NERI Seminar

11th November 2026

European Attitudes to Basic Income:

Exploring Women's Perspectives

Micheál Collins, Olga Li

European Social Survey, Ireland
University College Dublin

UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy
RESEARCH | ANALYSIS | EVIDENCE

Taighde Éireann Research Ireland

Outline

- Background
- Literature Perspectives & Hypothesis
- Data
- Initial Trends and Insights
- Modelling Gender Attitudes to UBI
- Results and Observations
- Next Steps *(including on Ireland)*

Background

- **Universal Basic Income (UBI)** is a topic of considerable debate within academic circles: role, impact and costs…
- UBI = an unconditional income to all citizens
- Recent increase in attention:
  - Economic and labour market instability…crisis…
  - New threats to traditional forms of employment
  - Experiments…
- Looking at:
  - attitudes (Ireland and EU)
  - then focusing on women's perceptions
    - *"…shaped by a complex interplay of gender, class and national welfare contexts"*

Theoretical Background

Literature Perspectives

- Pre-2000s literature often portrayed UBI positively for women, emphasising:
  - recognition of unpaid domestic labour including care
  - enhance women's autonomy and bargaining power
  - minimum income floor for: single mothers, female pensioners,…

Shift in Discourse post-2000s:

- reinforcement of traditional gender roles
- encouragement of a domestic-centric lifestyle

Data on attitudes has emerged:

- inconclusive
- calls for more nuanced examinations of women's perspectives

Hypotheses

- H1. Women are more likely to be in favour of UBI
- H2. Women with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to be in favour of UBI
- H3. Individuals in less economically developed nations, with limited welfare states, are more likely to be in favour of UBI

Data

European Social Survey (ESS)

Round 8 (2016/17)

Welfare Attitudes module

Countries (x21): Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia.

UBI measure

Some countries are currently talking about introducing a basic income scheme. In a moment I will ask you to tell me whether you are against or in favour of this scheme. A basic income scheme includes all of the following:

- The government ***pays everyone a monthly income*** to cover essential living costs

- It ***replaces*** many other social benefits

- The purpose is to ***guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living***

- ***Everyone receives the same*** amount regardless of whether or not they are working

- People ***also keep the money they earn from work*** or other sources

- This scheme is ***paid for by taxes***

Overall, would you be against or in favour of having this scheme in [country]?

Initial Trends and Insights

	European Countries %	Ireland %
Strongly against	12.0	13.0
Against	33.7	29.7
In favour	45.0	47.6
Strongly in favour	9.2	9.8

