

ISA - ISCSP

Lisbon | 9 – 13 September 2008

Renegotiating gender relations in the scenario of work and family life

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- Family relations suffered a deep transformation process in the last 40 years of the XX century:
 - Individualization
 - Growing claim for gender equality
 - Sentimentalization
 - Secularization

- **Does these transformations mean less valorisation of the family?**

- **Are there new meanings in family interactions?**

- **Are these meanings related to contextual constraints?**

- **What do men and women want?**

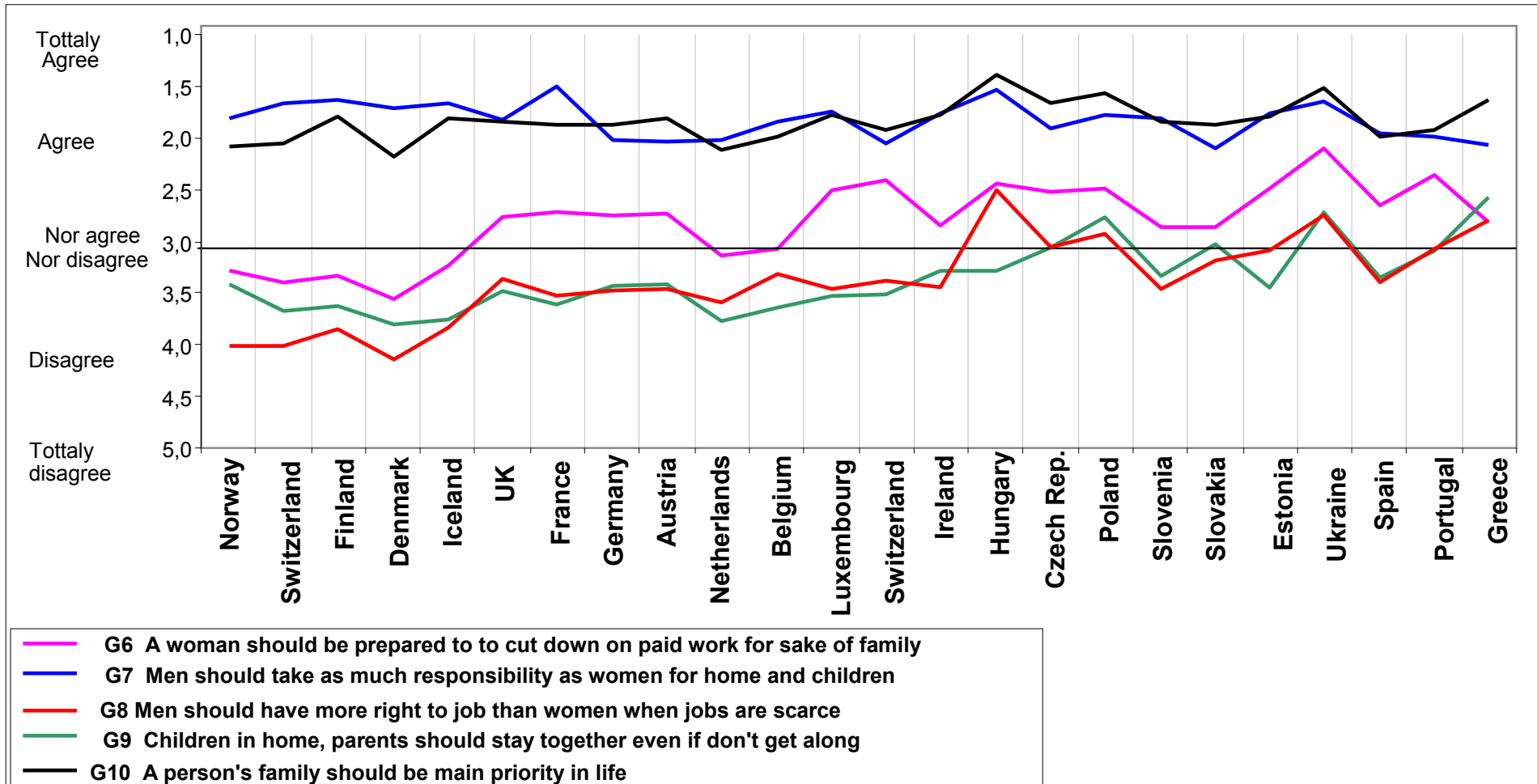
Bearing in mind that men and women are alike in the establishment of their life projects and share the commitment towards work, we might expect that, in terms of family roles, women may adopt more conservative perspectives and tend to assume for themselves the duty of family care, specially when mothers' activity is at stake, at least in some groups of countries, depending on the cultural background

Hypothesis tested:

Women's orientations towards work will vary less among countries than orientations to care. In some countries, orientations towards work can be modern but orientations to care can be traditional.

