

Moral Dilemmas of Poles in Comparative Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

On the eve of the parliamentary elections in Poland we decided to investigate the attitudes of Poles and other selected European and non-European societies to moral issues. We believe that moral issues might be raised during the electoral campaign, at least by some electoral committees. Such electoral strategy may be employed, even if economic difficulties become of paramount importance.

We also tested differences between male and female Poles and how gender differences in Poland contrast with gender differences in other analysed countries. In order to explore tendencies, we used quantitative approach in the form of statistical data analysis.

We hope that our readers will find this material valuable and that it will inspire more in-depth research. The report can also serve as a learning tool and may be used for group discussions with academic and non-academic students alike.

The statistical analysis was based on the database created by joint effort of the European Value Study (EVS 2022) and World Value Survey (Haerpfer et al. 2022) organisations. EVS and WVS research teams use random sample country quota to conduct surveys. For valid comparisons, we filtered respondents from 23 countries: Andorra (N=997), Austria (N=1476), Canada (N=4018), Czechia (N=1494), Denmark (N=3436), Germany [DK] (N=3323), Estonia (N=1147), Spain (N=1097), Finland (N=1124), France (N=1687), Great Britain (N=1737), Greece (N=2125), Georgia (N=1129), Hungary (N=1433), Indonesia (N=3167), Lithuania (N=1219), Latvia (N=1143), Libya (N=1087), Netherlands (N=3950), Poland (N=1226), Portugal (N=1125), Sweden (N=1112) and Slovakia (N=1268). Thus, the total number of respondents included in our study was 41,520.

The main analysis included 13 variables that concerned respondents' attitudes toward issues regarded as difficult moral dilemmas, such as: 1) claiming social benefits without relevant title, 2) freeriding on public transport, 3) cheating on taxes, 4) accepting a bribe from someone, 5) homosexuality, 6) prostitution, 7) abortion, 8) divorce, 9) euthanasia, 10) suicide, 11) casual sex, 12) use of political violence and 13) death penalty. Each variable was measured on a scale from 1 to 10 (1-action is never justified; 10-action is always justified).

Sources:

1) EVS (2022). European Values Study 2017: Integrated Dataset (EVS 2017). GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7500 Data file Version 5.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.13897

2) Haerpfer, C., Inglehart, R., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano J., M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen et al. (eds.). 2022. World Values Survey: Round Seven—Country Pooled Datafile. Madrid, Spain & Vienna, Austria: JD Systems Institute & WVS Secretariat. Version. 5.0.0, doi:10.14281/18241.20.



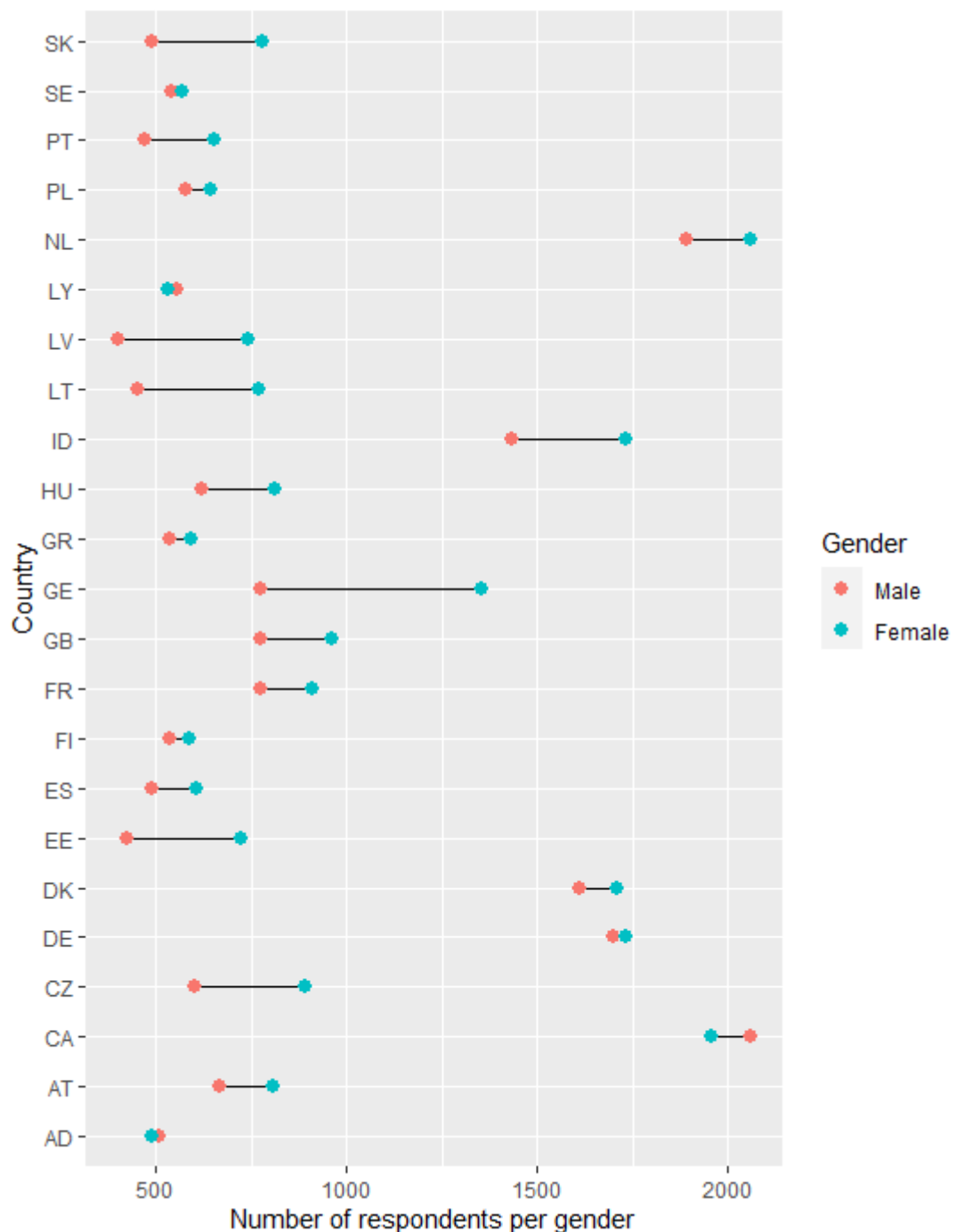
FEMALE AND MALE RESPONDENTS BY COUNTRY - PROPORTIONS

Filtering the database allowed us to check the distribution of genders within the compared samples. We noted significant differences especially in Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Indonesia, Georgia, Estonia and Czechia.

Therefore, some of the comparisons presented in this report should be treated with caution due to large cross-country and cross-gender differences.

More valid cross-gender comparisons may be noted in the cases of Sweden, Poland, Libya, Greece, Finland, Denmark and Andorra.

