

Glasgow, 03 - 06 September 2007

Research Streams

RS 2: Reassessing Class in Contemporary Sociology

Session 4 - Wednesday, 5th, 09.00 – 11.00, Room M532

Chair: Louis Chauvel

Values in Europe: Countries and Classes

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Our presentation is about values, considered as organized and relatively stable systems of preferences, which constitute, in general and because they motivate action, good predictors of behaviour.

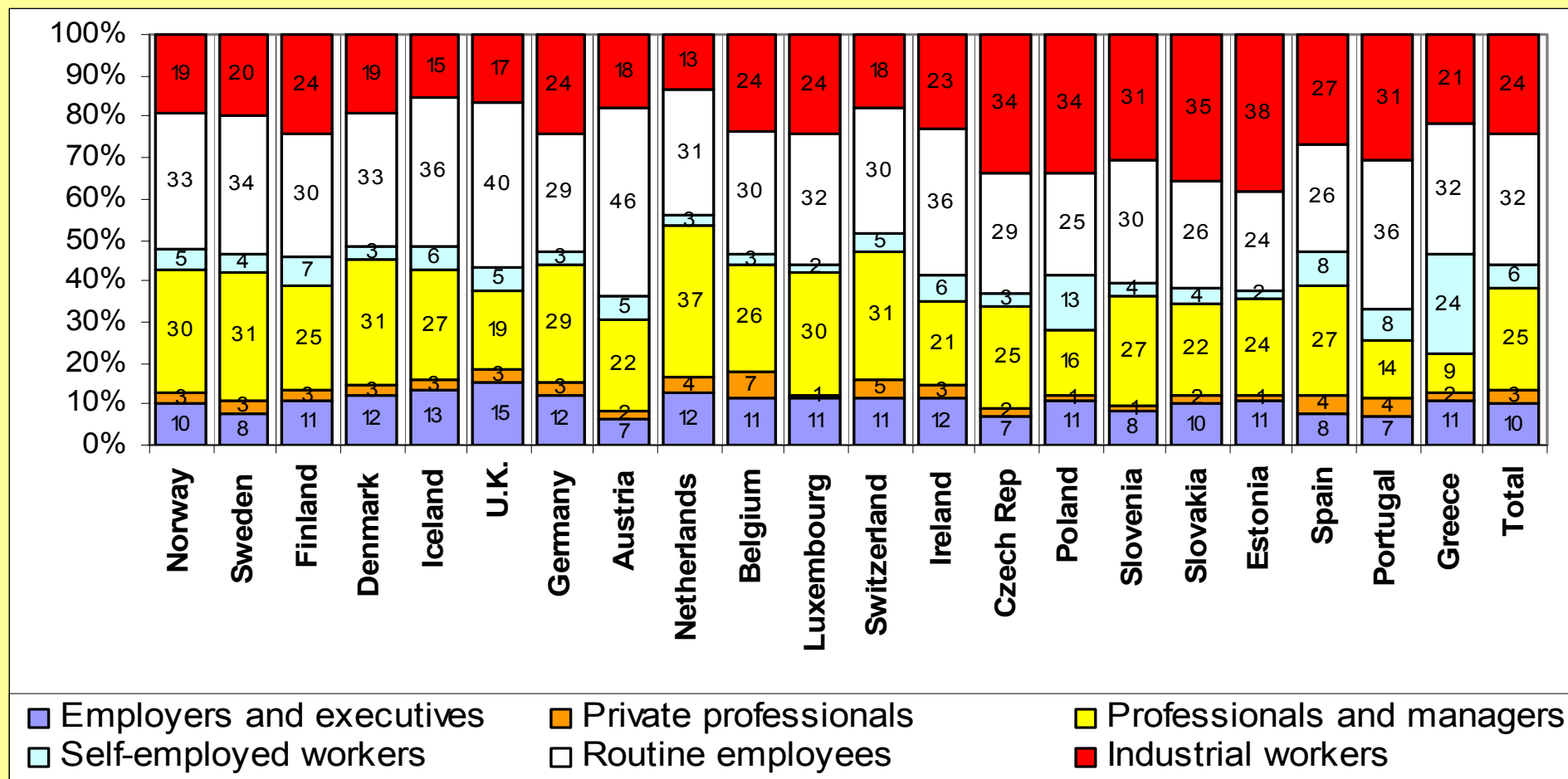
Values have their roots in individuals, in groups, in social classes, but they can also be connected with big aggregates like national states.

As referred by Shalom Schwartz, who proposed a structural theory of values – with which you are probably familiar – these express “motivational aims and they differ, precisely, according to the aims expressed”. (Schwartz, 1996).

The data we are going to refer proceed from the second wave of the European Social Survey (2004). We use a typology of six categories (social classes) based on the information that the ESS also provides on occupation and situation in the occupation.

We have comparative evidence from what Schwartz calls basic or transituational values, and, as the time is scarce, we shall only show, in the end, a very brief information about other values - situational values - that is, values connected with specific contexts.

Class structure in ESS countries (percentages)

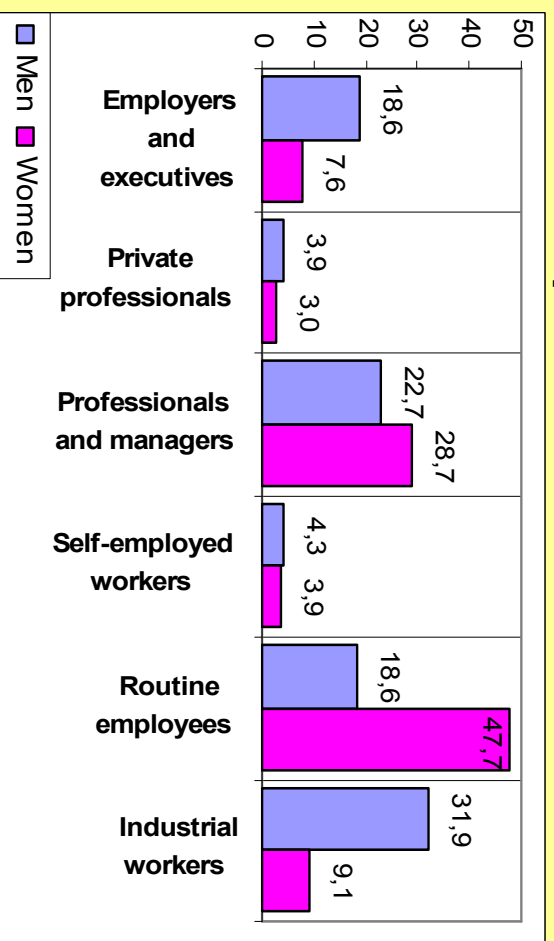
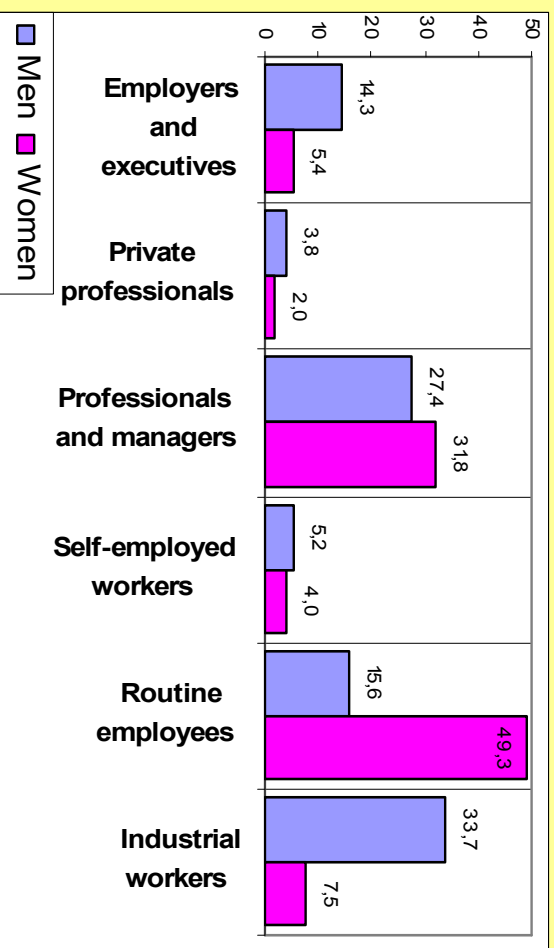


Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

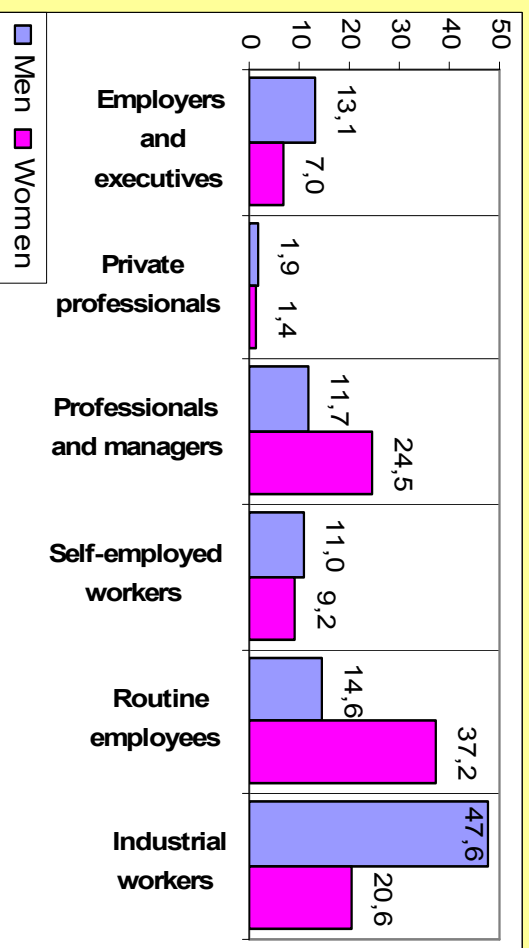
- Because of well known historical reasons, the Post-Communist countries present a number of Industrial workers (IW) clearly above the global pattern.

Structure of classes in groups of European countries (percentages)

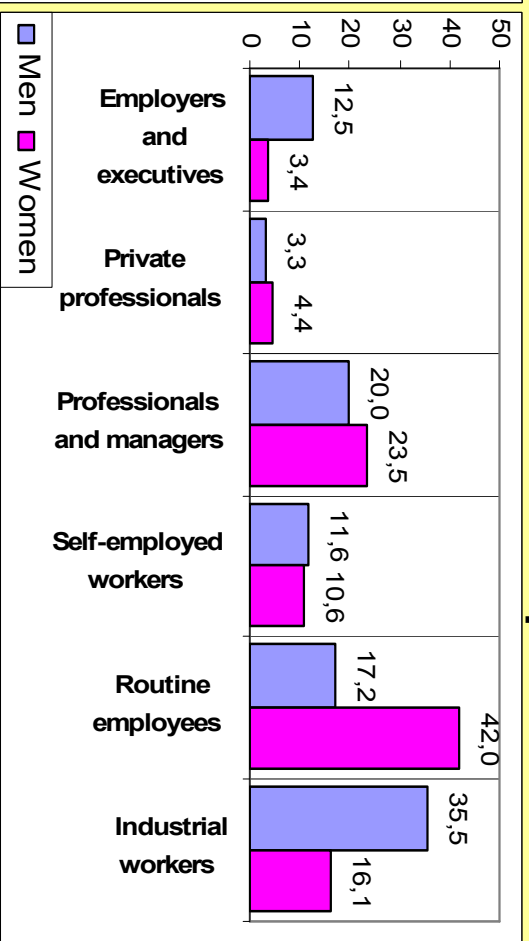
Scandinavian Countries Europe North and Centre



Post-Communist Countries



South of Europe



Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

The first aspect to note is the relative importance of the category of professionals and managers (PM). In contemporary societies, this is a leading category of employees on account of its scientific, technical and cultural resources, which give it a privileged position in the processes of increased incorporation of information, knowledge and technical expertise in the different fields of contemporary economic and social life.

Another comment about class structure concerns the class gender profiles revealed by the ESS. These profiles vary greatly from one class to another and this is a clearly transnational structural characteristic. In other words, at an European level, continuities can be seen in the gender composition of social classes. The same classes, in different countries, have the same type of gender composition with few variations in the percentages and almost no exceptions.

The IW and RE categories, the two with the scarcest resources, present opposite gender profiles. Without exception, the IW group includes a large majority of men, and the RE group has a large majority of women, often with a ratio of three or more to one.

Basic Human Values

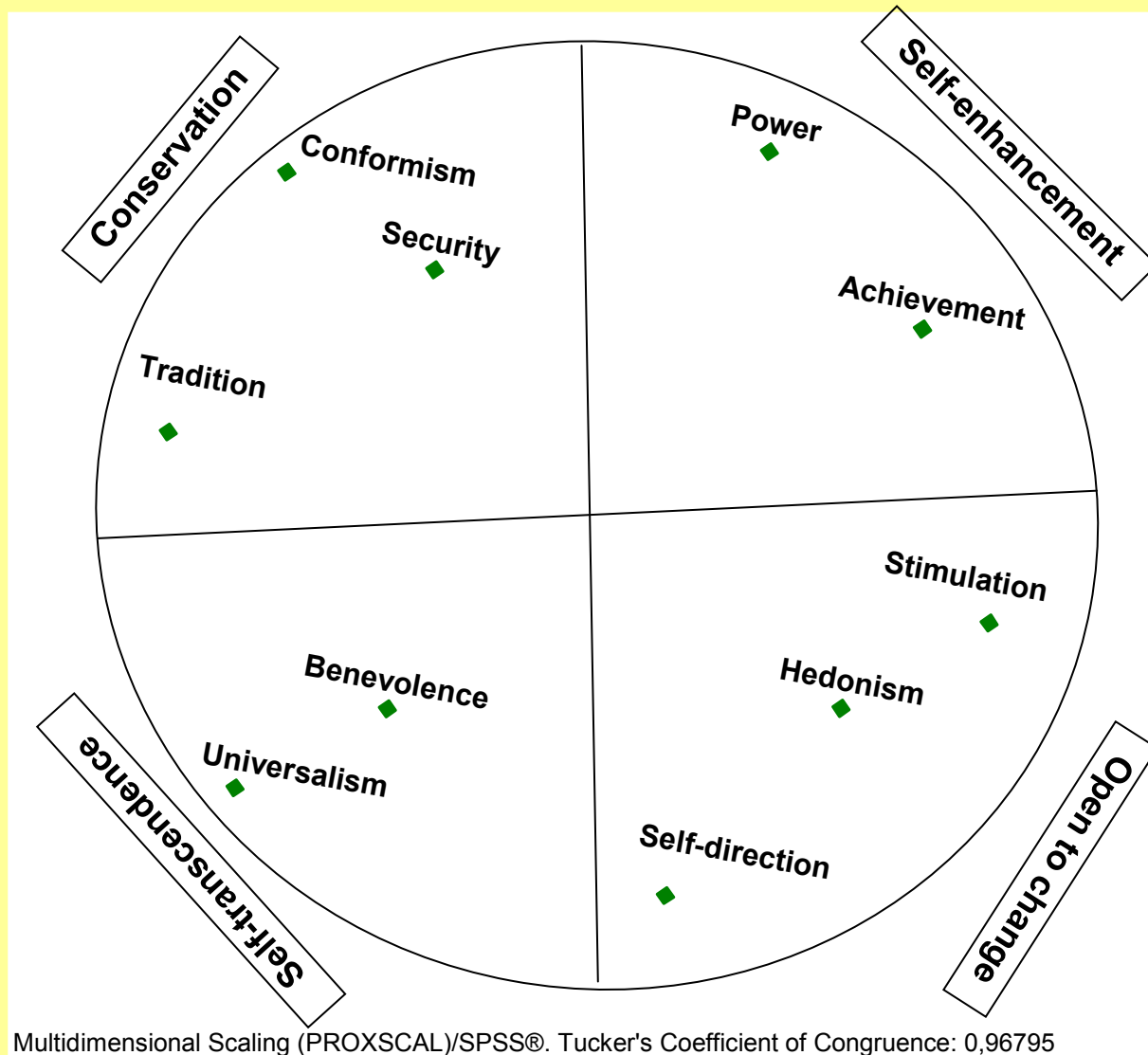
Based on Schwartz typology, 21 indicators refer to 10 types of transituational motivational values. Individuals express preferences about them.

