

Community, Work and Family II International Conference

Making the Connection in a Global Context

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**Women's and men's attitudes
towards work and family: similarities,
differences and contradictions**

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1. Introduction

What do men and women want?

- Some authors claim that, regarding work and family, women choose a life style according to their preferences (Hakim's theory);
- Others (Crompton *et al*) have shown that structural, institutional and cultural constraints shape "preferences". Choices are than constrained.

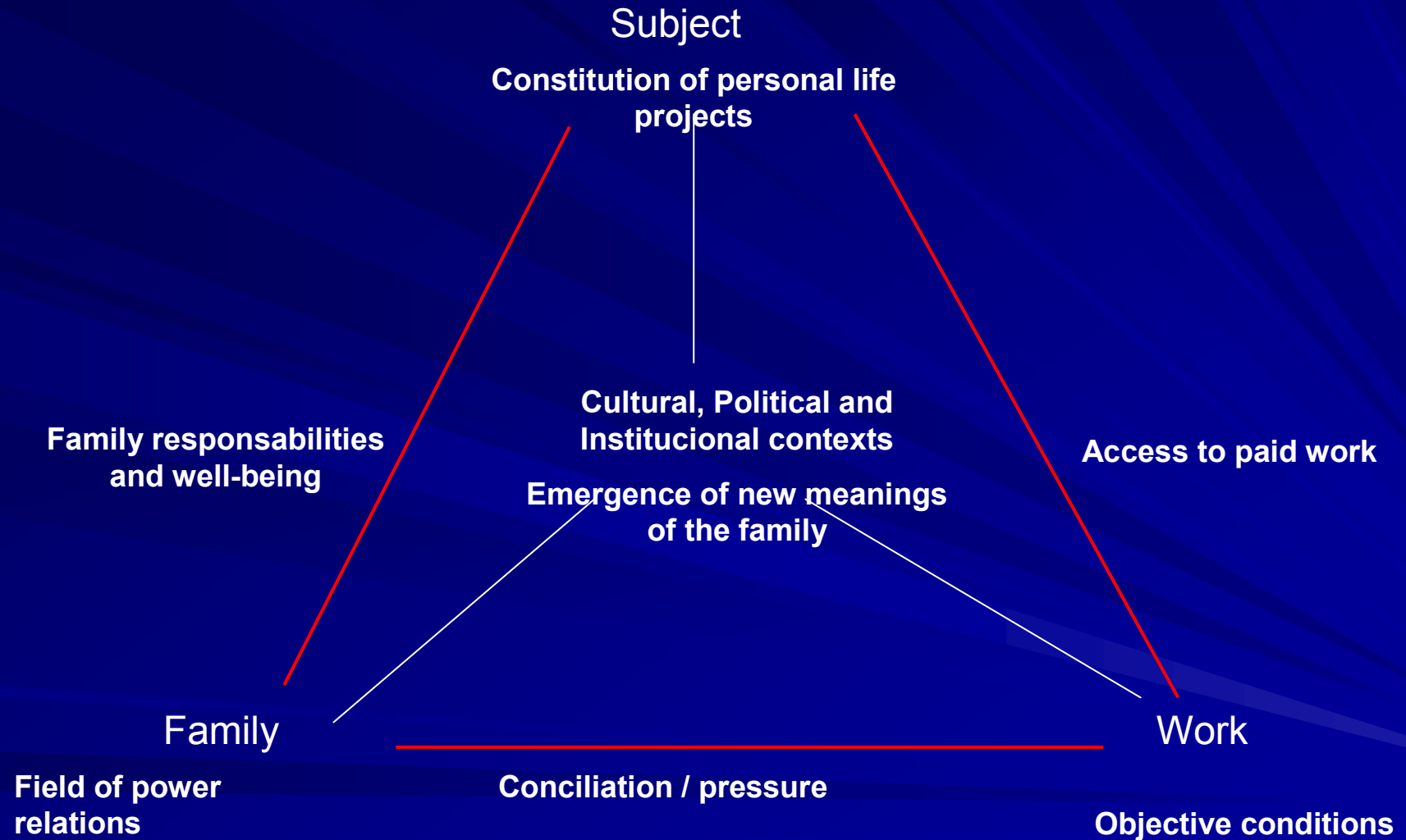
■ **In our research results – from quantitative and qualitative methods - we will try to show for Europe that:**

- Women want to invest in both spheres (work and family). But they find obstacles.
- New meanings of the family for both men and women and for all countries in Europe. Egalitarian perspectives but also ambiguities and difficulties in assuming positions.
- In spite of this general trend, differences by country and by resources (schooling, income).

Analytical strategies...

- To understand differences between countries regarding work-family issues we must account for **structural, institutional, cultural but also the dynamics** of change in a specific country.
- To understand trends and configurations in each, and in all countries, we must mix methods and account for **methodological issues** (formulation of questions, effects of the research contexts).
- To understand work-family conciliation we must perceive work and family as two fundamental dimensions in a process of constitution of **personal life projects**.

Analitical Prism Face: gender and family division of paid and unpaid labour



Mixing Methods

Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ ESS 2002■ ESS 2004■ EB 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ interviews held in Portugal in different regional and social contexts;■ interviews in several countries Austria, UK, Italy, Denmark, Hungary, Portugal, Poland (on going)

Previous and Ongoing Research Projects

■ Social Quality and Changing Relationships between Work, Care and Welfare in Europe (Workcare) – FP6 (ongoing)

Workpackage 4: “Orientations to Work and Care”

Workpackage 5: “Qualitative interviews with households”