Against or In favour of a basic income scheme

Mean ⓘ

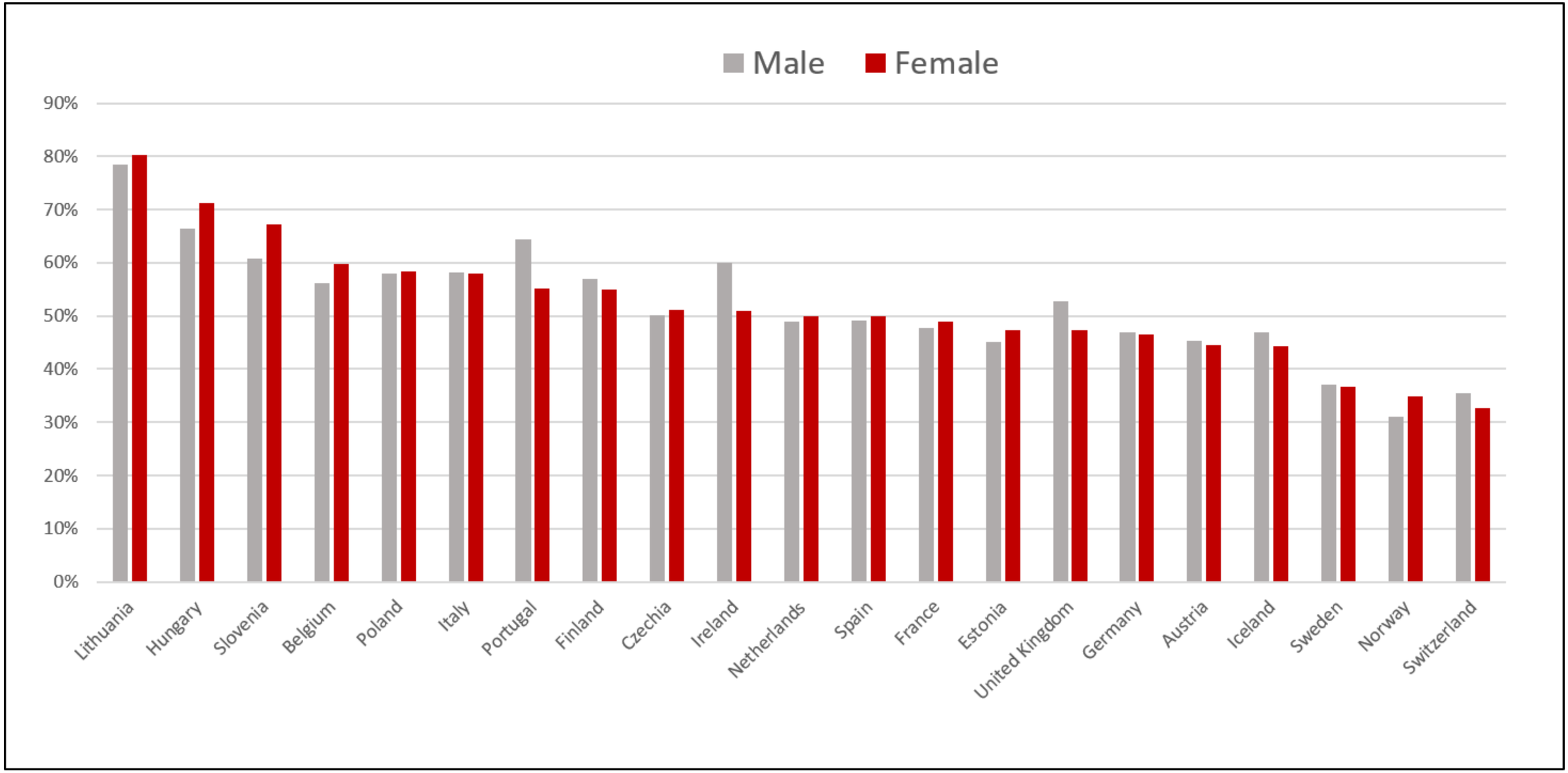


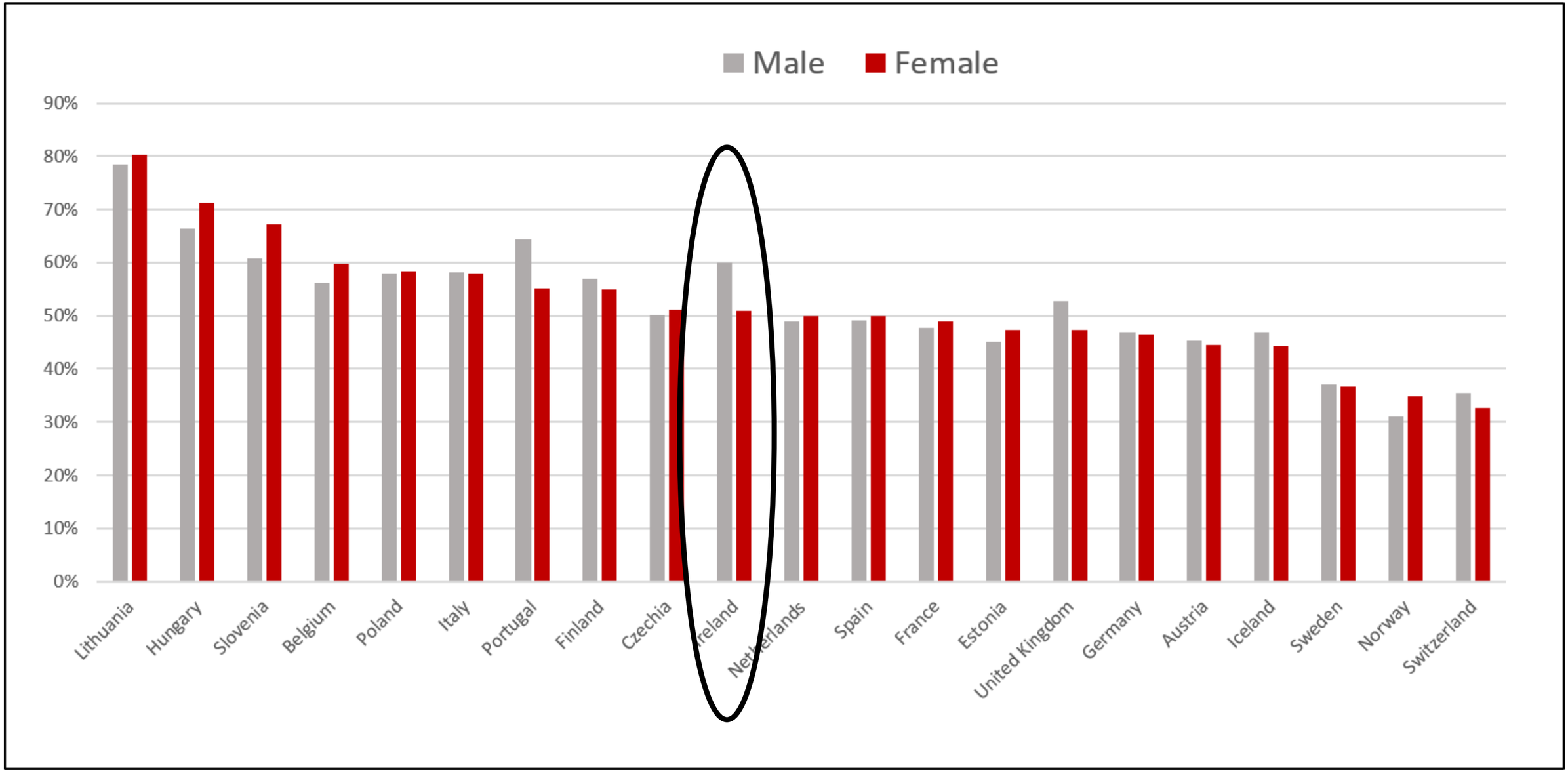
Mean

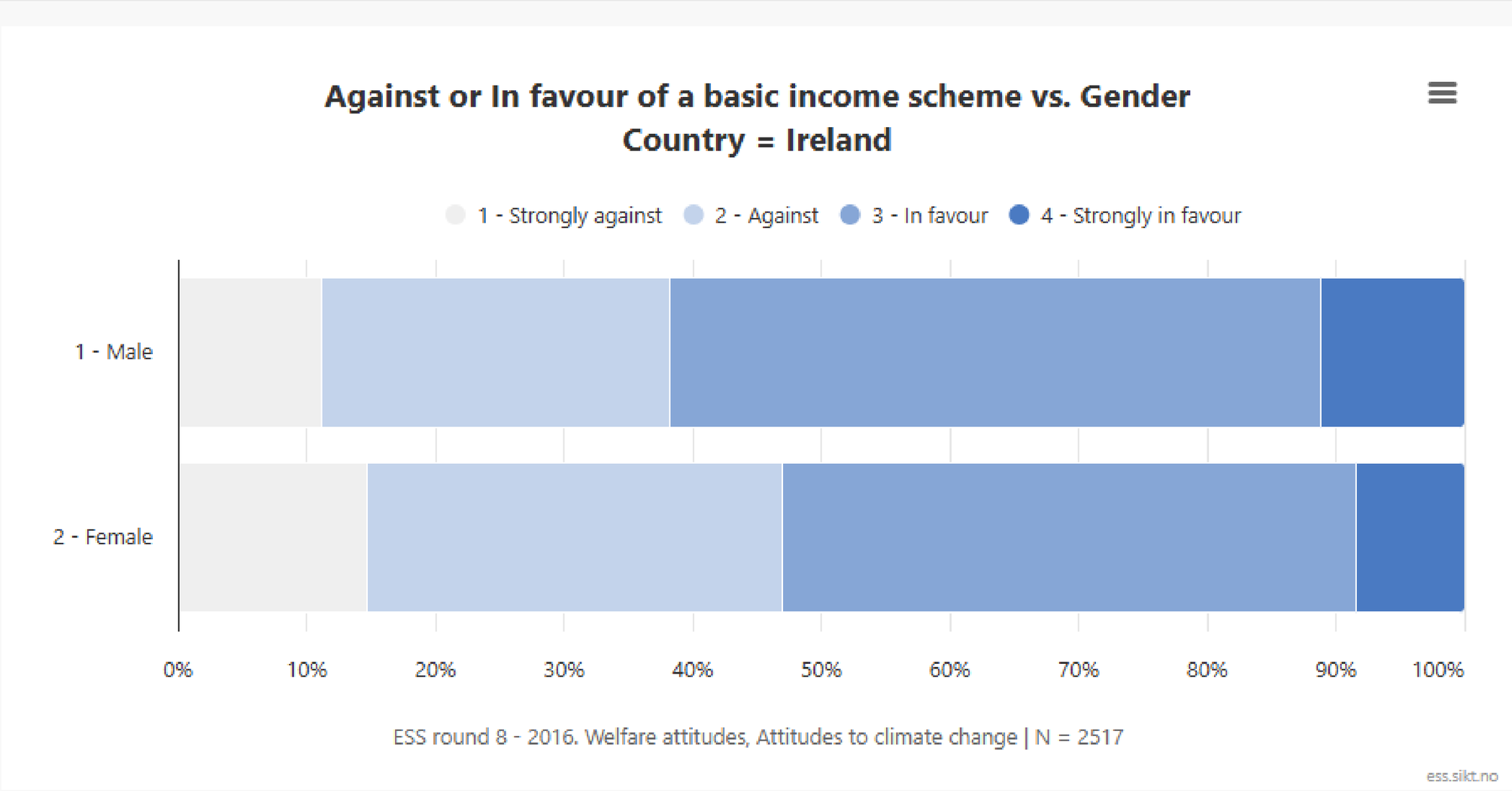
2 2.25 2.5 2.75 3

ESS round 8 - 2016. Welfare attitudes, Attitudes to climate change | N = 40633

ess.sikt.no


Male
Female
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Lithuania
Hungary
Slovenia
Belgium
Poland
Italy
Portugal
Finland
Czechia
Ireland
Netherlands
Spain
France
Estonia
United Kingdom
Germany
Austria
Iceland
Sweden
Norway
Switzerland


Male
Female
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Lithuania
Hungary
Slovenia
Belgium
Poland
Italy
Portugal
Finland
Czechia
Ireland
Netherlands
Spain
France
Estonia
United Kingdom
Germany
Austria
