

ES
RA

European Survey Research Association



An ethnographical look at survey questions.

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Based on the experience of comparative analysis with several international surveys, and combining both methodological and substantive analysis we propose the idea:

An Ethnographic look at survey questions.

1. A good descriptive analysis of the data is necessary before using multivariate analysis. NAND (Neither Agree Nor Disagree) choice is very frequently a modal answer.

2. Attention to the phrasing of the questions:

-Again, NAND choice may be the answer meaning just an uncomfortable question.

- And, different ways of asking questions produce different answers. Neutral questions vs “appealing” stereotypes.

3. Insist on replication (whenever possible). Don't jump into conclusions too soon! The relevance of analysing questions diachronically, the advantage of the European Social Survey.

- Knowing that comparing country means may produce serious bias, in this presentation we nevertheless use it only to underlie the relevance of descriptive analysis before using multivariate analysis.
- Our methodological stand stresses also the need to control critically the different moments of the research path against all automatisms.

1. Descriptive analysis of the data is necessary before using multivariate analysis.

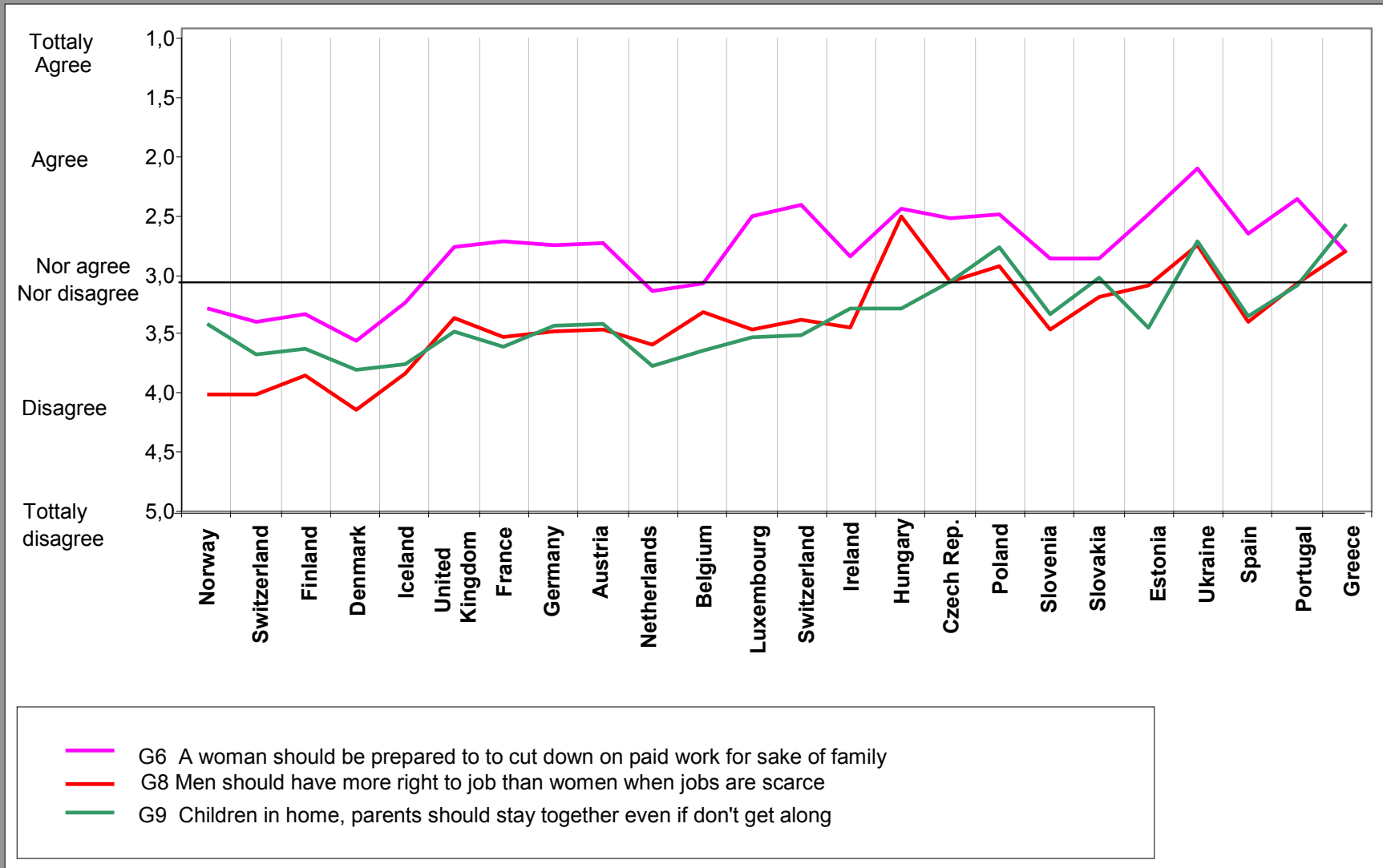
NAND (Nor Agree Nor Disagree) choice is very frequently a modal answer.