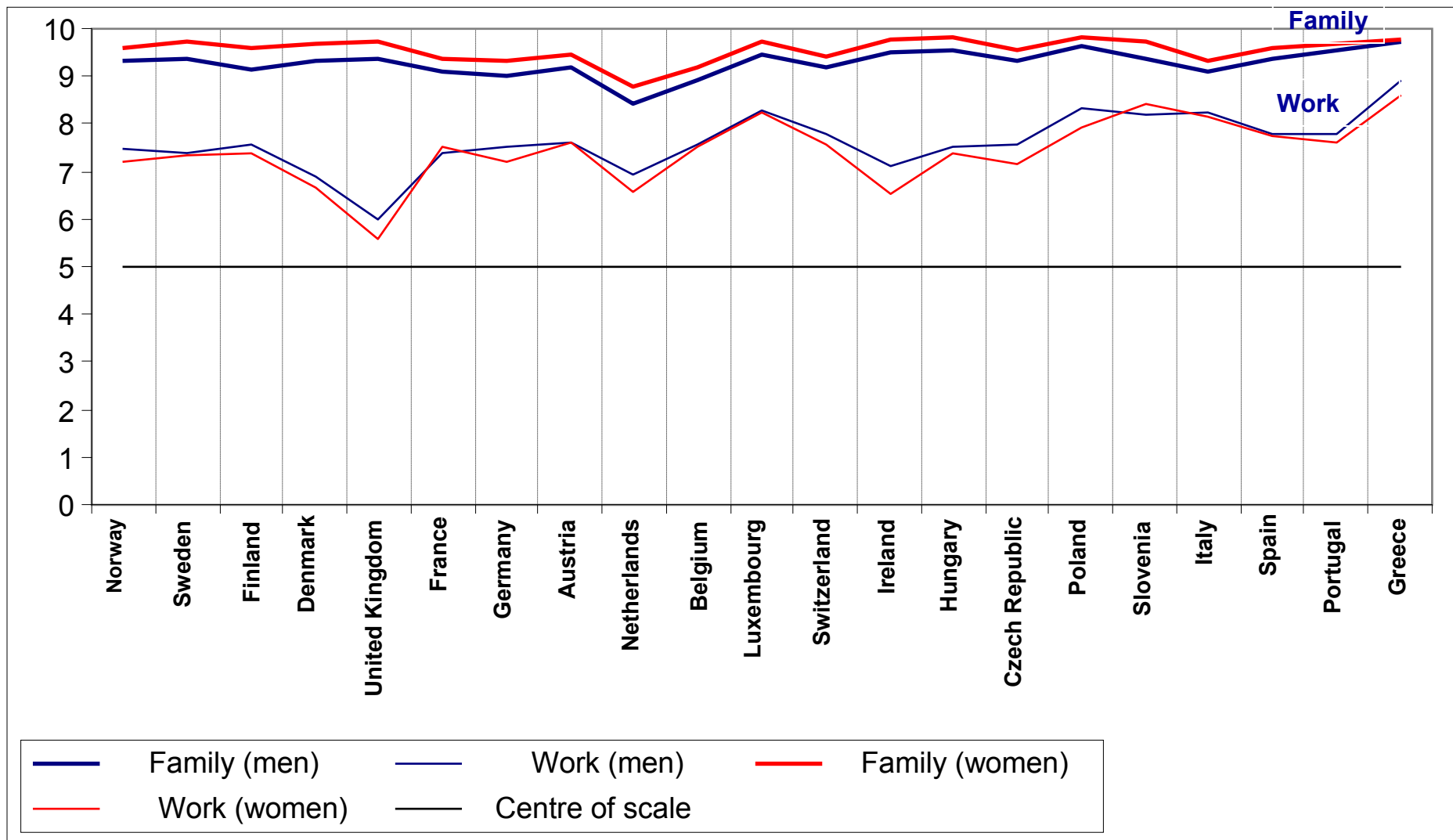
■ Work, Family, Gender Equity and Social Policies: European transformations from a comparative perspective (ongoing)

■ Men and Women between Family and Work in Portugal (2000; 2004); Marital Life and Work (2004)

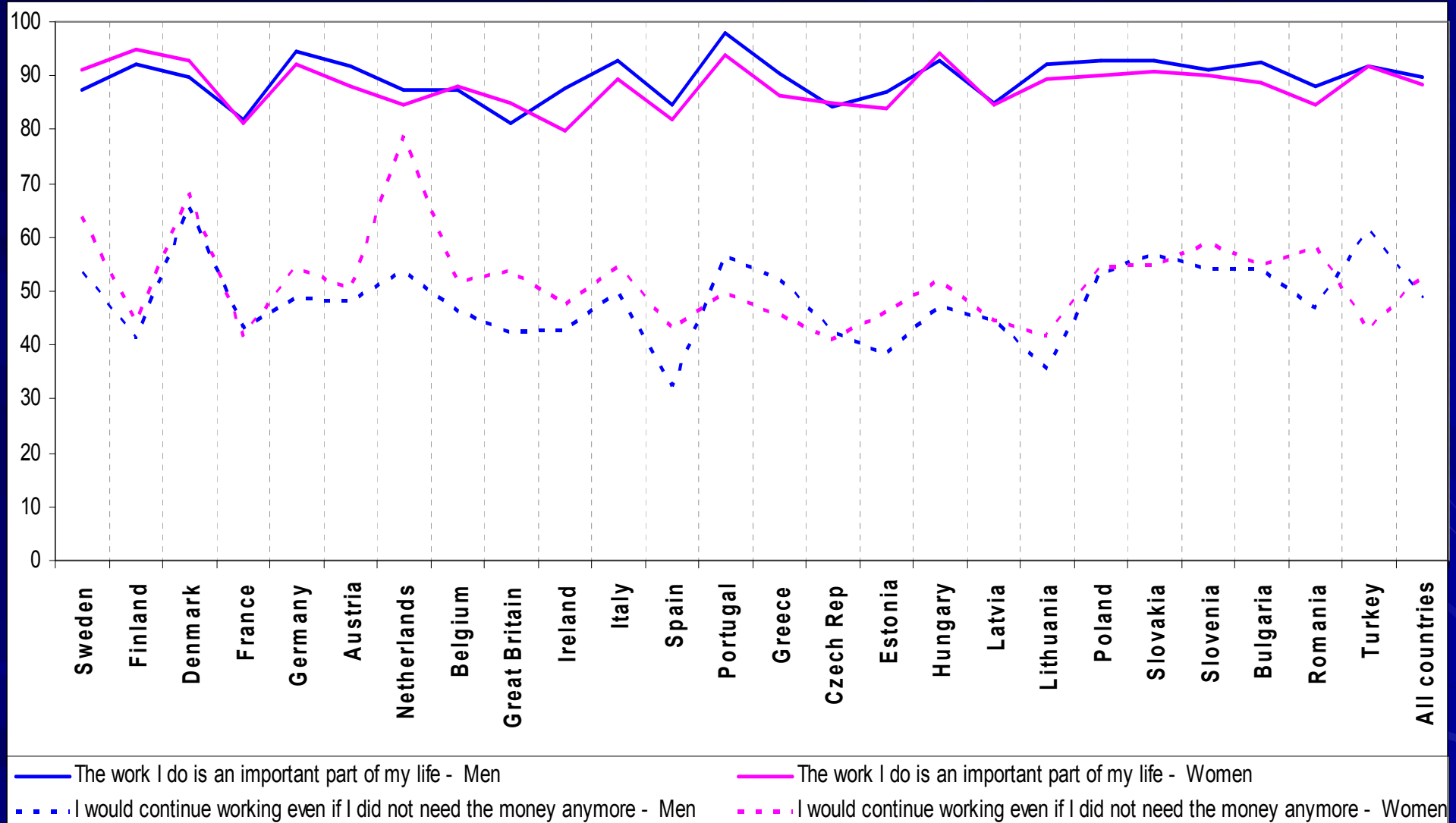
■ First European Quality of Life Survey: Time use and work-life options over the life course (2006, results on print)

2. Main dimensions of a life project: family and work

The importance of family and work in Europe (ESS, 2002)



