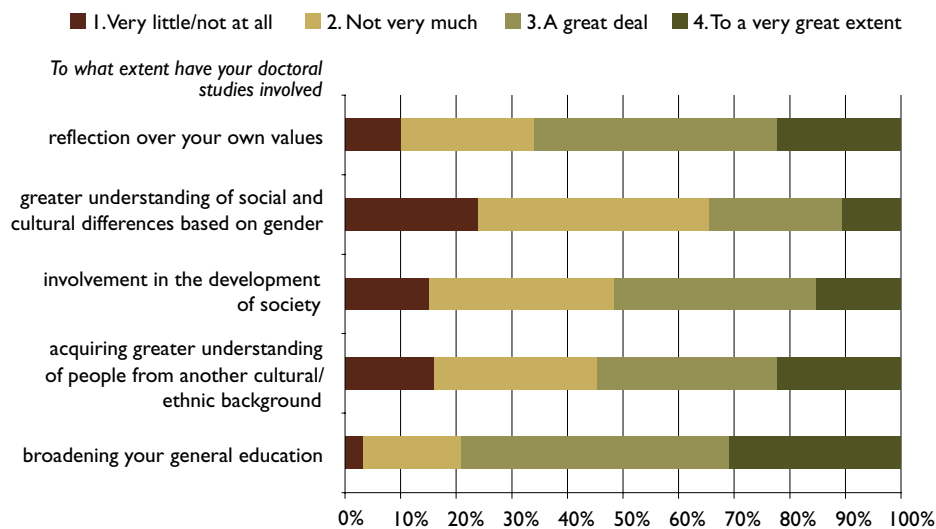


## Reflection and values

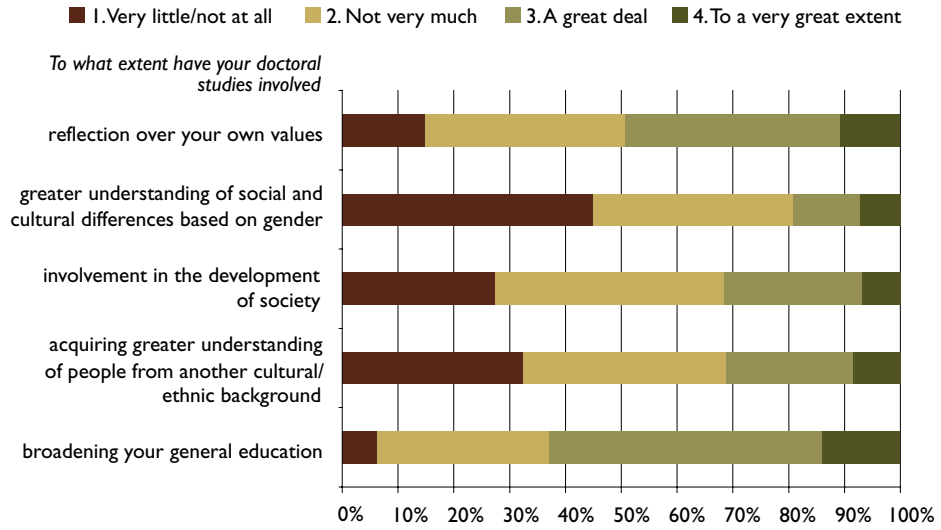
Personal development also forms part of the aim of higher education and this applies to both undergraduate and postgraduate study. One element in personal development, involves increasing the capacity for reflection over one's own values, another is greater educational breadth. The overarching social goals for higher education also include the expectation that education will contribute to the development of democracy and greater understanding between people with different cultural or ethnic background.

The questions included in this dimensional index deal with the extent to which postgraduate studies have prompted students to reflect about their own values or enabled them to gain greater awareness of social and cultural gender differences, become involved in community development, acquire greater understanding of people with other cultural/ethnic backgrounds and broaden their own educational horizons (figure 30).