Figure 1



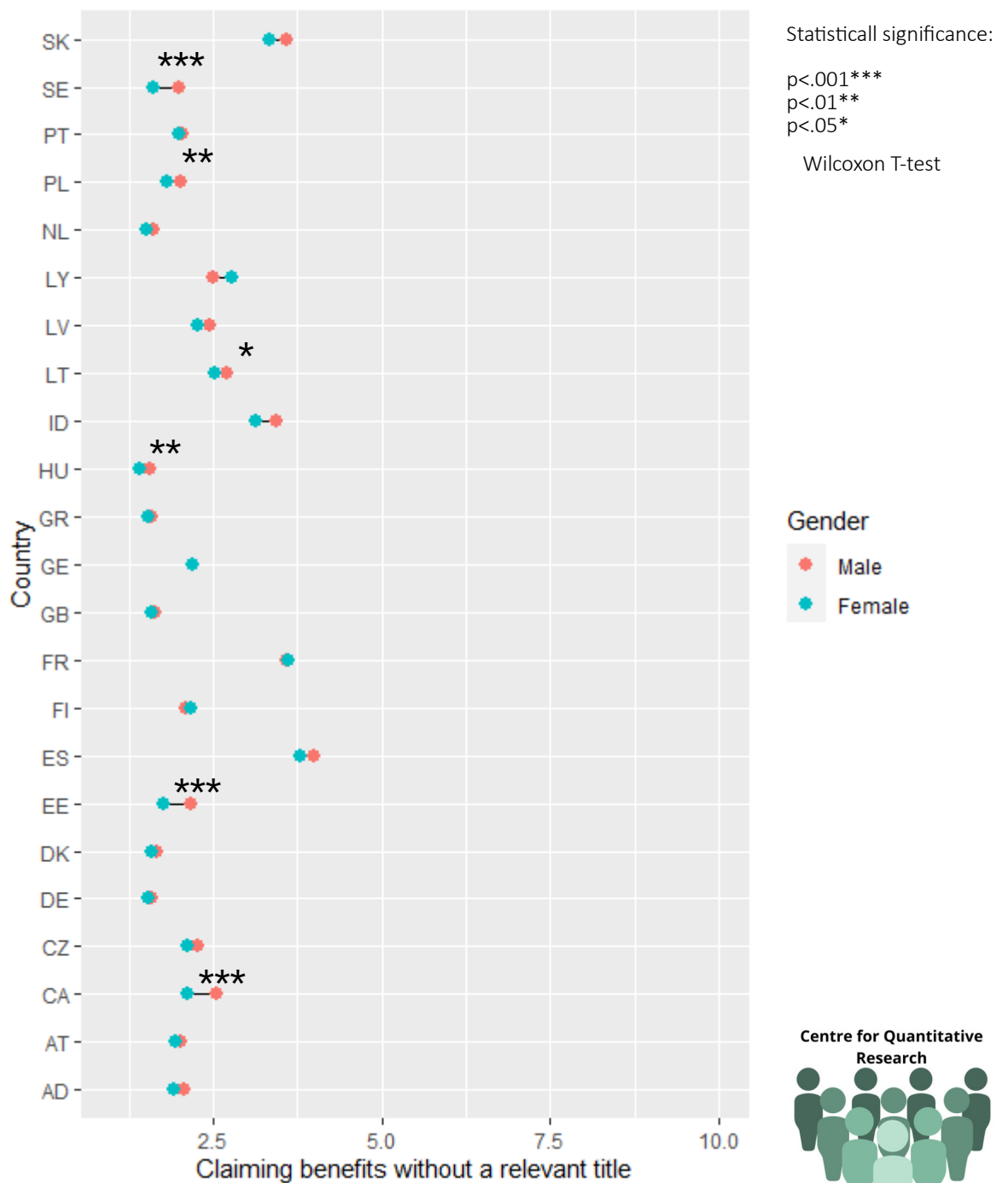
CLAIMING SOCIAL BENEFITS WITHOUT A RELEVANT TITLE

The analysis of average scores shows that majority of respondents in all countries did not find justification for claiming social benefits by people who are not entitled to do so. The highest share of opinions on justifiability of such behaviour was observed in Spain and France. The lowest share was recorded in the Netherlands, Hungary, Greece, Great Britain, Denmark and Germany.

Gender differences were noted as significant in Estonia (p<.001), Hungary (p<.01), Lithuania (p<.05), Poland (p<.01), Sweden (p<.001), and Canada (p<.001). In all those cases, male respondents proved more prone to justify unentitled claiming of benefits.

In Poland, tolerance for unentitled claiming social of benefits was very low.

Figure 2



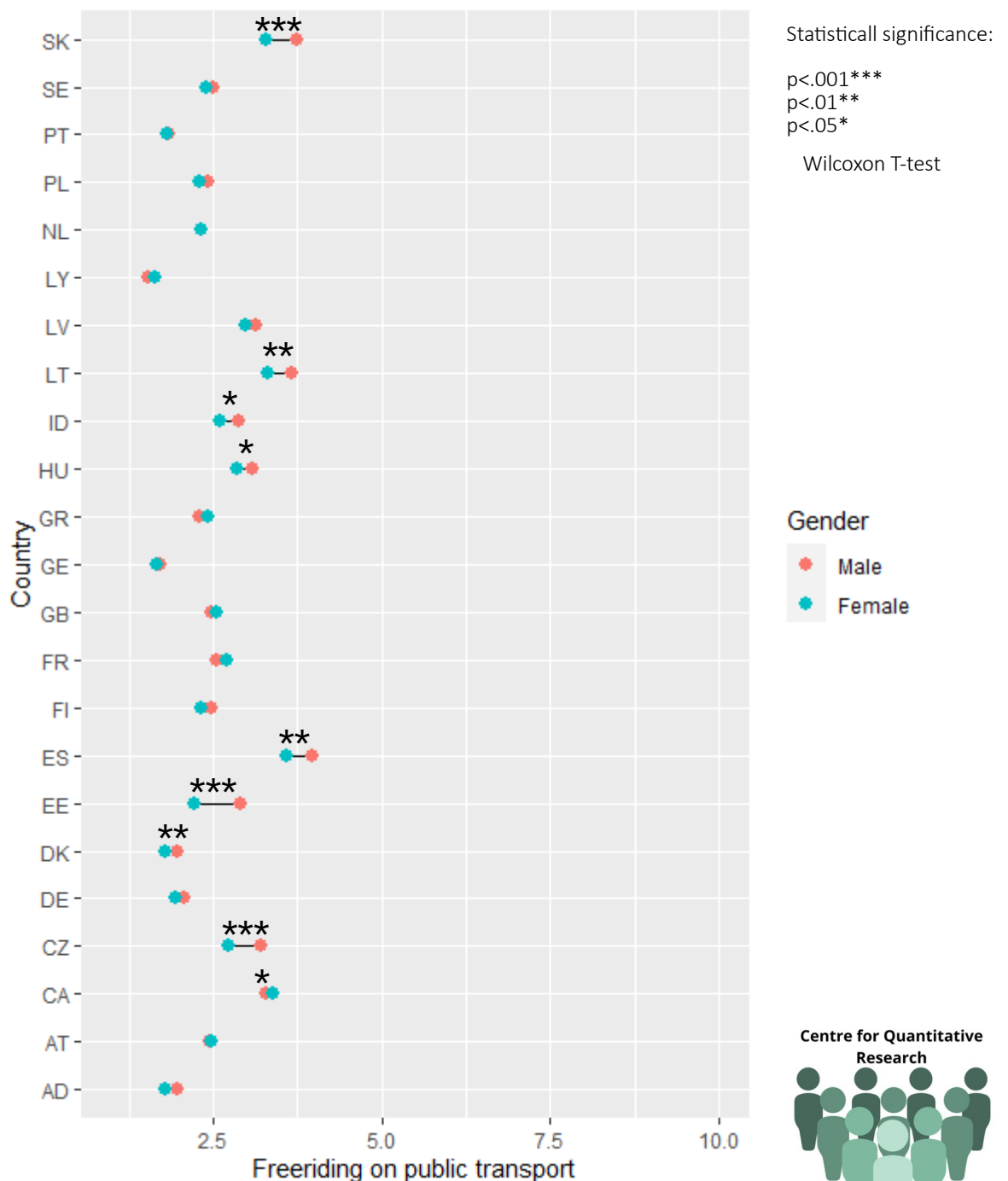
FREERIDING ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The analysis of average scores shows that majority of respondents in all countries did not justify avoiding fare on public transport. The highest share of justification was observed in Spain, Latvia and Slovakia. The lowest share of justification was observed in Libya, Georgia, Denmark, Germany and Andorra.

Significant gender differences were recorded in Sweden (p<.001), Latvia (p<.01), Indonesia (p<.05), Hungary (p<.05), Spain (p<.01), Estonia (p<.001), Denmark (p<.01), Czechia (p<.001) and Canada (p<.05). Excluding Canada, in all other countries male respondents proved more prone to justify freeriding on public transport than female respondents.

In Poland, perception of freeriding on public transport as justified was very low.

Figure 3



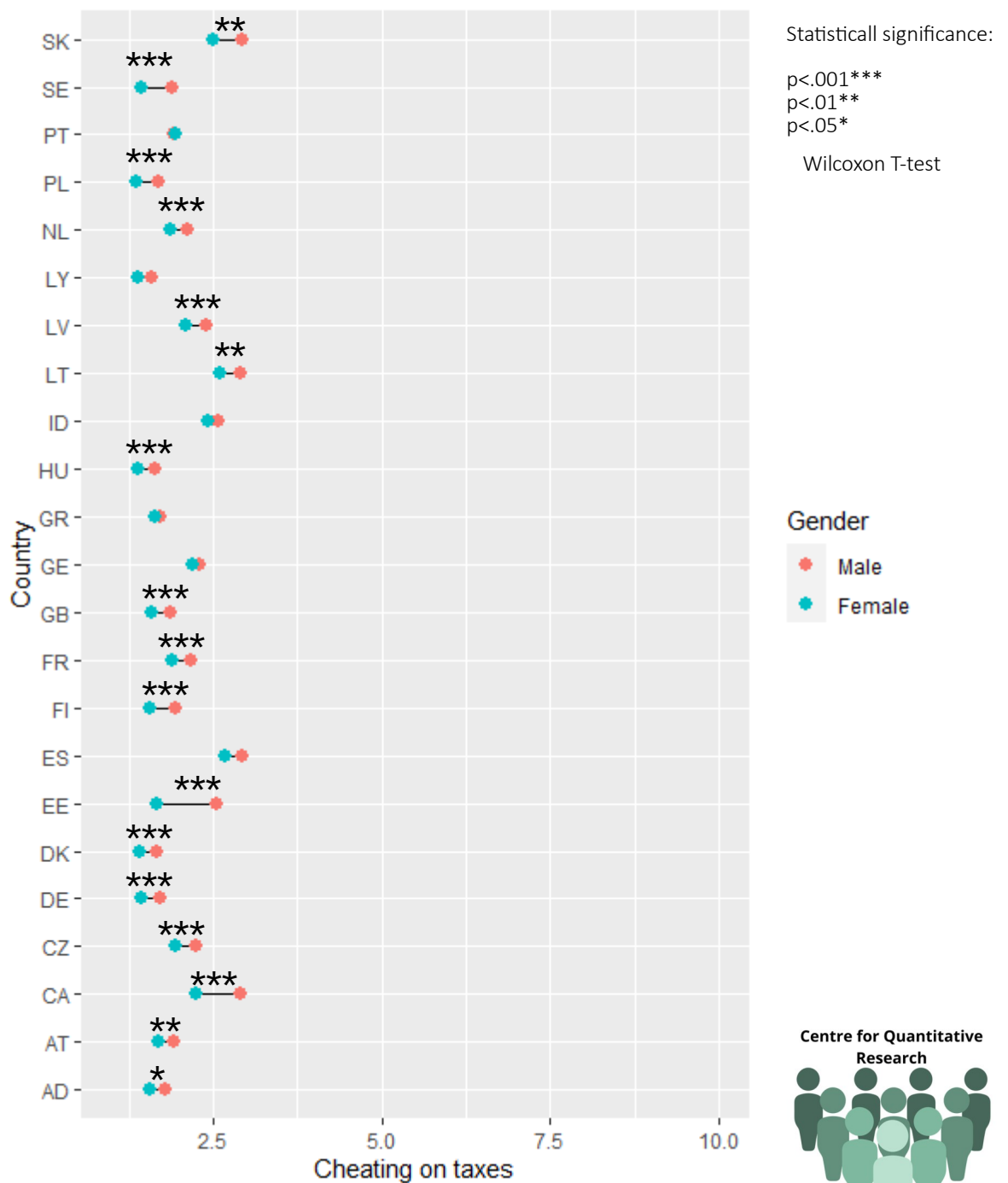
CHEATING ON TAXES

The analysis of average scores shows that majority of respondents from all countries did not find cheating on taxes justifiable. The highest share of justifying was observed in Slovakia, Latvia, Spain and Canada.