	DS	D	NA/ND	A	AS	Mean
Raising children is, in general more rewarding for a woman than a successful career	2.6	17.3	44.9	28.2	6.1	3.21

For many women to be housekeeper is an attractive alternative to professional stress	4.3	17.9	42.2	30.0	4.6	3.17
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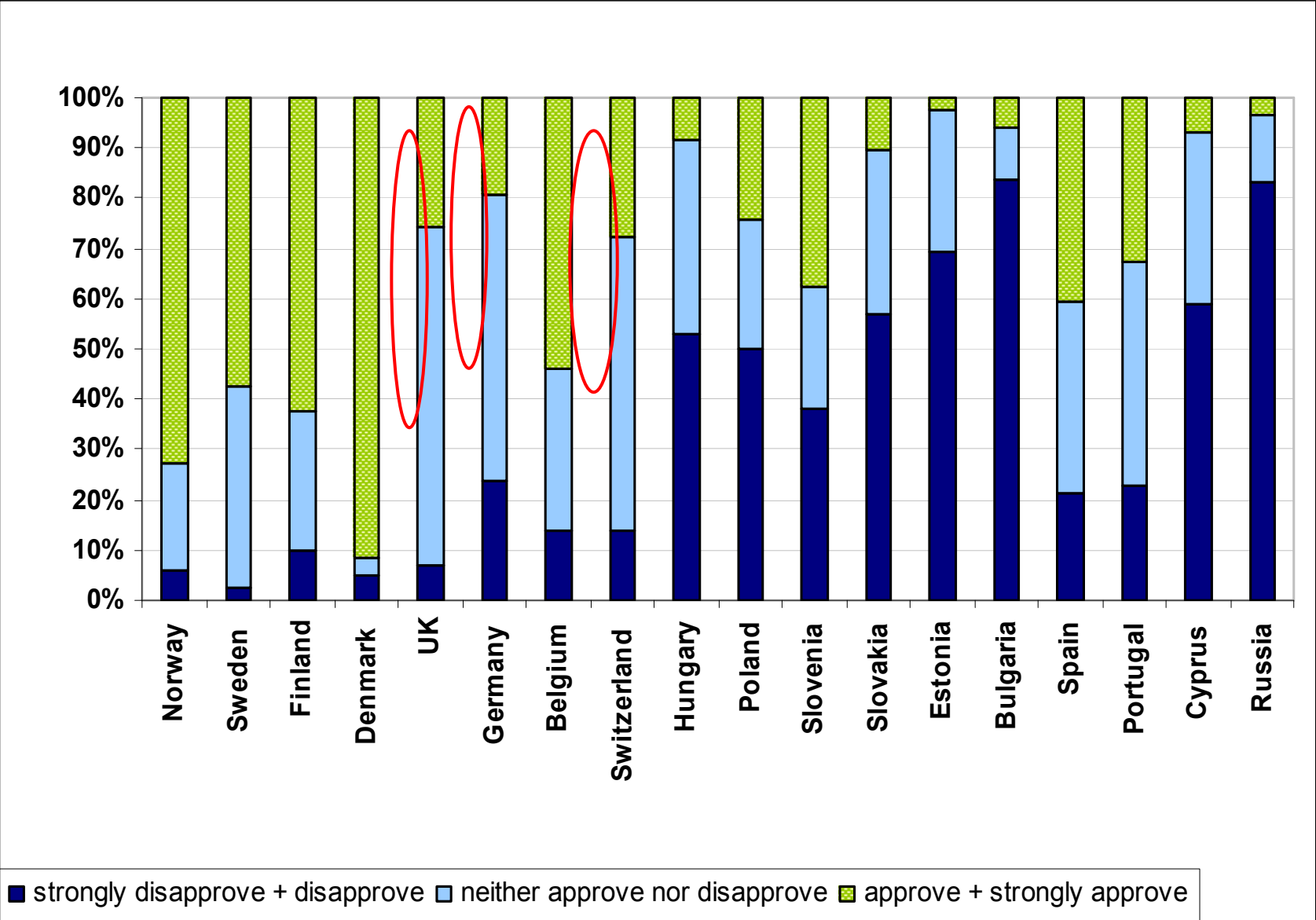
Torres, Analia F.V. da Silva, T. L. Monteiro, e M. Cabrita (2000) *Men and women between family and work in Portugal*, Tilburg University, WORC, Work and Organisation Research Centre, Tilburg.

