THE LAST OCCUPATION AS A MEASURE OF SOCIAL POSITION

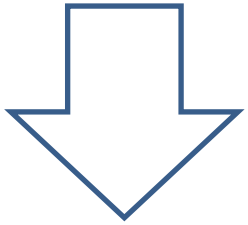
Zbyszek Sawiński
Educational Research Institute, Poland

Henryk Domański
Polish Academy of Sciences

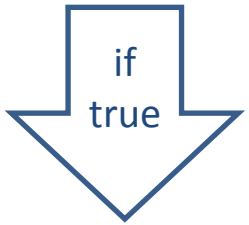
Problem

Work provides income and other social privileges, like prestige.

Work shapes values and attitudes that are required in the labor market.



The hypothesis:
An occupation is a better predictor of social standing for respondents who are currently working than for those who are not.



Does it make sense to ask the respondents who had recent work many years ago, about the details of their last occupation?

Data: European Social Survey 2010

FILTER QUESTIONS

F18. Did you do any paid work of an hour or more in the last seven days? (Yes/No)

[if NO] F19. Have you ever had a paid job? (Yes/No)

- currently working
- ever worked
- never worked

QUESTIONS ABOUT WORK

F21. In your main job are/were you: an employee, self-employed, or working for your own family's business?

SOCIAL CLASS (e.g. EGP)

F25. In your main job, do/did you have any responsibility for supervising the work of other employees? (Yes/No)

[if YES] F26. How many people are/were you responsible for?

F31. What does/did the firm/organisation you work/ed for mainly make or do?
[WRITE IN] .....

F33. What is/was the name or title of your main job?
[WRITE IN] .....

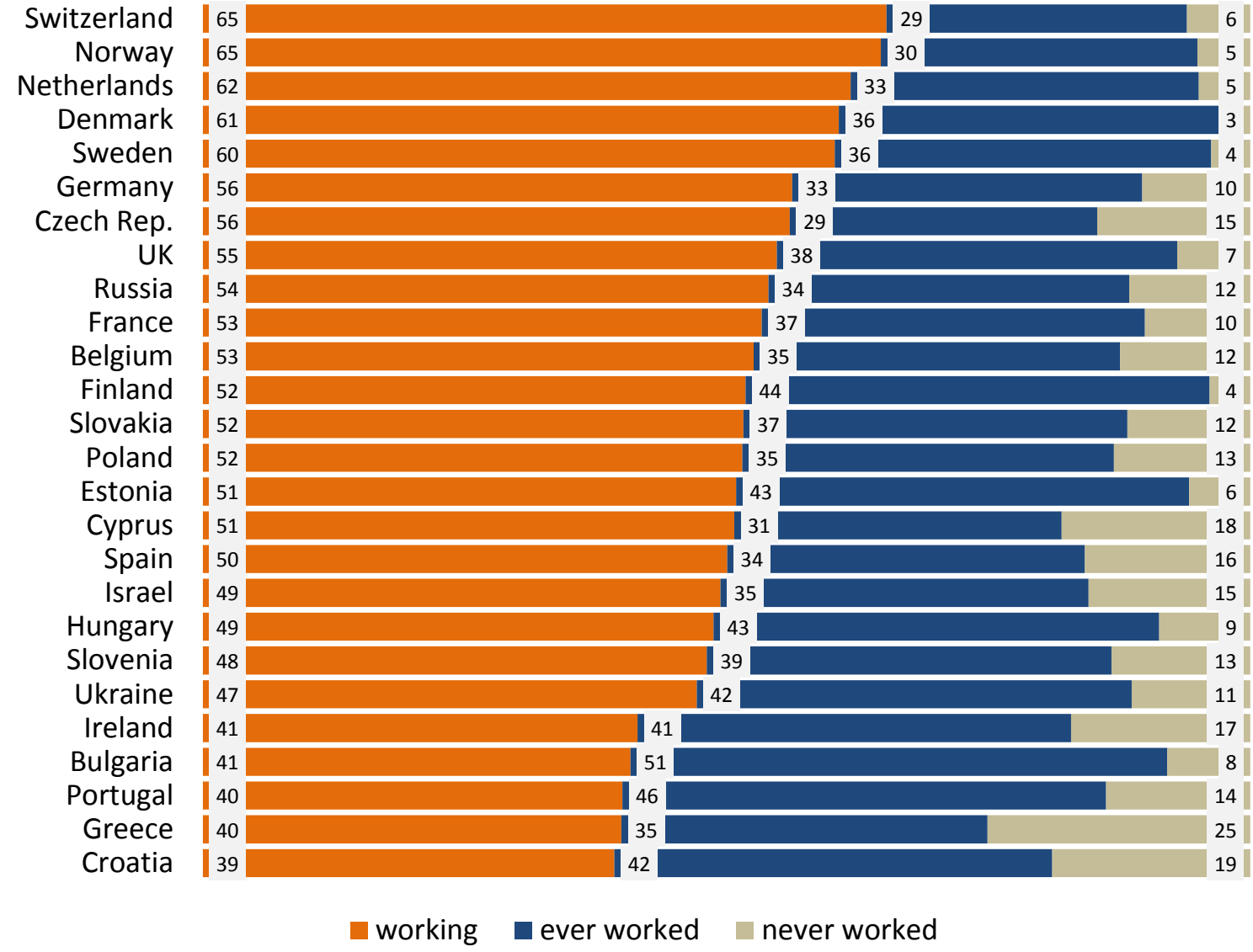
F34. In your main job, what kind of work do/did you do most of the time?
[WRITE IN] .....

