stronger ties between young adults and their parents contribute to the increased importance of family for the childless. Changes in the value of recreation and friendship are distributed equally across parities. This strengthens the argument for a change in attitudes that affects everyone in society, not just those who are childless. Particularly intriguing is the rise in importance of family for those without children; however, it is challenging to understand given the diverse definitions of family.

Despite consistencies over time, changes occurred during the last decade. The group valuing leisure as very important grew significantly between 2005–2009 and 2017–2019, which might be interpreted as an increase in hedonistic values. As for family, the term “leisure” is understood in different ways across individuals and cultures (Voss, 1967). For its definition, Veal (2020, p. 90) refers to Karl Marx, who “divided time and activity into two categories, related to ‘the realm of necessity’ and the ‘realm of freedom’ respectively.” Leisure has been associated, among others, with entertainment, escape from monotony, rest, and recuperation (Nash, 1960). Further, leisure can also include activities with family members and

friends (Veal, 2019). Therein, leisure versus friends and family are not separate spheres or life domains. An increase in the importance of leisure might be related with attitudinal changes in the framework of the SDT.

The overall increase in leisure for both childless and parent populations suggests that leisure is becoming increasingly important for society as a whole, possibly linked to more self-care and post-materialist ideals such as taking time to care for oneself. Leisure time can also refer to time spent with family or friends, which has different meanings for different people.

Our research clearly shows that even in social institutions where the SDT process has advanced a long way, family values are still valued and appreciated in most age groups and for both parents and the childless. The results of this study align with the study of acknowledging the importance of family values in light of the SDT (Fokkema & Esveldt, 2008). However, it is worth noting that the SDT has quite diverse and complex applications for different population groups. The value of children is changing; having children is no longer one of the life goals that must be achieved in order to gain self-worth, so the childless population is increasing and shifts in how important friends, family, career, and leisure are ranked. As (Van de Kaa, 2004) mentioned, childlessness is becoming more popular and accepted as the value of leisure and friendship grows.

While work is largely consistent in importance, we observe that family, leisure, and friendships are becoming more important. Our descriptive results show distinct age and parity trends as well as significant regional disparities in the relevance of domains. We observe a rise in the percentage of childless people who value family when we divide by parity. We also discover that for individuals in their 20s, family is becoming more and more important. The outcomes of leisure, job, and friends, however, essentially indicate changes in the relative importance of each area across society. In other words, there is a general trend across all age groups and parities in the increase or decline in the importance of each topic by region. This indicates a significant temporal shift in values. Work is linked to self-realisation, and putting more emphasis on it might take the place of putting more emphasis on raising a family. As a result, we would anticipate that as the SDT advances, the value of labour will rise. However, this is only the case in specific locations, and not just for those who are childless. Contrary to what we might assume, regions where fertility is rapidly declining, like East Asia, exhibit a reduction in the value of employment.

We find that there are clear age patterns for the importance of all four domains; however, the change in the importance of domains is largely consistent across ages. The outlier in this case is family, where the change in family is largely restricted to the youngest age groups. We also find a parity-specific difference in the importance of all domains, and cases where some parities are changing values to a greater extent than others. Overall, in 2017–2019 we see more similarities between different parities and ages than we did in 2005–2009. We understand this to be an emerging coherence at the society level, where individuals of different characteristics are valuing domains more similarly. Theoretically, we link this to the SDT and society-wide change of values. Based on these results, we therefore expect that the role of age and parity has decreased in the 10-year period.

Our study is not without limitations. We cannot make a causal claim that age or parity changes the value. For instance, do people value leisure less after the birth of a child or do they have a child because they value leisure less? As our data is cross-sectional, we are limited in applying methods that would allow us to deal with possible endogeneities. Individuals most likely conceptualise these life domains differently in different countries. This could be due to the normative meaning of the survey questions by language and context, but also larger cultural understandings of life domains. We do not try to directly compare countries as a result, but only examine trends.

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APPENDIX

TABLE A1. SAMPLE, BY REGION, COUNTRY, AND SURVEY YEAR.