Work attachment for working men and women (%) 2003



Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

- **Contradicting the stereotypes, women tend to attribute the same importance to work as men do. Work is a value in itself, making part of a feminine social identity, even in countries where there is a lower participation of women in the labour market.**
- **The discrepancies between the sexes are far narrower than the differences between countries. For men to family is important.**
- **In the job seeking, people tend to give much importance to the work-family conciliation that an occupation might offer. In many countries, the conciliation factor is even more important than a good salary (ex: Sweden, Netherlands, UK, Switzerland).**

Qualitative data: portuguese interviews

Positive identification with professional work. Lisbon, Oporto and Leiria

Male

“I like my job too much and sometimes, when someone is very committed, it becomes very incompatible with family. Maybe I should like my job less so that I could give more to my family”

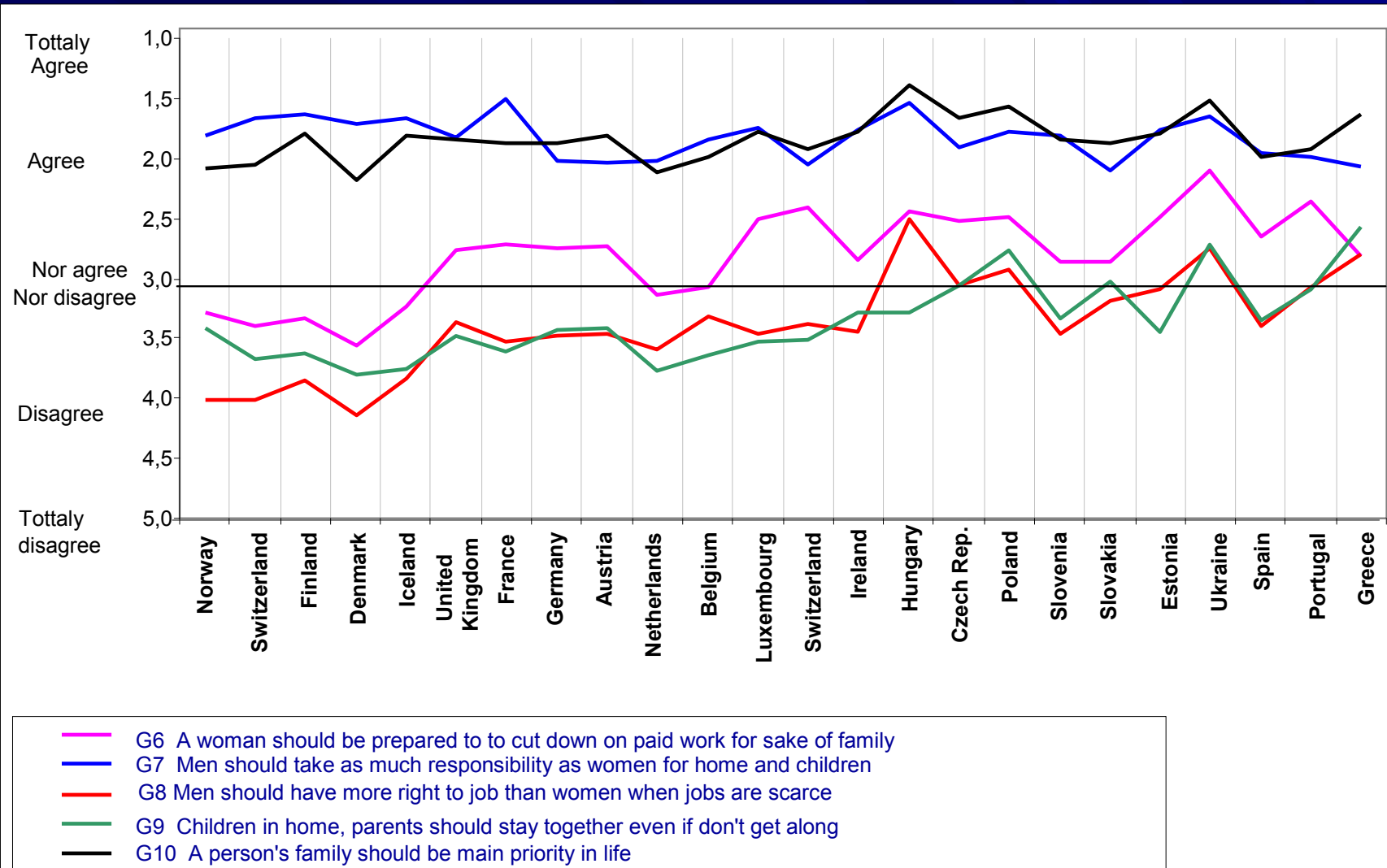
(Diogo Amaral, 28 years, university professor and researcher, Lisbon)

Female

“I think that if I didn't work I was nothing in my life, fortunately I have a job. (...) so we can be a little independent, if it wasn't for that I was not independent, I had to keep going under my husband's will”

(Andreia Gouveia, 43 years, hairdresser, Porto)

3. New meanings of the family in Europe



European Patterns

■ General consensus and very high agreement about:

A person's family should be main priority in life

Men shouldn't take as much responsibility as women for home and children

New meanings of the family. Egalitarian perspective and rejection of a traditional division of men and women's roles in the family.

■ Intermediary (undefined) positions:

A woman should be prepared to cut down on paid work for sake of family's well-being.

47% of the European agree. Marked differences among countries. Scandinavian tend to reject but the majority is near the middle or undefined point (nor agree nor disagree) or tends to the agreement.