Iceland
Sweden
Norway
Switzerland


Against or In favour of a basic income scheme vs. Gender
Country = Ireland
1 - Strongly against
2 - Against
3 - In favour
4 - Strongly in favour
1 - Male
2 - Female
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
ESS round 8 - 2016. Welfare attitudes, Attitudes to climate change | N = 2517
ess.sikt.no

Modelling Gender Attitudes to UBI

Micro-level

Gender

Socio-economic status:

- Education
- Principal economic status
- Social class
- Household income
- Feelings about Hhld income

Micro-level controls

Age

Trust in parliament

Born in the country

Political orientation (*Government should reduce differences in income levels*)

Macro-level controls

Economic development / Welfare Status (**Human Development Index**)

Models

Base model

$$Logit\,(UBI_{ij}) = \gamma_{00} + \beta_{1j} Gender_{1ij} + \beta_{2j} Socioeconomic_{2ij} + \beta_{xj} MicroControls_{xij} + \gamma_{xi} \text{MacroContrlos}_{xj} + \epsilon_{ij} + u_{0j}$$

Model 1: base model + Gender x Education

Model 2: base model + Gender x Social Class

Model 3: base model + Gender x Principal Economic Status

Model 4: base model + Gender x Household Income

Model 5: base model + Gender x Feeling about Household Income

N= 26,957

Results: in favour of a basic income

Gender: Female	-0.105***	(0.038)
Age	-0.026***	(0.005)
Household income (deciles)	-0.039***	(0.006)
Feeling about household income: Coping and living comfortably	-0.153***	(0.039)
Human Development Index score	-6.119**	(2.963)