Country	Wave 2005–2009					Wave 2017–2019			Sum
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2017	2018	2019	
Northern Europe									
Denmark				419		789			1,208
Finland	331				347	266			944
Iceland					294	483			777
Norway			369	362			358		1,089
Sweden		313			272	307			892
Western Europe									
Austria				537			454		991
France		374		465			536		1,375
Germany		509		529		573	415		2,026
Netherlands		350		330		587			1,267
Switzerland			276	389		953			1,618
United Kingdom	376				399		431		1,206
Central-Eastern Europe									
Czechia				523		451			974
Estonia				420			310		730
Hungary				583	382		475		1,440
Lithuania				460			393		853
Poland	314			542		411			1,267
Slovakia				294		345			639
Slovenia	379			453		303			1,135
Eastern Europe									
Armenia				560			619		1,179
Belarus				603			566		1,169
Georgia				574	563		622		1,759
Russia		715		536		1,413			2,664
Turkey			740		1,176		1,268		3,184
South-Eastern Europe									
Albania				568			506		1,074
Bosnia-Herzegovina				682				578	1,260
Bulgaria		328		399		339			1,066
Croatia				537		489			1,026
Montenegro				653				320	973
North Macedonia				611				398	1,009
Romania	570			451			792		1,813
Serbia		515		557		377	511		1,960
Southern Europe									
Cyprus		750						428	1,178
Greece				454		351			805
Italy	376				507		583		1,466
Spain			436	562		337			1,335
Australia	354						395		749
Latin America									
Argentina		433				423			856
Brazil		708					662		1,370
Chile		409					345		754
Mexico	763						722		1,485
Peru		754					635		1,386
East Asia									
China			636			1,017			1,653
Hong Kong	450						663		1,113
Japan	313							291	604
South Korea	573						426		999
Taiwan		492						363	855

Source: WVS/EVS. Persons aged 20–39 years. Unweighted data. Note: Numbers are underlined if data of that year is from the WVS, otherwise, the data is from the EVS. Numbers in bold and underlined indicate that data is from both EVS and WVS.

TABLE A2. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE DOMAINS, BY REGION, AND TIME PERIOD.

Country	2005–2009				2017–2019			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
FAMILY								
Northern Europe	89%	10%	1%	0%	89%	11%	1%	0%
Western Europe	83%	14%	2%	1%	85%	13%	2%	0%
Central-Eastern Europe	83%	15%	2%	0%	85%	13%	1%	0%
Eastern Europe	90%	9%	1%	0%	89%	10%	1%	0%
South-Eastern Europe	86%	13%	1%	0%	90%	9%	1%	0%
Southern Europe	87%	12%	1%	0%	90%	9%	1%	0%
Australia	95%	3%	1%	0%	89%	8%	2%	1%
Latin America	89%	10%	0%	0%	90%	10%	1%	0%
East Asia	83%	16%	1%	0%	85%	14%	1%	0%
All regions	87%	12%	1%	0%	88%	11%	1%	0%
LEISURE								
Northern Europe	49%	45%	5%	0%	51%	44%	5%	0%
Western Europe	48%	45%	6%	1%	49%	46%	5%	0%
Central-Eastern Europe	38%	52%	9%	1%	47%	45%	7%	1%
Eastern Europe	41%	45%	12%	2%	41%	47%	10%	2%
South-Eastern Europe	41%	47%	11%	2%	47%	44%	7%	1%
Southern Europe	49%	45%	6%	0%	48%	43%	8%	1%
Australia	52%	44%	4%	0%	44%	50%	6%	0%
Latin America	44%	39%	15%	2%	46%	40%	11%	3%
East Asia	32%	52%	15%	1%	38%	51%	11%	0%
All regions	43%	46%	10%	1%	45%	45%	8%	1%
WORK								
Northern Europe	46%	48%	5%	1%	49%	46%	4%	0%
Western Europe	53%	40%	6%	1%	49%	46%	5%	1%
Central-Eastern Europe	53%	41%	5%	1%	51%	43%	4%	1%
Eastern Europe	69%	25%	4%	1%	59%	33%	6%	1%
South-Eastern Europe	61%	34%	4%	1%	63%	33%	4%	0%
Southern Europe	65%	31%	3%	1%	70%	27%	3%	1%
Australia	33%	59%	8%	0%	35%	55%	8%	2%
Latin America	72%	25%	2%	1%	66%	29%	4%	2%
East Asia	51%	43%	6%	0%	44%	48%	7%	1%
All regions	59%	35%	5%	1%	55%	39%	5%	1%
FRIENDS								
Northern Europe	66%	32%	2%	0%	66%	32%	2%	0%
Western Europe	63%	33%	4%	0%	60%	36%	4%	0%
Central-Eastern Europe	42%	50%	7%	0%	51%	44%	5%	0%
Eastern Europe	56%	39%	5%	1%	53%	41%	6%	1%
South-Eastern Europe	46%	46%	8%	1%	51%	43%	6%	1%
Southern Europe	54%	42%	4%	0%	58%	36%	5%	1%
Australia	62%	32%	5%	0%	51%	44%	5%	0%
Latin America	36%	38%	23%	3%	39%	40%	18%	3%
East Asia	47%	49%	4%	0%	43%	52%	4%	1%
All regions	52%	41%	7%	1%	52%	41%	6%	1%

Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted Data.

Note: Ages 20–39.

TABLE A3. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY, BY COUNTRY, AND TIME PERIOD.

