



New Meanings of the Family in Europe: Gender Relations Between Ideology and Practice.

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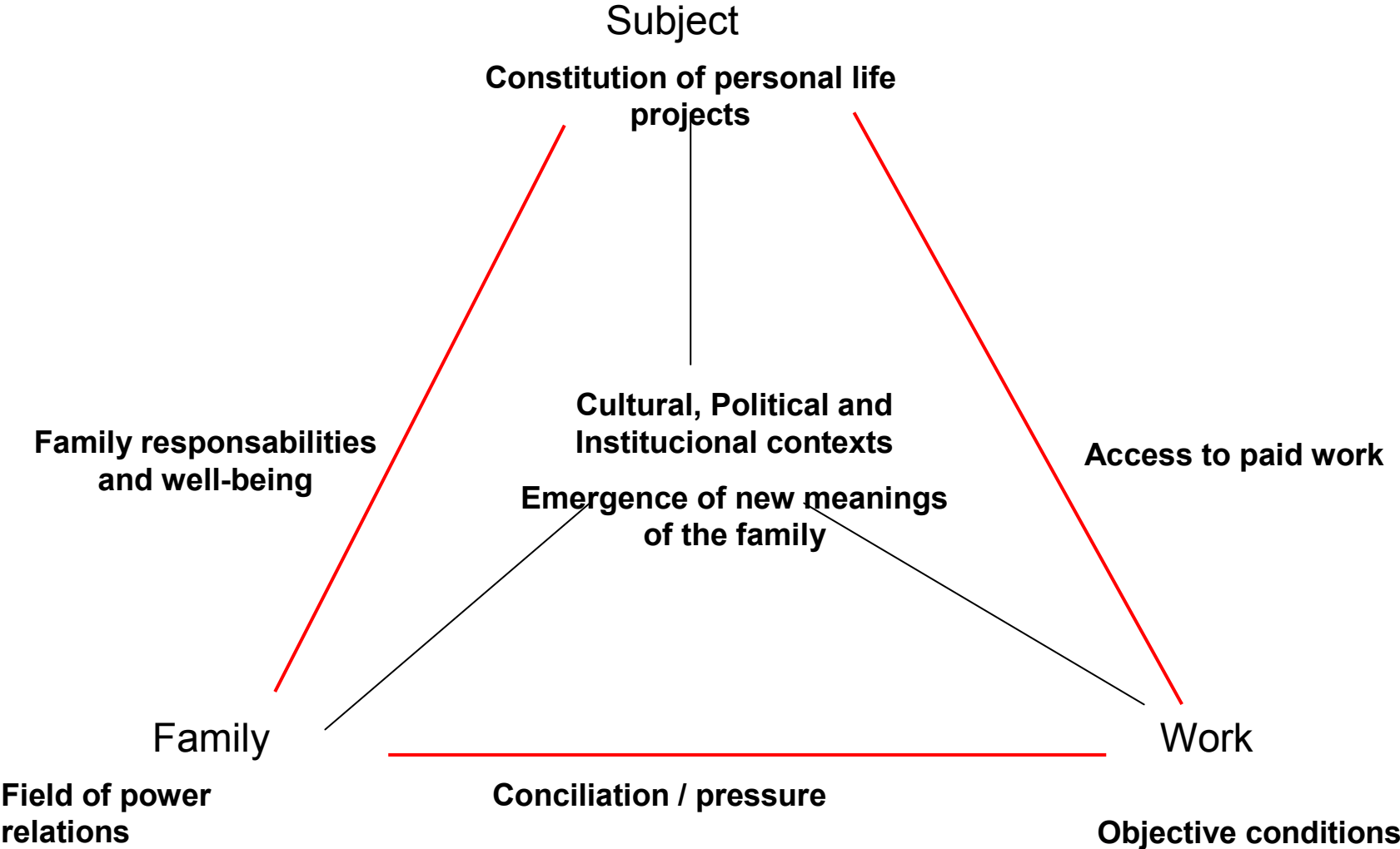
Family relations suffered a deep transformation process in the last 40 years of the XX century.

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?**
- **In our research results we will try to show for Europe:**
 - In terms of discourse, new meanings of the family across Europe
 - Egalitarian perspectives but also ambiguities and difficulties in assuming positions.
 - Differences by country and by material and social resources.
 - In terms of practice, incidence of housework related disagreements among european couples.

- 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 then constrained;
- To analyse work and family we must also necessarily account for gender relations and asymmetries that are transversal to all societal institutions and cultural arrangements (Connel, Kimmel).
- ESS recent data tells us that women – as well as men - want to invest in both spheres (work and family). 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



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).