New meanings of the family in Europe

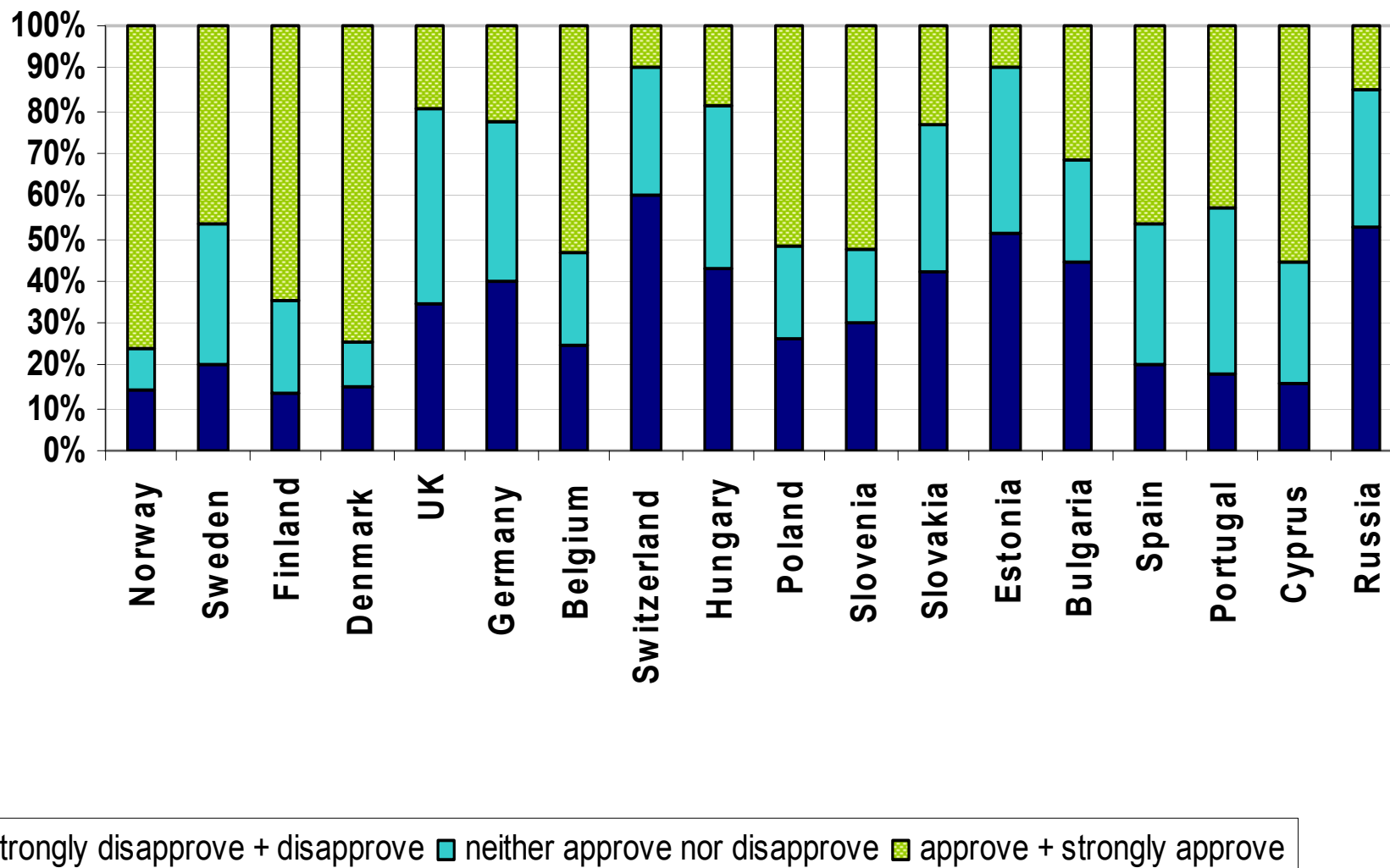


Choose never to have children (women about women)

(ESS, 2006)



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



(ESS, 2006)

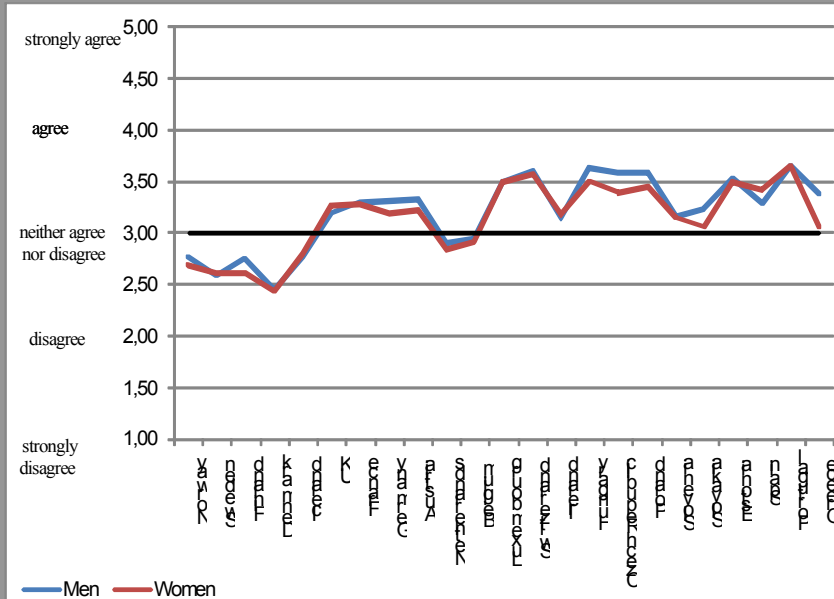
2. Attention to the way questions are phrased, we propose focusing our attention on a mixed way of making questions.