Country	2005–2009				2017–2019			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Albania	89%	11%	0%	0%	98%	2%	0%	0%
Argentina	91%	8%	1%	0%	91%	9%	0%	0%
Armenia	94%	6%	0%	0%	92%	7%	0%	0%
Australia	95%	3%	1%	0%	89%	8%	2%	1%
Austria	75%	22%	3%	1%	82%	15%	3%	0%
Belarus	79%	19%	1%	1%	87%	11%	1%	0%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	76%	23%	1%	0%	93%	7%	1%	0%
Brazil	88%	12%	0%	0%	86%	12%	2%	0%
Bulgaria	85%	14%	1%	0%	84%	15%	1%	0%
Chile	90%	10%	0%	0%	88%	11%	1%	0%
China	82%	17%	1%	0%	88%	12%	0%	0%
Croatia	79%	20%	1%	0%	84%	15%	1%	0%
Cyprus	92%	8%	0%	0%	93%	6%	1%	0%
Czechia	80%	17%	3%	0%	85%	14%	2%	0%
Denmark	85%	14%	1%	0%	88%	12%	0%	0%
Estonia	76%	19%	4%	1%	89%	10%	1%	0%
Finland	86%	12%	2%	0%	83%	16%	1%	0%
France	88%	11%	1%	0%	87%	10%	2%	1%
Georgia	96%	4%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	0%
Germany	76%	19%	4%	0%	88%	11%	1%	0%
Greece	82%	16%	2%	0%	93%	7%	0%	0%
Hong Kong	64%	35%	1%	0%	72%	27%	1%	0%
Hungary	87%	12%	0%	0%	86%	13%	0%	0%
Iceland	95%	5%	0%	0%	91%	8%	1%	0%
Italy	91%	9%	0%	0%	88%	11%	1%	0%
Japan	91%	8%	1%	0%	94%	5%	1%	0%
Lithuania	67%	30%	3%	0%	68%	28%	4%	0%
Mexico	96%	3%	0%	0%	97%	3%	0%	0%
Montenegro	92%	8%	0%	0%	87%	9%	2%	1%
Netherlands	83%	13%	3%	1%	79%	17%	3%	0%
North Macedonia	92%	6%	1%	0%	95%	5%	1%	0%
Norway	89%	11%	0%	0%	90%	10%	0%	0%
Peru	81%	18%	1%	0%	87%	13%	0%	0%
Poland	90%	9%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	1%
Romania	87%	11%	1%	0%	91%	8%	1%	0%
Russia	86%	12%	1%	0%	80%	18%	1%	0%
Serbia	90%	10%	0%	0%	91%	8%	1%	0%
Slovakia	93%	6%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	0%
Slovenia	83%	14%	1%	1%	84%	14%	1%	0%
South Korea	90%	9%	0%	0%	85%	14%	1%	0%
Spain	84%	15%	1%	0%	87%	11%	2%	0%
Sweden	92%	7%	1%	0%	92%	7%	1%	0%
Switzerland	84%	14%	2%	0%	85%	12%	2%	0%
Taiwan	90%	10%	0%	0%	86%	13%	0%	0%
Turkey	97%	2%	0%	0%	91%	8%	1%	0%
United Kingdom	94%	6%	1%	0%	90%	9%	0%	0%

Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted Data.

Note: Ages 20–39.

TABLE A4. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF LEISURE, BY COUNTRY, AND TIME PERIOD.