The links between values are dynamic and may be condensed in two orthogonal dimensions: *Self-Transcendence* vs. *Self-Enhancement* and *Openness to Change* vs. *Conservation*.

The **first dimension** shows in one of the extremities the motivational types *Universalism* and *Benevolence*, and in the other, the values of *Power*, and *Achievement*. This axis organizes the values, in the first extremity, on the basis of the people's motivation to transcend their egoistic concerns. In the opposite position are those who are willing to promote their self-interest even if it is necessary to harm others.

The **second dimension** opposes the motivational types *Self-direction*, *Hedonism* and *Stimulation* to *Conformity*, *Security* and *Tradition*, organizing the values on the basis of the people's motivation to pursue their own interests through new experiences, as opposed to self-restriction, and conformity with tradition.

Structures of the relationships among the 10 motivational types of values in Europe*

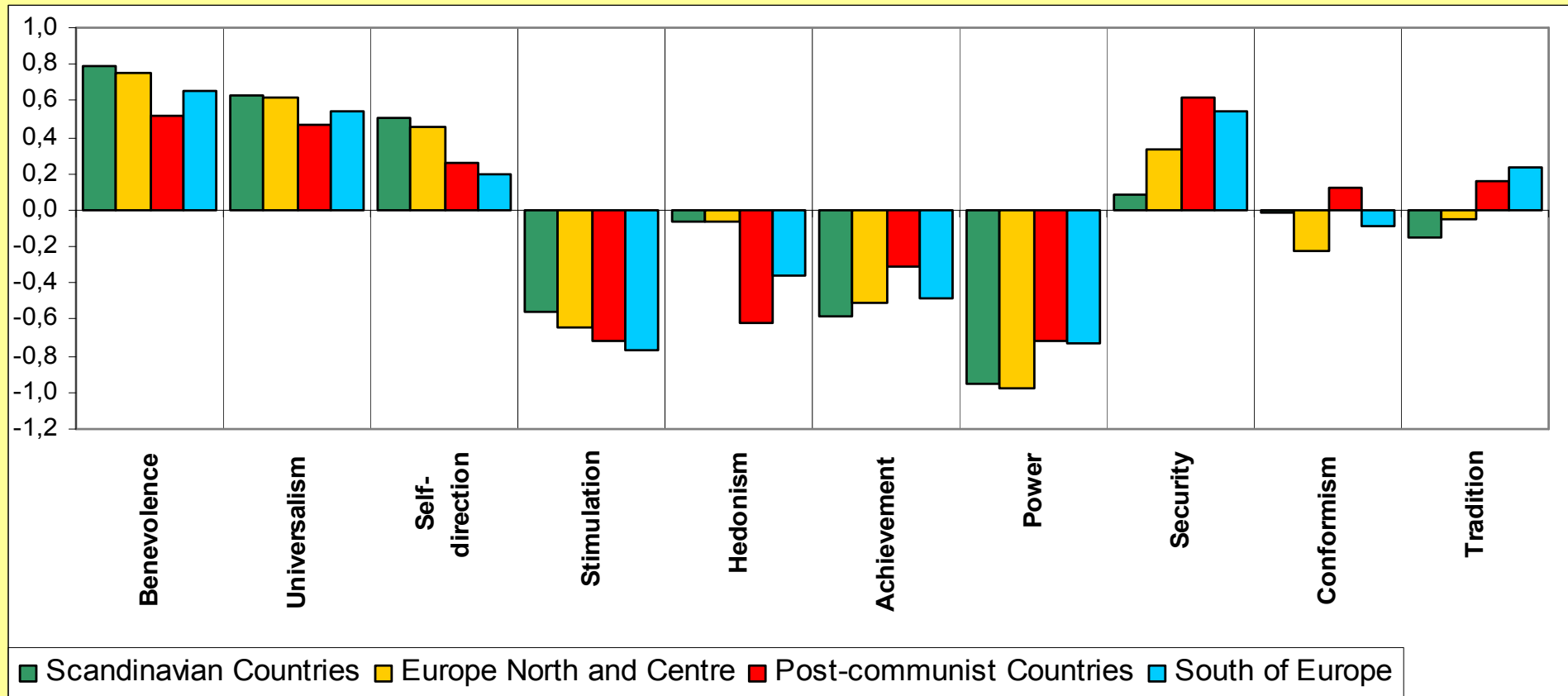


Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

* Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Ireland, Hungary, Czech Rep. Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Hierarchy of human values by groups of countries

(centred means)