Mixing Methods

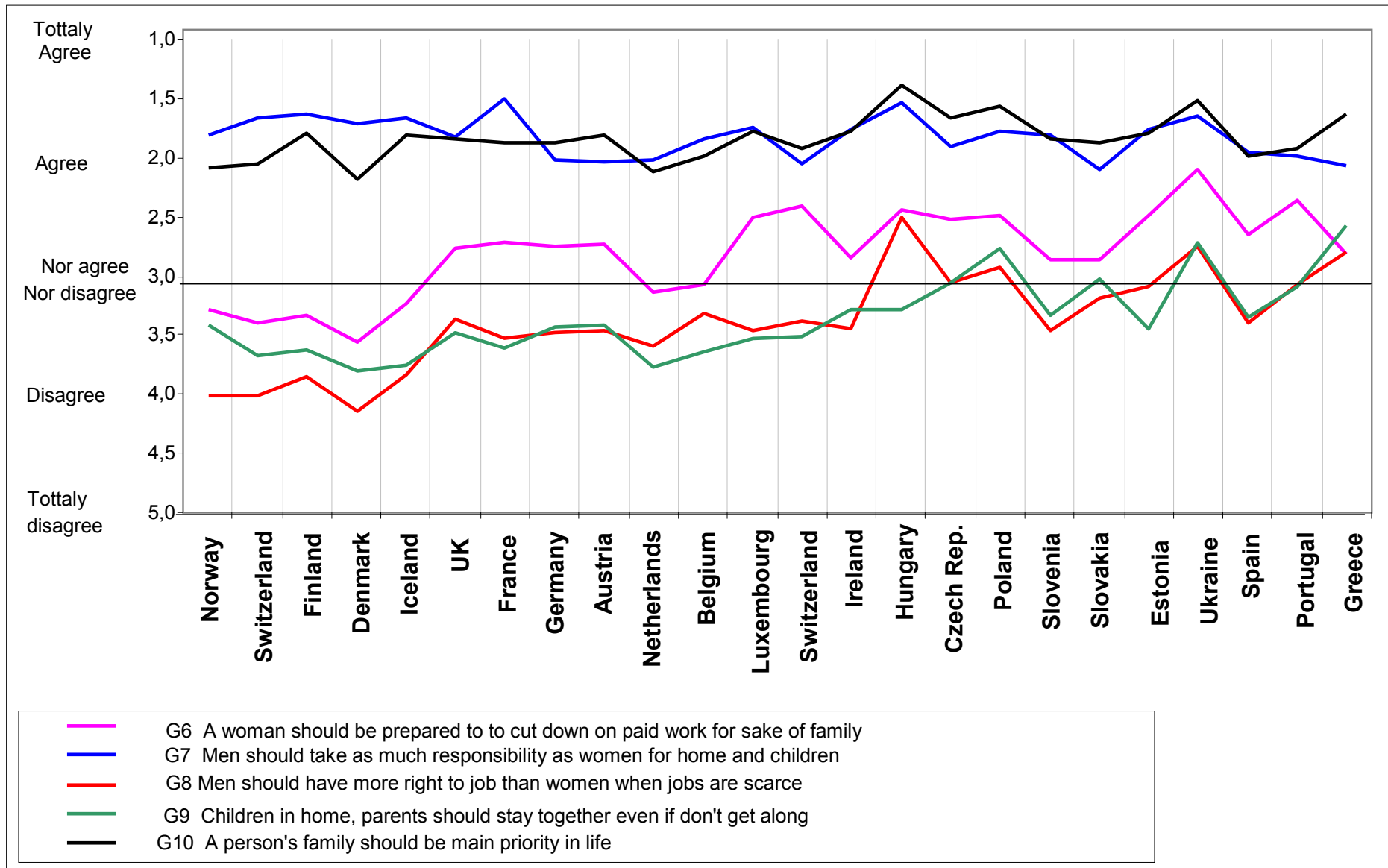
Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESS 2002 • ESS 2004 • EB 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews held in Portugal in different regional and social contexts; • Interviews in several countries Austria, UK, Italy, Denmark, Hungary, Portugal, Poland (on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

Previous and Ongoing Research Projects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Quality and Changing Relationships between Work, Care and Welfare in Europe (Workcare) – FP6 (ongoing) <p style="text-align: center;">Workpackage 4: “Orientations to Work and Care” Workpackage 5: “Qualitative interviews with households”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work, Family, Gender Equity and Social Policies: European transformations from a comparative perspective (ongoing)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men and Women between Family and Work in Portugal (2000; 2004); Marital Life and Work (2004)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First European Quality of Life Survey: Time use and work-life options over the life course (2006, results on print)

New meanings of the family

(means)



Source: ESS, round 2, 2004

**General
consensus**

A person's family should be main priority in life
Men should take as much responsibility as women for home and children

New meanings of the family

Equalitarian perspective and rejection of a traditional division of men and women's work

**Intermediary
Positions –
around centre
of the scale**

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), and some tend to the agreement.

Methodological questioning

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.

Country Clusters

Gender roles 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; Children in home, parents should stay together even if they don't get along; A person's family should be main priority in life.