Country	2005–2009				2017–2019			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Albania	17%	56%	23%	4%	21%	61%	17%	2%
Argentina	47%	39%	13%	1%	36%	48%	12%	3%
Armenia	40%	48%	12%	0%	37%	49%	11%	3%
Australia	52%	44%	4%	0%	44%	50%	6%	0%
Austria	54%	40%	6%	1%	57%	37%	5%	0%
Belarus	28%	54%	17%	1%	36%	53%	10%	1%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	37%	56%	7%	1%	56%	37%	6%	1%
Brazil	30%	56%	12%	2%	40%	47%	10%	2%
Bulgaria	32%	50%	15%	2%	43%	47%	9%	1%
Chile	54%	36%	9%	1%	59%	37%	2%	2%
China	15%	41%	41%	3%	21%	50%	29%	1%
Croatia	35%	58%	6%	1%	40%	55%	4%	1%
Cyprus	58%	35%	6%	1%	51%	35%	12%	3%
Czechia	36%	52%	10%	2%	42%	48%	9%	1%
Denmark	50%	43%	7%	0%	42%	50%	8%	0%
Estonia	37%	51%	12%	1%	48%	46%	6%	1%
Finland	53%	44%	3%	0%	72%	25%	3%	0%
France	41%	51%	8%	1%	39%	55%	6%	0%
Georgia	47%	42%	10%	2%	33%	49%	15%	3%
Germany	39%	53%	7%	1%	42%	53%	5%	0%
Greece	52%	45%	3%	0%	44%	47%	8%	0%
Hong Kong	33%	56%	11%	0%	32%	60%	7%	1%
Hungary	43%	48%	8%	1%	50%	44%	5%	1%
Iceland	39%	53%	8%	0%	38%	54%	8%	0%
Italy	36%	56%	8%	1%	43%	52%	5%	0%
Japan	52%	45%	3%	0%	64%	32%	4%	0%
Lithuania	27%	62%	11%	1%	39%	48%	12%	1%
Mexico	56%	29%	13%	2%	59%	27%	12%	2%
Montenegro	46%	48%	6%	1%	52%	40%	6%	2%
Netherlands	58%	39%	3%	0%	59%	38%	3%	0%
North Macedonia	77%	16%	6%	1%	61%	35%	3%	1%
Norway	51%	46%	3%	0%	44%	52%	3%	0%
Peru	33%	35%	28%	4%	36%	41%	19%	4%
Poland	41%	51%	7%	0%	46%	51%	2%	1%
Romania	37%	44%	16%	2%	51%	38%	9%	2%
Russia	42%	43%	14%	2%	45%	45%	8%	2%
Serbia	44%	48%	8%	1%	53%	41%	5%	1%
Slovakia	36%	55%	9%	1%	58%	37%	4%	0%
Slovenia	46%	46%	8%	0%	49%	43%	8%	1%
South Korea	24%	66%	9%	1%	30%	65%	5%	0%
Spain	51%	44%	5%	0%	55%	39%	6%	1%
Sweden	55%	42%	3%	0%	58%	37%	5%	0%
Switzerland	49%	46%	5%	0%	57%	37%	6%	0%
Taiwan	36%	53%	11%	0%	44%	46%	10%	0%
Turkey	51%	37%	10%	3%	56%	38%	6%	1%
United Kingdom	47%	43%	9%	1%	37%	55%	7%	1%

Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted Data

Note: Ages 20–39.

TABLE A5. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK, BY COUNTRY, AND TIME PERIOD.

Country	2005–2009				2017–2019			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Albania	64%	33%	3%	1%	78%	21%	1%	0%
Argentina	71%	26%	2%	1%	66%	30%	2%	1%
Armenia	79%	18%	3%	0%	60%	35%	5%	1%
Australia	33%	59%	8%	0%	35%	54%	8%	2%
Austria	51%	41%	6%	1%	54%	40%	5%	1%
Belarus	54%	40%	5%	1%	62%	32%	4%	2%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	55%	43%	3%	0%	70%	27%	3%	1%
Brazil	67%	32%	1%	0%	62%	35%	2%	1%
Bulgaria	62%	33%	4%	1%	55%	40%	5%	0%
Chile	60%	33%	5%	1%	55%	35%	7%	4%
China	48%	44%	7%	0%	46%	47%	6%	1%
Croatia	45%	50%	5%	0%	45%	50%	4%	1%
Cyprus	66%	27%	5%	1%	59%	34%	4%	2%
Czechia	45%	47%	7%	1%	47%	42%	7%	5%
Denmark	48%	45%	7%	0%	41%	51%	7%	1%
Estonia	51%	41%	8%	1%	41%	51%	8%	1%
Finland	32%	56%	11%	1%	44%	52%	4%	0%
France	66%	31%	2%	1%	59%	37%	3%	1%
Georgia	81%	15%	4%	1%	73%	24%	3%	0%
Germany	55%	37%	8%	1%	46%	50%	4%	0%
Greece	72%	26%	2%	0%	73%	23%	4%	1%
Hong Kong	33%	57%	9%	1%	26%	62%	11%	1%
Hungary	58%	38%	4%	1%	50%	46%	3%	1%
Iceland	53%	44%	4%	0%	42%	53%	5%	0%
Italy	60%	37%	2%	1%	76%	23%	1%	0%
Japan	44%	49%	7%	0%	40%	48%	10%	2%
Lithuania	48%	47%	4%	1%	44%	50%	5%	1%
Mexico	88%	10%	1%	1%	77%	14%	6%	2%
Montenegro	61%	33%	6%	1%	78%	21%	1%	0%
Netherlands	37%	54%	7%	1%	37%	56%	7%	1%
North Macedonia	86%	9%	3%	1%	64%	31%	5%	0%
Norway	51%	47%	2%	0%	59%	38%	1%	1%
Peru	74%	23%	3%	0%	68%	29%	3%	0%
Poland	64%	34%	2%	0%	55%	43%	1%	0%
Romania	56%	36%	6%	2%	56%	38%	6%	0%
Russia	58%	35%	5%	2%	55%	36%	7%	2%
Serbia	61%	33%	4%	1%	57%	36%	6%	1%
Slovakia	60%	34%	5%	1%	70%	26%	3%	2%
Slovenia	43%	50%	6%	1%	50%	46%	4%	0%
South Korea	65%	32%	3%	0%	48%	44%	7%	1%
Spain	60%	36%	3%	1%	71%	27%	1%	0%
Sweden	47%	48%	4%	1%	60%	37%	3%	0%
Switzerland	56%	41%	3%	0%	40%	55%	5%	0%
Taiwan	63%	34%	2%	0%	59%	38%	2%	0%
Turkey	75%	19%	4%	2%	48%	38%	12%	2%
United Kingdom	51%	37%	8%	4%	58%	36%	6%	1%

Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted Data

Note: Ages 20–39.