New meanings of the family

(means)



Source: Ess, round2, 2004

Consensus

Priority given to family and demand of gender parity in family responsibilities

Rejection

Sacrifice of female professional work in favour of men; indissolubility of marriage due to the existence of children

-- Egalitarian perspective --

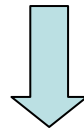
-However.... prevailing ambiguous positioning

Same indicators

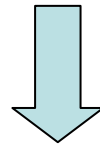
A woman should be prepared to cut down on paid work for sake of family
Men should take as much responsibility as women for home and children
Men should have more right to job than women when jobs are scarce
A person's family should be main priority in life



Gender roles Index



Two Step Cluster



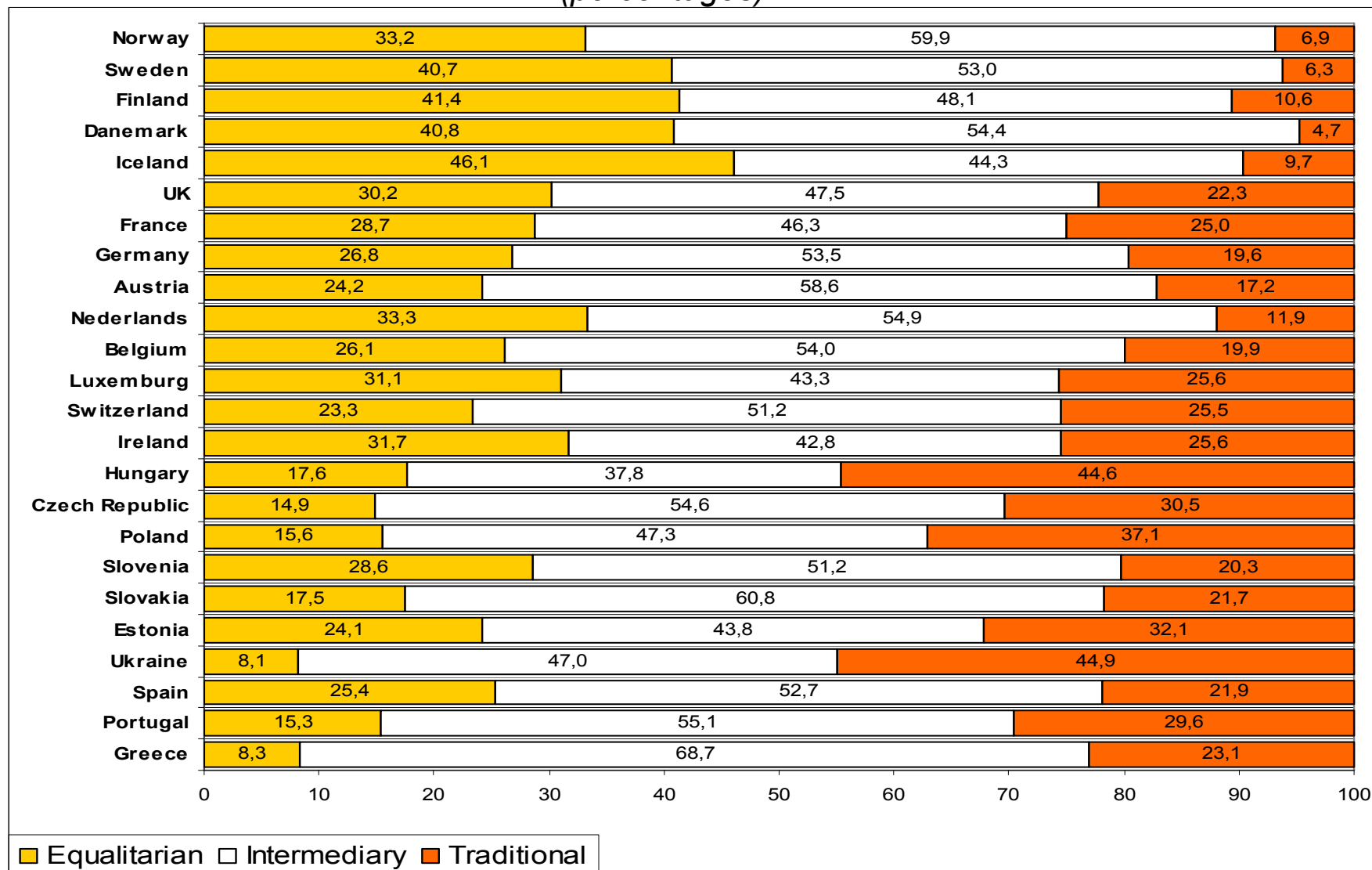
Three groups:

Egalitarian, Intermediary and Traditional

Doing analysis at an individual scale – two step cluster

Egalitarian, Intermediary and Traditional positions by country

(percentages)



Source: ESS2, 2004

The intermediary positions is the dominant one

In a cross country perspective

In a gender perspective

Nordic countries have higher percentages of egalitarian individuals

Iceland (46,1%),
Finland (41,4%),
Denmark (40,8%),
Sweden (40,7%),
Norway (33,2%)

Women are more egalitarian than men

Exceptions have to be made for:

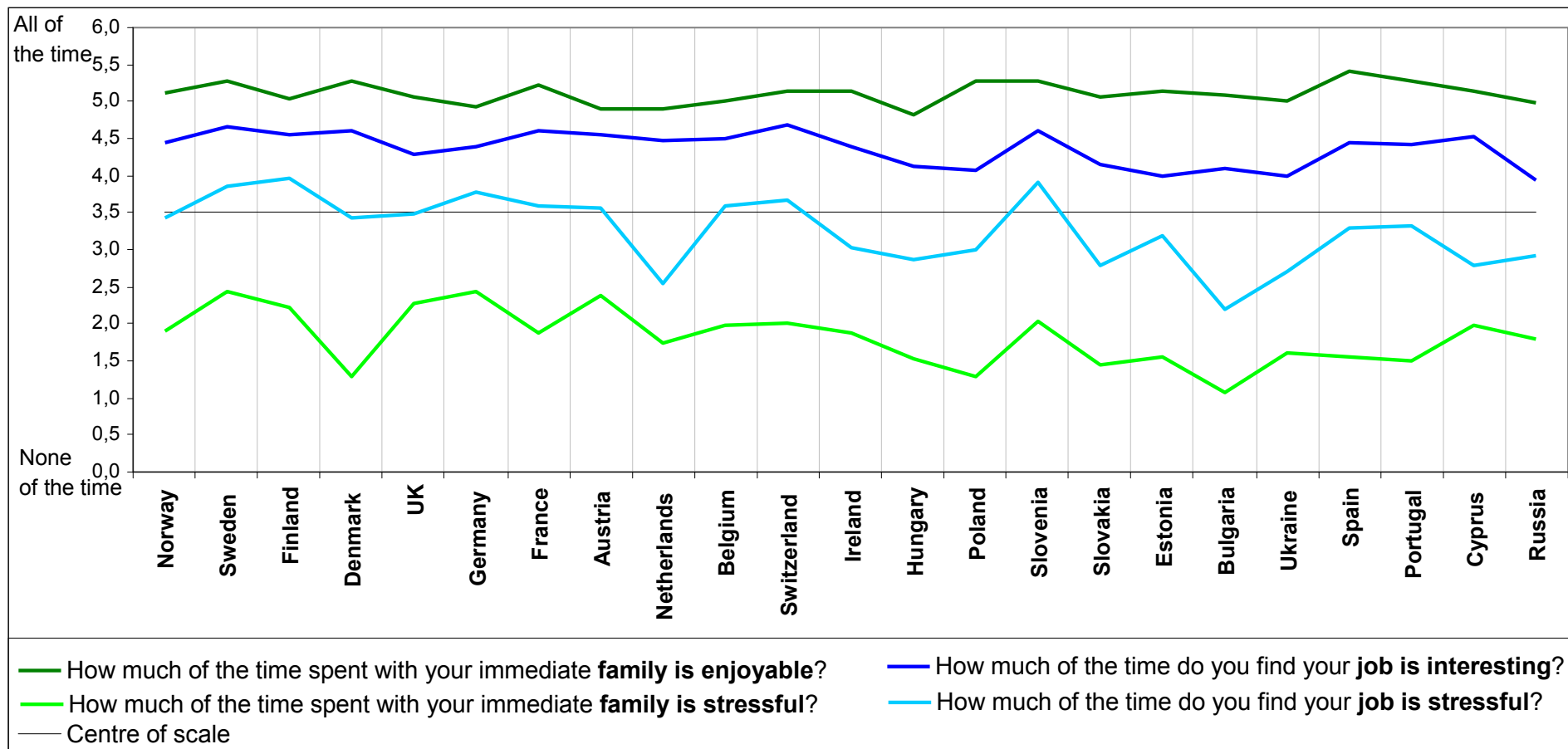
Hungary (42,8%),
Ukraine (42,1%)
Poland (36,2%)