Significant gender differences were observed in majority of the compared countries, displaying high consistency and higher share of justification among male respondents than female respondents. The only exception were Portugal, Libya, Indonesia, Greece, Georgia, Spain, where no gender differences were observed.

In Poland, a very low share of respondents found cheating on taxes justifiable.

Figure 4



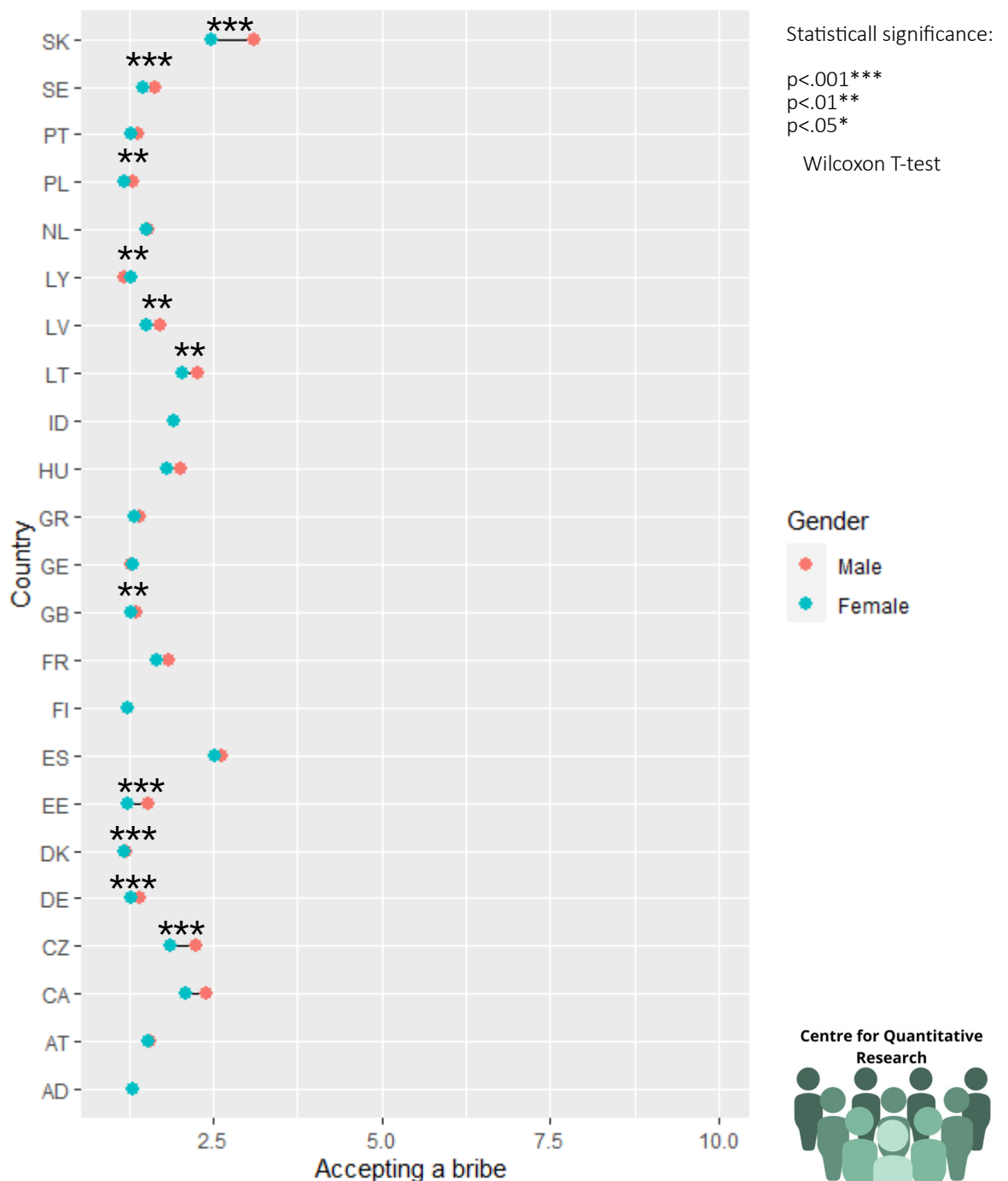
SOMEONE ACCEPTING A BRIBE

The analysis of average scores shows that majority of respondents from all countries did not find justification for accepting bribes by someone. The highest share of justification was observed in Slovakia and Spain.

Significant gender differences were observed in Slovakia ($p < .001$), Sweden ($p < .001$), Poland ($p < .01$), Libya ($p < .01$), Latvia ($p < .01$), Lithuania ($p < .01$), Great Britain ($p < .01$), Estonia ($p < .001$), Denmark ($p < .001$), Germany ($p < .001$) and Czechia ($p < .001$). In majority of the listed countries male respondents were more prone to justify such behaviour than female ones. The only exception was Libya where female respondents proved more tolerant to someone accepting a bribe.

In Poland the level of justifying bribe-taking was very low.

Figure 5



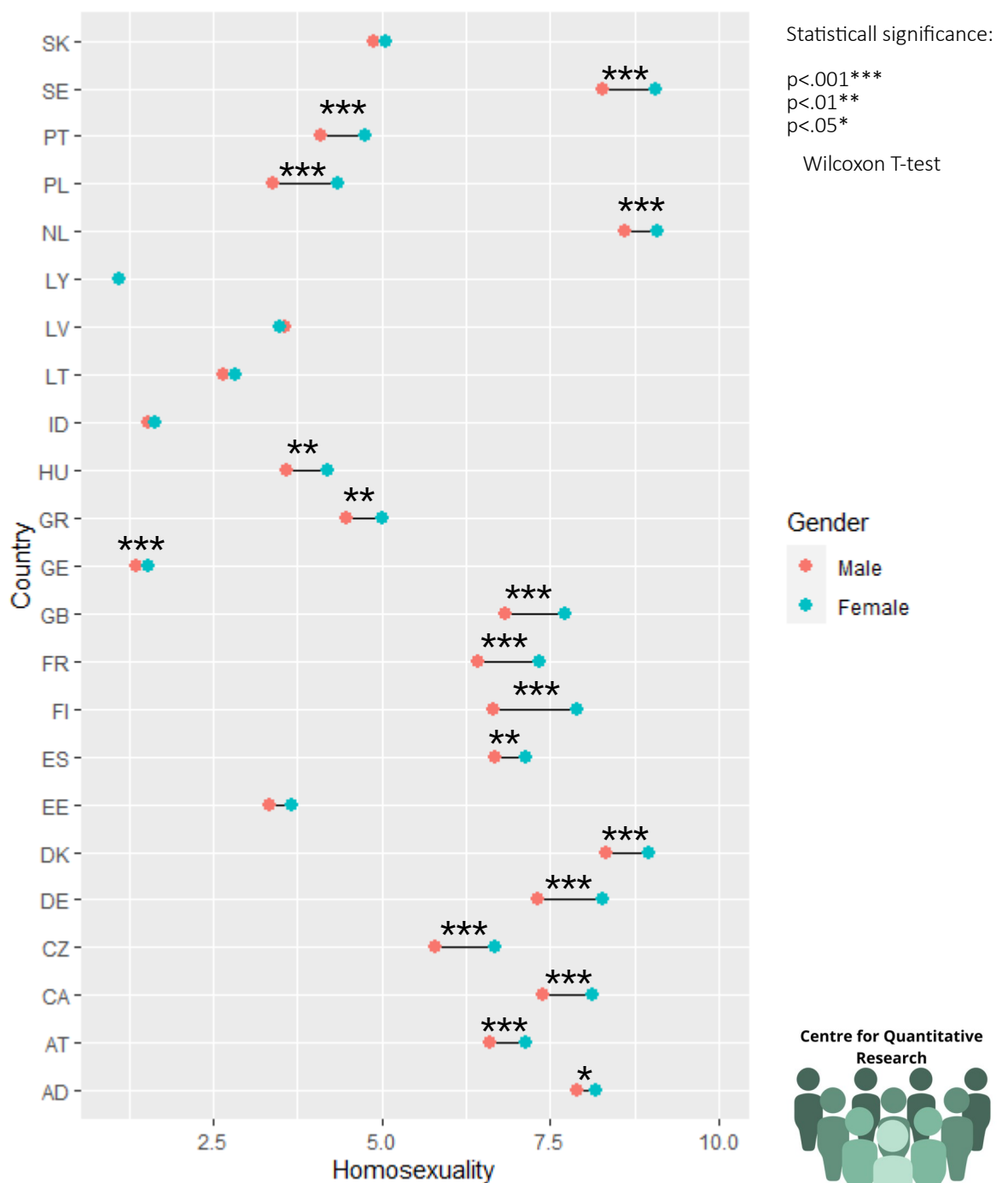
HOMOSEXUALITY

The analysis of average scores shows significant diversification of attitudes. Homosexuality was perceived as justified more frequently in Sweden, the Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Finland, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Canada and Andorra. The lowest score was recorded in Libya, Indonesia and Georgia.