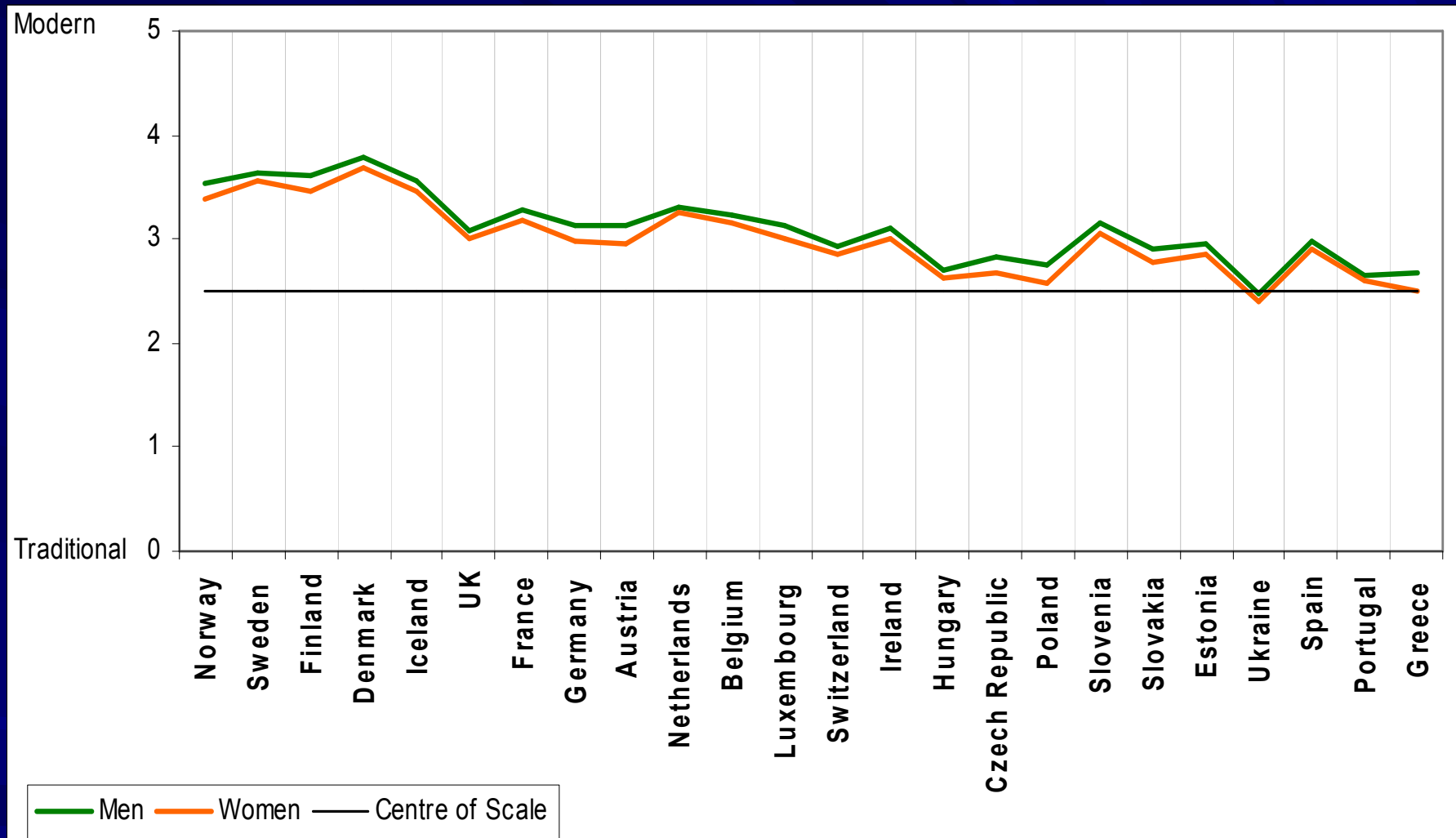
■ Rejection

Men should have more right to job than women when jobs are scarce.

Children in home, parents should stay together even if don't get along.

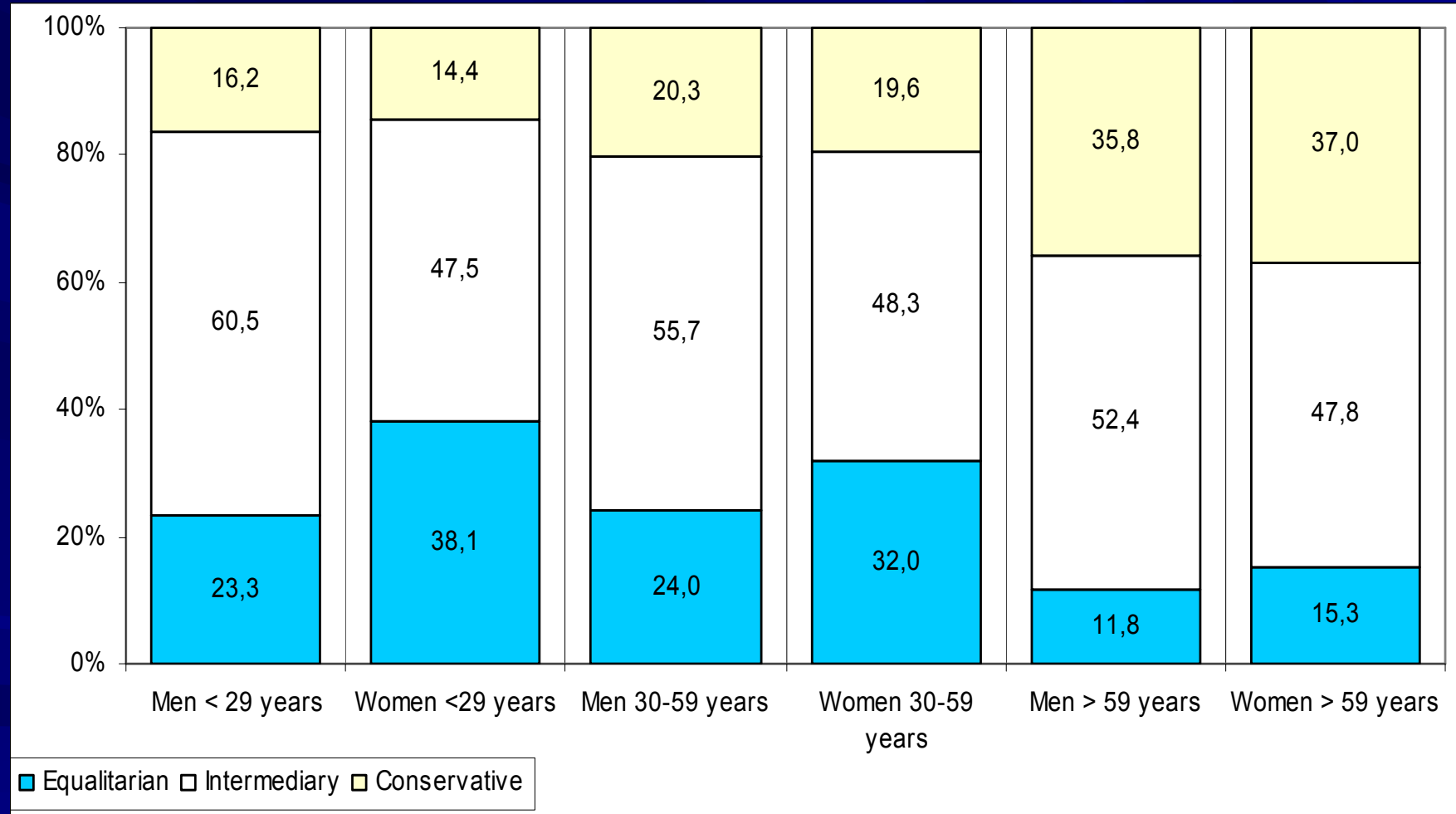
The sacrifice of the female professional work in favour of men is rejected by the majority (52,9%). The idea of the indissolubility of marriage due to the existence of children is also, globally, rejected (52,2%). Distinction between countries. Scandinavian express a much clear position (of rejection), while the others have more difficulty in standing for or against the statements.