Ambivalent
position between
modernity and
tradition

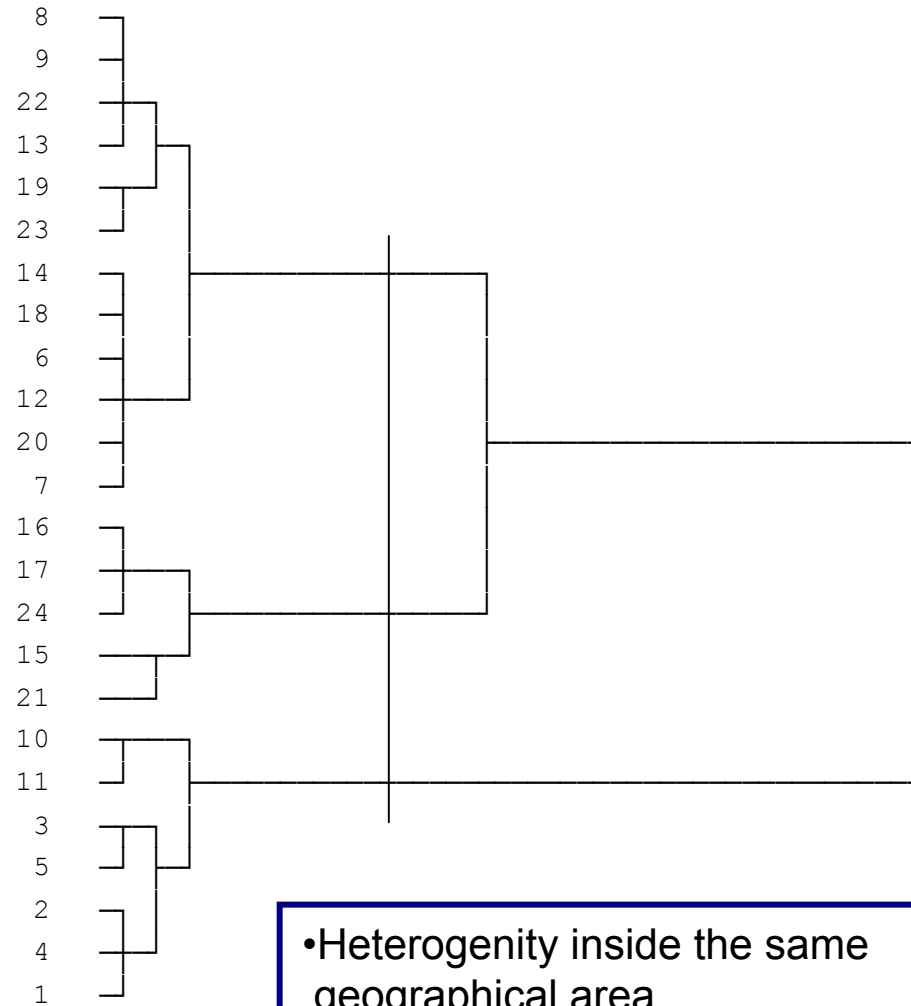
- Germany
- Austria
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Slovakia
- Portugal
- Ireland
- Slovenia
- United Kingdom
- Luxembourg
- Estonia
- France

More
traditional
countries

- Czech Republic
- Poland
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ukraine