These countries show relatively high percentages of traditional women

Assessing women's attitudes....

Women's opinion about work and family

(means)

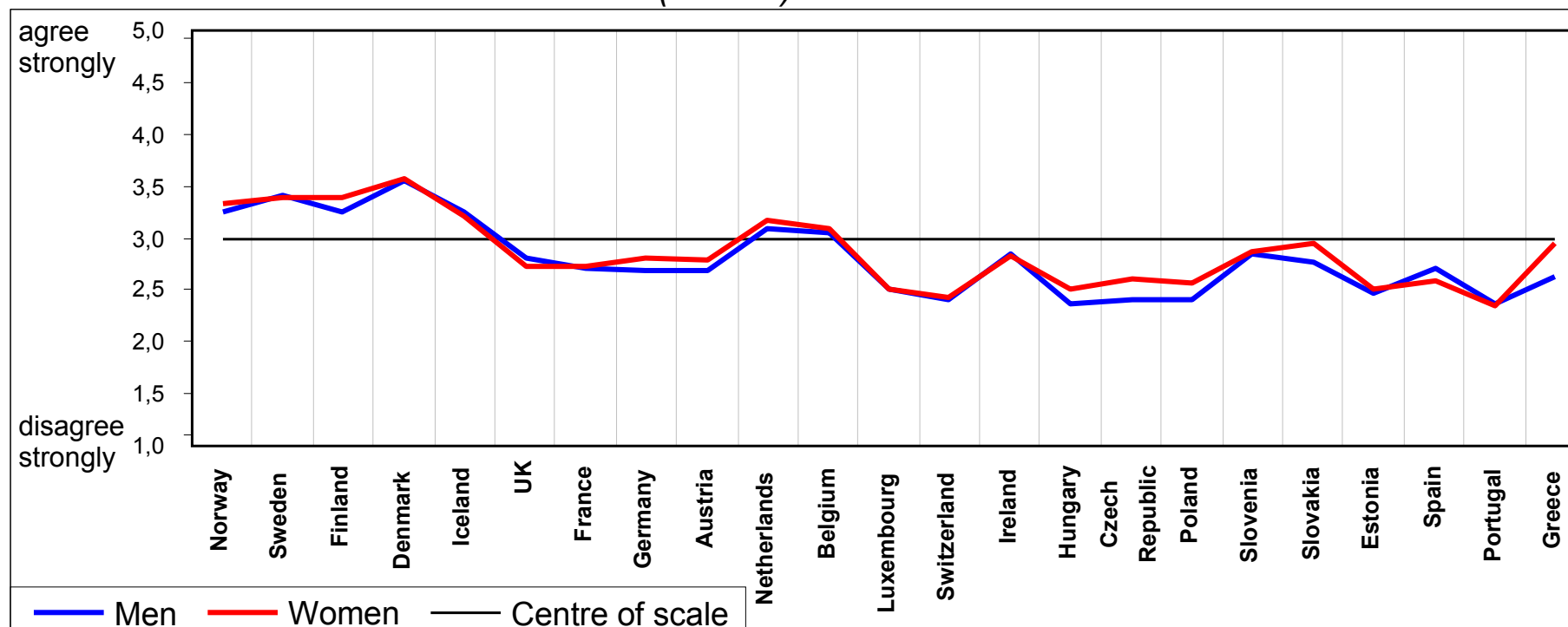


Source: Ess, round3, 2006

- Family is perceived as source of well-being and the stress felt in familial context is undervalued. This happens in a very consensual way across Europe.
- European tend to be more critical about the time spent working than they are about family.