Gender roles in the family index

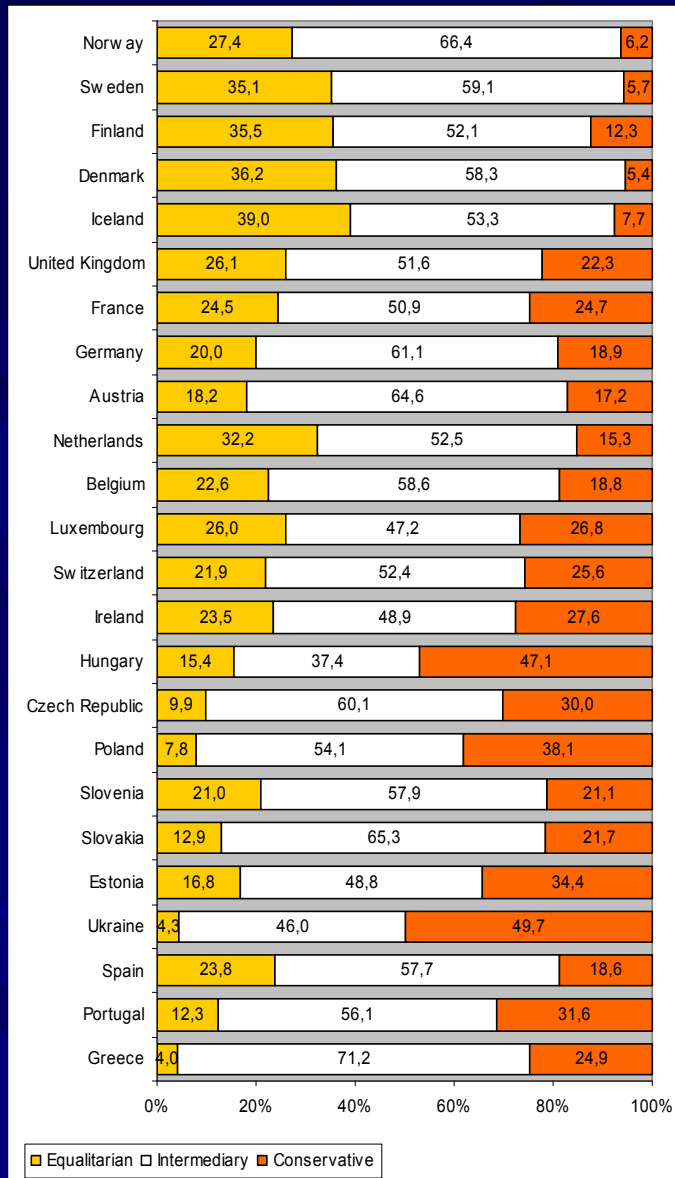


Sythetic index of gender roles in the family: **g6**: Woman should be prepared to cut down on paid work for sake of family; **g7**: Men shouldn't take as much responsibility as women for home and children; **g8**: Men should have more right to job than women when jobs are scarce; **g9**: Children in home, parents should stay together even if don't get along