Countries
committed to
more **egalitarian**
and **modern**
values

- Netherlands
- Belgium
- Finland
- Iceland
- Sweden
- Denmark
- Norway

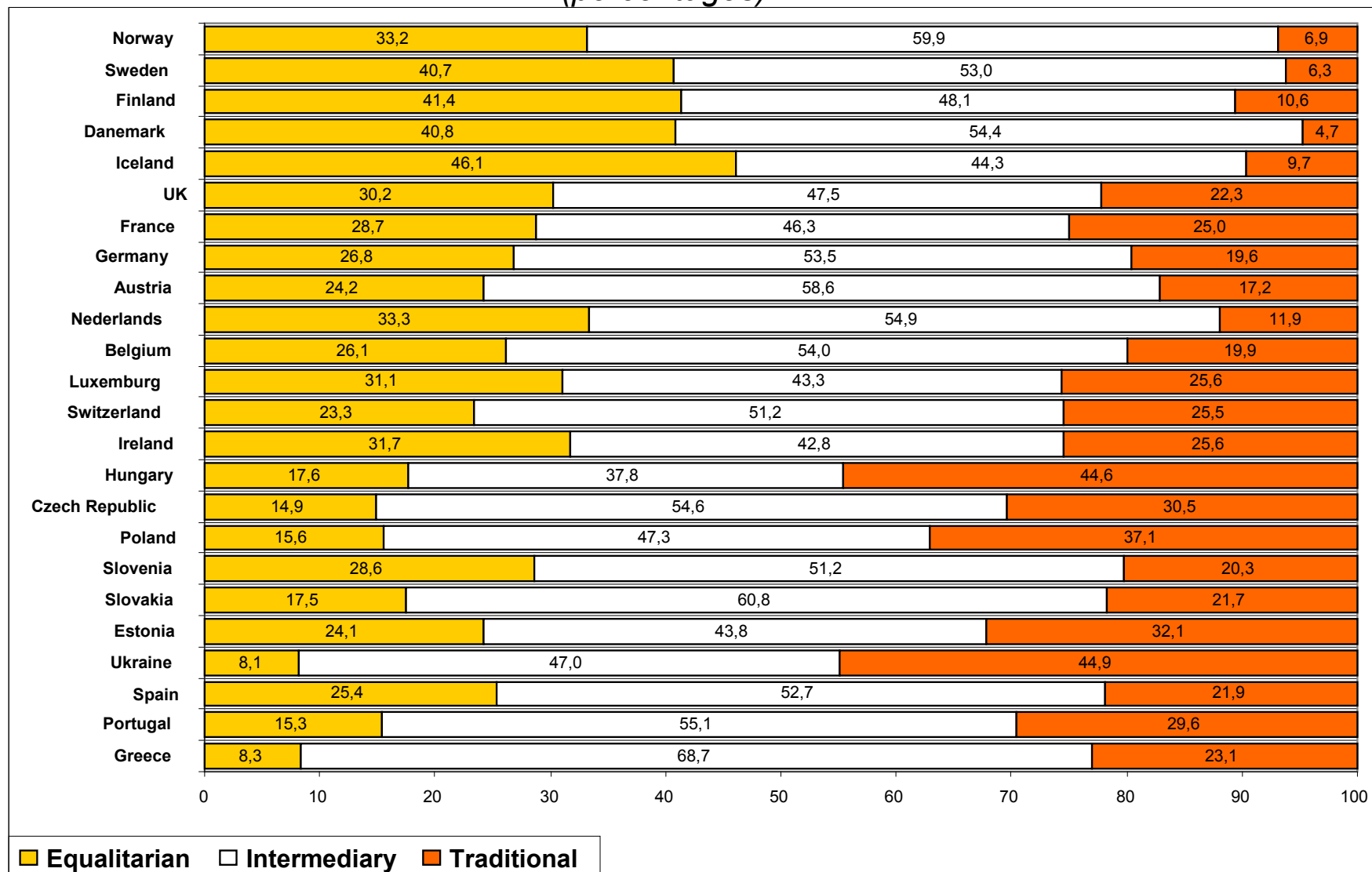


- Heterogeneity inside the same geographical area
- Effect of institutional contexts

Doing analysis at an individual scale – two step cluster

Egalitarian, Intermediary and Traditional positions by country

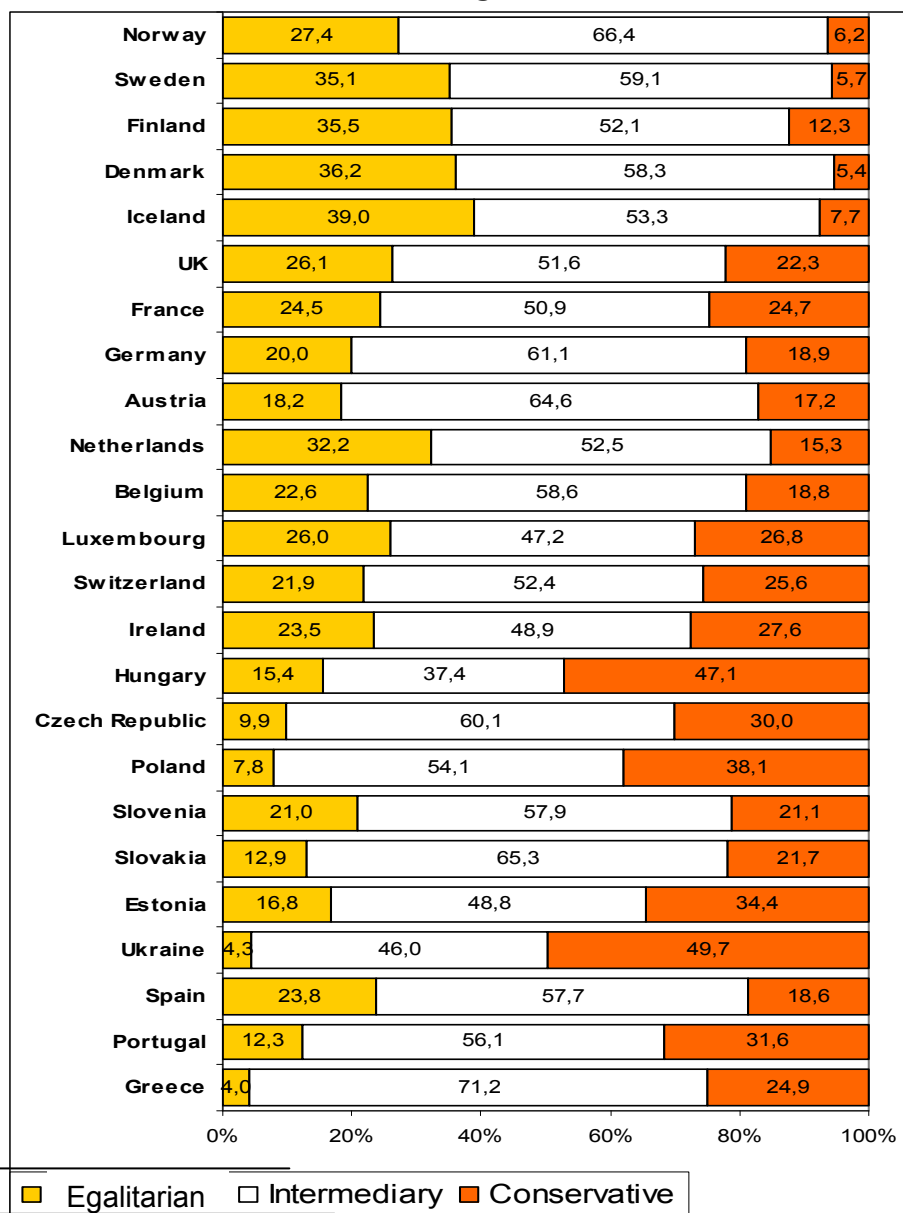
(percentages)