Gender differences were observed in majority of the compared countries. The scores consistently indicated higher justification for homosexuality by female respondents. No gender differences were observed in Slovakia, Libya, Latvia, Lithuania, Indonesia and Estonia.

The share of perceiving homosexuality as justified in Poland was markedly below the highest results and far behind the scores for core EU countries.

Figure 6



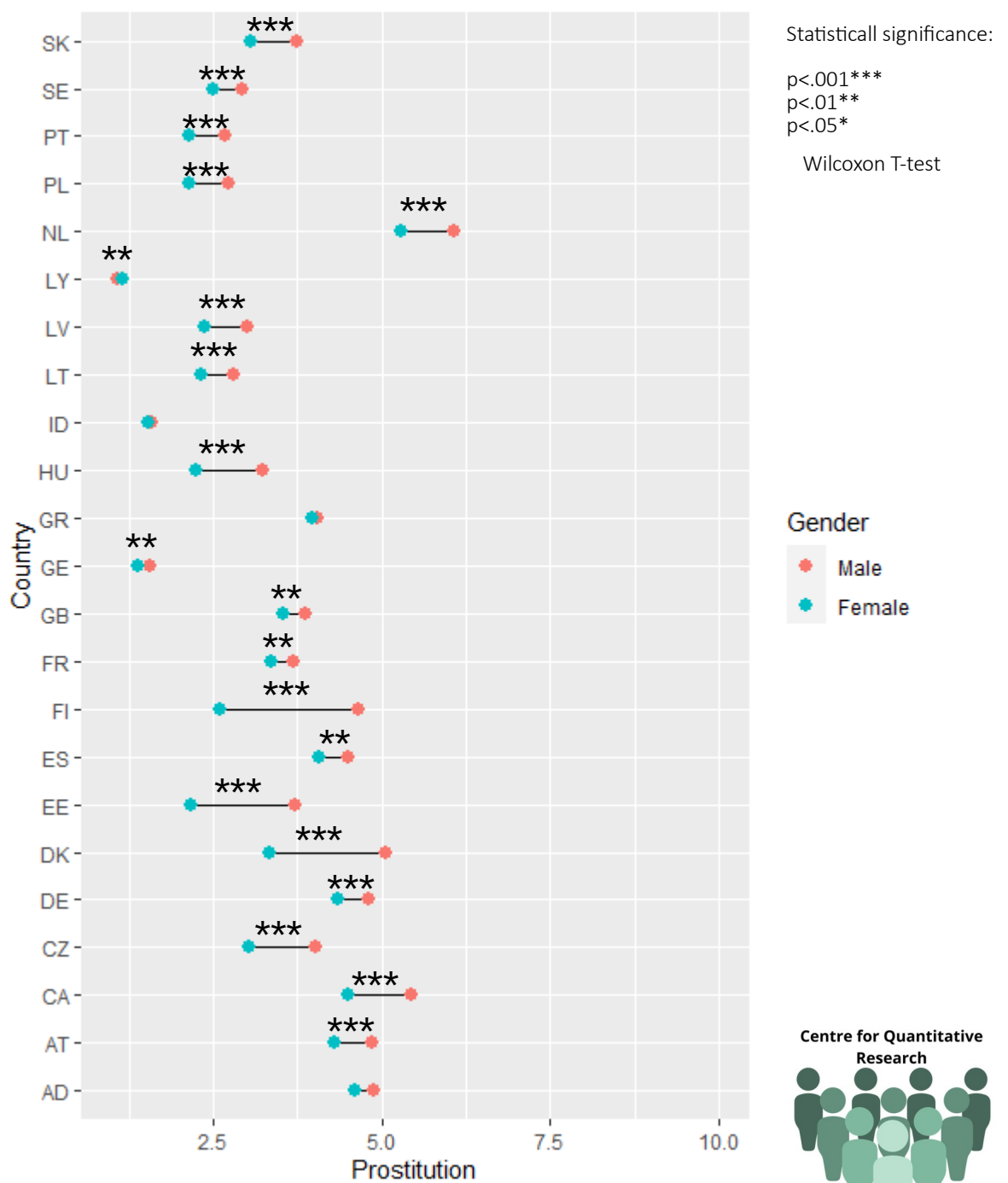
PROSTITUTION

The analysis of average scores shows that prostitution was found justified the most frequently in the Netherlands. In a number of countries respondents had no decisive opinion. The lowest level of justification was observed in Libya, Indonesia and Georgia.

Significant gender differences were observed in majority of the compared countries. The scores consistently indicated higher justification for prostitution among male respondents. An interesting observation was noted in regard to Scandinavian countries such as Finland and Denmark where mean difference between male and female respondents was the highest.

In Poland, perception of prostitution as justified was very low.

Figure 7



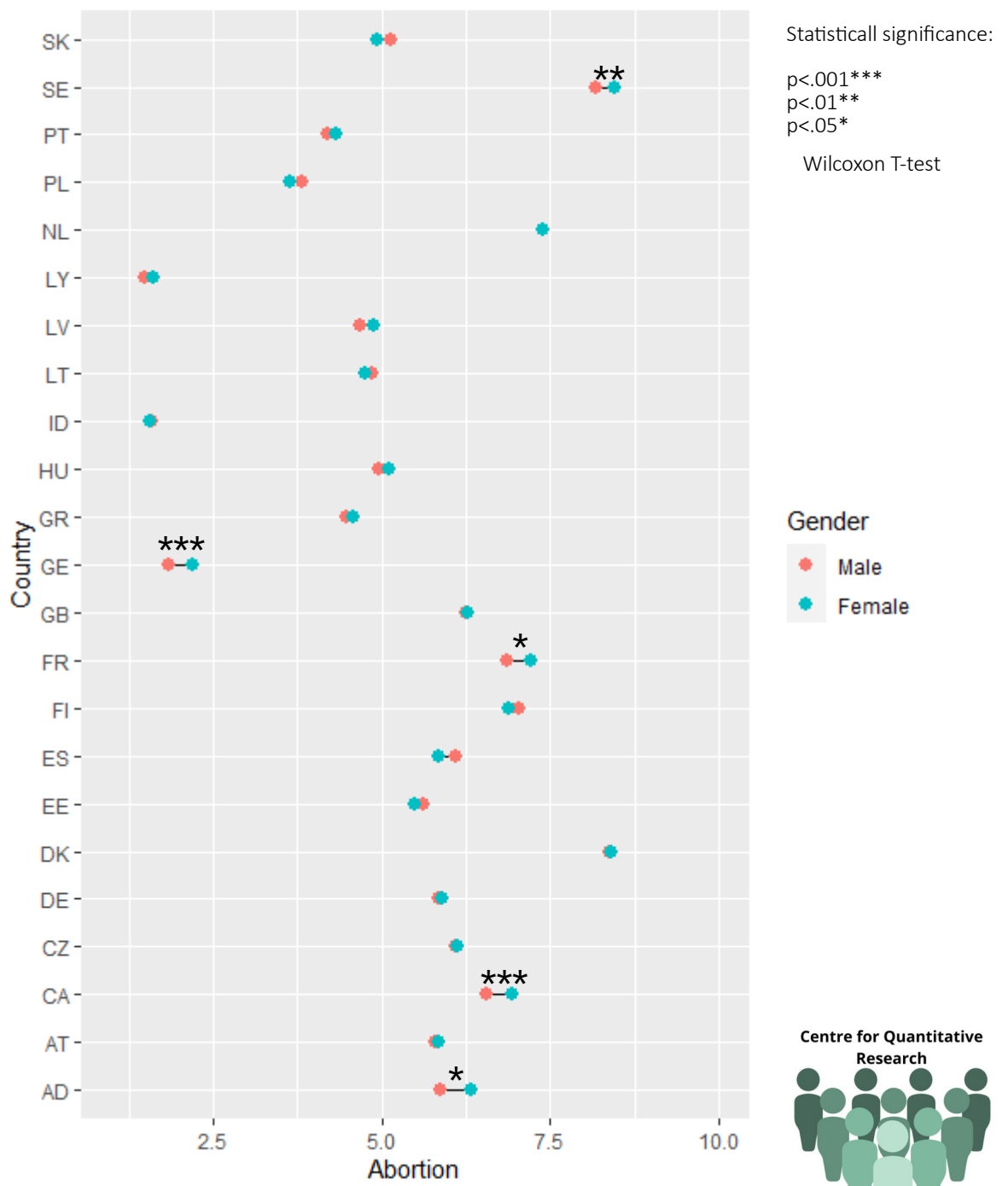
ABORTION

The analysis of average scores shows large diversification of attitudes in regard to abortion. Abortion was seen as highly justified in the Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden and Denmark. The lowest levels of justification were observed in Libya, Indonesia and Georgia.