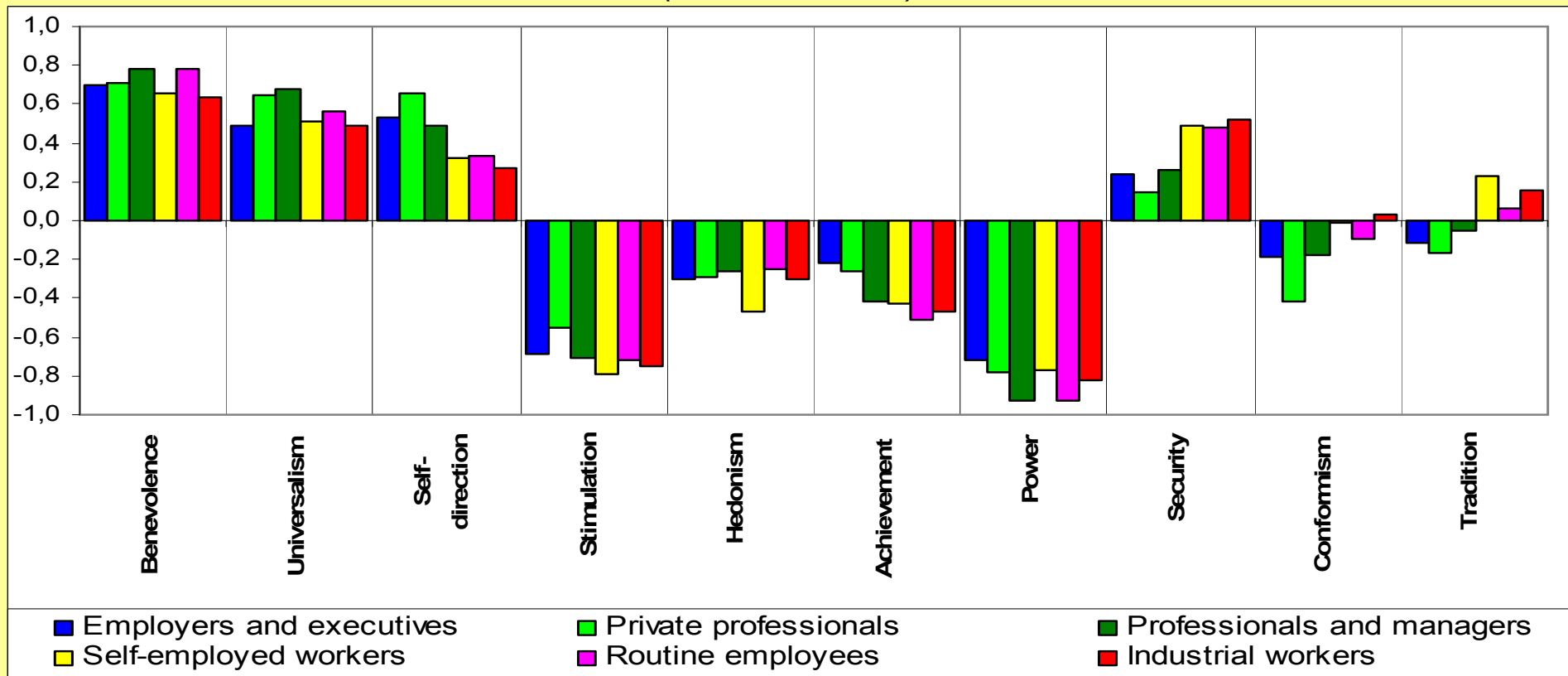


Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

- Globally prevalent values are *Benevolence*, *Universalism* and *Self-direction* – less so in Post-Communist countries and in the South – and *Security*, this one with more weight in Post-Communists and in the South. *Tradition* only surpasses the mean in the South and in Post-Communists. *Stimulation*, *Power*, *Self-direction* and *Hedonism* are below the mean in all groups of countries.

Hierarchy of human values by social class

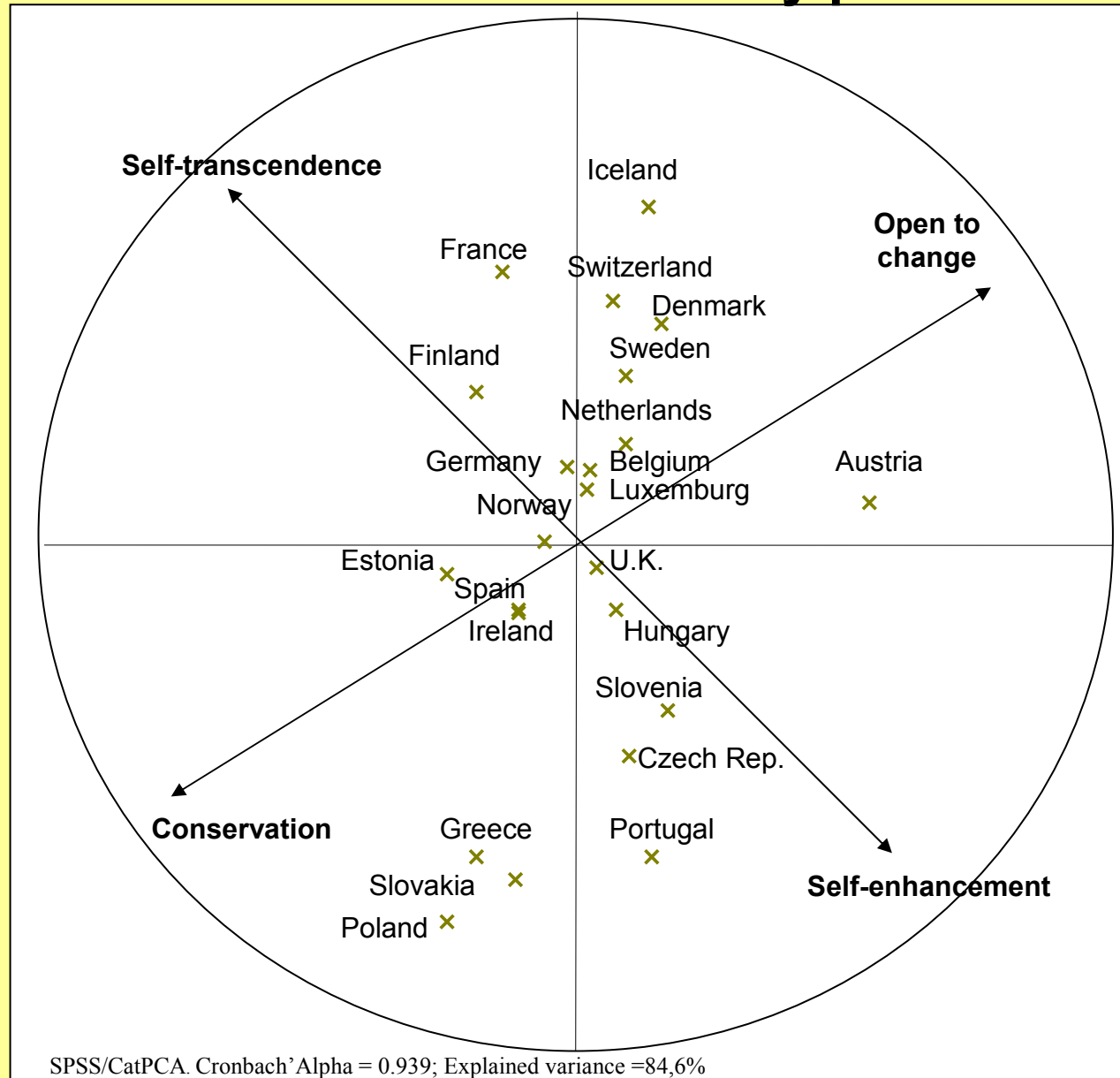
(centred means)



Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

- So, *Benevolence* and *Universalism* are prevalent values for all the social classes. *Self-direction*, also always positive, has more expression in the classes with more capital. In contrast, *Security* has greater expression among those classes with less capital. *Tradition* is above the mean only between independent workers, industrial workers and routine employees.