NAND choice may be the answer meaning just an uncomfortable question (tricky, with more than one possible meaning, not referring really to attitudes, answers dependent on context issues, etc.).

How questions are asked in the field (interference).

Different ways of asking questions produce different answers.

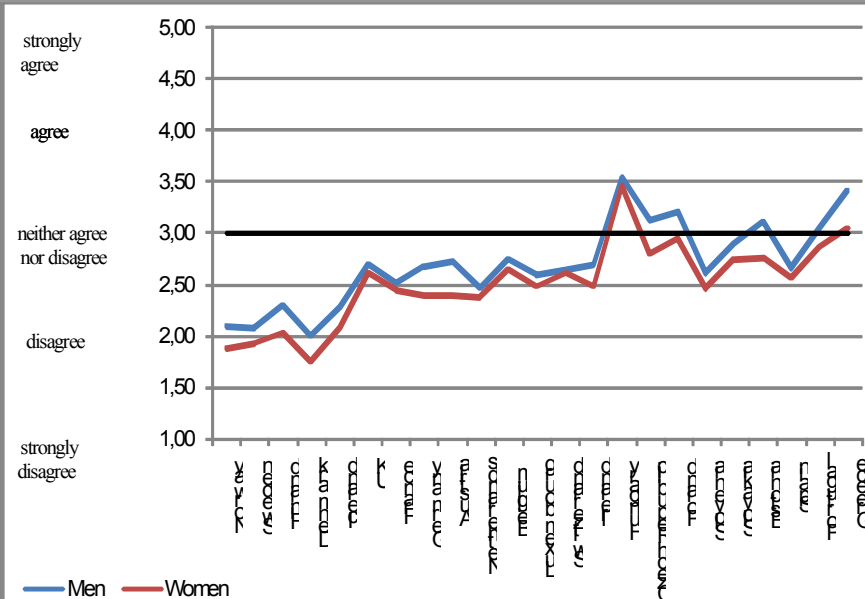
A **woman** should be **prepared** to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family