F34a What training or qualifications are/were needed for the job?
[WRITE IN] .....

ISCO

Percentages of working respondents in 26 countries

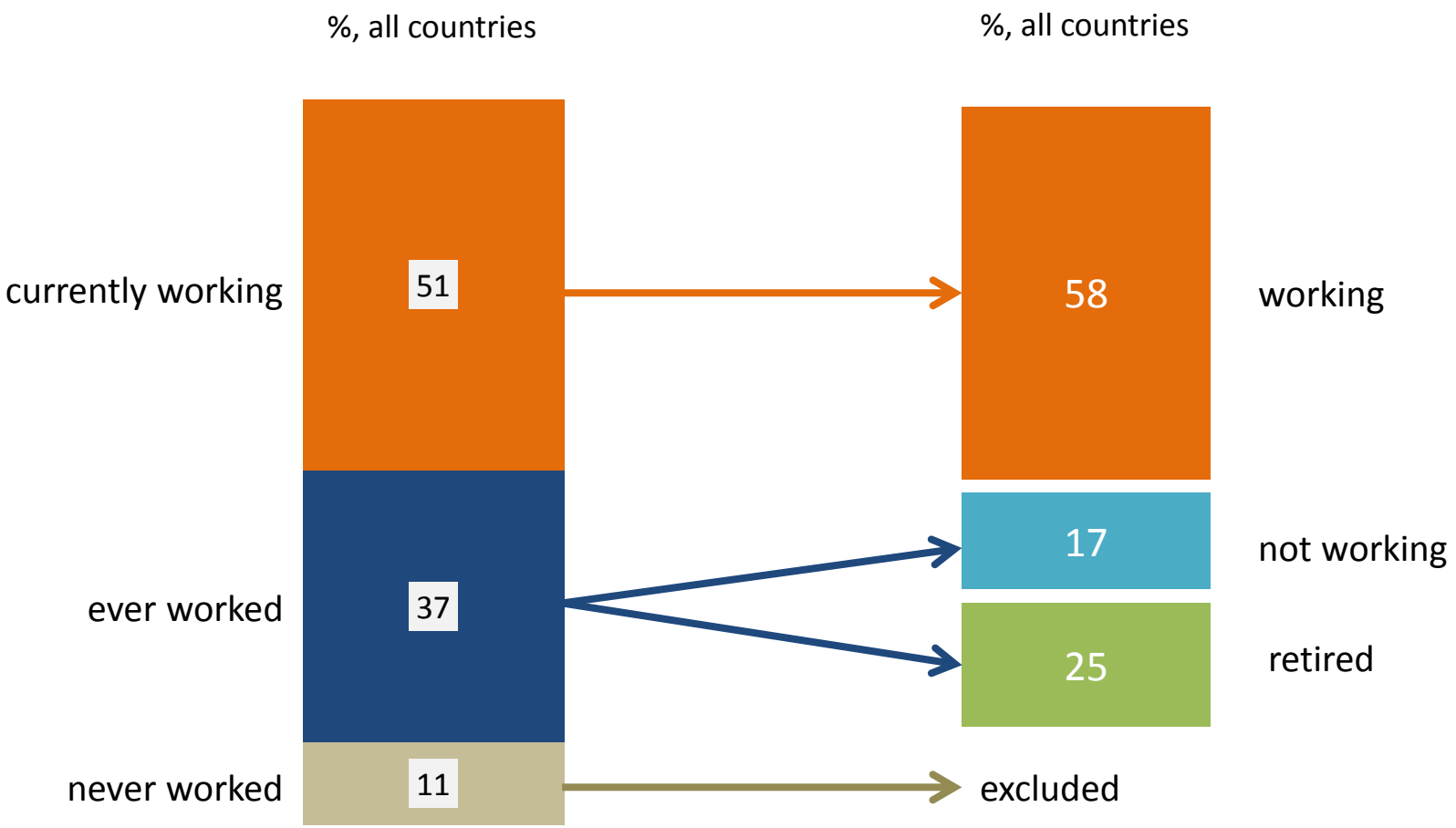
ESS 2010



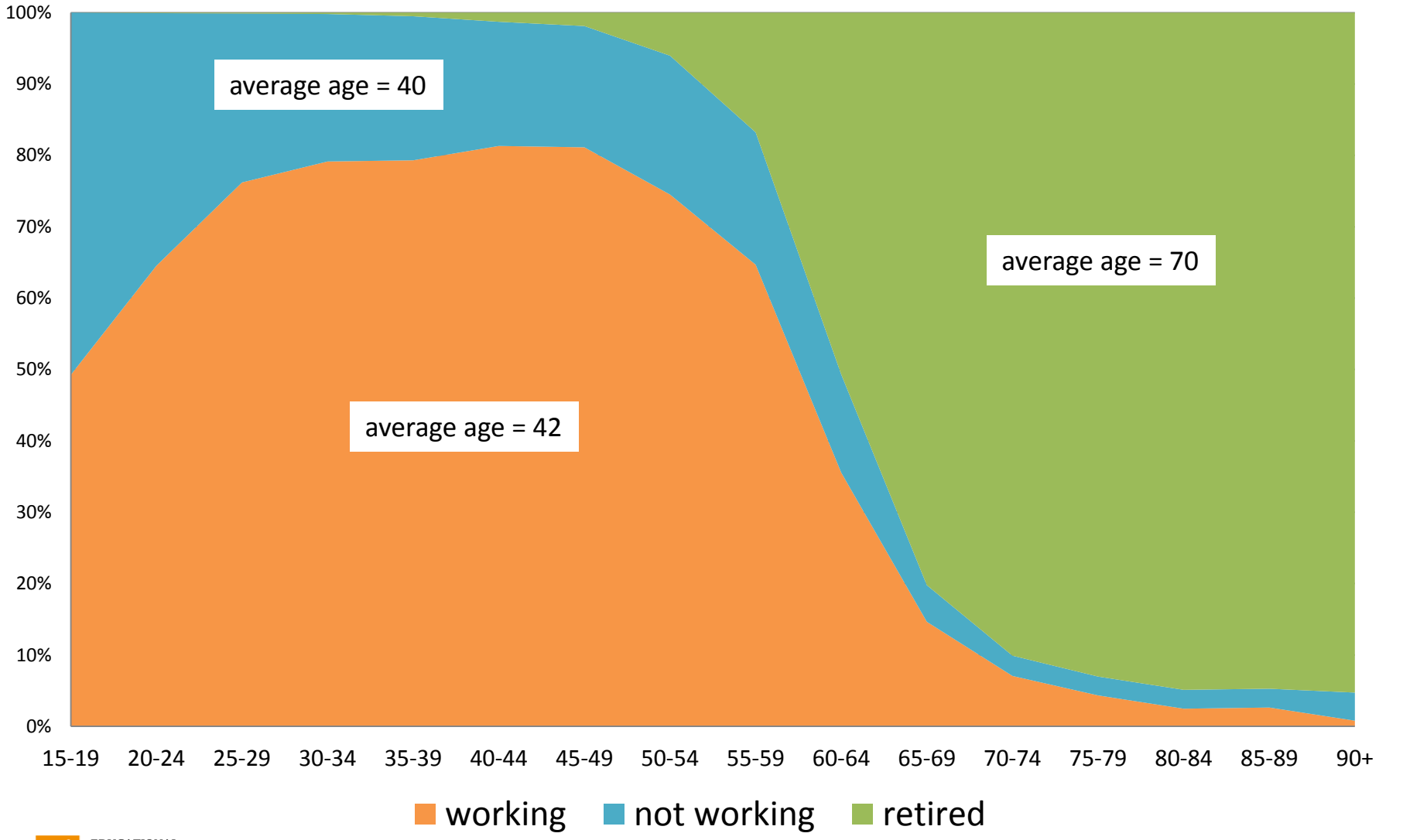
IBE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