Human values: country profiles



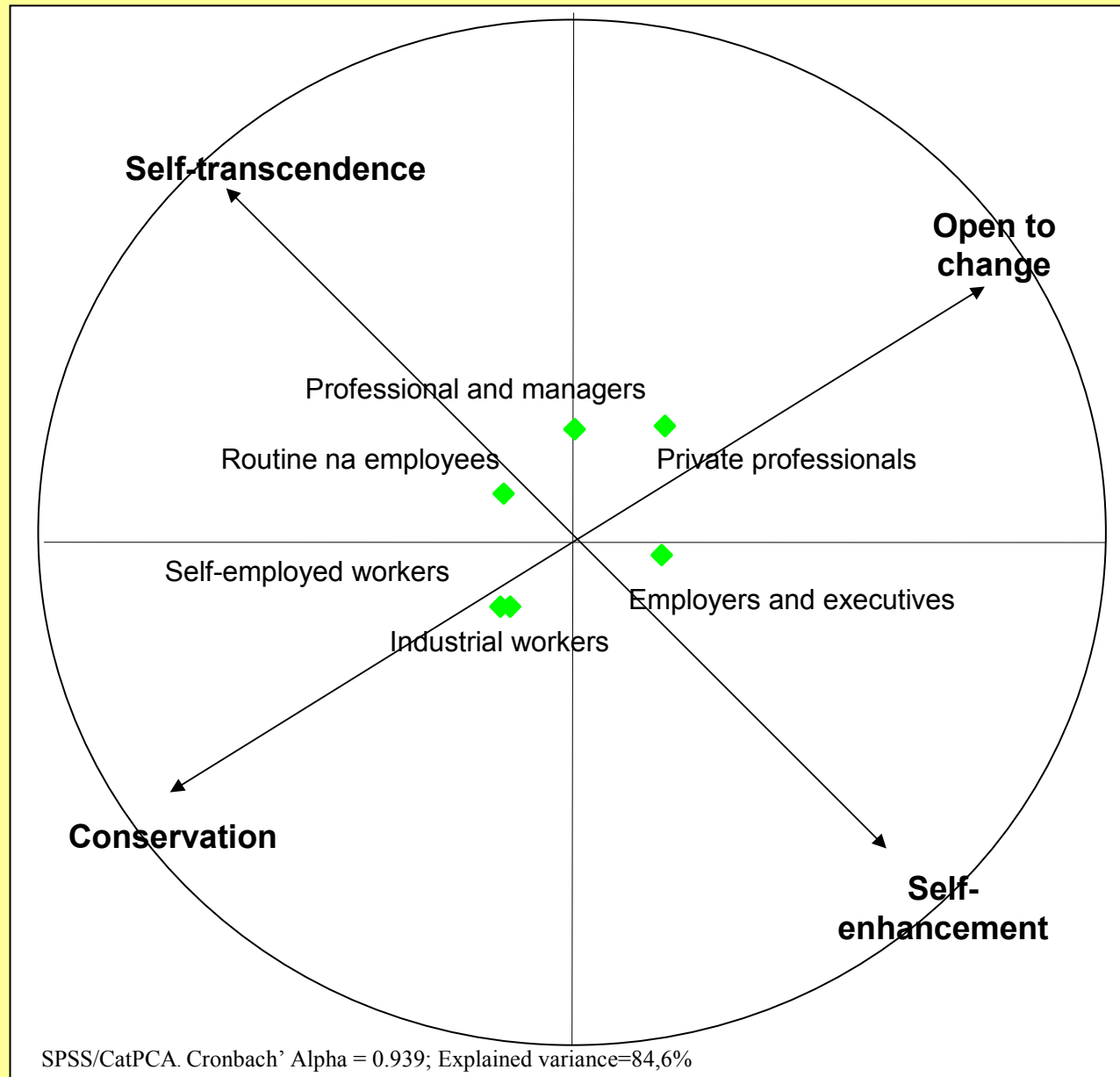
Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

So, the axes of *Conservation vs. Openness to Change* and *Self-Enhancement vs. Self-Transcendence* oppose the Post- Communist and the Southern countries to those of the Centre and the North as well as the Scandinavian. The later cases are more *Open to Change* and *Self-Transcendent* and the previous are nearer *Conservation* and *Self-Enhancement*.

The same analysis, but by social classes, shows that the axis *Conservation vs. Openness to Change* opposes the Self-Employed Workers and the Industrial Workers to the Employers and Executives and to the Private Professionals. The later ones are more *Open to Change* and the previous are nearer of *Conservation*.

The axis *Self-Enhancement vs. Self-Transcendence* opposes the Employers and Executives, near of the first value, to the Professional and Managers and the Routine Employees, more *Self-Transcendent*.

Human values: social classes profile



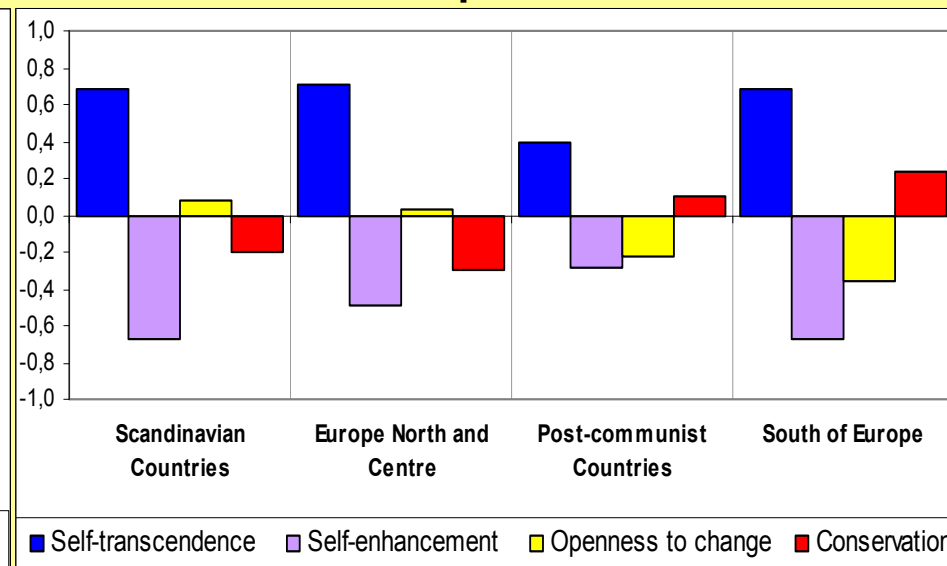
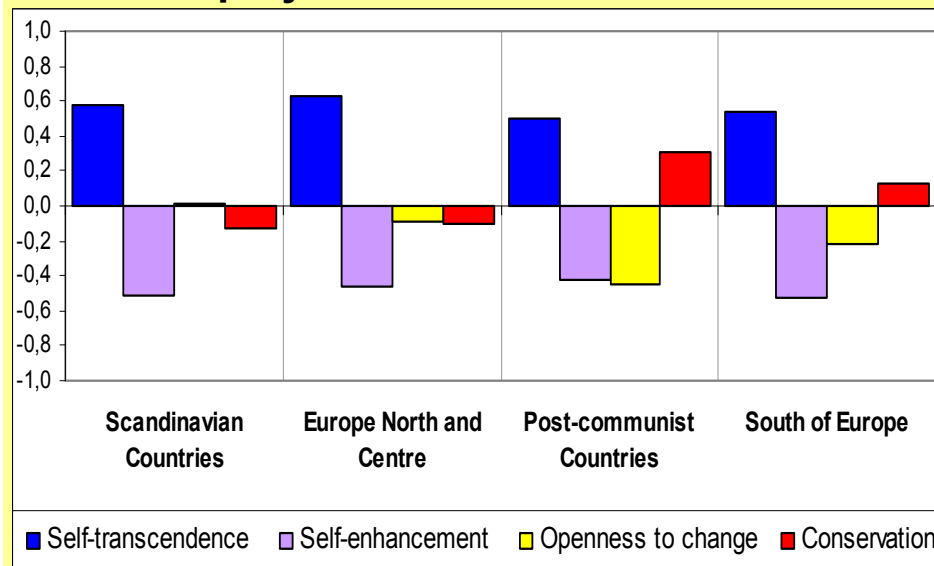
Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