TABLE A6. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDS, BY COUNTRY, AND TIME PERIOD.

Country	2005–2009				2017–2019			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
Albania	21%	58%	19%	2%	32%	57%	10%	1%
Argentina	60%	26%	12%	2%	54%	36%	8%	2%
Armenia	56%	39%	5%	0%	48%	43%	8%	0%
Australia	62%	32%	5%	0%	50%	44%	6%	0%
Austria	63%	33%	4%	0%	69%	29%	2%	0%
Belarus	38%	51%	10%	1%	44%	47%	8%	1%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	38%	59%	3%	0%	55%	40%	5%	1%
Brazil	35%	51%	12%	1%	39%	47%	12%	3%
Bulgaria	45%	47%	9%	0%	51%	44%	5%	0%
Chile	29%	36%	27%	8%	46%	42%	9%	2%
China	37%	55%	8%	0%	37%	58%	5%	0%
Croatia	41%	55%	3%	0%	47%	49%	3%	1%
Cyprus	61%	35%	4%	0%	59%	31%	7%	3%
Czechia	39%	53%	8%	1%	52%	42%	6%	0%
Denmark	63%	34%	2%	0%	61%	34%	5%	0%
Estonia	39%	50%	10%	1%	46%	44%	9%	0%
Finland	61%	38%	2%	0%	65%	32%	3%	0%
France	61%	32%	7%	0%	55%	37%	6%	1%
Georgia	76%	23%	1%	0%	64%	34%	1%	0%
Germany	58%	38%	4%	0%	59%	38%	3%	0%
Greece	47%	50%	3%	0%	63%	32%	5%	0%
Hong Kong	43%	55%	2%	0%	36%	57%	6%	0%
Hungary	48%	44%	7%	1%	58%	38%	3%	0%
Iceland	68%	31%	1%	0%	68%	31%	2%	0%
Italy	55%	41%	3%	0%	50%	47%	3%	1%
Japan	59%	38%	2%	0%	51%	42%	5%	2%
Lithuania	24%	65%	11%	0%	38%	55%	7%	0%
Mexico	36%	44%	17%	3%	37%	43%	16%	4%
Montenegro	55%	43%	2%	0%	62%	34%	4%	0%
Netherlands	65%	33%	2%	0%	64%	34%	2%	0%
North Macedonia	80%	16%	3%	0%	60%	35%	4%	1%
Norway	69%	29%	2%	0%	64%	35%	1%	0%
Peru	21%	30%	46%	3%	18%	33%	45%	4%
Poland	43%	53%	4%	0%	52%	46%	2%	1%
Romania	31%	49%	19%	2%	39%	43%	17%	1%
Russia	43%	50%	7%	1%	45%	45%	8%	2%
Serbia	54%	43%	3%	0%	61%	38%	1%	0%
Slovakia	50%	45%	4%	0%	59%	37%	4%	0%
Slovenia	50%	43%	7%	0%	50%	44%	6%	0%
South Korea	58%	41%	2%	0%	50%	50%	1%	0%
Spain	53%	41%	5%	1%	60%	36%	5%	0%
Sweden	69%	28%	3%	0%	70%	28%	1%	0%
Switzerland	66%	33%	2%	0%	62%	35%	3%	0%
Taiwan	39%	57%	3%	0%	39%	55%	5%	0%
Turkey	67%	30%	2%	0%	62%	35%	3%	0%
United Kingdom	68%	29%	3%	0%	53%	42%	5%	0%

Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted Data

Note: Ages 20–39.

TABLE A7. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE DOMAINS, BY AGE.

	2005–2009				2017–2019			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
FAMILY								
20–29	85%	14%	1%	0%	86%	12%	1%	0%
30–39	89%	10%	1%	0%	89%	10%	1%	0%
LEISURE								
20–29	44%	45%	10%	1%	47%	44%	8%	1%
30–39	41%	47%	11%	1%	44%	46%	9%	1%
WORK								
20–29	57%	37%	5%	1%	53%	40%	6%	1%
30–39	61%	34%	4%	1%	56%	39%	5%	1%
FRIENDS								
20–29	55%	38%	6%	1%	55%	38%	6%	1%
30–39	48%	44%	7%	1%	49%	44%	7%	1%

Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted Data.

Note: Ages 20–39.

TABLE A8. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE DOMAINS, BY PARITY.