Significant gender differences were observed in several countries such as Sweden ($p < .01$), Georgia ($p < .001$), France ($p < .05$), Canada ($p < .001$) and Andorra ($p < .05$). In all those cases higher justification level was recorded among female respondents.

Justification of abortion in Poland was low and it was the lowest among all the compared EU

Figure 8



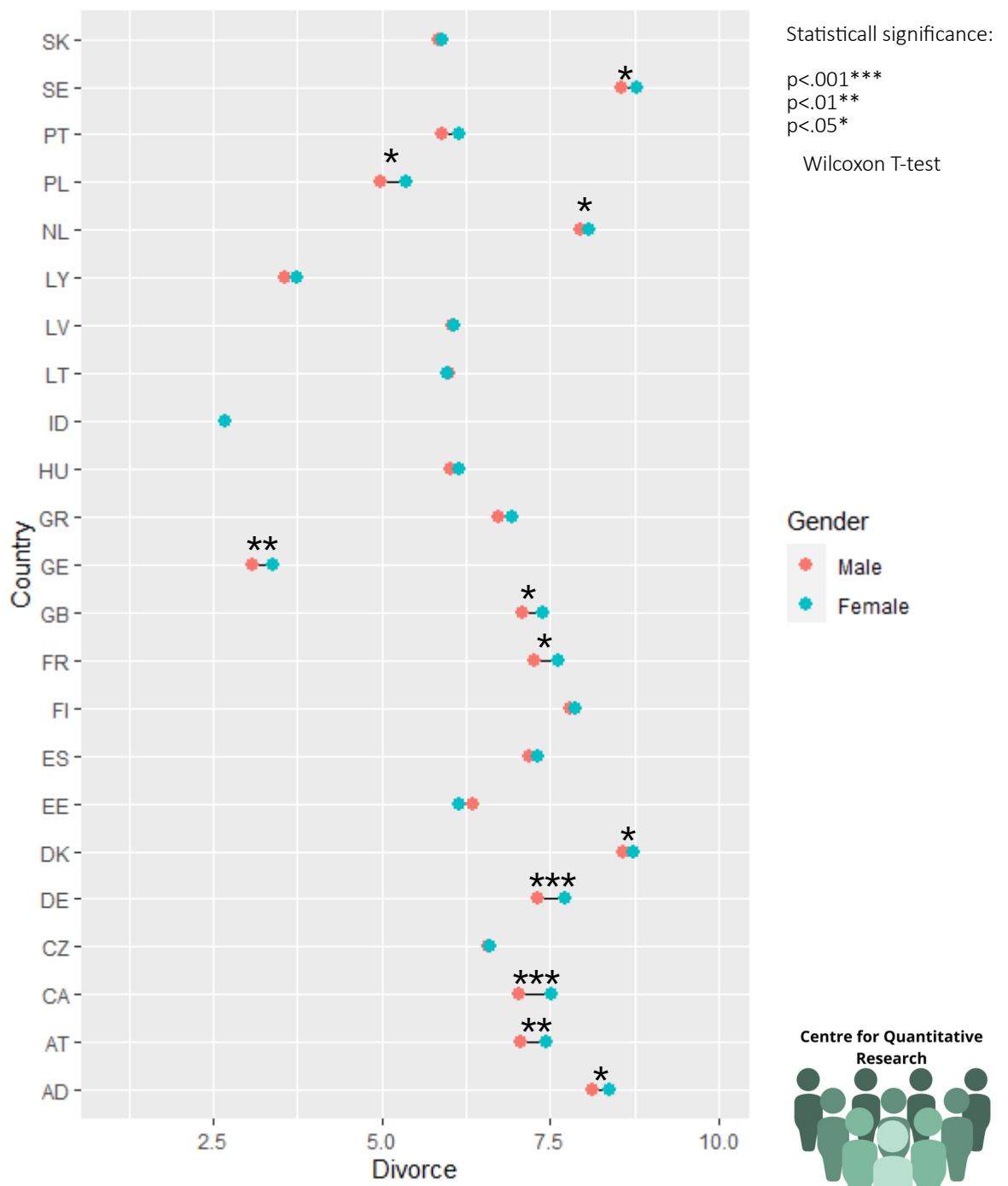
DIVORCE

The analysis of average scores shows some diversification of attitudes in regard to divorce among the analysed countries. The highest level of tolerance for divorce was found in the Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden and Denmark. The lowest level was observed in Indonesia and Georgia.

Gender differences were observed in some countries, including Sweden ($p < .01$), Poland ($p < .05$), Netherlands ($p < .05$), Georgia ($p < .01$), Great Britain ($p < .05$), France ($p < .05$), Denmark ($p < .05$), Germany ($p < .001$), Canada ($p < .001$), Austria ($p < .01$) and Andorra ($p < .05$), with consistently higher justification by female respondents.

Justification of divorce among respondents from Poland was average in general, but markedly lower than in all other compared EU countries.

Figure 9



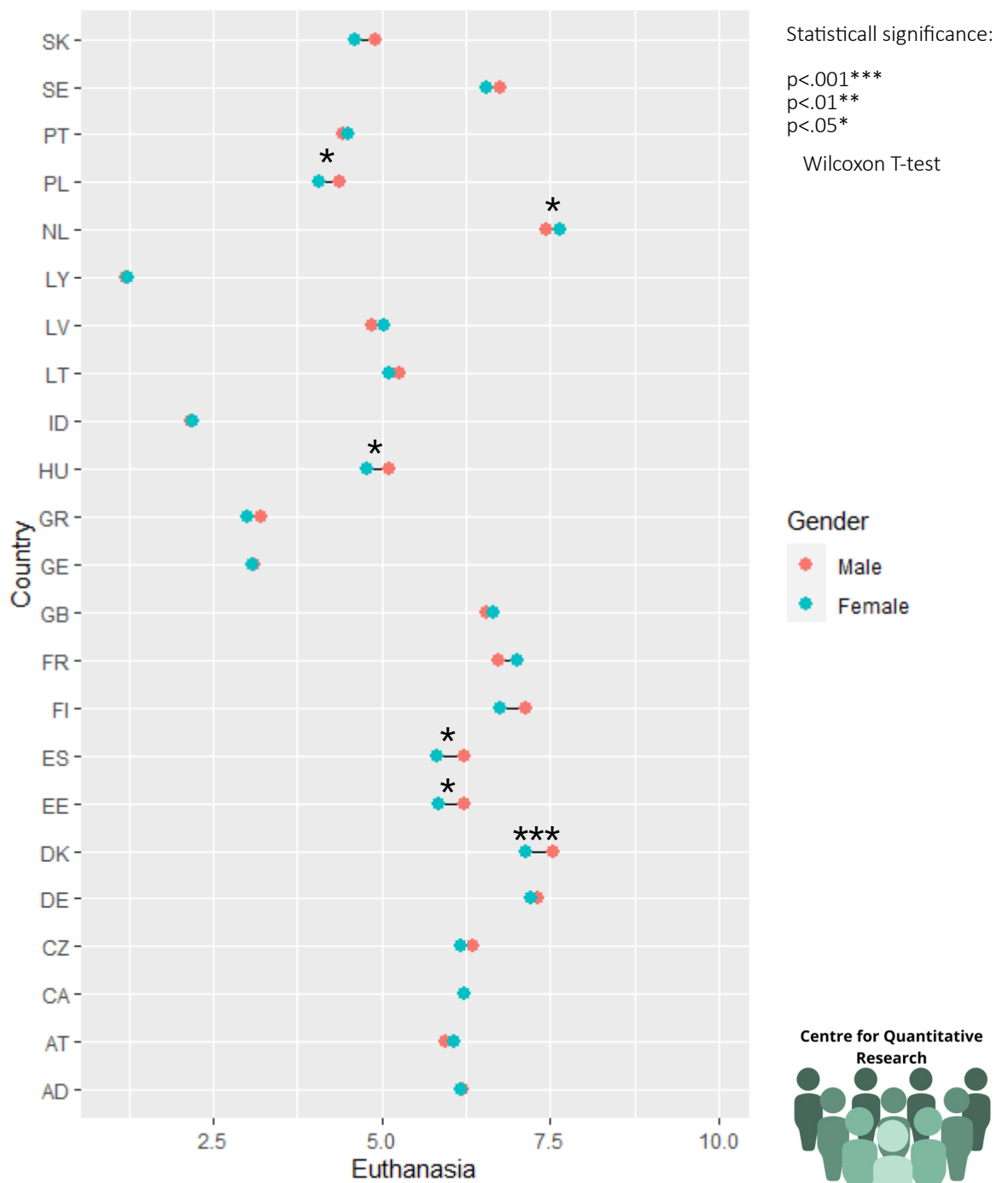
EUTHANASIA

The analysis of average scores shows some diversification of attitudes in regard to euthanasia. Euthanasia was perceived as justifiable the most frequently in the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany. The lowest levels justification were observed in Libya and Indonesia.

Gender differences were observed in several countries, including Poland ($p < .05$), the Netherlands ($p < .05$), Hungary ($p < .05$), Spain ($p < .05$), Estonia ($p < .05$) and Denmark ($p < .001$), indicating stronger justification of euthanasia by male respondents. The only exception from the said tendency concerned the Netherlands where female respondents were more prone to justify euthanasia.