Human values preferences by social class

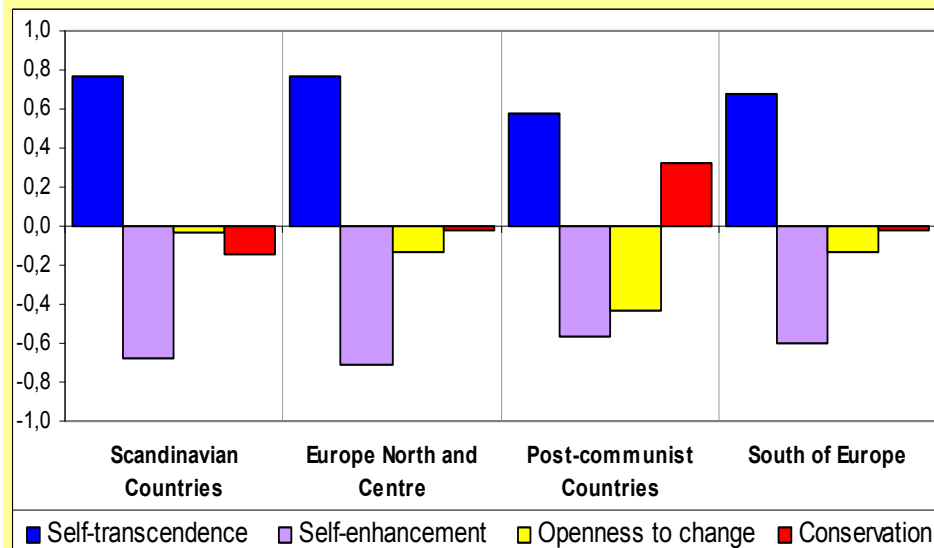
Employers and executives

(centred means)