	2005–2009				2017–2019			
	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important
FAMILY								
Childless	81%	17%	2%	0%	83%	15%	1%	0%
Parents	93%	7%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	0%
LEISURE								
Childless	48%	44%	8%	1%	50%	43%	7%	1%
Parents	38%	48%	12%	2%	41%	47%	11%	2%
WORK								
Childless	57%	37%	5%	1%	52%	42%	5%	1%
Parents	61%	33%	4%	1%	58%	36%	5%	1%
FRIENDS								
Childless	58%	37%	4%	0%	57%	38%	5%	0%
Parents	45%	45%	9%	1%	45%	45%	9%	1%

Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted Data.

Note: Ages 20–39.

TABLE A9. ESTIMATED COEFFICIENTS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE DOMAINS, AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS.

	Family	Leisure	Work	Friends
Year				
2005–2009	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
2017–2019	0.013***	0.026***	-0.042***	-0.003
Age				
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	-0.007*	0.014**	0.024***	-0.022***
Parenthood status				
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parent	0.099***	-0.094***	0.033***	-0.110***
Sex				
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.041***	0.002	0.044***	-0.015***
Region				
Northern Europe	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Western Europe	-0.043***	-0.021*	0.047***	-0.039***
Central-Eastern Europe	-0.050***	-0.061***	0.060***	-0.188***
Eastern Europe	0.002	-0.047***	0.187***	-0.091***
South-Eastern Europe	-0.004	-0.053***	0.157***	-0.182***
Southern Europe	0.004	-0.025*	0.199***	-0.109***
Australia	0.021+	0.0003	-0.128***	-0.067***
Latin America	-0.012*	-0.026**	0.247***	-0.278***
East Asia	-0.055***	-0.175***	0.012	-0.217***
N	57,174	57,174	57,174	57,174
Adjusted R2	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.03

+ p < 0.1, *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Source: WVS/EVS, respondents aged 20–39.

TABLE A10. ESTIMATED COEFFICIENTS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE DOMAINS, BY PARENTHOOD STATUS, AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS.

	Family		Leisure		Work		Friends	
	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019
CHILDLESS								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	-0.034***	-0.021**	-0.0004	0.002	0.034***	0.026**	-0.055***	-0.049***
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.062***	-0.056***	-0.004	-0.032***	0.013+	0.016+	-0.023**	-0.032***
Region								
Northern Europe	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Western Europe	-0.073***	-0.045***	-0.013	0.012	0.080***	-0.008	-0.047**	-0.041*
Central-Eastern Europe	-0.042**	-0.046**	-0.073***	-0.014	0.037*	0.016	-0.200***	-0.112***
Eastern Europe	0.087***	0.002	-0.041*	-0.046**	0.242***	0.108***	-0.096***	-0.138***
South-Eastern Europe	0.029*	0.040**	-0.058***	-0.007	0.139***	0.130***	-0.202***	-0.158***
Southern Europe	0.037**	0.025+	-0.024	-0.071***	0.173***	0.202***	-0.116***	-0.118***
Australia	0.108***	-0.013	0.047	-0.013	-0.131***	-0.104**	-0.04	-0.150***
Latin America	0.071***	0.045**	-0.093***	-0.036+	0.257***	0.202***	-0.306***	-0.257***
East Asia	-0.002	-0.067***	-0.160***	-0.146***	0.041*	-0.064***	-0.195***	-0.247***
N	16,012	13,495	16,012	13,495	16,012	13,495	16,012	13,495
Adjusted R2	0.029	0.02	0.007	0.01	0.032	0.033	0.031	0.027
PARENTS								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	0.020***	0.009+	0.037***	0.027*	0.034***	-0.005	0.009	0.026*
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.017***	-0.027***	0.019*	0.032***	0.095***	0.056***	0.006	-0.005
Region								
Northern Europe	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Western Europe	-0.032***	-0.005	-0.079***	0.011	0.086***	0.022	-0.014	-0.046*
Central-Eastern Europe	-0.066***	-0.046***	-0.139***	0.02	0.124***	0.072***	-0.263***	-0.130***
Eastern Europe	-0.033***	-0.053***	-0.067***	-0.023	0.260***	0.125***	-0.041*	-0.093***
South-Eastern Europe	-0.069***	-0.011	-0.146***	0.034+	0.180***	0.192***	-0.226***	-0.108***
Southern Europe	-0.036***	0.003	-0.03	0.061*	0.197***	0.298***	-0.127***	-0.033
Australia	0.007	-0.015	-0.027	0.018	-0.134***	-0.157***	-0.011	-0.044
Latin America	-0.080***	-0.043***	-0.046**	0.057**	0.306***	0.217***	-0.294***	-0.227***
East Asia	-0.095***	-0.058***	-0.256***	-0.130***	0.075***	-0.001	-0.207***	-0.206***
N	15,885	11,782	15,885	11,782	15,885	11,782	15,885	11,782
Adjusted R2	0.277	0.23	0.019	0.013	0.047	0.041	0.05	0.021

+ p < 0.1, *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Source: WVS/EVS, respondents aged 20–39.