- This doesn't necessarily mean the acceptance of the sacrifice of a professional life or career (strong disagreement with the priority of men in the labour market - obviously true in some countries more than others).

Women's answers are very discrepant, which means that in some countries they position themselves in favour of the statement and in others they react against it, reflecting different cultural and institutional contexts:

A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family
(means)



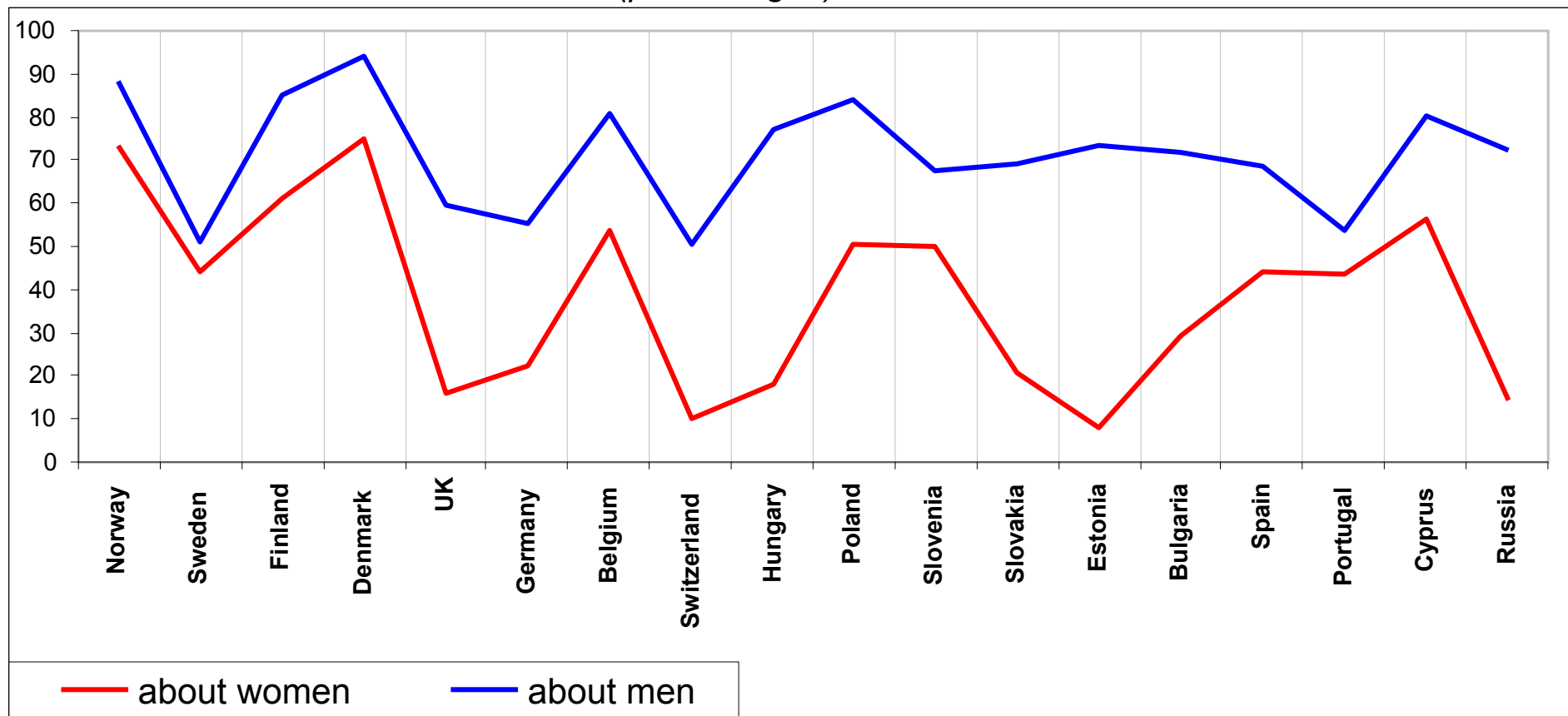
Source: Ess, round2, 2004

When gender roles are at stake...