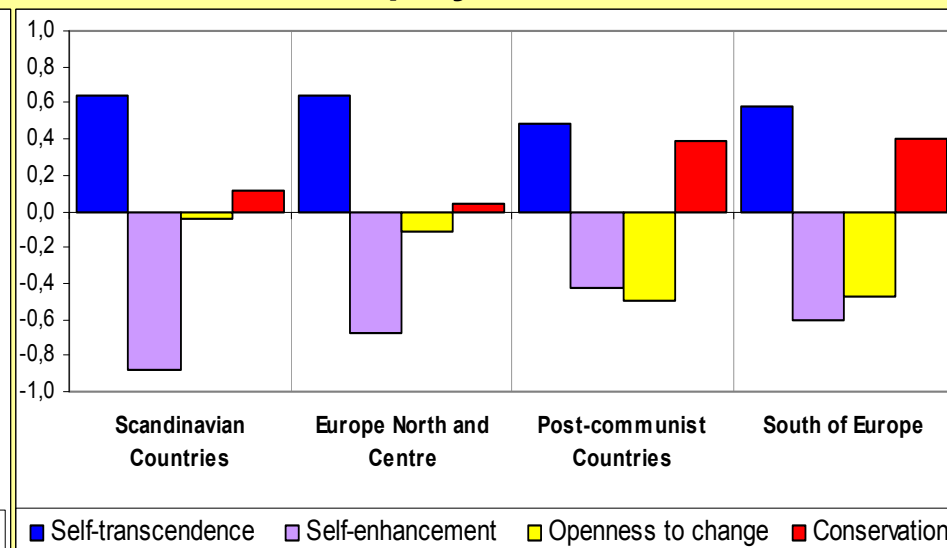
Private professionals



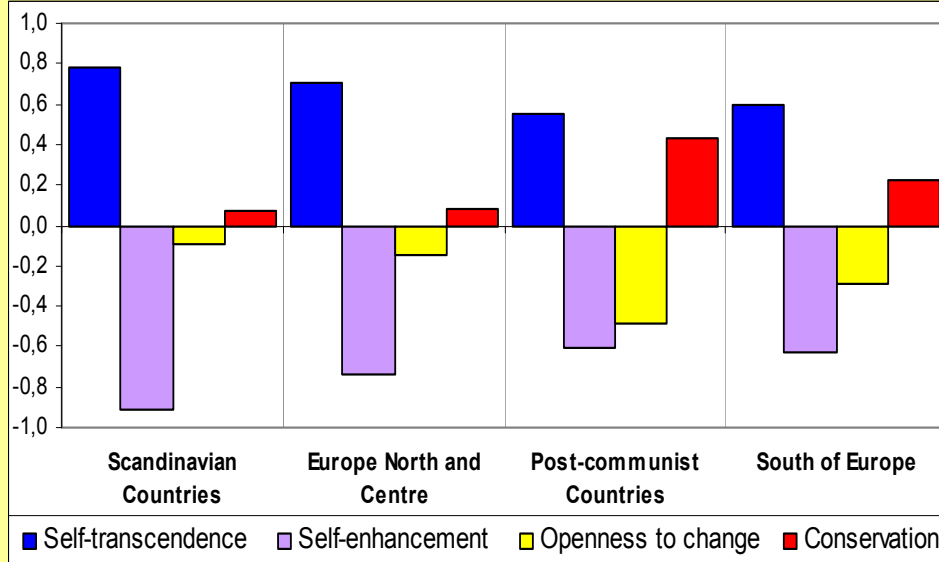
Professionals and managers



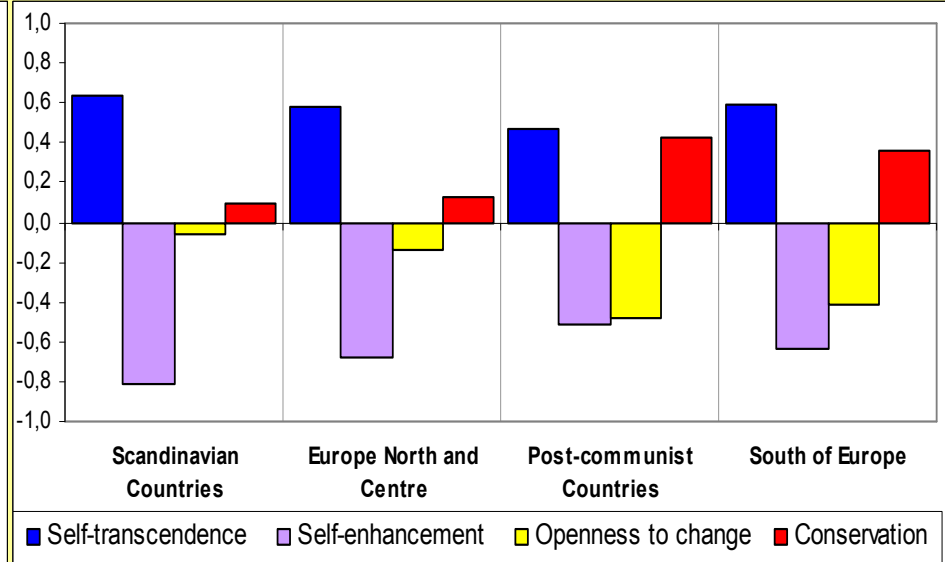
Self-employed workers



Routine employees



Industrial workers



Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

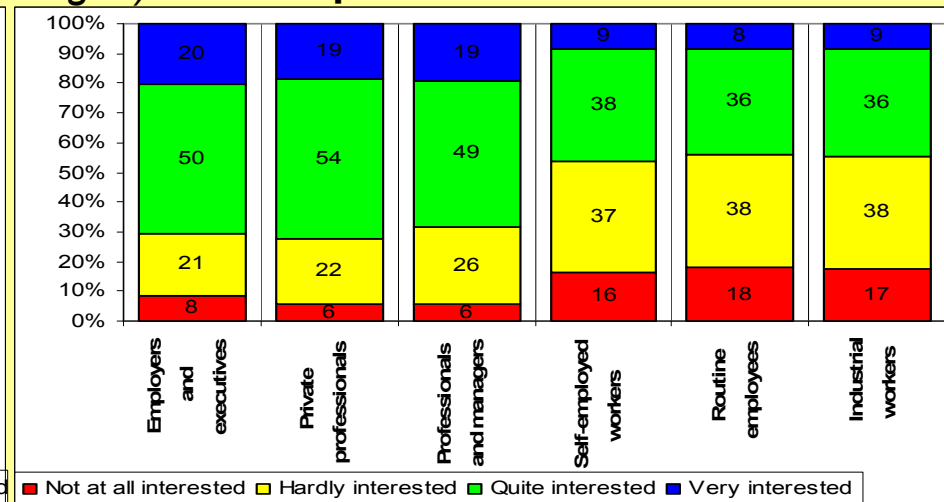
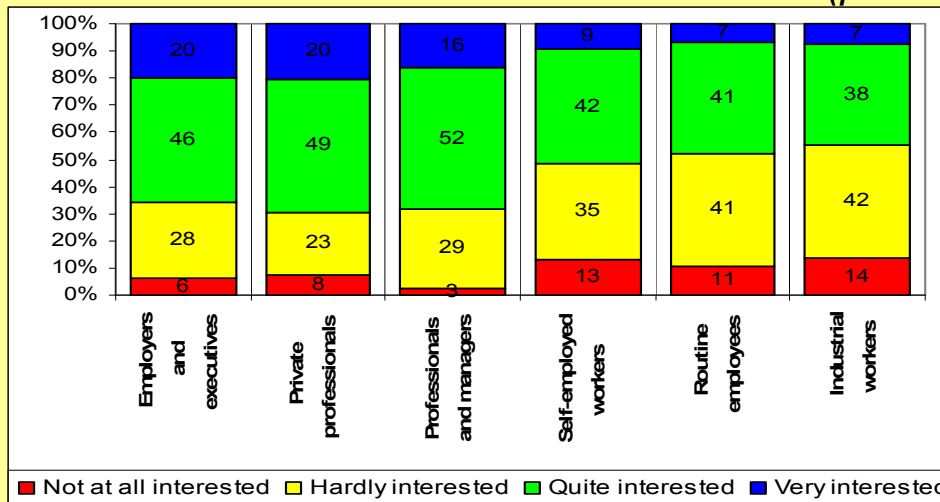
- *Self-Transcendence* is, therefore, the value with which every class identifies. With the exceptions of the Employers and Executives and the Private Professionals of the Scandinavia, the Centre and the North of Europe, as well as the Professionals and Managers of the same countries plus the Southern ones, *Conservation* is above the mean in the other social classes. This is systematically so, although with unequal incidence, in the case of the classes with fewer resources. In Post-Communist and Southern countries *Openness to Change* shows the lowest levels of identification.

Interest in politics by groups of countries and classes

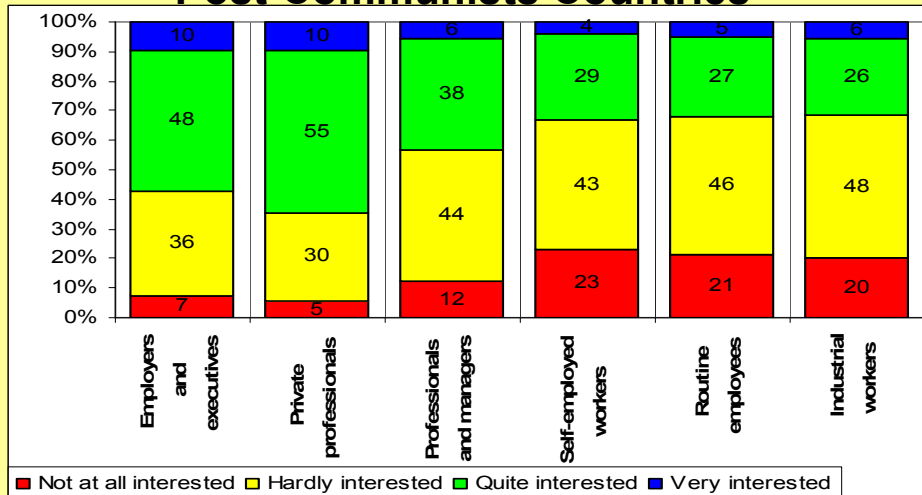
Scandinavian Countries

(percentages)

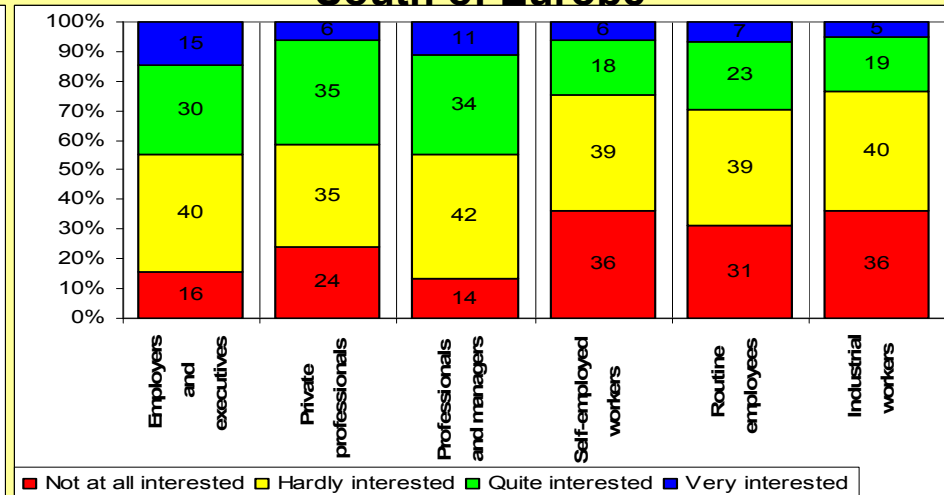
Europe North and Centre



Post-Communists Countries



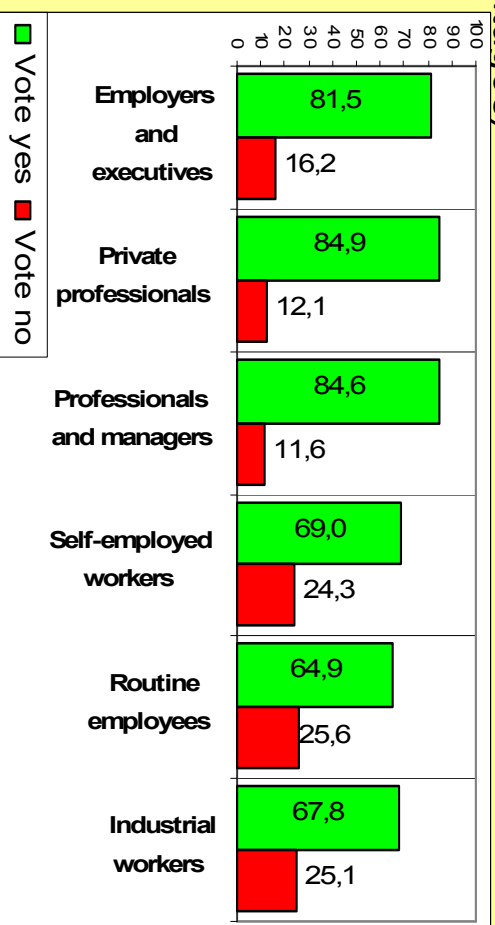
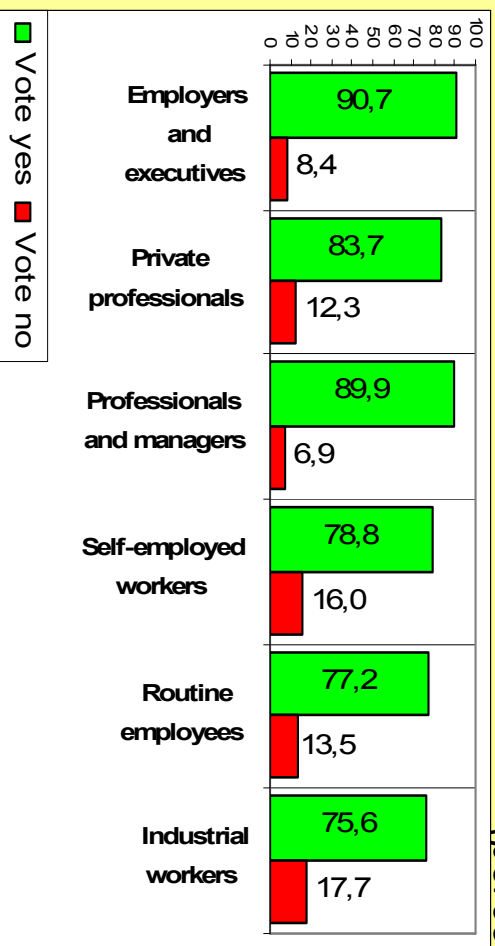
South of Europe



Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

- The Southern countries, followed by the Post-Communist, show less interest in politics than the global pattern.
- Clear distinctions in all groups of countries: the three classes with more resources show interest in politics contrasting with the other three, with less capital.