TABLE A11. ESTIMATED COEFFICIENTS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE DOMAINS, BY REGIONS AND TIME, AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS.

	Family		Leisure		Work		Friends	
	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019
NORTH. EUROPE								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	-0.026*	-0.017	0.072**	0.046+	0.014	-0.032	-0.051*	-0.073**
Parity								
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parents	0.180***	0.113***	-0.088***	-0.144***	-0.004	0.032	-0.114***	-0.104***
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.088***	-0.080***	-0.051**	-0.02	0.015	0.015	-0.108***	-0.097***
N	2707	2203	2707	2203	2707	2203	2707	2203
Adjusted R2	0.166	0.085	0.007	0.014	-0.0007	-0.0003	0.033	0.032
WESTERN EUROPE								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	-0.049***	-0.035**	0.026	0.003	-0.018	-0.003	-0.041*	-0.014
Parity								
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parents	0.233***	0.159***	-0.117***	-0.122***	0.018	0.047*	-0.083***	-0.132***
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.045***	-0.057***	0.040**	0.003	0.072***	0.040*	-0.034*	-0.036*
N	4534	3949	4534	3949	4534	3949	4534	3949
Adjusted R2	0.12	0.08	0.015	0.013	0.004	0.002	0.012	0.019
CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	-0.013	0.024	0.00006	0.035	0.072***	0.034	-0.02	-0.026
Parity								
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parents	0.150***	0.092***	-0.111***	-0.101***	0.052**	0.052*	-0.190***	-0.147***
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.051***	-0.068***	0.013	0.004	0.033*	0.022	-0.031*	-0.056**
N	4350	2688	4350	2688	4350	2688	4350	2688
Adjusted R2	0.055	0.046	0.013	0.007	0.012	0.005	0.039	0.025
EASTERN EUROPE								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	0.003	0.0008	-0.014	0.002	0.028*	0.028+	-0.027+	-0.0002
Parity								
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parents	0.047***	0.052***	-0.070***	-0.098***	0.014	0.026	-0.060***	-0.086***
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.023**	-0.035***	0.004	-0.008	0.094***	0.059***	0.050***	0.012
N	5467	4488	5467	4488	5467	4488	5467	4488
Adjusted R ²	0.021	0.014	0.006	0.009	0.011	0.004	0.009	0.007

TABLE A11 (CONTINUED). ESTIMATED COEFFICIENTS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE DOMAINS, BY REGIONS AND TIME, AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS.