Perception of euthanasia as justifiable in Poland was slightly below the middle of the scale and visibly lower than in majority of other EU countries, the only other exception being Greece.

Figure 10



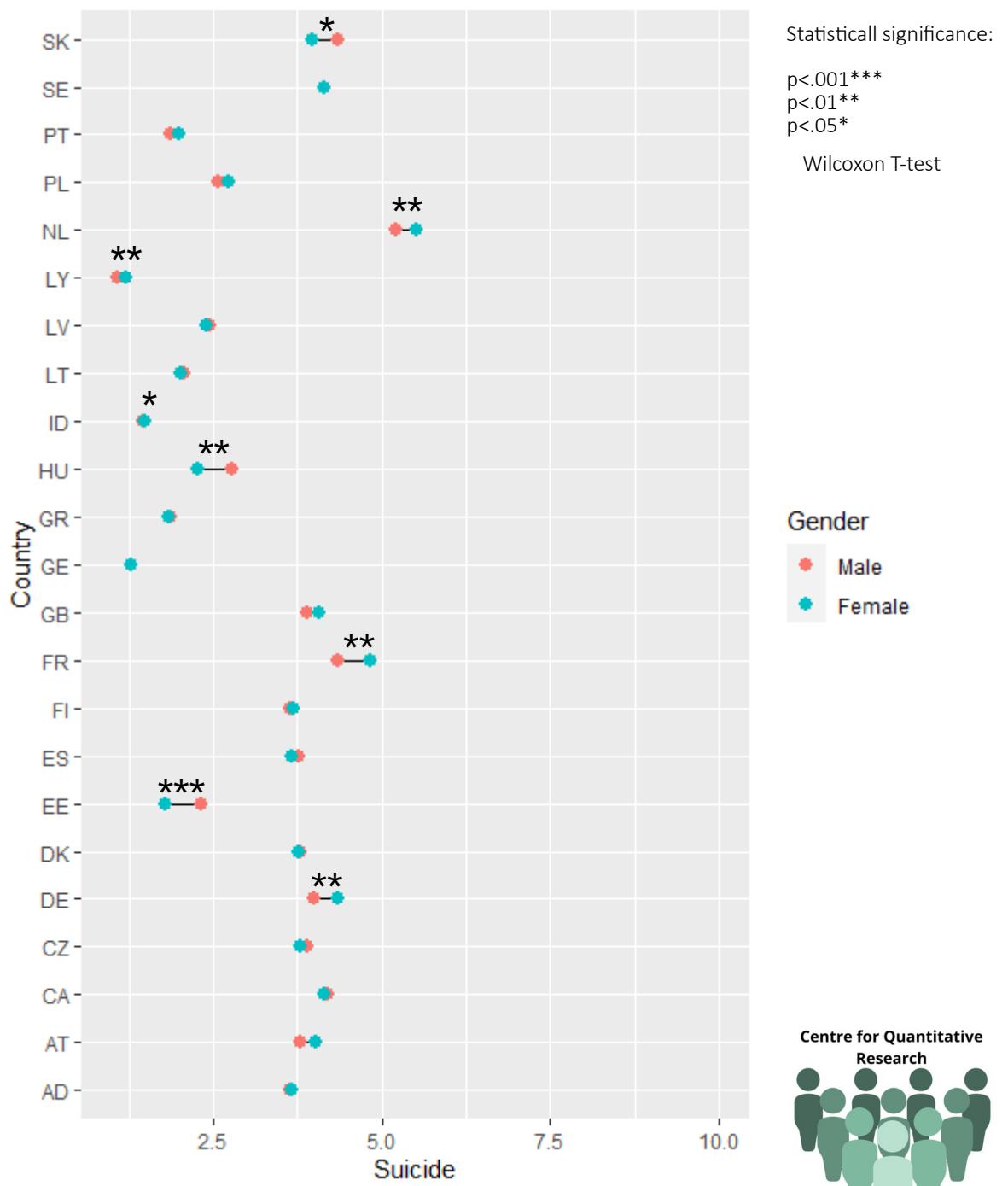
SUICIDE

The analysis of average scores shows that in majority of the studied countries tendency to justify suicidal behaviour was found low. The lowest level of justification was observed in Libya and Georgia. The highest level was recorded in the Netherlands.

Gender differences were observed in a few countries including Slovakia (p<.05), the Netherlands (p<.01), Libya (p<.01), Indonesia (p<.05), Hungary (p<.01), France (p<.01), Estonia (p<.001) and Denmark (p<.01). Male respondents justified suicide more frequently in Slovakia, Hungary and Estonia, while female respondents displayed higher tolerance in the Netherlands, France and Denmark.

Justification of suicide among respondents from Poland was very low.

Figure 11



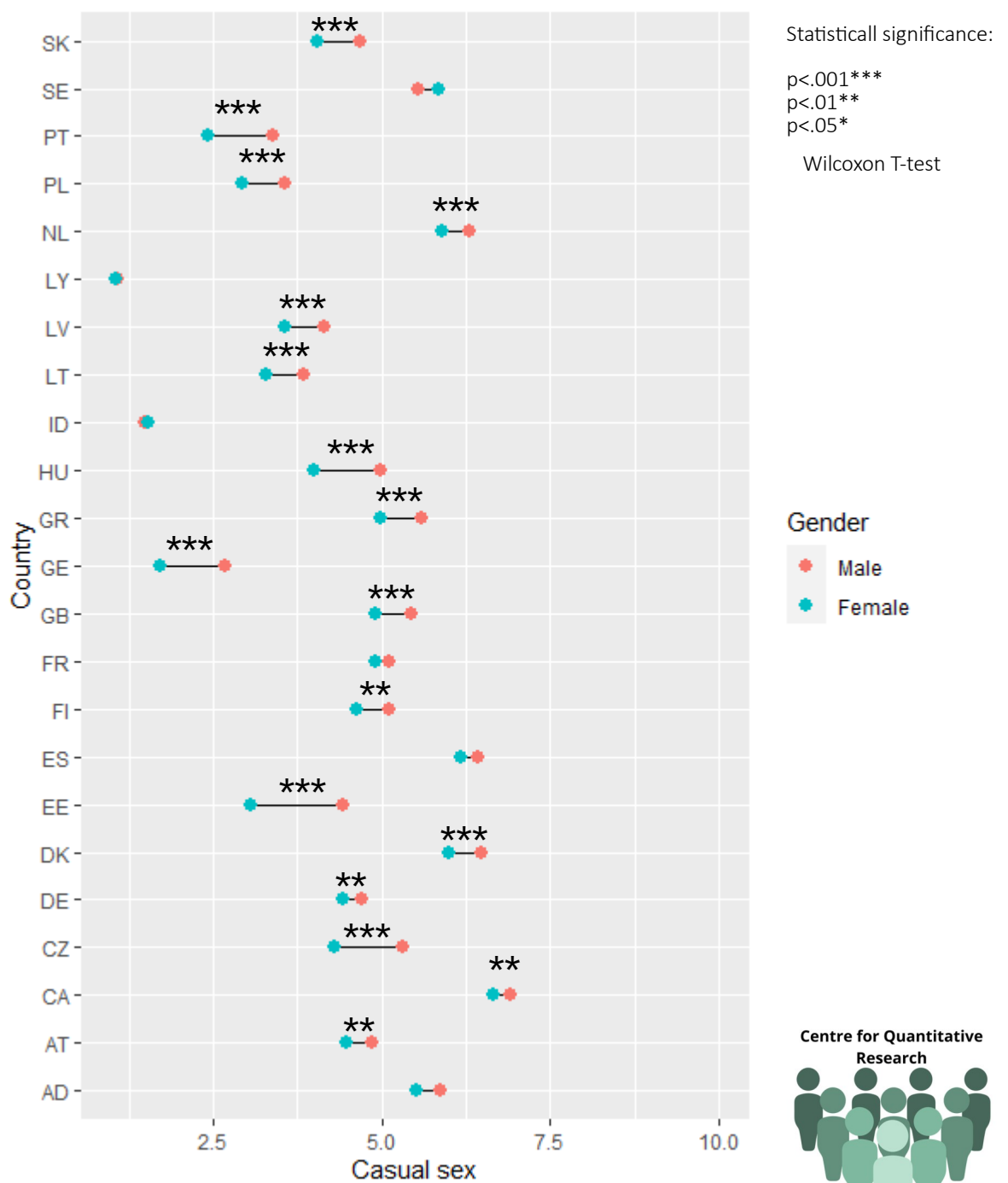
HAVING CASUAL SEX

The analysis of average scores shows that in majority of countries having casual sex is perceived as justifiable at a low to average level. The highest justification was observed in Canada, Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands.

Gender differences were recorded in a majority of the compared countries. The only exceptions were Sweden, Libya, Indonesia, France, Spain and Andorra. Among countries with visible differences, there was a consistent tendency indicating more justifying attitudes among male respondents.

Among Polish respondents, finding casual sex justified was at a low level and the second lowest only to Portugal considering the EU countries.