- Women's answers are very discrepant, which means that in some countries they position themselves in favour of the statement and in others they react against it, reflecting different cultural and institutional contexts.
- In line with what we observed before, Nordic countries show a more clear position towards disagreement, while Eastern and southern European countries tend to agree with the statement, showing a more traditional profile about gender roles.

The approval of full-time job arrangements in early parenthood can be considered a modern attitude if defended equally for both men and women, as an expression of parity in labour market participation.

Have a full-time job while she/he has children aged under 3 (approve + strongly approve)
(percentages)

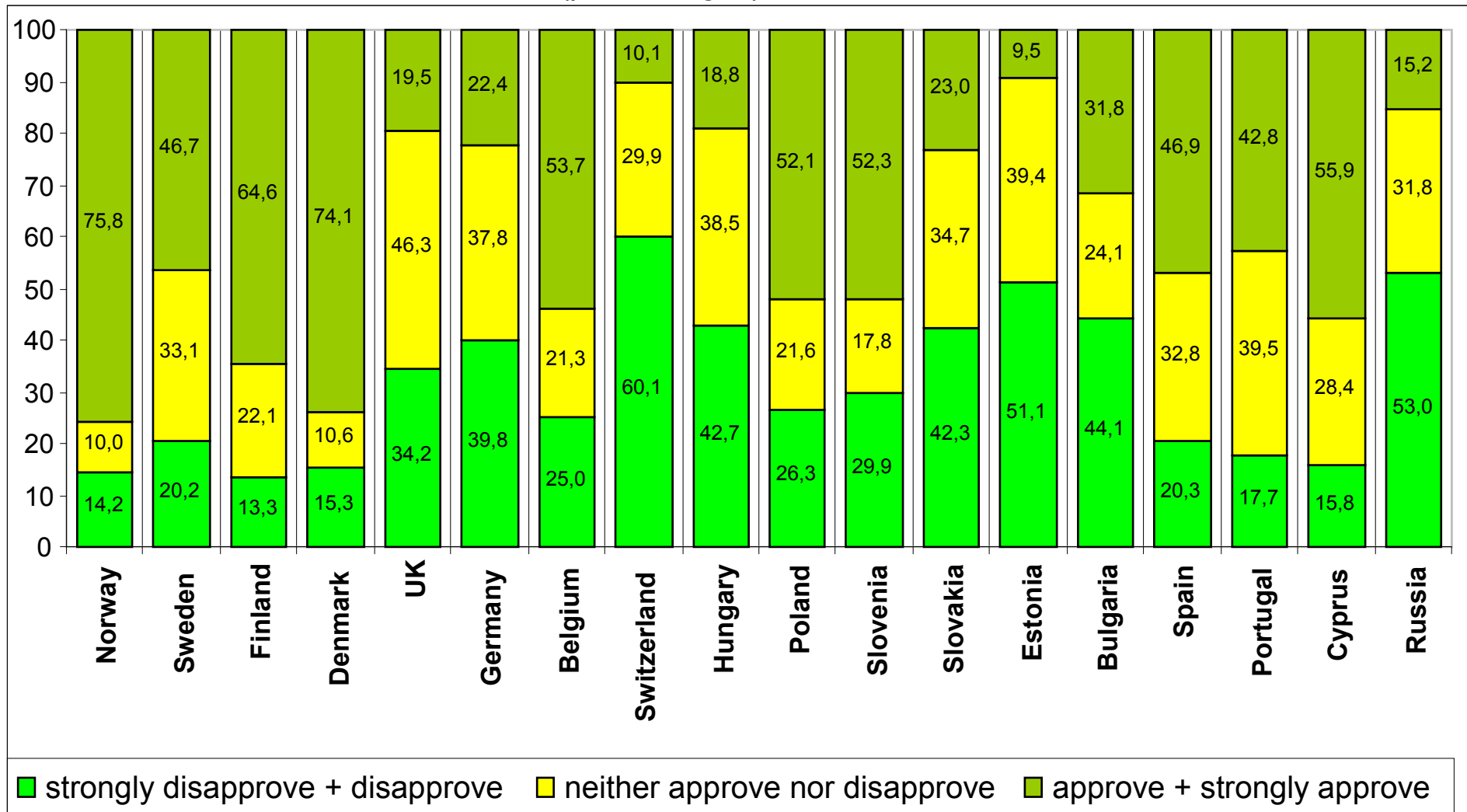


Source: Ess, round3, 2006

Generally for Europeans is easier to approve a full time job when having a children under 3 years of age for men than for women

But how women evaluate themselves?

Have a full-time job while she has children aged under 3 (women about women)
(percentages)



Source: Ess, round3, 2006

Mainly approve – Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark

Mainly disapprove – UK, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia, Estonia, Russia

- These differences among European countries can be rooted in cultural factors and gender roles ideologies. For instance, a maternalist stance – the inescapable importance of women and mothers for childcare - can be the justification for the apparently conservative positioning of United Kingdom, Germany and Switzerland.
- Secondly, we must be attentive to the way the question is asked, avoiding misinterpretations. Europeans don't say that women shouldn't work at all; they are just evaluating the full time job situation. This opens up for other possibilities of arrangement between paid work and care of children, and don't necessarily mean sending women back home.
- These country differences, besides reporting attitude discrepancies, may also be due to differences on the extension of childcare political measures (the influence of cultural and structural constraints).

Interpreting contextual constraints

Multiple Regression

Dependent variable: a job which allowed to combine work and family responsibilities

	Sweden	United Kingdom	France	Austria	Netherlands	Czech Rep.	Spain	Portugal	Greece
Adjusted R²	,073	,093	,055	,058	,109	,043	,038	,029	,025
Years Education Completed	-	-	,060*	,069*	,110***	-	,095*	,113**	,127***