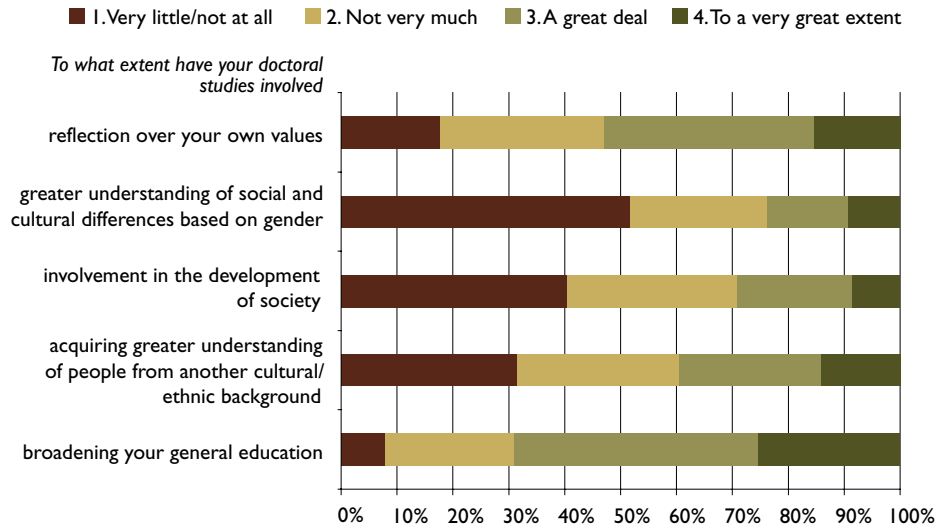
### Catalonia



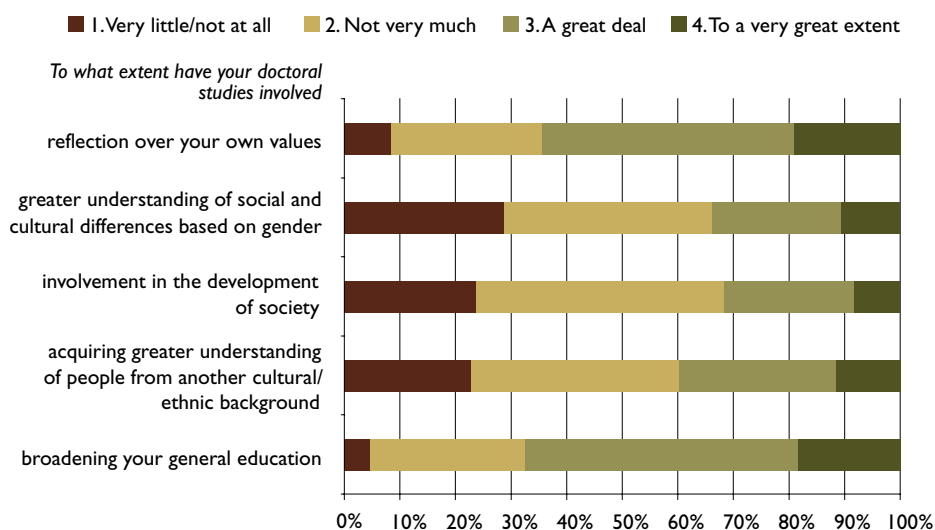
**Finland**



**Ireland**



## Sweden

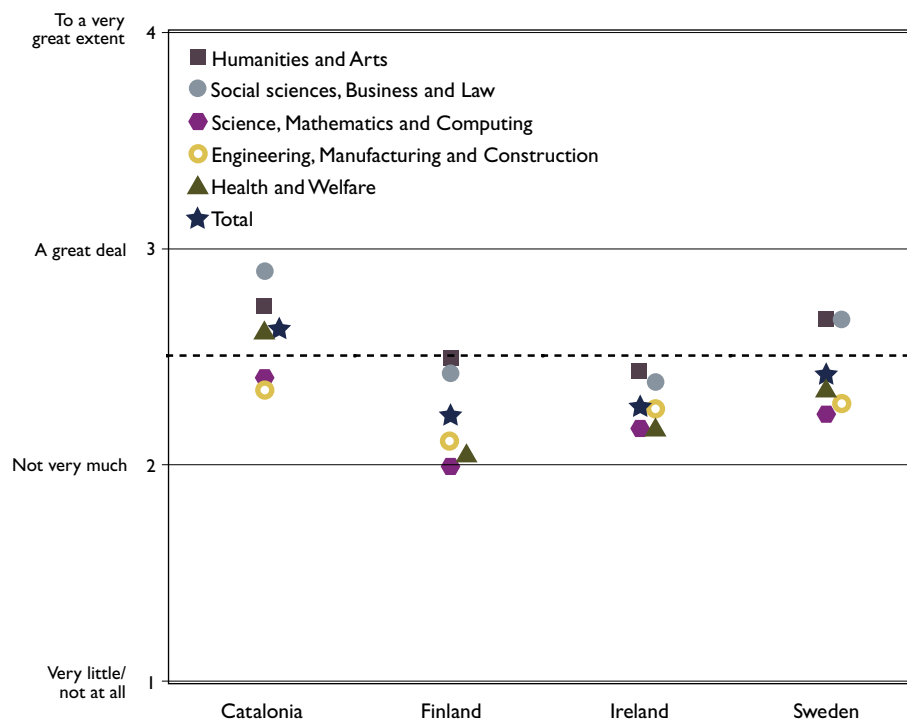


**Figure 30.** Reflection and values. Index items and distribution of responses by country.

On the whole the majority of postgraduate students state that their studies have not influenced their personal development to any major extent (figure 31). The students in Catalonia, however, indicated somewhat more influence on their personal development than the students in the other countries. Most students feel that postgraduate study has helped to broaden their educational horizons. More postgraduate students in Sweden and Catalonia claim that postgraduate study has led to greater reflection about their own values. A small proportion of postgraduate students in Finland, Sweden and Ireland say that their studies have led to greater awareness of social and cultural gender differences, more involvement in community development and increased understanding of individuals with other cultural backgrounds. The proportion is somewhat larger in Catalonia, which may reflect the fact that many postgraduate students come from Latin America.

This index shows great differences between different subject fields. The pattern is more or less the same in the different countries. The figures from the Humanities and Arts and from the Social sciences, Business and Law are higher than for Science, Mathematics and Computing, Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction or Health and Welfare.

This is the only index in which the women have responded more positively than the men in virtually every area.



**Figure 31.** Reflection and values by country and subject field.

## Comments

On the whole the *Reflections and values* index reveals great differences between the subject areas. This may be an expression of differences in the way the various programmes involve questions relating to values and human interaction. The most surprising figures are perhaps those from Health and Welfare.

According to the majority of postgraduate students, their studies only increase their social involvement or understanding of other groups to a limited extent. On the other hand they do feel that their education has been broadened and the majority of students, except in Finland, state that their studies have helped them to reflect more about their own values.

Postgraduate study in mathematical, scientific, technological and medical subject areas are felt to contribute far less to the development of the students' own values when compared with programmes in other subjects. It may be that issues relating to values have traditionally played a less important role in these disciplines. In a career oriented world, however, it may be important for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to offer both personal and professional development – not least in view of the goals of the Bologna process.