New meanings of the family by sex and age in Europe

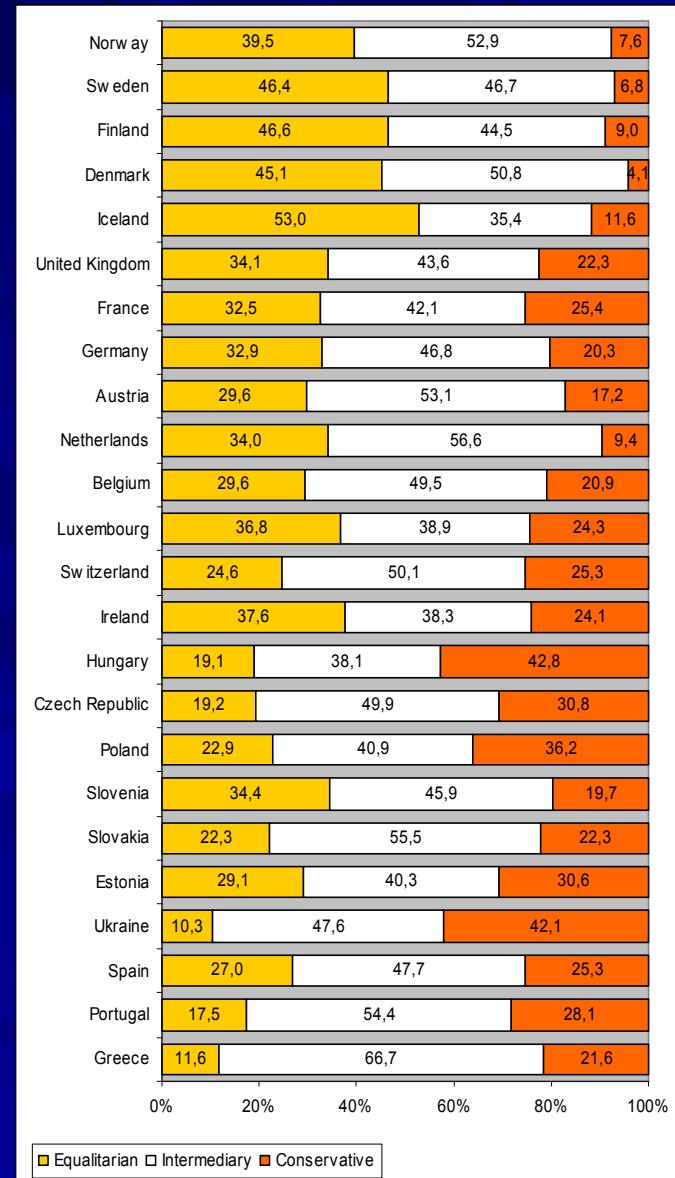


Men



ESS 2004

Women



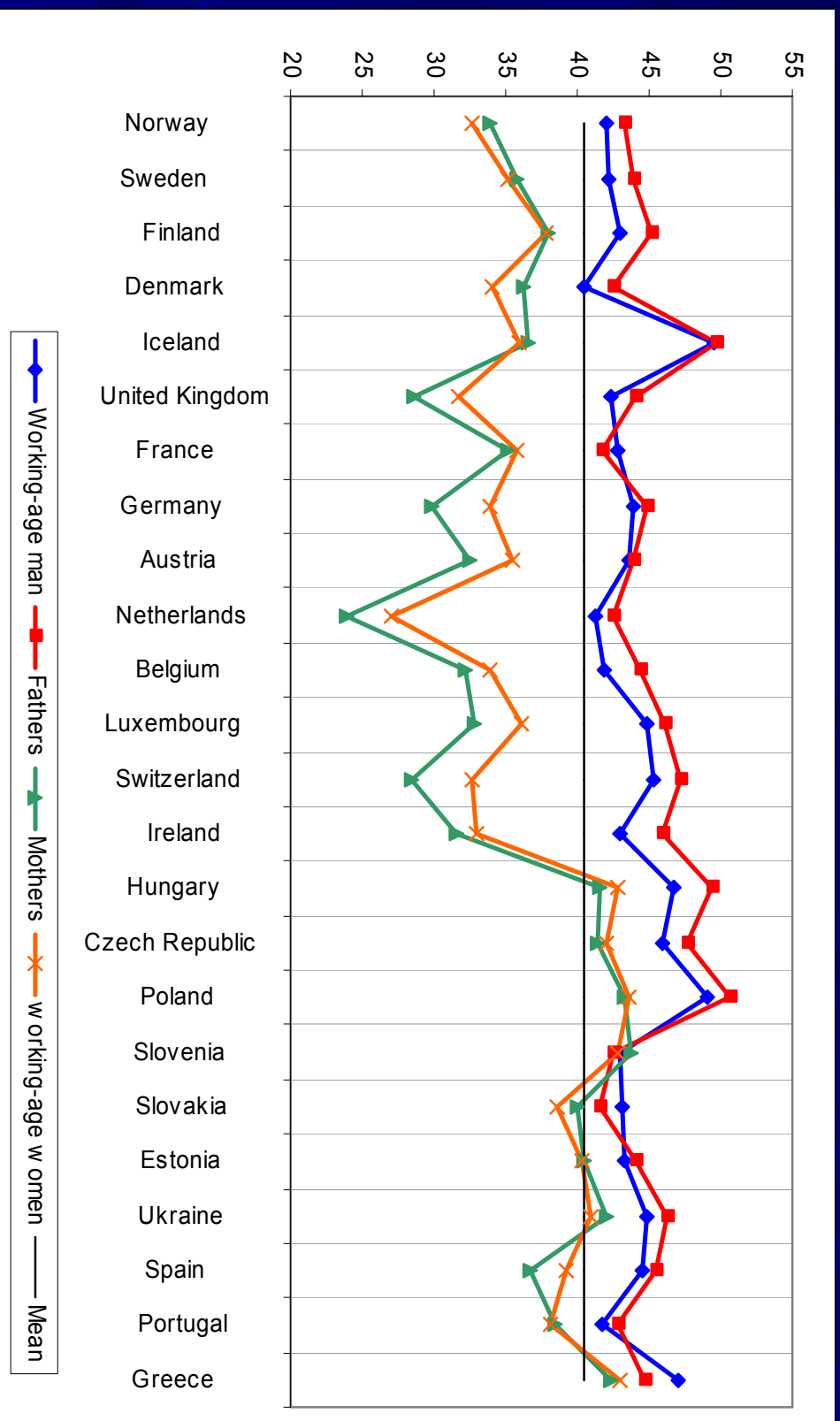
ESS 2004

- The intermediary position is the dominant one
- Women are always more egalitarian than men (but Hungary, Poland and Ukraine present a relative high percentage of conservative women)
- Older people tend to be more conservative than younger people
- Nordic countries have higher percentages of egalitarian individuals

- Methodological questioning:
 - Different ways of asking questions produce different answers. Questions addressed with a gender neutral perspective will be answered according to personal projects and wishes. When gender roles are directly at stake the answers tend to be filtered by gender stereotypes.

4. Integration in the labour market

Hours worked weekly by working age men and women, fathers and mothers with children under the age of 12



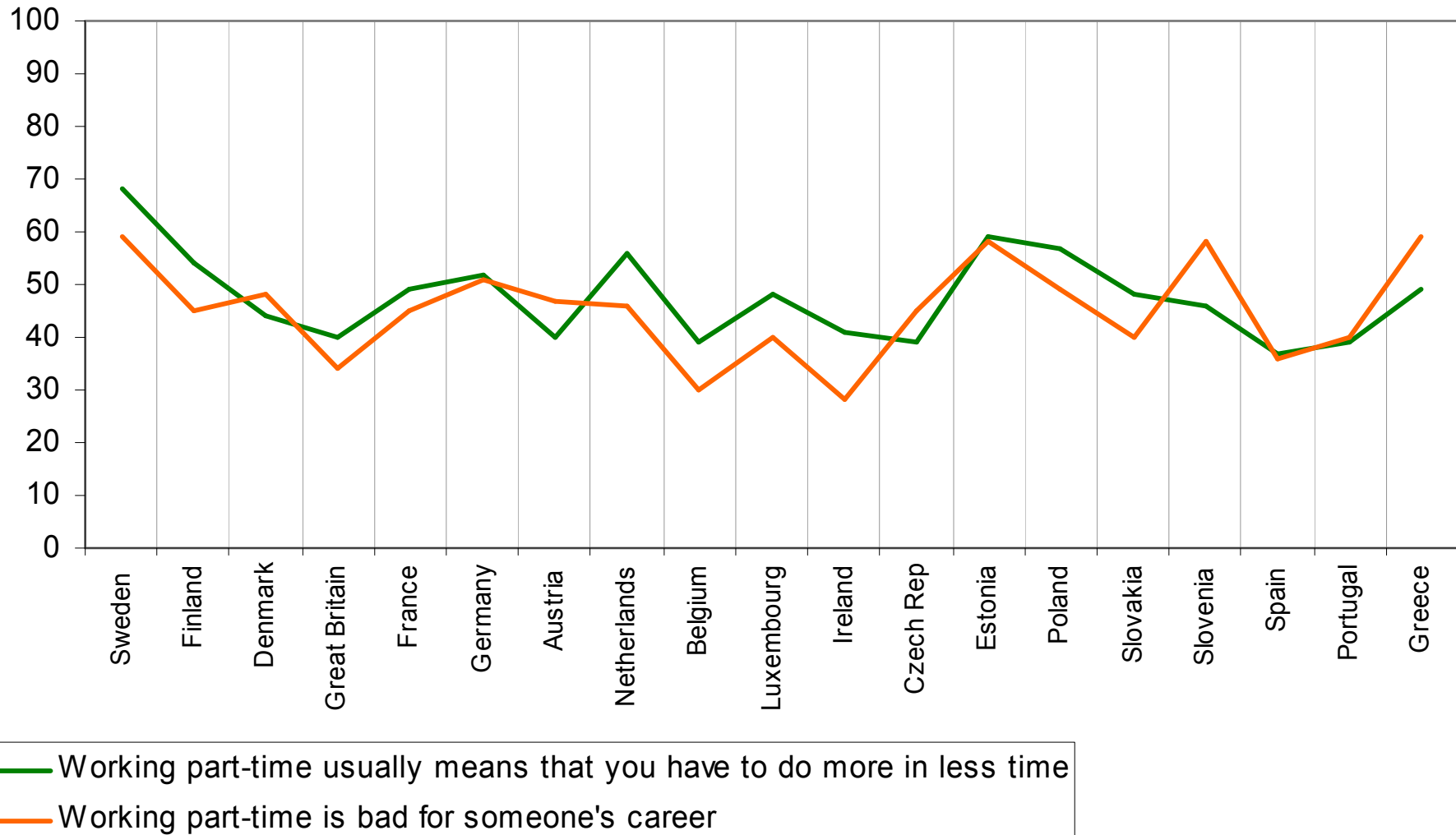
- **Clear female presence on the labour market**, the great majority of the countries registering more than 50% of participation.
- Scandinavian and Northern European women have higher labour market participation though with rates, on average, lower than men. Other countries – South and East Europe - present low figures of female activity but high number of hours of work for men and also for women. Only in the Netherlands, the UK and in Switzerland female part-time among mothers is high.
- In fact, there is a **critical perspective towards part-time solutions**. Both men and women express a negative opinion about this type of working arrangement.
- **Lack of money is the main reason for not reducing time spent working.**
A high percentage of men (68%) and women (65%) state that they would like to reduce the time spent working, but they need the money they earn. This view is expressed both by parents and childless persons.[EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003]