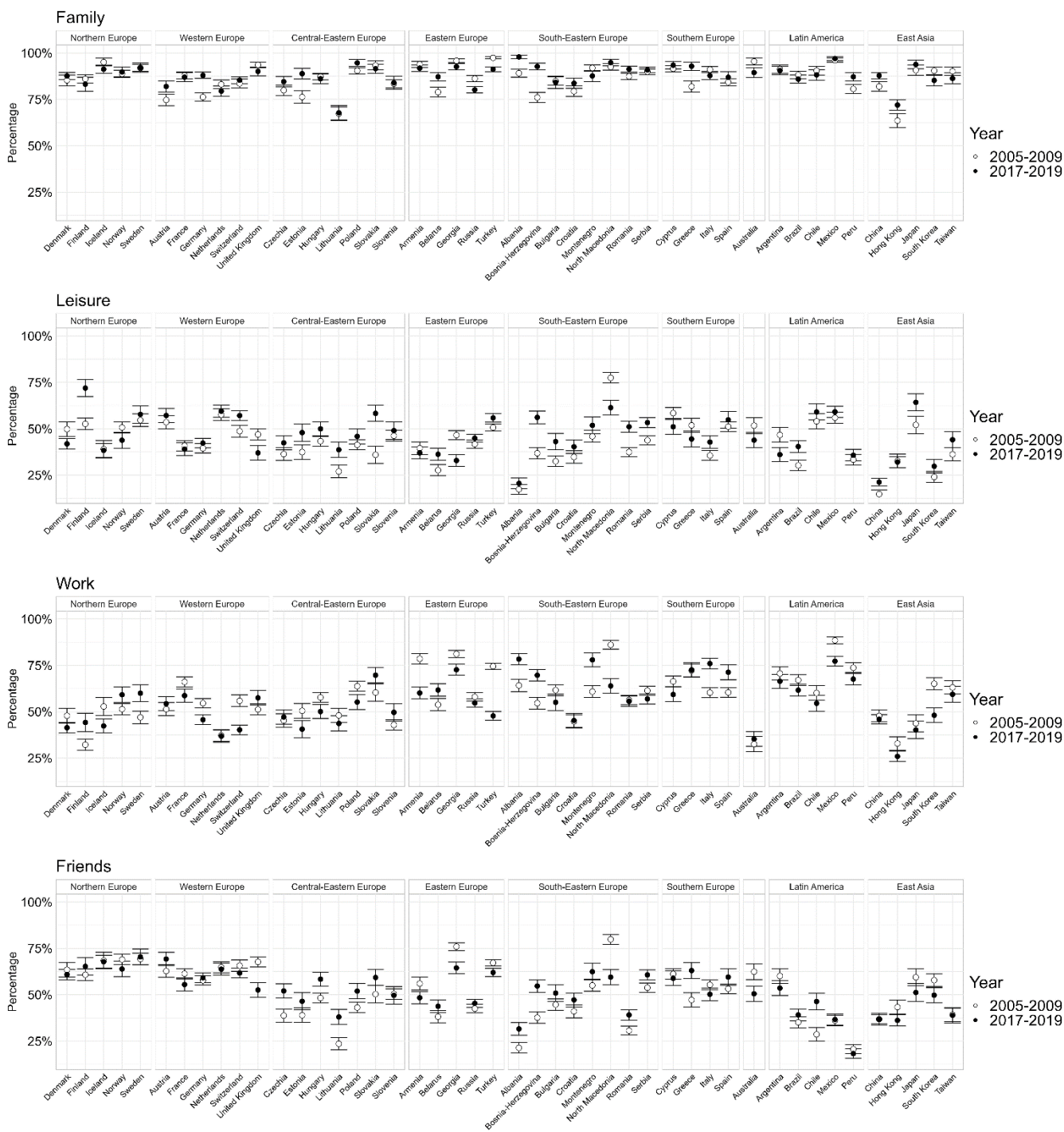
	Family		Leisure		Work		Friends	
	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019
SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	0.012	-0.008	0.039**	0.006	0.075***	0.032*	0.003	0.0009
Parity								
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parents	0.063***	0.060***	-0.154***	-0.081***	0.003	0.056***	-0.158***	-0.080***
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.052***	-0.037***	0.009	0.018	0.016	0.005	0.013	0.015
N	5873	4308	5873	4308	5873	4308	5873	4308
Adjusted R ²	0.024	0.031	0.02	0.006	0.006	0.005	0.025	0.006
SOUTHERN EUROPE								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	-0.006	0.012	-0.008	0.014	0.045*	0.022	-0.027	0.003
Parity								
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parents	0.104***	0.085***	-0.044*	0.004	0.006	0.104***	-0.126***	-0.043
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.033**	-0.050***	0.026	-0.022	0.036*	0.051*	0.001	0.0004
N	3085	1699	3085	1699	3085	1699	3085	1699
Adjusted R ²	0.041	0.049	0.002	-0.0009	0.003	0.013	0.018	-0.0002
AUSTRALIA								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	0.051*	0.01	0.043	0.078	0.021	0.023	0.0004	0.038
Parity								
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parents	0.042+	0.094**	-0.136*	-0.143**	-0.017	-0.068	-0.111+	-0.071
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.047+	-0.063*	0.109*	-0.091	0.061	-0.039	-0.067	-0.189***
N	354	395	354	395	354	395	354	395
Adjusted R ²	0.13	0.067	0.019	0.014	-0.004	-0.003	0.008	0.023
LATIN AMERICA								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	0.034**	0.004	0.040*	0.026	0.018	0.002	0.015	0.014
Parity								
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parents	0.005	0.02	-0.026	-0.032	0.047**	0.035+	-0.137***	-0.114***
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	-0.017	-0.014	-0.022	0.029	0.058***	0.044*	-0.036*	-0.02
N	3063	2787	3063	2787	3063	2787	3063	2787
Adjusted R ²	0.006	0.004	0.0008	0.001	0.006	0.002	0.016	0.011

TABLE A11 (CONTINUED). ESTIMATED COEFFICIENTS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE DOMAINS, BY REGIONS AND TIME, AVERAGE MARGINAL EFFECTS.

	Family		Leisure		Work		Friends	
	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019	2005–2009	2017–2019
EAST ASIA								
Age								
20–29	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
30–39	-0.029+	-0.030*	-0.002	-0.023	0.027	-0.001	-0.072**	-0.096***
Parity								
Childless	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Parents	0.100***	0.135***	-0.140***	-0.096***	0.032	0.080***	-0.101***	-0.042+
Sex								
Female	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Male	0.001	-0.014	-0.003	-0.041*	0.105***	0.043*	0.026	0.005
N	2464	2760	2464	2760	2464	2760	2464	2760
Adjusted R ²	0.017	0.034	0.023	0.013	0.011	0.006	0.023	0.014

+ p < 0.1, *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.
Source: WVS/EVS, respondents aged 20–39.

FIGURE A1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO CONSIDERS EACH DOMAIN “VERY IMPORTANT” IN THEIR OWN LIFE.



Source: WVS/EVS. Weighted data.
 Note: Ages 20–39. 95% confidence intervals.



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