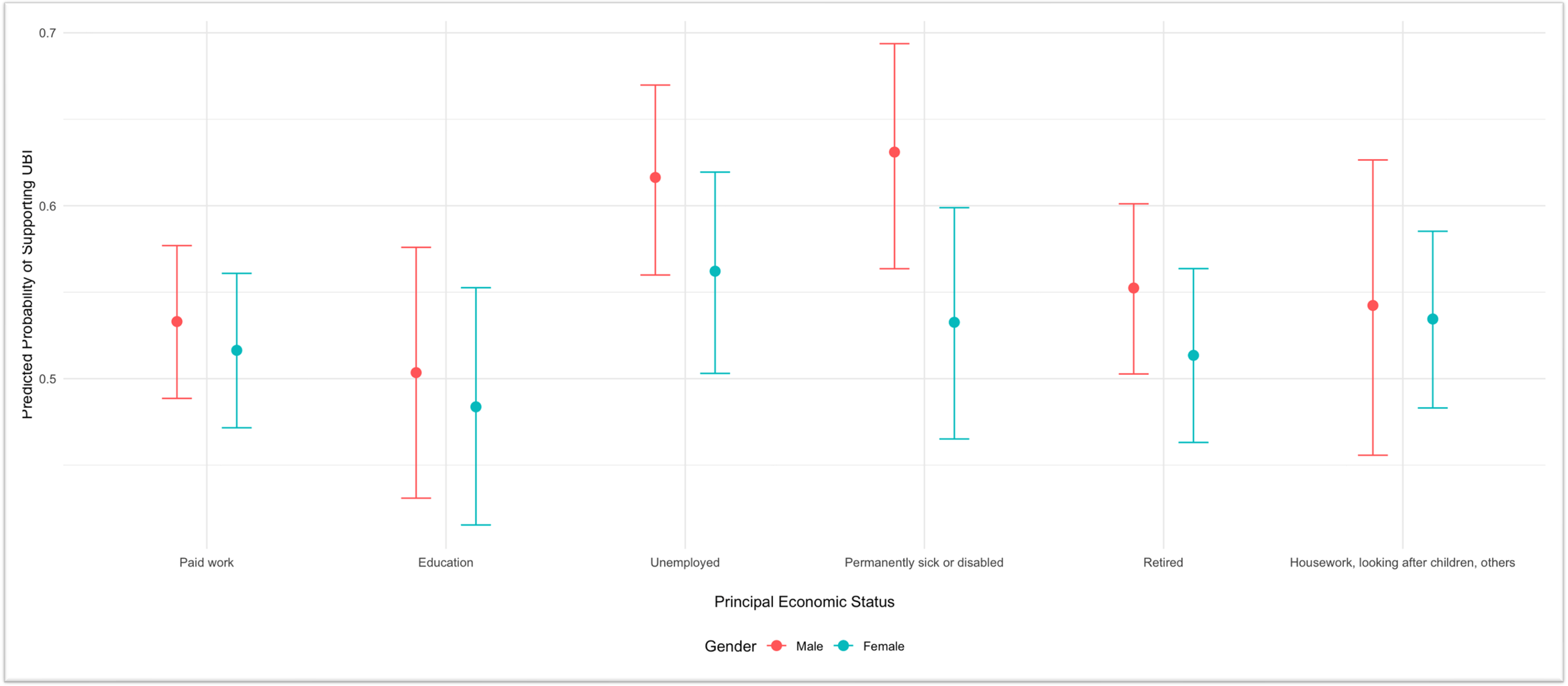
Results: in favour of a basic income

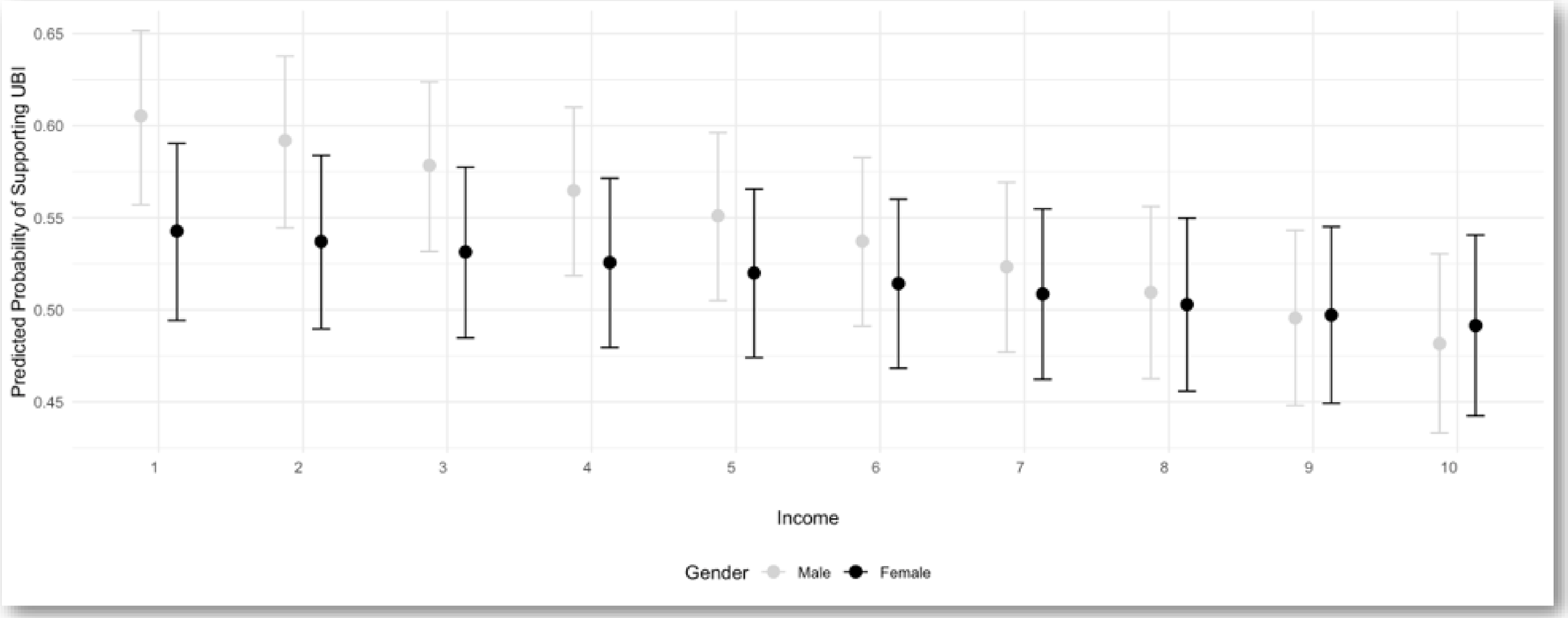
Gender: Female	-0.105***	(0.038)
Age	-0.026***	(0.005)
Household income (deciles)	-0.039***	(0.006)
Feeling about household income: Coping and living comfortably	-0.153***	(0.039)
Human Development Index score	-6.119**	(2.963)
Years of education	0.012***	(0.004)
Principal economic status: Unemployed	0.265***	(0.064)
Principal economic status: Permanently sick or disabled	0.226***	(0.082)
Government should reduce differences in income levels	0.270***	(0.014)
Trust in parliament	0.040***	(0.006)
Born in the country: Non-national	0.141***	(0.044)