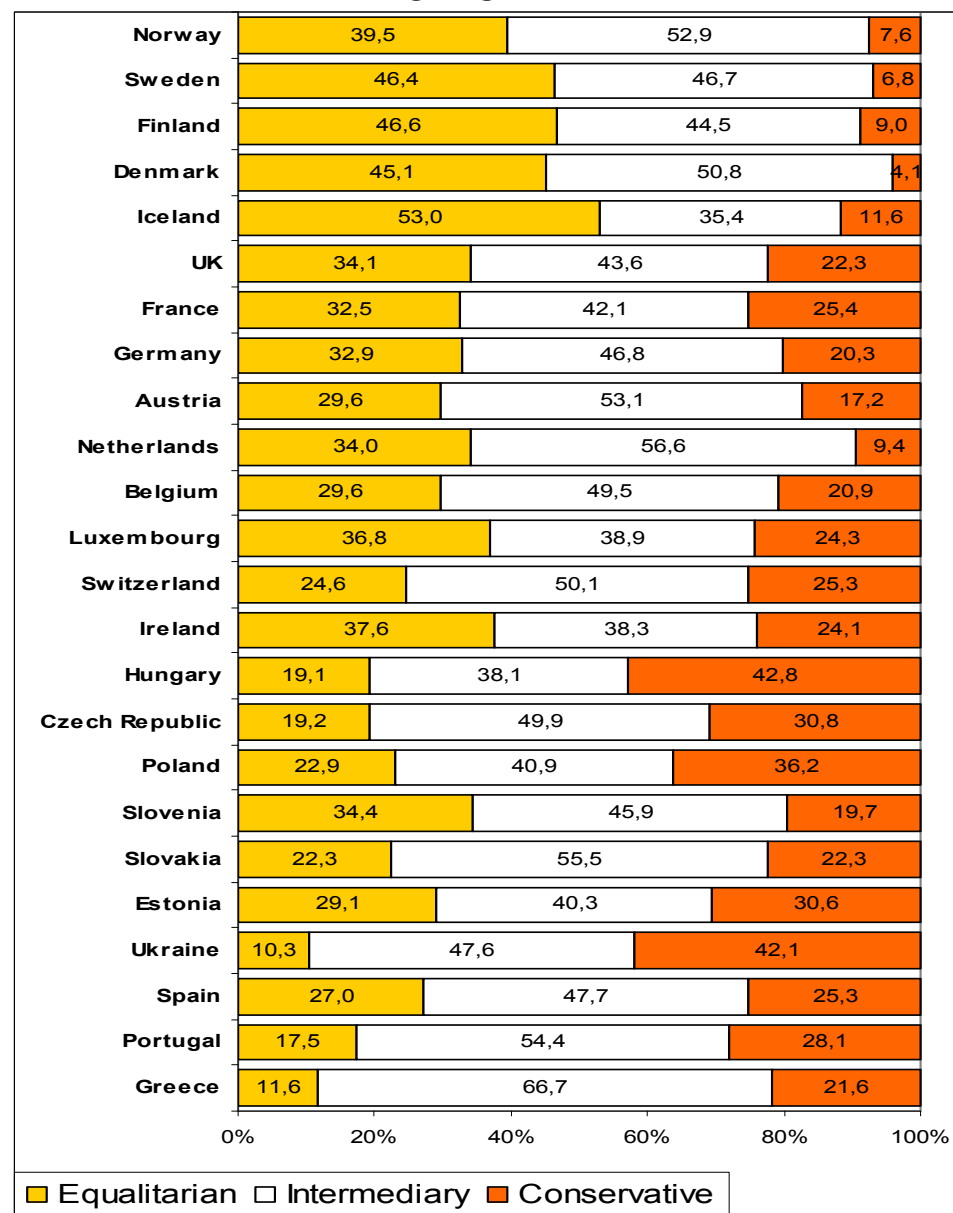
Source: ESS2, 2004

Egalitarian, Intermediary and Traditional positions by country and gender

Men



Women



Source: ESS2, 2004

Cultural and Structural constraints

Multiple Regression: dependent variable: Gender Roles Index

	Sweden	Netherlands	UK	France	Austria	Spain	Portugal	Czech Rep.	Greece
Adjusted R²	.094	.070	.068	.124	.103	.254	.147	.084	.208
Years Education Completed	,236***	,241***	,145***	,288***	,181***	,458***	,262***	,209***	,333***
Income	-	-	,119***	-	-	-	,197***	-	-
Sex ^a	,123***	,119***	,074*	,066*	,193***	,135***	,101*	,187***	,284***
Working hours (week)	-	-	-	-	-	-,103*	-	-	-,061*
Household Type ^b									
Living alone	-	-	-	-	-,085*	-,103*	-	-	-
Childless	-	-	-	-	-,170***	-	-	-	-
Couple	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Couple with children	-	-	-	-	-,122*	-	-	-	-
Lone parent	,066*	-	,118***	,097*	-	,083*	-	,089**	-

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

Source: ESS2, 2004

Years of education completed and sex – cultural predictors

Income, working hours per week and household type – structural predictors

- The highest the level of education more egalitarian
- To be a woman means to be more egalitarian for all countries selected
- Apart from the UK and Portuguese cases, the income isn't a strong predictor

New meanings of the family

- Valuing family in a more modern, open and egalitarian way.
- Clear desire of more involvement of men in the family.
- “Acceptance” of women’s sacrifice in favour of the family but not in favour of men
- In a cross country perspective, Nordic countries have higher percentages of egalitarian individuals and women are always more egalitarian than men
- Cultural dimensions have a higher capacity to explain attitudinal differences across countries than structural dimensions