Income	-	-	-	-,093*	-	-	-	-,129***	-,112***
Sex ^a	,053*	,169***	,149***	,097*	,136***	,129***	,104**	,081*	,091**
Working hours (week)	-	-	-	-	-,096*	-	-	-	-
Household Type									
Living alone	-	-	-	-	-,086*	-,096*	-	-,091*	-
Chidless Couple	-	,096*	,183***	-	,131*	-	-	-	-
Couple with children	,254***	,228***	,277***	,089*	,208***	,111*	,094*	-	-
Lone parent	-	,154***	-	-	,147***	-	-	-	-

* $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,001$; *** $p < 0,0001$.
^a dummy variable: 0=men, 1=women
^b dummy variable: reference: "Other"

Source: ESS 2004

For almost all countries the presence of children has a great impact on the importance given to the conciliation factor.

However, in Southern countries education and income are factors with more importance to the variation of the dependent variable than the “household type”.

People earning lower salaries tend to value more the conciliation element when job seeking.

Sex is an important predictor in all countries. Women tend to value the opportunity of work-family conciliation more than men.

Conclusions

- It is confirmed the hypotheses that across the European countries women's orientations to care tend to vary more than women's orientations to work.
- As we have seen, every time the social female role – particularly mother's – is directly at stake the positions of women tend to diverge more between countries, than in other questions, posed in a more general way – namely those related to work (satisfaction with present job, interesting job, enjoyable family time).
- The fact that Nordic women tend always to assume a different (more egalitarian) position from their European counterparts highlights the idea that orientations to family (by women) tend to vary in a cross country comparison.

- We cannot confirm the second part of our hypothesis because the fact that women may agree with the idea that women should be prepared to reduce their working time in the name of family, may not necessarily mean a traditional attitude, but simply the assertion of what they observe around them
 - Particular conditions - political packages and childcare facilities coverage for instance – objectively differentiate and influence their perception of reality.
- Despite women always assume more egalitarian positions than men, answers tend to be more ambiguous and less reflective of an egalitarian perspective, the diversity of the answers being determined by the cultural and institutional constraints, of the different countries.