ESS (round 2) 2004

Country: $F(22, 42766) = 180,165, p < 0,000, \eta^2 = 0,085$
 Gender: $F(1, 42726) = 24,835, p < 0,000, \eta^2 = 0,001$

When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women



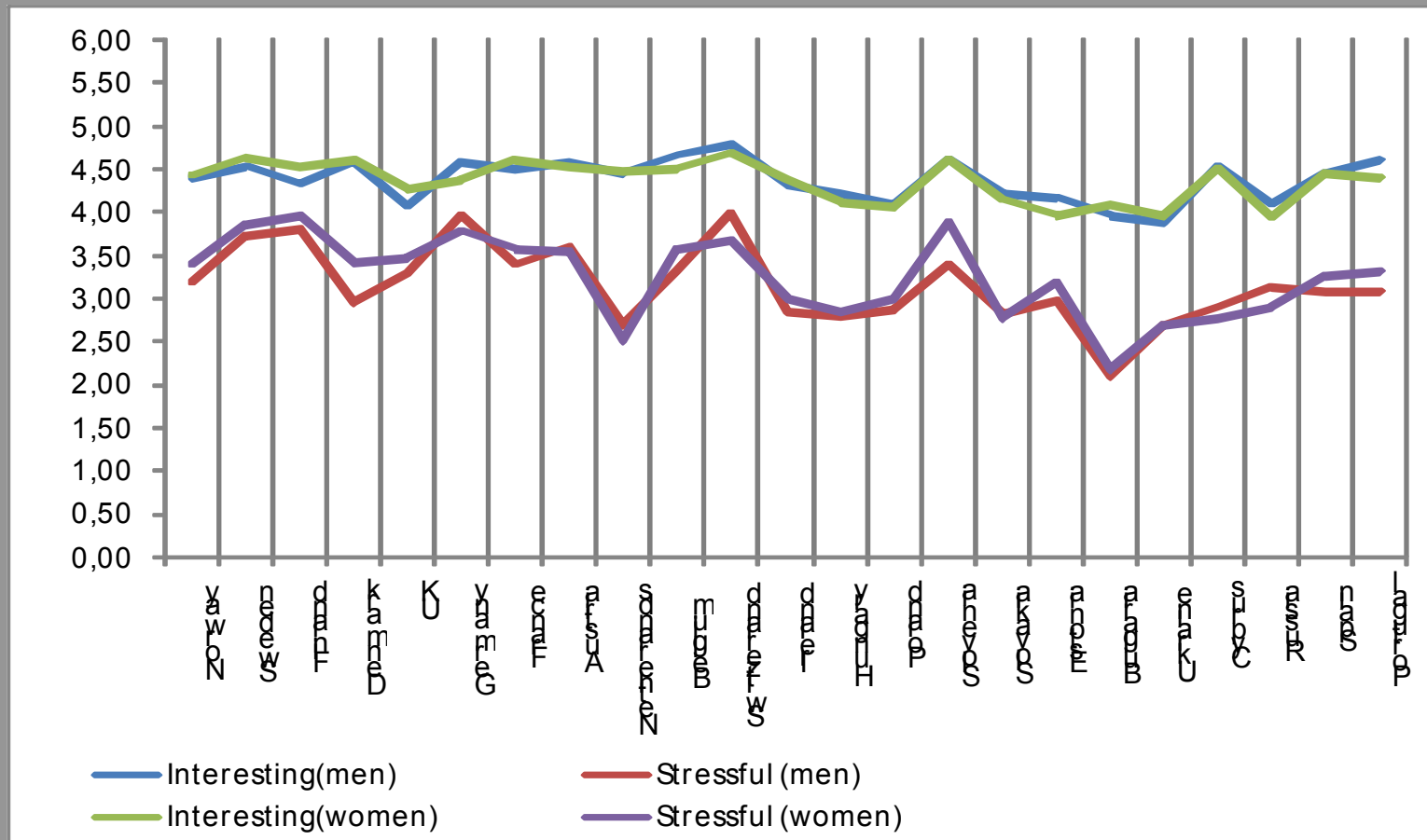
ESS (round 2) 2004

Country: $F(22, 42913) = 206,087, p < 0,000, \eta^2 = 0,096$
 Gender: $F(1, 42867) = 228,516, p < 0,000, \eta^2 = 0,005$

When gender roles are directly at stake the answers tend to be filtered by gender stereotypes.

Women tend to be more modern than men – rejecting a masculine order.

How much of the time do you find your job interesting and stressful