Qualitative data from the interviews held in Portugal, also reveal this rejection of part-time jobs:

“I feel partially fulfilled; working with elderly is very interesting. Generally, I’m satisfied. But I would like to work full time, and then I could develop a better job. (...:)”

(Márcia Barbosa, 34 years, mother of a child of 2, director of an elderly care facility)

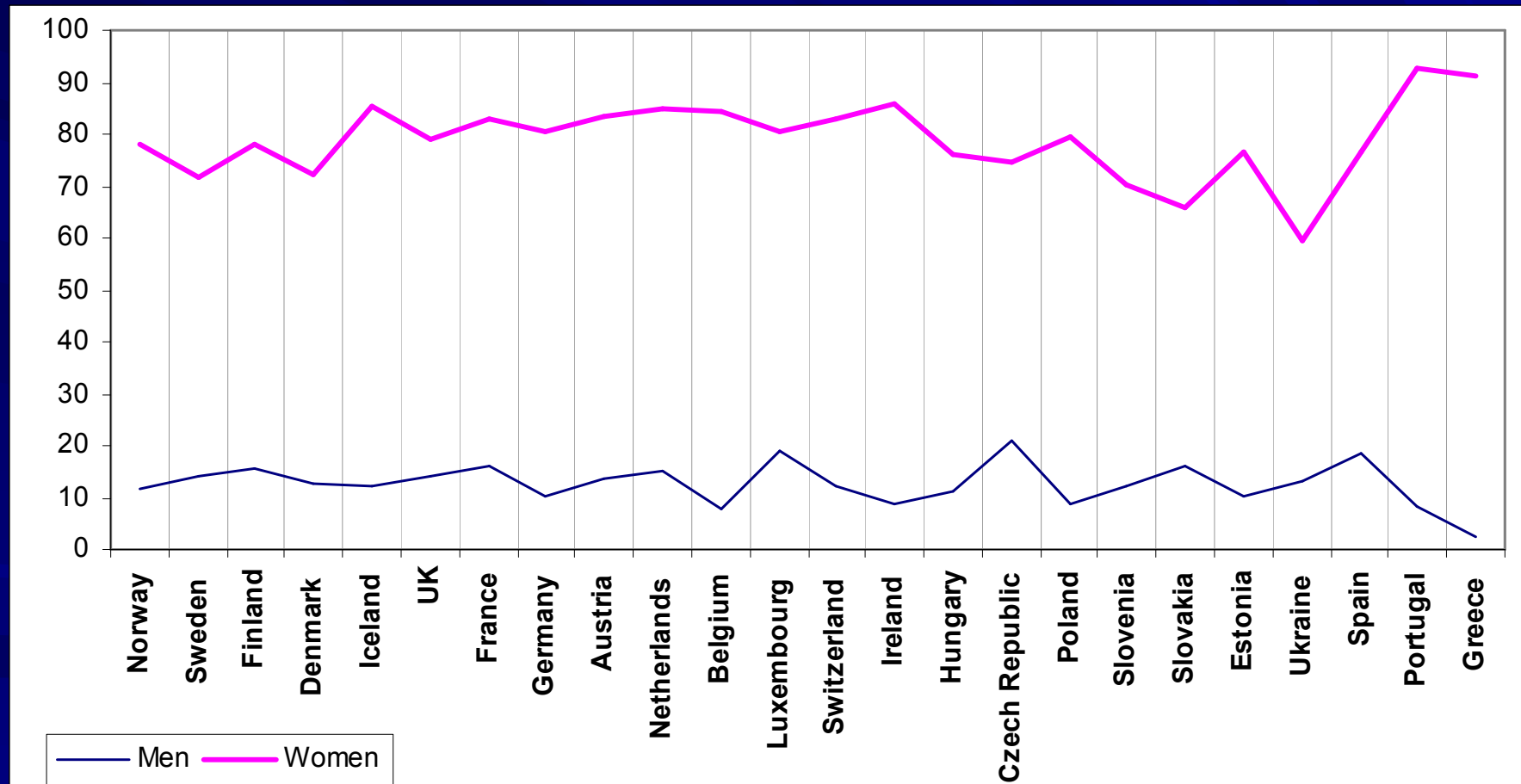
Opinion about part-time jobs: european overview



Source: Time use and work-life options over the life course (2006)