INSTYTUT FILOZOFII I SOCJOLOGII POLSKIEJ AKADEMII NAUK

Definition of work situation



Work situation by age: All countries



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household income in ESS 2010

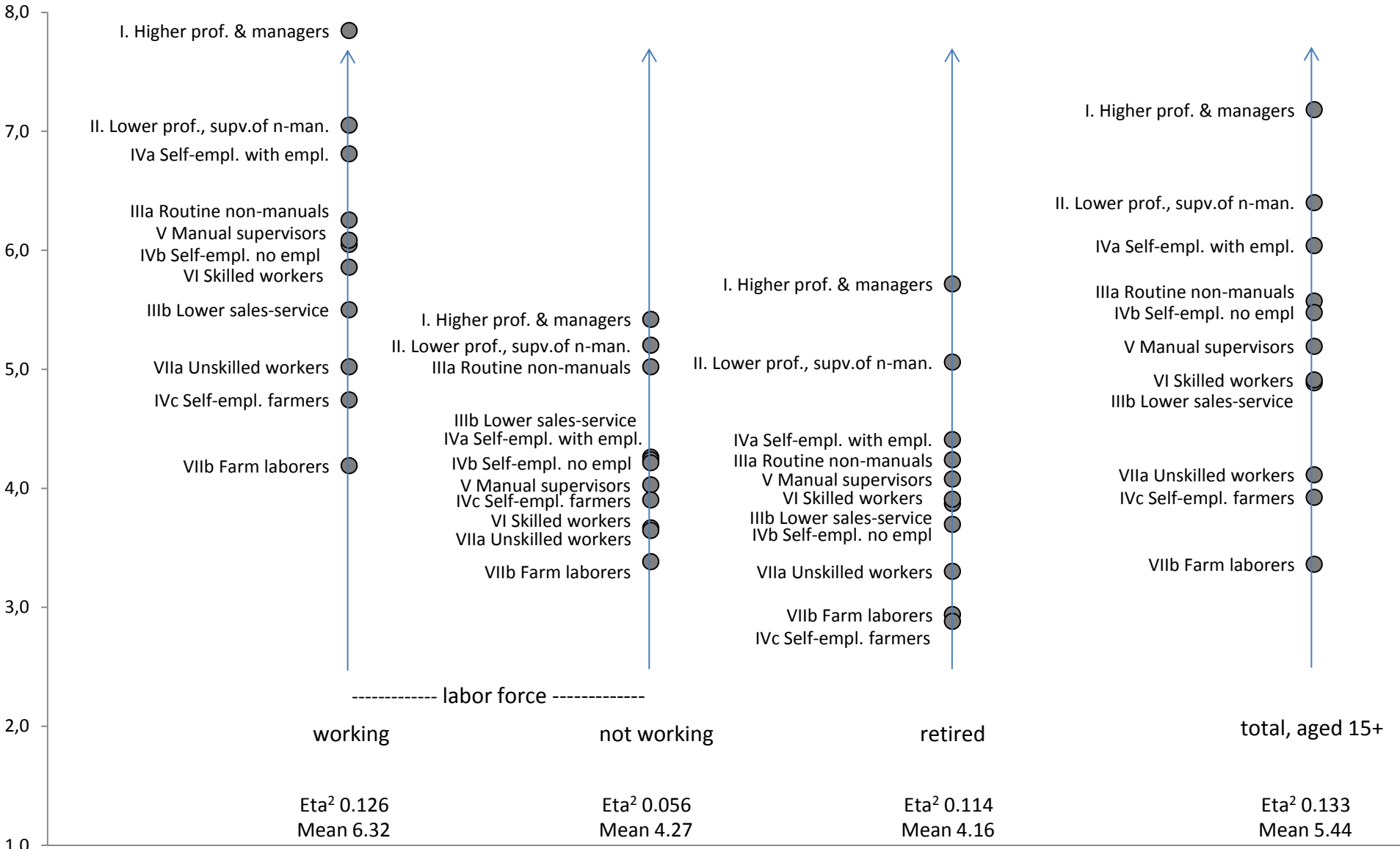
F41. Using this card, please tell me which letter describes your household's total income, after tax and compulsory deductions, from all sources? If you don't know the exact figure, please give an estimate.