ESS (round 3) 2006

Job interesting

Country: $F(18, 19024) = 30,275; p < 0,000, \eta^2 = 0,028$

Gender: $F(1, 19028) = 4,209; p = 0,04, \eta^2 = 0,000$

Job stressful

Country: $F(18, 19016) = 66,05; p < 0,000, \eta^2 = 0,059$

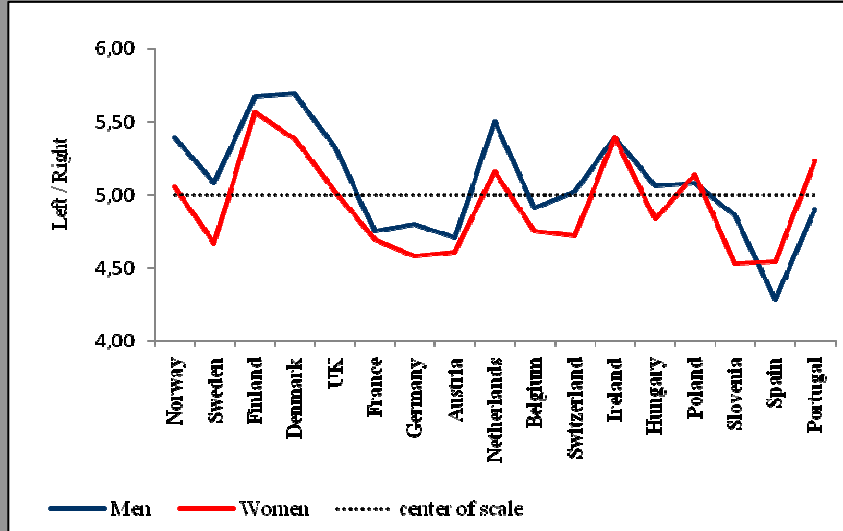
Gender: $F(1, 19021) = 14,248; p < 0,000, \eta^2 = 0,001$

3. Show how careful we must be when concluding only from one application when comparing countries.

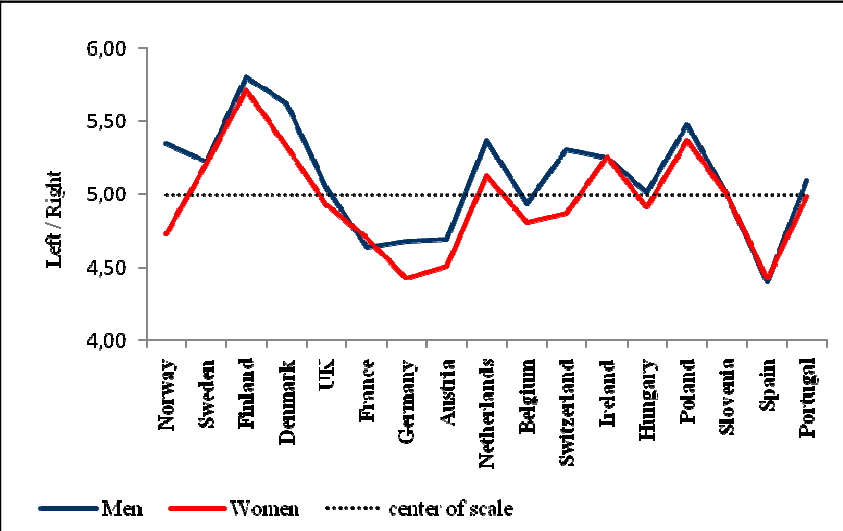
A difference showing up in 2002, can disappear in 2004 and reappear in 2006. Long term structural dynamics in each country. But also conjuncture effects.