Results: H1 Gender

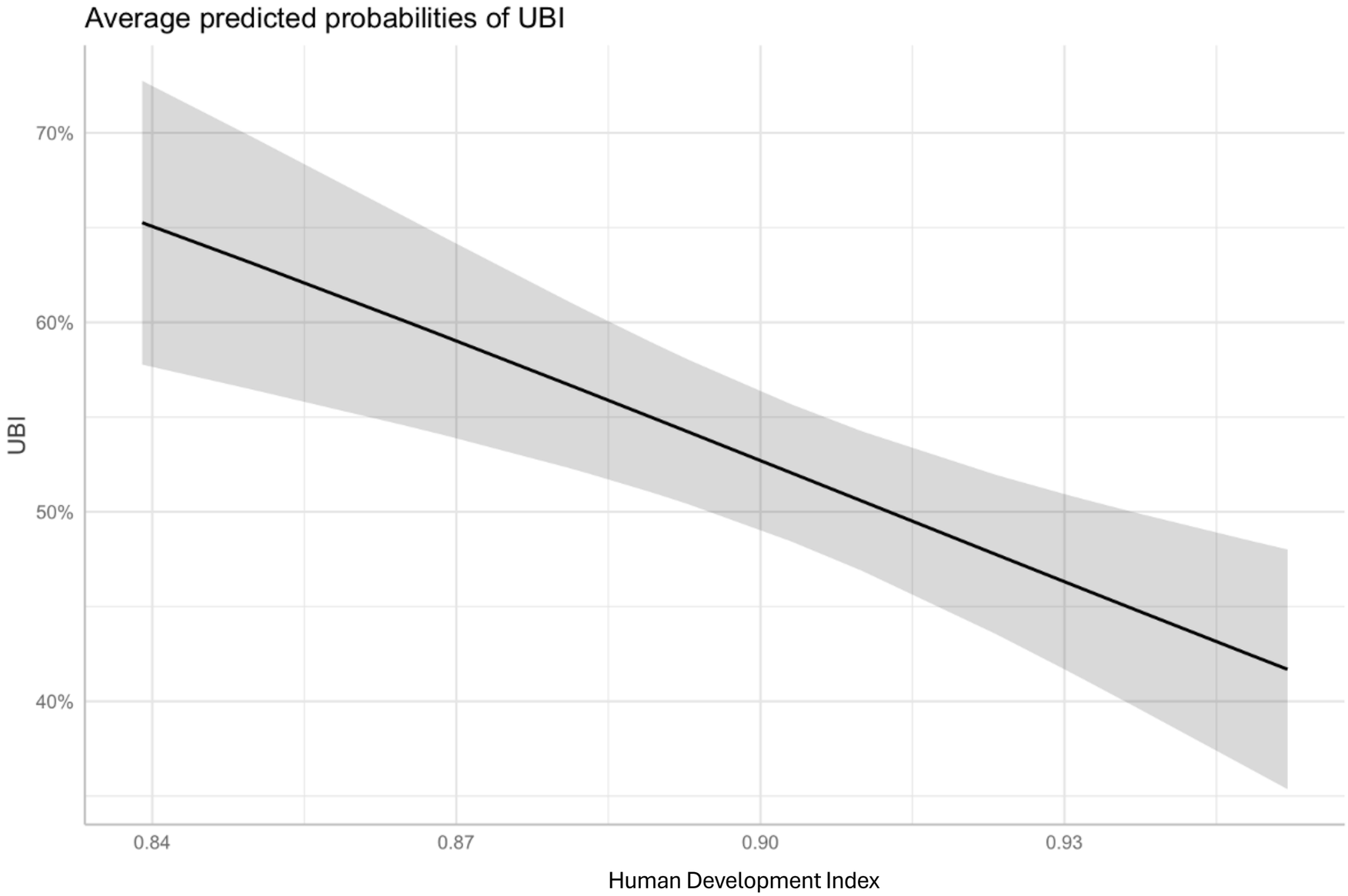
Gender: Female	-0.105***	(0.038)
Age	-0.026***	(0.005)
Household income (deciles)	-0.039***	(0.006)
Feeling about household income: Coping and living comfortably	-0.153***	(0.039)
Human Development Index score	-6.119**	(2.963)
Years of education	0.012***	(0.004)
Principal economic status: Unemployed	0.265***	(0.064)
Principal economic status: Permanently sick or disabled	0.226***	(0.082)
Government should reduce differences in income levels	0.270***	(0.014)
Trust in parliament	0.040***	(0.006)
Born in the country: Non-national	0.141***	(0.044)

Results: H2 Gender and Principal Economic Status




Predicted Probability of Supporting UBI
0.65
0.60
0.55
0.50
0.45
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Income
Gender
Male
Female

Results: H3 Individuals* and development



Summary

- Examined the effect of gender on UBI support across European countries
- Women generally less likely to support UBI
- Men with lower income, unemployed, and permanently sick/disabled more likely to favour UBI
- Individuals from less economically developed countries, with limited welfare states, more in favour of UBI

Outline

- Background
- Literature Perspectives & Hypothesis
- Data
- Initial Trends and Insights
- Modelling Gender Attitudes to UBI
- Results and Observations
- Next Steps *(including on Ireland)*

NERI Seminar

11th November 2026

European Attitudes to Basic Income:

Exploring Women's Perspectives

Micheál Collins, Olga Li

European Social Survey, Ireland
University College Dublin

UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy
RESEARCH | ANALYSIS | EVIDENCE

Taighde Éireann Research Ireland