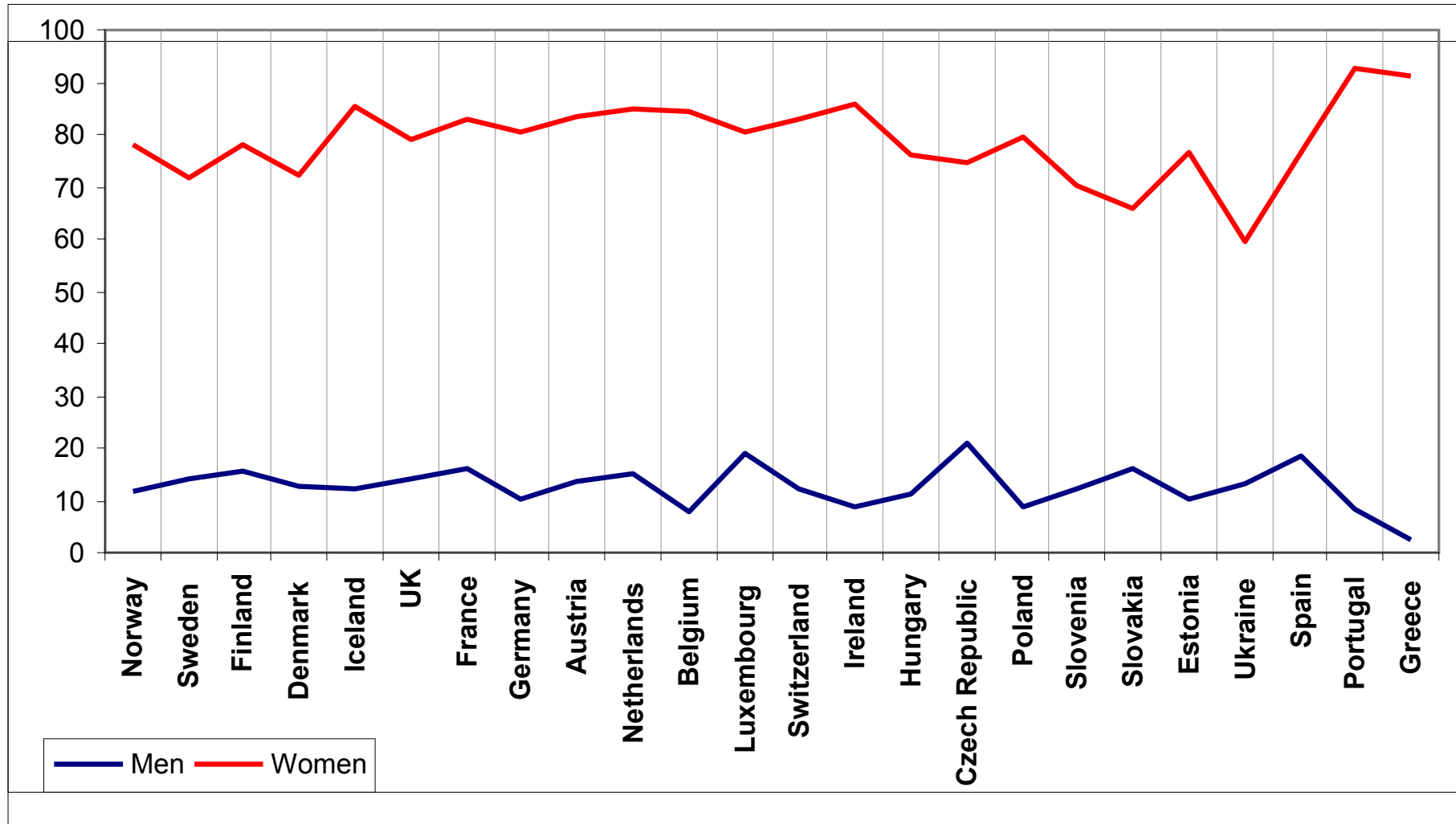
Looking closer to the dominant intermediary position we noticed the importance of the answer **not agree/nor disagree**

- Gap between the ideological discourses and the universe of practices
The universe of practices is constrained by objective and contextual conditions
- 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 - ambiguities and difficulties in assuming positions

Division of domestic tasks

Working men and women saying that they spend more than a half of the total time spent by the household in the domestic tasks, in a week normal day

(percentages)