Political self-positioning

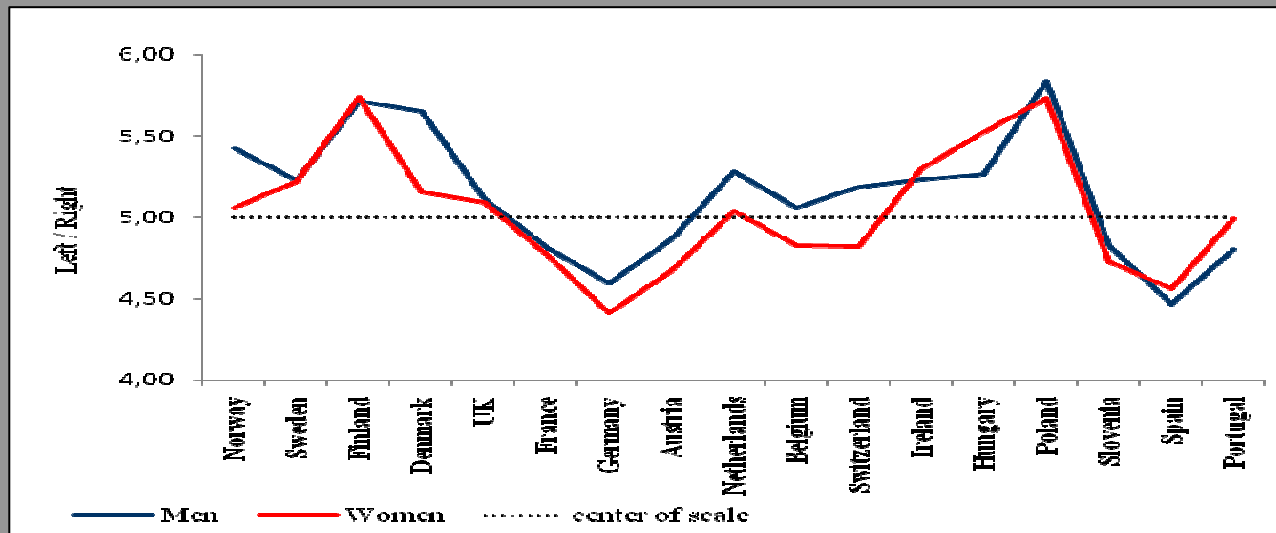
ESS (round 1) 2002



ESS (round 2) 2004



ESS (round 3) 2006



Political self-positioning

- 2002** Women positioned slightly more to the left. Exceptions are:
- Portugal
 - Spain
 - Poland
- 2004** Differences between women and men are less evident. Women in Portugal, Spain are more to the left than in 2002.
- 2006** The same result of 2002.

Political self-positioning

These results are convergent with others about political self-positioning. Since the 80s, women tend to position themselves more to the left than men, even in voting (Inglehart e Norris: *Rising Tide. Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*, 2003).

This tendency has been designated as a change from a *traditional gender gap* to a *modern gender gap*.

When we compare three ESS waves we confirm the differences (between southern European or Polish women) and all the other European but the differences are not always strong (sample differences, etc.).

Conclusions

- **Attention to descriptive analysis before using multivariate analysis.**
- **Abandon the category Neither Agree, Nor Disagree.**
- **Different ways of asking questions produce different answers.**
- **Important to be prudent when you do only one application.**