Example, Poland

J. 1100 PLN or less	1st decile group
R. 1101-1500 PLN	2nd decile group
C. 1501-2000 PLN	3rd decile group
M. 2001-2400 PLN	4th decile group
F. 2401-2800 PLN	5th decile group
S. 2801-3300 PLN	6th decile group
K. 3301-3900 PLN	7th decile group
P. 3901-4700 PLN	8th decile group
D. 4701-6000 PLN	9th decile group
H. 6000 PLN or more	10th decile group

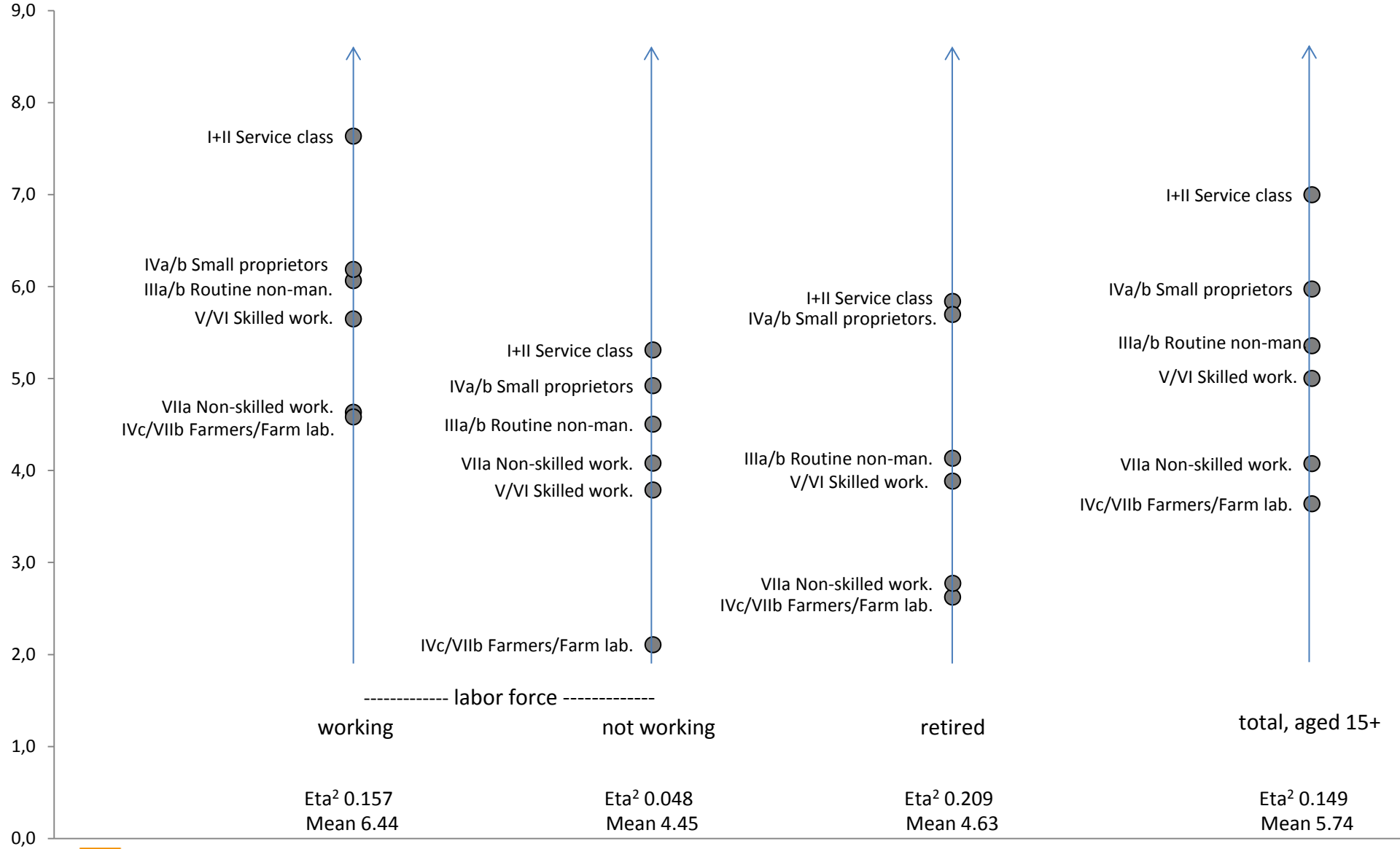
HH INCOME DECILE GROUP

ESS 2010, 25 countries