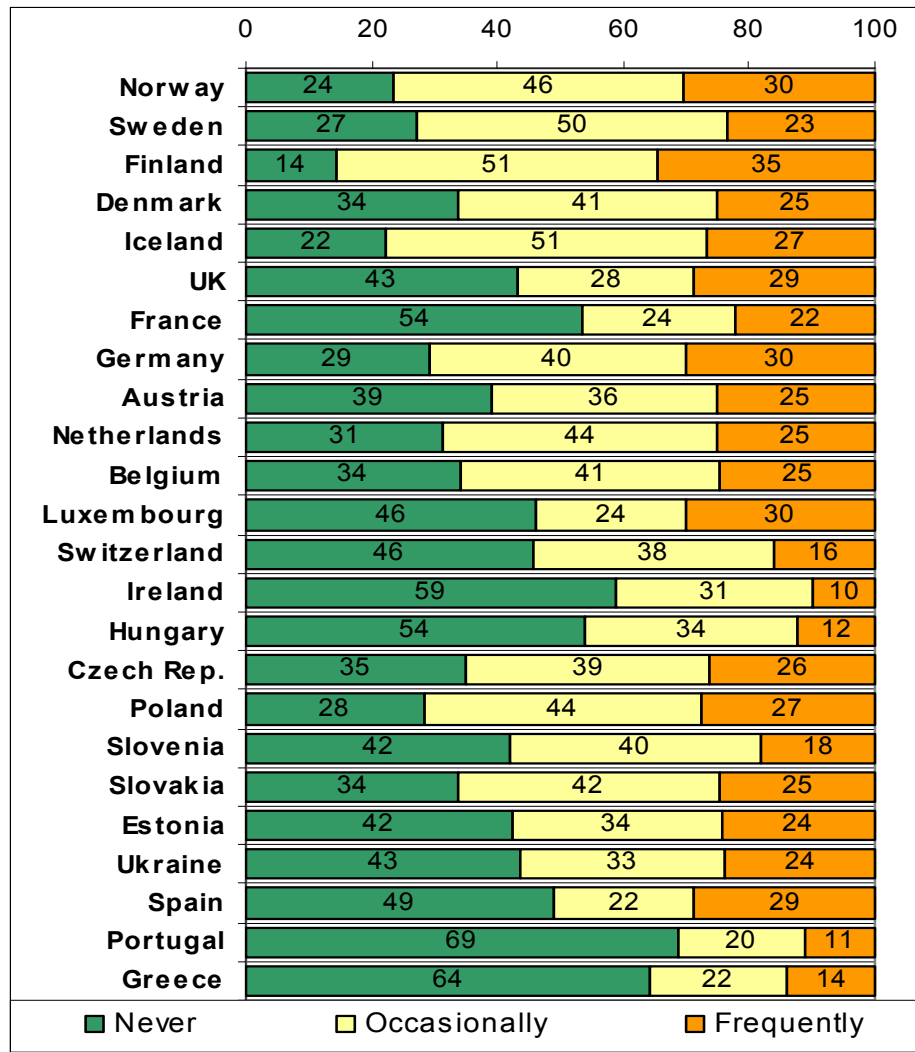
Source: ESS2, 2004

- The percentage of women responsible for more than half of the time spent by the household on housework is clearly higher than men in the same situation.
- Surprisingly, it's not visible a gap between nordic countries and the rest of Europe.
- The gap between the time spent by men and women is wider in two countries: Portugal and Greece.

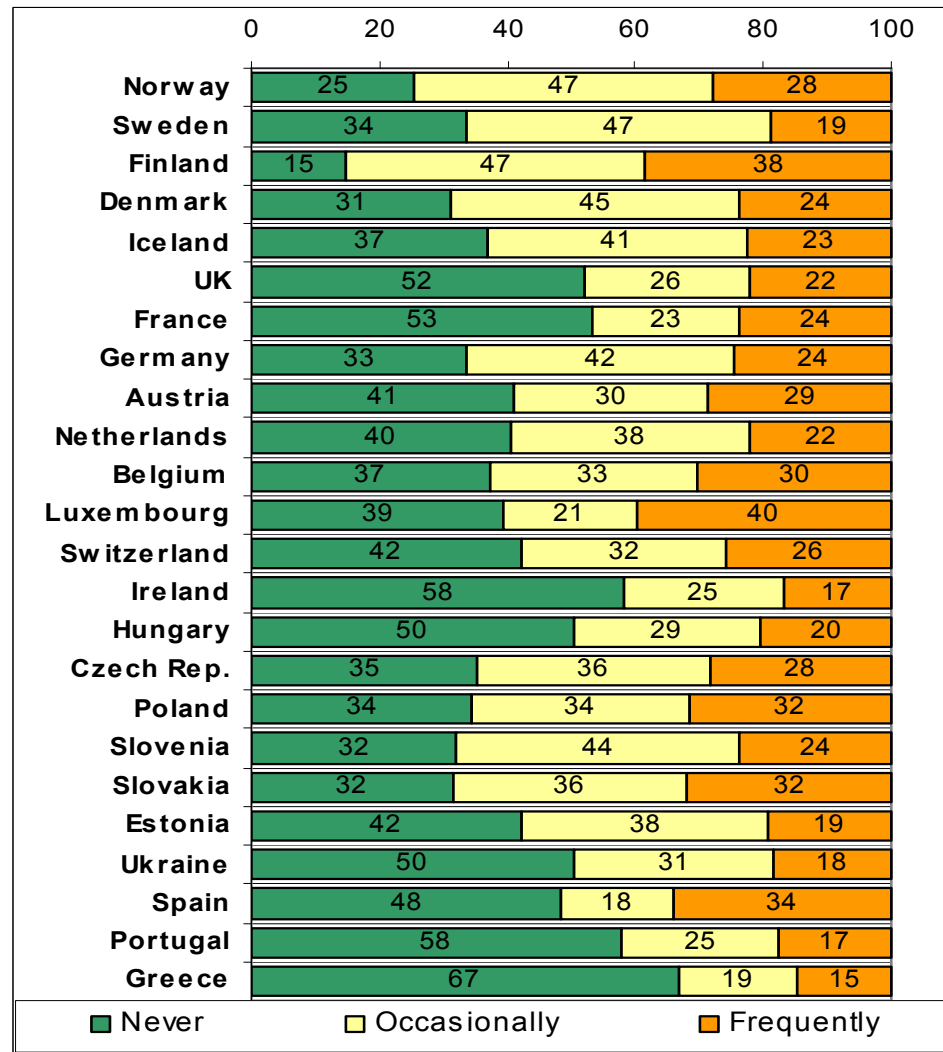
Disagreements about housework

How often do you and your partner disagree about how to divide housework?