Figure 12



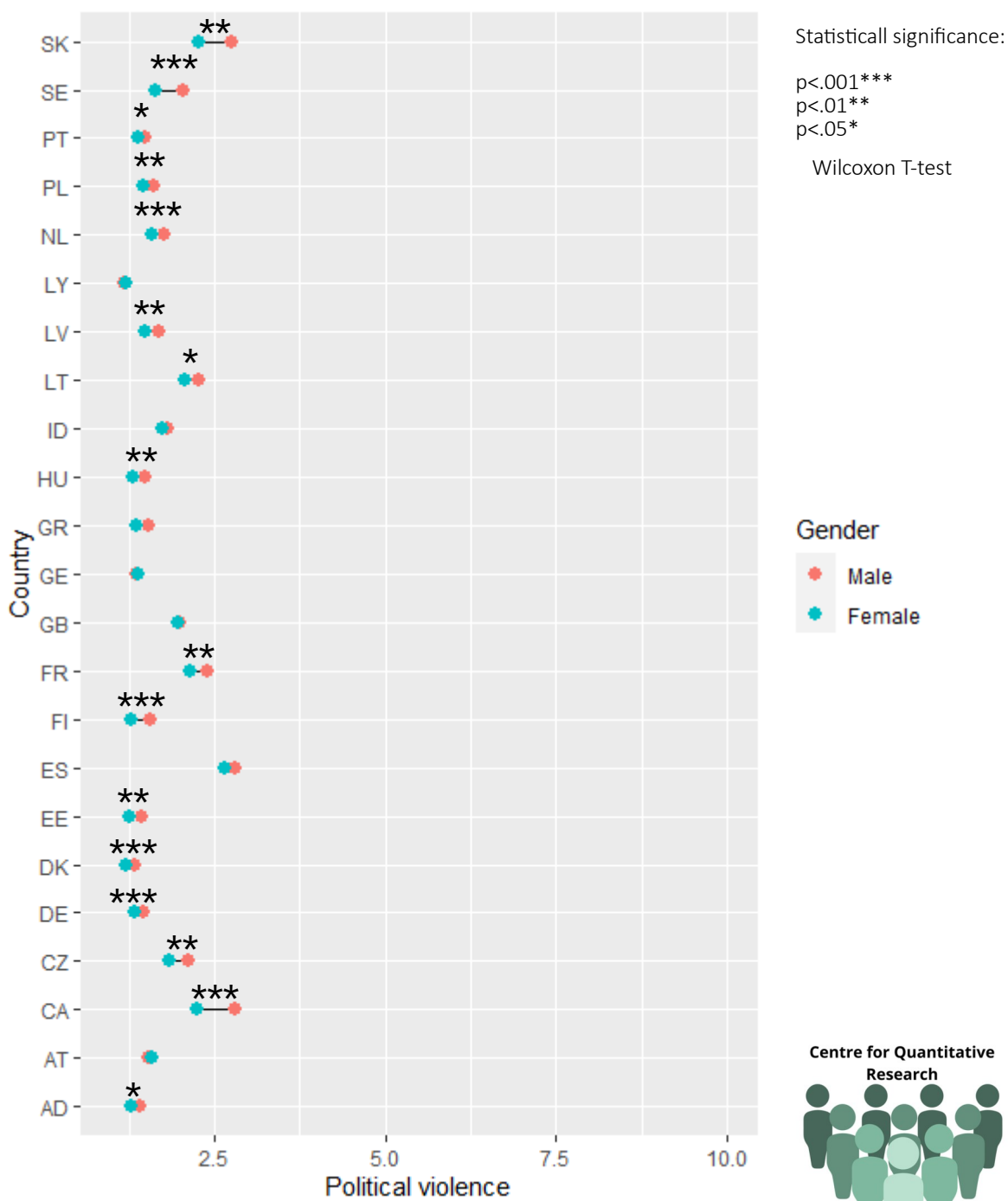
USE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The analysis of average scores shows that in all compared countries political violence had very low level of justification. The highest level of finding political violence justifiable was recorded in Slovakia, Spain and Canada.

Gender differences were observed in most countries. The only exceptions were Libya, Indonesia, Georgia, Great Britain, Spain and Andorra. Among countries with visible differentiation, there was a consistent tendency of stronger justifying attitudes for political violence among male respondents.

Among Polish respondents, perception of political violence as justifiable was very low.

Figure 13



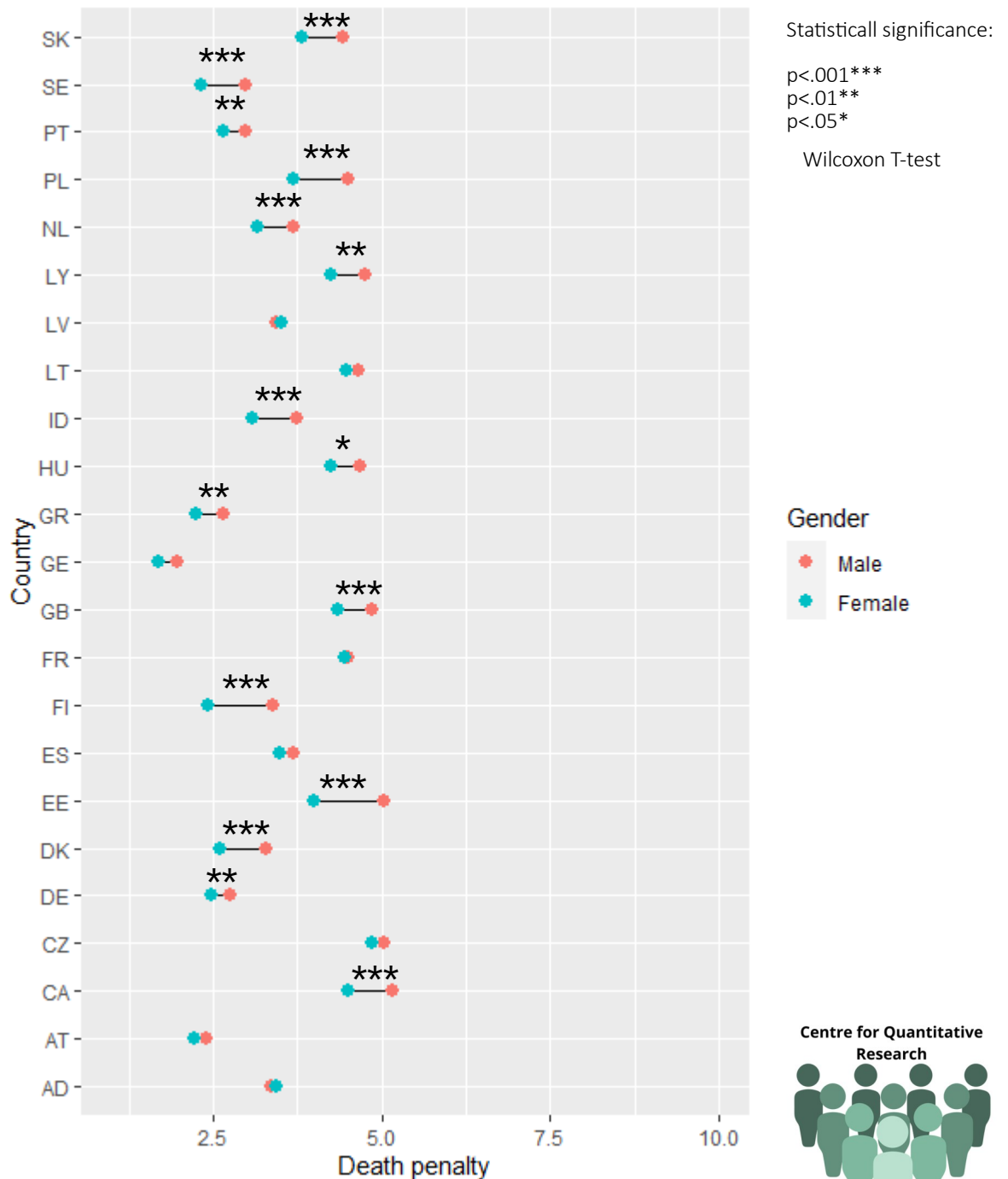
DEATH PENALTY

The analysis of average scores shows that in general, justification of death penalty was low and average at best. The highest level of justification was recorded in Canada, Estonia and Czechia. The lowest level was observed in Georgia.

Gender differences were noted in majority of compared countries. The only exceptions were Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, France, Spain, Chechia, Austria and Andorra. Among countries with visible differences, there was a consistent tendency indicating stronger justifying attitudes to death penalty among male respondents.

Among Polish respondents justification of death penalty was relatively low.

Figure 14



RESULTS – SUMMARY

Poles declared very low readiness to justify such behaviours as: claiming social benefits without the relevant title, freeriding on public transport, cheating on taxes, someone taking bribes, prostitution, suicide, casual sex and political violence. Low levels of justification by Poles were observed in regard to homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia. Moderate justification concerned only divorce. No high or very high levels of justification of difficult moral issues were observed among Poles.

Out of all compared subjects, in ten cases there were notable statistical differences between genders, and these were: claiming social benefits, cheating on taxes, someone taking bribes, homosexuality, prostitution, divorce, euthanasia, casual sex, political violence and death penalty.

Males proved to be more tolerant in majority of the compared dimensions, excluding only homosexuality and divorce where females proved more tolerant. It should be noted that higher tolerance of political violence and death penalty by men was also associated with higher tolerance for social violence in general. Thus, we may refer to stronger problematic tolerance of men in this regard.