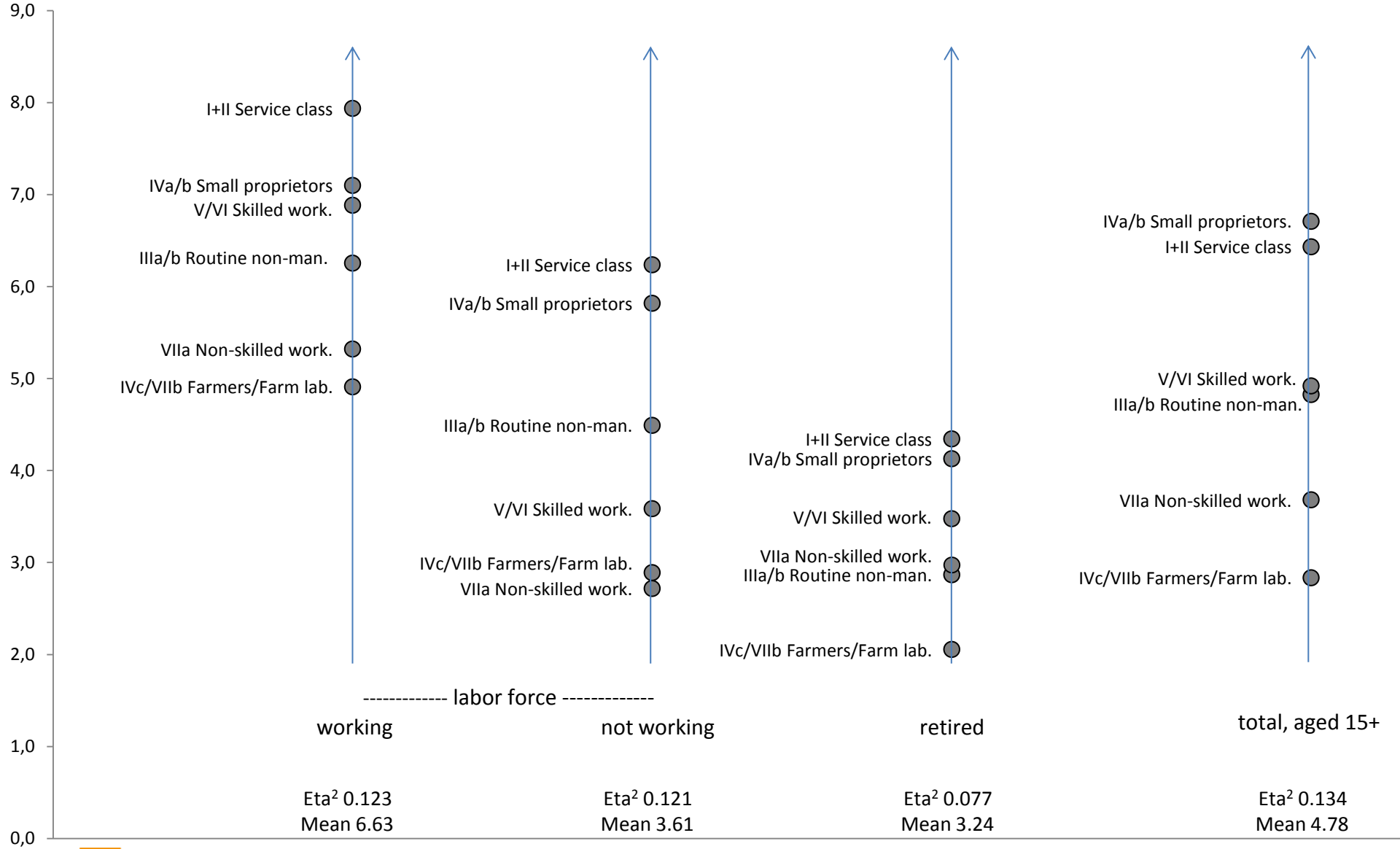
HH INCOME
DECILE GROUP

Germany



HH INCOME
DECILE GROUP

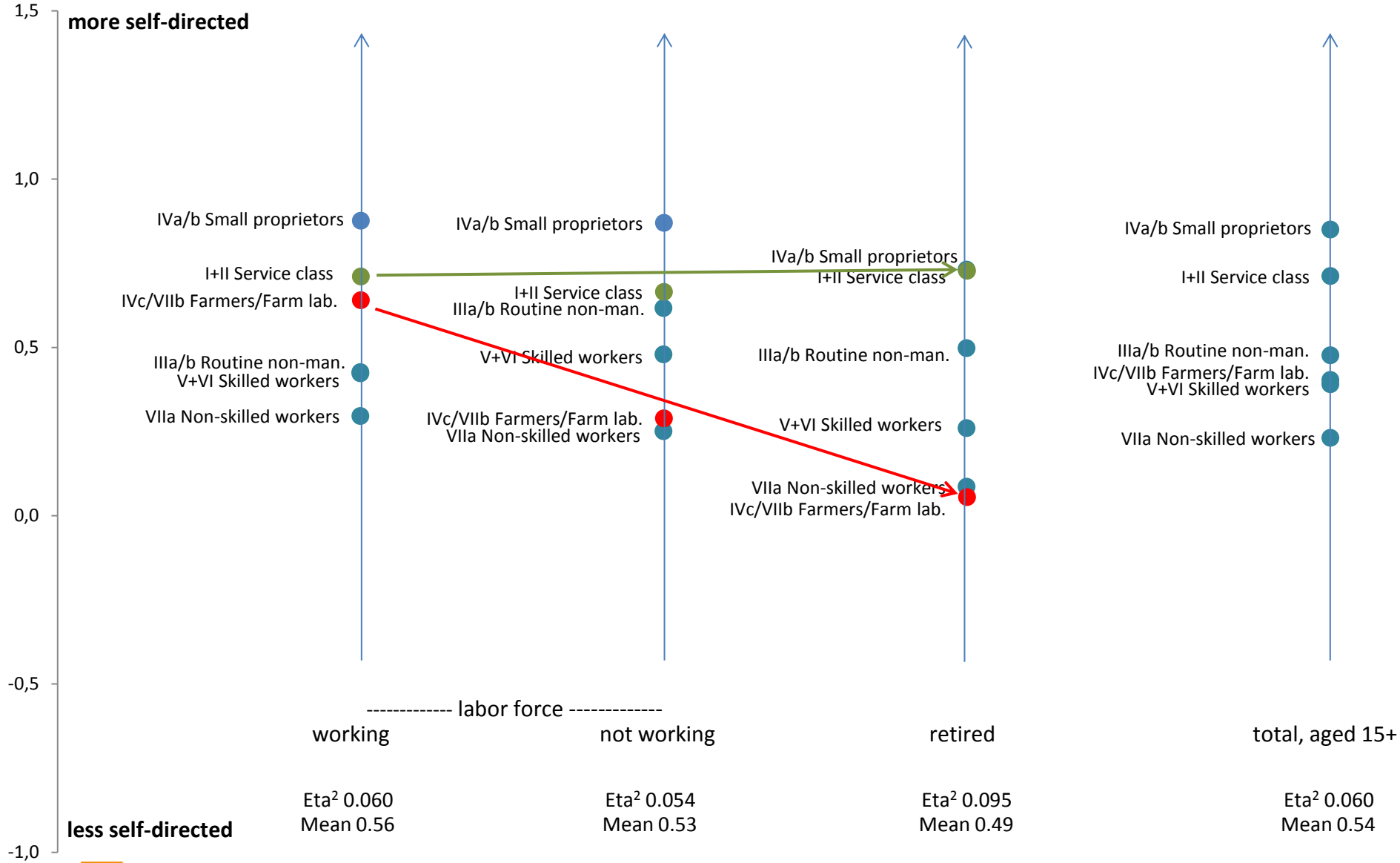
Bulgaria



VALUES AND ATTITUDES

SELF-DIRECTION: Independent thinking and action choosing, creating, exploring.