Men (percentages)

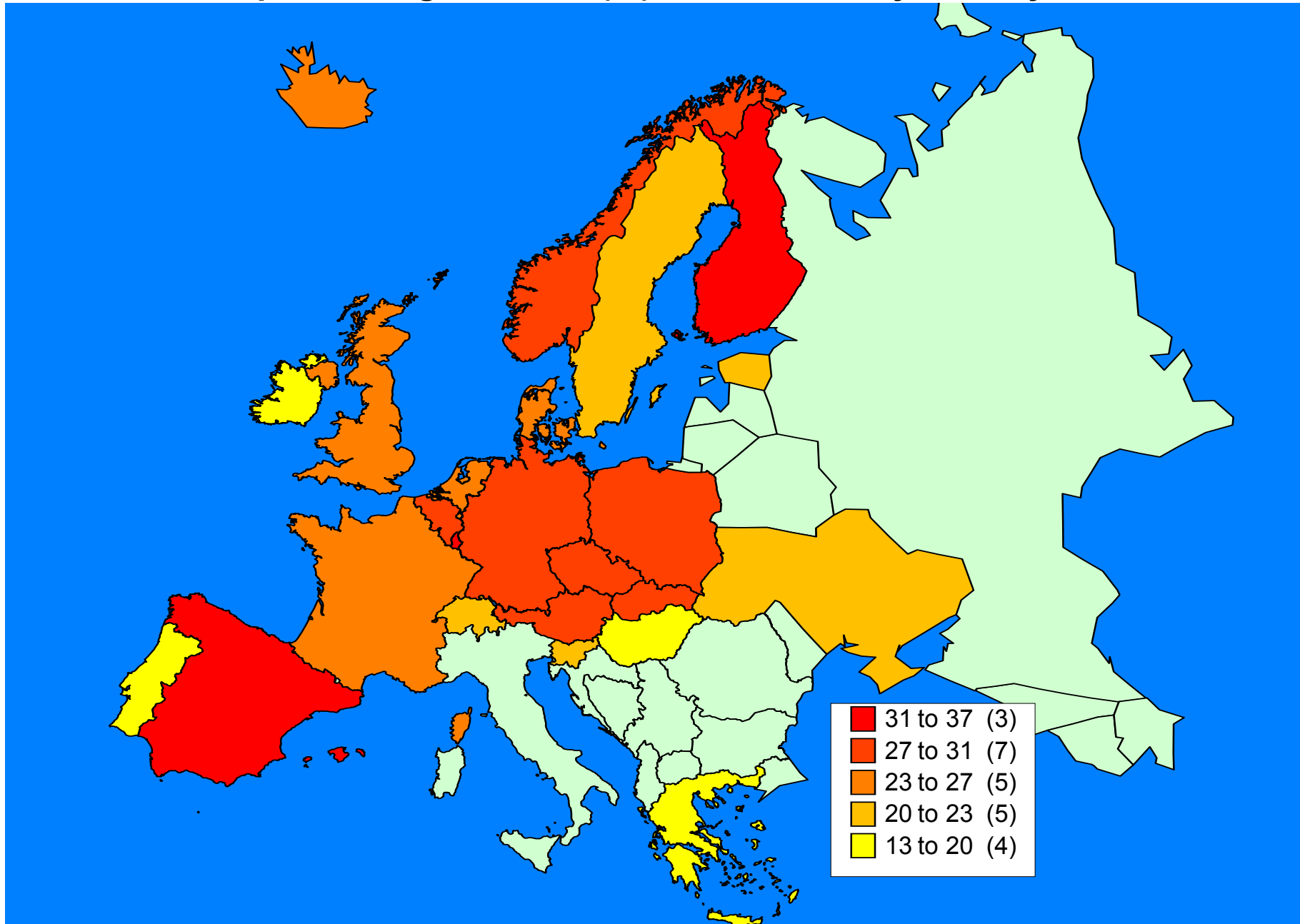


Women (percentages)



Source: *ESS2, 2004*

Frequent disagreements (%) - individuals by country



Source: *ESS2, 2004*

- Although previous research states that couples don't generally assume domestic conflicts, our data reveal that, despite housework not being a very strong source of conflict, there are relatively high percentages of Europeans saying that often disagree with their partners about that issue, especially women.
- People resist conflict according to their degree of identification with norms and values implicit to their positioning on gender social relations. Our qualitative data reveal differences between social classes, with classes less empowered with resources incorporating more strongly those norms and values, and with strongly empowered classes attenuating conflict through external help (hired housekeeper).

Conclusions

New meanings of the family are not yet fully grounded:

- Incorporation of new gender ideology in the family, producing changes but not meaning complete gender equality.
- Reproduction of a gender ideology resulting in constraints imposed over women (and men):
 - Objective constraints configuring the conjugal relation.
 - Structural obstacles (sexual division of work) and symbolic (incorporation and naturalization of gender unequalities):
 - Women are professional workers with family responsibilities
 - Men are free professional workers

- As we had concluded in previous research, once again we confirm work as a dimension of social identity for both women and men. Women strongly value this component of life.
- Women want to invest in both fronts (work and family). But in the majority of countries they have to pay a price for maintaining both investments
- The difference between men and women's hours of work (unpaid) is unfavourable for women – women's overload.

- Women as social subjects doesn't mean that a traditional gender normativity is completely surpassed
 - feminization of domestic arena and care of children
 - women assume family responsibilities.

- Daily negotiations and conflicts between men and women about housework must be seen as part of a larger process of social change:
 - gender relations;
 - gender identity;
 - gender normativity;

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That's all!

**Thank you for
your attention.**