The most polarising issues, i.e. those with the biggest differences between average scores for males and females in Poland, were homosexuality, casual sex and death penalty.

Poland on average had visibly lower scores of justification in comparison to almost all other EU countries. Significant differences were recorded in such dimensions as homosexuality, abortion, divorce, euthanasia and having casual sex.

The most diverging dimensions among all compared countries were homosexuality, prostitution, abortion, divorce, euthanasia and casual sex. These are all themes directly connected to sexuality and family issues.

RESULTS – INTERPRETATION

Low or very low tolerance in the case of difficult moral issues of Poles may be explained by cultural and social factors.

Impact of culture

The character of Poland's culture is described by numerous authors, including Herbert Kitschelt, Radosław Markowski or Mirosława Grabowska, as Catholic Christian, nationalistic and post-communist heritage. Christian roots may be traced in such myths as sacralisation of life and sacralisation of family. Sacralisation of life means that in open public and political discourse pro-life attitude are dominant, thus radical pro-choice and pro-euthanasia ideas are met with strong social disapproval. Sacralisation of family on the other hand, produces the myth of a 'traditional Polish family' composed of a man and woman who have children and remain loyal to each other until death. Thus, phenomena such as homosexuality, suicide, abortion, euthanasia, divorce and casual sex are treated as harmful, sinful or dishonourable.

Family is also very strongly incorporated in the nationalistic symbolic discourse in Poland, associated with strong historical premises which connect family as an institution with anti-partition and patriotic movement in form of upkeeping the Polish language and knowledge of the Polish history during russification and germanisation.

Post-communist heritage in Poland is associated with quite universally negative attitude toward the communist regime and the Soviet Union. Pre-transition epoch is remembered by elderly and middle-aged Poles as a time of corruption, tyranny, terror, political violence, occupation, oppression of opposition and falsehood. Thus, lack of support for political violence, death sentence, accepting bribes, cheating on taxes or claiming social benefits without a title (behaviours associated with the concept of 'homo sovieticus') proves very strong and is a way of breaking with the unappealing and shameful communist past.

Impact of society

The observed differences between genders are big and interesting, as they reveal more open moral attitudes of men with exceptions of homosexuality and divorce. Based on conflict theory and socialisation theory, we may assume that women are generally socialised in Poland as more conservative and men as more liberal. However, there was an observation of the peculiar case of stronger liberal attitudes among women regarding homosexuality and divorce. Those attitudes can be explained by strong impact of feminism ideological movement in which lesbianism and perspective of building non-traditional and modern relationships within marriage are a strong and effective alternative to traditional (stereotypically Christian) female social role models.

The second surprising observation concerned stronger tolerance toward moral issues associated with violence and brutality such as political violence and death penalty by men. It would seem that men are more often socialised or exposed to violence, thus they are more accepting of occurrence of such behaviour.

R SCRIPT FOR REPLICATION PURPOSES - Part I

For transparency and educational purposes we attach script that can be used to trace and replicate our data base analysis. To reproduce said results authors have used open source R packages such as: car, tidyverse, haven, ggplot2, ggpubr, dplyr, sjmisc, jtools and missForest. In the script we provide step-by-step procedure (if you want to receive the same results do not change the procedure freely – unless you are a capable programmer) with short explanation of each step:

1) Loading data base and generating coder:

```
EWVS<-read_sav("") #Please read SAV format file
labels.EWVS<-get_label(EWVS)
names.EWVS<-names(EWVS)
No.EWVS<-c(1:231)
Coder.EWVS<-data.frame(No=No.EWVS, Labels=labels.EWVS, Names=names.EWVS)
```

2) Variables selection

```
EWVSred<-select(EWVS, cntry_AN, X001, F114A, F115, F116, F117, F118, F119, F120, F121, F122, F123, F132,
E290, F144_02, X025A_01)
```

3) Pre-analysis preparation

```
EWVSred<-set_na(EWVSred, na=c(-1,-2,-3,-4,-5))
EWVSred<-drop_labels(EWVSred)
EWVSred<-zap_label(EWVSred)
EWVSred<-as.data.frame(EWVSred)
```

4) Number of missing cases – preparation for selecting data imputation technique

```
TableNA<-EWVSred %>% group_by(cntry_AN) %>%
  summarize_each(funs(sum(is.na(.))))
```

5) Exclusion of cases with more than 1 NA

```
delete.na<-function(EWVSred, n=0){EWVSred[rowSums(is.na(EWVSred))<=n,]}
EWVSred<-delete.na(EWVSred, 1)
```

6) Selection of countries for analysis and data preparation for imputation

```
Data<-dplyr::filter(EWVSred, cntry_AN == 'PL' | cntry_AN == 'DK' | cntry_AN == 'DE' | cntry_AN == 'AD' | cntry_AN == 'AT' | cntry_AN == 'CA' | cntry_AN == 'CZ' | cntry_AN == 'EE' | cntry_AN == 'GE' | cntry_AN == 'ES' | cntry_AN == 'FI' | cntry_AN == 'FR' | cntry_AN == 'GB' | cntry_AN == 'GR' | cntry_AN == 'LY' | cntry_AN == 'HU' | cntry_AN == 'ID' | cntry_AN == 'LT' | cntry_AN == 'LV' | cntry_AN == 'NL' | cntry_AN == 'PT' | cntry_AN == 'SE' | cntry_AN == 'SK')
Data<-droplevels(Data)
Data$cntry_AN<-as.factor(Data$cntry_AN)
Data$X001<-as.factor(Data$X001)
```

7) Data imputation - due to non-normal distribution among chosen continuous variables we choosed nonparametric technique, based on random forest algorithm which imputs median or mode values and generates imputed values based on already existing data in the data set.

```
set.seed(1234)
Dataimp<-missForest(Data, verbose=TRUE)
Dataimp$OOBError
Data<-as_tibble(Dataimp$ximp)
Data<-as.data.frame(Datai)
Data<-round_num(Datai, digits=0)
```

R SCRIPT FOR REPLICATION PURPOSES - Part II

8) Convenient renaming of variables

```
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Country = cntry_AN)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Sex = X001)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Benefits = F114A)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Avoid_Fare = F115)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Tax_Cheat = F116)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Bribe_Taking = F117)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Homosexuality = F118)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Prostitution = F119)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Abortion = F120)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Divorce = F121)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Euthanasia = F122)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Suicide = F123)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Casual_Sex = F132)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Political_Violence = E290)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Death_Penalty = F144_02)
Datai <- Datai %>% rename(Education = X025A_01)
Datai$Sex<-recode_factor(Datai$Sex, '1'='Male', '2'='Female')
Datai$Gender<-Datai$Sex
```

9) Pre-processing data for Figure 1

```
Gender<-Datai %>% group_by(Country, Gender) %>% count(Gender)
ggplot(Gender, aes(n, Country)) +
  geom_line(aes(group = Country)) +
  geom_point(aes(color = Gender), size=2.5) +
  labs(x='Number of respondents per gender')
```

10) Non-parametric ANOVA – cross-country analysis

```
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Benefits~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Avoid_Fare~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Tax_Cheat~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Bribe_Taking~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Homosexuality~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Prostitution~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Abortion~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Divorce~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Euthanasia~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Suicide~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Casual_Sex~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Political_Violence~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
Atest_benefits<-compare_means(Death_Penalty~Sex, method='kruskal.test', data=Datai)
```

11) Non-parametric T-TEST – cross-gender analysis controlled by country

```
ttest_benefits<-compare_means(Benefits~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_fare<-compare_means(Avoid_Fare~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_cheat<-compare_means(Tax_Cheat~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_bribe<-compare_means(Bribe_Taking~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_homo<-compare_means(Homosexuality~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_prost<-compare_means(Prostitution~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_abor<-compare_means(Abortion~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_divo<-compare_means(Divorce~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_euth<-compare_means(Euthanasia~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_suic<-compare_means(Suicide~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_csex<-compare_means(Casual_Sex~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_pval<-compare_means(Political_Violence~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
ttest_dpel<-compare_means(Death_Penalty~Sex, group.by='Country', data=Datai)
```

R SCRIPT FOR REPLICATION PURPOSES - Part III

12) Preprocessing data for Figure 2-14

```
Just2<-Data1 %>% group_by(Country, Gender) %>% summarize(Not_Entitled_Claim_of_Benefits=mean(Benefits),  
  Avoid_Fare_on_Public_Transport=mean(Avoid_Fare),  
  Tax_Cheat=mean(Tax_Cheat),  
  Bribe_Taking_by_Someone=mean(Bribe_Taking),  
  Homosexuality=mean(Homosexuality),  
  Prostitution=mean(Prostitution),  
  Abortion=mean(Abortion),  
  Divorce=mean(Divorce),  
  Euthanasia=mean(Euthanasia),  
  Suicide=mean(Suicide),  
  Having_Casual_Sex=mean(Casual_Sex),  
  Political_Violence=mean(Political_Violence),  
  Death_Penalty=mean(Death_Penalty),  
  Education=mean(Education))
```

13) Cleveland dot-plot template (for effect change variable names accordingly)

```
ggplot(Just2, aes(Not_Entitled_Claim_of_Benefits, Country)) +  
  geom_line(aes(group = Country)) +  
  geom_point(aes(color = Gender), size=2.5) +  
  xlim(1,10) +  
  labs(x='Claiming benefits without a relevant title')
```

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