Germany

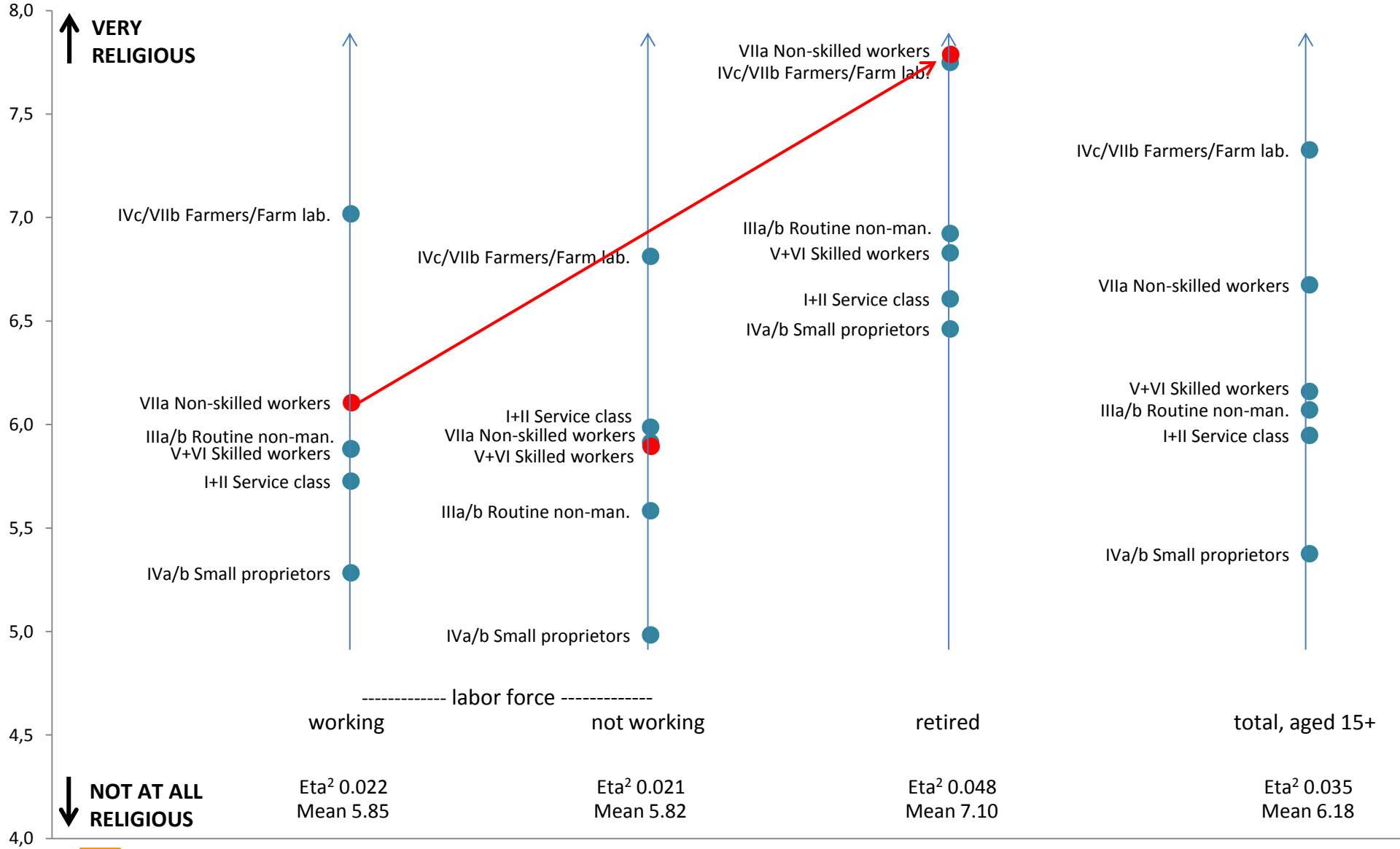


IBE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

INSTYTUT FILOZOFII I SOCJOLOGII POLSKIEJ AKADEMII NAUK

C21. Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are? (var RLGDGR)

Poland



Conclusions

- The hypothesis only partially confirmed.
- Household income.
  - East European countries: People do not keep their privileges after retirement, so the last occupation becomes a poor indicator of material situation.
  - West European countries: The privileges persist after retirement, so the occupation continues to be a good indicator of social status.
- Values & attitudes.
  - For values rooted in social heritage, the last occupation looks to be a better predictor in case of respondents who retired. Their value systems are no longer constrained by the requirements of the labor market, so they may return to original class values.
- At least in some dimensions, the last occupation is a valuable indicator of the social position for respondents who are not working.
- It makes sense to ask the questions about the last occupation to all respondents who ever worked.

Thank you very much for your attention!

Zbyszek Sawinski: z.sawinski@ibe.edu.pl

Henryk Domanski: hdomansk@ifispan.waw.pl