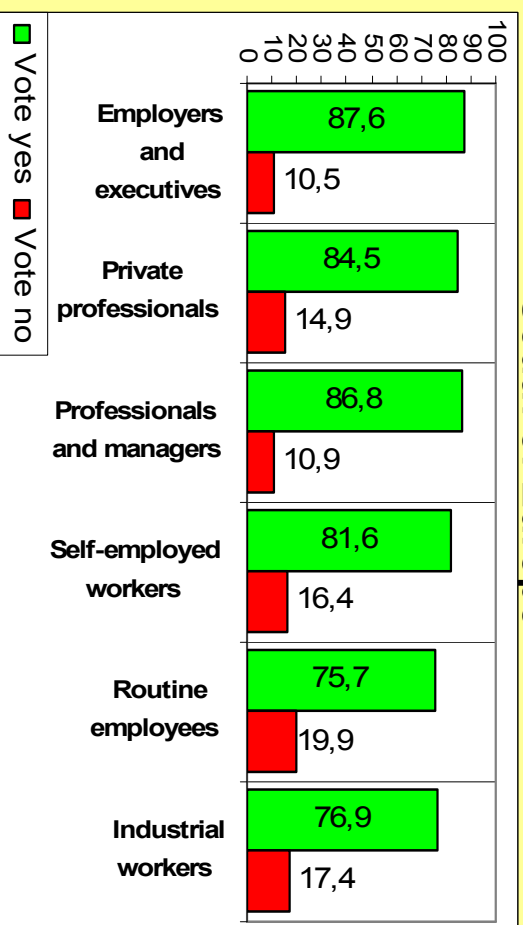
Vote in the last elections for national parliaments Scandinavian Countries (percentages)



Post-communists Countries



South of Europe



Source: ESS, round 2 (2004)

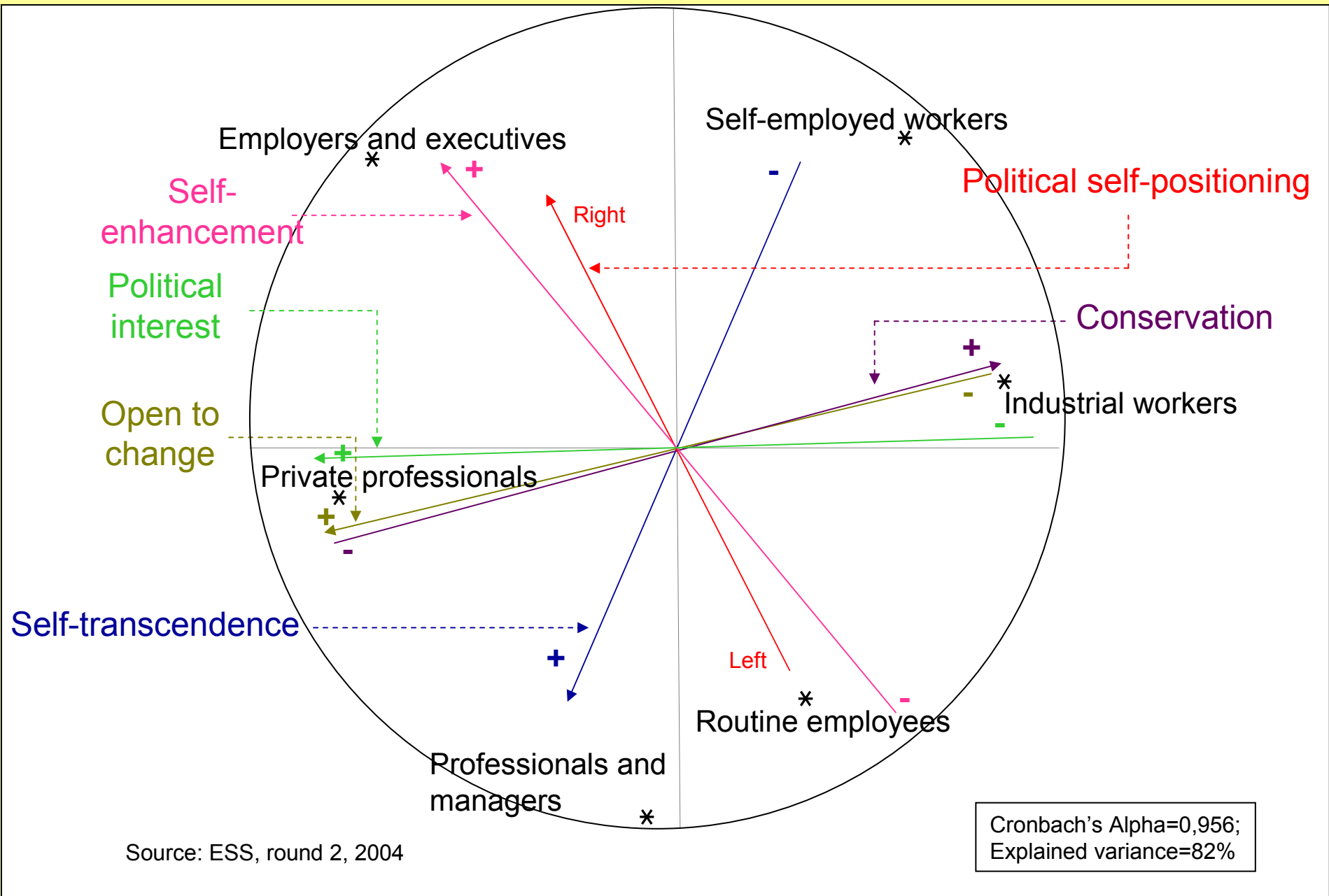
- Previous comment are confirmed by the fact that abstention is always greater in the classes with scarcest resources.



European Social Survey

Winner of the 2005 Descartes Research Prize

Values, Political self-positioning, Interest in politics and Classes



Values, Political self-positioning, Interest in politics and Classes

- **Employers and executives** – *Self-enhancement, more Openness to change, Right, Interests in politics;*
- **Private professionals** – *Openness to change, more Self-transcendence, Centre-right, Interest in politics;*
- **Professionals and managers** – *Self-transcendence, Openness to change, Left, Interest in politics;*
- **Self-employed** – *Self-enhancement, Conservation, Right, low Interest in politics;*
- **Routine employed workers** – *Self-transcendence, Conservation, Left, low Interest in politics;*
- **Industrial workers** – *Conservation, undefined between Self-enhancement and Self-transcendence, Centre-left, low Interest in politics.*

That's all!

Thank you for
your attention.