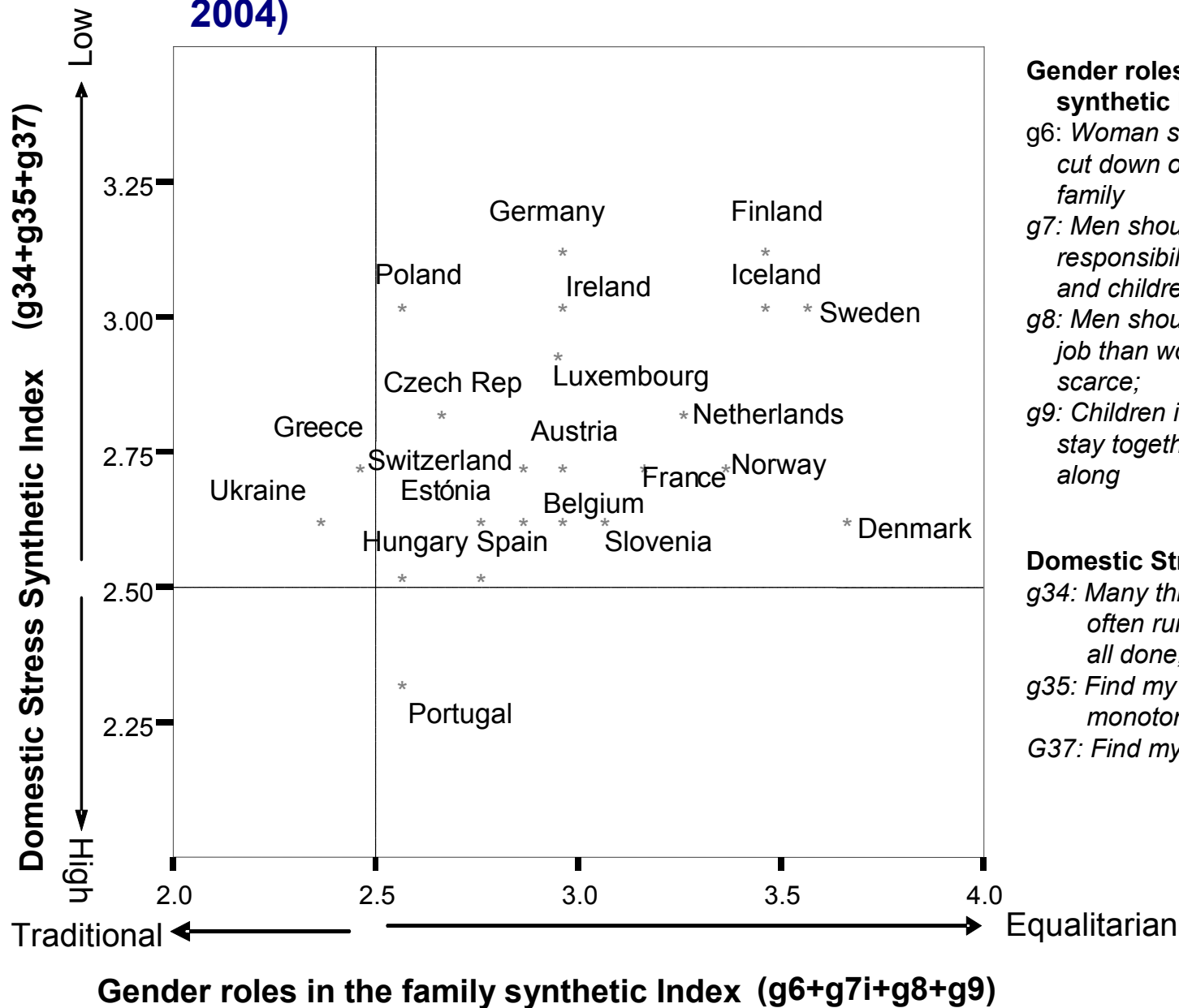
5. Domestic tasks

People saying that they spend more than a half of the total time spent by the household in the domestic tasks*



* In a normal week day. Couples which both members work

Domestic stress and gender roles in the family (ESS, 2004)



*scale: 1=Agree strongly; 5=Disagree strongly

Qualitative data – portuguese interviews

Main Trends of Couple division of unpaid work: Lisbon, Oporto and Leiria

Inequality and traditional division of unpaid work:

- Overload of female work
- Double burden (women integrated in the labour market and responsible for domestic tasks)
- ‘Intensive’ double burden in contexts of part-time professional integration
- Incorporation of traditional gender roles in the family: “It’s a woman’s duty”. Much more clear in Porto and Leiria than in Lisbon.

Egalitarian – higher levels of resources (schooling and income):

- Housekeeper provides a more equalitarian division of unpaid work.
- Gender egalitarian ideal

Traditional modified – lower levels of resources (Schooling and income):

- Traditionalist perspectives over gender roles in the family
- But more cooperation between spouses. Couple division of unpaid work based in objective conditions of existence

Generation gap:

- Younger people and more qualified tend to be more gender egalitarian

- *“Can I manage both things? Of course it’s nerve-racking on weekends, in stead of being resting, the need to clean the house. Now, I’m feeling good about work, about earning money, feeling useful. At home, I feel good about my family, my stuffs. (...) And of course men ended up in a different position. He wants to watch football, he watches football, but if I want to watch the soap-opera he won’t let me, because he doesn’t’ like it. Men, for being men, and because they don’t know how to do it... (...) He wakes up in the morning and comes home in the evening, and because I just get up in the middle of the morning, he thinks I’m in a better position, I sleep more hours.”*

(Marília Rodrigues, 26 years old, post office attendance)

Satisfaction with the various spheres of life, by life course and sex(%)

	Childless Until 35		Pré-school/ School children		Childless 36-50		Childless > 50		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Hours spent on paid work	69	69	65	73	69	67	70	73	68	70
Hours spent on household tasks	61	65	66	61	68	64	68	71	65	64
Hours spent on training, studies, courses ^[1]	66	66	66	67	73	71	71	74	68	69
Division of household tasks ^[2]	87	79	86	69	89	68	89	74	87	71
Own free time	73	65	59	53	68	59	74	67	67	60
Financial situation	56	53	54	54	57	52	63	58	57	54

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

^[1] As this option was not applicable for a significant number of respondents we analysed only the valid cases.

^[2] As this option was not applicable for a significant number of respondents we analysed only the valid cases

- Contradictions between discourse and practice
 - Coexistence of the new egalitarian perspective of the family and the old gender relations in the family
 - Women assume the domestic tasks overburden

- The majority of the countries present a tendency for an egalitarian perspective of the family and low levels of domestic stress. Portugal assumes a solitary position, with the higher level of domestic stress.

- ***Wide cross-country distinctions, persistent gender gaps and some variations over the life course:***
 - Gender gap about the ‘satisfaction with the division of household tasks’ - women, in all life course stages, but above all women with children, are much less satisfied than men.

6. Final conclusions and general trends

Work as a dimension of social identity for all.

Women “prefer” to work professionally.

New meanings of the family. Valuing family on a more modern, open and egalitarian mode. Clear desire of more involvement of men in the family.

Labour market participation of working mothers.

Though men have more hours of work, women are very close. Real part-time jobs (with half of the hours) are the exception in Europe: Netherlands, UK and Switzerland. And they are not desired as a good combination between work and family (you have to do the same in less hours...)

Men don't do the majority of the housework, nor care. The difference between men's and women's hours of work – accounting for paid and unpaid work – is unfavourable for women.

Women want to invest in both fronts, family and work. But in the majority of the countries they have to pay a price for maintaining both investments. Overload, not having a career, guilt feelings, unfulfilled identities.

The more egalitarian gender role values the less domestic stress.

Differences among countries.

The parsonian model for the middle class – women at home men at work – is no longer sustained. New meanings, equality as a clear ideal, more involvement of men in the family is clearly desired.

But ...

- Men tend to assume more “professional” responsibilities” for themselves (masculinity hegemony). Women do the symmetrical thing about the family. In spite of the end of the *parsonian* division we still feel the signs of the incorporation of that model.
- It is not, however, out of “preferences”. In Europe, in the big majority of the countries, men and women, but more women than men, tend to “prefer” equality. They seem, though, constrained in their practises. The main raison for not wanting to reduce working time is...lack of money...
- The new general trends. But there are differences among countries and within countries. More variety of models and of different arrangements

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